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OH, WHAT A TANGLED WEB THEY WEAVE

Kim Lehman & Ian Fillis

Breaking news: Thomas More and John Stuart Mill threaten legal action as utopia and dystopia are used and abused in television marketing messages.

MARKETING THINK

We are going back to basics here. This is not because we are doubtful that the reader will understand our treatise. Rather, we seek to set out a basic framework, or logic even, that provides some insight into the practical, real world, outcomes when advertising, promotions and marketing professionals must go forth into the world and produce stunning television advertising campaigns that will tick ROI boxes while winning awards for creative cleverness. At the point when these newly minted professionals conjure their first strategy to capture the hearts and minds of the consumer one would expect they had a thorough understanding of the links between symbols and cues found in the societal landscape and the actual behaviour of consumers. To be fair, they probably will develop at least a working knowledge quite quickly (otherwise they will be fired), but one coloured firstly by the textbooks that they skimmed at university, all saying the same thing, and secondly by the lack of imagination fostered by the herd mentality within the marketing industry. Once ensconced in that domain they will witness the gratuitous use of the symbols and meanings from great civilisations to sell frequently inane goods and services to keep our late-capitalist machine running.¹ Here they will also encounter, and squeeze the juices out of, the focus group and wonder why anyone takes any notice of the participants who emphatically decide red is the best colour for the new packaging

despite the fact they are clearly arrogant and hate the product, and the client thinks they are morons.²

In this climate quite a number of big ticket intellectual and philosophical concepts have been, and will be, reduced to a note in the client brief beside the one that says that in Jungian thought red is the colour of blood, passion and emotion, while in Masonic symbolism it means intelligence, discipline and glory.³ There is nowhere higher to go, metaphorically speaking, than involving a world religion in your marketing communications strategy. For example, who would have thought that you could use all of the world's religious deities to sell Australian lamb? It turns out you cannot. Clearly, someone in the advertising agency did not reflect on the wisdom of placing assorted deities and spiritual leaders⁴, including those representing vegetarian religions, around a banquet table extolling the virtues of eating a baby/pre-pubescent sheep.⁵ Or indeed the wisdom of simultaneously insulting all of the world's religions in one way or another with injudicious 'table talk'. Keeping to our deity theme, and perhaps more understandable and less controversial, is Arnold Schwarzenegger as Zeus spruiking the electric BMW iX in a 2022 Superbowl commercial.⁶ The electric vehicle thing sort of links to Zeus being the sky and thunder/lightening god. However, Arnold Schwarzenegger is not very Zeus-like, being surprisingly short of stature, and somehow not being very 'commanding'. But he is a celebrity.

In some ways, though, celestial beings are low hanging fruit for marketers, providing they keep clear of any religion that will either do them bodily harm, or might sue for defamation. (For example, we advise keeping away from Scientology, who are rather litigious apparently.⁷) But our concern here is not so much a theology with a

figurehead an/or quirky characters to represent the brand in some useful marketing kind of way. We are interested in an intellectual concept that has allowed marketers, advertisers and corporations to present an idealised future for consumers which seems possible rather than imagined. In other words, a concept that has been the recipient of a ‘marketing think’ makeover, and has ended up looking like the lead in the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band song ‘Look Out There’s a Monster Coming’⁸. And as a consequence, is in danger of becoming meaningless. We are talking, of course, about utopia.

CONSTRUCTING PLEASANTVILLE

The term ‘utopia’ was coined by Thomas More in his book of the same name. First published in Latin in 1516, *Utopia* describes an island community in the Atlantic ocean with a proposed ideal style of government. While the notion of an ideal government or society has been around the global thinkers traps for some time—Plato’s *The Republic* being an obvious example—More’s utopia is the one that seems to have made an impression on the intellectual and literary milieu and come out the other end as a genuine, world-shaping almost-philosophy⁹ The bottom line: a utopia is a community or society possessing highly desirable or perfect qualities. The possibility that one might be able to create such a community or society has certainly been lurking around the minds of politicians of all persuasions over the years, predominately as the *raison d’être* for all sorts of whacky policies claimed to be for the betterment of all. Modern times have seen notions of utopia more associated with socialism, communism and the left generally¹⁰, and, ironically, has consequently been used by their political opponents as a means of delegitimising their position.¹¹

Despite the turmoil found amongst competing political platforms, or perhaps because of it, the nature of utopia has been, and still is, of great interest to thinkers. The

Utopian Studies Society frames their interest thus:

