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TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MECHANISMS OF  
PERSONALITY SUPPRESSION IN *BRAVE NEW WORLD* AND  
*FAHRENHEIT 451*

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## ASBTRACT

Dystopian literature is mostly based on the representation of an apparently perfect and egalitarian society in which individuals have been completely dehumanized and their individuality completely eradicated. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), two of the most representative novels of this genre, portray two perfectly alienated societies. While in the Huxley's novel the dystopian society works through a system of rewards and indulgences, both physically and mentally, in Bradbury's work the same social homogeneity is effected through a system of terror and violence. This thesis carries out a comparative analysis of both novels to contrast the methods used to carry out the massive suppression of individuality

KEYWORDS: Huxley, Bradbury, *Brave New World*, *Fahrenheit 451*, alienation, dehumanization, mind control.

El género literario distópico se fundamenta principalmente en una sociedad, aparentemente perfecta e igualitaria, en la cual los individuos han sido totalmente deshumanizados y su individualidad erradicada por completo. En *Un Mundo Feliz* (1932) de Aldous Huxley y *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) de Ray Bradbury, dos de las novelas más representativas de este género, se pueden apreciar dos sociedades perfectamente alienadas. Mientras que en la primera esto se basa mediante un sistema de recompensas y complacencia tanto física como mental, la de la obra de Bradbury se consigue mediante un sistema de terror y violencia. El presente trabajo se centra en la identificación de los métodos empleados para efectuar esta masiva supresión de la individualidad y la correspondiente comparación de los resultados de ambas novelas.

KEYWORDS: Huxley, Bradbury, *Un Mundo Feliz*, *Fahrenheit 451*, alienación, deshumanización, control mental.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Brave New World* (1932) and *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) are two of the most representative and prominent dystopian literary work of all times. Both were written in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and, consequently, both contain indicative and characteristic themes, elements, and features proper of their contemporaneous period although both are set in a fictional near future. In the current 21<sup>st</sup> century, any average reader can acknowledge and identify various of these aspects as reigning issues.

While the dystopian world described in *Brave New World* is based on the exaltation of instant happiness, satisfaction and pleasure, *Fahrenheit 451* relies on fear, punishment, and intimidation. However, there are common aspects in both works, despite their apparent opposition. The vast majority of these aspects, central to the dystopian genre, concerns how the individuals of the society portrayed have been alienated and converted into a dehumanized community where collectivism is the core and main objective. Individualism, and, therefore, personality is restricted, suppressed, persecuted, and, punished. Thus, the question is: how can a government achieve this mass “brainwashed” society?

By the same token, this thesis analyzes the identification and the subsequent analysis of the recurrent mechanisms of personality’s suppression and the similarities and differences between both literary works. It also is intended to comprehend and study the means used and the how they work to achieve this depersonalized world. With this in mind, the present research paper deals with the analysis of the mechanism and effects of the diverse instruments of elimination and suppression of personality and individualism in the dystopian works *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451*, and their comparison between both novels.



## 2. DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

### 2.1. Backgrounds

#### 2.1.1. Social & Political Background

In the 20th century, there are three main historical events that have a great repercussion in history and that are a fundamental key to situate and understand the two dystopian novels analyzed in this paper. These are the rise and influence of Marxism and Communism, the two World Wars, and the Cold War.

Although the origins of Marxism can be established in the 19th century with the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848, it is in the 20th century when it has more repercussion. These theories created by Karl Marx cover the political, economic and social spheres. Related to this doctrine is communism, closely linked to the idea of utopia, since it promotes social equality, collectivism, and the struggle against capitalism. However, before the publication of Marx's famous work, there was already utopian socialism, a system based on equality among all individuals with an idealistic, unrealistic, and practically impossible socio-economic model. Anyway, the presence of Communism will have an important influence throughout the 20th century. It was during the Russian Revolution led by Lenin in 1917 and brought about by the First World War that Marxism came to power for the first time in history. This ideology was also implemented in countries such as China in the first half of the 20th century and Cuba in the second half of this century.

This ideology is very influential in Huxley's *Brave New World*, as it can be seen from some of the names of characters, such as Lenina or Bernard Marx, the elimination of religiousness, or the extreme application of collectivism. The latter is evident since the abolition of private property includes persons, which justifies the prohibition of monogamy and imposes sexual promiscuity.

World War I (1914-18) and World War II (1939-45) had as a result an impact with the cruel and violent reality of these devastating events and a dramatic rupture with the ideal consideration of a wealthy situation that the population were living in before the beginning of both conflicts. These events will have a highlighted influence in the literature of the period, specially in the dystopian genre.

