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**“EACH ONE OF US GOES THROUGH LIFE
INSIDE A BOTTLE”**: A Reading of *Brave New
World* in the Light of Zygmunt Bauman’s Theory

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**“EACH ONE OF US GOES THROUGH LIFE
INSIDE A BOTTLE”**: A Reading of *Brave New
World* in the Light of Zygmunt Bauman’s Theory

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In the Light of Zygmunt Bauman’s Theory

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“All is lost sold your soul to this brave new world”

Iron Maiden in Brave New World Album

Thank you,

Kathrin H. Lerrer Rosenfield for enlightening this obtuse mind of mine.

Sandra Maggio for your support when I thought I would not make it.

My beloved wife for all the times you understood me when I was traveling through my own brave new world.

Professors who devoted some of your time to read and assess my work.

Aldous Huxley for your company through these two years.

Zygmunt Bauman, whose ideas allowed this to germinate.

RESUMO

Esta dissertação propõe uma leitura do romance *Admirável Mundo Novo* (1932) de Aldous Huxley sob a luz dos conceitos de Zygmunt Bauman da Modernidade Líquida. A narrativa ocorre em uma Londres futurística no século 26, no ano 2540 de nossa Era Comum, ou – na narrativa no ano 632 AF (Após Ford). Subjacente ao cenário distópico de avanço tecnológico e organização altamente desenvolvida, porém, os temas discutidos no romance remetem à circunstância do tempo e lugar de sua produção, o início dos anos 1930, em um contexto de desenvolvimento industrial, tensão política e crise econômica. Nesta pesquisa, eu busco a resposta para a seguinte pergunta: “De quais maneiras a ficção de Huxley antecipa o tipo de sociedade seus leitores vivem no tempo presente, três-quartos de século após sua publicação? Com ajuda das teorias do Professor Zygmunt Bauman, eu construo minha interpretação das metáforas encontradas no romance, que prognosticam as atuais condições de capitalismo de mercado livre, consumismo, obsolescência programada que determinam a ética, a estética e a forma de pensar de nosso tempo presente. As hipóteses de Bauman concernem a liquidez do mundo atual, no qual nada deve durar muito. Esta premissa gera um grande número de consequências, tais como: fragilidade dos laços humanos, pensamento crítico superficial e supremacia dos contatos virtuais sobre o contato de fato entre as pessoas. A dissertação está dividida em quatro capítulos. No primeiro, eu contextualizo o conceito de distopia. No segundo, eu trago a contextualização necessária sobre o tempo, a obra e o autor. No terceiro, eu introduzo os conceitos de Bauman sobre modernidade sólida e líquida e os conecto com o estudo de *Admirável Mundo Novo*. No capítulo IV, apresento minha leitura da obra. Ao final da pesquisa, espero encontrar respostas para a questão proposta estabelecendo inter-relações entre os aspectos ficcionais do romance e os traços sociais de nosso tempo atual.

Palavras-chave: 1. Aldous Huxley. 2. *Admirável mundo novo*. 3. Zygmunt Bauman. 4. Crítica literária. 5. Literatura distópica.

ABSTRACT

The present thesis proposes a reading of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) in the light of Zygmunt Bauman's concept of Liquid Modernity. The plot of the novel unfolds in the futuristic London of the 26th century, in the year 2540 of our Common Era, or – in the narrative – in the year 632 AF (After Ford). Underlying the dystopian scenario of technological advancement and highly developed organization, however, the themes discussed in the novel actually address the circumstances of the time and place of its own production, the beginning of the 1930's, in a context of developing industrialization, political tension, and economic crises. In this research, I pursue the answer to the following question: "In what ways does Huxley's fiction anticipate the kind of society its readers would be living in at our present time, three quarters of a century after its publication?" With the help of Professor Zygmunt Bauman's theories, I build my interpretation of the metaphors found in the novel, that prognosticate the current conditions of free-market capitalism, consumerism, programmed obsolescence, that determine the ethics, the aesthetics and the ways of thinking of our present times. Bauman's assumptions concern the liquidity of the contemporary world, where nothing is meant to last long. This premise generates a number of consequences such as overconsumption, frail human bonds, superficial critical thought, and supremacy of online over factual contacts among people. The thesis is devised in three chapters. In the first, I contextualize the concept of dystopia. In the second, I bring the necessary contextualization about the time, the work and the author. In the third, I introduce Bauman's concepts of solid modernity and liquid modernity and connect them with the study of *Brave New World*. Finally. In Chapter IV, I present my reading of the novel. At the end of the research, I expect to find the answers to the posed question by establishing critical interrelations between the fictional aspects of the novel and the social features ongoing in our present time.

Key words: 1. Aldous Huxley. 2. *Brave New World*. 3. Zygmunt Bauman. 4. Literary Criticism. 5. Dystopian Literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Since I am not truly altruistic I wish to begin this introduction with an account regarding my own life story, which I believe to be the actual inception of this project. A long time ago in my remote childhood, I came across a book that would change my mindset for life. The book in question is called *Marcelo, Marmelo, Martelo* (ROCHA, 1976), which narrates the story of a little boy who questions the names of every object he encounters. He drives his parents insane with his seemingly senseless interrogations. Unable to answer his questions plausibly, his parents prefer to focus on the absurdity of his questions and forsake the boy's questionings. After reading this story, I have had countless questions to which I have never been able to find answers.

Although I did not learn the term dystopia until some years ago during my undergraduate course, I have always been interested in this genre that brings a narrative about a future that has gone awry. I recall first watching the movie *Terminator: Judgement Day* (1991) when I was only nine years old and when Sarah Connor dreams of watching some kids in a playground, what seems to be a nuclear bomb goes off. I remember being horrified and questioning myself: "what if". At some point later in the movie, there is a scene of a battle between humans and machines and once again, I was scared that, somehow, that could really happen. After *Terminator*, came *Mad Max*, *Matrix* and other countless dystopian movies that shaped my interest in this genre.

Not until a short time ago did I read *Brave New World* (2007). I first came into contact with Huxley's best-known novel towards the end of my undergraduate course. I must confess the novel did not strike me as the best book ever written. However, it set me thinking about a number of issues that pervade the time in which I live. Moreover, I could not help but to believe that Huxley was attempting to warn his readership of the dangers originated from the model of society he saw arising in the early 1930's. In many ways, some of Huxley's concerns seem to have been fulfilled. While reading *Brave New World* (2007), I came across the following passage written by Ezra Pound (1987):

Artists are the antennae of the race. (...) A graver issue needs biological analogy: artists are the antennae; an animal that neglects the warnings of its perception needs very great powers of resistance if it is to survive. Your finer senses are protected, the eye by bone socket, etc. A nation which neglects the perceptions of its artists declines. After a while it ceases to act, and merely survives. There is probably no use in telling this to people who can't see it without being told.

Artists and poets undoubtedly get excited and “over-excited” about things long before the general public. Before deciding whether a man is a fool or a good artist, it would be well to ask, not only “is he excited unduly?”, but: “does he see something we don’t?” Is his curious behavior due to his feeling an oncoming earthquake, or smelling a forest fire which we do not yet feel or smell? (p. 82-83)

It seems to me that this is the case of Huxley. Although, his novel was written in 1931 and published the following year, his concerns seem to be anticipating some of the issues we can witness today such as overconsumption, deterioration of human relationships, instant obsolescence, individualization, chemical happiness among others. Margaret Atwood poses similar questions

Meanwhile, those of us still pottering along on the earthly plane- and thus still able to read books-are left with *Brave New World*. How does it stand up, seventy-five years later? And how close have we come, in real life to the society of vapid consumers, idle pleasure-seekers, inner-space trippers, and programmed conformists that it presents? (2007, p. XV)

This capacity to develop critical reflection seems to me to be one of the most important elements in a work of literature. By providing another viewpoint other than our own, literature appears to give readers a new pair of eyes through which we can see the world. By magnifying what he saw in his time, Huxley seems to have been able to make his novel timeless. *Brave New World* (2007) is a novel that has not lost its significance despite the eighty-four years elapsed since its publication until today. Furthermore, its significance appears to be ever increasing as technology, medicine, biology and other areas develop at vertiginous speed. Harold Bloom (2004) seems to agree with this timelessness of *Brave New World*

Each decade brings its technological advances, and these advances inexorably alter the social fabric of the world. Perhaps his guesses were simply lucky, but Huxley’s Utopia seems closer every day. This ability of *Brave New World* to become more relevant as time passes accounts for its continual popularity, both as a period piece and as an ever-modern novel.

The reading of *Brave New World* (2007) triggered within me a curiosity to understand in more depth the interweaving between the fictional world created by Huxley and the world that we live in. This question shall guide this study. I will attempt to present critically the interface between the world of *Brave New World* (2007) and our modern world. Margaret

Atwood seems to agree on the relevance of the analysis of *Brave New World*. In the introduction to the 2007 edition of Huxley's novel

Surely it's time to look again at *Brave New World* and to examine its arguments for and against the totally planned society it describes, in which everybody is happy now. What sort of happiness is on offer, and what is the price we might pay to achieve it? (p. VIII)

In this context, I have decided that studying Aldous Huxley's (2007) *Brave New World*, one of the most prominent literary works in the field of dystopia, could be relevant to grasp the changes we have been experiencing. One may see several similarities between the world built by Huxley and the one built by us. Quoting Italo Calvino (apud ZANINI, 2007, p. 6): "A classic is a book that has not finished saying what it has to say". Therefore, analyzing *Brave New World* seems to be relevant to promote knowledge.

Approximately, at the same time of my reading of *Brave New World* (2007), I had been reading some of Zygmunt Bauman's writings. As my undergraduate end-of-course monograph concerned fear, I read a book written by Bauman (2006) entitled *Liquid Fear*. In this book, Bauman discusses a number of pertinent issues to what he refers to as "liquid modernity".

Liquid Modernity may be Bauman's best-known concept. According to Bauman, towards the second half of the 20th century, our social array has been going through a liquefaction process. This process affects all aspects of life. Nothing is supposed to be permanent. People and things are supposed to be discarded as quickly as they are acquired. Opposed to our liquid times, Bauman defines the early part of the 20th century as a time when safety was people's major concern. Institutions, governments, control mechanisms had to be strong and powerful for a sense of security in detriment to freedom. However, as the 20th century unfolded, the major desire was no longer for security; rather, there was a craving for more freedom. This need for more freedom shifted the pendulum to its opposite end. This shift has led to a dismantling of what used to be solid. Governments, institutions, relationships, identities have been liquefied to "make" freedom.

Concerning the relevance of this study, it is important to discuss various works of dystopian literature because the world seems to be going through a radical transition. With the rise of technology, changes in cultural settings, the consolidation of new forms of relationships, social networks, the decline of the concept of privacy as we used to know it, devouring capitalism, untamable globalization, and life has dramatically changed and

individuals seem to be still trying to find a new order of things. In this current social setting, a new revival of dystopian art can be witnessed. A new wave of zombies of all sorts, vampires, gloomy futures, catastrophes comprise a considerable percentage of literary and cinematographic industry.

One of the roles of an academic study is to produce knowledge that may be applied outside the academia. One of the primary intents of this study is to bring about a critical discussion concerning the world we live in. We are going through a historical moment when it all seems to be completely unpredictable. What we used to believe in seems to be falling apart. Old beliefs are longer applicable. Only by understanding the present, we will be able to put together the pieces of the future. Portraying the future is exactly what dystopian literary works do. All dystopian art deals with a gloomy and terrifying future and their foundations seem to be rooted in a gloomy and terrifying present. Orwell's (2009) *1984*, *Blade Runner* (BLADE ..., 1991), *The Matrix* (1999), H.G Well's (2012) *Time Machine* (2012) and others transfer to the future their disappointments about their time.

Brave New World (2007) does that magnificently by showing a dystopian future controlled by an authoritarian yet invisible government, where consumerism is the key to prosperity, individuals are no longer capable of any in-depth thinking, relationships are shallow, privacy is extinct, people are segregated and on goes the story. Does it ring a bell?

This thesis will comprise the analysis of the social elements presented in Huxley's *Brave New World* in the light of the theory proposed by Bauman. Some of the topics to be analyzed shall be the way society is structured, its economic engine, and the arrangement of geographical space, how interpersonal relations unfold, among other relevant issues present in the novel. Moreover, these issues will be addressed in relation to the liquid modern world, on which Bauman debates at length. In this study, we shall use solid modernity to refer to the period *Brave New World* was written. The period of time this study is being written we shall refer to as liquid modernity in order to be consonant with the nomenclature used by Bauman in his works.

In order to introduce this study, in chapter one some ideas regarding the history of utopia and dystopia shall be presented. Firstly, we shall look at some early utopian writings, such as the biblical *Book of Genesis* and its Garden of Eden. Moreover, we shall briefly look

at Plato's attempt to devise his ideal society in *The Republic*. Afterwards, Tomas More's *Utopia* shall be approached because sources seem to agree that More was the one who first coined the neologism utopia. After that, we shall take a leap in time to the end of the 19th century and early 20th century. In this time frame we shall look at the second dystopian turn, a stretch of time that was prolific in the production of dystopian literature. We shall try to understand why this period was particularly relevant for dystopias and how the historical period intertwines with literature.

In the second chapter of this thesis, we shall finally direct our gaze to Aldous Huxley and his novel *Brave New World*. The first lines of this chapter two will present an outline on Aldous Huxley. Afterwards, there will be a brief summary of the novel in order to get readership more acquainted with it. After that, there will be an analysis of the period in which *Brave New World* was written. It seems that the analysis of the 1930's conjuncture is fundamental to understand the tone of the novel. Still in the second chapter, some ideas on Totalitarianism will be presented because they shall help to understand the totalitarian world created by Huxley. This analysis of Totalitarianism shall rely mostly on the paramount work of Hannah Arendt called *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

In chapter number 3, there shall be a presentation on some of the major ideas of Zygmunt Bauman. Firstly, we will look at Bauman's notion of Modern Liquidity. Moreover, some ideas on the society of consumers shall be offered. Further into in the third chapter, a few lines shall be written regarding the fear of strangers and the discarded individuals of this liquid world. Some of Bauman's books to be used in this close reading shall be *Liquid Surveillance* (2013), *Liquid Love* (2003), *44 Letters from the Liquid Modern World* (2010), *Globalization: Human consequences* (1999), *Liquid Modernity* (2000) among others.

Chapter number four will be devoted to my analysis of the novel and its relations to the liquid modern world discussed by Bauman. We shall try to answer some of the questions presented in the beginning section of this study. We shall look at how *Brave New World* goes beyond its period of solid Modernity and anticipate some elements that are noticeable in this liquid stage of Modernity. We shall discuss some of the major elements present in *Brave New World* and try to relate to the major elements of our liquid modern world. Although, the primary theoretical reference shall be Bauman's work, this analysis may rely on other works to be mentioned in the references.

It seems that the world has been going through severe changes at a vertiginous speed. However, we do not seem to be going anywhere. Four days prior to my writing these lines, Paris was under attack and a great number of individuals were brutally murdered. France and its allies strike back at a faceless enemy. In Brazil, the breach of a dam in the State of Minas Gerais caused a mudslide to devastate cities, kill people and irreparably damage the region's ecosystem. Notwithstanding, these events shall be quickly discarded from memory due to the overwhelming amount of information presented to us every second. How can we screen through so much senseless information we are exposed to daily? (Bauman, 2007). Some caring people posted "pray for Paris" on their social networks timelines. Others show their concern with the situation in Brazil by posting a photo of a muddy dog being rescued. Yet, a few days later, all this must be forgotten because something more important is bound to happen. A new technology device will be launched and newscasts around the world will show people rushing to stores to purchase it, because in a society of consumers, the rule is: I consume therefore I am. Who shall feel uneasy about the plights of the world when they can acquire the latest model of smartphones? As Bauman (2005) says: "Satisfied consumers, busy looking after their own interests are doing splendidly well..."¹. In a society of consumers, discarding is as important as the acquiring. Therefore, nothing should last long.

When consuming and banalities or social networks do not relief your concerns, one may always resort to some soothing medication. According to *Super Interessante* magazine, 2.1 tons of Rivotril were consumed in Brazil alone in 2010. Ironically, in *Brave New World* (2007), a small portion of Soma can easily achieve this erasing of concerns. Nobody should be forced to reflect for too long. Take your daily portion of Soma and "go on a holiday". (Huxley, 2007). When one returns from one's holiday, Paris or Minas Gerais will have been forgotten and our happy liquid life of consumers shall follow its course.

These questions seem to have triggered my desire to develop this master's thesis. Despite the time elapsed between the publication of *Brave New World* and the writing of this thesis, it seems to me that the novel may help to discuss some pertinent issues of our modern liquid world.

¹ My translation

From my point of view, the importance of a novel may be told for its capacity to arise critical questions in the mind of readership. In this brief study, some of these questions shall be presented and discussed and the theory of Zygmunt Bauman shall help to understand how the work of Huxley intertwines with our brave new liquid modern world.

1 Dystopia – Setting the basis

This chapter is intended to delineate some questions related to dystopian literature. Firstly, in order to understand better the central theme of this section we shall briefly analyze its counterpart: utopia. By means of introduction, we shall briefly look at the roots of utopia and its controversial usages along time. Afterwards, the great spread of dystopian literature at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, shall be the main the focus. Some aspects of the social conjuncture of the turn of the century will be studied. A few social elements will be raised in order to grasp the influence of social settings to literature and vice and versa. Some characteristics of narrative in dystopian novels will be discussed. Other works to be mentioned here are *The Time Machine* (2012), and *The Matrix* (1999) and *Fahrenheit 451* (2012). Many other examples could be shown, however, due to the space constraints, these have been chosen.

1.1 On Utopia

Dreams of perfect worlds have haunted human minds since the beginning of times. A world free from hunger, unhappiness, and plights have been a recurrent desire of human beings since primordial ages. A world where everyone could live happily ever after. A world of unshakable placid state, where all would be provided effortlessly. From biblical times, such worlds have been created in order to satisfy this human unattainable craving. The book of Genesis, one of the best-known examples of ideal worlds was written because of such craving:

1:26 And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

1:27 So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

1:29 And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.

1:30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has breath of life, I have given every green plant for food', and it was so.

1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, indeed it was very good. And then there was evening and there was morning on the sixth day.²

The creation of the world by God in the book of Genesis comprises well the human longing for the perfect life. A life of plenty, in which all creation would serve humankind, the cornerstone of creation. A life of endless idleness, pleasure and contemplation devoid of any suffering or pain. Restlessness would not torment the perfect godly creation. Therefore, the Garden of Eden also seems to be an example of utopia, although at times it may not be named as such. In biblical ideals, humanity should live in eternal peace provided they could comply with the only rule established by their almighty God, which is never eat from the tree of sin. God is the utmost ruler who would provide to his people as long as they lived in civil obedience and never tried to be gods themselves. This utopian placid life would be only possible through the utmost obedience on the part of humankind. The biblical ubiquitous God should be solely worshipped and his ruling should be respected so that the Garden of Eden could be eternal.

Curiously, this biblical God plays the same role as Ford in *Brave New World* (2007), the Big Brother in *1984* (2003) among other centralizing figures in both utopian and dystopian literature. These figures tend to portray a supposedly benevolent ruler who can provide it all as long as individuals show absolute subservience.

Though lacking the magic of the biblical writings displayed above, Plato's *Republic* is another attempt to devise a perfect society that would be guided by sheer reason.

In Plato's society, individuals would be ranked in three casts determined by the characteristics of their souls. The ruling cast would be the statesmen, formed by philosophers, the bastions of reason. They should guide society because they are the holders of reason and wisdom. The general civilian population, who are characterized by their

² Available at <<http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/book.php?book=Genesis&chapter=1&verse=26&t=1>> Access on 09/18/2015

appetite, would be responsible for providing material goods for subsistence, should comprise the second class. The third class would consist of the executive force, the so-called men of action that constitute armies and police.³ This society would be aristocratic because it was to be ruled by the “best” according to Plato. This attempt by Plato to organize the ideal republic according to his own criteria seems to be another example of a fictitious utopian society. The passage below is peculiar because Socrates and Adimanto establish they are the founders of the Republic and therefore are entitled to set the molds through which poets ought to write their fables: “As founders, it is our duty to know the molds according to which poets must compose their fables and which they shall never forsake when writing their verses. However it is up to us to write such fables”. (Plato, 2000, p. 67).

One can see the power granted to philosophers concerning how to lead society in a passage of *The Republic* (2000) in which Adimanto and Socrates are discussing what sort of literature children, who would eventually become guardian, should be allowed to read. According to Socrates, it is important to start shaping these individuals in their infancy because, infants are more malleable than adults, and are more likely to serve society accordingly. In addition, they talk about the importance of shaping literature, more specifically fables, so it meets the needs of the ideal city. According to this passage, fable authors must be monitored, and only good literature should remain and bad literature should be banned. (p. 65). Therefore, the city guardians should be modeled from their earliest childhood in order to serve the society designed by the philosophers. In Orwell’s *1984* (2003), Winston Smith works in the Records Department of the Ministry of Truth, a governmental department where news is written and rewritten according to the interests of the Big Brother. In Plato’s *Republic* (2000), Socrates and Adimanto take into their hands the “duty” to decide what should be written and what should be forgotten.

Despite the fact that the utopian dream had been present long before the writings of Thomas More, one must look back to the remote year of 1516 in which Thomas More coined the term utopia in order to name the island described in his book. As Fátima Vieira says: “It is thus certain that although he invented the word utopia, More did not invent utopianism,

³ Available at <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/utopia/perfection1/society1/society.html> Access on 09/18/2015

which has at its core the desire for a better life; but he certainly changed the way this desire was to be expressed.” (2010, p.16)

In his narrative, Thomas More recounts the journey of a traveler to the island of Utopia. This imagined place would comprise all the elements of a supposedly perfect society according to More’s viewpoint. The island of Utopia is a land of social equality in which individuals would have equal rights and rulers would abide to the law along the same lines as any ordinary citizen. Privileges of any nature would not be granted to any individual. No individual ought to be treated differently. Democracy would be the very essence of this society. Decisions would be made by a council chosen among the people, and this council would be responsible to legislate on behalf of the people. Some motions would be discussed with the people before any decision was made. One of the main traits of Utopia would be its social uniformity. Individuals would give up their individuality on behalf of the common good. Everyone ought to dress the same. Houses would be identical. Slaves would be the only ones to differ in their clothing. More says:

“Clothes look the same for all the inhabitants of the island. Their looks would be unchangeable and shall distinguish only men from women, married from single. This clothing shall match elegance and practicality, facilitate body movements, and protect the individual from heat and cold. Every family must manufacture their own clothing. (MORE, Thomas, p.27)⁴⁵

The passage quoted above provides a good example concerning More’s attempt to erase all uniqueness from his perfect society. More’s idea of a perfect society lies in the utmost equality among its individuals. Curiously, the same concept of ideal society can be found in Orwell’s *1984* (2009).