Utopian thinking is a necessary, often compulsive, human pursuit. Rooted in the capacity to dream, the quest for a utopia encourages one to re-invent reality and question the soundness and steadfastness of what surrounds us.¹²

Of course, while thinkers are more likely to take a purely theoretical and philosophical interest in utopia, academic research can successfully straddle theory and the real world. For instance, Kozinets¹³ examined utopia from a subculture of consumption perspective, drawing insight from Star Trek fandom resources and interviews in identifying what he calls a powerful utopian refuge, grounded in consumer religiosity and construction of the self. Firmly embedded in the real world is Maclaran and Brown's ethnographic study of a shopping center in Dublin.¹⁴ They opine that the sweeping social utopias of the past have given way to customer-level 'practices and cultural forms—daydreams, myths, fairy stories, fine art, film, theater, and television programs like *Survivor*.'¹⁵

But in many ways, utopia's most noticeable societal impact has been as a driver of narrative in the arts, appearing as the core trope in all sorts of output. According to Podoshen *et al.*¹⁶, Jameson¹⁷ considered that all entertainment products, looking to appeal to their market, had 'to have an iron in the utopian fire'. But the use of utopia as a theme predates our modern conception of popular entertainment. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (first published in 1726); William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (published in serial form commencing in January 1890); H. G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (published in 1905); and Aldous Huxley's *Island* (published in 1962), to choose examples that span the centuries. Clearly, these are but a small sample from

literary fiction, with more contemporary creative outputs in speculative fiction and fantasy writing seemingly growing exponentially. In the film world, in H.G. Wells's *Things to Come* (premiering in the United Kingdom in 1936) a century long future is imagined where global destruction occurs, followed by a rebuilding of civilisation, but with tinges of darkness. Similarly, Wells' *The Time Machine* (versions in 1960 and 2002) tells the story of his failed search in a time machine for a utopian future, finding dystopia instead. *Winstanley* (released in 1975) documented the 17th-century group of Gerrard Winstanley followers in their attempts to create an idealist farming community as a form of collective agriculture. *Gandahar* (released in 1987) involves a mixture of eugenics, time travel, death and utopia in constructing an ideal world. *Tomorrowland* (released in 2015) portrays the collective memorised search for an enigmatic place which exists somewhere in time and space. Again, this is only a cursory glance across utopia's oeuvre to make our point. Nonetheless, there is a theme of sorts relevant to us.

With more than a little irony sprinkled about, utopia more often than not appears as the 'happy' side of the coin, the obverse being dystopia. Calling on our pantheon of deities and world religions for illustration: the Christian religions have their Garden of Eden, with its utopian, bucolic innocence. But transgress, and all dystopian Hell breaks loose, or everybody just moves to the real world to live. Okay, we could be accused of being somewhat flippant. But it makes intuitive sense. Afterall, how can we lust after utopia is if we cannot visualize dystopia, or perhaps even have experienced it in some way? The English philosopher John Stuart Mill used the term 'dystopia' in an 1868 parliamentary speech denouncing the English government's Irish land policy, apparently inspired by Thomas More's concept of utopia. He used it

as an antonym for utopia, but the relationship between utopia and dystopia has become much more nuanced over the years. There is now a blurring, with utopian and dystopian worlds sharing considerable commonality. Both states of being involve a collective sense of an extreme, from the utopian idyll to widespread suffering and injustice. Both utopias and dystopias are usually set in the future, which can then be used to comment on the present. Both usually involve the technology of the day being used to create the 'perfect' or 'imperfect' living conditions required for the narrative to hand.

But we are still talking about creative outputs, where plot devices, obtuse symbols and allusions to other great works abound. In the real world of the marketer the rather straightforward good versus bad, utopia versus dystopia dichotomy is the simplest road to travel, and thus the most prevalent in marketing messages. To be fair to the marketing gurus, there just isn't the space in a 30 second television commercial to develop plotlines and investigate the continuum between good and bad, and back again¹⁵. And that is not a marketer's job. (More about that later.)

As it happens, and drawing on the Latin, utopia literally means 'no place', but that detail has never hindered any creative use of the concept in the modern marketing world. Quite the reverse in fact. Marketers need the consumer to recognise the world they are dramatising. Utopias in advertising are presented as attainable. As has been suggested by James Fitchett: 'we look at consumption and consumer culture as the space where we can realize our utopian hopes and dreams'¹⁸. Taking a multidisciplinary perspective, where dystopia and dystopic tendencies are assessed against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, Fitchett¹⁹ notes how utopia can be

viewed as a selfish and bland state while dystopia can be viewed as much more attractive and desirable from a consumption perspective. We agree. Clearly, many consumers are drawn to a full-colour world, with all its dystopian faults and flaws, and not so interested in living in a bland, grayscale utopian Pleasantville!

