
Creative Writing Piece: The Gifts of Freedom

Plan: Australians turning into fashion victims (conformity, dissociation with nature), a real political tyrant rises up and subdues Australians (think Hitler), dystopian Australia created (eg Oceania in 1984), invading other neighbouring countries (Hitler's Lebensraum, war/conflict). The short story will be a cross between 1984 (constant war, obvious dystopia) and Brave New World (conformity), told from a high-ranking dissident's (rebel's) viewpoint.

The year is now 2050. Upon the pan-continental country that is Terra Nova, or merely three decades prior, Australia, a new order was established by the True Blue Party, lead by the Freedom Giver. Not that we have the freedom to choose who governs us. He bestowed upon us the freedom to be attractive, the freedom to belong and the freedom to dump our hatred into our neighbours, all of which form pillars of contemporary Terra Novian values. But these freedoms are all but apparitions the Freedom Giver conjured up to deceive Australians into voting him in power. Apparitions that we must dispel. The Ascension to Integration, as official Newspeak refers to the day we received these "liberties", was the day the Freedom Giver took power and renamed Australia to Terra Nova. It was also the day that Australians, as a society, sold our identities.

Everyone was transformed into drones that consume for the sake of satisfying their vanity, ronins who lost their sanctuary of belonging and jingoistic militants. Those who actively resisted "thought reformation" were exiled to correctional labour camps in the Outback, where they dropped like flies in the scathing 40°C sun. There was another freedom that was "gifted" to Australians by the Freedom Giver, the freedom of safety, the freedom to believe that nothing will ever go wrong. This, unfortunately, came at the cost of all our other freedoms, the True Blue Party has propaganda pumping telescreens that dual function as surveillance cameras installed in everyone's homes to observe any signs of dissidence. Not to mention the Freedom Giver's numerous eyes and ears dispersed around the country. Remember, trust no one, as these treacherous emissaries constantly pull false flag operations in order to root us out. Details of our clandestine activities should be provided on a need to know basis.

Our pioneer Emmanuel Goldstein, taught us how to wage a campaign against authoritarianism. We fight the strongmen, not by guns, but by information, for the pen is mightier than the sword. Terra Nova cannot be toppled in a single coup, just like Rome wasn't built in a day. Only five dozen years ago, half a dozen countries dominated by the presence of an immense red shadow, broke free of their crimson yokes. The people knew the risks, challenging the world's second most powerful nation, but they stood up, united, enlightened each other. We don't even know if Goldstein is breathing, for officially he is an "unperson". No records of him now exist, all his documentations were sent to memory holes. But his plans will remain with us.

So how did Australia descend into dystopia? Well, it all started with our attraction to the lives of others. From a young age we were conditioned through sleep mantras, or hypnopaedia, to adore and admire celebrities we could never match in terms of charisma. In short, we conform with their definition of beauty, we can no longer be beautiful in our own way, not in everyone else's way. Innately, we are attracted to the charismatic via curiosity, and this was reinforced in social conditioning. This inadvertently paved way to unwavering loyalty to the Freedom Giver. The media, which presided over our daily incoming and outgoing information, constantly nags us for not being as "adequate" as celebrities. What purpose did this reminder serve? Just so fashion companies can bilk people of their hard-earned money by creating the problem, vanity, that they offer to solve?

We pursued fashion because we sought for a place to belong in society, but in doing so we lost our real place of belonging, nature. Australia, once renowned for its remarkable natural beauty, flourishing with flora and fauna, on the seaside or deep in the Outback, is now rendered a miserable wasteland that is Terra Nova as its population became detached and dissociated from nature in favour of superficial pursuits. As we lose connection with our place of belonging and as we feel that we are not valid enough, we become insecure of ourselves. We lose hope. Tyrants are known to prey on our loss of hope, for hope is the only good quality that escaped from Pandora's Box that keeps humanity alive and kicking in spite of the other abominations released. And so, the Freedom Giver arose.