Another interesting aspect of More’s utopia is its rigid social structure and organization. Every detail in utopia is preconceived and must be unquestioningly abided. All utopians must work the same number of hours every day, which means, they must work for three hours in the morning, then they take a 2-hour lunchbreak and then resume their

⁴ My translation

⁵ Available at <<http://www.dominionpublico.gov.br/download/texto/cv000070.pdf>>

activities for another three hours. After work, they must have dinner and have their earned rest. However, their resting period must not be devoted to sloth and idleness. Once again, More's social order includes a need for obedience. For a perfect world, every single individual must behave accordingly so that this perfect world can be achieved and maintained. As the motto in *1984* (2009) states: "Freedom is Slavery" (Orwell, p. 6). Individuals must behave equally and united in order to maintain social stability. Stability, which happens to be the very engine in the society created by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World* (2007).

"Utopians are spiritual, loving, ingenious; enjoy leisure, patiently work when necessary and their favorite passion is the exercise and development of the spirit" (More, p.41)⁶⁷. More's description concerns a profile of individuals who are sheepish, docile and obedient whose main goal in life shall be to maintain the social order. In Huxley's *Brave New World* (2007) and Orwell's *1984* (2009) the same sort of individuals is shaped by different means. In *Brave New World* (2007), citizens are shaped according to the needs of the state by means of genetic engineering. Individuals are no longer naturally conceived. Instead, they are manufactured in laboratories in order to create a society in which its members do not question the social arrangement imposed by the state. Ever since their inception individuals are genetically assigned a role in society, which they must never, stand up against at all. In *1984* (2009), the same sort of individual is forged by means of violence, thought control, manipulation of information, coercion, ubiquitous surveillance. People are battered into a regular subservient mass with no room for individuality. Curiously, the allegedly paradisiacal world designed by Thomas More requires the same sort of individual present in the horrific worlds of Huxley and Orwell. As J.C. Davis states in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* when discussing the social intricacies of More's ideal society

There are multiple tensions at work here. The dilemma of the good citizen confronting the disquieting, even corrupting influence of politics in a dysfunctional world is paralleled by the choice between the inescapable turmoil of political participation and the possible "attunement and harmony" of contemplative detachment. But the twist of the knife was that detaching oneself from the life and the problems of the community induced a sense of alienation failure of duty and

⁶ My translation

⁷ Available at <<http://www.dominionpublico.gov.br/download/texto/cv000070.pdf>>

compromised goodness, of exile. Contemplating a society in which these tensions could not arise, however fictitious that society was might be the only sense of relief. (2010)

What J.C Davis (2010) seems to argue is the impossibility of social participation without the consequential turmoil originated from it. One's active participation in the political realm is likely to cause some sort of distress due to the distinctive nature of ideas. The only way out of turmoil would be a state of complete alienation where society members detach completely from the active participation in society. Due to these dilemmas and tensions both utopian and dystopian societies tend to be characterized by a strict code of laws imposed on individuals for the sake of social order:

Utopian societies are built by human beings and are meant for them. And it is because utopists very often distrust individuals' capacity to live together, that we very frequently find a rigid set of laws at the heart of utopian societies- rules that force the individuals to repress their unreliable and unstable nature to put on a more convenient social cloak. (VIEIRA, 2010, p.7).

Also according to *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* (2010) at the time of More's writings, the word utopia was a neologism. As time has gone by, the term utopia has undergone several changes in meaning as well as in usage. Utopia has been used by different fields of study such as science, politics, and literature among others. This process is called deneologization. "Its meaning changed many times, and it has been adopted by authors and researchers from different fields of study, with divergent interests and conflicting aims." (VIEIRA, 2010, p.3). Fredric Jameson in his work *Archaeologies of the Future* seems to agree to the roots of utopia that date back to Thomas More. He argues that the start of utopia has a "convenient and indispensable starting point", Thomas More's inaugural text. (Jameson, 2005, p. 1)

From a historic standpoint, the term utopia emerged as a product of the Renaissance. Medieval Times had come to an end and the belief in humankind and the convictions that reason would lead humans towards perfection were very strong in Europe. Renaissance relied on the anthropocentrism that had characterized ancient Greece and Rome. Individuals were no longer subjected to external forces. Instead, they would take their fate into their hands and they would build an ideal world. The overseas journeys contributed to the belief

there was a place where the perfect world could blossom. The newly discovered territories were the ultimate hope for Europeans. The possibility of otherness turned into a promise that society could be organized differently and other places and people were at hand (VIEIRA, 2010, p.4).

Fredric Jameson (2005) lists a number of innovation occurring simultaneously to Thomas More's Utopia (1516). "...almost exactly contemporaneous with most of the innovations that have seemed to define modernity (conquest of the New World, Machiavelli and modern politics, Ariosto and modern literature, Luther and modern consciousness, printing and the modern public sphere)". (p. 1)

All these factors emerged in the ruins of Medieval Times and converged to create a sense of optimism in Europe in the early 1500's. "And More used the emerging awareness of otherness to legitimize the invention of other spaces, with other people and different forms of organization". (VIEIRA, 2010, p. 4)

Etymologically speaking, utopia is a very interesting word to be analyzed. Thomas More coined this term using the Greek prefix *ouk*, which means no and *topos*, whose meaning is place. Then, from its very beginning utopia has been a delicate theme because it means no place in English. How can a no-place actually exist? According to Fátima Vieira: "Utopia is thus a place which is a no-place, simultaneously constituted by movement of affirmation and denial. (2010, p. 4)

The sentence quoted above portrays quite well the incongruities of human existence concerning the possibility of an ideal world. How can a no-place be attained? Dostoyevsky in his *Notes from the Underground (1918)*⁸ describes this impossibility.

Shower upon him every earthly blessing, drown him in a sea of happiness, so that nothing but bubbles of bliss can be seen on the surface; give him economic prosperity, such that he should have nothing else to do but sleep, eat cakes and busy himself with the continuation of his species, and even then out of sheer ingratitude, sheer spite, man would play you some nasty trick. He would even risk his cakes and would deliberately desire (Dostoyevsky, 1918, p.39)

In its very essence utopia is a tricky, controversial, debatable, thought-provoking issue. To make matters even more complex, Thomas More invented another word towards

⁸ Originally published in English in 1918- Available at: <http://www.planetebok.com/ebooks/Notes-from-the-Underground.pdf> > Access on: August, 15th, 2014

the end of his book, which is Eutopia. This term was presented in the last six verses of More's work where the perfect place is described as if it actually existed and was designed by him in full form.

For what Plato's pen has plotted briefly,
In naked words, as in a glass,
The same have I performed fully,
With laws, with men, and treasure fitly.
Wherefore not Utopia, but rather rightly,
My name is Eutopie: a place of felicity. (Thomas More, 1516)⁹

By presenting the Eutopia (which sounds exactly like Utopia), Thomas More intends to surpass in importance Plato's city and be responsible for conceiving the place of felicity.

From then on, this pair of words, utopia and eutopia has been controversial because they cannot be drawn apart and yet they cannot co-exist. How can a place of felicity be unachievable? As Fátima Vieira states: "More created a tension that has persisted over time and has been the basis for the perennial duality of meaning as the place that is simultaneously a non-place (utopia) and a good place (eutopia). (2010, p. 5)

Due to its controversy since its very inception the meaning of utopia has changed countlessly as it has been adopted by other scientific fields and explored by some individuals.

Fátima Vieira (2010) provides a very interesting explanation regarding the definition of the concept of utopia from a historical viewpoint. According to her, the concept of utopia has been grounded at least one of the four following basic pillars. The first is a flawless imagined society, the good place. The question that remains is what is good and what is bad and under what perspective? The second pillar is that of literature, but which is also debatable because it does not cover non-literary texts. As for the third characteristic, it concerns the

⁹ Available at: <http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/anemolius/>

function of utopia and the fourth deals with the desire for a better life triggered by a dissatisfaction with the current model of society.

Utopia goes far beyond political, scientific and sociological realms. It is through literature that utopian thought has been more remarkably crystallized, mainly because it seems to be a human necessity to project onto the future or onto other places, the need we possess of the ideal life. This has been the underlying premise of most religions: the promise of a better life. “So that men may endure suffering, he must be sustained by such high hopes that no conflict with reality may weaken it and no achievement fulfill it, a hope for beyond”. (Nietzsche, 2012, p.47)¹⁰.

1.2 On the Second Dystopian Turn

Dystopian literature became particularly widespread at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century due to a general feeling of pessimism because scientific development had not been able to eradicate blights and make the world a good place to live in. Religion was no longer such a safe haven. Anthropocentrism was failing. *A fin de siècle* atmosphere was notorious and was reflected in literature and by literature.

The twilight of the 19th century was a portrait of the dismantling of beliefs that had occurred chiefly in the second half of that century. A great deal of the predominant beliefs was shredded to pieces and not much remained for the 20th century. Religious beliefs were shattered by the discoveries of Charles Darwin concerning the origin of species and the close relation between apes and humans. Humans were no longer believed to be created in God’s image. Humans were no longer special and unique; instead, people were nothing but the byproduct of evolutionary processes. Unlike the promises made ever since the biblical book of Genesis, humankind was not God’s chosen child.

God himself was under attack because the evolution of science had replaced the general belief in him. Nietzsche’s best-known sentence “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him”¹¹ in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (2012) does not reflect Nietzsche’s desire to banish the idea of God; instead, he seems to express the spirit of his time. The solidified belief that a higher being was watching over humankind was crumbling down.

¹⁰ My translation

¹¹ My translation

And people were the murderers because the belief in God was no longer as necessary as it had been before. Science seemed to lead the way to new explanations and the space for mythical elucidations was becoming *démodé*. However, science also faltered because it had not provided the ultimate progress for the ideal world.

Sigmund Freud and his unveiling of the utterly selfish human unconscious made people realize they were not even the masters of themselves. In his paramount work, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (2012), originally published in the year 1900, Freud approaches the human unconscious as the most relevant aspect of human psyche. According to him, the unconscious comprises all that is repressed in the human psyche. The unconscious comprises some of human being's most selfish desires, which have been repressed to the unconscious due to social constraints. Freud (2012) argues that the unconscious would reveal itself in the form of dreams. Therefore, the analysis of oneiric representations would be a fundamental element of psychoanalysis. The interpretation of dreams would lead to a better understanding of human unconscious and its selfish nature. In his book, Freud (2012) makes the following statement about the nature of dreams: "They are all absolutely selfish, in all of them the dear "I" appears, even if in disguise. The desires fulfilled are generally from this "I", if ever the interest for someone else produced a dream; it is nothing but a deceiving appearance" (p. 290)¹². By denouncing the ultimate nature of human unconscious Freud helps to deconstruct the idea of humans as kind and benevolent individuals, made in God's image.

Therefore, the optimism that originated a utopian wave few centuries earlier had been swept away. The order of the day was one of deconstruction and questioning of the consolidated illusion. Humanity seemed to have been awakened from a state of illusion and did not know how to respond. An earthquake had shattered the foundations of the world and people were at a loss.

This period of uncertainty and pessimism was broadly depicted by the literary world. In a period of 11 years, English literature produced three works that materialized the aura of their time; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, first published in 1886. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, published in 1890 and *Dracula*, whose publication was in 1897. These three literary works denote the predominant obscure aura that pervaded the end of the 19th century. These masterpieces deal with a great number of issues that were under scrutiny at the time of their

¹² My translation

publication, namely: the ambiguity of human nature, the aristocratic social structure, the human impossibility to be good, the haunting feeling that science was not overall beneficial to humanity among so many other issues.

In the same vein, alongside with these three books, another novel was published at the period that concerns a great deal with the issues in vogue in the last decade of the 19th century: *The Time Machine* (2012) by H.G Wells. Well's novel also represents the fears and anxieties from the end of the 19th century and early 20th century. "Wells thus initially epitomizes what we have termed the "second dystopian turn", but also the outpouring of late nineteenth-century utopian sentiment, often taking up the very same themes, notably authority, leadership and the advancement (or threat) of science and technology (CLAYES, 2010, p.113). In *The Time Machine* (2012), Wells describes a world set in the year 802,701 AD dwelled by two classes of individuals: Eloi and Morlocks. The Eloi dwell the underground and are deformed creatures that live in the dark. On the other hand, the time traveler finds a class of individuals who live on the surface of the planet and are frail and peaceful. Despite the time elapsed in his journey the time traveler encounters a society that very much resembles that society of Wells. People were divided into the owners of means of production and those whose only mean of support was to sell their labor. In *The Time Machine* (2012), Wells doubts the human capacity to evolve as a society as time goes by. In his novel, Wells struggles with pertinent issues of his time such as: the consolidation of capitalism as the dominant economic system and the class conflict present at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century. Despite the passing of time, the time machine does not arrive any place better than Well's own. Individuals are still divided into those who live a life in the sunlight and others who are forced to the underground. After his adventures in the land of Eloi and Morlocks, the time traveler advances further into the future and arrives in a devastated beach whose only inhabitants seem to be some animal mutations, and without any sign of human presence. Thus, Wells also expresses his concern about the future of humankind in terms of technological advances. *The Time Machine* (2012) discusses the dangers of technology, the illness represented by social inequality in an industrial capitalist society. Furthermore, the novel deal with the unachievable goal of making the world a flawless place to live in.

The Time Machine (2012) is an exemplary novel of the atmosphere in which the turn of the century was embedded. The promises of the past had not been delivered. The beliefs

of the past had been shattered. The hopes of the past had been dismantled. Salvation for humankind was an illusion. What about the future? The future seemed to be bleak, barren and nightmarish. Thus, dystopia was its most suitable expression.

Still imaginative visions of ideal societies in the twentieth century took a general turn toward the dystopian, toward a suspicion that, if “ideal” societies could be established at all, this establishment would lead to stagnation, tyranny and the suppression of dissent. (BOOKER, M. Keith, 2005, p. 625)

Then one may infer that a wave of dystopian literature originated from these social settings. As an outlet for the anxieties of a certain period, dystopias have been present along the 20th century, defined by Hobsbawn as “*The Age of Extremes*” (1995). Hobsbawn demarcates the beginning of the 20th century at the First World War in 1914 because the war caused the complete collapse of the western civilization from the 19th century.

This civilization was capitalist in its economy, liberal in its legal and constitutional structure; bourgeois in the image of its characteristic hegemonic class, glorifying in the advance of science, knowledge and education; material and moral progress; and profoundly convinced of the centrality of Europe, birthplace of the revolutions of science, arts, politics and industry, whose economy had penetrated, and whose soldiers had conquered and subjugated most of the world, whose populations had grown until they had risen to form a third of the human race, and whose major states constituted the system of world politics. (HOBSBAWN, 1995, p. 6)

The quotation above helps to understand why the 20th century was so prolific in the production of literary dystopias. After merely one hundred years, everything that people believed in was reduced to shambles. This negativism that pervaded the 20th century is elicited by Fátima Vieira (2010) “...the 20th century was predominantly characterized by man’s disappointment-and even-incredulity- at the perception of his own nature , mostly when his terrifying deeds throughout the two World Wars were considered”. (p. 18). Therefore, the 20th century was a fertile land for the propagation of dystopian literature. As the curse goes: “May you live in interesting times”.

A common point between utopian and dystopian literature has to do with the criticism towards the ongoing model of society. Both of these genres tend to criticize the ongoing

social model. While utopias achieve this effect by erasing all the negative elements of society, dystopian writings tend to magnify these very same elements, thus making the society described into an awry place.

The description of the society is of the essence for a dystopian work of literature. Dystopias focus primarily on the workings of society. That is the reason why characters are devoid of a stronger consistency. In a dystopian work, characters are the clogs that keep the machine together and running. The narrative is commonly triggered and carried on by a character who does not fit in the machine. In his doctoral dissertation, Alfredo Leme Coelho Carvalho (2011) seems to agree with this point concerning the description of societies. According to him, utopian or dystopian narratives tend to magnify the society they wish to describe in detriment to a deeper psychological account of characters. (p.18). There is a tendency to report in more detail the macrocosms instead of individual microcosms.

In respect with social organization, one must highlight another important characteristic of utopian works pointed out by Vieira, which is the strict system of control that pervades these societies. Vieira states: “ As it is because utopists very often distrust individuals’ capacity to live together, that we very frequently find a rigid set of laws at the heart of utopian societies- rules that force the individuals to repress their unreliable and unstable nature...” (2010, p. 7). Vieira (2010) goes on to say that only law would be able to guarantee social order, which carries a negative view of humanity.

At this point one may remember Sigmund Freud’s *Civilization and its Discontents* (2011) and the constant conflict experienced by human beings between their innermost pleasure principle and the restraints imposed by society. In both utopian and dystopian individual impulses must be forsaken on behalf of society. Zygmunt Bauman discusses the same conflict in an interview given to “Fronteiras do Pensamento”¹³. According to Bauman, the history of humanity has always been a struggle between the need for security and the need for freedom. He states that whenever society becomes more secure, freedom tends to be suppressed. On the other hand, security may be forsaken for the sake of freedom. Bauman compares this process to a pendulum that always moves from one end to the next without actually finding a balance between these two human intrinsic needs: security and freedom.

¹³ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POZcBNo-D4A> Access on October 7, 2015.

Dystopian literature tends to highlight this overwhelming social rigidity. Particularly along the 20th century, period that comprises the second dystopian turn, examples of dystopias that magnify strong control abound. Orwell's *1984* (2003) may be the most notorious example. Orwell's novel is a bare and raw description of the fears that tormented individuals of his time. A totalitarian government that shapes society members by means of violence, annulment of individuality, manipulation of information, threats of external enemies. The Big Brother in *1984* (2003) is one of the greatest representations of control through fear.

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (2012) relies on the same element to narrate a society whose right to read has been annulled and all books must be burned, on behalf of social stability. Individuals must think uniformly without any complexity offered by books. Bradbury's novel was first published in 1953, a time in which television was spreading widely in the United States. Therefore, in the narrative people watch a great deal of television. Somehow, the novel portrays a concern of the time that television would be deployed to manipulate society.

Blockbuster movie *The Matrix* (1999) seems to deal with the same theme of suppression of individuality. However, in this motion picture, individuals are connected to a virtual reality that resembles our supposedly real world. This world is supposed to provide people with distractions so that they do not realize their real condition. In reality, people are nothing but energy suppliers that keep a machine-ruled society. The oppressing system is not represented by any government in *The Matrix* (1999). Yet, this overwhelming figure is represented by machines, which have been a concern in societies over the last decades. Despite the fascination with technologies of communication, virtual reality, social media, there seems to be a concern that this high technology may deprive individuals of their privacy, social contact and even usefulness because machines seem to be replacing people in a vast numbers of spheres in society.

Similarly to what was discussed by both Freud in the early 20th century and by Bauman later on, humankind has always been pursuing a balance between individuality and social stability. In order to obtain more stability does one need to give up one's individuality and vice and versa? Literature seems to demonstrate this concern, by describing worlds where individuals no longer have some space for their individuality and become nothing but cattle in the hands of rulers that gain control over society through various forms. Aldous

Huxley's *Brave New World* (2007) shall be discussed in more detail further in this study. However, at this point one may say that Huxley's novel seems to show a society where the line between freedom and control is more subtle, that is, individuals appear to live in a state of endless freedom and pleasure inside a glass prison.

Being utopia a place of felicity as defined by Thomas More, how could one be happy when one's pleasure principles must be repressed? How can social stability and security be achieved without control? As Bauman states, the pendulum appears to be swinging from one end to the other without ever finding a balance. This seems to be a perennial human conflict that no society has been capable to reach a common ground.

We conclude this chapter by referring back to the very beginning concerning utopia, because once again utopia becomes a conflictive concept. How can the place of felicity be attained if pleasure principles are overruled by social constraints? More's use of utopian meaning a no-place of felicity seems to enclose well the incongruities of human life and social organization. This place of felicity seems to be a safe haven in the minds of humanity. A place to be dreamed of and always unreachable. Since the beginning of times in the Bible, passing by Plato, More until modern times, this utopian dream has been slipping away. Humanity seems to be doomed to live in an imperfect world. Therefore, dystopian settings seem to be the most viable to depict humanity's destiny.

2. On Aldous Huxley's Brave New World

Aldous Huxley was an English essayist, novelist born on July 6th, 1894 and who, curiously died on the same date as John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated, November 22nd, 1963 and C.S Lewis died. Huxley was born in a family of prominent scientists, his grandfather being an important proponent of the evolution theory and his brother who was a major biologist (Bloom, 2004). He was expected to become a scientist himself, yet, at the age of 16, he was stricken by a disease that left him blind for two years and damaged his sight for life. This temporary blindness forced a career change and Huxley got a degree in literature from Balliol College in Oxford. This scientific heritage, however, was to be extremely relevant in Huxley's writings since science and its implications is one of his most discussed issues. Soon after he graduated from Balliol School, Huxley went on to become a teacher and later a journalist.

Aldous Huxley was first published for his poetry. However, his first novels were responsible for his success. In 1921, *Crome Yellow*, a satirical novel of English social classes was published. In 1930, Huxley moved to Sanary, in the south of France, where, in 1931 he wrote his best-known novel, *Brave New World*.

As a pacifist, Aldous Huxley was concerned about the ongoing situation in Europe in the 1930's. In 1937, he moved with his family to California, where he became increasingly involved with mysticism and Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism and Hinduism. In the period of World War II, Huxley worked for Hollywood as a screenplay writer. He wrote screenplays for some notable movies such as *Pride and Prejudice* (1941) and *Jane Eyre* (1944).