THE MARKETING IS THE MESSAGE

So, let us begin with the Marketing 101 proposition that at the heart of marketing is a mutually satisfactory exchange between a buyer and a seller. There are numerous permutations here of course. Clearly, though, straight forward financial exchanges between consumer and producer are passé. Courtesy of Kotler and Levy's 'Broadening the Concept of Marketing' essay²⁰, all sorts of non-financial products, services and experiences have fallen under the spell of the marketing professional. National parks, art galleries, religions, political parties, to name but a few appearing in academic marketing journals. However, that is the preamble, as the important point for us is that a successful communication process between a buyer and a seller is required for the mutually satisfactory exchange to even get off the ground. This is a key aspect of a marketer's job.

Then, as part of a successful communication process marketers use symbols to create messages and convey meanings.²¹ A question: What do long, winding roads threading their way through snow-capped peaks signify to the punter? Picture a sleek, designer car on that road. (Perhaps not an electric vehicle (EV), as you do not want to remind consumers that you cannot really go too far before you need to plug it in.) Well, they see freedom, the open road, just taking off into the wild blue yonder not constrained by 'the man'. That might be a little dramatic, but you get the idea. So, these symbols

are intended to evoke a certain meaning in prospective buyers, who transfer that meaning to products.²² Whatever the non-EV car was on the long and winding road, it is now imbued with the exhilaration of living in a constraint-free world. But, why? Obviously enough, it is because the communications marketplace is crowded, and consumers and companies alike need (and want) to be noticed. In a marketing context these symbols then elicit meaning for the receiver, an internal response to a perceived external stimulus. There are certainly shades of Pavlov here. The business world considers this ‘a good thing’.²³ But the cynical amongst us might suggest that this cuts to the proverbial heart of all that is wrong with marketing. They say: ‘We need to press the button on the consumer that lines up the synapses and makes a direct link between brain, hand and wallet’. We say: ‘You Machiavellian marketing types are just manipulating humans to buy products they do not need with money they do not have so you can drive the latest EV SUV, not on a mountain road to nowhere, but around the corner for a latte’.

However, before marketers can pepper the television advert with symbolic bits and pieces, they need to decide how they will frame their message. And the choice of manipulatory contrivances to do the job are numerous! We have already annoyed the reader with considerable introductory level marketing theory, so we will avoid listing the possibilities and just note a few standouts. The most famous is the ‘unique selling proposition’. (We know it is famous because it has an acronym, which we will not use.) The unique selling proposition has brands focusing on what is distinctive about their offering. The online graphic design platform Canva springs to mind.²⁴ Its tagline ‘Empowering the world to design’ makes a bold claim given the meaning of the work ‘empower’—once you buy Canva, you, the global consumer, will be stronger, more

confident and better able to take control of your designs needs. If Canva were then to directly compare that proposition to their competitor's, we could call the framing of this message 'positioning'. Others, like 'fear', 'humour', and 'call to action' frequently get a run, as does 'signalling'. 'Buy our flash EV and signal to your peers your environmental bone fides'. While all these, and more, can feature in advertising campaigns, it is 'storytelling' that has the ability to immerse the consumer in the recognisable world of the product.

Storytelling is 'a thing' in marketing.²⁵ Here, however, we are using the term to describe advertising messages with a traditional narrative structure, literally a story that has a start, middle and end.²⁶ Picture this:

We open with a farmer toiling in a field (could be on a tractor, could be walking), they lean down and look with pride and not a little wonder at the potato they just unearthed. Then we see a clean, shiny, branded truck unloading potatoes at a supermarket. Cut to a smiling family cook doing something magical with potatoes which are then presented to the adoring masses at the table.

All that can easily happen in a 30 second television commercial. Storytelling marketing messages, then, attempt to make the product more compelling, and more relatable and/or interesting, by making it the star of a micro-story. The story can still include humour, fear, calls to action, and other means of framing the message, but, importantly, all that must take place inside the story. From our perspective, with this style of communication marketing and the message are as one.

