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While many of the societies created in YA Dystopian fiction are clearly dystopian not only in the perception of the readers, but also the characters inhabiting these worlds, many of them - in their self-description – claim the utopian status, so that their failings become at first less apparent. It is in the discovery and realisation of their true nature that the protagonist grows as a person to become an informed and active member of society. The paper will examine the actual functioning of the societal systems themselves both in terms of their expressed principles and the ways of ensuring the system's perpetuation as well as the vision of society as projected by the authorities and the methods employed in sustaining control over the behaviour and beliefs of the populace. Then the focus will shift to the instruments which allow the characters, as well as the readers, to recognise the dystopian nature of the depicted societies. From the first moment of doubt, through the growing awareness, to the final realisation of the true nature of reality and the inability to reconcile it with the official image. The novels to be analysed include Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and Ally Condie's *Matched* – particular attention is paid to the similarities and differences in the points of interest enumerated above.

**Keywords:** Anti-utopia, Young adult dystopian novels, Worldbuilding

## *The Martians*: A Postscript to Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars Trilogy

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Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Martians* is a stylistically diverse collection that includes interwoven short stories and vignettes, the Constitution of Mars (with a commentary), abstracts from *The Journal of Areological Studies* and a series of poems. Towards the end, particularly in “*If Wang Wei Lived on Mars and Other Poems*” and the story “Purple Mars,” the vision of the lives of Frank Chalmers, John Boone, Maya Toitovna and the numerous other characters who populate the Mars trilogy as well as the stories in *The Martians* fades, and the author reflects on his immediate surroundings. “[I]n the / Attempt to imagine Mars I came to see / Earth more clearly than ever before,” he writes in one of the poems. My presentation will focus on this self-reflexive movement in *The Martians* of harmonizing utopian dreamworlds with daily realities, and on the importance of “*If Wang Wei Lived on Mars and Other Poems*” for this journey.

**Keywords:** Twentieth-century utopian literature, Poetry, Kim Stanley Robinson

## In Perfect Harmony - Cylons and Humans in *Battlestar Galactica*

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Ronald D. Moore's reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* TV show depicts an almost eternal cycle of war between good and evil, a war between man-made, ever-evolving creatures and mankind themselves as their original creators. One of the major underlying themes deals with the rise of the creations against their makers, combined with a struggle of religions, one God vs. a several gods religion. A battle of supremacy, man vs. machine, which in the end cannot be won. A cycle which restarts again and again and which needs to be broken to end the dystopian hell of recurring war and destruction.

Revelations of unity lead to a rough harmony between Cylons and Humans. Only a few in the beginning but determined to break the cycle and realizing one cannot be without the other, Ying and Yang, opposites working together to reach a unified utopia.

This presentation will closely analyze the various stages of this harmony and how it became to be. Also, we will be looking at factors which made it possible to break an endless cycle and to finally break free and thus fulfilling the promise of a utopian life, not separated but together as equals.

**Keywords:** Military Science Fiction, From Dystopia to Utopia, Man and Machine.

## The Commodification of Space Utopia in Pop Music: From David Bowie to Elton John

Pere Gallardo-Torrano  
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First published in paperback form in 1951, Arthur C. Clarke's novel *Prelude to Space*, describes the preparations for the first manned expedition to the Moon. Written before the Apollo program, Clarke's novel follows the lines of hard SF and takes great pains to make the idea solid, viable and desirable. Despite the grandiosity of the project, the novel fails to convey a sense of adventure, perhaps because the plot is almost non-existent. Clarke himself admitted in the Preface to the 1976 edition that his approach was not altogether disinterested, as he belonged to a select group of scientists who defended the viability of space travel much before JFK launched his campaign to conquer space, in 1962. Although it lacks the cheerfulness and optimism of the TV series *Star Trek* (1966), it does share elements which are reminiscent of American culture (i.e. the frontier of space [JFK, sic]). JFK's speech at Rice University on September 12, 1962 laid claims for a new epic that linked the future of the United States to outer space. This might have been in response to the fact that the Soviet satellite Sputnik had already demonstrated in 1957 that the United States was not alone in that enterprise. In time, space became a roller-coaster of images that triggered emotions. The Moon was reached on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1969. Between 1969 and 1972, six manned missions landed on the Moon, thus spreading the idea that space was not only *at* hand, but also *in* our hands. After 1973, the manned space race slowed down noticeably given the enormous cost, the difficulty of coming to terms with the defeat in Vietnam and the impending First Oil Crisis.

