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ORATORS IN THE REALM OF PANDEMONIUM PLAYING GOD

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ABSTRACT

Once upon a time Sigmund Freud proclaimed that technology was the means by which to push humans beyond the edge of their biological limits, transforming them into ‘a kind of prosthetic’ God. By the time humans began to dominate the world, many animal species had already disappeared because of man’s hunger. This was the first indicator that humans were prone to determine the fate of other species. The wars they fought, massacres they ordered, and extinctions they caused. The center of the world was not large enough, while the center of the universe was occupied by God. Dante Alighieri imagined the planets through their proximity to the Sun as our juxtaposition to God. For humankind, the inability to control themselves was disturbing enough. Zamiatin, in his *We*, created a dystopian world at the edge of Armageddon in which people become the subjects of a long-lasting project that portrays religions as myths. The aim of this study is to display the imaginable cost of playing God through science, which is presumably designed to make life easier, not to replace God.

Keywords: post-human, transhumanism, pantheism, dystopia, science, technology, destruction, God

PANDEMONIUM’DA TANRIYI OYNAYAN VAİZLER

ÖZ

Bir zamanlar Sigmund Freud, teknolojinin, insanları bir tür prostetik tanrı(lar)a dönüştürmek amacıyla, biyolojik limitlerinin ötesine taşıyan bir yol olduğunu açıklamıştı (ki hâlâ öyle). İnsanoğlu dünya üzerinde ikamet etmeye başladığında,

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birçok hayvan türü, insanın açlığından ötürü zaten çoktan yok olmuştu bile. Bu, insanoğlunun başkalarının kaderlerine karar verme eğiliminin ilk işaretiydi. Savaşlar yaptı; katliamlar gerçekleştirdi, nesillerin yok olmasına sebep oldu. Evrenin merkezi tanrı tarafından işgal edilmişken, dünyanın merkezi yeterince büyük değildi insanoğlu için. Dante Alighieri, gezegenleri güneşe olan yakınlıklarıyla hayal etti; tıpkı bizim tanrıyla yan yana duruşumuz gibi. Kendi bedenini kontrol edebilme yetisine sahip olamamak yeterince rahatsız ediciydi zaten insan için. *We* romanında, insanların, dinleri mitler olarak tanımlayan, uzun süreli bir projenin nesneleri haline geldiği, mahşerin kıyısında distopyan bir dünya yarattı Zamiatin. Bu çalışmanın amacı, tanrının yerine geçmekten ziyade, muhtemelen hayatı kolaylaştırmak için tasarlanan bilimi kullanarak tanrıyı oynamanın öngörülebilir bedelini ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: insan üstü, insan ötesi, panteizm, distopya, bilim, teknoloji, destruksiyon, tanrı

INTRODUCTION

History involves rapid changes. It often changes so rapidly that each evolution gives birth to a new social construction, a new moral value and a new change in the balance of power. It is the invention of print, which ends feudalism and launches the Renaissance. It is the crusade, which depolarizes values and beliefs in Europe. It is geographical explorations, which deconstruct indestructible powers. Each exploration conveys more power to humans. Human history indicates that these explorations occur at such a stunning pace that humans, who rely on the power in their hands, do not know what to do and how to cope with that power. The Spanish found themselves with their hands on such an unexpected power at an unexpected time when they encountered the heavenly riches offered through their exploration of America. This exploration offered such massive power and riches that it changed the balance throughout the world. Columbus depicts this surprise, the heavenly gift, in his letter to the queen of Spain:

[It] is exceedingly fertile. It has numerous harbors on all sides, very safe and wide, above comparison with any I have ever seen. Through it flow many very broad and health-giving rivers; and there are in it numerous very lofty mountains. All these island are very beautiful, and of quite different shapes; easy to be traversed, and full of the greatest variety of trees reaching to the stars... (Columbus reports on his first voyage, 1493)

He depicts the inhabitants as unarmed, weaponless and even lacking knowledge of the language of war or conflict, which is why the Indians do not have any signs of war, fighting or scars on their bodies:

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They are very guileless and honest, and very liberal of all they have. No one refuses the asker anything that he possesses; on the contrary they themselves invite us to ask for it. They manifest the greatest affection towards all of us, exchanging valuable things for trifles, content with the very least thing or nothing at all. (Columbus reports on his first voyage, 1493)

Yet, when the Spanish are gifted with that power, the first thing they do is slaughter these inhabitants. Columbus explains the excuse and the valid ground of that slaughter to the queen:

I took possession of all of them for our most fortunate King by making public proclamation and unfurling his standard, no one making any resistance. ... [the natives] might become Christians and inclined to love our King and Queen and Princes and all the people of Spain. (Columbus reports on his first voyage, 1493)