THE TANGLED WEB

In the previous sections we have given shape to the theoretical landscape, both in respect to concepts of utopia and dystopia and to the means by which astute marketers

deliver messages to consumers that press their socio-economic, psychographic and cultural buttons. That done, we can now consider the real-world outcomes after the aforementioned professionals ‘go forth into the world and produce stunning advertising campaigns that will tick ROI boxes while winning awards for their creative cleverness’. As you will have noticed, we are quoting our own words from earlier in our treatise. That is because they are good words presented in the right order, resulting in a pithy comment alluding to an important point. While the tension between the ‘suits’ and the ‘creatives’ is perhaps only real in a marketing textbook, our words do speak to a simple, bottom-line equation: how creative can marketers be while keeping within budget and meeting various performance metrics. The sky is not the limit.

Thus, while the notion of utopia moves around depending on the current whims of society²⁷, the types and number of utopias that can be communicated by marketing professionals is another matter entirely. That said, hand an advertising agency a Super Bowl gig and watch them rack up the celebrity and tech/CGI bills! We only need to refer back to Arnold Schwarzenegger’s appearance as Zeus in a 2022 Super Bowl commercial for BMW for an example. Still, while we agree that not every agency is going to have a Super Bowl budget to play with, such advertisements do illustrate our thinking. For this reason, we did not exclude them when we started our viewing of television advertisements from around the world, which brings us to a caveat of sorts. In some respects, our gathering of data to support our thinking lacked the academic robustness desired by our more earnest colleagues. However, as experienced consumers, avid watchers of television and with a nice, solid background in our chosen research field we feel comfortable with the framework our ruminations have

suggested. To our way of thinking, there are three clear styles of marketing message in the output of our newly minted advertising, promotions and marketing professionals are now working at the coalface of marketing that is television advertising. We now elucidate.

A. For instant utopia, buy our product

Our first style of marketing message is where the television advertisement provides the consumer with a view of utopia, highlighting the euphoria that will doubtless be felt when the product or service is experienced by the consumer. The world inside the advertisement is depicted as a place of contentment where the consumer's 'problems' are solved by astute business folk fulfilling dreams. Some product types have no difficulty at all in presenting their brand's attributes as the utopia you have always dreamt of, for example, holiday travel. TUI UK's advert (Figure 1) is constructed around a number of vignettes starring various consumer market segments, blissfully engaging in the activities to be found in their chosen utopia. Of course, this is not a political and social utopia that aligns with More's definitions, but it is a marketer's utopia, where characters can think utopian thoughts that feed into their consumer dreams. Louis Vuitton frequently places celebrity endorsers in utopian locations where they can wander about with their luggage. One of the 'Spirit of Travel' series advertisements (Figure 2) has USA actress Emma Stone alternatively posing and contemplating her handbag and her surroundings. It is the mood of this story that drives the utopian connection, rather than the landscape, which is sweeping, but rather dry. But who says utopias have to be green and verdant? Well, Yardley London does. In a series of television advertisements for the Hindi speaking market, they are definitely reference gushing niceness and maybe even the Christian Garden of Eden.

Our Yardley example (Figure 3) even has some colourful, animated flora to decorate their consumer utopia of cleanliness. Interestingly, in the ‘For instant utopia, buy our product’ style of marketing message, dystopia does not actually need to be seen.

Figure 1 (View advertisement [here](#))

Figure 2 (View advertisement [here](#))

Figure 3 (View advertisement [here](#))

B. Our products love a good dystopia

Our second style of marketing message is those where the storytelling draws on a very dystopian world right from the start. That is, a dystopian world or a dystopian future can act as counterpoint to bring the promised utopia into sharp relief to reinforce a product’s desirability. Utopia means nothing if the consumer cannot visualize dystopia, which is thus clearly articulated. In addition, this dystopia is something the product enjoys, a place in which it can really show off its stuff, or if you are an advertising executive speaking to a client, ‘highlight its key brand attributes’. Not surprisingly, the marketers of certain types of motor vehicles—definitely not EVs—love this idea. Witness the Chevrolet Silverado Super Bowl 2012 advertisement (Figure 4). Clearly, the ‘other’ brand of light truck—one of the characters in this advert names Ford as the competitor—will fail to get you through the apocalypse. There is some sort of key brand attribute link to an apocalyptic landscape as the backdrop for a vaguely rugged four-wheel drive vehicle. The same

cannot be said for the television advertisement for the Dodge Charger (Figure 5), essentially, a four-door sedan with ‘sports’ variants. Still, this vehicle survives through armed conflicts and insurrections. It has big windows through which heroic figures can enter and exit. But dystopia does not have to be so life-and-death. Somewhat more prosaically, cleaning products operate at a household level of dystopia, where the karma of a perfect home has been disturbed by unruly children defacing walls or nasty bacteria contaminating kitchen surfaces. Proctor & Gamble’s Mr Clean brand (Figure 6) takes an unusual approach to its presentation of a post-product utopia, with a CGI man romancing a glum housewife who has just stained her shiny white stovetop. By comparison to the previous style, where dystopia does not need to appear, in the ‘Our products love a good dystopia’ style of marketing message it is utopia that does not necessarily even need to be seen.

