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Subversion of Utopian Optimism in Anna Carey's *Eye*

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By

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Letter of Approval

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## Abstract

Titled “Subversion of Utopian Optimism in Anna Carey’s *Eve*” examining the Detrimental Impact of Science and Technology, this thesis delves into the adverse consequences of advanced scientific developments on human existence, drawing upon Keith Moylan's dystopian framework. Within the narrative, the misuse of cutting-edge science and technology by a totalitarian regime results in a pervasive sense of loss, misunderstandings, maladjustment, identity crises, and conflicts. Propaganda emerges as a central theme in this novel, unfolding within an unspecified American society's political machinery. The protagonist, Eve, finds herself inexplicably held captive by the totalitarian Kindred government. Following a failed attempt to escape, she descends to the lowest echelon of human captivity, confined to a safari-themed enclave known as the City of Sand. Here, alongside wild animals and fellow societal outcasts, she is coerced into serving new Kindred masters, partaking in the hunting of wild animals and being compelled to commit acts of kin destruction in the name of purification. The narrative unfolds as Eve grapples with hunger, fear, paranoia, and an overarching identity crisis, navigating a world where the totalitarian government's cruelty towards its citizens is omnipresent. Eve embarks on a perilous journey through icy waters, dark tunnels, and enigmatic spy chambers, navigating the mysterious dictatorship that governs her world. Throughout the novel, her struggles mirror the broader challenges faced by citizens under the oppressive regime, emphasizing the harsh realities of a society dominated by totalitarian rule.

## I. Dystopia in the Life of Eve in Anna Carey's *Eve*

This thesis delves into the analysis of Anna Carey's novel *Eve* through the lens of scientific dystopia. The narrative unfolds with distressing elements, such as the prevalence of myopia, fragmentation, annihilation, anarchy, and political turmoil among the characters, establishing it as a dystopian tale. The objective of this study is to expose the novel's exploration of scientific dystopia, challenging the optimistic ideals embedded in the modernity project.

The modernity project, originating from the Western world, promises to enhance humanity through advancements in science and technology. Anna Carey explores the dichotomy between optimism and the disruptive factors accompanying change. Scientific disciplines introduce innovations like mechanical hounds, fire machines, and genetic code manipulation, initially expected to improve human existence. However, these groundbreaking ideas and inventive thinking gradually turn into instruments of imprisonment and control over human life. Genetic mutations result in individuals being raised to donate organs to wealthy tycoons, demonstrating a stark contrast to the optimistic expectations of benefiting human lives through scientific breakthroughs. The novel, "Eve" depicts the sowing of seeds of anxiety and intimidation by modern science and technology.

Eve, the central character, navigates a world devastated by a deadly plague, leaving countless children orphaned. The ensuing chaos prompts desperate acceptance of a ruler, whose reconstruction ideals prey on the most vulnerable members of society. Schools indoctrinate girls to perceive men as evil and manipulative, compelling them to graduate and continually conceive to boost human demography. Simultaneously, boys endure labor camps, losing their innocence in the process. Eve uncovers these grim truths on the eve of her graduation, leading to a life of squalor and mistreatment resembling that of animals. The only

escape, as suggested by the Kindred leader, Cassian, is for Eve to triumph in the Gauntlet Battle to redefine humanity's treatment.

The novel intricately weaves dystopian perspectives and disillusionment into the lives of its characters, reflecting the impact of obsessive pursuit of scientific and technological advancement in modern society. Far from bringing improvement to Eve, modern scientific development instigates rifts, chasms, and pervasive anxiety, fear, and paranoia in their lives. Consequently, the redemptive power of modernity becomes ambiguous within the characters' experiences in the novel.

The human inclination towards a desirable society or the fear of a detrimental one is evident in diverse literary and non-literary texts. Moylan (67) asserts that the insensitivity of the state and its consequent impact on collective lives find expression in various literary forms since the establishment of the state. During the 16th and 17th centuries, Moylan argues, a utopian desire for a beautiful and harmonious life gained hegemony in literary imagination, coinciding with scientific and material optimism.

However, the literary dominance of utopian thinking diminishes as science and technology pose a threat in the contemporary world. In contrast to utopia, 'dystopia as a warning' (Horizon\_7) portrays a perilous world where justice and humanity decline, and authoritarian dictatorship prevails through repressive means. Dystopia depicts a dreadful world where individuals endure terrifying lives, subjected to severe torment by the state.

Characters like Eve and Cassie in the novel play a crucial role in embodying the theme of negative utopia. Eve, a major character in the novel, resides in a scientifically advanced but politically devastated American society plagued by violence and power struggles. Her identity crisis and loss of agency make her invisible, reflecting the impact of dystopian views on people's lives in an unspecified American society.

The novel's portrayal of the domination of science and technology, devastation, authoritarian government, and spiritual decay further confirms its dystopian nature. Eve's story unfolds in a complex political, cultural, and social setting, illustrating the emptiness and superficiality of modern scientific development in American society. The novel explores the political and social disturbances in America through Eve's experiences, emphasizing a bottom-up perspective on a society in flux.

Dystopia, as a term, encompasses literature, art, philosophy, fiction, culture, and politics. It serves as a reaction to the predictable certainty of scientific or objective efforts for the betterment of humanity. The concept challenges the notion that enlightenment of humankind is possible, considering it a delusion. Anti-utopian thinking remains skeptical of explanations claiming universality, focusing instead on the relative truths of individual experiences. Dystopian understanding emphasizes interpretation, asserting that reality arises from personal interpretations rather than abstract principles. It underscores the fallibility and relativity of personal experiences over absolute certainty and universality.

"Fragments of the modernity project can be found scattered throughout Eve" (Smith 34). A subset of these dystopian concepts, pertinent to the upcoming exploration of negative utopia in Carey's work, will serve as the cornerstone for the paper's argumentation. The novel's central character, Eve, epitomizes model citizenship but becomes ensnared in the government's calculated whims, enduring frequent imprisonment and subjugation. She becomes a victim of betrayed love, war, fragmentation, racial discrimination, homosexuality, tormented sex and loss.