Regarding the World War I, its consequences were a rethinking of the social situation in Europe, moral relaxation and the emergence of new trends, and a high number of deaths that led to contempt, fear, and rejection of human cruelty. It was in this same period that the Russian Revolution of 1917 occurred in the Soviet Union, which brought about the rise of Marxism, while the United States began to become a world power, implying the rise of capitalism. This last country also experienced the so-called Roaring Twenties, a period of great social and economic welfare that ended with the New York

Stock Market Crash of 1929 that unleashed a great economic depression in the USA. This economic collapse also meant the end of a happy period, that is, the end of the utopian dream and the birth of a disastrous situation.

Additionally, the outbreak of World War II entailed a struggle of the democracies against the fascist states in order to stop the Nazi advance. Unlike the previous war, this one is distinguished by the use of nuclear bombs and more powerful and lethal armament. This issue, coupled by the rise of Nazim and the atrocities realized under this form of totalitarian power, such as the Holocaust, impregnated people all over the entire globe with terror and pessimism. Because of the ignominious employment of the scientific and technological advances, there was a great feeling of wariness of these achievements.

In *Fahrenheit 451*, this conflict has a great influence in some of the events portrayed. For instance, the book burning is related to this same practice carried out by the Nazi government. In the magazine *The Writer*, Bradbury comments on this issue: "when Hitler burned a book I felt it as keenly, please forgive me, as his killing a human, for in the long sum of history they are one and the same flesh" (*Temperature* 19). Another example is the fact that the city in which this novel is set has a nuclear war and is destroyed by a nuclear bomb at the end.

Finally, after the World War II, the Cold War (1945-89) happened, that is, a political, social and economic conflict between the two blocks led by the USA and the Soviet Union ("Cold War"). As Hammond states, "Dystopianism was an expressly Cold War literary mode" (664). In this period, there was a significant concern about nuclear armament, as well as an oppressive feeling of unsteadiness. Also, the propaganda plays a relevant role in the development of this conflict ("Cold War"). This episode involved important political treatments and decisive social changes such the fall of the Berlin Wall, fact that ends this phase. The feeling of uncertainty implied an absence of confidence in a perfect or reliable system and a state of social unrest, issue that will be reflected in the dystopian works of this time.

### 2.1.2. Scientific and Technological Background

As aforementioned, the scientific and technological advances produced in this century have a fundamental function in its course. The most outstanding is the development of more effective and lethal war machinery. In a period in which there were two wars that changed the course of history and that drastically changed the concept of war, research, investment, and the development of weapons were key for governments. The existence of weapons such as the flamethrower used in World War I or the atomic bomb used in World War II resulted in a high number of deaths and serious injuries. The agonizing death that many of these weapons produced and their increasing effectiveness generated enormous fear and aversion to the advancement of technology and science and its adverse employment. Likewise, the human experiments conducted by the Nazi regime

in the concentration camps to the better acquaintance of the human body in relation with its physical and psychological limits increased this fear and repudiation of scientific research. The Nazi researchers also studied genetic manipulation in embryos in order to create what they considered a superior perfect race, an issue foreseen in *Brave New World*.

### 2.1.3. Cultural Background

The term “utopia” was created by Thomas More in 1516 in his book by the same title. In this work, More describes an idealistic and unrealistic perfect social organization based on equality and agricultural collectivism. Since then, this term has been employed to define an ideal world, sometimes physically or socially impossible or unrealistic where the importance relies on the collective social and cultural machinery – sociopolitical institutions, norms, and relationships – rather than individual characters or character psychology (Ray 2; Wegner 80).

The idea of utopia had such an impact that it inspired and became the basis for important political, social and economic doctrines such as the utopian socialism previously mentioned. One instance of this is the utopian urban planning realized in factories in United Kingdom and United States by Robert Owen, one of the most important representatives of utopian socialism in the 19th century. These constructions were created by socialists and were formed by colonies with the intention of improving the quality of life of the workers.

However, this idea of extremely egalitarian systems also became the main source of criticism for dystopian authors. For a society to become perfect and egalitarian for all its inhabitants, people must have the same conception of freedom and equality. Hence, subjects who are "imperfect", or different, should disappear or be changed somehow. And a large number of dystopian novels are based on this idea, as will be explained below.