Figure 4 (View advertisement [here](#))

Figure 5 (View advertisement [here](#))

Figure 6 (View advertisement [here](#))

C. Utopia/dystopia as a plot device

Our third and final style of message is where the notion of utopia/dystopia acts as plot device. In a general sense, a plot device is used to move a story forward.²⁸ In the case of storytelling marketing messages, dystopia can act as the precursor to a more ideal state that could be achieved if the consumer only purchased the appropriate product.

Recently, ‘tech’ brands seem particularly susceptible to the lure of the utopian light at the end of the dystopian tunnel.²⁹ Perhaps this is not surprising given the significance of Apple’s ‘1984’ television advert that introduced the Apple Macintosh personal computer.³⁰ Commentators have waxed lyrical about this advertisement, which heavily referenced Orwell’s novel and was filled with dystopian symbolism directed at the IBM Corporation that cast Apple’s product in the rainbow hues of utopia. But ‘1984’ is not a recent example of the style. Maybe not, but it is memorable enough for Motorola to ‘riff off the idea’ nearly 20 years later with their ‘The tablet for all of us’ advertisement, this time including a love story of sorts (Figure 7). And there you have it! The dystopian commute and drone-like workers are just a setting for the romance, usefully facilitated by, but not really starring, the tablet. Taking the more obvious ‘dystopia is bad’, ‘utopia is good’ route, Woolmark have framed their argument to the consumer to use natural fibres rather than synthetic by having models firstly swim in a dystopian oil-filled pool (Figure 8). They then emerge to remove their black oily garments and frolic in utopian, natural landscapes with sweeping vistas and babbling brooks. Similarly, Guinness presents the viewer with a bleak and unsettling urban dystopian landscape that sets us up for the joys of the harmonious and cosy pub we step inside in order to share a pint with friends (Figure 9). The world outside brightens up after that, and we finish with the tagline ‘There’s more life in the dark’. It seems, then, in the ‘Utopia/dystopia as a plot device’ style of marketing message utopia and dystopia are frequently both seen. The key difference between this style of marketing message and our previous two is that there is rarely a utopia without a dystopia, and there is not necessarily any direct connection to either state or the actual product.

Across all three of our marketing messages styles, communicating a sense of utopia cuts through the ‘unsureness’ in television advertising by creating a seemingly safe and achievable branded future aimed at helping to sell products. The inherent symbols and meaning makes this appear even more achievable. However, utopian dreams can be flawed as can be seen in the interpretations of our examples. Plus, there are risks involved in the selection of utopian celebrities and taboo topics (take note Lamb Australia). Marketers seek to imbue a cloak-like (un)creative governance over their viewers in ‘describing’ a world vacillating between good and bad. Not surprisingly, an achievable utopia as a refuge is particularly attractive to consumers in today’s global marketplace, marked by conflict and war, turbulent oil and gas prices and cataclysmic climate-events. And marketers assure us that there will be a bright future, as long as we follow their advice and make wise consumer decisions! What is the result of all this marketing planning and strategising? Well, the resultant marketing messages offer us a tangled web of storylines and narrative structures packed with visions of utopia and dystopia, but sometimes devoid of one or the other.

Figure 7 (View advertisement [here](#))

Figure 8 (View advertisement [here](#))

Figure 9 (View advertisement [here](#))

THE END GAME

Television advertising using utopian and dystopian worlds often draws from the arts, particularly the literary world, resplendent in iconic representations of both the achievable and unachievable. Perhaps the dystopian alternative is what thrill seeking consumers love in today's post pandemic future, free from command and control directives. As we have highlighted above, fully evolved narratives cannot be presented in a 30 second slot. However, the brief timespan available for utopian and dystopian storytelling within a television advertisement plot (to use the word loosely) can still be enough to communicate a believable future state of mind and being. And we all dream and sometimes even attempt to understand their contents.