Eve's conflict, grappling between the true essence of democracy and a perverted strong-government, mirrors real-world dystopias in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Such conflicts resonate with intellectual and socio-political critics who take these issues seriously, making dystopian narratives a key area of interest. Summoned to the

Capitol, Eve is thrust into a turbulent battle that appears futile. Other attendees lack proper names but are recognized by their coding numbers. Unlike narratives that valorize war as a means to rescue humanity, Eve's narrative presents war as a spectacle for Capitol entertainment, spreading a message of cruelty against dissenters. It's a portrayal of inevitable and senseless death.

Anna Carey, an Irish novelist, playwright, and screenwriter, has authored ten novels within the post-apocalyptic genre. Known for her sparse use of punctuation, Carey prefers simple declarative sentences, avoiding semicolons and quotation marks for dialogue. She believes in not cluttering the page with unnecessary marks, a style rooted in her past editing experience at the University of Tennessee, where she removed punctuation in a book, pleasing the professor she worked for (Kermit 34).

Anna Carey's most recent novel, "Eve," stands out as her most shocking yet intimately personal creation. The world within its pages has suffered an unnamed catastrophe, leaving it charred and inhabited only by the last remnants of humanity, a few surviving dogs, and resilient fungi (Carey 45). The sky remains perpetually veiled in dust and toxic particles, while the seasons manifest as varying degrees of cold and dampness. Bands of cannibals roam the desolate landscape, taking refuge in the few remaining intact dwellings within the woods.

Eve, the protagonist, navigates this nightmarish residue of America, attempting to escape the impending Appalachian winter by carefully choosing back roads leading to the southern coast. Mummified corpses, benign in their lifelessness, dot the landscape, either seated in doorways and automobiles or gruesomely displayed on pikes and tables. Eve pushes a shopping cart filled with essential items—blankets, canned food, jars of lamp oil, and gasoline siphoned from abandoned vehicles. Her only defense, besides flight, is a pistol with limited bullets. The cart is equipped with a bicycle mirror to prevent surprises from behind.

Critics have scrutinized various aspects of the novel, offering diverse criticisms. Zadie Smith notes the craftiness of the opening chapter and suggests that the subsequent chapters might fall short in comparison, following a literary thermodynamic law. She observes a reversal in Carey's usual narrative structure, where the first two-thirds serve as a prologue with red herrings, leading to a left-field climax. According to Zadie Smith, the novel begins with a clever and fully developed opening chapter that sets a high standard, making it challenging for the subsequent chapters to measure up. This creates a literary version of thermodynamics, where the initial brilliance establishes an expectation that the rest of the novel struggles to fulfill. In contrast to Carey's typical approach, where the first two-thirds serve as a prologue filled with misleading clues, the remaining chapters, spanning from two to twenty-four, along with appendices, function as an extensive epilogue. This unconventional structure leads to a surprising climax that diverges from the preceding buildup, a technique that typically proves effective (Smith 12).

George Daniel commends the novel, expressing admiration for its enchanting language and rich character descriptions. However, he notes a loss of authorial control following a compelling start, particularly pinpointing a restaurant incident. Daniel suggests that while the book constitutes only two-thirds of an exceptional novel, it still possesses commendable qualities, such as detailed characters, insightful observations, and Carey's adeptness at navigating unconventional scenarios. Despite a strong beginning, the novel falters, beginning with the shooting episode in the restaurant (Daniel 2).

Kermit Lansner expresses admiration for the enduring impact of the book, underscoring its ability to remain in the thoughts of readers over an extended period. He highlights its depiction of timeless love and the evolving dynamics of love throughout time. Lansner personally reflects on the lasting resonance of the book, noting that even a year after reading it, he continues to contemplate and discuss its content. Recently prompted to compare

it to other books, he describes it as surpassing one familiar title both he and his wife have read, yet falling short of another. In the realm of contemporary fiction, Lansner asserts that this particular book lingers in one's consciousness (Lanser 13).

While these critics touch on various elements of the novel, none delve into the issue of emasculating scientific optimism present in the narrative. The absence of commentary on this theme prompts a researcher to focus on Eve's implicit critique of the systematic denudation of manhood, presenting it as a novel and untested issue. Eve's portrayal of denuded manhood is seen as a powerful and poignant reflection of humanity, challenging the prevailing optimism associated with scientific progress.

This novel distinctly addresses the challenges faced by individuals in a dystopian age and society. The narrative is immersed in a setting imbued with dystopian features, with the author's descriptions often conjuring images of a dystopian world. Gothic elements, such as pervasive darkness, abandoned locations, scenes set in graveyards, and others, contribute to the portrayal of a society veering off course. The entire planet grapples with misunderstandings, familial disintegration, cultural decay, and a yearning for the past. Furthermore, self-centeredness extends its reach as parental love and affection become contingent on the achievements of their children.

Eve experiences a decline into neuroticism and paranoia as a result of societal decay, autocratic political systems, fading memories, and the overwhelming influence of science and technology. The dystopian setting is vividly portrayed, depicting a motionless gray river winding through a valley, surrounded by lifeless reeds. The characters traverse an ash-covered landscape in a world that feels entirely unfamiliar. The novel's passages vividly depict the deteriorated state of this dystopian world, as illustrated in the following description: "Below in the little valley, a motionless and precise gray river winds its way, flanked by a burden of dead reeds along the shore. 'Are you okay?' he asked. The boy

nodded, and they proceeded along the blacktop in the gunmetal light, shuffling through the ash, immersed in the other's entirely different world. They crossed the broken asphalt apron and discovered the tank for the pumps" (Carey 4).

Central to the post-modern philosophers' thinking is a critique of Modernity, focusing on the rational thinking of its main protagonist. The novel reflects on the strategy of advancing humanity through scientific progress in the modern era. Dystopian thinker Keith Moylan considers both scientific and narrative knowledge and concludes that scientific knowledge is inherently contradictory, relying on narrative knowledge to establish its validity. This suggests a recurrence of narrative within the scientific realm. He concluded that scientific knowledge is paradoxical because it cannot assert its true validity without relying on narrative knowledge, which it considers as non-knowledge. In essence, there is a recurrence of narrative within scientific knowledge. To establish its superiority, scientific knowledge depends on narrative support. In simpler terms, Lyotard demonstrated that science shares similarities with other human activities. The dystopia theory critiques the perceived decline of science. Booker M. Keith also challenges the Western tradition of rationalist thinking, termed "logo centric," which seeks certainty. Despite the main protagonist Eve aligning with logo centric views, his reasoning inherently involves a deconstructive impulse, undermining itself. The dystopia theory questions the perceived decline of science and challenges Western rationalist thinking. The critique of Modernity, a key focus of post-modern philosophers, involves scrutinizing the rational thinking of the main protagonist. The novel reflects on the strategy of improving humanity through scientific progress in modernity.