In the 1950's, Huxley experimented with hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD and mescaline. These experiences were reported in his book *The Doors of Perception* written in 1954. In 1958, Huxley revisits his *Brave New World* to discuss with hindsight some of the implications he described in his previous novel. In *Brave New World Revisited* (1958), Huxley remains pessimistic about the future, mainly regarding issues such as overpopulation and Totalitarianism. Already in the 1960's, he wrote *The Island*, a utopian novel, in which the combination of spirituality and technology led humankind to development.

In 1959, Huxley was awarded the American Academy of Letters. In 1962, he was chosen Companion of Literature of the British Royal Society of Literature. On November 22nd, 1963, Huxley died of tongue cancer. (Bloom, 2004)

Concerning *Brave New World*, it was first published in 1932 and in its first year it sold 13,000 copies. Despite its commercial success, the novel was negatively reviewed by critics. Criticism was mostly based on the supposedly simplistic language used in the novel. According to some critics, the language used in the novel lacks depth and is overly repetitive. Reviewers argued that Huxley was not concerned to elaborate a plot; instead, he seemed to be focused on expressing an idea (Bloom, 2004). Others criticize Huxley's novel for its allegedly bias towards political propaganda. Moreover, critics classify the novel as unoriginal and dry. Harold Bloom (2004) transcribes a passage that expresses the reception for the novel on the part of the critics. The passage below was originally written for a publication named *New Statesman and Nation*

This squib about the future is a thin little joke, epitomized in the undergraduate jest of a civilization dated A.F, and a people who refer reverently to "our Ford"- not a little bad joke, and what it lacks in richness Mr. Huxley tries to make up by repetition; but we want rather more to a prophecy that Mr. Huxley gives us... The fact is Mr. Huxley does not care for the story – the idea alone excites him. There are brilliant, sardonic little splinters of hate aimed at the degradation he has foreseen for our world; there are passages in which he elaborates conjectures and opinions already familiar to readers of his essays... There are no surprises in it; and if he had no surprises to give us, why should Mr. Huxley have bothered to turn his essay in indignation into a novel. (Bloom, 2004, p. 13)

Harold Bloom (2004) reports another recurrent criticism towards *Brave New World*, which is its focus on sexuality. This society conceived by Huxley stresses greatly the need for individuals not to suppress sexual instincts of any nature. Quite the contrary, ever since their childhood they are encouraged to engage in erotic games in order to stimulate their sexuality, thus alleviating any sort of frustration. The easy and unveiled way Huxley deals with sexuality seems to have shocked and disturbed critics from his time.

Regarding its plot, *Brave New World* opens with a nameless Director of the Central Hatchery giving students a tour of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. Above the main entrance of the building, it is written the motto of this society "Community, Identity, Stability". Inside the center, students are informed about the workings of hatchery

and conditioning. The director explains to them how the fertilization of human beings is carried out. Some selected women are paid to have their ovaries extracted. These high-quality ovaries are maintained in laboratories in tanks of spermatozoa in order to mass-produce babies.

This initial tour also elicits the Caste System, which is ordered according to genetic engineering. In this society, there are five castes, namely: Alpha, which is the most respected of the five. On the other end of the pyramid are the Epsilons. Midlevel are located Beta, Gamma and Delta. Castes are defined before fertilization. Alphas and Betas undergo all the fertilization process inside their incubators, whereas the other castes are removed to go through the Bokanovsky's Process, which divides the fertilized egg into ninety-six identical twins. Bokanovsky's Process represents mass-production applied to Biology (Huxley, 2007, p.5).

Later on, it is explained how castes are genetically modified in order to be obtained: "The lower the caste said Mr. Foster, the shorter the oxygen. The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy percent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs. At less than seventy, eyeless monsters". (Huxley, 2007, p. 11). Therefore the lower the social caste the less oxygen they are provided with, thus affecting their brains and consequently their intelligence. "But in Epsilons, said Mr. Foster very justly, we don't need human intelligence. (Huxley, 2007, p. 11).

Further into the novel, Huxley takes readers into a conditioning room, where infants are taught to hate books and nature. In these conditioning rooms, there are books and flowers laid on the floor. As soon as babies reach for the books or the flowers, an unpleasant shrieking alarm goes off and babies are electrified so that they are conditioned not to take an interest into books and nature. This "lesson" aims at teaching individuals that reading and nature are not economically viable because one who reads or one who contemplates nature do not contribute to the economic prosperity of the country.

Shortly after the conditioning demonstration, students are first instructed on the concept of hypnopaedic lessons or sleep-teaching. In their sleep, babies are exposed to drills aimed at teaching them how they should behave in society "I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They are too stupid to read or write. Besides, they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta" (Huxley, 2007, p.22).

These repetitive drills concern a number of themes such as sexuality, consumerism, and caste division among others. From their early childhood, children are brainwashed to behave according to the teachings of those in power.

The following segment shows children learning how to play with complicated apparatus in order to encourage consumption. Simple games are to be suppressed so that more apparatus can be purchased. “Imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It’s madness” (Huxley, 2007 p. 25). Playtime also consists of erotic stimulation. Children of both genders play naked and are encouraged to play together to boost their sexuality.

For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations afterwards, erotic plays between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!) and had therefore been rigorously suppressed. (Huxley, 2007, p.27)

Shortly afterwards, the touring students are surprised by the appearance of Mustapha Mond, one of the ten World Controllers. Mustapha lectures them on what the world was like before Our Ford society was established. Students learn about the horrific concept of family and viviparous reproduction. He also talks about the predominance of emotional behavior in the past. About the wars that raged on in the world until peace was finally achieved. He teaches students about the horrors of old age and the belief in God. Mustapha wishes to give students an idea how fortunate they are to be able to live in such as stable world.

The entire first part of the novel is devoted to painting a picture of the social system of Ford’s era. All the tour around the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre is intended to display the social workings that will be crucial to the unfolding of the story. Somehow, Huxley paints a background picture before giving readers the plot *per se* and its major characters. Some of these concepts are artificial reproduction, genetic social order, loose sexuality, curbing of freedom, consumerism, and control of masses, among others.

Social organization prevails over individual relationships or internal feelings. As it has been previously said, this focus on social engineering tends to be highlighted in detriment to micro-relations. The magnifying lenses on macrocosms are a recurrent feature of

dystopian literature and tend to erase or blur the importance of individuality on behalf of the whole.

In respect with the main characters of the novel, some of them stand out as predominant for the plot. One of them is Bernard Marx, an example of unsuccessful conditioning. Throughout the novel, Bernard does not seem to content with life in London. He does not take the drug (Soma) expected to soothe the anguish of individuals. Marx does not engage in the activities designed to entertain people. He often questions and complains about the lack of individuality in his society. However, his peers do not hear him. Therefore, he feels like an outsider in a society that preaches the erasing of any self-consciousness. In the first part of the novel, Marx represents the main point of conflict between those who are conditioned to be satisfied and himself. “Bernard is physically imperfect, melancholy, and dissatisfied with life in London”. (Bloom, 2004, p. 17).

Lenina Crowne works in the Central Hatchery and Conditioning Center and she accompanies Bernard Marx to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. In this reservation, Londoners are allowed to go on holiday and see a sample of the “barbarous” life from before Ford’s society. On the Savage Reservation, reproduction is still viviparous, cleanliness is not order of the day, books are allowed, and mystical and sacrificial rituals are performed. All she witnesses horrifies Lenina. Later on in the novel, Lenina feels drawn to John, the Savage. This attraction makes her struggle with her conditioning, which represents an important conflict in the second half of the novel.

Fanny Crowne is Lenina’s friend and works at the Conditioning Center too. She is the voice to contradict Lenina’s doubts concerning their conditioning. When Lenina’s passion for John is strongly criticized by Fanny since no individual can be attached to others in any deeper level. She advises Lenina to have sex with the Savage but not to have any deeper feelings for him. As Harold Bloom states: “...Fanny is a model citizen, and cannot contemplate behaving against her conditioning”. (2004, p. 17)

Mustapha Mond is one of the World Controllers, responsible for the English territories. He holds the knowledge concerning the sacrifices to be made by society in order to achieve stability. He discloses his knowledge in a conversation with John. He seems to be aware of the downsides of this “civilized” world. He states that humankind had to forsake literary and religious books and art so that peace, stability, and endless happiness could be

attained. In this conversation, the Savage argues: “I don’t want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin” (Huxley, 2007, p.211). To the Savage’s point of view, Mustapha Mond replies: “...you’re claiming the right to be unhappy”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 212). This discrepancy in the characters’ arguments seems to summarize the very essence of *Brave New World*, the clash between humanity and automatons. By creating the “perfect” society, Ford had to erase the very things that make us humans. Mustapha Mond is the vessel that holds this knowledge. Despite his awareness of the price to be paid for this “perfect” society, he chooses to abide to the rules because he believes that no price is too high for the level of stability and happiness they have conquered. This is made clear towards the end of the conversation between John and Mustapha where the latter counterargues

Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have little to eat, the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow, the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind (Huxley, 2007, p. 212)

It looks like a tempting deal. Should Mustapha run for a political position in our modern world and offered people the benefits above in return for their humanity, it seems he would obtain a good percentage of the vote.

John “The Savage” is the major counterpoint to the conditioned London and the major character in the second part of the novel. John is the son of two Londoners, The Director of the Conditioning Center and Linda, who went to New Mexico on holiday. This takes place before the novel timeframe itself. However, his pregnant mother, Linda, is left behind on the Savage Reservation due to an accident. Despite his mother’s efforts to teach him the principles of the civilized world, John is born and raised according to barbarous models. John is a lover of Shakespeare, who displays emotional attachment to his mother and Lenina.

John’s conflict becomes even more paradoxical when he and his mother travel back to London with Bernard and Lenina. John is shocked by the values and principles of the civilized world. John refuses to ingest any drugs to cloud his feelings. He demonstrates his feelings when his mother Linda is in her dying bed. John does not accept the fact that people

are not allowed to become emotionally involved with others. He does not understand why books have been abolished. Above all, John does not understand himself. His conflict is one of identity. His identity lies in a place in between. He is an outsider in both the savage and the civilized world.

Civilized society has no place for the uncivilized, but neither does the Savage Reservation have a place for someone born to a civilized woman. His lack of place, and therefore lack of identity, is one of the major themes of the novel (Bloom, 2007, p. 18)

John is devoid of a sense of belonging. He is doomed to belong nowhere. Returning to the reservation is no longer a choice because he has already been “branded” by civilization. Remaining in civilization is not an option either because he is aware of its flaws. So says the Savage “I ate civilization...it poisoned me...” (Huxley, 2007, p.213). John’s words denote his irrevocable stain. Therefore, he decides for exile and for purification through self-inflicted pain and ritualistic sacrifices. He moves to a remote lighthouse in pursuit of peace. Yet, sometime later, reporters discover his whereabouts. John seems to be forced to take the only viable exit

Through an archway on the further side of the room they could the bottom of the staircase that led up to the higher floors. Just under the crown of the arch dangled a pair of feet...Slowly, very slowly, like two unhurried compass needles, the feet turned towards the right; north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-south-west; then paused, and after a few second, turned as unhurriedly back towards the left. South, south-west, south, south-east, east... (Huxley, 2007, p.229)

This dramatic ending reinforced by the repetitive use of words gives readers a notion of plight and disorientation that haunted the Savage throughout the novel. Not even in death does he seem to find peace.

Although *Brave New World* (2007) is a gloomy depiction of a future, one cannot overlook its satirical power. Huxley’s novel is not narrated under only somber and oppressive hues. Instead, it carries a great deal of wit and satirical humor. This tone is reinforced by the choice of character names in the novel. The major character names allude to historical or literary names. First and foremost, one can see the name Ford for the supreme

authority in Huxley's society. This elicits quite well Huxley's wit. By choosing Ford, after the great automaker, Huxley sets all the ironic tone for his narrative. The concept of mass-production applied to biology is one of the pillars of *Brave New World* (2007). Also, one can see a reference to the speedy growth of capitalism in the early 20th century, particularly in the United States. Moreover, the name Ford alludes to the inception of corporation ruling. Bernard Marx is a character that, despite being aware that something is wrong in his society, is unable to make any deep change. Lenina, after Lenin, Mustapha Mond after Alfred Mond. These names corroborate Huxley's intent to make his novel satirical because the figures he alludes to did not prevent a dystopia from being established.

Rather than taking the best aspects of both capitalist Right and socialist Left, the World State has taken the worst: from the former the reduction of the individual to compulsive consumer, from the latter the subordination of the individual to the supremacy of the collective State (McGivern, 2004, p. 92)

Aldous Huxley's main point seems to be that although many of the characters in the novel represent rebellious and intellectual historical figures, none of them seems to be able to make any significant positive change to the world. Therefore, by means of ironic choice of character names, Huxley seems to highlight the cautionary message of his novel.

Having introduced the first part of the novel as well as its main characters, now we shall return to the plot of the novel and its second and most conflictive part.

As it has been previously said, Bernard Marx is a failure as a conditioned individual. He is not content with his life in London. He receives a warning from the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning that he ought to behave accordingly otherwise he shall be exiled.

Marx goes away on holidays to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. On this holiday, Lenina Crowne accompanies him. On the reservation, he comes across John the Savage and his mother, Linda. Later on, Marx finds out that Linda is originally from London and that she was stranded on the reservation due to an accident that occurred when she and the Director were on holiday. Afterwards, Marx finds out that Linda was pregnant from the Director. Marx decides to take John and Linda back to London to threaten the Director.

Upon arriving in London, John becomes the central part of the narrative due to his inconformity with the system he witnesses in the “civilized” world. He revolts against the use of Somnia; he cannot accept the fact that people do not suffer before death, he does not understand why books and arts have been banished, and he does not conform to promiscuous sexuality. Firstly seen as a menace, quickly John becomes an attraction to Londoners due to his eccentricity.

The second part of the novel focuses on the clash between John’s beliefs and customs in contrast to those held in London. The dialog between John and Mustapha Mond, which was partly transcribed above, seems to epitomize well the incongruities between the two. Appalled by his mother’s death and his dislocation, John retreats to a remote lighthouse, where he submits himself to a purging process. The media looking for news on the Savage disturb his pursuit for peace. Eventually, the Savage commits suicide and the novel ends.

2.1 Historical Setting Behind Huxley’s Brave New World

This segment is intended to analyze the historical period in which the novel *Brave New World* was published. It aims to provide an overview of the elements that constituted one of the most dramatic epochs in human history. Despite Huxley’s futuristic narrative, one can assume that his dystopian fictional world was strongly marked by the global situation of his own time. Huxley’s concerns regarding the dangers of extreme consumerism, the rise of totalitarian regimes, restrictions on freedom, and fear of the consequences of technology among others are all discussed in the novel and seem to be grounded on issues stemmed from the global conjuncture. This chapter shall attempt to briefly bring to present some of the political, economic, human matters that were present in the early 1930’s, time of the publication of *Brave New World*.

One of the most important tools for the study of literature is the study of history. One should not overlook the relevance of historical context when one analyzes a fictional work. A literary work tends to be pervaded by elements of society in which it is inserted. A work of fiction is closely intertwined with its own time. However pioneering and innovative a literary piece may be, it is somehow affected by its own chronological realm. Despite the timelessness of certain issues addressed by literature, it is likely to be rooted in its own present. Literature is not an isolated, supreme, immaculate art immune to and divorced from

human and social interferences. When discussing literary theory, Terry Eagleton (2003) in his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction* argues: “what I have tried to show throughout this book is that the history of modern literary theory is part of the political and ideological history of our epoch” (p.169). As the source for literary theory, how could literature be immune from its own time?

Although *Brave New World* is a novel set in a distant future from its own publication date, studying its historical setting is of the essence to comprehend Huxley’s dystopian novel.

Brave New World is a novel written by Aldous Huxley in 1931 and published the following year. Huxley seems to have been cursed to live in interesting times because the novel came out in one of the most dramatic periods of human history. Eric Hobsbawm (1994) names this period the Age of Catastrophe.

Huxley published his best-known novel fourteen years after the end of World War I, seven years before the outbreak of the Second World War and only three years after the crash of the New York Stock Exchange, which triggered a worldwide devastating economic crisis. What could be more interesting than that? Although the entire twentieth century was a dramatic period, it is hard to refute that the 1930’s might have been its most dramatic of all. Crises mushroomed in every corner of the world, the remnants of World War I were still present, and the economic crisis affected the entire world and the eminent threat of a new global war darkened humankind’s horizon.

After the First World War, the United States of America had become the major player in the global economic game and it represented the driving force of the global market. “The United States had become a determining factor on world prosperity. Her role in the international finance had been transformed by the Great War, which made her a capital-exporting nation. (ROBERTS, 2000, p.340). Due to the demands of the Great War, the United States was responsible for the supply of goods to the European countries devastated by the war. In the 1920’s, known as the Roaring Twenties, the United States economy was booming. American people harvested the privileges of the financial thriving. As J.M Roberts puts it: “This abundance, enhanced by the demands of war, made her people in the 1920’s the first in the world millions of whom could take for granted, for example, the ownership of a family car” (2000, p.340).

Unsurprisingly, in *Brave New World* (2007), in his mocking tone, Huxley names the supreme authority as Ford, after the automobile entrepreneur. By the way, the sarcastic tone of the narrative is constantly pointed to the principles of the American society of consume. Some passages of the book seem to be satirical of the over-consumerism of American people. “But old clothes are beastly, continued the untiring whisper. We always throw away old clothes. Ending is better than mending, ending is better than mending, ending is better... (HUXLEY, 2007, p.42). Keeping a prosperous economy appeared to be the main goal in the United States. Big corporations seemed to rule over the needs of the regular American citizens. As long as the economy was running smoothly, American society would thrive. Therefore, companies had to be protected at all costs. Every good American citizen was expected to contribute with its share of consumption so that American companies could succeed and give back to the people their jobs and consequently their money. Curiously, this sacrifice of the individual on behalf of the greater was a characteristic of European totalitarian regimes. Huxley (2007) also captured this “Every man, woman and child compelled to consume so much a year. In the interests of the industry” (p.42). Huxley goes on to say: “You can’t consume much if you sit still and read books”. (p.42). Huxley also sees the fact that, from an American perspective, consumption epitomized the path to endless prosperity.

Due to the prominent position of the United States in the global economy, the American affluence expanded to other countries around the world. Driven by the United States, the pessimism appeared to be slowly overcome, and financial recovery was slowly on the way. This is corroborated by J.M Roberts

...a mood of optimism was nourished in the western world by the return of prosperity in the 1920’s, and its later spread to other parts of the world. The harsh immediate post-war years, bad as they had been, proved to have been a prelude to a gradual recovery shared in some degree by most humanity outside the Soviet Union. The years from 1925 to 1929 were particularly encouraging. This was especially notable in the United States, but Europeans, too, who remembered the old days as normal, had some excuse for thinking things were getting back to what they had been before 1914. (2000, p.326)

Eric Hobsbawn (1995) seems to go along the same lines when discussing the importance of the United States for the global economy. According to him, the US was the main exporter in the 1920’s and the main importer only after Great Britain. Therefore, in the

intertwined global economic net, the US played a vital role. Hobsbawn (1995) goes on to say that the crisis could only be explained by having the United States inserted in this equation.

The illusion of prosperity from the 1920's quickly turned to dust and the world plummeted in what might have been its worst economic crisis ever. Since *Brave New World* (1932) was published shortly after the start of the Great Depression, one might assume that this could be reason for the novel's gloomy tone towards capitalism and its encouragement to consumerism. Huxley is able to absorb the worldwide conjuncture and turn it into a work of fiction. Curiously, in the preface of *Brave New World* (2007), it is said that Huxley started to write the novel some time after his visit to the United States, more specifically to California.

Due to the importance of the US, the onset of the Great Depression in the west to the Atlantic quickly spread to every corner of the globe. Thus, in order to understand the reason for the great economic catastrophe that plagued the world in between the two Great Wars one must look at the roots of the financial crisis, firstly in the United States and secondly in the rest of the world. J.M Roberts (2000) paints a clear picture of the bleakness surrounding the world after the outbreak of the Great Depression.

The economic depression of the early 1930's was unprecedentedly worldwide and more severe than any other slump. No continent was untouched and most nations and peoples were badly damaged by its specificity, its extent and the suddenness of its onset. Great plagues and folk-movements in the past had slowly rolled the Euro-Asian landmass and North Africa, but there had never been such simultaneity about them, nor had they so savaged every continent. Perhaps, the world depression was the first truly world-historical event ever (p.339)

Therefore, regarding the economic realm, the 1930's were tough times all over the world. Nobody came out unscathed from the Great Depression

The United States, main economic power, the engine for the global economy of the time was in a bottomless financial crisis due to the crash of the New York Stock Exchange in 1929. With the faltering of the most powerful economy, the entire world was somehow affected by crisis. "Why did the capitalist economy between the wars fail to work? The situation of the USA is a central part of any answer."(HOBSBAWN, 1995, p. 97)

When discussing the origins of the economic collapse, Eric Hobsbawm (1995) provides a two-fold explanation for the crisis. The first lies on the fact that the global economy was relentlessly unbalanced. Unlike Great Britain, the main economic power before World War I, the United States did not need to rely on other countries for the success of her economy. The American economy was nearly self-sustainable. “The USA did not need the world much because, after the First World War it needed to import less capital, labor (relatively speaking) fewer commodities than ever”. (HOBSBAWN, 1995, p.99). This independence allowed the United States to exempt itself from the responsibility for the economy around the world. The USA did not take responsibility, as the major economic force of the time, to act as a “global stabilizer” (HOBSBAWN, 1995, p.99). The second explanation put forward by Hobsbawm concerns a lack of demand to keep the world economy running for a longer period of time. Hobsbawm argues that towards the second half of the 1920’s agriculture, salaries were falling behind, and the American people were no longer able to maintain the consumption patterns from the early 1920’s. Therefore, Hobsbawm explains, the gap between the great businesspeople and the masses was growing significantly and the masses responsible for the consumption that kept the economy running were no longer capable to buy as much as they did before and the result was over-production and speculation, which eventually led to collapse. This discrepancy between upper and lower classes led to a lack of consume and thus companies ended up producing more than the market could take in and result was the onset of the economic crisis

What was happening, as often happens in free market booms was that, with wages lagging, profits rose disproportionately and the prosperous got a larger slice of the national cake. But as mass demand could not keep pace with the rapidly increasing productivity of the industrial system in the heyday of Henry Ford, the result was over-production and speculation. This, in turn, triggered off the collapse (Hobsbawm, 1995, p.100)

Once again, *Brave New World* (2007) illustrates well the economic conjuncture in the early 1930’s. Under the ruling of Ford, the techniques of sleep-teaching and conditioning towards endless consumption seem to epitomize the desperate attempts on the part of free market players (represented by Ford) to maintain the economic mill spinning. In the event of a stumbling economy, manipulation of the masses seems to be the right way to go.