Nonetheless, and regardless of the nature of the product or brand, utopias are created and used by marketers to present an ideal world within their communication, with a view to achieving some sort of corporate strategy goal. To our way of thinking, then, the big ticket intellectual and philosophical concept that is utopia has been bastardised and turned into some sort of out-of-control marketing monster. But let's not pull wool over anyone's eyes. It is all about persuading a consumer to do what is required of them, be that to donate time or money, to visit, stay longer, or purchase two instead of one. In other words, it is about whatever the objective of the marketing communication might be. Within that process, utopia has been molded and manipulated as a tool to sell pretty well anything.

In the business world the endgame is market domination, and one route to that nirvana is the calculated use of television marketing messages. Is that bad thing? Are consumers being deceived by the tangled web marketers weave along the way? It is not our job to debate that prickly conundrum. Similarly, while we have cast

aspersions on the skill set of ‘fresh’ marketing graduates and the professional marketing fraternity more broadly, we are not here to offer counsel on that matter either. The aims of our treatise were simple. We sought to present a typology of marketing message styles of sorts, and to provide some insight into the world consumers see on their television screens. And so, it only remains for us to suggest that while utopia and its evil twin dystopia together form a world-shaping almost-philosophy, apparently with value to humanity (to guide, to illuminate, to pontificate on), it has been fed into the high-powered juicer that is marketing, and thus been used and abused. Whether that has made the concept meaningless is a question for the thinkers of the world to cogitate. We are just marketing academics and at least partially responsible for the mess utopia is in.

NOTES

1. We are well aware of the swirling political waters around the term 'late-capitalism'. We take a simple view, concisely discussed by Lowrey, 'Why the phrase'.
2. Featherstone speaks here about why everyone, not just marketers and their clients, appear to hate focus groups, but continue to use them to guide decision-making.
3. 'Colour', *Dictionary of Symbols*.
4. Some of the identifiable deities and spiritual leaders appearing in this 2017 advertisement are: Jesus Christ, Zeus, Aphrodite, Moses, Ganesha, L. Ron Hubbard, Odin and Obe-Wan Kenobi. It can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWvKUzyqLDA>
5. The definition of what constitutes a 'lamb' is regulated. Here is Australia's regulations: <https://sheepproducers.com.au/lamb-definition/>
6. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=On4M6CagtGc>
7. Mind you, it is hard to see the marketing angle in utilizing their supreme being as the central character in any advert: the evil Galactic Confederacy ruler Xenu, responsible for banishing the first humans to Earth 75 million years ago. Wikipedia has an interesting article on Xenu: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xenu>
8. Written by Vivian Stanshall, this song could be the anthem for corporations that endlessly aim for the utopia of a fully satisfied customer and end up with a monster. The lyrics are available from: <https://genius.com/Bonzo-dog-doo-dah-band-look-out-theres-a-monster-coming-lyrics>
9. Hodgkinson, 'How Utopia shaped'.
10. Kozinets, 'YouTube utopianism'.
11. Levitas, 'Looking for the blue'.
12. Utopian Studies Society, 'The intellectual impulse'.
13. Kozinets, 'Utopian enterprise'.
14. Maclaran and Brown, 'The center cannot'.
15. *ibid*, 321.
16. Podoshen et al., 'Theoretical reflections'.
17. Jameson, 'Reification and utopia'.
18. In film, there is time to go there and back. Dickinson suggests that the films *Pleasantville* (1998), *American Beauty* (2000), *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Far from Heaven* (2002), and *The Truman Show* (1998) 'offer audiences escapes from the boredom of suburban life but return the audience to that very same suburb, the same relationships' (228), but transformed by their newfound understanding of utopia versus dystopia.
19. Bradshaw, Fitchett and Hietanen, 'Dystopia and quarantined', 520.
20. *ibid*.
21. Kotler and Levy, 'Broadening the concept'.
22. Belk, 'Qualitative Research'.
23. Bruce et al., 'Communicating brands'.
24. Ceruto, 'The psychological concept'.
25. Canva home page: <https://www.canva.com>
26. We have chosen just a few sources we consider interesting: Brown and Patterson, 'Selling stories'; Júnior, *et al.*, 'A story'; Stern, 'Classical and vignette'.

27. Of course, in a literary sense, there are other narrative styles writers use to tell a story, the discontinuous or nonlinear narrative, and stream of consciousness, being just two examples. But again, and with respect to the consumer, a 30 second television advert is not the place for intellectual adventures.
28. Atanasova, 'Re-examining utopia'.
29. Anyone interested in literary plotting will find this book rewarding: Belknap, *Plots*.
30. Watercutter, 'Tech companies'.
31. The Apple '1984' advert can be found here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtvjbmoDx-I>

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