This uncontrollable and limitless power would arouse a change throughout the world, much beyond the perception of the human mind. The power gained by the Spaniards was not only the superior weapon of the soldiers under Hernán Cortés. In fact, their technological superiority caused the Aztecs to lose from the very beginning, no matter how they outnumbered the Spaniards. For the first time, human beings entered a war without being largely dependent on muscle strength, and they proceeded by firing their bullets with “strange steel pipes of strange death”. As soon as technological superiority is achieved, people are inclined to dominate a region. The Pacific Slave Trade has already presented one of the greatest atrocities in human history. It doesn't really matter if we adopt this notorious period of slave trade or the situation of the Spaniards as our starting point and, with these events in mind, make a journey through time. It will not be difficult to imagine how our colonial people might travel to different planets with the multinational space armada instead of the great Spanish Armada, and how they might quickly establish a new slave trade on this so-called planet, with assets descendant from our history. Although it sounds like science fiction, it is almost certain that one day we will actually destroy our world and try to travel to other planets to avoid possible extinction. Because we have been searching for planets that can be colonized for a long time, the possibilities of life on Mars are also calculated. Just as the ‘New World,’ the continent of America, has been invaded by European settlers, other planets may one day share in a similar method of colonization. If we presume that there are other beings on the planet, should they be Christianized? Or should they be Muslims? Or are human beings the new gods when they set foot on the planet? (Williamson, 2009).

Another sample, the exploration of richness and enhancements in Africa, did not culminate in a different end. The explored power transformed the explorer into “the lord” of these lands. Forcible entry and detainment, even slaughter, was lawful for sustainment, and to “serve of the lord”. Years later, nothing changed in the world. The industrial revolution also represents one of these explorations which rapidly change human history and revolutionize the algorithm of power balance. While enriching some, the industrial revolution identified the rest as labors. The change was such that poets, authors and artists strove to depict the agony into which the revolution was transformed. The arts and literature in this era are full of stories of the age: immigrants flooding from the villages into urban areas to be slaves in the factories in the hope of ‘a better’ life; the abuse of child laborers; the abuse of women and the degradation of women’s rights. *Heidi*, by Johanna Spyri, is one of the examples that show the agony of child abuse industrialization gave birth to (the description of ‘a better world’ or ‘a better life’ here has commonalities in discussions of transhumanism and in the novel *We*, which will be discussed later in this study). Through explorations, humans with power improve upon new moral values. To “serve” and protect the “power,” it is lawful to use every means possible. Any land, any human and any child can be sacrificed. Humans were caught off guard in such a way that even today it is not possible for us to eliminate the destructive results of these explorations on a global scale. Long after all of these explorations, the issues of human rights, women’s rights, child protection and ecological struggles cannot be resolved, even today.

In our contemporary age, the explorations and enhancements continue at a significantly rapid pace. During this age, the enhancements are in the field of science and include artificial intelligence, the creation of machines, computing machinery and artificial intelligence, superhuman intelligence, advanced civilizations, the transference of the human mind to a computer, the installation of a brain-implemented computational structure in a powerful supercomputer, the inhabitation of a robot body and existence in virtual reality. The explorations that are occurring today might be real or may occur in the near future. It is crucial here to lay out humans’ tendency to expand the limits of their existence: “We have always sought to expand the boundaries of our existence, be it socially, geographically, or mentally. There is a tendency in at least some individuals always to search for a way around every obstacle and limitation to human life and happiness” (Mitchell cited in Bostrom, 2005, p. 1). The tendency even dates back to the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh (approx. 1700 B.C.), representing a king in search of immortality; the searches of the Elixir of Life in later times; and Chinese Taoism struggling for physical immortality. Modern religions always remind us of death. Human beings strive not to die. In this respect, modern religions and myths meet in a common denominator: the fear of death. We know that in the past, because of the fear of death, people sought immortality through

methods such as magic and alchemy. We know that in the most basic mythological stories, the search for immortality exists, whether the story takes place in the east or the west. We know that Achilles, Helen, Ino, Memnon, Menelaus, and Peleus were degenerated (Øistein, 2009). These were before modern religions, of course. But we know that after modern religions, for example, in *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Sir Galahad was immortalized. Many such examples are possible and interrelated, as “we are accustomed to think of myths as the opposite of science. But in fact they are a central part of it: the part that decides its significance in our lives” (Midgley, 2003, p.1).

Humans seek to transcend the confines in their embodiment, and nature brings them to the point of *hubris*: “Some ambitions are off-limits and will backfire if pursued” (Bostrom, 2005, p. 1). Bostrom summarizes human’s ambitions through scientific and technological innovations that our contemporary age offers, which might be interpreted as the continuation of man’s past godhood:

In the early decades of the 20th century, not only racists and right-wing ideologues but also a number of left-leaning social progressives became concerned about the effects of medicine and social safety nets on the quality of the human gene pool. They believed that modern society enabled many ‘unfit’ individuals to survive —individuals who would in earlier ages have perished— and they worried that this would lead to a deterioration of the human stock. As a result, many countries (including the USA, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Switzerland) implemented state-sponsored eugenics programs, which infringed in various degrees on individual rights. In the United States, between 1907 and 1963 some 64,000 individuals were forcibly sterilized under eugenics laws. The principal victims of the American program were the mentally disabled, but the deaf, the blind, the epileptic, the physically deformed, orphans, and the homeless were also sometimes targeted. But even such widespread compulsory sterilization pales in comparison with the German eugenics program, which resulted in the systematic murder of millions of people regarded as ‘inferior’ by the Nazis. The holocaust left a scar on the human psyche. Determined not to let history repeat itself, most people developed an instinctive revulsion to all ideas appearing to have any kind of association with Nazi ideology. (And yet, it must be remembered, history did repeat itself, e.g. in the Rwandan genocide of 1994, in which the world did nothing but wring its hands as 800,000 Africans were slaughtered). (Bostrom, 2005, p. 6)

The physical and psychological traumas resulting from human's daemonic godhood realm brought the postwar era, which universally opposes the programs of constructing a new and better world through totalitarian utopianism, as seen in the Stalinist tyranny.