Whenever a crisis is established, the solution lies in having people consume more. No matter what price shall be paid in the long term.

The Big Crash of 1929 was the trigger that set into motion a domino effect that would eventually spread throughout the world. However, the year *Brave New World*, 1932 is reckoned as the worst. According to J.M Roberts (2000), industrial production in the United States had plummeted 52.7% and in Germany, the figures were even worse: 53.3%. Roberts (2000) also says that in leading manufacturing countries the number of unemployed workers was approximately 30 million. In his book *A Very Short History of the World* (2010), Geoffrey Blainey states that unemployment rates were over 30% in some industrialized nations. Also according to J.M Roberts (2000), during the peak of the crisis, the average income fell by 38 per cent. The price of raw materials and foodstuff dropped 56 and 48 per cent respectively, thus affecting the less-off nations in the world, usually responsible for the supply of these products to industrialized nations. Roberts paints a didactic and concise picture of the domino effect that crippled the world economy during The Great Depression

Dramatic changes like these were the simplest markers of what happened as manufacturing countries cut back production. As workers lost their jobs, and their wages became unavailable to buy goods, other manufacturing trades, food suppliers and service industries sold less. As the demand for imports of raw materials fell back, the non-industrialized countries had less foreign earnings than ever with which to buy manufactured exports. As world trade crumbled further, so less business was done by shipping firms, insurance, banking, less money was available to people who might start up new business or invest in improving their existing ones (not that a slump was likely to encourage to do that)- and so on, and on and on. (p.342)

The entire economic chain was deeply wounded by the crisis, thus generating an unprecedented economic collapse. As it was previously mentioned, the Great Depression could be regarded as a critical blight for the entire world. No country was immune, no individual was unaffected and this great economic cataclysm paved the way to another excruciating moment in the history of turmoil in the 1930's: The rise of totalitarian regimes and the consequent World War II.

Brave New World (2007) was capable to identify the rise of totalitarianism because, even though it is not the same ruthless totalitarian state as described by Orwell in *1984*, the very principles of a totalitarian state are very much identifiable in *Brave New World* (2007); censorship of freedom, manipulation of information, manipulation of the masses among

others. All these elements that were clear in Nazi and Stalinist ruling can also be perceived in Huxley's novel. Despite the varnish layer covering the society of *Brave New World* its underlying mechanisms are noticeably present in the society of Ford. The masses seem to be locked in a prison of invisible bars where they are not allowed to break free and do not seem to wish to do so. In their artificial, pharmaceutical and over consumerist cage, they need nothing else but their small dose of Soma, some new item to consume and the apparent freedom to whatever they wish to do. The omniscient, ubiquitous presence of Ford is not to be feared, but instead, it is intended to be cherished for its benevolence, mercy in providing individuals with their utmost happiness. Instead of the violence, fear, ruthlessness of The Big Brother, Ford is the benevolent fatherly figure, which individuals cannot even fathom to do without. Why should one care about the genetic modifications to keep social classes immutable, or the ban on books, after all books trigger nothing but turmoil. Why should anyone want to feel sad? Take your dose of Soma and everything shall be all right. Go shopping and your blues shall fade away. Copulate and your troubles shall pass. *Brave New World* (2007) can capture the tyranny and Totalitarianism of Ford's society flowing under a varnished surface of benevolence and joy.

The Great Depression begun as of 1929 helped a great deal to pave the way that led to one of the gloomiest, horrific events in human history.

Such an economic depression was unprecedented; it was the final push needed by communism and fascism, thus leading to the Second World War, which was, in fact seen more and more as the unfinished World War I... The global depression, in the early 30's triggered fear and anxiety and a premonition of chaos. Hitler thrived exactly on these fears. (BLAINEY, 2010, p. 298)¹⁴

World War II was not just a war per se. It symbolized much more than that. It epitomized a deadly wound to the very principles of liberalism. The conviction in a representative democratic state of governments elected by the citizens was strongly shattered by the emergence of totalitarian regimes and the consequent Second World War. The movement towards more democratic societies was clouded by the rising of Nazism, Fascism

¹⁴ My translation

and Stalinism and the suspension of civil rights. Since the 19th century, more advanced nations were turned to the establishment of constitutional and democratic political systems. It was widely believed, the construction of western societies ought to be guided by the use of reason, grounded on scientific development and educational foundations. These values had been wide spreading throughout the 19th century and were believed should advance even further. “Of all the developments in the Age of Catastrophe, survivors from the nineteenth century were perhaps most shocked by the collapse of the values and institutions of the liberal civilization...” (HOBSBAWN, 1995, p. 109). These values represented a “mistrust of dictatorship and absolute rule”. The economic, political global chaos of the 1930’s jeopardized the core values remaining from the 19th century. Actually, not just values were threatened but also the very existence of a liberal, bourgeois viewpoint was endangered by the upheaval of the decade of the publication of *Brave New World* (2007). The optimism towards an improvement of human condition was suspended due to the catastrophic events that started in 1929 and extended until the end of World War II and even further. Hobsbawn is able to capture the consequences and dangers of the rise of fascism in Europe

But as the tide of fascism rose with the Great Slump, it became increasingly clear that in the Age of Catastrophe not only peace, social stability and the economy, but also the political institutions and intellectuals values of the nineteenth century liberal bourgeois society, were in retreat or collapse (1995, p. 108)

The disorientation and calamity in the years shortly prior to the publication of *Brave New World* (2007) and for the years to come was such that the very future of humankind was under suspicion. Who could state for a fact that the future of human societies was guaranteed? The very pillars that sustained societies that had been damaged and nobody could assure that they could be repaired effectively. As Harold Bloom (2004) states in his guide to *Brave New World* (2007)

It is also worth noting that Huxley composed *Brave New World* in 1931 when Europe and America were still reeling –economically, politically and socially- from World War I. Massive industrialization, coupled with severe economic depression and the rise of fascism, were the backdrop for the novel It was this turbulence that informed Huxley’s cautionary vision of the future. (2004, p. 14)

As a by-product of its time, *Brave New World* (2007) appears to be capable to grasp these nuances of its time and put into operation in a novel. The very hinges that keep the system in *Brave New World* (2007) somehow resemble those that dismantled the real world of the 1930's. Some of the concerns, fears, and anxieties of the people that lived in that period are expressed in Huxley's dystopia.

One of the major concerns had to do with the fear of what would be the consequences of the wide use of technology. Never before had technology been so present in people's lives. However, prior to the outbreak of the First Great World War, there was a strong optimism that science and consequently technology would lead humankind to a betterment of life conditions. Yet, in 1914, for the very first time in history, technology was employed to terminate enormous masses of people's lives. Never before, had a war been fought and soldiers been killed from a distance. Therefore, technology was no longer the path to the Promised Land; instead, it was also a new threat to be coped with. For the first time, mass elimination was possible; there was no more need for the personal battles of the past. The mass-production of cars had been put into practice in order to kill people. Killing people had become impersonal. In the first lines of his poem *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, Wilfred Owen expresses people's astonishment before the massive killing of soldiers during World War I:

What passing-bell for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out³ their hasty orisons.⁴
No mockeries⁵ now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, –
The shrill, demented⁶ choirs of wailing shells; (1917)¹⁵

The glorious warrior of the past embedded in honor, pride and braveness had been transformed into nothing but cattle that could be exterminated by the thousands. Soldiers were no longer the headliners of a war. They were simply gun-bearers who would die an anonymous death like cattle in a slaughterhouse. Weapons were the main feature of wars.

¹⁵ Available at <<http://www.warpoetry.co.uk/owen2.html>>

Weapons were named and soldiers unknown. People had been replaced by technology. People were disposable and replaceable

In the same vein, Huxley demonstrates his concern with the employment of technology for obscure purposes, yet his apprehension is placed upon the use of chemical and laboratorial conditioning in order to maintain social hierarchy, which led to stability of the system and content. From their very inception, individuals are genetically conditioned to accept their social position and never attempt to climb the social ladder or even question their places in society. The process of creating genetically modified individuals in laboratory is called Bokanovsky's Process and it is, according to one of the Directors of a Conditioning Center: "...one of the major instruments of social stability" (HUXLEY, 2007, p. 5). Social conditioning is of the essence for Ford's system because it is the means to achieve stability and through which people are maintained unquestioning. The Director goes on to say: "Ninety-six identical twin working ninety-six identical machines...The principle of mass production at last applied to biology." (HUXLEY, 2007, p. 5). Conditioning is such that laboratories contain a room called Social Predestination Room. It is worth noting that conditioning was in vogue at the time especially due to the works of Pavlov on Classical Conditioning and afterwards Skinner's conditioning.

"In the second half of the twentieth century, advances in biology were so vast that a eugenic society became more than a mad Englishman's far-fetched fantasy" (BLOOM, 2004, p. 14). In a world where conditioning is so deeply engraved into human societies, firearms would no longer be necessary. The technology that represented a threat did not come only in the form of massive killing but also by means of devoicing individuals and denying their basic freedom. Repression through violence and fear would not be required because individuals would simply volunteer and love their servitude.

Curbing individual freedom was another concern at the time *Brave New World* was published. Quite like what can be seen in Orwell's *1984*, repression of individual freedom is an elementary hinge that maintains the system together. Critical and thinking masses should be either terminated or manipulated in ways that they can no longer think critically.

Strongly influenced by the horrors of World War I, Orwell's *1984* (1949) paints a society where freedom is unthinkable. As part of the slogan of the Big Brother says: "Freedom is slavery" (p.6). As freedom is slavery; it must be restricted by all means; violence, fear, manipulation, erasing of the past, restriction of language and so on. "Orwell

produced a sick man's nightmare of sadism based on his observations of European Totalitarianism" (BRANDER, 2004, p.75) There is no space for maneuver. Individuals are restrained in such ways that they no longer exist as individuals. They are molded into a mass of uniformity.

Huxley also denotes his concern about restraints of individual freedom on behalf of the "greater good". However, the control of the masses in his novel is at a much deeper level than the oppression expressed by Orwell. Censorship in *Brave New World* (2007) goes as far as the very conception of human life. In Ford's society, repression is no longer needed because the individual's very existence has been shaped according to the rules of the system. Transforming is not necessary because people are formed how they must be. Laurence Brander puts it very well: "The people were always in a state of euphoria because the human spirit had been prisoned and confined in a perfectly conditioned healthy cadaver" (2004, p. 76).

It seems that although Huxley is able to smell the troubles down the road in terms of totalitarian regimes, he seems to be more worried about another sort of dictatorship. He discourses on the hedonistic servitude, where masses are manipulated into believing they are free. Yet, they do not seem to be aware that they are locked inside invisible bars. Huxley's satire seems to aim at the supposed freedom of capitalist societies, where people are persuaded to enjoy what they are forced to do. This effect is achieved by constant manipulation from conception to death through advertising, inducement of standards, imposition of endless pleasures among other techniques we are so acquainted with. The most efficient form of control is having people want to be under control. Ford was the one who controlled but also the one who provided the pleasures. A fair trade.

As it has been previously said, overconsumption appears to be a major topic for debate in *Brave New World* (2007). Pretty much like the American society of the 1920's, the people had to consume to keep corporations thriving. In return, they would be given a job to keep their good state. Only through the prosperity of corporations, the nation could prosper. Thus, every citizen was a clog in the machine. Otherwise, the system would falter and so would the people. The same rationale can be witnessed in *Brave New World* (2007).

In conclusion, we can say that even though *Brave New World* is a novel that paints a futuristic society set in approximately 600 hundred years after its actual time of publication,

there is some evidence that relates the concerns, fears and anxieties of its own epoch. Huxley seems to look at his own time with magnifying lenses and caution people about what the dangers he could identify in the 1930's. Although the 1930's were utterly chaotic and disastrous, one can see that some of the same issues remain today, thus making *Brave New World* (2007) a novel that represents the past, the present and perhaps the future.

It is the parable of the individual in the mass community. We live in the age of the mass. The politicians, the salesmen, the entertainers, all who batten on the mass exacerbate the instincts which sway beings as a mass. The decent individuals are carried along, still protesting but more than ever lost. In our timid totalitarianism, the individual is bruised and frustrated by forces as impersonal as nature herself. (BRANDER, 2004, p. 78)

More than ever, we are embedded in this mass culture, where everything is made according to the customer's taste according to a previously established catalogue. We are the ones being molded according to mass advertising industry. Inside a transparent cage, we live in apparent freedom. We are the ones allowed to do whatever we have to do. We are the ones being dragged along. Unlike in Charles Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), we are not the ones operating the conveyor belt; we are the ones being conveyed. Yet we do not know where.

2.2 On Totalitarianism

A large number of dystopian literary texts present this omniscient, ubiquitous, totalitarian regime responsible for controlling citizens and maintaining society united. Individuals tend to be forsaken in the name of society. Some of the classics of the 20th century dystopian literature and cinema display this system. In George Orwell's *1984* (2003), readers are presented to "The Big Brother", a figure that never appears physically along the entire narrative but whose presence cannot be forgotten. The mechanisms of control include surveillance cameras, the Thought Police, manipulation of news. All individuals must fit into this system. In the motion picture *The Matrix* (1999), this totalitarian state is represented by the matrix, an operational system designed to keep humans entertained while the machines feed on them. In *Brave New World* (2007), although this totalitarian system is liquid and transparent, individuals are so conditioned to abide to the

rules, they do it unthinkingly. In Huxley's society, no mechanism of control is needed any longer. Ultimate control has already been accomplished.

In his essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, George Claeys (2010) brings a concise and comprehensive explanation about totalitarian regimes. According to him, the term totalitarian was first introduced in 1928 and was against liberal, bourgeois, individualist ideas. This new regime aimed at controlling completely the hearts and bodies, minds and souls of people. Claeys (2010) lists seven characteristics of Totalitarianism, which will be transcribed below:

- 1- A one party state with hegemony over the secret police, and a monopoly over economic, cultural and informational sources; fascists see this state as the focus of the spiritual unity of the nation; possessing a will of its own, and having nothing existing outside it, while communists view the state as an extension of proletarian power during an interim 'dictatorship of proletariat';
- 2- A technological basis to centralized power, e.g., especially through the use of the media and surveillance techniques;
- 3- The willingness to destroy large number of domestic enemies in the name of the goals of the regime; such as the Jews under the Nazis, the Kulaks (rich peasants) by Stalin; or the intellectuals by Pol pot;
- 4- The use of 'total terror' (an emphasis particularly associated with the work of Hannah Arendt) to intimidate the population and ensure complete loyalty;
- 5- The willingness of the regime to annihilate all boundaries between the individual and the party/state, by destroying most intermediary organizations and politicizing any which remain, such as youth organization;
- 6- A 'totalist' philosophy or ideology which demands absolute loyalty and sacrifice, and the absolute submission of the citizen to the party/ state, leaving no part of private life unpoliticized; for the fascists this was based more on the idea of necessary myths for the masses, for Stalinists, it rested upon a true account of necessary historical development based on Marx's materialist conception of history, in both instances society becomes extremely militarized;
- 7- A cult of leadership, in fascism. The leader embodies the spirit, will and virtues of the people, and is identified with the nation; in communism despite the fact that Marx offered no theory of leadership as such, an equally strong cult emerged around Lenin, Stalin and later leaders like Mao Zedong and Kim Il-Sung.

When analyzing totalitarian regimes it is important to turn to Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (2012). In her work, Arendt discusses a number of relevant points for dystopian works. In order to establish a totalitarian regime, fear is a very important component. Terror is often used as a persuasive tool to force people to abide to the system. "The establishment of a totalitarian regime requires the introduction of terror as a necessary

instrument to realize a particular ideology, and this ideology has to be supported by many, even the majority, before terror can be established” (ARENDR, 2012, p.30).¹⁶

This strategy to evoke terror in order to control the masses can be seen in *1984* (2003), which is a notable by-product of the time of its publication. The Second World War had recently ended, Europe had been devastated and the future was nothing but gloomy. The society of *1984* (2003) is portrayed as a place where freedom has been exterminated, control is imperative, individualities no longer exists and the government oppresses the people in every way possible. Not by chance, Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was originally published only two years after George Orwell’s novel. Arendt catches the mood of her time in the preface of her book: “Never before was our future so unpredictable, never have we depended of political forces that may overlook the rules of good sense and self-interest- forces that seemed insane if compared to previous centuries”. (ARENDR, 2012, p.11)¹⁷. The trauma of totalitarian regimes in Germany and Russia was still vivid in Europeans minds and both the fiction in *1984* (2003) and Hannah Arendt’s theory seem to clearly capture this aura of their time.

Another interesting element discussed by Hannah Arendt that pervades dystopian literature is the masses. By definition, the term mass refers to an agglomeration of individuals who are indistinguishable from one another. This aspect can be noticed in a number of dystopias along the 20th century. The individual no longer matters. Individual freedom must be given up on behalf of society. According to Hannah Arendt (2013), totalitarian movements are achievable wherever masses exist. These masses do not have the conscience to share any common interest. They consist of neutral people who do not mind about politics and hardly ever vote. Arendt goes on to discuss two illusions that were destroyed by the rise of totalitarian regimes. The first consists of the illusion that in European states, most of the population was actively engaged in politics and that the masses did not comprise the majority of a nation’s population. The second illusion terminated by Totalitarianism was that the masses were completely neutral, silent and insignificant. This

¹⁶ My translation.

¹⁷ My translation

was confirmed by the fact that totalitarian regimes relied on the approval of the masses to achieve their goals.

This indifference of the masses is also visible in *Brave New World* (2007). In Huxley's novel, almost all the population is oblivious to the fact they are controlled by the system. Bernard Marx seems to be the only one waking up to this fact. Nobody seems to care much about anything as long as they are free to consume, entertain themselves and take their daily portion of Soma. Hannah Arendt (2012) discusses this aspect in relation to the bourgeois societies. According to her, the bourgeois competitive society has developed apathy towards public business and political issues. Individual financial success is what matters and the alienation to public issues opened up the way to the consolidation of totalitarian regimes.

Propaganda turns out to be another feature of both real totalitarian regimes and dystopias. When discoursing on *Brave New World* (2003), Gregory Claeys (2010) touches upon this point of propaganda and manipulation. He argues: "History to Ford is merely 'bunk', here it must be continuously rewritten". (2010, p. 118). In the same vein, Fredric Jameson (2005) argues: "The most haunting feature of *1984* is the elegiac sense of the loss of the past, and the uncertainty of memory" (p.33). These two statements highlight how the manipulation of reality and history is important for dystopias and totalitarian regimes. In several works of fiction, restriction to information access is of the essence for the regimes portrayed. In *Fahrenheit 451* (2012) books are burned. In *Brave New World* (2007), books are locked away from regular individuals. In *1984* (2003) news are constantly rewritten on behalf of the system.

Hannah Arendt (2012) argues that the masses must be conquered by propaganda. This propaganda is necessary because totalitarian regimes exist inside a non-totalitarian world, thus all this propaganda is directed to those outside the totalitarian system, both in other countries and people inside the country who do not comply with regime. Arendt also states that propaganda is likely to be the most important tool to deal with the non-totalitarian world. This propaganda is not entirely explicit; instead, it tends to be veiled, indirect threats to those who dare to ignore the teachings of the system.

Once Totalitarianism has accomplished complete control, propaganda is replaced with doctrination and violence is not employed to frighten the people (which is only executed in the early stages, when there is political opposition) but instead to give reality to their ideological doctrines and to their utilitarian lies. (ARENDRT, 2012, p.474).¹⁸

The quotation above resembles the propaganda techniques set into motion by totalitarian regimes from the literary examples. Lies and threats are not tokens to violence and straightforward threats. Instead, lies are used to corroborate the validity of the system. A noticeable example derives from *1984* (2003) in which the war against the other countries, the rewriting of history, and the manipulation of news serve the purpose of validating the system. According to this manipulation, the very existence of the society would be jeopardized in case the system were to be terminated. In *Brave New World* (2007) when discussing with John the Savage, the controller says that the banishment of books is necessary so that the system may prevail and along with it, the people can prevail. In the controller's words:

Because our world is not the same as Othello's world. You can't make flivvers without steel – and you can't make tragedies without instability. The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well-off; they're safe, they're never ill; they're not afraid of death, they are blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they are plagued with no mothers or fathers, they've got no wives, or children or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. (p. 193)

The statement above demonstrates what was previously said concerning totalitarian propaganda. It is not intended to frighten people any longer; instead, it is expected to justify the importance of the system to the system. The survival of people themselves depends on the survival of the system. Should the system collapse, the people would pay a very high price. Individuals are always being reminded of how costly the failure of the system would be to the people themselves. This gimmick was widely explored by two of the most notorious totalitarian regimes of the 20th century: Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany. In both countries, propaganda was supposed to persuade individuals of how beneficial the regime was for the country. The very survival of the nation strictly depended on the survival

¹⁸ My translation

of the regime. Thus, everyone must support the system so that the nation itself could thrive. In order to achieve this effect, the figure of Stalin and Hitler had to be conveyed as the benefactors of the nation. The fatherly figure whose main mission was to protect the people from external threats. They were portrayed as the leaders of the nation whose existence guaranteed the existence of the nation. Interestingly enough, this is the same strategy employed by both fictional and real characters such as Hitler, Stalin *Brave New World's* Ford, The Big Brother in *1984*, and by the matrix, in the picture of the same name.