Some of the defining characteristics of the dystopian genre can be found in previous literary works such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, (1726), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* (1818), and H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) (Claeys 113). In the first case of these predecessors, more specifically, in Book IV, Swift satirizes his contemporaneous society, that is, the rationalist philosophy. And, as in *Brave New World*, the subjects portrayed lack emotions, they are purely rational. Moreover, there are inferior races that are less rational than the superior ones. In the case of *Frankenstein*, the advances in science and technology have perverse results. The manipulation of the human body to artificially create life can also be found in Shelley's work. And another issue that can be observed is the importance of literature, especially in the development of emotions and personality. Finally, in *The Time Machine*, selective breeding is employed, and this is related to how the social hierarchy is

organized: the aristocracy is compounded by the ones who have the use of science at their disposal, while the slave race has not (Claeys 113).

## **2.2. Definition and characteristics of dystopian literature**

### **2.2.1. Definition and objectives**

As Ray indicates, the term “dystopia” derives from Greek and means literally “bad place” (3). This genre emerged in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it is a “fictional portrayal of a society in which evil or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand, or as a satire of utopian aspirations which attempts to show up their fallacies, or which demonstrate, in B.F. Skinner’s words, “ways of life we must be sure to avoid” (Claeys 107). Usually there is a totalitarian collectivism, imposed in every aspect of the subjects’ lives. The setting of the dystopian novel is time in the near future but that shows the negative consequences of the time it is written. It is also characteristic that, in most cases, the individuals have been dehumanized and deprived of the possibility of developing their own personality. This inauspicious situation is the direct consequence of a misleading evolution of science and technology. This is related to the constant surveillance, the oppressive atmosphere, the lack of freedom, and the forced conformity that the members of these societies suffer (Ray 2).

The dystopian genre has several main objectives: to criticize, to satirize, and offer a corrective to the utopian ideas. First, the criticism is principally aimed at the current situation when the work was written, and to achieve this, it is situated in a future where the criticized issues have reached an extreme and pernicious state. Second, the satirizing aspect of this genre is due to the fact that this type of literary works is intended to condemn some alarming or inconvenient aspect of the present society. For instance, Hammond states that “*Brave New World* was already satirizing American patterns of mass population, consumption, entertainment, and leisure” (669). This criticism also implies a sharp moral warning. Finally, the governments described represent opposition to the utopian ideology portraying some of the utopian ideas to extreme and highlighting its negative implications.

### **2.2.2. Common Elements & Features**

Regarding the most common elements and features of the dystopian genre, which are interrelated, these are: the individuals’ conformity, their control and enslavement, the reliance on technology, and the importance of the natural world (Ray 8-10).

In order for a totalitarian state such as those described in the dystopian novels to continue to function, the conformity of its citizens is fundamental. These states create a system in which all individuals obediently exercise the role determined by the government. For this to happen, it is necessary that these subjects do not rebel or do not fulfill their task, which is why the state places special emphasis on them being satisfied,

happy, or distracted. Through this, people have no opposition in any way to being manipulated or stripped of their freedom.

Although the subjects are conformed and, often, satisfied, this does not imply that they have any type of freedom or rights. Usually, they are not aware of the control the government has over them. Yet, those who realize the authoritarian status of the state are not allowed to select any alternative. In order for these collectivist systems to work, the population is not granted any freedom that would be inconvenient to the government.

The aforementioned control is mainly achieved and ensured due the government's reliance on technology. Technological devices are the instruments employed to distract, repress, or have the population under vigilance. The power of the authorities relies on the fact that they are the ones who possess the advanced technology or science. Even the most inoffensive devices can become powerful manipulation instruments. For instance, Baker comments that "the 1950s was the first decade in the USA in which television played a dominant cultural role; in the dystopias of the period, this is imagined as a means of social and political control" (493).

Given the strong relationship established between technology and control, its total opposite, that is, the natural world represents freedom. Nature is represented as the most appropriate place where the characters can develop their personality and enjoy their individuality. Due to the absence of the totalitarian regime and its means of control, subjects have the possibility of living a more "human" life, in which they can be and do what they choose by their own choice.

### 3. ***BRAVE NEW WORLD***

#### **1. Government Control**

As aforementioned, government control is the base and the most defining characteristic in the vast majority of dystopian literature, and in the particular case of *Brave New World*, this issue conforms the foundation of the fictitious and distorted future the novel portrays. Subjugation is the core and key of the feeling of conformity of a suppressed and brainwashed society. It is the government that promotes and inculcates each one of the elements aimed to the deletion of the personality and personal thinking of the individuals. As is remarked in the novel, “there’s no such thing as a divided allegiance; you’re so conditioned that you can’t help doing what you ought to do” (209). This intended suppression of the individualism has the complete dominance of the community and the elimination of the independent mentality as its pivotal objective, that is, an extreme and forced implementation and operationalization of collectivism.