The research seeks to demonstrate that Carey's dystopian narrative envisions the erosion of social perfection under the abusive power of the state. It posits that the dystopian society depicted in the novel reflects Carey's views on individual and societal dystopia,

portraying the struggle for identity against a dystopian backdrop. By applying the dystopian critique presented by M. Keith Booker, Tom Moylan, and others, the research delves into Carey's "Premonition," exploring how technocratic knowledge in the hands of a coercive state, if misused, becomes a weapon of torment. The study aims to unravel the aspects that define dystopia, drawing on Tom Moylan's "The Scraps of the Untainted Sky" and Krishna Kumar's analyses of theoretical aspects of dystopia to establish the novel as a work within the dystopian genre.

The thesis is structured into three chapters, with the initial chapter titled "Dystopia in the Life of Eve" highlighting the narrative flow and addressing potential issues within the research. Subsequent to this, the thesis introduces the research hypotheses. Following the hypotheses, the study delves into reflections on Carey and her contemporary world. Additionally, the first chapter presents perspectives and reflections from other critics and commentators, establishing the researcher's originality and creativity.

Moving on to the second chapter, titled "Implication of Dystopian Projection in Eve," it provides an overview of the theoretical framework of Dystopia as developed by prominent theorists.

The final chapter, "Warning: Call for the Reform," serves as a conclusion, weaving together the researcher's findings in relation to Eve.

## II. Implication of Dystopian in *Eve*

Eve's narrative unfolds within a daunting society where adults are compelled to participate in a form of entertainment that brings pleasure to the Capitol, a specific segment of society. This entertainment involves witnessing battles among participants who are either forced or indoctrinated into a killing ritual. The story paints a disturbing picture of a morally compromised society governed by principles that prioritize coercion and intimidation for state maintenance, rather than seeking consent. The foundational policies of this unjust state create a gap between the affluent and the destitute, allowing the stronger segment of society to control the weaker.

In Eve's dystopian world, the absence of moral principles in the governing body leads to the selling of innocent lives for the benefit of a privileged few, exacerbating the predicaments faced by the society. The powerless individuals in the feeble part of society have no voice against injustice and inequality, as the Capitol government actively seeks to perpetuate its hegemony by fostering a structure that discourages opposition. One layer of this structure of adaptation informs that the ruling principle of the "Society is its coercive force that society believes if to be the rule sustaining mechanism disregarding the wishes of the people" (56).

Contrary to the principles of present-day social democracy, where individuals have an equal say in policy formulation, the Society in Eve relies on coercive force to maintain control, disregarding the wishes of the people. The ruling principle of the Society rejects participatory democracy, opting for repression in response to calls for justice and good governance. This starkly contrasts with the current world's challenges in representation, resource distribution, and justice system, which, although contentious, have not reached the extreme portrayed in Eve.

Another layer of Eve's dystopian world reveals the Society's approach to social concerns, as reflected in the experiences of the female protagonist. The games involving killing and the systematic control of districts through manipulation of knowledge and market mechanisms serve as apparatuses to sustain the Society's political system. "The games of killing each other and systematic controlling of the District through the manipulation of the knowledge and regulation of market mechanism operates as an apparatus to sustain the political system of the Society" (87).

The mandatory involvement of youth between twelve to sixteen years old reflects the Society's attempt to divert the youth's attention from political matters, engaging them in entertainment to prevent potential threats to the existing status quo.

The narrative delves into the tale of desperation amid ecological turmoil, as Society grapples with natural disasters and anarchy, leading to widespread hunger. The central question is how the state addresses this hunger and desperation. The term 'hunger' extends beyond a scarcity of food, encompassing various levels of human need that contrast with the desperation later revealed through Eve's experiences on her journey to the Capitol. There, she witnesses the stark contrast between the Capitol's opulence in terms of food and clothing and the Society's desperation for even a daily meal, exposing the prevailing injustice in the world.

Eve, thrust into the state-organized battle as a volunteer tribute, experiences the grim nature of war. Her first-person narrative details the journey from Society to the Capitol, highlighting the injustice and cruelty inherent in the mandatory participation in a game designed for Capitol entertainment. This sets the stage for Eve's realization of the dystopia that the world of Society has become. What is wrong in the world of society is exposed through surfacing of the difference of the hunger of Society and the Capitol:

Eve of being catapulted herself into the place of her sister in state-Organized

horrendous battle in the arena as a volunteer tribute experiences the gloomy Nature of

war. Through her first-person narrative account of the journey from Society to The Capitol where battle in the enclosed arena among the twenty-four participants and her intermittent comments on various practices gives the sufficient ground for claiming how the world the Society transgresses boundary of injustice. The injustice and cruelty have its manifestations in mandatory participation in game the objective of which is to entertain the Capitol audience watching ruthless battle among the participation. (Eve 112)

The novel commences with the protagonist's captivity, serving as the catalyst for a crisis in Eve's identity. Looking back, she strives to piece together the fragments and reconstruct her shattered identity. Trapped by the Kindred after a failed escape, Eve and her companions find themselves relocated and struggling to adapt to new surroundings. As they grapple with the revelation of their genetically damaged status, they confront a loss of identity outside the city, feeling forlorn and dependent on their friends in a world on the brink of civil war.