After the devastating financial crisis of 2008 caused by the absolute deregulation of markets, global efforts were concentrated on the attempt to rescue financial markets. Yet, the discussion did not focus why this model of capitalist system had failed, and no option was pointed out. The whole propaganda encouraged individuals to be aware to the importance of saving the system that had caused the crisis. Propaganda was so intense that individuals were led to forget the causes that originated the crisis. Saving the system had to be everybody's mission. "In fact, who needs direct repression when chicken can be convinced to go spontaneously to the slaughterhouse" (ZIZEK, 2013, p.39).¹⁹ This statement seems to summarize the importance of propaganda to totalitarian or not so totalitarian regimes.

Once again, one may remember the transformation of individuals into chickens in *Brave new World* (2007). In this world devised by Huxley, terror is no longer necessary because people have been so deeply conditioned they come to love their servitude (CLAEYS, 2010, p. 114). The teachings of the system have been so consistently internalized that individuals do not even question them anymore. The only reality available to them is the one designed by the system. When exposed to the endless repetition of "the more stitches, the less riches" (HUXLEY, 2007, p.42), they are unconsciously led to believe that consumerism is vital to the reality in which they are inserted. In *The Matrix* (1999), individuals become so embedded in the system they end up living two lives, one inside the matrix and the other outside. In order for them to free themselves from machine control, they have to unplugged and die from their artificially created life so that they could see the truth.

When analyzing totalitarian regimes from history and from stories, it is very important not to overlook the mechanisms of propaganda because they are capable of

¹⁹ My translation

propagating ideas, values, principles, beliefs, lies and others. Moreover, they can consolidate regimes and establish long lasting effects to society. Furthermore, propaganda is so powerful that it is able to create a complete new reality or simulation of it.

A central figure for the success of a totalitarian regime is what Hannah Arendt terms as “The Leader”²⁰(2012, p. 510). According to her, the leader is the propeller, the engine for the entire system. Despite the large number of subordinates that encircle him, the leader is the heart and soul of the regime. This circle of subordinates help to convey a mysterious, impenetrable image about the leader. He is not supposed to be fully known. The Leader must be capable of managing the internal issues of the party so that he does not have to resort to violence to achieve his goals. Arendt (2012) mentions Hitler as an example to demonstrate that violence is not vital to get to power within the party. According to her, Hitler did not need to rely on either the SS or the SA to establish his power inside the party. He needed to manage the people so that after some years everyone owed their loyalty to Hitler for their place in the party.

Hannah Arendt (2012) highlights another interesting aspect related to the operational model of totalitarian parties. After the party is completely trained and the regime is consolidated, the sole guideline for the entire system is the desire of the Leader. Nothing else matters but the wishes of the Leader thus making him irreplaceable. Without him, the entire system would break down.

As for the practical functions of the Leader, Arendt (2012) points out two of his primary duties. The first one consists of acting as a defender of the movement against external threat. Here, one may relate his function with the propaganda used by the regime. The Leader is the only one gifted enough to defend the nation, the party, the system. He plays the role of a big father, or the big brother. While he defends the movement against external forces, the Leader is also responsible for bridging the inside and the outside world. Therefore, he is in charge of everything. No information is conveyed without his knowledge. No decision is made without his *carte blanche*. Eventually, he becomes the ultimate totem.

Due to his supreme power, the Leader no longer lies in the center of the system. He starts to hover everywhere, thus making him into a mythic figure whose mysterious, unreachable aura resembles the one of a godly status. This mechanism of worship allows the

²⁰ My translation

Leader to obtain even more power. Around this overwhelming figure, totalitarian regimes gained force and consolidated in several parts of the world.

At this point it seems one may draw some interesting parallels between the theory provided about Totalitarianism and dystopian Literature. Two great dystopian classics from the 20th century deal directly with totalitarian issues. In *1984* (2003), this connection is quite explicit due to the cruelty, harshness and overbearingness of the system. As Gregory Claeys (2010) states: “Orwell’s dystopian world-state is blunt, stark and pitiless. Consent rests upon punishment and fear.” (p. 118). Order is maintained by means of force, surveillance, violence and absolute control on the part of system keepers. Propaganda is also of the essence because the war against other states makes this ubiquitous threat into a bond that keeps the nation together. Very much like in totalitarian states from real life, information is crucial and is exclusively controlled by those in power. The Ministry of Truth is in charge of falsifying information and rewrite history. Information conveyed to the public is an attempt to keep individuals in their stark ignorance.

As mentioned above, the Leader is a prominent figure for totalitarian movement. This figure is not absent in *1984* (2003). The Big Brother. The figure that concentrates all power over Oceania, but he is never seen. This mysterious figure is able to control without his own physical presence. He is everywhere but never seen. By means of propaganda, he is not seen by the people as a tyrant but as a benefactor, someone whose presence and benevolence is the very foundation upon which the nation rests. Despite the unsurmountable and endless war, the Big Brother is always there for you. He is the one who knows best. He is the bridge to the outside world. Without him, the state would collapse. Wherefore, nobody should dare to question his authority. His wish is the people’s command.

The regime motto also denotes the importance of information access. “War is Peace/Freedom is Slavery/Ignorance is strength” (ORWELL, 2003, p.19). Oceania’s war against other states epitomizes the external threat so essential for the maintenance of Totalitarianism. When exposed to a threat individuals tend to stick together in order to defeat the enemy in common. This is the reason why fear is such an important mechanism of control. People can be manipulated more easily when afraid.

Freedom tends to be one of the very first casualties in a totalitarian movement. Individual freedom must be forsaken for the benefit of regime. The loss of freedom is a

recurrent theme in dystopian literature. People are afraid of losing their most basic freedom. Freedom to get around, to speak, to love. These basic rights are jeopardized in Orwell's novel. Surveillance is such that even within their own residences individuals are controlled by the state. Thought Police is another mechanism employed by the state to curb freedom. Even a new language is conceived to restrict people's thoughts and expression.

Regarding the last phrase of the motto, ignorance is a key pillar to maintain the system standing. When people are completely controlled, when their thoughts have been restricted, once information has been thoroughly manipulated, nothing remains but ignorance. Once ignorance reigns over and critical thinking is extinct, rulers are free to regulate as they wish. Servitude is no longer questioned. People come to love their servitude.

Love to servitude is what one can see when reading Huxley's *Brave New World* (2007). The oppressive system seems to have been taken to a whole new level. Layers of genetic conditioning cover Totalitarianism. Individuals are exposed to governmental propaganda since their very first days in laboratories. Propaganda is carried out through the endless repetition of phrases that aim at keeping the system operating. Two names for the propaganda were conceived: sleep-teaching or hypnopædia. In these lessons, children are taught the fundamentals of the regime. Free sex, consumerism, use of Soma among other themes are all lesson children learn from the very beginning. These lessons are meant to keep individuals entertained and satisfied so that they may not turn against the regime. In *Brave New World* (2007), history is also told according to the interests of the regime. Concepts such as literature, religions, parenthood are conveyed in such a way that youngsters are led to disgust these notions so strongly they cannot even stand to hear them being uttered. As Claeys (2010) puts it: "Huxley's chief concern, then, is much more with how servitude becomes attractive than it is with science or technology as such". (p. 116).

Like George Orwell's *1984* (2003), in *Brave New World* (2007), the authoritarian central figure also exists. Ford is the omniscient, ubiquitous character that does not represent the symbol of violence. Instead, he is the benefactor, the one that provides everything that is needed for the people. In Huxley's own words: "Has any of you been compelled to live through a long time-interval between the consciousness of a desire and its fulfillment?" (2007, p.38). Ford is the one who provides this allegedly ideal society where nothing is left to wish for. Ford has finally achieved social stability. Due to his generosity, Ford's power is no longer questioned. Ford's power has been established for so long that his name is used to

describe the era in which the novel is set. The time is 652 A.F (After Ford). Therefore, the power of Ford is such that he has achieved a mythic religious status. This is also confirmed by the expression said by people in the novel: “Oh, My Ford”. (HUXLEY, 2007, p. 27). This denotes that Ford has achieved a status of the god in our modern society. Like totalitarian leaders discussed by Hannah Arendt (2013), Ford is also a mysterious figure whose presence is felt, yet no seen throughout the novel. He can control society without being physically present.

In *Brave New World* (2007), control mechanisms are no longer necessary. People are constantly maintained in a state of artificial happiness. Whenever, anxiety sets in, one simply has to take a dose of Soma and go on a holiday from reality. This strategy makes the system even more efficient because people are maintained inside a cage under the illusion of freedom.

Given the information presented above, it is possible to understand that dystopian literary texts have been widely influenced by the social setting in which they are inserted. Despite the fact, dystopias tend to conceive a future for the world; their basic premise is grounded on the current model of society. In dystopias, the negative elements experienced in a certain society are magnified and therefore draw attention to the social problems

Moreover, literary dystopias have been powerful criticism tools to draw attention to the barbarous, overbearing, and cruel totalitarian systems experienced along the 20th century. The reading of dystopian literature helps individuals to comprehend how totalitarian regimes actually work and therefore they can develop their critical sense. Masses devoid of critical thinking are more susceptible to Totalitarianism in its various forms, whereas, critical individuals are more equipped with the necessary skills to discern things. Although utopias do not appear to be accomplishable, one may always attempt to turn this place into a dystopian reality.

3. An Overview of Zygmunt Bauman's Theory

This chapter is intended to outline some aspects among the vast theory produced by Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. His work is prominent to the central object of study of my MA dissertation, since Bauman's theory shall provide the foundation for the analyses of Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* and its relations to our contemporary social setting. This segment aims at providing readers with an overview of some of Bauman's concepts in order to contextualize the reason why his theory is the primary source of analyses for *Brave New World*. Therefore some key elements of his theory shall be explicated and discussed so that when readers are introduced to my analysis of Huxley's novel they can see the bridges between Bauman's and Huxley's work.

Zygmunt Bauman has been one of the most outstanding authors in the sociological field. On the verge of turning 90 years old, Bauman has become one of the most popular and bestselling authors in his field. His work addresses an extensive range of issues such as freedom, justice, human suffering, consumerism, Holocaust, ethics among a number of others. In his books, Bauman does not seem to be strictly concerned with designing a rigid and unmalleable sociological system. Instead, he seems to focus on a larger degree on the human consequences of sociological events. In a book devoted to analyze Bauman's work edited by Michael Hviid Jacobsen and Poul Ponder, it is said about Bauman's chief focus:

As is evident from all his books, he has been preoccupied with this broad topic of modernity's transformations and its human consequences and therefore he is truly generalist rather than a specialist sociologist. This topic defines his sociology rather than his adherence to particular schools of thought (2008, p.3)

The passage above helps to understand Bauman's popularity extending far beyond the boundaries of academic circles. He is an author whose northern needle of the compass points to the implications of sociological events. He does not seem to be exclusively concerned with notions and concepts to be employed within the academia. Instead, he seems to direct his strength to understanding how these concepts affect the lives of peoples across the globe. Social processes are meaningless unless they are understood in terms of how they

touch people's lives. From this perspective, Bauman's work has achieved an enormous success because it has a human touch to it and not the usually cold touch of academic studies.

His concern to make his work accessible to all audiences is often made clear by his use of language. His linguistic style is not designed to exclude readers. Instead, by making his texts reader-friendly, he accomplishes one of the vital roles of humanities, which is to be applied in order to transform people's lives. "his writing suggests that this kind of sociology can have a transformative capacity, can make people think things more deeply, can shock the reader out of their moral ennui, and can –at least partially- instigate social action" (Jacobsen, Marshmann, 2008, p. 21) His language is not meant to be restricted from the public. It is not intended to turn readers away from science but instead to draw people towards it. Bauman's language resembles that of literature thus helping make his work more socially transformative. By using a language individuals in general relate to Bauman is able to give his work a deeper sense of humanity, of transformation and identification. Jacobsen and Marshmann have an essay that addresses Bauman's use of metaphor. They argue that the use of metaphor walks hand in hand with Bauman's practicing of sociology because one of his underlying premises is that individuals should not conform to the way life looks like and seek transformation. Bauman believes in utopia practiced on a daily basis, as if tomorrow was the utopia of today. Utopia seen as journey and not as a destination. Bauman's use of metaphor grants his text with a human resonance.

Like utopia or morality, metaphor points to imagination rather logic, to infinity rather than totality, to possibility rather than probability. In the case of Zygmunt Bauman, his metaphors are methods of possibility pointing to a world existing parallel to the reality as we know, recognize and perceive it. He encourages us to see things differently, and here metaphors belong to or exemplify Bauman's favorite sociological strategy: defamiliarization. (JACOBSEN, MARSHMANN, 2008, p. 23)

Defamiliarization consists of turning what one takes for granted into something new, challenging and thought-provoking. Defamiliarization defies common sense. Once one has been catapulted out of their ordinary thinking mode, once can no longer go back. The crime scene has been trespassed and there is no turning back. Defamiliarization has been an

intermittent feature of literary work. Literature has been a trigger to the dullness of ordinary life into an exciting, risk-taking adventure. Through literature, one may see life from a different, fresh vantage point thus leading to questions and eventually to critical thinking.

Defamiliarization is a recurrent purpose in Bauman's works, which is intended to bring people out of the shallowness and drowsiness of the pond of ordinary and uncritical life. Bauman seeks to bring individuals into the turmoil and troubled waters of the torrents of critical thought. At this point, one may once relate the purpose of Bauman to instigate critical thought to the lack of thinking in the society of *Brave New World* (2007). Huxley has designed a society that very much resembles the waters of a pond in its tranquility, placidity and inertia. So much so that one the foundations of this society is the word stability. Stability achieved through lack of thinking. By showing the horrible consequences of lack of critical of thinking, *Brave New World* (2007) moves individuals out of their ordinary inertia and lead to an aware life. Somehow, one can state that *Brave New World* (2007) serves the same purpose as Zygmunt Bauman's texts.

One of the features in Bauman's work is precisely the blurring of the same border between literary and scientific language. Literary language permeates Bauman's theory. This "gimmick" allows a large number of readers to relate to his words. Therefore, science is no longer a privilege for a handful of individuals. Science becomes popular. In his book *Liquid Love*, about the frailty of human relationships in our modern world, a passage denotes Bauman's writing craft. In this passage, he discusses the modern clash between extreme individualization and the human need for bonding. According to him, people are trapped inside a dead-end maze because they have been taught to pursue the benefits of a relationship and simultaneously give up the onus of it. The rationale behind this view on relationship is identical to the one in the business world. Maximize your profits. Minimize your losses. However, this businesslike approach appears to be incompatible to human relationships. The passage goes as follows

What they hope to hear from counsellors is how to square the circle: to eat the cake and have it, to cream off the sweet delights of relationships while omitting its bitter and tougher bits ; how to force relationship to empower without disempowering, enable without disabling, fulfilling without burdening. (Bauman, 2013, p. ix)

Besides the daring provocative power of the passage above, it also displays Bauman's capability to express into metaphorical, almost literary-like language the unsolved puzzle of modern human relationships. Who has never been faced with the tough choice of giving in to temptation and eat a whole cake or save some of it for later, according to parental advisory? It is the kind of example to which anyone relates. Moreover, this passage could have been extracted from a literary text for its lyricism and its use of antonyms to convey meaning of dilemma. According to Jacobsen and Marshmann (2008), Bauman transcends the dividing-line between social science and literature.

Even Bauman's best-known argument: the dichotomy between solidity and liquidity in the modern world is one that relies on the use of metaphors to convey meaning. By using these two natural states, he gets it across to a larger number of readers because it is the kind of idea to which almost anyone can relate. In this dichotomy, Bauman captures the discrepancy between the solidity of institutions of the past such as nation, territory and state and our present times when everything is fragmented to the point of liquefaction. Nothing is expected to be contained in its form for long.

3.1 On a Modern Liquid World

By means of introduction, it seems interesting to start by saying a few words regarding Bauman's concept of the liquid and solid means after all. Bauman argues that modernity may be divided into two distinctive stages: the first he refers to as being solid modernity. Solid modernity represents a time when durability was the essence of society. Institutions were solid. Governments were strong and omniscient. Nations were well discernable. Goods were made to last. Television commercials highlighted the durability of an item. Workers had a project for life, which usually consisted of working for the same company all their lives Relationships were expected to be for life. Religions preached the eternal "*till death do us apart*". Life as a whole was more lasting, unchangeable, immutable, slow moving, perennial. These are characteristics belonging to solid elements. Time was not vital, because according to Bauman (2005) solids cancel time. As things are expected to be everlasting, time loses some of its importance. As situations were to remain the same for a long time, time did not matter as much as it does in our liquid modernity.

In *44 letters from the Liquid Modern World* (2011) he explains quite didactically and concisely what he means by a liquid world: "the world I call "liquid" because like all

liquids, it cannot stand still and keep its shape for long” (p. 1). In a world where speed and mobility are in vogue, nobody and nothing are allowed to keep its shape for long. Life in this liquid is not for those who desire for roots. Roots are solid. Solid is not cool. People and things must constantly change. Beauty standards shift. Yesterday’s fashion is uncool today. Gadgets go obsolete overnight. Yesterday’s happiness is today’s misfortune. In this schizophrenic world, individuals try to keep afloat. “Everything or almost everything in this world of ours keeps changing: fashion we follow and the objects of our attention... (BAUMAN, 2013, p. 1). One of the main characteristics of this fluid world is that of unpredictability. Individuals are so uncertain of what may become of them that every day is a struggle not to drown. Stopping means dying so individuals just carry on along the riverbed with no yesterday and no tomorrow. Finally the blissful opportunity to live in the present? However, at the current speed of life, people are not allowed to relish the present and therefore are left with nothing. As Bauman states:

Liquid life is precarious, lived in constant uncertainty. The most intense and haunting concerns of this sort of life are to be caught napping, being unable to catch up with events, falling behind, defaulting due dates, cramping with unwanted goods, missing the moment of change or taking a nonreturnable path. (2005, p.8) ²¹

“In skating over thin ice our safety is in our speed”. (Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Prudence*) This quotation is the epigraph in Bauman’s *Liquid Life* (2005). This highlights the importance of speed in the liquid world. One is expected to move faster and faster. Time is of the essence.

In a sense, solids cancel time; for liquids, on the contrary it is mostly what matters. When describing solids, one may ignore time altogether, in describing fluids, to leave time out of account would be a grievous mistake. Descriptions of fluids are all snapshots, and they need a date at the bottom of the picture (BAUMAN, 2005, p. 2)

In this society, “the meaning of time has been renegotiated” (Bauman, 2007, p. 32). That is to say, that unlike the past, time is no longer seen as cyclical or linear. Instead, Bauman defines time as being pointillist where it is fragmented, ruptured, discontinued.

²¹ My Translation

Time is no longer a perpetuum. “Time is broken up, or even pulverized into a multitude of instants. (Bauman, 2007p. 32). This fragmented time seems to boost the need for speed. Every second is a chance for the new. Second chances do not exist. Quoting Brazilian songwriter, Renato Russo: “First time is always the last chance” (1991).²²²³ One must be always alert and speedy, otherwise chances shall pass and should one not be prepared to take it, it shall not come back, that is life in our liquid modern world is so busy and fast. “Prudence suggests that for anyone wishing to catch a chance by flashing, no speed is too great; all hesitation is ill-advised since the penalty is heavy (Bauman, 2007, p.35)

Caught in a hectic current of fluidity and speed, vertigo is the only feeling possible. Individuals try to stay “informed” to everything going on around them. In order to minimize the risk of surprises one must stay tuned in everything. However, as everything is always changing one can never be fully “informed”. The world shall always catch individuals guard down. “...this world, our liquid modern world keeps surprising us: what seems certain and proper today may well appear futile, fanciful or a regrettable mistake tomorrow”. (BAUMAN, 2013, p. 2).

The Internet plays an important role in this constant pursuit of the latest news because it provides access to instant, real time news from every corner of the planet. We no longer need to wait for anything. Everything is just one click away. Goods, news, shopping all available right before your eyes. However, this magnificent device has also added to this need to not fall behind. One must have the latest phone, must be instantly and 24 hours available. Information overload has not allowed people sufficient time to process information and once again, we are all running after the unreachable. As Bauman himself puts it “...a flood of information which threatens to drown us and makes swimming or diving all but impossible”. (2013, p.2) Bauman goes on to say: “How to sift the news that counts and matters from the heaps of useless and irrelevant rubbish? How to derive meaningful messages from senseless noise?” (2013, p. 2). Our liquid modern society seems to be embedded in oceans of information that run at amazing speed and one is not allowed time to process and reflect upon it.

²² Available at <<http://www.vagalume.com.br/legiao-urbana/teatro-dos-vampiros-letras.html>

²³ My Translation

In a liquid society, consumerism and discard seem to walk side by side. Destruction is meant to make room for the new. Nothing is permanent. Everything is transient. This continual process of consumption and destruction generates an uncertainty concerning the future because the present is no longer the cornerstone for the future.

This continual sense of loss of direction seems to be the price society has to pay for its fluidity. The sense of progress and linearity has been forsaken and the future appears to be a completely unknown territory. Individuals seem to be drifting around with no sense of what lies ahead of them. This feeling is captured by Bob Dylan's song *Like a Rolling Stone* (1965): "How does it feel/ to be on your own/with no direction home/ like a complete unknown/ like a rolling stone"²⁴. We all seem to be like rolling stones gathering no moss, just flowing along our liquid life at dizzying speed in order to remain alive.

It might be said that the world of *Brave New World* (2007) does not reflect in any way this liquid modern world because the society in Huxley's novel is stagnated in a rigid and social hierarchy. However, it is important to say that in aspects their life seem to resemble ours. The importance of consuming, the importance of quickly discarding what has been consumed. The importance of sex in profusion. The constant and instant rotation of partners, as if they were disposal commodities. Upper-class individuals are allowed a mobility to foreign parts of the world not possessed by people from the lower classes. Despite the apparent social stability, the wheels of the economy and endless pleasure must keep spinning. "The opposite of the "durable" objects is "transient" ones meant to be used up – consumed- and to disappear in the process of their consumption" (BAUMAN, 2006, p.125). Despite the apparent social stability in the world designed by Huxley, one can notice the transformation of everything into an item to be used up and discarded similarly to what happens in our modern world.