#### **2. Scientific & Technological Advances**

The regime makes use of some of the contemporary scientific and technological advances of the time the novel was written to execute it with more certainty, effectiveness, and precision. These issues are the means through which the state conditions the individuals and, Mustapha Mond states, “One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them” (207). The most compelling evidence of this is the continued application of “hypnopedia” and eugenics in the everyday life of the individuals.

##### 2.1. “Hypnopedia”

The term “hypnopedia” refers to the manipulation of the mind during the sleeping period through the exposition of repeated oral suggestive statements in order to learn or implement a determined behavior or belief. All the members of the civilized society are exposed to it from a very early age to implant in them the planned morality and mentality. The utterances provided during the “hypnopedia” sessions conform the unique source of thinking of this community. This can be seen when Lenina starts to question something that reflects a different line of thought. For example, when she talks with Henry about Epsilons and their role in society:

Lenina suddenly remembered an occasion when, as a little girl at school, she had woken up in the middle of the night and become aware, for the first time, of the whispering that had haunted all her sleeps... (The words were there, unforgotten, unforgettable after so many night-long repetitions): “Everyone works for everyone else. We can’t do without any one. Even Epsilons are useful. We couldn’t do without Epsilons. Everyone works for everyone else. We can’t do without any one.” ... “I suppose Epsilons don’t really mind being Epsilons,” she said aloud. (64)

In this situation, the statements she heard during her sleep come to mind and cause that she considers that thing as something absurd, unfeasible, and, dangerous, and immediately rejects it. In other words, the implanted sequence of thoughts work as a means to amend and self-censorship of the potential new and undesirable individual ideas. Thus, in light of the importance of the “hypnopedia” method for the manipulation of the individual mentality, Huxley inserts this procedure also as a mean to illustrate the results of the mental manipulation on the society that the Soviet Union and the United States was investigating (*Revisited*, 126).

## 2.2. Eugenics

Equally significant is the application of eugenics as the exclusive and only authorized means of “giving birth” in civilized society. Individuals are genetically restrained to a determined social class or hierarchy with an even physical impossibility to move or escalate in the social hierarchy. This social hierarchy is created artificially, designing superior or inferior individuals according to the necessities of the system. The Alphas are the most privileged class since they are “created” to be mentally and physically perfect in order to conform the leader class. The Betas are less favored than the previous ones. These are commissioned to carry out the administrative tasks. This progressive decrease of capabilities and virtues proceeds until the last caste, the Epsilons. These ones, along the other lowest castes are conditioned to do the least qualified labors. These lowest castes are established to be unable to do any other type of function they were not “created” for. Mr. Foster explains how they “create” some of the specialized workers:

Doing repairs on the outside of a rocket in mid-air is a ticklish job. We slacken off the circulation when they're right way up, so that they're half starved, and double the flow of surrogate when they're upside down. They learn to associate topsyturvydom with well-being; in fact, they're only truly happy when they're standing on their heads. (13)

These individuals are conditioned to feel even extreme physical pain if they realize other things than what they were supposed to.

This segregation is accentuated by the representation of the castes in different colors, one color depicts a determinate caste. This issue reinforces the unification and representation of social classes. In essence, the creation of this massive group of mentalities and physical characteristics involves a unification of possible and permitted behavior, being the individual features suppressed from the artificial formation of the embryo. It entails a controlled evolution, conditioning the physical and psychological characteristics, behavior and personality of the members of the community to fulfill a determined objective and role in society.

## **3. Consumerism & Materialism**

Related to the aforementioned issues, there is the significant presence of consumerism and materialism in the civilized world of the novel. These two issues

conform the base and ultimate objective of society. Through the “hypopedia” treatment, the individuals are told to consume and purchase if they feel uncomfortable emotions. In this case, the act of buying something functions as an avoidance of unpleasant feelings or thoughts, that is, any trace of individuality or personality.