The concept of dystopia originates from Thomas More's term 'Utopia,' envisioning an ideal society. Dystopian societies, on the other hand, are characterized by dehumanization, totalitarianism, environmental disaster, or societal decline. Dystopia serves as a warning, reflecting concerns about exploitation, repression, state violence, and other societal issues. The term acts as a prophetic vision, cautioning against negative sociopolitical tendencies. Throughout history, expressions of fear or the desire for harmony and progress have shaped fictional accounts of political and social conditions, revealing an ongoing human endeavor to depict utopian or dystopian societies based on contemporary concerns. People's perceptions of a society as appealing or appalling depend on their understanding and interpretation of the prevailing circumstances. Dystopia is characterized as an imaginative society that has deviated from the norm, marked by the prevalence of various negative elements such as "exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, famine, ecocide depression, debt, and

the steady depletion of humanity" (XI). This nightmarish scenario also encompasses injustice, limitations on freedom, and a stringent punitive legal system. Baccolini and Moylan recognize the common theme of "dystopia as warning" in all instances of dystopian imagination, seeing it as a cautionary element. Having observed numerous instances of dystopia, they argue that, to varying degrees, dystopia has functioned as a prophetic vision—a metaphorical canary in the cage—for writers who are ethically and politically concerned. These writers aim to alert us to alarming sociopolitical trends that, if left unchecked, could transform our contemporary world into oppressive structures (Dark Horizon, 2).

Eve, vividly portrays a harrowing societal account, with the dystopia not solely arising from food scarcity, but rather from the state's strategy of controlling Districts through a resource-distribution mechanism. The governing system in Eve reflects a totalitarian regime, employing technology to oppress the dispossessed. The infringement upon individual freedom by the ruling system is a hallmark of totalitarian governance, functioning arbitrarily to secure its dominance.

Throughout our history, instances abound where individuals have expressed either fear and horror or, conversely, a yearning for harmony, peace, progress, and human contentment, perceiving fictional depictions of adverse political and social conditions (Mautner 119). In the realm of beautiful imagination, as illustrated by "detailed pictures of society significantly better than that in which the writer lives" (Elliot 110), Krishna Kumar posits that the visions of a virtuous or malevolent society "manifest themselves in all ages in all manner of guises" (Kumar 103). This suggests that the human inclination to portray society in a positive or negative light is an enduring aspect of our history.

Individuals reveal their aspirations for a utopian society, a place where they can fulfill desires and aspirations that go unmet in their actual social and personal lives. Similarly, they articulate apprehensive visions of society, envisioning a dystopian reality fueled by concerns

about contemporary trends leading to the deterioration of the existing system. In both expressions of an idealized or bleak society, reflections of the underlying issues within the society become apparent. The perception of whether a society is attractive or repulsive hinges on one's embrace of the contemporary world, yet a certain level of understanding exists regarding the factors that contribute to a society being welcoming or intimidating.

Eve and her world serve as a metaphorical "canary in the cage" (Carey 132), voiceless against oppressive rule. The absence of freedom has become a norm in the society she represents, amplifying the terribleness of her world, where fear and helplessness prevail due to life's hardships. The most brutal facet of this lack of freedom starts with hunger, as the state's policies restrict resource use and survival tactics.

The deliberate creation of desperation in the districts aims to enslave and manipulate them for entertainment, with the absence of freedom serving as a backdrop for the Capital's entertainment forms. The dehumanizing use of entertainment as a tool to terrorize individuals and society underscores Eve's dystopian world, thriving on the cruelest treatment of individuals by the Game makers, representing an oppressive force enforcing totalitarian principles.

Carey's narrative serves as a warning, highlighting socio-political issues that make the world difficult to live in. The roots of evil, manifested in war and violence, impact peace and progress, posing a dire threat to humanity. Eve's narrative signals that promoting a culture of war and bloodshed will lead to perpetual suffering for humanity.

Eve, as the protagonist, exposes the painful consequences of war and violence, emphasizing that these are the root causes of individual suffering. Her traumatic experiences and loss reveal the thematic intention of Carey to convey the destructive impact of war on individuals in society. She expresses her traumatic discontent:

Should I feel relieved, that my father is going to be executed? Angry, that I came so close...don't know. I don't feel anything. My hands go numb, so I know I'm panicking, but I don't really feel it 'not the way I normally do. I am overwhelmed either the need to be somewhere else, so turn and leave my parents and Nita and the city where I once lived behind me. (Carey 201)

Eve's revolutionary attitude emerges as she expresses a desire to overthrow the oppressive government threatening her and others. The state, aiming to maintain the status quo, employs various means of control, including technological surveillance and terror tactics by the secret police.

In the context of dystopia, where human beings are reduced to soulless entities, there is no freedom, only a fear of freedom. The projection of such a society serves as a warning, questioning the trajectory of our own society. Eve employs dystopian techniques to satirize modern mass phenomena and raises awareness about the consequences of societal wrongs.

The strength of Eve lies in its use of dystopian techniques to estrange readers while addressing contemporary societal issues. It serves as a didactic account, warning about the contradictions present in society and encouraging readers to contemplate the direction in which our society is heading.

Eve, positioned among numerous dystopian novels, offers a glimpse into a foreboding and daunting future resulting from human actions themselves. Dystopian literature serves as a crucial tool to inspire readers to effect change and alleviate societal distress. Humanity is endowed with a multitude of choices, and the power embedded in these choices determines whether our society leans towards utopian ideals of tranquility, prosperity, progress, and harmony or dystopian ideals of discord, death, and devastation. The conflict arising from these choices engenders turmoil and social disorder.

“The government that has been threatening ...almost the year” (Smith 269). Eve's decision to oppose the state's choice to perpetuate its political system leads to conflict. The government exercises control over mass media through censorship and propaganda, with the Capitol manipulating citizens through mediums like television and books. Eve becomes ensnared in the traumatic torture inflicted through mandatory government messages on television. Economic control is also wielded by the Capitol, imposing stringent laws that require every district to toil for the Capitol, leaving nothing for themselves. This leads to starvation and poverty becoming commonplace in the districts.

Individual privacy is invaded through technological surveillance, a contemporary issue that Carey exaggerates to depict how strict control over citizens can transform society into a living hell. High-tech surveillance methods represent one of the state's most invasive means of controlling its citizens. Wheeler's reference to unremitting surveillance aligns with Pat Wheeler's observation that it internalizes the state's regulatory powers, becoming the principle of individuals' own subjection.

Eve experiences horror through ubiquitous media screws, position locator chips injected into the body, and other surveillance methods. The state deploys secret police to regulate individual behavior and maintain obedience. The objective of this surveillance is to instill the belief that the state can acquire information from any source, ensuring the sustainability of the system. However, Carey's dystopian narrative challenges the utopian notion that state prevalence brings happiness and harmony. Milner notes that in dystopian societies, the state creates conditions that residents find irresistible, akin to a bee hive, even if they are aware of their mechanized minds.