3.2 On Consumer Societies

Another pivotal element of Bauman's theory is his critical quest against the society of consumers. According to him, a society of consumers is the one in which individuals see their predominant identity as the one of a consumer. This identity surpasses any other, be it

²⁴ Available at < <http://letras.mus.br/bob-dylan/11903/traducao.html>> Access on March 3rd, 2015

cultural identity, lifestyles, values or ethics. As Bauman argues in *Postmodernity and its Discontents* (1997): “In such a world, identities can be adopted and discarded like a change of costume” (p.88). We are essentially and above everything else consumers. One is what one consumes. A society of consumers is beyond a consumerist society because in the first consumerism defines life and it is the primary goal in life. “The perception and treatment of virtually all parts of social environment and actions tend to be guided by “consumerist syndrome” of cognitive and evaluative dispositions”²⁵. (BAUMAN, 2007, p. 109). This syndrome, according to Bauman (2007) goes far beyond the simple pleasure obtained from the action of consuming; instead, it is a regulatory set of strategies and attitudes, judgments that shape the patterns of an individual’s life. “The Politics of life with a capital “P” as well as interpersonal relationships tend to be modelled to the likeness of consumption means and objects and according to the guidelines of consumerist syndrome”²⁶ (BAUMAN, 2007, p.109) . In *44 Letters from the Liquid Modern World* (2010), Bauman corroborates his previous statement: “Consumerism means transforming human beings into consumers first and foremost, and demoting all their other aspects to secondary, derivative and inferior ranks. “ (p. 67)

The success of a society of consumers relies on the premise of full satisfaction of human desires. However, this satisfaction must act like a receding horizon, because one is not to be ever fully satisfied with what one owns. Once one’s desires are completely fulfilled, one stops consuming and the system fails. Therefore, promises of satisfaction are made and broken simultaneously. One is expected to be always pursuing the latest purchase, which is rapidly no longer the latest. Hence, individuals appear to be caught up in an infinite search for the obsolete. One is never meant to achieve the ultimate satisfaction. Actually, satisfaction aims to generate dissatisfaction. As Bauman, himself states: “Society of consumers has been capable to make dissatisfaction permanent”. (2007, p. 106). Goods lose their value shortly after they have been acquired so that consumers must seek a new satisfaction. This process eventually leads to an addiction-like pattern in which consumers look for ephemeral satisfaction to make up for the dissatisfaction they feel. Individuals resemble lab rats endlessly walking toward nowhere. To make matters worse they are under

²⁵ My translation

²⁶ My translation

the illusion that by walking faster and faster they will eventually attain what they wish. The passage below effectively summarizes Bauman's argument

Society of consumerists relies on the premise to satisfy human desires like no other society in the past could have accomplished or dreamed of. The promise of satisfaction, yet, shall remain seductive as long as this desire remain unattained; more importantly, as long as there is a suspicion that desires have not been fully and completely satisfied. Setting easy goals, guarantee easy access to adequate goods to their targets as well as the belief there are objective limits to legitimate and realist desires – this would mean the death of society of consumers (2007, p. 106)²⁷

One seems to live under endless dissatisfaction because dissatisfaction is what boosts consumerism. Unlike the solid modernity when goods were mostly advertised for their practical function, durability or performance, liquid modernity sells happiness through goods. Therefore, one who does not consume is thought to be unhappy. Advertising campaigns appeal to abstract and intangible values. Buy our washing powder and have a happy family. Drive our car and boost your manhood. Use our cosmetic and lift your self-esteem. Everything delivered to you. However, happiness has expiration date. Then the cycle moves on. Bauman (2010) compares goods to medicines. According to, one obtaining the latest products aims to relieving the pains and discomforts of falling behind. The fear of losing one's "market value" (p. 69). More than just being for the need to survive, one must pursue "social circulation" (p.69). Individuals like goods must not remain on the shelf.

Far beyond the simple need for basic survival, one's going to shopping mall one seeks the feeling of belonging in the system. In Bauman's words: "Confidence that you have kept up with the hectic pace of change, and so are still in the right, needs new proofs and new reassurance every day. A regular stroll through a shopping mall may be the answer to all anxieties (2010, p. 69).

Despite this apparent reassurance, shortly after, the soothing medicine becomes the very origin of discomfort. Next time one strolls through the shopping mall, the ideal medicines will not be the same. Therefore, one must keep up with the new medicines in an endless chase after the illusionary happiness. In Mick Jagger's words, this would go: "When I'm drivin' in my car/and that man comes on the radio/ He's tellin' me more and more/ about

²⁷ My translation

some useless information/ supposed to fire my imagination/ I can't get no, no, no...satisfaction (Jagger & Richards, 1965)²⁸.

The implications of this society of consumerists abound. Entire areas of social life have been reshaped. Relationships, both professional and personal have been affected. The concepts of time and space have been modified. No area of human action has been untouched by the society of consumerists and its consequences.

In one of his books, Zygmunt Bauman discusses the modern conflict between a world in constant individualization and the human atavistic need for bonding to other human beings. This book is entitled *Liquid Love* (2003). As Bauman, himself puts it: “The principal hero of this book is human relationship” (p. viii).

According to him, relationships nowadays are a great dilemma because individuals are between a rock and a hard place since they have been taught to approach relationships from a businesslike angle. Long-term commitments should be shunned at all costs. Things must be instant, and ready to use. Goods must be user-friendly. Products are returnable and refundable. However, how can one build a relationship if not over time?

The commodity approach to relationships does not seem to work satisfyingly. This seems to be the dilemma addressed by Bauman (2003). “Like other consumer goods, partnership is for consumption on-the-spot (it does not require additional training or prolonged preparation) and for one-off use “without prejudice”. First and foremost, it is eminently disposable”. (p.12). Apparently, relationships have been turned into commodities. According to this reasoning, Bauman (2003) suggest two conditions to have a short-lived and successful relationship. The first is that anyone on the verge of entering a relationship must be as rational as possible. One must avoid emotions of any nature. The second condition is that one should keep this mindset by all means. A relationship should be as pragmatic and as emotion-free as possible.

The instantaneity and looseness of virtual relationships appear to be the main attraction of this kind of contact. No long-term and solid commitment is needed. One can simply connect and disconnect by pressing a key. Once the person one is chatting to loses

²⁸ Available at <http://www.vagalume.com.br/the-rolling-stones/i-cant-get-no-satisfaction.html> Access on March 10th, 2015

their interest one can simply change to somebody else. There is no more need for conflict solving. One can simply disconnect. Like a product that no longer works to satisfaction, one can simply replace it for a new one. Individuals end up in a dissatisfaction circle because satisfaction is always one step ahead, yet unreachable. Like products, people are also disposable. Bauman (2003) summarizes the current trend in relationships: "...the old-style 'till death tears us apart' marriage already elbowed out by the self-admittedly temporary 'we will see how it works' cohabitation, is replaced by a part-time, flexible-times 'coming together' (p. 36). Bauman (2003) goes on to say: "*Homo Oeconomicus* and *Homo Consumens* are men and women without social bonds. They are the ideal residents of the market economy and the types that make the GNP watchers happy" (p. 69). *Brave New World* (2007) also present the same kind of ideal individual. They are the ones who engage in relationships shortly enough to not fully engage.

Sex in the modern liquid world is another topic discussed in *Liquid Love* (2003). He enters in this subject of sex by mentioning the control of sex by medicine that he call *Scientia Sexualis* (p.39). According to him, science promises to cure sexual, reproductive concerns of any nature. There are pills for anything. "Medicine competes with sex these days for the charge of 'reproduction'" (Bauman, 2003, p. 40). Sex and reproduction have also been swallowed by the society of consumers. Thanks to the enormous advances in the medical field, anyone who can afford it is given access to great advantage. Bauman (2003) even poses the hypothesis that in the future parents will be able to choose their children from a catalogue with donors in it.

Like in *Brave New World* (2007), individuals are produced in laboratories according to the needs of governments or individuals. So much so, that in Huxley's novel, parenthood has been forbidden and even the terms father and mother made into inappropriate language. The task of reproducing is delegated to the state so that individuals can be free to enjoy the pleasure of their lives. On the other hand, reproduction through sex is disgustingly frowned upon by Londoners who spend time among the savages.

Even children have become an object of consumption according to Bauman. Children are expected to fulfill the pleasures of parenthood, pleasure that no other object of consumption can provide. However, more and more individuals are looking for a value for money choice, in which their investment in a child can pay back in the future. Like other relationships, parenthood represents a package containing the joys and sacrifices. In a society

that prioritizes instantaneous enjoyment, dependence and autonomy, having a child may be a burden that many are willing to do without. “

Having children means weighing the welfare of another, weaker and dependent, being against one's comfort. The autonomy of one's preferences is bound to be compromised, and ever anew: year by year; daily. One may become horror of horrors, dependent. Having children may mean the need to lower one's professional ambition, to sacrifice a career', as the people sitting in judgement over professional performance would look askance at a sign of divided loyalty (Bauman, 2003, p. 43)

When Bauman discusses his metaphor of *tourists and vagabonds*, he argues that one of the premises of a successful life in the modern liquid world is to travel light. Therefore, children are seen as nuisance because traveling with a child is a hard task. Traveling light is an impossibility.

3.3 On the Fear of Strangers or Human Waste

When discussing the collateral damage of this consuming life as he calls it, Zygmunt Bauman states “I suggest that the paramount (though by no means the only) “collateral damage” perpetrated by that promotion and struggle is an overall and comprehensive commoditization of human life” (Bauman, 2007, p.120). By this, he means that anyone and everyone is judged according to the same standards as those one judges merchandise. People are evaluated according to the market benefits they can bring. Those who do not belong to the society of consumers constitute the underclass. The underclass is made up of non – consuming individuals. The underclass is uncommoditized. They remind the useful consumer classes of the dangers that await for them should they ever stop consuming. Like the dwellers of Mexico in *Brave New World* (2007) these individuals are to be excluded to an invisible place, far away from the glossy world of consumption. Like filthy waste, they are supposed to be hidden in the underworld (or sewage) of the underclass. In *Brave New World* (2007), London is where the happy ever-consumers reside. Mexico is where the underclass is to be deposited. The disruption in London begins when John the Savage is taken to London.

These people must be secluded because they do not contribute to the happy well-being of society of consumers. They are those who failed.

The poor of the society of consumers are totally useless. Decent and normal members of society –bona fide consumers- want nothing from them and expect nothing, no one (mostly no one who truly counts, speaks up, is listened to and heard). For them, zero tolerance. Society would be much better off if the poor burnt their tents and allowed to be burnt with them –or just left. The world would be much more endearing and pleasant to inhabit without them inside it. The poor are not needed, so they are unwanted (BAUMAN, 2007, p. 126)

Nowadays, human rights are debatable, whereas consumers' rights are not. This shows the evaluation rationale operating in a society of consumers. Not partaking at the table of happy consumers is doom and exile. Salvation can solely be attained through consumerism. Consumerism is both the journey to salvation and its destination.

This ongoing temptation to purge the world from those who personify failed consumers resembles the quest of totalitarian regimes from the 20th century to expurgate those they considered as the nuisances of the world.

Another aspect of Bauman's theory concerning segregation of the lower classes and that shall be relevant to the study of *Brave New World* (2007) is his metaphor of *tourists and vagabonds*. Bauman argues that the so-called *tourists* are those who master the skills to be unfixed, in other words, they are the individuals capable to be somewhere without being attached to it. They are present, yet they are inside a bubble, which can only be pierced by what they want to come through. They are not rooted to the place they are in. They are transient, autonomous, uncommitted, and free to come and go anytime they wish. The tourist's life is a constant flux. Life of this sort is a sequential; instead, it is an episodic life. They are the epitome of success, because they have nothing to hold on and to be held on by. Like commodities, they are made to circulate. More than arriving, moving is what matters. As Bauman (1997) himself states "Mobility is the name of the game: one must be able to move when the needs push or the dreams call" (p. 90). *Tourists* engage in traveling by choice. They are entitled to pursue a relief from the boredom of repetitive routine life. Physically or virtually they are allowed to flee from ordinary life. "...mobility has become the most powerful and most coveted stratifying factor, the stuff of which the new, increasingly

worldwide, social, political economical and cultural hierarchy are daily built and rebuilt". (Bauman, 1998, p. 9). The *tourist* does not have to adhere to anything or anyone. *Tourists* are fluid, liquid, they just come and go. They are not expected to commit to anything. Mobility means prestige.

On the other hand, there are the *vagabonds*. They are the flawed citizens of a liquid society of consumers. They do not meet the requirements to be categorized as good citizens because they fail to consume and they are not allowed to be on the move. They are those who move because they are unwelcome where they are. *Vagabonds* are those to be made invisible whenever necessary.

The tourists stay or move at their heart's desire. They abandon the site when new untried opportunities beckon elsewhere. The vagabonds, however, know that they won't stay for long, however strongly they wish to, since nowhere they stop they are welcome: if the tourists move because they find the world irresistibly attractive, the vagabonds move because they find the world unbearable inhospitable. (Bauman, 1997, p. 92).

Separation of individuals is another feature of *Brave New World* (2007) because those who reside in London are the privileged ones, who are granted the opportunities to fly to Mexico on their vacation out of curiosity about the life of savages. Even though Londoners are in direct contact with the savages, they are constantly security of the guards who are there to ensure Londoners come out unharmed. Like in the liquid modern society, the vagabonds, or underclass or the savages in Huxley's work, have the sole function to remind happy consumers of what may happen should they stop partaking of the fun consumerist life.

In order to avoid this contact with the ramble, wealthy individuals have relied on the concept of gated communities, where state-of-the-art surveillance is the primary feature buyers seek. They look for high-priced condominiums where visitors are screened before they are granted access. Another important advantage of this sort of property is the facilities available to these individuals. Gyms, pools, playgrounds, recreation rooms all designed to avoid what Bauman denominates as *mixophobia*. Those who can afford it no longer have to endure the barbarity, the discomfort and fears of contact with other human beings. Inside these gated communities, their sole companions are those who belong to their social level. Like in *Brave New World* (2007), the savages and the civilized are perfectly divided.

However, *tourists* travel anywhere either physically or with their electronic devices. Like in *Brave New World* (2007), well-off citizens are allowed to travel to the savage's area, e.g. tourists having access to the slums in Rio de Janeiro City so that they may see how the life of the underclass works. Tourists wander across poor zones as if they were at a zoo or in a safari to admire some exotic species to which they do not see in their natural habitat. Nevertheless, when slum dwellers are spotted in luxurious neighborhoods such as Copacabana Beach, they must be either working to serve the upper classes or they are suspiciously frowned upon.

When discussing overpopulation and human waste Bauman (2004) exposes the paradoxical need for some of this human waste. According to him, these ramble cannot be eliminated, otherwise there would no labor to clean toilets, or collect the trash produced by the upper classes.

In this sense, this human waste seems to live in a limbo, stranded between the need for their unskilled services and their undesirability. They do not seem to belong anywhere. They cannot be completely discarded. Yet, they cannot be accepted. This limbo becomes more noticeable in shopping malls or temples of consumption. Workers are supposed to be uniformed so they cannot mingle with the herd of happy consumers who drift along store windows. These workers are there to perform their chores and therefore must be labeled. Their uniforms are like brands. Under other circumstances, they would be outsiders and therefore frowned upon. Once their uniforms are off, they are expected to leave the mall's premises. Bauman (2005) argues

In a society of consumers, they are “failed consumers”- those dispossessed of the money that would allow them to boost market capacity and therefore they create a new sort of demand that a profit-driven industry cannot supply or colonize in a profitable way. Consumers are the main asset of the society of consumers, while failed consumers are its most annoying and expensive liability.²⁹

According to Bauman (2005), another consequence of the global economic progress is the ever-growing number of immigrants pursuing a better life in other parts of the globe. Bauman states that the more economic progress advances, the more “redundant population”

²⁹ My Translation

is produced. By redundant population, he means people who are no longer necessary because they cannot be absorbed by the society of consumers. They are what Bauman (2005) defines as the “side effect” of economic modernization. Eventually they have to pursue other areas where they can find subsistence. In these more developed areas, they represent the return of human waste. “Immigrants, specially newcomers exhale the overwhelming stench of landfills and, under many disguises, haunt the nights of potential victims of growing vulnerability”³⁰(Bauman, 2005, p. 74). These immigrants are important warnings of may happen to anyone, should they fail to succeed in the game of a society of consumers.

Another kind of human waste is that formed by refugees. They are those fleeing conflict zones and have to look for shelter in other countries. Upon them lies the stigma of terrorists. Besides being “parasites”, they are also seen as a threat due to their origin, creed and habit (Bauman, 2005). They are the ones who do not belong. They are the ones who are frowned upon when they go by. Mainly, after the events of September 11th, 2001, the fear of strangers has become mainly represented by an ever-present enemy that can be lurking around the bend. Terrorism has become a major threat represented by particular group of individuals. No sooner had Paris been brutally attacked by ISIS on November 13th, 2015, than François Hollande decreed the closure of all French borders. This measure implies the need to contain the terrorism by locking them out of France. Nations as well as individuals believe that by building walls, gates, installing CCTV, they will be able to feel secure. Therefore, anyone unidentified represents an immediate threat. Those who are unidentified are the ones who do not dwell inside the same walls as we do. Therefore, they are strangers. Therefore, they are dangers. As Bauman (2010) says: “Strangers are dangers, so every stranger is a container and a portent of danger. Or so at least they believe. And what they wish more than anything else is to be secure from danger”. (p.160)

According to Bauman (2010), these fears are representations of other undercurrent of anxieties, such as insecurity about one’s job, unemployment, unreliable partnerships, income loss, social status loss, eviction, future unpredictability, among other social concerns that haunt individuals’ daily existence.

³⁰ My Translation

Strangers do not embody only the justifiable threat of terrorism, they also symbolize the terror of a liquid world in which individuals skate blindfolded on thin ice and in which they are not allowed to slow down, otherwise they may fall behind, and therefore perish.

4 A Reading of *Brave New World* in *Liquid Times*

Having presented some background information about Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and about Zygmunt Bauman's theory, this close reading shall be devoted to try to interlace some aspects of both.

The very first characteristic of *Brave New World* (2007) to catch my eye was undeniably the raging need for consumption in Ford's society. Since their very inception (conception has been banned in *Brave New World*), individuals are brainwashed to consume in order to keep the economy running. On the very first pages of the novel, it is made clear that one of the fundamental pillar of Ford's society is devouring consumerism. Individuals are conditioned to consume as much as they possibly can. On the other hand, they are conditioned to hate activities that do not require consumption of any nature. "Imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It's madness" (Huxley, 2007, p.25).

As shown in the initial tour along the Conditioning Center, ever since their early infancy, people are taught to consume so that the economy could run smoothly and everyone could be happy. A few passages from the novel denote the conditioning that individuals undergo when they are still toddlers: "Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, less riches" (Huxley, 2007, p. 42). At this point, we may remember a point made by Bauman concerning our society of consumers that says that in a society of consumers, we are consumers above everything else. What and how much we consume shape our primary identity. "Consumerism means transforming human beings into consumers first and foremost, and demoting all their other aspects to secondary, derivative and inferior ranks. Consumerism also means the recycling of biological necessity into commercial capital". (Bauman, 2010, p. 67). There is no better way to transform individuals into consumers than beginning at the earliest possible age.

According to the website of American Psychological Association³¹, nowadays American children are exposed to more than 40,000 commercials a year. Assuming each commercial running time is 30 seconds each, it may be estimated that children view an average of 55 minutes of commercials daily, adding up to approximately 333 hours a year

³¹ Available at <http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/advertising-children.aspx>> Access on November 23rd, 2015.

watching commercials. In *Brave New World* (2007), sleep-teaching and hypnopedia are the methods to boost consumerism, whereas in our liquid modern world, advertising appears to perform this role. The American Psychological Association's website presents a study concerning the effects of advertising on children:

Research on children's commercial recall and product preferences confirms that advertising typically achieves its intended effects. A variety of studies using differing methodologies find that children recall content from the ads to which they've been exposed. Product preference has been shown to occur with as little as a single commercial exposure and to strengthen with repeated exposures. Most importantly, studies have shown that product preferences affect children's product purchase requests and that these requests do influence parents' purchasing decisions.³²

A passage from *Brave New World* (2007), in which the importance of conditioning is explained is transcribed for comparative purposes

Not so much like drops of water, though water, it is true, can wear holes in the hardest granite; rather, drops of liquid sealing-wax, drops that adhere, incrust, incorporate themselves with what they fall on, till finally the rock is alone scarlet blob.

Till at last the child's mind is these suggestions, and the sum of these suggestions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too- all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides –made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions!

In *Brave New World* (2007), sleep-teaching and hypnopedia result in turning individuals into consumers for all their lives. These methods are very effective, so much so that, further along the novel, Lenina expresses her passion for clothes and shopping: “What a perfectly sweet *Malthusian* belt...I simply must get one like it...I love new clothes, I love new clothes, I love...”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 43/44). When Lenina says that she must get a new *Malthusian* belt, she implies that her need for new clothes has already been internalized. After so much conditioning, she no longer has a choice, she must purchase, and consequently she loves it. She has not been given a chance to choose whether she likes shopping or not. This seems to be the case of children in this liquid world. They have been so embedded in this world of advertising that they do not seem to be able to do otherwise. They must shop and they must love it because they do not know otherwise. As Bernard Marx thinks to himself regarding the conditioning system: “One hundred repetitions three nights a week for

³² Available at <http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/advertising-children.aspx>> Access on November 23rd, 2015.

four years, thought Bernard Marx, who was a specialist on hypnopaedia. Sixty-two thousand four hundred repetitions make one truth. Idiots!” (Huxley, 2007, p. 40)

This advertising bombing triggers what Bauman (2005) defines as “consumerist syndrome”. This syndrome is characterized by the incessant pursuit of the latest product to be purchased in order to recall the pleasure obtained from the previous buy. However, the more individuals shop, the more this pleasant thrill wanes, thus generating an incessant displeasure originated from the pursuit of pleasure. “What begins as a necessity must end as compulsion or addiction” (Bauman, 2005, p.107)³³. This effect may be compared to the ever-increasing need for chemical drugs. In order to relieve the pain from consumerism, one must go and shop some more. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction walk hand in hand. According to Bauman (2005), the promise of satisfaction has never been greater than in our liquid society. Individuals are told that happiness is always at arm’s length, as long as they can afford to buy it or possess credit to buy it. However, this promise must remain unfulfilled because once individuals are fully satisfied, they shall not pursue any more goods, and that would represent the end of the society of consumers.