However, despite the revolt against 'collectively orchestrated social change', the breathtaking pace of development in science, technology, medicine, artificial intelligence and space deflected its route from war onto a path which offers a better world again. It was Julian Huxley in 1927 who first coined the term transhumanism in religion without revelation. According to Huxley, humans have the capacity to transcend themselves as a species, and transhumanism is a way of accomplishing this. Transhumanism basically refers to the combination of a technologic alchemy, whereby humans use technology to be better by any means. Therefore, it is a merge of biological entity and machine, something we are familiar with from the Star Wars Series' notorious Darth Vader. In that sense, "the transhumanist views the body with its biological frailty as something to be overcome through technology so as to free the mind from embodied limitation" (Fisher, 2015, p. 23). High-tech machine-people that can arise as a result of the merger of humans with machines, and their advancement toward a possible level of immortality, of course leaves many fearful for the future. This is especially true with regard to the theological aspect of human beings' ability to achieve immortality, which will be regarded as a rebellion against God and will lead to the question of the existence of many institutions (Blake C. et al., 2012, pp. 201-280). Here, at this point, the fear of the future, the possible reoccurrence of totalitarian utopianism sparked post humanism and transhumanism in the contemporary age. The fear of the power of the future and its futuristic "promise of a better world" leads philosophers and authors to attract attention based on this fear, and to limit humans' urges through universal ethics and beliefs (Bostrom, 2005, p. 7). At this instant, 'transhumanism' comes to light. Transhumanism is first used by the author of *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley's brother, Julian Huxley, who was:

[...] a distinguished biologist (who was also the first director-general of UNESCO and a founder of the World Wildlife Fund). In *Religion Without Revelation* (1927), he wrote: 'The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself – not just sporadically, an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way – but in its entirety, as humanity. We need a name for this new belief. Perhaps *transhumanism* will serve: man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realizing new possibilities of and for his human nature'. (Huxley quoted in Bostrom, 2005, p. 7)

Bostrom defines transhumanism in an earlier study explaining that it “promotes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating the opportunities for enhancing the human condition and the human organism. ... Transhumanists hope that by responsible use of science, technology, and other rational means we shall eventually manage to become posthuman, beings with vastly greater capacities than present human beings have” (Bostrom, 2004, p. 493). Moreover, “we may favor future people being posthuman rather than human, if the posthuman beings would lead lives more worthwhile than the alternative humans would lead” (Bostrom, 2004, p. 497).

In general, some transhumanists and posthumanists support the concept that developments in science and technology should contribute to nature and human nature rather than threatening them. Annas, Andrews and Isasi warn humanity against the dangers of transhumans and post-humans in the future, and seek to raise consciousness about their powers in the future:

The new species, or ‘posthuman,’ will likely view the old ‘normal’ humans as inferior, even savages, and fit for slavery or slaughter. The normals, on the other hand, may see the posthumans as a threat and if they can, may engage in a preemptive strike by killing the posthumans before they themselves are killed or enslaved by them. It is ultimately this predictable potential for genocide that makes species-altering experiments potential weapons of mass destruction, and makes the unaccountable genetic engineer a potential bioterrorist. (Annas, Andrews, and Isasi 2002 quoted in Bostrom, 2005, p. 25)

Most posthumanists focus on the danger of power that transhumans and post humans will present, and increasingly to human rights, animal rights and ecology, seeking the “‘general systems theory’ of sociologist Niklas Luhmann for a rethinking of the subject–object distinction fundamental to both positivist science and humanist philosophy” (Wolfe 2010 cited in Bolter 2016, p. 4). Moreover, Haraway is also among those who draw attention to the upcoming change. Her posthumanist perspective “does not reject technology as a source for the reconfiguration of the human. With her cyborg, she seeks to maintain the tensions and possibilities of technological mediation that can be productive even at the political level” (Wolfe 2010 cited in Bolter 2016, p. 4).

Let us go back to the beginning. What if the Spanish would have chosen to live in harmony and peace in the newly explored land with the original inhabitants? How would America look like today if the Spanish had made use of the fertility and riches the heavenly land offered together with the inhabitants, who had no knowledge of the language of war or defense,

and who welcomed them with love and friendship? When the gold and diamonds discovered in Africa offered power, would the colonizing countries be poorer today if they had chosen to use the power under the circumstances of globally moral values, for the sake of both themselves and the inhabitants? What would happen today, and how would the world appear today, if the industrial revolution had been realized, protecting human rights, women's rights and children's rights and pursuing globally moral values instead of personal or national ones? With the discovery of the steam engine, the industrial revolution, which has gained momentum, brought with it mass production and the global market. Of course, the global economy has brought the world closer together in terms of trade, if not physically, and thus the revolution initiated by steam engines has spread to almost every field, enabling progress in agriculture, art, science, medicine and many other fields. With the international circulation of money, manufacturers in the UK, France, Russia, America, Germany, China and the like have become major players on a global scale. The resulting large amounts of revenue were allocated to automation and advanced technology to advance achievements and maintain current positions in the market. In this way, almost everything that people do machines began to do. For example, in the construction sector, the automotive sector and even in the medical field, we have now relegated most of the work to machines. The reason for this is that the human workforce is too expensive yet too vulnerable when compared to machines. After all, machines do not go on strike and do not know the meaning of fatigue (Hopkinson, Hague, & Dickens, 2005).

