The Idea Of Dystopia In Our Society

The dictionary defines a dystopia as “an imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.” However, many futuristic novels and movies present a dystopian society as one that lives effortlessly, showing that the world will never be perfect, even if it may seem so. A society whose citizens are kept ignorant and lazy, unknowing that they are being controlled, all hidden under the illusion of a perfect utopian society, has become more of a reality today than it ever was in history. Dystopian societies are often portrayed as only a fictional possibility, however, this may not be the case in the near future.

The 21st century has brought many technological advancements that have benefited society in many ways. These new technologies are costing the people more than just money. People are paying a high loss of privacy when using certain technological devices. Jim Hightower, an author for Creators.com is very worried about what the new technological age will mean for privacy. In his article, “Watch Out -- the Drones Are Coming Home to Roost,” Jim Hightower warns of the dangers that an increased number of domestic drones will have on American privacy in an effort to urge the reader to take action against the U.S. government’s unmanned domestic drone policy that Hightower claims is being used to spy on U.S. citizens domestically. Domestic drones are not the only concern Hightower is worried about, he also expresses the possibility that these drones will become just one of many weapons used against American citizens in order to keep them in control. Hightower comments, “We are on a fast track to becoming a society under routine, pervasive surveillance.” Hightower introduces the idea that we are already seeing a form of control, which can only get worse if allowed, and will end with a dystopia.

With such advancements in technology, social media platforms have also grown among society. Society has the need to share their thoughts and feelings with the world on a platform that makes it possible. What the people don’t realize is the lack of privacy that comes with using social media. In the article titled, “How many 'likes' does it take to build a dystopia? We're about to find out,” author Jeramie D. Scott director of the EPIC Domestic Surveillance Project, explains the many ways social media platforms violate basic privacy rights. Scotts makes it clear that peoples privacy is a lost by stating, “Everything you click on, everything you like, every picture you view, every Facebook profile you visit, every person that is your Facebook friend, and on and on becomes data to be collected, stored, and analyzed. Even the people you meet offline can be tracked by Facebook.” It is frightening that even when someone is offline, they can be watched. This sort of insight into people’s lives is only one step away from what can be a dystopia where everyone is watched.

Besides the privacy violation that social media brings, there is also the effect of what happens when they are on social media and how this leads to a dystopia. In the article titled “America the Dystopia?” by Jean Card, she presents the idea of dystopia in our society. The first idea Card presents to the reader is, “Big government and big media are dominating American society and suffocating free speech. Who will rise up?”. Card explains the way the government and the media have taken steps to inhibit truly free speech. She defines the term “political correctness” and talks of how many American citizens feel “muzzled” by the negative criticism

that is brought on when expressing themselves on social media. This, she states, is due to the way the centralized media has been grooming the culture. She mentions the extreme acceptance of diversity brought on by social media that it almost feels forced. Even though social media is supposed to be a platform in which people can express themselves, it has become so twisted in the sense that a person can get attacked for sharing thoughts that contradict everyone else's. This has created a form of dystopia within social media, in which people are scared to express their freedom of speech.

With a rapid change in climate, the world is closer to a dystopian future. In Ralph J. Dolan's article "Dystopia has already arrived in America," he talks about the many reason's dystopia has already unfolded in America. He states in his article "Dystopia has already arrived. The coral reefs are dying. The bees are disappearing. Microplastics, mercury, pharmaceuticals and other toxins are invading the food supply." This statement clearly opens up the idea that climate change is one of the many characteristics of a dystopia that has already presented itself in our society.

Even though many people want to believe a Utopia is possible, society has made it clear that a utopia would only be a masked dystopia. In a TEDEd video entitled "How to Recognize a Dystopia," it is explained how a dystopian society was first introduced to the world. It is stated that many dystopian novels were based off real life situations dating back towards WWII. The video also states that in order to achieve a perfect world or society, one must picture what it takes to achieve that perfection. It takes rules and regulations, it takes people to enforce the rules, and people to follow them. It is a chain of events that is needed in order to achieve a "perfect society," otherwise known as a utopia. Which leads to the point that a utopia is only achievable through a dystopia, in which people live under the illusion that they are living in a perfect world.

There are, of course, those who say society is only improving, and for all we know, that could be correct. However, it seems more likely that society is headed toward a far more terrible dystopia. With advancements in technology, a growing social media platform, and rapid climate change, American society is setting itself up for a dystopian future. Even if it's efforts aim towards a Utopian government, it will still most likely only achieve the illusion of a Utopian government.