In like manner, through the employment of eugenics, the individuals are created to be merely either producers or consumers, according to the estimates and evaluation of the government. In the same line, the government promotes consumerism as one of the fundamental and basic functions of the members of the community. This can be seen when Linda, one of the Lenina’s coworkers, talking about clothes, states “it never used to be right to mend clothes. Throw them away when they’ve got holes in them and buy new. ‘The more stitches, the less riches.’ Isn’t that right? Mending’s antisocial” (104). If they do not consume, they obstruct the system. They are “designed” and induced to produce and consume in massive terms for the perfect performance of the system. The subjects are not significant as individuals, but their importance relies on the collective interest. They perform the role of sheerly gears of their perfect machinery, and, therefore, they are treated and seen as such.

#### **4. Suppression of Religiousness**

Another relevant element that contributes to the deletion of the individuality and independent thoughts is the suppression of religiousness. As well as the abolition and complete destruction of literature, this matter is related to the elimination of feelings. The absence of the right to freedom of religion reinforces the limitation of the permissible thoughts. Furthermore, this also narrows and confines the worship of all the people into the ones expected from the authorities: the veneration to the system, and of physical pleasure. The belief in God would involve feelings like love or contradictions with the system’s ideology such as the rejection of polygamy or promiscuity. The existence of God is unnecessary in a system purely based on technology. This issue is commented by Mustapha Mond: “God isn’t compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine and happiness” (207). Moreover, the abolition of religions reinforces Fordism.

##### **4.1. Fordism**

Under the aforementioned circumstances, the role of religion is practically and intentionally replaced by the worship of Henry Ford, Fordism. This matter is a criticism of industrial specialization. The fact that the beginning of the era portrayed in the novel begins in the “year of Ford” implies that this is the origin of this system and its consequences are the actual situation described in the work. This also related to the specialization process employed in the creation of the individuals through eugenics. Therefore, there is a parallelism between the creation of humans and the creation of cars, which also implies and reinforce the idea of persons as machines.



## 5. Elimination of Feelings & Negative Emotions

A central aspect regarding the sharpest means employed to maintain the population in such high degree of control and docility is accomplished by a meticulous regime of suppression of feelings and negative emotions. These means form the base of the hedonist lifestyle of the society and are: the institutionalized consumerism of the hallucinating drug Soma, the extreme and almost compulsory sexual promiscuity, the inexistence of families, and the prohibition of literature.

### 5.1. Soma

As abovementioned, the drug Soma is a drug institutionalized by the State that is provided to the population as a reward for having a proper behavior or as a pharmaceutical solution to deal with undesirable feelings, thoughts, or emotions. The characters consume it every time they have “forbidden” thoughts to experiment comforting, felicitous, and pleasurable visions. As Mond comments, “there’s always Soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering” (210). For this reason, it also constitutes a great instrument of behavior conditioning. The subjects themselves suppress any trace of their own individuality or personality.

In addition, Soma represents the most efficient, rapid, and reliable resource of reality or anxiety-evading solution for an unwanted potentiality of individuality. Furthermore, the fact that Soma is the only existing drug in the sphere of *Brave New World*, works as a guarantee for the State that these other drugs’ negative effects such as depressing or violent behaviors cannot occur. In short, this fictitious substance denominated Soma and classified as “chemical persuasion” by Huxley (*Revisited* 99) represents a central element against both social and personal unrest.

### 5.2. Inexistence of the Concept of Family

The inexistence of the concept of family is also a remarkable measure implemented by the authorities with the objective of eliminating the feeling of belonging to or the affection for a specific and small group. The mentality promoted by the State is that everyone belongs to everyone and that the antique concept of family is something heinous, egotistical, and pernicious for the general welfare of the society. This mentality is implanted in such extreme degree that the family-related words like “father” or “mother” are considered as obscene and taboo vocabulary. The subjects are no permitted to feel any sentiment of monogamous love since this would develop in negative and selfish behaviors, and, therefore, miserable and malfunctioning citizens. This aspect is closely related to the promotion of promiscuity.

Along the same lines, natural breeding is considered an anti-system act. This would result in the futility of the government’s population control. Moreover, the parents would be less productive if they should take care of their children. Thus, with the elimination of the notion of family, the State ensures that the individuals have not any

affectionate feeling towards anything other than the respectful and obedient feeling for the entire community. Under those circumstances, the person is dehumanized, reduced as a mere piece that only has to live with the unique objective of working for the correct function of the society, and any other distracting action or feeling must to be repressed.