At this point, in our postmodern time, humans are about to face new revolutionary explorations, such as mind uploading (Mind Uploading, 2015) and neural logic in machines (Dong et al., 2019), similar to humans via science and technology. Through these advancements, humans are about to face a new, limitless power. While mind uploading will allow someone to copy himself into a machine without an organic body (or human body), neural logic will make it very difficult to distinguish humans from machines. At this point, with all of these questions in play, science fiction arises. It enables humankind to see the answers. Before the explorations, neither the Indians of America nor the Indians of Africa had a mirror to see what the newcomers, the explorers, would do, when they welcomed them. The villagers who rushed to the cities for 'a better life' did not have a mirror of the future. Yet, today, we have such a mirror. On the eve of scientific and technological explorations that will result in rapid, massive change, expanding the limits of the human body, the world and universe, we can see the possible answers about our future. Science fiction is the mirror that shows humans the possible results of their choices and arouses global consciousness. Humans are able to see what will happen if they destroy the universe for the sake of themselves or reconstruct it for the sake of humanity. In the posthuman age, we are standing in the position of the

Indians in America and Africa. We are in the position of the villagers rushing into the cities for ‘a better life.’ Yet, we have a mirror and are able to see the results of god’s reaction, such as Noah’s Flood or the destruction of the people of Lot, before the big change.

In this section, we will study science fiction in the realm of pandemonium playing god(s), through the power transhumans and posthumans offer in the scientifically and technologically advanced states depicted.

Science Fiction As Orator

In this section, we study science fiction through religion and religious beliefs. This is because it portrays the fact that while humans pursue ‘a better life’ for humanity via explorations, the power they gain positions them in the place of god(s). Humans transform into daemonic gods who urge devotion of sacrifices and submission to their power, as if they were in a Nietzschean parabola¹ of will to power. It depicts some humans who play godhood with that power, and the rest who submit and devote themselves to that power as sacrifices or even who seem to yield to god on the surface until they might be given a real chance to hold any kind of power. This perspective might be held through the notion of godhood and sin in Abrahamic religions and books. In this manner, some might interpret that science fiction does not take its readers to the point of devotion and disbelief. On the contrary, it warns humans not to be a part of that ‘sin.’ It arouses consciousness not to submit to the daemonic power that would bring an apocalyptic destruction, and ‘hell.’ Moreover, it warns of pandemonium by playing god(s) against the danger of such power. And whether or not it is a rumor, it is believed that the RMS Titanic, which people said God couldn’t even sink, was torn apart by an iceberg.

Science offers humankind power, either to destroy in the realm of Armageddon, or reconstruct in harmony and peace in the realm of heaven. Contrary to science, science fiction offers humans just one option, one sole path: it is to challenge all of the socially constructed ‘daemonic powers,’ socially constructed godhood and religion, and norms which destroy human nature and nature. It offers humans the option of using ‘the knowledge’ of science and power for the ‘protection’ of universal ‘harmony,’ including both human nature and nature. Science fiction proposes both utopia and dystopia, which represent cautions for humankind to protect nature and the universe, challenging and revolting against socially constructed power in fear of future scientific and technological enhancements.

In this regard, humans reach their origins and are as pure and fearless as a child in science fiction. They move far beyond the socially

¹ The Nietzschean concept is inspired by Kafka in his writings.

constructed perceptions of religion and power. They move far beyond the socially constructed perceptions of the world and its order. They move far beyond all of the deconstructed and degenerated norms. In fantastic fiction, their minds are pure, and their perceptions are limitless (Tolkien n.d., p. 12), which enables them to see beyond the enforced norms.

The advanced nations and states constructed by these powers propose that humans are nothing more than violence, enslavement, and the notion of captivity of the self. The perception of the human mind, which is free and pure as a child's brain, enables humans to see, think and perceive in an unfiltered manner. Humans' unfiltered perceptions and points of view, and their purified notions may transform them into their origin. Their independence from all social constructions, experiences or teachings may bring them to the point of their origin, their creation. The origin here may bring humans to the starting point of religious perception. In this manner, one might propose that, contrary to common beliefs, science and science fiction bring humans closer to the origin of beliefs of god(s) and religion. As Sammons stated:

[C]ontemporary science fiction is often negative towards religion... However, it is an ideal form to deal with religious themes because it is, by nature, more interested in ideas such as the future of mankind or the ethical implications of science than many other genres. It is thus a natural type of literature to speculate about religion on other planets or in the future. (1988, p. 127; see also Inloes, 2017; Burton, 2018; Bittarello, 2008; Halvorsen, 2017; Degouveia, 2017)