“The consumerist syndrome” goes far beyond the simple pleasure obtained from the advent of shopping; it also defines the existence in the society of consumers. As Bauman (2005) puts it: “...the perception and treatment of all parts of the social environment and the actions evocated by it tend to be guided by the “consumerist syndrome...” (p. 109)³⁴. All spheres of human deeds are greatly determined by this consumerist syndrome. There seems to be no life outside the consumerist circle.

Brave New World (2007) finds ways to placate the frustrations and burdens derived from life, in particular to this life of consumerism. Our liquid society seems to be seeking the same kind of ways relieve individuals from the pains and burdens.

One of the pillars of Ford’s society is the need for everyone to be completely happy at all times. In order to achieve this goal, individuals are provided with three major subterfuges. Individuals are allowed and even encouraged to release all their sexual desires. Endless entertainment and distraction keep people away from concerns. From time to time, people watch the *feelies*, something that resembles cinema. Moreover, their music is designed to make individuals achieve a state of ecstasy. Furthermore, and most importantly, individuals are supplied with a daily ration of *soma*, a side-effect free drug that gives

³³ My Translation

³⁴ My Translation

individuals the so-called holiday from their daily sadness. This need for endless happiness and how it can be achieved can be seen in the conversation between Mustapha Mond, the World Controller, and John the Savage. “Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labor, and then the *soma* ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies. What more can they ask for? (Huxley, 2007, p. 197)

In the novel, from their remotest childhood, individuals are taught to pursue the satisfaction of their sexual instincts. Relationships are not to last long, instead they should be fleeting. Individuals are expected to change partners as quickly as they can. They should never get bored of their partners. As soon as boredom sets in, another partner ought to be sought. In the early pages of the book, the Director of Conditioning denotes this when he is explaining to his students the fundamental elements of Ford’s society. According to him, no sexual desire should be repressed as they were before the time of Ford. Teenagers and even children ought to be encouraged to engage in erotic activities from a very early age. The words of the Director goes as follows

He let out the amazing truth. For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations afterwards, erotic play between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!); and had therefore been rigorously suppressed. A look of astonished incredulity appeared on the faces of his listeners. Poor little kids not allowed to amuse themselves? They could not believe it.

In order to promote happiness among its citizens, no sexual desires should be repressed because then frustration would set in as people in Ford’s society are not supposed to be able to deal with frustrations. Sexual partners ought to be under constant rotation as this hypnopædic drill shows: “Everyone belongs to everyone else” (Huxley, 2007, p. 34). In other words, the sentence above means that nobody belongs to nobody else. Everyone is supposedly free to endlessly pursue one partner after the other. As Fanny says: “Of course there’s no need to give him up. Have somebody else from time to time, that’s all. He has other girls, doesn’t he?” (Huxley, 2007, p. 35). As Bauman (2010) says: “Now you can just go online and order genitalia” (p.22). Sex has become a microwavable thing. Rituals are gone. Convenience has been gained. Gratification is always instantaneous. One does not have to go through all the waiting, and risks of being turned down by a potential partner. Flirting is no longer necessary because individuals are aware of the kind of negotiation in which they are engaging. There is no need for calling the following day because nobody is looking for post-coital engagement. Once the deed has been done, individuals can go their

separate paths and seek another partner for the following night. As Fanny puts it in *Brave New World* (2007), “it’s not as though there were anything painful or disagreeable about having one or two men besides Henry. And seeing that, you ought to be a little more promiscuous...”

Given the circumstances, why should anyone experience the onus of a till death do us part kind of relationship?

A consequence of this fleetingness of relationships is that individuals do not develop any bonds toward their partners. As they are not relationships *per se*, instead they seem to be more like interactions, human feelings end up waning to the point of extinction. Commitment is *démodé* and fun is what matters.

In this setting, individuals seem to become nothing but goods to be enjoyed to the customer’s discretion until it is no longer amusing and therefore must be discarded without regrets of any sort. Zygmunt Bauman dedicates an entire book to this of human relationships in a liquid modern world. This book is entitled *Liquid Love- On the Frailty of Human Bonds*, and it discusses the transformation of human relationships into commodities. Bauman (2003) argues that human relationships have become a very complex paradox in our liquid modernity because individuals still desire for bonding, however, they do not want the burdens that comes from long-lasting relationships. Thus, individuals appear to conduct their relationships following a businesslike approach, which is, maximize profits and terminate losses. As Bauman (2003) states

What they hope to hear from the counsellors is how to square the circle: to eat the cake and have it, to cream off the sweet delights of relationship while omitting its bitter and tougher bits, how to force relationship to empower without disempowering, enable without disabling, fulfilling without burdening (p.ix)

In a world of fast-growing individualization, committing to another human being seems to a scary thing because one does not obtain one’s benefit straight away, as when one buys a pair of shoes. Firstly, one must sacrifice something and the outcome is never certain. In a stock market language, one is putting one’s money in in a high-risk investment and for long-term dividends. Therefore, in a world regulated by market laws, relationships appear quite off-putting. “All in all, what they learn is that commitment and particularly long-term commitments, is the trap that the endeavor to relate should avoid more than any other danger” (Bauman, 2003, p. x). Besides the risks of a long-term commitment, when one engages in a longstanding relationship, one is forced to give up other possibilities. “Keep all

doors open at any time” (Bauman, 2003, p. x). By keeping doors always open, one is not required to experience dullness, boredom, sameness, among other downsides of enduring engagements. Similarly to what one sees in *Brave New World* (2007) one is not expected to cope with the difficulties derived from a relationship, instead, one should seek for sugarcoated relationships.

According to Bauman, in liquid modernity, social networks have become so popular due to the ease with which one is able to connect and to disconnect. When online, one is able to keep all doors open, but when one door is no longer attractive, one is able to disconnect and turn to a more interesting one. “Unlike its offline alternative, the online world renders an infinite multiplication of contact conceivable- both plausible and feasible. It does this through reducing their duration and consequently by weakening such bonds...” (Bauman, 2010, p.15). Social networks are not available to the characters in *Brave New World*. However, it seems they would take an interest in this alternative to/of relationship.

Relationships seem to follow a market rationale; one expects maximum profit and minimum loss at one’s earliest convenience. One should not nurture a relationship in order to make it permanent. When one does not see profit coming soon, one is allowed to pursue another investment. The same logic seems to apply to relationships in liquid modernity.

...in a consumer culture like ours, which favors products ready for instant use, quick fixes, instantaneous satisfaction, results calling for no protracted effort, foolproof recipes, all-risk insurance and money-back guarantees. The promise to learn the art of loving is a (false, deceitful, yet keenly wished to be true) promise to make love experience in the likeness of other commodities, that allure and seduce by brandishing all such features and promise to take the waiting out of waiting, sweat out of effort and effort out of results (Bauman, 2003, p. 7)

Relationships, like goods are expected to deliver instant joy without much effort or be disposed of, as a boy in *Brave New World* says: “I once had to wait for nearly four weeks before a girl I wanted would let me have her”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 38).

Similarly to other aspects of human life, relationships have been undergoing a commoditization process. In a society of consumers, where individuals are, above all consumers, relationships must follow the logic of consumerism. One is not supposed to wait for the long-term benefits of a relationship. Like the boy in *Brave New World* (2007), consumerists must not waste an entire month for what they desire. They want to consume the product or have the person straight away. No waiting is tolerable. “Like other consumer goods, partnership is for consumption on-the-spot (it does not require additional training or

prolonged preparation) and for one-off use “without prejudice”. First and foremost, it is eminently disposable” (Bauman, 2003, p. 12). One is expected to engage in partnerships that should not last for too long. Like goods, relationships must never pass their sell-by-date. Like Aldous Huxley in his novel: “The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving anyone too much”. (2007, p.209). In Bauman’s words: “Don’t let the relationship escape from head’s supervision, don’t allow it to develop its own logic and particularly to acquire rights of tenure- to fall out of your pockets where it belongs”. (Bauman, 2003, p. 21) As the Director puts it: “Don’t imagine, he said, that I’d had any indecorous relation with the girl. Nothing emotional, nothing long-drawn. It was perfectly healthy and normal”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 84) In this logic, human bonds to others are perishable, and ought to be gotten rid of, before it rots. At the first sign of trouble, one must fall out of love.

Another important element is happiness production in *Brave New World* (2007) is the endless amount of distractions and entertainment to which individuals are exposed. By no means, should they feel any sort of loneliness, or sadness, or concern. In Ford’s society individuals must be constantly distracted in order to prevent any kind of negative feeling. In a passage of the novel, Linda, while still stranded in the Reservation describes to her son, John the Savage, the wonder of Ford’s world.

And she would tell him about the lovely music that came out of a box, and all the nice games you could play, and the delicious things to eat and drink, and the light that came when you pressed a little thing in the wall, and the pictures that you could hear and feel and smell, as well as see, and another box for making nice smells, and the pink and the green and blue and silver houses as high as mountains , and everybody happy and nobody ever sad or angry, and everyone belonging to everyone else and the boxes where you could see and hear what was happening at the other side of the world ... (Huxley, 2007, p.110)

Ford’s society promotes a life that is full of games, senseless music and cinema; continuous chattering is fomented in order to keep individuals pleasantly distracted. “Huxley’s utopians were provided with a series of non-stop distraction guaranteed to ward off boredom and discourage idle speculation about the nature of things” (Bowering, 2004, p. 71)

One of main things to be frowned upon in *Brave New World* (2007) is the need for solitude. People are conditioned to always seek the company of others in order to terminate with one’s capacity to think profoundly. His need for solitude and quietness is what makes Bernard Marx a misfit in society. On one of his dates with Lenina, there is a conflict because

Bernard wants them to sit down and look at the sea. However, Lenina does not see a point in silently looking to the sea. Bernard says: “I want to look at the sea in peace, he said. One can’t even look with that beastly noise going on” (Huxley, 2007, p.78). Their argument goes on and Bernard says: “I thought we’d be more...more together here-with nothing but the sea and the moon. More together than in that crowd, or even in my rooms”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 79). Lenina counter-argues: “But Bernard, we shall be alone all night”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 77). In the end, Lenina convinces Bernard to go an event named Semi-Demi of the Women’s Heavyweight Wrestling Championship. (Huxley, 2007, p. 77)

As a well-conditioned woman, Lenina strongly believes that their waking hours are to be spent in the company of others and always doing something. No one is expected to be left alone, otherwise deeper thoughts may arise and one will cause trouble down the line.

Bauman (2010) describes the case of a real-life girl who sent 3,000 text messages over a one-month period. Bauman (2010) draws the conclusion that over thirty days she did not have a chance to spend more than ten minutes of her waking hours alone. She does not even know how to be with herself any longer. “By now, she’s probably forgotten how one lives-thinks, does things, laughs or cries-in one’s own company, without the company of others. Like in *Brave New World* (2007), the modern liquid world discourages individuals to spend time with themselves. We are not allowed time and silence. There seems to be a buzzer, a notification or a reminder that the world out there exists. Interaction is the order of the day. However, the content and the length of the interaction are not. What matters is the endless circulation. As Bauman argues: “In the buddy-buddy sort of relationship, not messages as such but coming and going of messages, the circulation of messages, are the message – don’t mind the content”. (2003, p. 34) Like in a roller coaster the view does not matter, the moving (and the speed) is what does. Stopping, thinking, looking inwards does not give a thrill and must therefore be avoided.

Running away from loneliness, you drop your chance of solitude on the way: of that sublime condition in which one can gather thoughts, ponder, reflect, create-and so, in the last account, give meaning and substance to communication. But then, having never savored its taste, you may never know what you have forfeited, dropped and lost (Bauman, 2010, p. 9)

This loss of “meaning and substance” in communication seems to be represented in *Brave New World* (2007) by Huxley’s choice and use of language to voice his characters. Since most of these characters are incapable of any in-depth thinking, Huxley builds a great

deal of his narrative using short and simplistic sentences and structures. This sort of language aims to express the inaptitude of some characters to put forward any complex thought. Extremely short linguistic chunks convey the shallowness of their ideas. They are so embedded in distractions of all sorts that they seem unable to elaborate any more complex reasoning. The characters' existence seems to be entirely based on physical sensations. As Margaret Atwood states in the preface of the 2007's edition of *Brave New World*: "All is surface; there is no depth". (2007, p. XIII). This effect seems to be achieved by over simplistic language. Moreover, the contents of interactions seem to go no deeper than ordinary subjects. Characters in the book talk mostly about amenities such as sexual adventures, clothing, repetition of hypnopaedia, movies named "feelies", their music, and not much else.

Curiously, Bauman (2010) has written an essay on the fast-growing popularity of *Twitter*, a social network that allows individuals to exchange messages instantly. However, these messages must not exceed 140 characters. According to Bauman (2010), *Twitter* has become extremely popular because it allows individuals to be always seen. He argues that the more one *tweets*, the more visible one is to the public eye. In this celebrity-driven world, being seen is one of the primary goals of existence. The depth of interaction is irrelevant. One must continuously *tweet* in order to be seen and heard. "Stop talking- and you are out. Silence equals exclusion". (Bauman, 2003, p.35) What one says does not matter. One hundred forty characters approximately fills two lines in a text like the one you are reading. How can deepness be developed? In order to be able to interact so rapidly and in such a concise way, one must necessarily give up content. That is what Bauman (2010) argues in a passage of his essay

Once face-to-face contact is replaced by a screen-to-screen variety, it is the surfaces that come into touch. Courtesy of Twitter, surfing, the preferred means of locomotion in our hurried life of instantly born and instantly vanishing opportunities has finally caught with interhuman communication. What has suffered as a result is intimacy, the depth and the durability of human intercourse and human bonds. (p.19)

In this setting, one must avoid at all costs any kind of complexity. Long e-mails are instantly deleted. Complex and thought-provoking conversations are quickly dismissed. Communication must be battered into 140-character tweets, as birds do.

As Margaret Atwood (2007) argues, *Brave New World* is a world of senses, of surface, of shallowness. There is no room for deepness. There is no room for books and

quietness. In this world of continuous buzzing distractions and entertainment, films and music play an important role. Films in the novel are called *feelies*. *Feelies* appear to be motion pictures with an oversimplified plot that provide viewers with the same sensations experienced by the characters in the film. Music seems to be of the same kind. Music is used in ritualistic-like events in which participants reinforce their conditioning and their love for their leader Ford. These rituals take place in a building called *Westminster Abbey Cabaret* and one of the performances *London's Finest Scent and Color Organ. All the Latest Synthetic Music* (Huxley, 2007, p. 65). A band is playing the hit song of the moment: "There ain't no Bottle in all the World like that dear Little Bottle of mine" (Huxley, 2007, p.65). This song praises their drug *Soma* and its chorus goes as follows

Bottle of mine, it's you I've always wanted!
Bottle of mine, why was I ever decanted?
Skies are blue inside of you,
The weather's always fine;
For
There ain't no Bottle in all the world
Like that dear little Bottle of mine (Huxley, 2007, p. 66)

A conversation between John the Savage and the World Controller explicates the antagonism between their points of view. John the Savage born and raised in the Reservation is fond of Shakespeare, while the World Controller argues that for everyone to be happy literature must be banned and other kinds of art should be promoted.

World Controller: You've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We've sacrificed high art. We have the feelies and scent organ instead.
John: But they don't mean anything.
World Controller: They mean themselves, they mean a lot of agreeable sensations to the audience.
John: But they're...they're told by an idiot (Huxley, 2007, 194)

Again, in *Brave New World* (2007) superficiality seems to be the key to maintain everyone in their happy state of mind. Art and its instability have been banished. Critical thinking too. Human bonds have been ripped apart. Individualization prevails. People live in a manufactured state of happiness.

When, for any reason, the glossy varnish of happiness fades, one can always rely on the ultimate relief: *Soma*. *Soma* is a drug administered by the state and every individual in Ford's society is given a daily portion of this drug to be taken when they may feel down and

want to seek a holiday. A holiday is what individuals in the novel call the time they are under the influence of soma. Soma does not present any side effects and can be taken at any time and by anyone. As the song quoted above says, the sky is always blue and the weather is always fine when one is under the influence of soma. “If anything should go wrong, there’s soma” (Huxley, 2007, p. 195). Soma is the ultimate escape for any troubles they may experience. “After ectogenesis and conditioning, Soma was the most powerful instrument of authority in the hands of the Controllers of the World-State (Bowering, 2004, p. 70). Soma is so important in Ford’s world, that it can be seen indeed as an essential instrument of control that guarantees no individual should be discontent and thus rebel against the World-State.

According to a publication from the Harvard Medical School³⁵, one out of ten American takes some kind of antidepressant. This publication also quotes a study from National Center for Health Statistics that says that over a 10-year period there has been an increase of 400% in the consumption of antidepressants. In July of 2010, a Brazilian magazine entitled *Superinteressante* published a report stating that Clonazepam was the second best-selling medicine in Brazil, adding up to a total of 2.1 tons in 2010 alone. The website of Berkeley University³⁶ shows that the number of long-term users (over 24 months) of antidepressants has doubled since 1999.

Based on these publications, one may see an overall and significant increase in the intake of antidepressants. According to Ronald Elson, a psychiatrist at Berkeley University for 30 years interviewed by Berkeley’s webpage, one of the reasons for this increase is the belief that we should be happy and that sadness is to be treated: “We also tend to think we should be happy, so sadness gets confused with depression, and we think it should be treated, often by medication”. Here I quote Brazilian philosopher Luiz Felipe Pondé: “The greatest fetish of our time is the pursuit of happiness” (2012, p.134). In this modern liquid world, one is obliged to be or to appear happy. Therefore, at the first sign of sadness, one believes that something is wrong because the entire world is happy, except oneself. Thus, one is inclined to seek drugs that shall alleviate one’s pains.

In *Brave New World* (2007), the endless artificial state of happiness is a governmental action to keep all individuals in a state of lethargy and stupor so that Ford’s rulers can keep all society under control. Another passage from a conversation between Mustapha Mond,

³⁵ Available at <http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/astounding-increase-in-antidepressant-use-by-americans-201110203624> Access December 8, 2015

³⁶ Available at < <http://www.berkeleywellness.com/healthy-mind/mood/article/are-antidepressants-overprescribed> > Access December 8, 2015

one of the World Controllers, and John the Savage elicits the importance of Soma to the World-State

...anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there's always soma to give you a holiday from the facts. And there's always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now you swallow two or three half-gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. (Huxley, 2007, p. 210)

Curiously, in the interview given to Berkeley's University webpage, psychiatrist Ronald Elson states that another reason for the dramatic increase in antidepressants consumption is the fact that individuals look for "quick fixes", that is to say that one does not want to wait long enough to be happy. One wants happiness delivered to one's door as quickly as possible. Once again, it is possible to see a relationship between the concept of happiness and the society of consumers. The same consumerist rationale applied to the idea of happiness. As Bauman writes: "...as the impulse to seek in stores and only in stores the solution to all problems and relief for pains... (2007, p. 107) Happiness is not to be achieved by persistence and training. Happiness must be purchased at a suitable time. As the slogan of a famous soda company exclaims: "Open happiness!"³⁷ As simple as that, happiness found at the turn of a soda screwcap.

When happiness cannot be found in a store, one can always look for it in a drugstore because when dissatisfaction sets in, one can always resort to medication and its promises to relieve all suffering. Like *Brave New World* (2007) says: "Take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache or a mythology". (Huxley, 2007, p. 46.)

Bauman (2010) addresses this medicalization in society, when he claims that recently virtually every condition has been labelled and defined as a disease requiring urgent medical attention. As Henry Foster puts it in *Brave New World*: "A doctor a day keeps the jim-jams away". (Huxley, 2007, p. 163) Bauman exemplifies with cases of momentary shyness, which is a condition that any individual has already experienced. However, in medical practice, this momentary condition has been named as "social anxiety disorder", which should be treated as soon as possible through the use of medication. Bauman goes on to say: "Of course, what we pay for in such cases is the promised freedom from a particular fear and anxiety, but seldom, if ever, does the drug we buy make us generally less fearful and less

³⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Happiness

prone to anxiety” (Bauman, 2010, p. 78). Hence, despite the promises of pharmaceutical companies, one does not rid oneself from anxiety, fear, or sorrow; instead, one simply temporarily alleviates the symptoms. These symptoms shall re-emerge when the effect of medication fades out. Therefore, one must choose between a constant state of artificially manufactured happiness or the words of John the Savage: “Well, I’d rather be unhappy than have the sort of false, lying happiness you were having here”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 156).

Another element that stands out when one reads *Brave New World* (2007) is the separation and discrepancy between London and New Mexico. While London is a highly developed and artificialized society, New Mexico is depicted as an underdeveloped and barbarian-like society. “They took their seats in the plane and set off. Ten minutes later they were already crossing the frontier that separated civilization from savagery” (Huxley, 2007, p. 90). Upon arriving in the Reservation, Bernard and Lenina catch their first glimpse of life condition there. “The dirt, to start with, the piles of rubbish, the dust, the dogs, the flies. Her face wrinkled up into a grimace of disgust. She held her handkerchief to her nose” (Huxley, 2007, p. 94). While Bernard and Lenina had been used to a life of cleanliness, organization, artificiality, when in the Reservation they face themselves with the bare reality of life in this place. This initial shock triggers a discussion that sheds light on the discrepancy between London and New Mexico. On the one hand, Lenina argues: “But cleanliness is next to fordliness” (Huxley, 2007, p. 94). By fordliness, she means lordliness, civilization. On the other hand, Bernard Marx maintains “Yes, and civilization is sterilization” (Huxley, 2007, p.94). By such an interaction, one can grasp the distinction in life conditions that Huxley wants to display between the two places.