### 5.3. Sexual Promiscuity

Inextricably related with the previous point is the prominent sexual promiscuity performed by the entire civilized society and promoted by the government with a peculiar emphasis. The role of sex is vital to understand the docile demeanor of the subjects. As Sargent and Sargissen state “promiscuity forms a mean of keeping people content” (305), and, therefore, the possibility of social unrest is greatly reduced. This conventionalized promiscuity satisfies the citizens’ sexual necessities and desires, and also provides almost instant pleasure and superficial happiness and comfort without any emotional implication. It is also very effective as a mean of suppression of feelings such as love, passion, or jealousy since monogamous relationships and even families are prohibited. Regarding this topic, Mustapha Mond comments, “chastity means passion, chastity means neurasthenia. And passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means the end of civilization. You can’t have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices” (209). Since passion and jealousy are unstable feelings, they are considered harmful to society. Hence, the state promotes the rejection of monogamy. As Linda, a Lenina’s coworker, remarks: “Everybody belongs to everyone else, don’t they?... Nobody’s supposed to belong to more than one person. And if you have people in the ordinary way, the others think you’re wicked and anti-social. They hate and despise you” (104).

Moreover, the state considers the subjects animals, only promoting the satisfaction of biological necessities and eliminating the means of satisfying the emotional ones, dehumanizing them. Mond also states that “many of the natural impulses are allowed free play, that there really aren’t any temptations to resist” (209). As a matter of fact, this issue is a significant means to see how the sexual social patterns reflects the gender relations in this society (Sargent and Sargissen 301). In this case, women are in equal terms than men in the sense that women can also be as promiscuous as men without any social or moral obstruction. However, this equality is only superficial since women are seen, even by themselves, as “pneumatic”, that is, pleasure objects for men. Thus, the dehumanization on women is even increased. So, as shown above, sex and promiscuity are used as a powerful means to keep people happy and distant from evolving feelings, and, therefore, developing their own personality.

### 5.4. Literature’s Destruction & Abolition

As something created as an expression of feelings and as a significant portrayer and detonating device of emotions, literature is prohibited. In all totalitarian systems, the literature is considered as dangerous matter that puts at risk the government’s control of

the people's mentality. Literature conveys diversity of thoughts and artistic and emotional values that would suppose the stimulus necessary to produce an awakening in the subjects' mind. In that case, the individuals would begin to feel emotions, to think for themselves and, in time, they would notice the government's manipulation, that would lead to a general social unrest, and, finally, to the probable fall of the entire system. This absolute censorship finds an exception in the higher castes of society, which are allowed to have books and have an excellent knowledge of the topic, for instance Mustapha Mond, who knows with great detail Shakespeare's tragedies. He states that "you can't make tragedies without social 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 blissfully ignorant of passion" (193). He also declares that the abolition of literature is "the price we have to pay for stability. You've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We've sacrificed the high art." (194).

In addition, the abolition of literature also implies a convenient citizens' lack of knowledge about the past since all traces concerning the period before Ford have been destroyed. This is a potent and efficient means to control and to implant the desired or new beliefs and thoughts convenient for the government such as being totally faithful and obedient to the current system.

## **6. Superficial Mass Entertainment**

Another key point is the superficial mass entertainment, assigned to occupy the minds of the individuals preventing them from pondering on their lifestyle and the architecture of the system they are living in. Similar to the manner the "hypnopedia" operates on the mentality of the subjects, the activities regarding their leisure time are a significant component concerning brainwashing exposition. These mass entertainment elements are principally represented by means of the movies and music.

The ideological use of these two elements illustrates the utilization of those as propaganda devices to reinforce and manipulate the subjects' mentality. These elements succeed as an effective channel for promotion and implantation of the ideology and morality intended by the authorities. The content portrayed in the media reflects the life type of society and lifestyle that the state expects to implant. For instance, an encouragement of sexual promiscuity is realized in the film displayed in the cinema as well as a manipulative adoration of Ford is highlighted in the music halls.

In addition, they also work as a feeling-evading instrument since they constitute one of the almost immediate solutions offered and promoted by the government to deal with negative thoughts. As Huxley defines these issues as "non-stop distractions" (*Revisited* 56), they conform, together with the consumerism of Soma, the principal pastime and source of entertainment in their free time. However, the creation and distribution of these propaganda weapons are monopolized by the authorities, who utilize them to spread the unified ideology intended by the State and to censor any conceivable divergent idea.

By the use of this complete dominion of the artistic or informative matters by the system, any possibility of diversity, subjectivity, or individuality is thoroughly dissipated from the citizens' lives. It is also convenient to discuss the specific role and function of the music halls regarding this issue. The songs, which also have clearly propagandistic suggestive messages repeated several times, sung in unison by all the members create a feeling of belonging, an evocative sense of devotion to the community, reinforcing the idea of unification in the people.