In a dystopian society, individuals are dehumanized, reduced to mere objects in the eyes of their governing authorities, compelling them to conform to the state's desires. Freedom is nonexistent, replaced by a pervasive fear of embracing it. The forewarning of

such a bleak outcome, as envisioned by an observer, serves as an underlying cautionary theme, prompting reflection on the trajectory of our society. The narrative raises a crucial question: where are we headed? This alarming portrayal functions as a signal, cautioning against the potential pitfalls of a society veering off course, reminiscent of an exaggeratedly nightmarish alternative.

The strength of "Eves" lies in its use of the dystopian technique of estrangement, which highlights the disconcerting issues prevalent in contemporary society. This serves as a satirical commentary on how societal norms are steering the attention of today's youth away from genuine social concerns. The warning is subtly woven into the narrative, with the protagonists recognizing the source of injustice, inspiring them to challenge and dismantle the oppressive "genetic experimentation" (Carey 14).

Carey employs historical and mythic elements to convey a cautionary message to present-day society. By extrapolating these elements into a future context, readers gain insight into the factors that contribute to societal dysfunction. This narrative falls into the genre of a warning or what Moylan refers to as a "didactic account," revealing the inherent contradictions within the society from the very outset (Carey 148).

Anna Carey creates a dystopian vision in *Eve* that engages with both creative and political dimensions. The focus on the protagonist's coming of age in an exaggerated version of contemporary U.S. society expands the dystopian form by incorporating various textual influences. Carey enriches the narrative with social detail and conflict, transforming the popular post-apocalyptic setting into a "critical dystopia." She weaves an "inter-textual web" drawing on mythic narratives, feminist fiction, and survivalist adventure, demonstrating that multiple factors contribute to social disharmony. In Carey's alternative future, she attributes these evils fundamentally to human choices, emphasizing the role of human choices in determining whether the world becomes better or worse. The choice for the sustainability of

the political system necessitates curbing individual freedom, and this very choice prompts the protagonist's aspiration to defy the system.

The central government's choice reveals a harsh economic exploitation policy favoring the Capitol inhabitants, sustaining their luxury while leaving the districts' producers without the fruits of their labor. This economic injustice exacerbates the misery and despair of the people, as highlighted by Eve's vivid description of poverty in contrast to Capitol's opulence. Carey's narrative suggests that technology itself isn't inherently good or bad; its impact depends on how it's employed. In Eve's world, Capitol utilizes technology not to uplift the dispossessed but to maintain its exploitative power. Eve describes horror of the war:

Even over the chatter of the people around us. I hear the gunfire when it starts, just snaps and claps in the micro phones. I tap the glass in front of me a few times, and the camera angels switches...forced their way in to. On the table with in is a pile of small boxes-ammunition-and a few pistols. It's nothing compared tom the guns the people here have in all their abundance, but in the city. (364)

Dystopias can be described as pessimistic portrayals of a future that are so profoundly flawed that individuals would rather escape to the greatest extent possible, using all available means. This bleak outlook on the future is characterized by images of "unrecoverable, insurmountable bureaucratic control, authoritarianism, and economic exploitation," as discussed by Williams (384). Harold L. Berger has recognized the prevalence of such depictions of adversity and terror in a significant portion of dystopian literature.

Human beings cannot be perpetually programmed like machines; instead, they possess emotions, desires, feelings, and a yearning for freedom. If the government attempts to indefinitely control individuals' personal freedom, it gives rise to an enduring conflict between the state and its citizens. The conflict depicted at the beginning of the novel is not only evident in its opening but is also emphasized in the conclusion, hinting at potential

future conflicts. Primarily, Eve, in a selfless act, sacrifices her own life for the benefit of her friends and the entire city in the novel's conclusion. She steps into the Weapons Lab in Caleb's stead, fully aware that she cannot allow him to face his own execution. Despite Caleb's past wrongs, Eve's enduring love for him prevails, as she cannot bear to live with the knowledge that she didn't take his place.

Booker's analysis of dystopian fiction resonates with Eve, where both thought and feeling are suppressed, and technology serves the government's hedonistic pursuits. The use of technology, such as surveillance cameras, demonstrates its deployment for the benefit of those in power rather than the larger population. Eve also critiques a dystopian system that celebrates injustice, exemplified by events like reaping days in front of the "Justice Building," where innocent tributes are chosen for a bloodthirsty Capitol audience.

The ominous portrayal of Eve underscores a bleak outlook on the future characterized by unalterable bureaucratic control, authoritarian rule, and economic exploitation. In describing the scene, Eve observes a diminishing display of lights, reminiscent of water puddles evaporating under the sun. The realization dawns that these red lights represent individuals, vanishing and extinguishing. The narrator is left in contemplation, grappling with the profound sense of loss. This occurs in the aftermath of a concluded war, during a period when the populace sought a lasting resolution to genetic issues, prompting the initiation of carefully crafted experiments aimed at rejuvenating humanity (Carey 124).

Milner's observation about protagonists being imprisoned or under perpetual surveillance aligns with Eve's portrayal of a society where freedom is censored, and individuals face the consequences of their choices. The narrative underscores the consequences of human deficiencies in decision-making, leading to chaos and disharmony. The aftermath of war in Eve's world exemplifies the substantial loss caused by human

choices and the quest for a permanent solution to genetic problems through designed experiments. He observes:

... this we believe, is why so recent works, dystopian and pessimistic, have central scene in which the protagonist is imprisoned or bound or allowed to walk free only on the condition of perpetual surveillance or control. We find literal binding of the protagonist or strong capture or containment imagery, in every major dystopian works. (49)

War, genocide, mutation, and genetic experimentation lead to the degradation of humanity to a machine-like level. The protagonist rebels against conventional norms, expressing dissatisfaction, which sparks conflict. The government, aiming to eliminate undesirable genetic traits, attempts genetic manipulation but faces disastrous consequences, resulting in damaged genes.

Humans are not programmable machines; they possess emotions, desires, and a longing for freedom. State control over personal freedom perpetuates conflict between individuals and the state. The novel's opening and ending highlight this conflict. Eve sacrifices herself for her friends and the city, challenging the government's control. Despite Caleb's wrongs, Eve's love prevails, driving her sacrifice.