The aim of this study is to display the imaginable cost of playing God through science, which is presumably designed to make life easier, not to replace God. Zamiatin, in his *We*, created a dystopian world at the edge of Armageddon in which people become the subjects of a long-lasting project that portrays religions as myths. The effect of such studies reveals the function of science fiction in the interpretation of ethics, beliefs, godhood and religious beliefs. In this manner, science fiction might be proposed as the exegetics, the interpretation of modern religions, mostly Christianity. This is because science fiction has the characteristics of precautions, similar to religions and holy books. It posits humans in power in the middle of two pathways: heaven or hell. It shows humans what they can do with that power. Science fiction holds the mission of modern prophecy. Kant's and Nietzsche's concerns related to the power humankind gained and its possible destructive results in the world (Kant and Nietzsche quoted in Bostrom, 2005, p. 4), which became true in Hitler's Germany and in Stalin's totalitarian state, or even going back to ancient texts, as seen in Gilgamesh's destiny to Achilles' wrath.

Zamiatin is one of the dystopian writers who displays a fictional world against the totalitarian state of Lenin, Stalin and Soviet Russia. We might consider as a posthumanist and transhumanist critic, as follows:

Zamyatin's [the spelling of Zamyatin here is a direct quotation from the book; however, the name is also spelled Zamiatin, which is cited in the book] state is built, the theory that most men believe their freedom to be more than a fair exchange for a high level of materialistic happiness. It appears, though, that this theory will be put to a final test in the future. If the present rapid rate of technological development continues, both totalitarian and democratic societies will be involved in this test. (Peter Rudy in Zamiatin, 1952, p. IX).

Zamiatin's novel is framed as a prophecy, because it is a precaution against the scientific developments that will bring about a posthuman society. Zamiatin's science fiction affected and will affect the perception of humans regarding the dangers of advanced societies:

When the material wants of the Soviet people are satisfied, will many of them continue to resent regimentation? As we ourselves pursue even higher goals of materialistic happiness, the complexity of our technological society will increase and exert even more intense pressures for efficiency through the regulation of our lives. What decision will we make under those circumstances? Mankind is rushing toward a final proof or refutation of Zamyatin's prophecy. (Peter Rudy in Zamiatin, 1952, p. X)

War of the God(s) Embowered in *We*

It is often proposed that Zamiatin opposes Christianity through his novel *We*, because it includes many critical references to the Holy Bible. Yet, in this study, we propose that Zamiatin depicts his novel through a comparing and contrasting point of view between God in the Holy Bible and the god, the creator of the United State. It is purported that *We* doesn't mean to criticize Christianity, but, rather, to depict the transformation of humans into godhood and their declaration of being a God through their success in reasoning, scientific and technological expansions, which bring them to the age of transhuman and posthuman in a highly advanced state, as Zamiatin calls 'superhuman,' 'superworld' and 'supervision.'

In *We*, humankind opposes the imperfection of the God in Christianity and his imperfect limited system, delineated in the Holy Bible. Humans seek to transcend the confines of their embodiment, and in nature, and to reach perfectness using reasoning and science. This urge enables

humans to create a highly advanced superworld, the United State, and recreate superhumans, expanding their capacities into a transhuman and posthuman notion. In this way, it is now impossible to make mistakes or suffer as “in the ancient” or “primitive times,” which is a reference to Christian society in *We*. The technological advances drive them to the point of *hubris*, a transhumanist term defined as follows: “some ambitions are off-limits and will backfire if pursued” (Bostrom, 2005, p. 1). The advances humans gained, the society humans created, the system humans established, transform them into a so-called God, who is higher than the real God himself, as he is perfect and the creator of perfection.

The creator of the civilized world is the God of Knowledge in *We*. First, humans take the journey in the form of a quest to set them free of the primitive God and religion. Their quest conveys to them reasoning, which is the perfect system for their desires and freedom: “Hence you see how the great power of logic purifies everything it happens to touch”; “this divine power” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 22) gives them the ability to transform themselves into divinity, into a God. In this manner, Zamiatin compares the power of God’s knowledge and the reasoning of man, which namely justifies his declaration of godhood. His declaration of the godhood is the slavish imitation of the God in religions.

One of the comparisons between the God in Christianity and the God of the United State Zamiatin reveals is found in these lines, “Love and Hunger rule the world” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 21), which is also a quote by Schiller (Friedrich Schiller 1795 quoted in Freud 1930), and might be a reference to the Bible:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not from the Father but from the world. The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God remains forever.
(1 John 2: 15-17)

God only allows love for him, but not a worldly love. Humans’ desire and hunger for any worldly felicity is finite, contrary to the love of God, who is infinite. Transhumans oppose that notion in religion; they deconstruct it. Yet, posthumans arrive at the same end and declare war against love and hunger: “[n]aturally, having conquered hunger (that is, algebraically speaking, having achieved the total of bodily welfare), the United State directed its attack against the second ruler of the world, against love” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 21). The posthumans, the Gods of the United State, arrive at the same end as the “ancient primitive sage tells” (Zamiatin, 1952,

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p. 21). The superhumans criticize and object to the God, who later on becomes “He.”

The lines, “It was a solemn liturgy for the United State, a reminiscence of the great days, years, the Two Hundred Years’ War – a magnificent celebration of the victory of *all* over *one*, of the *sum* over the *individual!*” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 44), assert the victory of rationalism and science over religion, and the belief in God. Humans’ knowledge deconstructs God(s) and religion(s); yet, he himself recreates his own religion, and declares himself as the God, the sole God. The new God here is not that different from the “ancient” one(s), as he organizes “a solemn liturgy” in which he expects a sacrifice, and the execution of a dissident takes place during that religious ceremony.