Every Machiavellian knows that in order to keep his subjects docile and avoid uprisings, tyrants must distract their people. There is no better way to distract than waging a constant war, for war is fuelled by hate, and hate can cloud everyone's sense of judgement, judgement on the government's misdeeds. Hell, war keeps the economy going! According to True Blue Party ideologies, "Terra Novians, are the supreme race in the Asia-Pacific". We were conditioned to be proud of this dogma, and do whatever it takes to ensure our race's survival, even at the expense of our peaceful neighbours. It became our instinct. Our hatred led us to annex New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, and there is an ongoing Cold War with China, who is wary of our expansionism. The Australia that I knew from my childhood wasn't like this. We were rated the top ten most peaceful countries in the 2010's, and now we are a nation of flag-waving, murderous psychopaths! The Freedom Giver probably condemned Australians to centuries of infamy from the outside world. Parallels to a certain madman a century ago, who brainwashed a peaceful people and nearly conquered Europe, could certainly be drawn.

While the circumstances do appear bleak, we still have hope. We should resist not by challenging his status quo directly, but by chipping away at authoritarianism, by enlightening the people. Send this societal dissection to every citizen by plane drop, in all major cities. We shall return Australia's rightful name, as that is our true national identity, beyond the facade of consumerism, apathy and ultra-nationalism the Freedom Giver created with his goons. Most of all, we, as Australians, must learn from our past. We cannot afford having another dictator take the current one's place after our tremendous sacrifices made to dethrone him.

Creative Writing- Reflective Analysis

Purpose of the piece: The main purpose of "Gifts of Freedom" is to caution the readers, composed of eligible Australian voters, about the dangers of pursuing superficiality and conformity in exchange for assimilation (dubbed "Integration" in the in-universe Newspeak). They were cautioned against embracing populist leaders cropping up around the world in the present day such as Donald Trump, Pauline Hanson and Vladimir Putin, and "The Gifts of Freedom" portray such jingoistic and nationalistic leaders in negative light. The audience is also reminded to not give up our innate connection to nature in the process of earning social acceptance because tyrants can rise up and "subdue us (the common people) like slaves" by manipulating our perceptions on the authentic, as well as twisting our values when we are deprived of our place of belonging.

Structural, stylistic or thematic aspects from the original text: The targeted audience, as in Leunig's writings, could be considered both as the more politically-enlightened elites, as well as the less politically aware average citizen. The average citizen must not adopt an apathetic attitude towards politics, for they hold the majority of votes, votes which could potentially usher in a tyrant if they are misused. The necessity keeping populist and mildly authoritarian leaders that have taken power in Central Europe and the United States in check was highlighted, for the tyrant and his party took advantage of our misguided perception of "True Blue" identities. Intertextual references to

dystopian texts “1984” and “Brave New World” were used extensively as inspiration for living conditions under the terror of authoritarianism, such as “telescreens” and “hypnopaedia” for state-sponsored brainwashing. A highly sarcastic and satirical tone was maintained throughout the piece, referring to the tyrant. Explanations were given on how “Australia descends into dystopia”, identified as our dissociation with nature as well as overt obsession with “lives of others”, ie fashion, socially engineered by the government of Terra Nova in order to render the population docile. What was real and authentic was swamped out by the artificial. The tyrant's dogma, “Thou shalt be attractive”, is quite visible. Leunig challenges the “average Joe” to get out of their comfort zones and embrace nature as our inner sanctum, for it is nature which gives us hope, hope to “dethrone” the tyrants. Hope was seen as an elusive luxury for the people of Terra Nova, and the warning to “trust no one” signifies the usage of an unreliable narrator. The letter itself could potentially be interpreted as a possible false-flag operation staged by the unscrupulous government, furthering the suspense and adding ambiguity to the narrative of Terra Nova's timeline as one devoid of hope and trust. Deliberately non-explicit allusions to oppressive regimes that existed in real life such as Nazi Germany (“a certain madman a century ago”) and the Soviet Union (“immense red shadow...crimson yoke”) were included as a veiled threat to the history-orientated/history-conscious members of the audience. They can associate blind pursuit of conformity with the numerous atrocities committed by these regimes and become wary of

Message of the piece: The message delivered would be for contemporary Australian “everyman” to reflect on our ideas of our pursuits and values. In modern context as of 2017, we should always remain vigilant regarding semi-authoritarian regimes cropping up around the world, lest they turn the countries they rule into Terra Nova, brainwashing the people, wrecking nature and propagating hatred.

Strengths and weaknesses: Although the main idea and themes (authoritarianism) was established very quickly and more or less sustained throughout the piece, it proved difficult to extend the ideas and make connections/transitions to all of Leunig's themes (consumerism, superficiality, nature and hope, in order of appearance).