## **7. Technology**

The last element discussed in this chapter is technology, which is completely involved with several aspects previously analyzed. Since even before the subjects' birth, technology has a decisive role in their future life. The conditioning realized through the artificial creation of individuals, the devices employed in the sessions of subliminal learning, the massive production of the comforting and suggestive drug Soma, or the sensorial cinemas are some of the instances of the importance of the technology in this regime. The higher castes realize a vast use of these technological advances to develop, implant, and reinforce the totalitarian system through the manipulation of the citizens' mentality. This can be openly seen in contrast with the Savage Reservation, where there is not any knowledge of the technology the civilized world has, and its people are completely free and portrayed as the actual human beings of the story.

In essence, the suppression of individuality and personality is the most vital base for the state's system to function as it does. This is not achieved through violent punishments or a clear exposition of the intended mentality, but it is by means of scientific conditioning, subliminal messages, institutionalized hallucination-drugs, suggestive pastimes, and the deletion of feeling-evoking issues, such as literature or religions. With the effectiveness and precision of these methods, a perfect society of dehumanized citizens can be built, formed by people entirely pleased with their absolute subordination.

## 4. *FAHRENHEIT 451*

### 4.1. Government Control

As a greatly defining characteristic of most dystopian works, a severe censure and control of the citizens' mentalities realized by the government also sustain the dystopian system of this novel. This goes from the application of methods that varies from the subtlest, such as the propaganda and the fast lifestyle promoted, to the most explicit and violent ones, which is the case of the Mechanical Hound or the burning of the disobedient citizens to death. In this case, the key of the state's control relies on its concern regarding the suppression of freedom of thought. Restraining the subjects' mentality, the government can control their behavior and, hence, the potentiality of a resistance movement, thus guaranteeing this totalitarian system's prevalence. Consequently, the most emphasized control method in *Fahrenheit 451* is the interdiction and destruction of all types of books, and this issue will be analyzed in more detail in the next section.

### 4.2. Prohibition & Destruction of Books

The central characteristic that represents *Fahrenheit 451* is the prohibition and destruction of books. For this endeavor, the government has created a powerful institution charged with investigating, finding and pursuing book owners. These officials, known as "firemen", are also in charge of burning these books and arresting their owners. This systematic burning of books represents the individuals' conformity and the domination of television and consumerism, resulting in cultural homogenization (Baker 490). This "cultural homogenization" is the objective of the state, the suppression of individuality and free thought. The existence of this institution is intended to eliminate the conservation of cultural values or individual mentality portrayed in the books. Hence, the prohibition of books represents the prohibition of individuality. It is the main means to control the social mentality and behavior since the state's intention is the avoidance of the spread of the diversity of ideas that would imply the reading of these forbidden books. For this reason, the books are compared with freedom. This can be clearly seen when the narrator repeatedly compares books with birds and the pages as the wings, "the flapping, pigeon-winged books died" (10), and the pages as the wings, "the books leapt and danced like roasted birds, their wings ablaze with red and yellow feathers" (151). Concretely, the emphasized comparison and identification of books with pigeons conveys and reinforces the conventionalized representation of this particular animal with the idea of freedom. Their burning, aside from the implication of being a killing of a living entity, also constitutes the destruction of the scenario in which the subjects could develop their individuality and personality.

Also, the destruction of the cultural enrichment that books imply reinforces the distracting effect of the media (which will be discussed in the section 4.3). According to Baker, "the "high culture" of the literary canon is the means by which mass culture,

television, and state control can be opposed” (490). The elimination of the competence of other means of personal fulfilment, such as literature, strengthen the impact of the distractibility of the superficial mass entertainment and consumption and propaganda. Under these circumstances, the subject succumbs to an ideological dependence with these means and also to an absolute alienation without a possible existence of any other undesired alternative.

David Seed comments on the connection between the ideology underlying the burning of books and the same situation carried out under the mandate of the Nazi regime:

On the night of 10 May, 1933 Nazi followers destroyed piles of books in German university towns. As the flames rose in the square opposite the University of Berlin the Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels praised the gathered throng for ending the "age of extreme Jewish intellectualism" and ushering in the new German era: "From these ashes there will rise the phoenix of a new spirit... The past is lying in flames. The future will rise from the flames within our own hearts." (236)

The statements of Goebbels synthesize perfectly another one of the purposes of this practice: the total elimination of the anterior intellectual assets and their substitution with the new, superficial, and alienating features. The abolishment of knowledge about the past allows the authorities to delete all the previous free thought and even the memories of the possibility of having it. Hence, the burning of the records of the past results in the transformation of the individual's mind as a *tabula rasa*, while “the phoenix of a new spirit” aforementioned constitutes the new alienating and individuality suppressor state in which the government controls the mentality, behavior, and lifestyle of the citizens. As Montag indicates, “maybe the books can get us half out of the cave. They just might stop us from making the same damn insane mistakes!” (96). This situation is precisely the one intended by the regime: preventing people from learning of the past and also from knowing that what they are living is an authoritarian system. In this manner, they also avoid citizens' rebellions maintaining their alienated behavior.