Zamiatin compares the perspectives on wars between the god in the Bible and the God in the state:

The most clement, Christian God himself, who burned all the infidels on a slow fire, is He not an executioner? Was the number of those burned by the Christians less than the number of burned Christians? Yet ... this God was for centuries glorified as the God of love! (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 199)

However, the “Two Hundred Year War” slaughters the earth’s population; “Only about two tenths of the population of the globe did not die out. But how beautifully shining the face of the earth became when it was cleared of its impurities!” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 22). In *We*, humans oppose the savage, the God in the Bible and the people who believe in him, which was fair enough for the civilized, rational ones to slaughter all the Christians to cleanse the “impurities” all over the world. The rational man and his advanced system, including “superhumans” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 45), were all divine, such that his slaughter and war against the primitives were legitimate enough:

It is instead a testament to the imperishable wisdom of man, written in blood. Even at the time when he still was wild and hairy, man knew that real, algebraic love for humanity must inevitably be inhuman, and that the inevitable mark of truth is cruelty-just as the inevitable mark of fire is its property of causing the sensation of burning. Could you show me a fire that would not hurt? (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 199)

The “superhuman of power of the Well-Doer” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 44), the “superior wisdom” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 110), the “Supervision of the Well-Doer” (Zamiatin 1952, p. 76) all are in that perfection, and all the problematic ones, even the God of Christianity, are worthy of being wiped

out. This perspective brings the perfect superhuman to the same point over which he criticizes the God.

The comparison of the godhood by Zamiatin (1952, p. 98) in the 1920s is an upside down reflection of the posthumanist and transhumanist point of view in the 2000s. Nothing changes through time. That is the “fear of the future,” the preoccupation of the philosophers and scientists who reveal that scientific and technological enhancements might enable humankind to gain such uncontrollable and destructive power and might discriminate between societies as humans and transhumans. The power which transforms some into posthuman may claim rights over controlling and slaughtering others on behalf of them, as they will be considered primitive and inferior to posthumans. Individual humans will be “expired as the victim of its own excesses” (Bostrom, 2005, p. 4).

In *We*, to be an “origin” is associated with humans’ undistorted notions, which are primitive and limited in perception and capacity and require enhancements to be civilized. It is imperfection. The origin of humans is also associated with “wild man” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 17), which is a mythological figure in many cultures (Bernheimer, 1979). It symbolizes the origin and pureness of humans. In *We*, if D-503 closes the state of “primitive,” he defines himself with his “furry,” “ape-like hand” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 49); if he settles on the notion of superhuman, he describes an “iron hand,” which is the notion of a dual nature: “There were two selves in me” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 54), as in Dionysus (Atsma, n.d.). The superhuman promises a mechanical perfection, but D-503 reflects imperfectness of the God(s), the imperfection of origin, and the primitive. The human devotes himself to create perfection, and destructs the origin in the process. His creations are “the ideals” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 24); “to be original means to stand out among others; consequently, to be original means to violate the law of equality. What was called in the language of the ancients ‘to be common’ is with us only the fulfilling of one’s duty” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 28). However, nothing is better than its origin; “A few steps more and we will be within reach of our ideal. The ideal” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 24). In *We*, humans’ origin is a challenge against the super God’s authority and throne in the United State. It is an uprising in the state and requires reconstruction: “I never saw dreams before. They say that to see dreams was a common normal thing with the ancients”. Dreams are the signification of human’s origins and are “a serious mental disease” that needs to be recovered (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 31).

Another comparison is the notion of ‘sin’. Every action against the authority and the God of the State is to be sentenced and deserves torture, which is one more slavish imitation of the God(s) in religion(s). Lie is a sin: “I involuntarily told the old woman a lie.” This requires punishment: “Every honest Number ... must immediately go to the office of the Guardians”

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(Zamiatin, 1952, p. 29). “Guardians” here is another comparison Zamiatin makes. “Guardians” are the response to, and reconstruction of, the guardian angels in the Bible. The advanced state needs to create military-like superhumans to protect his system, which is also the notion of apotheosis.

Well-Doer is the creator of the state who best knows what humans need; that is, why he is the sole entity able to make decisions on behalf of humans. Well-Doer, the god, is the sole one who offers humans freedom, eternity and eternal happiness, which is the notion of paradise in religious books. Well-Doer makes decisions to construct this happiness and eternity in the State. Humans are to protect his “perfect” system without their free will (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 109). The ones who rise up against his decisions are condemned to punishment; “[t]his organization aims at liberation from the beneficial yoke of the State. ... Liberation! It is remarkable how persistent human criminal instincts are!” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 34). Posthumans desire more freedom and create a “perfect” world for themselves, independent from all of the enforcements of the religion(s) and the God(s). Well-Doer, the God, promises freedom and eternal happiness for posthumans. However, he also proposes death and enslavement.