Carey's pessimistic view of society is evident not only in his overall perspective but also in his manipulation of language. According to Moylan (23), despite an initial silence, Carey often employs language as a tool for counter-narratives. This dystopian linguistic approach connects fictional terms like "Eve," "game," "Bureau," and "Experiments" to real-world dystopian elements, unraveling hidden political dimensions. Carey's critique extends to the potential manipulation of language by those in power, echoing concerns raised by David Andrews.

Andrews suggests that urban elites, often sponsors of such language manipulation, witness a shift where the general population increasingly adopts and consumes these linguistic constructs. This societal transformation is mirrored in the ancient cityscape, notably in the dominance of sports venues and monuments, exemplified by structures like the Coliseum and Circus Maximus in Rome. As Johnson delves into the language associated with dystopia, the emphasis is on the potential misuse of language by ruling elites. The concern is that, similar to Carey's perspective, language manipulation becomes a tool for control and influence by those in power.

The novel exposes the state's cruelty, denying citizens their rights to life, liberty, and happiness. Instead, the ruling class benefits the privileged few who support them. Carey portrays a dystopian universe where societal control and the illusion of perfection are maintained through various means.

Eve offers a critique of the gloominess prevalent in society, affirming that her true essence is intertwined with her loved ones rather than conforming to societal labels. She underscores the transient nature of a vibrant flame, challenging the oppressive system depicted in the novel: I am not defined by Abnegation, Dauntless, or even the Eve. I do not subscribe to the Bureau, the experiment, or the fringe. My allegiance lies with the people I cherish, and reciprocally, they are bound to me. The love and loyalty exchanged within these relationships shape my identity more profoundly than any mere word or group ever could. It seems that a flame burning so brightly is not destined for permanence (Carey 188).

Carey underscores Eve's profound powerlessness in the face of a tyrannical government controlled by numerous bureaucratic institutions. Paranoia pervades the characters' lives, marked by intimidation, uncertainty, surveillance, betrayal, and manipulation. The social living standards appear lower than those in contemporary societies, yet despite her suffering, Eve questions the societal norms. The Bureau plans to manipulate

everyone in Chicago using a 'memory serum,' a prospect vehemently opposed by Eve and her friends as it essentially amounts to the mass destruction of lives.

In this dystopian reality, bodies are perceived as weak and powerless, subjected to constant oppression and regulation by the state. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concept of discipline in "Discipline and Punish," the state employs meticulous control over individuals' bodies, enforcing a precisely designed daily routine for societal conformity. This coercive approach enables the ruling elite to mold individuals into obedient entities, following a rigid schedule without deviation. Lives are meticulously directed by the government, fostering a submissive populace ignorant of the state's omnipotent power.

Foucault argues that discipline enhances the body's economic utility while diminishing its political disobedience. Essentially, a thoroughly disciplined body increases productivity, benefiting the state economically, while simultaneously rendering it submissive and non-threatening to state control. Consequently, citizens in autocratic regimes unwittingly resemble prisoners due to the extreme discipline imposed on their bodies.

Foucault examines the application of discipline within penitentiary institutions in his work "Discipline and Punish," where he extensively cites Léon Faucher, the architect of regulations for a Parisian prison. According to Faucher's guidelines, the prisoners' daily routine will commence at six in the morning during winter and at five in the summer. They are required to engage in nine hours of work daily throughout the entire year, with two hours dedicated to educational activities. The prisoners must silently rise and dress when the supervisor opens the cell doors at the first drum-roll, complete dressing and bed-making by the second drum-roll, and assemble for morning prayers in the chapel by the third. The workday concludes at nine in winter and at eight in summer (Foucault 6).

Similarly, the characters in *Eve* adhere rigorously to a set routine. Specifically, individuals known as Numbers repetitively live their lives based on the Table of Hours, a

meticulously organized schedule imposed by the state. This Table, hailed by the main protagonist as the "heart and pulse of One-State," dictates the precise allocation of every moment in a person's day. Consequently, everyone engages in synchronized activities, forming a colossal organism that moves and behaves uniformly. This collective conformity aims to shape a singular entity easily governed through the enforcement of discipline and order (Carey 12). Carey illustrates a typical day in the lives of One State residents, stating: Every morning, with six-wheeled precision, at the exact same hour and minute, we rise—millions of us—as if we were a singular entity. Simultaneously, millions of us commence work as one. Later, in unison, we cease our activities. Then, akin to a single body with a million hands, we raise spoons to our lips at the precise second dictated by the Table. Following this, we embark on a stroll, attend the auditorium, participate in Taylor exercises, and retire to bed—all synchronized at the same second according to the Table (Carey 13).

This peculiar consensus prohibits any foreign action that deviates from the norm, making it easy for the government to assert control while utilizing people's productivity for its benefit. The uninterrupted and everlasting routine drains creativity and the desire to learn, transforming individuals into a homogeneous mass easily molded by the authorities. Foucault explores this disciplinary "time-table" method, arguing that it achieves the same unquestioning compliance from citizens as military commanders receive from soldiers.

The rigid time breakdown and disciplinary control in the military eliminate free movements, shaping the body to conform to temporal imperatives. In works like *Eve*, characters follow precisely established routines that erase individuality, rendering them robotic and indistinguishable. Moylan highlights the pervasive central planning in virtually every aspect of life, leading to a meticulously scheduled existence from birth to death.

Even intimate acts like sex are regulated in the Table of Hours, with allotted periods for Personal Hours. Though seemingly allowing freedom, these Personal Hours remain

within the closely regulated Table of Hours. The dystopian lifestyle mirrors the strict discipline of prisoners or soldiers, who lack the freedom to act independently.

The dystopian regime controlling citizens' time and space resembles the "rezhim" of GULAG prisoners in Soviet Russia. While the daily routine in One State mirrors that of GULAG prisoners, the crucial distinction lies in the citizens' voluntary acceptance of the regime. Unlike prisoners who face armed guards and strict marching orders, dystopian citizens willingly adhere to a pre-programmed routine, believing in their duty to serve the state and sacrificing personal happiness for societal obligations.

In *Eve*, individuals work diligently for the government, considering it a vital duty. The protagonist, Eve, contributes to a critical project, designing a spaceship to expand One State's powers. Similarly, other characters, like those responsible for manipulating media information, are deeply entrenched in their social duties, turning into mere "subjects" dedicated to satisfying the government's desires and not interfering with the progress of the State Machine.