Afterwards, the novel shifts its focus to the Reservation dwellers and the situation is not much better.

An almost naked Indian was very slowly climbing down the ladder from the first-floor terrace of a neighboring house- rung after rung, with the tremulous caution of extreme old age. His face was profoundly wrinkled and black, like a mask of obsidian. The toothless mouth had fallen in. At the corners of the lips and on each side of the chin a few long bristles gleamed almost white against the dark skin. The long unbraided hair hung down in grey wisps round his face. His body was bent and emaciated to the bone, almost fleshless. (Huxley, 2007, p. 94/95)

Horrified by this sight, Lenina asks Bernard Marx what is wrong with the man, to what Marx answers that he is nothing but old. Lenina replies that there are many old people in London but they do not look like that. Bernard responds that they are not that way because

they are artificially kept healthy, young and beautiful. Faced with the horrors of that sight, Lenina concludes: "It's awful. We ought not to have come here" (Huxley, 2007, p. 95). Eventually, she tries to reach for her Soma bottle but she realizes it was left behind in their rest house. Shortly after, they witness a woman breastfeeding a baby, which makes Lenina blush, because this practice is forbidden for its primitiveness. Further, they see a mother looking for lice in a girl's hair.

Through this initial shock, Huxley seems to try to convey the abyss between artificial life in London and primitive life in the Reservation. While in London, books, feelings, intimate relationships, profoundness have been banned, in the Reservation they are allowed to read, to have emotional bonds, human rituals. However, they seem to live in precarious conditions of poverty, hunger and need. Therefore, one may see that Huxley does not idealize either setting. While Londoners are allowed to travel and go places, Reservation residents are under complete surveillance so they do not have a chance to go anywhere. "...five hundred and sixty thousand square kilometers, divided into four distinct Sub-Reservation, each surrounded by a high-tension wire fence" (Huxley, 2007, p. 87) John, the Savage voices this craving for freedom, when he asks Lenina: "And you really can go flying, whenever you like?" (Huxley, 2007, 110).

Bauman concerns himself with this issue of mobility of developed and underdeveloped countries and the restriction of freedom to those from underdeveloped areas. Bauman names those who are entitled to move around freely as *tourists*, while the unwelcome ones are the *vagabonds*. Bauman (1997) argues that *tourists* are the ones constantly on the move for their free will. They are expected to remain in allegiance to the place in which they are. In a world of short-standing moments, of a continuous present (Bauman, 1997); *tourists* expect to come and go without any commitments. They are the ones who can afford to see everything but partake in nothing.

First and foremost, they perform the feat of not belonging to the place they might be visiting; theirs is the miracle of being in and out of place at the same time. The tourists keep their distance, and bar the distance from shrinking into proximity. It is as if each of them was enclosed in a bubble with tightly controlled osmosis; only such things as the occupant of the bubble admits may leak in, only such things as he or she allows to go, may seep out. (P.89)

Like Lenina and Bernard in the Reservation, they can see all the plights of local life, they can enjoy the experience. However, they can do that with the certainty they can walk away at any moment. "The decision to leave home behind in order to explore foreign parts

is all the easier to make for the comforting feeling that one can always return, if need be” (Bauman, 1997, p. 92). Even the horror experienced by Lenina serves her a good purpose. Upon returning to London, she can feel ever more secure and confident that she is very lucky to live in her place. No doubt shall remain in her heart and no questions shall remain in her mind. As Bauman (1997) expresses on the functionality of vagabonds: “It is their evident unhappiness that inspires the rest to thank God daily for having made them tourists” (Bauman, 1997, p. 94). This is the reason why Lenina shall always be grateful for the life she has been granted.

On the other end of the spectrum are the *vagabonds*, who are doomed to enjoy no freedom. They are the ones who do not move at their own discretion, from time to time they are forced to move on because their setting has become inhospitable to them. They are the ones deprived of choice. The high-tension wire fence sets the fate of Reservation dwellers. They are not allowed the joy of choice. The fences epitomize their destiny to be in other people’s hands. Bauman (2003) states: “The lower-tier city dwellers are doomed to stay local- and so one could and should expect their attention, complete with discontents, dreams and hopes, to focus on local affairs” (p. 98). “To touch the fence is instant death, pronounced the Warden solemnly. There is no escape from a savage Reservation”. (Huxley, 2007, p. 88) While some fluctuate, others are damned to stay. According to Bauman (1997), this separation between *tourists* and *vagabonds* characterizes our liquid modern world.

It is the criminals who make us insecure, and it is the outsiders who cause crime; and so it is rounding up, incarcerating and deporting the outsiders that will restore our lost or stolen security (Bauman, 2003, p. 119). In his book *Wasted Lives*, Bauman (2005) also names those individuals as human waste. According to him, modernity, in its attempt to shape the world has entered a process of waste production. On the one hand, as humankind produces, it also discards. However, the waste is likely to be overlooked. Waste is not interesting. The product matters, not its inevitable waste. One avoids seeing the waste, unless when one is forced to see it. Waste is supposed to be kept away from sight and from mind. As long as waste is maintained away, one does not concern oneself with it. As Bauman says, (2005) we do not think about waste unless an avalanche of waste rolls down the mountain and breaks into our backyards.

Seemingly, we take the same attitude towards human waste. One does not worry about immigrants unless they flee to our countries. We do not worry about slum dwellers

provided that they stay where they are destined to be. We do not think about refugees as long as they are out of sight and out of mind.

Lenina's shock when facing poverty, dirt, and decay can be explained by her never imagining that such things existed. In her own world, she lived in a complete state of obliviousness to outside problems. Her reaching for her bottle of Soma denotes her craving to go back to her world of cleanliness, order and whiteness. This repulse for human waste explains all the security measures to keep this kind of individual away from sight and mind. Besides being physically removed, waste must be removed from minds, so orderly citizens can go on with their lives unaware of their existence. According to Bauman (2005), immigration agents and quality controllers are necessary because they draw the line between chaos and order. Bauman (1989) argues that Holocaust was not simply an extraordinary event, but, instead, it was a by-product of Modernity, because it represented a horrific attempt to achieve sameness, to establish only one sort of people, to eliminate differences, to set extreme order. This shaping is a particularity of modernity.

In *Brave New World* (2007), this line is under constant surveillance so that Reservation residents may by no means reach London and shatter their constant state of peace. Londoners are allowed to fly to the Reservations so that they may how awful life with Ford can be. Peace is disturbed by John the Savage's presence in London. Had Bernard Marx not taken him to London, no conflict would have occurred. Conflict only arises from difference. The guiding principle of Ford's society is to eternalize sameness, so that "peace" may be achieved. In John's point of view, this sameness is a horrible sight

He woke once more to external reality, looked around him, knew what he saw-knew it, with a sinking sense of horror and disgust, for the recurrent delirium of his days and nights, the nightmare of swarming indistinguishable sameness. Twins, twins...

Bauman (2010) names this desire to eliminate differences as *mixophobia*. "Mixophobia manifests itself in a drive towards building islands of similarity and sameness amidst a sea of variety and difference" (p. 158).

Strangers are the source of insecurity. Therefore, one prefers to keep them away because they do not belong where one belongs. They are out of place. Like John in London is out of his place. Like Syrians, Haitians, Mexicans, they are out of place. "In a society of consumers, they are the "failed consumers"- people devoid of money that would allow

enlarging the capacity of consumers market” (Bauman, 2005, p. 53)³⁸. As these individuals do not partake of the happy feast of consumption, they are outsiders in a society of consumers and consequently they are frowned upon and seen as a threat to the sameness.

They are always too many- “They are the individuals there ought to be fewer of- or better still, none of- There is never enough of us. “We” are the people there ought to be more of” (Bauman, 2005, p. 47)

As there are too many of them, they should be eliminated if not literally they must be kept away from presence. As they are failed consumers, they are not worth investing in their life improvement. Like non-recyclable waste, they are expected to be removed and sent as far away as possible in order to prevent contamination. It is not economically viable to help these individuals out of their condition. Investing in barriers to keep them out is more worthwhile. “...a savage reservation is a place which, owing to unfavorable climate or geological conditions, or poverty of natural resources , has not been worth the expense of civilizing” (Huxley, 2007, p.141).

This human waste cannot be managed and transformed; therefore, it should be thrown out, piled up in some remote dumpster so that nobody can see it. As Huxley (2007) puts it in in *Brave New World*: “Those, I repeat who are born in the reservation are destined to die here”. (p. 88). Destiny is not meant to be modified. Destiny is to be fulfilled.

Brave New World (2007) is a satirical and ironic dystopia. In the novel, Huxley does not idealize humankind. Neither the artificial society of Ford, nor the natural state of the Reservation is the answer. Huxley seems to tease his readers to question what kind of society they want to live in. And at what price? He begins his provocations when naming his novel after a passage from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. “O brave new world, that has such people in it”. Huxley sets one thinking what kind of people they are. Ironically, he poses the question if we really are the stuff dreams are made on. Are such people so marvelous? Instead of idealizing human beings, Huxley prefers to begin his novel with a provocation and end it without a plausible “solution”. He does not point any way out to humankind’s problems because he does not seem to see any light at the end of the tunnel.

Brave New World (2007) also ironizes some famous historical figures. Despite their importance, these figures were never capable of significant changes in humankind. Ford is the ultimate almighty entity in Huxley’s novel. Ford’s mass production system was expected

³⁸ My Translation

to create more wealth and therefore make everyone richer. However, this did not seem to be case. Instead, what one sees today is the ruling of big corporations in a market-driven economy. These corporations do not seem to have any commitment, except to their shareholders. Bernard Marx is another important character in the novel who seems to go nowhere. He is a questioning individual in the first part of the novel. Yet, he does not seem to be able to bring about any changes in the world regulated by Ford.

Brave New World (2007) seems to be a criticism to humankind and its incapacity to develop a better world. Many of the issues presented in the novel already existed before its writing and are still seeable today. Some of them no longer exist, but others have arisen. By posing no solution, Huxley seems to show all the ambiguity of human existence and all its incongruities. I finish by quoting Margaret Atwood's delicate and pungent words

We wish to be as the careless gods, lying around on Olympus, eternally beautiful, having sex and being entertained by the anguish of others. And at the same time we want to be those anguished others, because we believe, with John, that life has meaning beyond the play of the senses, and that immediate gratifications will never be enough (2007, p. XVI)

CONCLUSION

Concluding a work to which one has devoted two years of one's life is not an easy task. Despite all the things left unsaid, what can be said that has not yet been said?

As I said in the introduction to this thesis, I am not exactly an altruistic person; therefore, I would start by giving a personal account for the reasons for this thesis. Hence, I think I shall begin this conclusion by talking about the effects of this thesis upon myself.

Brave New World was published precisely 50 years prior to my birth. By the time, this thesis is done; 34 years will have gone by since the day I was born. That seems to be an awful lot of time. In these 84 years, a lot has happened in the world. A World War, the Cold War, war on terrorism. The rise of Internet, the decline of the Soviet Union. Economic crises, economic prosperity. Sexual liberation, birth control pills. HIV. The collapse of Berlin Wall, the construction of walls in Israel and the United States. Man on the moon, women's liberation movement. Definitely, a great deal has happened in this little blue planet.

After all these events, a little novel of approximately 230 pages travels through time and falls into the hands of a young man from a peripheral city, in a peripheral state of a peripheral country. This novel is capable of stirring in this young man a desire to develop a master's thesis and dedicate two years of his life to the writing of it. Thus, *Brave New World* touched me on a deeper level and set me thinking about a number of issues concerning the reality I witness around me. Therefore, Huxley's novel has been relevant to myself and has boosted my own critical thinking.

First and foremost, because *Brave New World* is a novel about the incongruities of humankind. It seems to me that Huxley's novel deals with the human impossibility to go a step further. There seems to be an invisible wall that prevents us from going beyond. As my favorite sentence in the novel puts it: "Each one of us goes through life inside a bottle". Ironically, we can see through the glass. However, we cannot get out of it. That is the distinction between utopia and dystopia. Utopia naively takes us outside the bottle, whereas dystopia throws to our faces that we are inside the bottle. The death of John, the Savage at the end of the story highlights that there is no way out for us. Therefore, we are doomed to keep going around in circles, like John's hanging lifeless body, spinning south, then west, east, then south again. And so goes humanity.

As I have previously mentioned Margaret Atwood's word, we wish to be Gods. However, we do not want to give up our human condition. Like teenagers, we want to be grownups, yet we still want to play as children do.

I must confess that what struck me hardest when I first read *Brave New World* was not its existential questionings. Instead, its criticism to a society that very much resembles our own hit home almost instantly. As the quotation by Ezra Pound mentioned earlier on in this thesis points out, artists are supposed to be antennas for the race. This seems to Huxley's case, when he warns his readership of the dangers of a society he saw emerging in the early 1930's.

Brave New World addresses a number of social issues that seem to be in vogue still today. Overconsumption applied to the very existence of individuals. Consumption is essential to life. Human beings are consumers by nature. However, in Ford's era, overconsumption is what defines one's very identity. There seems to be no life outside consumerism. From an early age, individuals are brainwashed into believing that fun can be only be achieved through shopping. They are taught to despise anything that is not purchasable.

Purchasing requires discarding. That is another rule in Ford's society. One is not supposed to hold on to anything. It is all disposable. "Ending is better than mending", (Huxley, 2007, p. 42) says one of the drills people are exposed to. This dogma goes far beyond the simple need for new goods to be consumed in order to keep the economy running. This means that, it is all meant to be left behind without second thoughts. Any trouble? Just get rid of it. This rationale is eventually applied to other individuals too. When in trouble with another human being, the rule is "ending is better than mending" (Huxley, 2007, p. 42).

This disposability leads up to a frailty of human bonds. One is not supposed to nurture a relationship in order to make it lasting. When someone is no longer fun or is causing trouble, one does not have to put up with it. All one has to do is find someone else. Market rationale applied to relationships. Everyone and everything is returnable or refundable. Social networks make this connection and disconnection much easier. Ease to connect is great. Ease to disconnect even greater.

When Huxley depicts two distinct worlds in the same narrative, namely The Reservation and London, he does not seem to idealize or take sides. He does not describe

Reservation dwellers as the good-natured savages who read Shakespeare and are wronged by the powerful ones. Whereas, he does not describe Londoners as Olympians gods in their state of perfection. Spaces are intended to highlight hopelessness, unattainability and imperfection. Both the ones who read Shakespeare and those who follow Ford's ruling have not achieved a utopian society.

On the one hand, Reservation residents still have some humanity left in them, but on the other hand, they live in a precarious environment and lack the basic conditions to survive. Meanwhile, in London, individuals live in aseptic conditions, free from hunger and suffering, yet they lack their freedom and freewill. This spatial dichotomy emphasizes Huxley's bleakness towards the future of humankind.

Regarding the Reservation and its dwellers, *Brave New World* seems to address an issue that is very controversial nowadays. Savages are not allowed access to the civilized world. Instead, they are restrained to their Reservation by fences and walls and are maintained under constant surveillance. As long as London was untouched by the "impurity" of the Savages, there was no conflict and therefore no story. Once John the Savage stained "civilization" with "barbarity", the conflict occurs and the story may unfold.

The social issues above required a theoretical source so that they could be analyzed. That is why I decided to rely on Zygmunt Bauman's writings. I intended to discuss the points of the novel I could see converging with our liquid modernity. Reading Bauman was one of the challenges I faced when I took up the task to write my thesis. His production comprises an insurmountable number of books he has published over his lengthy career. Some may say that he repeats himself a great deal and I may agree with those. However, one cannot deny Bauman's influence on modern thought inside and outside the academia. He has been able to stretch his impact to the general public. This attraction to the public outside the academia is remarkable. Bauman's use of language has attracted readers from different areas as well as lay readers who rely on his ideas to make sense of the world. Anyone who goes to bookstores can see stacks of books written by this Polish sociologist.

Bauman does not seem to be concerned exclusively with developing strict sociological formulas or postulates. Rather, he appears to focus on how sociology may be applied in real life and how we can cope with the daily problems of life. This is one of the reasons why he addresses such a vast number of matters of our time. Nothing seems to go

unnoticed. He directs his gaze to specific social issues such as globalization, relationship, consumerism, surveillance, digital life, politics, and ethics among many others. Given this huge amount of theory, I had trouble navigating through Bauman's ideas. Therefore, I had to choose the ones that would help me the most in my analysis.

The writings of Zygmunt Bauman supplied the major part of the theoretical reference for this work mainly in themes such as overconsumption, frailty of human bonds, the fluidity of modernity, the commoditization of life among others. Given the large amount of issues addressed by Bauman, these ones came most in handy for my analysis of *Brave New World*.

In many ways, I may say that there was a connection between Huxley and Bauman's works. In other ways, there was none or I failed to see them. They both converge on their criticism to the societies they could witness in their respective ages. These two gentlemen somehow are able to put down in words what I want so badly to say but would never be able to. Their impressions on the world somehow connect to mine. They seem to express very well my own ideas about the world and the people in it.

Speaking of expressing ideas, another reason for my liking *Brave New World* is Huxley's satirical use of language. It all begins with his choice of title for his best-known novel. By quoting Miranda's speech from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Huxley sets his satirical tone towards the characters in the narrative. "Such people" devised by Huxley do not represent exactly a brave new world. Rather, they appear to be nothing but content puppets in the hands of Ford. Characters in the novel lie down in a golden cradle, idle and pleased with what they are provided. Yet unaware of what they are missing out. Characters have been conditioned so efficiently, they hope for nothing else. Ironically, *Brave New World* is named after a Shakespearian play, but reading Shakespeare is forbidden in the narrative.

Huxley's use of over-simplified language is another aspect of *Brave New World* to catch my eye. By doing so, Huxley seemingly reinforces the childishness of the characters he designed. Their language lack any sort of depth. Almost in a twitterian (I came up with this term), Londoners are incapable of any complex thought. Rather, they seem to repeat at length what they learned from their hypnopaedia lessons. When engaging in conversation, they give the impression to talk solely about the most frivolous subjects. When Bernard Marx proposes any "unorthodox" question, he is quickly reprimanded and then called odd.

Following the tradition of Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*, satire is applied in *Brave New World* in order to add emphasis to the silliness, pettiness, shallowness of characters that are not able to develop any deeper thinking. This feature helps corroborate the idea of a satirical dystopia.

Having analyzed *Brave New World* for over two years, I may conclude that there is a lot more to be analyzed. Further studies may be designed in order to understand more deeply a great number of issues brought to light by *Brave New World*. Anyways, a whole lot more could be done with this novel. However, I am certain that I have done the best within my powers.

After being through this long and thorny path, along which *Brave New World* has been my inseparable companion, I may be biased to give an opinion about it. However, once again I will make Margaret Atwood's words my own.

How does it stand up seventy-five year later? ...it stands up very well. It's still vibrant, fresh, and somehow shocking as it was when I, for one, first read it...It was Huxley's genius to present us to ourselves in all our ambiguity. Alone among animals, we suffer from the future perfect tense. Rover, the Dog cannot imagine a future world of dogs in which all fleas will have been eliminated and doghood will finally have achieved its glorious potential. But thanks to their uniquely structured languages, human beings can imagine such enhanced state for themselves, though they can also question their own grandiose constructions. It's these double-sided imaginative abilities that produce masterpieces of speculation such as *Brave New World*. (Atwood, 2007, p. XVI)

Atwood's words bring back to me the metaphor of life inside a bottle. Human beings seem to be trapped inside a bottle whose glass is transparent. Our condition itself is so satirical. On the one hand we can perceive our "glorious" potential. On the other hand, we do not seem to be able to fulfill such potential. Human beings seem to be trapped between the world of Rover the Dog and the Garden of Eden.

Ambiguity.

Human imagination is capable of coming up with a place where suffering no longer exists. At the same time, human imagination is capable of designing concentration camps. Human minds can produce the greatest deeds. Whereas, the same human minds can produce mass-killings. This seems to be our perennial karma.

It seems to me that *Brave New World* is a novel about this human ambiguity. As we try to do something right, something else gets lost along the way. In the World State, they achieve social stability in detriment of individuality. They give up their freedom for peace. They forsake freewill for a thriving economy. They desert depth on behalf of constancy.

Therefore, I do believe *Brave New World* warns readership of the dangers of going down the path, Huxley saw emerge in his time. By writing his novel, Huxley is saying that if things went on the way he saw them, something bad could happen. In many ways, his cautionary words still echo 84 years later. Because, although humankind has accomplished a great deal since then, many of Huxley's warnings came to happened indeed. The analysis of Zygmunt Bauman concerning our liquid modernity, seems to corroborate it.

Having said that, I must say, despite my biased opinion, that I agree with Margaret Atwood when she says that *Brave New World* still stands as a masterpiece of the 20th century, because of its freshness, vibrancy, shock. As the new millennium unfolds before us, I strongly believe that *Brave New World* shall not lose its critical power, its thought-provoking capacity, and its relevance.

After all, ambiguity is our human condition. Like dogs, we seem to be always running after our tails, doomed not to get it. Because as Margaret Atwood (2007) puts it: "To quote *The Tempest*, source of Huxley's title: 'We are such stuff? / As dreams are made on.' He might well have added: and nightmares" (p. XVI)

I wish to wrap this thesis up with another personal account.

In the first year of my master's course, while I was attending a class on Narratology, Professor Rosalia Neumann Garcia discussed with us the concept of focalization. I reflected on this question of focalization applied to *Brave New World*. Suddenly it dawned on me. Depending on the point of view, the story could be a dystopia or a utopia. Do you what was even more shocking? Should real people in our liquid modernity be offered a reality like the one presented in the novel, would they take the deal? I am inclined to believe, a great number of them would.

Is giving up on human feelings, freedom, initiative a price too high to pay? How much is one willing to give up in return for stability and perennial contentment? Is critical

thinking more valuable than conditioning? Aging or lifelong beauty? What matters more: the anguish of Shakespeare or the serenity of Soma?

It all depends on your angle.

Make your choice.

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