The final end they arrive at is not a better world for posthumans, but a slavish imitation of the god, here again:

I use deliberately the word ‘criminal,’ for freedom and crime are as closely related as well, as the movement of an aero and its speed: if the speed of an aero equals zero, the aero is motionless; if human liberty is equal to zero, man does not commit any crime. That is clear. The way to rid man of criminality is to rid him of freedom. (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 34)

The God of the State divests of human free will so as not to commit a sin. However, the god(s) in religion(s) create(s) a world and a system for humans, and deign(s) them free will, which is their freedom. Humans have freedom to enter into their own pathways: either sin or good deeds. Contrary to the God(s), the creator of the new “perfect” world imprisons humans’ free will, and transforms them into a “perfect” “organism,” transhumans, free of mistakes. It is a declaration of godhood, a slavish imitation of god(s): “We were not taught the ‘law’ of ancient religion but the law of the United State” (Zamiatin, 1952, pp. 39-40).

In *We*, the sacrificer’s hands are tied in the ceremony on behalf of the Two Hundred Year War, which is a “symbol of ancient custom... in the old days, when this sort of thing was not done in the name of the United State, the convicted naturally considered that they had the right to resist, hence their hands were usually bound with chains” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 44). The superhuman offers freedom, yet any possible resistance justifies their punishment, as happened to the body of Christ. The superhuman denies

everything that belongs to the God(s) and religion(s) to make life easier, to free humans and offer them eternal happiness; yet, he cannot stop himself from creating the same, which is actually nothing more than replacing God with himself. The religious ceremonies, hymns, crucifix, the guardians, nothing changes, except the one to whom all these are devoted. The superhuman, who takes a journey, promises a “perfect world,” different from the ancient “irrational, ugly world” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 89). Yet, the superhuman proposes nothing more than nothing. Zamiatin humorously reveals the final end of the superhuman’s journey to the “perfect world.” In ancient days “tortures, executions, return to barbarism,” “I pity you!” “You are incapable of philosophical, mathematical thinking.” Fortunately, the superhuman:

[...] moves upward in circles, like an aero. The circles are at times golden, sometimes they are bloody, but all have 360 degrees. They go from 0° to 10°, 20°, 200°, 360° – and then again 0°. Yes, we have returned to zero. But for a mathematically working mind it is obvious that this zero is different: it is a perfectly new zero. We started from zero to the right and came to zero on the left. Hence instead of plus zero we are at minus zero. Do you understand? (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 110)

In the end, the superhuman arrives at nothing more than the point he left; yet, this time it is worse than that; it is minus zero. In the state, humans arrive at the end, where they dispose of themselves with the promise of eternal happiness: “Happiness is when there are no longer any desires, not a single desire anymore” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 171). Zamiatin contrasts the perception of emotions in religions and in the United State: “The thing which was for the ancients a source of innumerable stupid tragedies has been converted in our time into a *harmonious, agreeable, and useful function of the organism*” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 22). The God of the State destroys the emotions of humans and transforms them into a machine, as these emotions are uncontrollable and drive humans into tragedies and revolt. That is why the God of the State has to devour all of the emotions on behalf of humans.

Zamiatin also reveals superhumans’ journey to a better world in the realm of “Prometheus” (1952, p. 45). The superhuman challenges the god and seizes his power to receive humans’ law and advancement. Unfortunately, Prometheus, of this “perfect world,” is different, as he replaces himself with Zeus, accedes in Olympus, and acts as Zeus. He urges submission. He expects sacrifices. The fertility of Zeus’s earth is not for everyone, but, rather, for his servants.

In *We*, comparisons of the biblical references such as Adam, Eve, apple, poison, paradise, hell, serpents, and fallen men are all irrational

problematic creations of the God which promises “happiness without freedom, or freedom without happiness” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 59, 69). The free will god promised to humans is his mistake. It is problematic to set humans free, which might lead him to make mistakes. A circle must be constructed for humans to be imprisoned in and deprived from his power, not to transcend his limits. This is the perfect system, supervision. “No hesitation!” means “No errors!” Everything in the super world works in a system of machinery with no errors. “Their god gave them nothing ... our god gives us absolute truth – that is, he has rid us of any kind of doubt. Their god did not invent anything cleverer than sacrificing oneself, nobody knows what for; we bring to our god, the United State, a quiet, rational, carefully thought-out sacrifice” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 43); the lines portray that rationalism of superhuman objects to religion, as it is irrational, but his rationalism converts into a religion again: “Knowledge, self-confident knowledge, which is sure that it is faultless, is faith” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 57).

In the state, they build an *integral* system to convey their advanced systems to other planets; in the case of any uprising or objection, the advanced superhuman has a right to slaughter the other primitives. In this realm, the power transforms humans into the God(s): “[t]he gods have become like us, *ergo* we have become like gods. And we shall come to you, my unknown readers on another planet, we shall come to you to make your life as godlike, as rational, and as correct as our own” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 66). The superhuman, who has the symptom of humans, is cured in the “Operations Department” to be transformed again into superhuman: “All seemed one: humanized machine and mechanized humans” (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 77, 80). Humans who seek to reach the highest and the most are referred to the realm of Icarus in *We* (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 80) as “the victim of its own excesses” (Bostrom, 2005, p. 4): “Wings are needed in order to fly, but we don’t need to fly anywhere. We have arrived” to the minus zero point (Zamiatin, 1952, p. 86). The desire of man for eternity is connoted in Icarus’s greed. However, the mortal’s world cannot be immortal, or eternal; it has a finality: “I have calculated that there is *no infinity!* Everything is final” (Zamiatin 1952, p. 215).