Louis Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" introduces the concept of ideological function, wherein individuals are categorized as "subjects" when involuntarily subjected to ideology. Althusser argues that ideology represents not the real relations governing individuals but their imaginary relation to those real relations, shaping their worldview. This "imaginary relation" influences how individuals perceive themselves and determines their social function.

The ability to identify oneself is influenced by social practices imposed through ideology. It serves the state's interest for people to view themselves as "subjects," as they then conform to the ideology's principles. Breaking free from this circle becomes challenging as individuals adopt the ideology's worldview. In Carey's dystopian world, the protagonist Eve uses writing to resist a totalitarian regime that devalues women for their reproductive

function and subjects them to patriarchal abuse. Writing becomes Eve's tool to reconstruct her body, disciplined and exploited by the state, and challenge its ideals.

Foucault's idea of discipline involves the state oppressing and controlling the body for total subjection. Eve, facing oppression in a society defining women solely by procreation, uses writing to reclaim her body and challenge the state's ideals. Atwood's novel aligns with *écriture féminine*, reflecting feminist philosophies on women's role and oppression. In a society where women are reduced to their reproductive functions, writing becomes a means for women to reconstruct and liberate their bodies, restoring their voices and power.

Eve's narration is crucial as she uses writing to recreate her body, reconstruct her identity, and maintain her humanity. In Carey's narrative, Eve describes her body as beyond her control, a commodity for the ruling elite. The totalitarian society, ruled by religious fundamentalists after a coup, deems fertile women as a "national resource." Aunts indoctrinate Handmaids to view themselves as "seeds," but Eve rejects this dehumanization. Denied ownership of her body, Eve reclaims it through storytelling, metaphorically refiguring her lost body. The novel vividly portrays the dismembered body as a metaphor for Eve's reconstruction amid ruthless societal values.

In this oppressive society, women are perceived merely as "two-legged wombs" (176). The physician examining Eve focuses solely on her torso (78). The recurring motif of hands underscores Eve's sense of emptiness, as they are described as both "empty" and capable of being held but not seen (Atwood 62). When reminiscing about her brother, Eve admits feeling like a "missing person" and expresses a profound longing for a tangible human connection: Is it wrong to desire a tangible body to embrace? Without it, I too exist without a physical form. I can hear my own heartbeat on the bedsprings, I can caress myself under the dry white sheets in the darkness, but I am also dry, white, and unyielding. It's akin to running

my hand over a plate of dried rice, like touching snow. There's an inherent lifelessness, a sense of abandonment in it. (Carey 132)

When a sudden military coup ushers in the rule of a dictator, women find themselves unexpectedly powerless overnight. In this new regime, Eve reflects on her experience, likening it to the feeling of having her "feet cut off" (Carey). The state, in its quest for the overall welfare of the country, dictates each person's social function, dismissing individual feelings and ambitions. According to Martin Kessler, dystopias envision a human nature that is entirely moldable, incapable of experiencing emotions or exercising judgment beyond the prevailing ideological framework. This results in the obliteration of personal identity within objective reality (568). Consequently, in Eve's society, when children reach sixteen, they are prohibited from choosing their future occupations, as the state seeks to control them in a predetermined manner, suppressing any ambivalence they may have. The government arbitrarily decides the roles individuals will assume and how their bodies will be utilized based on the state's requirements. Carey describes the instructions given to students upon turning sixteen: "Do not dare to envision the type of work you desire after leaving the Home of Students. Your assignment will be determined by the Council of Vocations. Their profound wisdom discerns where your service is required for the benefit of your fellow humans, surpassing your limited understanding. If your presence is deemed unnecessary for your fellow humans, there is no justification for you to occupy the earth with your physical presence" (Carey 18).

People's perspectives on using their own bodies aren't acknowledged, and what's even more troubling is that because of ideological indoctrination, they don't object to it; they're accustomed to being directed that they perceive nothing unusual about it.

The conditioning experienced by embryos and infants in Eve highlights the government's control not only over individuals' bodies and the determination of their roles but

also its manipulation of their minds, resulting in a populace characterized by ignorance and compliance. To ensure distinctions among castes based on both physical and mental capacities, individuals undergo chemical conditioning that prevents the emergence of jealousy or dissatisfaction. In addition to this, they are subjected to hypnopaedic teachings, described as "the greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time," wherein hypnotic messages are repetitively implanted in children's subconscious minds, eventually shaping their common sense (Carey 28). Consequently, adults efficiently perform their designated social functions without complaint, embracing their roles with unwavering dedication, whether as intellectual individuals in Eve or industrious workers like Cassie.

The Director of the state acknowledges the success of this method, emphasizing how the child's mind becomes a product of these suggestions, influencing the adult mind throughout one's life. This manipulation aligns with Althusser's ideology theory, illustrating that the reproduction of labor power skills occurs through forms of ideological subjection (Althusser 128). Therefore, citizens in dystopian societies must internalize state ideals from birth to become law-abiding individuals, molding them into diligent, disciplined, and submissive workers.

In Baccolini's analysis, Eve in Carey's work bears a resemblance to Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* in various aspects, including degraded humanity, dust, dirt, totalitarian government, and destruction. Dante's *Inferno*, written in the early fourteenth century, narrates Dante's journey through hell, navigating a desolate landscape of fire and ice, encountering every level of sin on his way to purgatory and paradise. In contrast, Carey's *Eve*, written in 2012, depicts Eve's journey through a post-apocalyptic American landscape, characterized by ashes and struggle against freezing temperatures and savage survivors in her quest to reach the coast before winter.

Despite the significant differences in time and setting, the opening lines of both texts, highlighted below, reveal textual and thematic similarities:

1. Eve opens with, "When she woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night she would reach out to touch the child sleeping beside her" (3).
2. The Inferno's canto one begins with, "In the middle of the journey of our life I came / to myself within a dark wood where the straight / way was lost" (1-3).

These similarities connect the texts thematically, illustrating a dystopian world, a negative version of utopia. Carey reworks the tropes of the Inferno, addressing the historical context of our time, marked by events such as the September 11th attacks, the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina, and the environmental crisis. These challenges to the American idea of exceptionalism are reflected in the universal reading enabled by the "everyman" protagonists in both the Inferno and Eve.