Pop and rock music, as part of popular culture, noticed from the early moments of the space race the potential of its themes. Thanks to TV and other media, space became another commodity to be exploited by the consumer society, and little by little, the respect and awe of the early times turned into matter-of-factness and boredom. In other words, the same socio-political system that helped develop a universal sense of admiration contributed towards erasing part of the glamour and epic of the enterprise. This presentation will focus on two songs which tackle the subject precisely from these two angles, namely, "Space Oddity" by David Bowie and "Rocket Man" by Elton John: the first one from 1969, and the second one from 1972, precisely two landmarks in the American space race.

**Keywords:** Space epic, Pop music, Commodification of space

## Zero Competition (OC) Utopian System

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The purpose of this study is to identify appropriate policies, systems and a progress indicator to harmonise our planet by eradicating poverty, economic instability (boom and bust cycles), war and corruption.

This research covered:

- 1) a study of global transformation and the universal laws of energy
- 2) the underlying causes of poverty, economic instability, war and corruption
- 3) progress indicators (and the effective use of GDP in global capitalism)
- 4) person-centred education (facilitation)
- 5) information systems and database technology

This study concludes that a transparent 'person-centred' system (such as the *Zero Competition (OC) System*) should replace our competitive culture to achieve global harmony. The OC System applies sophisticated science and technology in a cashless society. In a world without competition, everyone supports each other to achieve their potential harmoniously. The foundations of the OC System are a perfect information system and a system which matches individuals' needs with available resources. This system recognizes that everyone has unique needs depending on their genetic code, abilities and passions.

Everyone has access to the comprehensive online database of global resources. Each resource is objectively specified, indexed, bar-coded and linked to a worldwide inventory system. The concept of possession replaces legal ownership so all resources belong to the collective. Every person has a 'digital wallet' which is credited with their necessary resources (including HR) to live well and achieve their potential.

In a highly automated society part-time volunteering replaces paid employment because robots perform most productive tasks. The OC System operates in a world without national borders. The new global progress indicator measures global harmony instead of consumption. Everyone contributes to the *Global Harmony Index* (GHI) via proportional representation. Once the OC System is operational there will be optimal use of resources, minimal pollution and waste, so everyone can live in harmony with the natural environment.

**Keywords:** person-centred, cashless, zero-competition (OC)

## Ecotopianism: Unearthing the Utopian Roots of Environmental Ethics

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The aim of this paper is to re-connect environmental ethics with its utopian roots through my methodical conception of ecotopianism. According to this conception, ecotopianism is utopian thinking with regard to the relationship between human societies and their physical environment. In other words, ecotopian thinking imagines alternative social ecologies. Ecotopian thinking in an emphatic sense does so in search of new harmonies with nature. The connection from utopianism to environmental ethics is achieved, *inter alia*, through the design perspective: One of the central factors that shape the ecological interactions of a society is its value system. Therefore, to imagine a full-fledged ecological utopia, or ecotopia, in the emphatic sense, one also needs to develop a functionally adequate value system for the alternative social order – an (ecological) ethic. This train of thought, though not necessarily expressed in utopian language, is commonly presupposed by early texts of environmental ethics from the 1960s and 70s, embedding the budding philosophical subdiscipline in a larger programme of deep social reform. Subsequent professionalisation of the field, however, shifted the focus to theoretical issues in moral philosophy. To re-connect from environmental ethics back to utopianism, I exploit the utopian element in pragmatic ethics and the recent rise of pragmatism in environmental ethics. My resulting conception of pragmatic ecotopianism accesses value-based utopian thinking as a method in environmental ethics, offering an alternative mode of philosophical engagement with environmental issues. It also makes visible how utopian thinking, though largely unrecognised, pervades the contemporary environmental discourse.

**Keywords:** Ecological utopias, Utopia as method, Environmental ethics