Humans proclaim their impulse to transcend their biological and emotional limits to reach eternal happiness. However, in *We*, Zamiatin fictionalizes a dystopian futuristic world in the name of prophecy, and the messenger is a precaution to reflect to humans where they will arrive when they take the journey, transcending all curtailment, to expand their humanly capacity and to possess the power. Zamiatin proposes humans in the fictional dystopian world to claim how the power he desires might be destructive and bitter in the veil of eternal happiness, and how it might condemn him to slavery and deprive him from his gifted soul and identity, from his very self.

The power he demands might bring him to the edge of Armageddon, the war of humans against posthumans, which results in the perishment of humans.

Zamiatin's science fiction starts with the opposition against God; yet, the superhuman and the superworld are defeated when the protagonist's child is to be born on the other side of the wall. Humans' subconscious divulges humans' instincts, which bring him to salvation: "I felt: 'Saved'" (1952, p. 142). The world is finite, and everything in it has a finality to it. The godhood powers as well have a final end. One day each power in the world will come to an end.

To summarize, science fiction is the only medium to transcend the curtailment of Zamiatin, who himself is condemned to captivity in a state where humans are restricted in every aspect by 'a kind of prosthetic' God in Russia. It was a time such that the most insurmountable laws and systems surrounded humans. The most draconian enforcements were inflicted upon humans. The realities were upside down. History and beliefs were extinguished. For Zamiatin, science fiction is the only medium to free himself as Daedalus and transcend the unsurmountable walls. In this impossible world, Zamiatin deconstructs the realities of artificiality, irrationality of rationality, the dependency of independency, and the perfection of imperfection, one by one. Here, Zamiatin's science fiction is in the realm of Abraham, who destroys the prosthetic gods of his time.

Well-Doer's torturing punishments, the constructed glass walls that imprison civilized ones, are all justifiable, as the God of the State does not want anyone to destroy the perfect state, and the perfect system he created. He wants all humans in other states and planets to be civilized, as he and his transhumans are, and to enrich their capacity and help them gain the perfection he created. That is why he might be an *executioner* as the God in the ancient book(s) who tortures his sinners in hell. To protect his civilized "perfect" nation and state, he has to burn the imperfect humans who revolt against him and his system.

Socially constructed religions and beliefs are veiled, as they all promise humankind a heavenly life and world, and a heavenly afterlife. Yet, contrary to their promises, some propose a destroyed world and systems, which imprison and enslave individuals. It is difficult for humans to unveil them; however, science fiction frees humankind and their perceptions. Science reveals that human nature and the universe possess pureness and perfectness, which work in an impeccable algorithmic system. In science fiction, humans regain their origin and pureness with a limitless perception of mind, and expand their perceptions to make a clear distinction between daemonic gods and heavenly gods. In this way, they are capable of unveiling the gods and their promises. That is why the protagonists in all utopias, dystopias, science fictions and fantastic challenges and revolts against the

daemonic power, demonic systems and violence act on behalf of humanity and humans. Humans are always in a developing and changing progress within an ever-changing system of the universe and life. That is why humans exist with no end or final word to complete their self-individuation. This notion posits Bakhtin (as cited in Booker, 1994, p. 18) as the objector against the utopian point of view, and the exponent of the dystopian perception, which raised consciousness in humankind to challenge the danger of social and political structures which may destroy human's self and identity.

CONCLUSION

Each exploration creates its own dimension of belief systems and ethical values. The power exploration deigns to human advocates that humankind was prone to play the God or rebel, as in the case of Cain and Abel. The prosthetic Zeus embraces a magic wand and lightens the thunders all around. Some are the God(s) of Olympus, and the rest are his children on earth, desperate for his justice and grace. All the fertility and wealth on earth is now hidden in Zeus's inner conscience. Zeus favors sacrifices rather than the desire to quench humans' thirst, as is the case with all other Zeus(es) throughout history. Olympus is worthy of each sacrifice. Zeus is the posthuman, and the highest.

Science fiction, while describing what we might realize in the near future, inspires people. The first trip to the moon was originally made by Jules Verne, and Neil Armstrong repeated the journey of Verne's dreams. Today, we see what might happen in the near future in productions and TV series such as *Better Than Us* and *Black Mirror*. Science fiction predicts that technology can potentially make people more powerful and enduring than they actually are. Thus, technology can be construed as a possible structure to replace religions. Some postmodern philosophers exhort, and some posthumanists caution on biological enhancements, some on artificial intelligence, or some on economy in the future. However, science fiction cautions on the futuristic effect of the science of universal ethical values, universal justice, human rights and freedom, which are common in religions and nations around the world. The moral values science fiction depicted are far from the manmade perspective of the religious books that led humans into the crusades or terrorism; and are far from the manmade perspective of Christianity and nationality that led humans to slaughter humans in Columbus's America. Science fiction portrays the perspectives of beliefs, religions and ethical values universally common, and to humanity, either in Christianity, in Islam or in other myths or beliefs. Science fiction is the orator in the realm of pandemonium playing god(s).

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