The characters' journeys and readers' experiences are guided by significant figures in both texts: Virgil in the Inferno and "the man" in Eve. Carey's portrayal of a society in crisis mode exposes the darkest facets of human nature, encompassing selfishness, violence, slavery, and gangs within Eve's post-apocalyptic scenario. Similarly, Dante's Inferno unveils the profound sins of humanity through a vivid illustration of global destruction, representing an unrealized yet potential reality.

Carey's "Eve" explores a dystopian landscape reminiscent of Dante's Inferno, portraying a world marked by sin, suffering, and desolation. In "Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination," Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan suggest that science fiction has given rise to a "new map of hell," redefining the dystopian tendency originally seen in Dante's work. Their definition, applicable to both Carey and Dante, highlights the dystopian imagination as a prophetic tool used by writers with ethical and political concerns. It serves as a warning, akin to a canary in a cage, alerting us to potential

sociopolitical dangers that could transform our contemporary world into the oppressive utopian realities depicted in dystopias.

Baccolini and Moylan's notion of a "prophetic vehicle" aligns with John Cant's view of "Eve" as an accomplishment in presenting a "Grand Narrative of Western Culture." This perspective helps elucidate the novel's cryptic premise, addressing themes of nature's mortality and humanity's spirituality. Despite the seemingly bleak conditions depicted in both Dante's *Inferno* and Carey's "Eve," there exists a shared sense of hope within the despair—a characteristic often found in dystopian conventions.

Dystopia, as a negative version of utopia, contains an inherent hope within its gloomy narrative. The bleak outlook on society serves as a form of social criticism, acting as a warning that implies the possibility for reform in the face of the dystopic order. In this way, both "Eve" and the *Inferno* contribute to the tradition of dystopias by offering a critique of society and suggesting the potential for positive change.

While the novel doesn't delve into the origins of the crisis that turned Eve's landscape into a wasteland, it suggests human involvement. The only clues about the actual event are glimpsed through a man's memories: the clock frozen at 1:17, a sudden burst of light, and a sequence of ominous events. The man's reaction to the crisis, portrayed by Carey, raises questions and emphasizes the uncertainty surrounding the catastrophic occurrence.

This enigmatic episode prompts readers to consider various possibilities of global and self-destruction. Similar to how Dante's sinners create their own hell, Americans faced a profound sense of national vulnerability and mortality after the abrupt and shocking events of September 11th. The "reaction of incomprehension" among Americans following the attacks on the World Trade Center reflects the sudden awareness of their nation's fragility. It wasn't just the threat from Al-Qaida that concerned them; there was also a broader contemplation of potential unforeseen dangers to national security.

Living in a nation combating an invisible enemy like terrorism, openly labeling certain countries as the "axis of evil," and defending against elusive threats such as indiscernible white powder, Americans in 2006 harbored fears of human-induced destruction within the U.S. and beyond. The novel and the post-9/11 American psyche share a common thread of grappling with the unsettling and unpredictable nature of contemporary threats.

### III. Warning Call for Reform

Examining *Eve* through the lens of Dystopia's critical perspective yields the conclusion that dystopias flourish as a form of socio-political commentary. While discerning the author's exact intentions can be intricate, Carey's narrative style in *Eve* suggests an inclination towards commenting on the historical deviations of the state. Numerous literary works delve into the themes of individual versus state and freedom versus oppression, with dystopia being a notable subset. It is characterized as a society marked by poverty, squalor, or oppression, and authors often explore the reasons behind such conditions. Dystopias tend to exaggerate contemporary societal elements and are commonly interpreted as political warnings. Interestingly, many seemingly utopian narratives unveil dystopian undertones by suppressing justice, freedom, and happiness.

Carey explores the precarious landscape of the USA in a futuristic narrative, aiming to critique an idealized concept of society itself. Acknowledging the imperfections of the state, this perspective sheds light on its functions and responsibilities. The utopian portrayal of the state envisions flawless facilitation, ensuring the harmonious and inclusive coexistence of individuals in an ideal society. Numerous instances attest to the prosperity and harmony within a utopian society, where individuals avoid suffering and poverty.

Plato's concept of the Ideal State, initially designed to categorize freedom based on individual characteristics for strength and self-reliance, later becomes a tool of enslavement. *Eve*, echoing similar sentiments, provides insights into why living under an advanced state is challenging. *Eve*'s narrative allows readers to extrapolate reasons for the present perversion. The Faction-based society in *Eve* mirrors modern advanced states, with new forms of exploitation and torment replacing the old.

Humanity has reached a point where peaceful coexistence in society is elusive, and becoming wanderers is equally challenging. The central theme of *Eve* revolves around a

dystopian perspective on socio-political norms in advanced states. While states supposedly emerge to protect their people, the reality is that this utopian ideal primarily benefits a select segment of society – the powerful. Disparities and inequalities plague the world, with leaders enjoying riches while the hardworking populace faces recessions, hunger, and destruction. Exploiting their vulnerability and wielding state power, rulers make the lives of the dispossessed agonizing.

To caution against misguided policies aiming to subject significant portions of the state to exploitation and repression, Carey portrays a bleak new world. Achieving perfect beauty and harmony for the inhabitants requires a recognition of the principles of equality and co-existence within the state. Roth, in critiquing modern political authority, utilizes the dystopian genre to resonate with various politically motivated critiques of contemporary society (174, *The Dystopian Impulse*). In *Eve*, a dreadful world unfolds as the government governs through oppressive measures, forcing the vulnerable to engage in battles with a heartbreaking objective. The cruel intent of killing innocents in the arena and broadcasting it as a deterrent to prevent potential rebellion is unsustainable for the political system and status quo. This mindset calls for reform.

Our society is navigating through intricate uncertainties and puzzles. Despite significant advancements in the history of human civilization, primitive instincts and stereotypical mindsets persist. While technologies have been developed, their application often exacerbates rather than alleviates the human condition, a phenomenon sharply criticized in *Eve*. The emphasis should be on progress and improving life, rather than posing threats. Though oppression and suppression may silence dissent temporarily, their long-lasting consequences are alarming and disdainful. In light of this, Carey advocates for reforms in the prevailing attitude towards citizens, urging a rise from the ashes of destruction.

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