By the same token, the state gives everything they pretend subjects to think and behave, that is, they do not have the necessity of learning anything new, to read or expand their knowledge. This society's individuals are "shaped" by the same “mold”, in other words, there is no diversity of ideologies, behaviors, or mentalities. Captain Beatty himself, one of the leaders of firemen, declares, “If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none” (80). It is obvious how the officials are conscious and approves the elimination of individualism. They are in charge of the destruction of the other “sides of a question” in order to constrain the subject into the determinate response the state wants to. With this objective in mind, the authorities ensure that everything the citizens assimilate comes from the mass entertainments and utilitarian function books. The latter ones are the only type of book approved by the government since they are created by the authorities to guide or correct aspects of people.

Consequently, the right to read equals the right of individual freedom and free thought. For this reason, this process of alienation and abhorrence of reading begins in childhood due to the education they receive. Regarding this issue Captain Beatty declares, “With school turning out more runners, jumpers, racers, tinkers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and imaginative creators, the word 'intellectual,' of course, became the swear word it deserved to be” (76). This statement explains how the state educates the people for performing the roles they consider the society needs while preventing them from thinking by themselves or developing critical thought.

Coupled with the aforementioned, the fear is used as a mean of control and self-censorship. With an institution created specifically to investigate, prosecute, and incarcerate book owners with no clearly defined limitations (since they can even burn alive these book savers), the people are extremely afraid of the mere presence of this object. In addition, the intellectuals and literate people represented publicly as highly dangerous people. There are several statements in *Fahrenheit 451* in which this apprehension is explicitly indicated. One of these is where Captain Beatty establishes a parallelism between a book and a weapon and between an intellectual and a potential assassin: “A book is a loaded gun in the house next door...Who knows who might be the target of the well-read man?” (77). Here, books are identified literally with a weapon ready to fire, something really dangerous prepared to “destroy” the life of the ones who are disposed to read it. Hence, well-read men are dangerous people who will set someone else as target and hurt them with their “injurious” knowledge. Another instance can be also found in a Beatty’s utterance, “Remember, the firemen are rarely necessary. The public itself stopped reading of its own accord” (113). The interest in reading books and culturally enriching oneself is diminished due to the other personality and individuality suppressing elements that reinforce alignment, conformity, and disinterest in developing one's own personality. Instead of reading, the subjects preferred to employ their time with the mass entertainment, other fundamental aspect regarding the personality elimination.

#### **4.3. Mass Media, Entertainment, Propaganda & Consumerism**

As abovementioned, the mass media and entertainment also have a critical function in the alienation of society, specially the television, but also the radio and music. The extreme exposition that people suffer during a significant period of time everyday has a notable effect in their life and the best example of this is Mildred, Montag’s wife. She is entirely consumed by the television and its shallow content. For subjects like her, these types of entertainment signify more than this. They conform not only a means of reality-evading but also for escaping from one’s own feelings and thoughts. Each time they desire to feel something, to evade from their real life, they close themselves in their rooms enveloped by television screens in order to travel to another more comforting “reality”. About this consideration, Baker comments, “The unreality perpetuated by the television screens corresponds to a fabricated ideology which hides the true state of the world from its citizens” (493). This unreality isolates people from the

true reality they are living in, from noticing how their lives have been controlled and their free thought totally limited.

It is in this type of society in which the position of television has been so highlighted that it has impersonated the role of the family. The individuals like Mildred have the conception of the actors of the television shows as their own relatives. This deviance of the feelings is principally due to the continuous exposure to this type of distraction, which leads to the association of these characters with their closest people. They spend the vast majority of their time literally surrounded by actors that play the role of someone that is talking directly with them in reality. This extreme realism they are submerged in isolates them from their real family and ends up replacing it, even preferring these “virtual family” over the real one. This can be openly seen when Montag, not feeling well, asks Mildred if she can turn off the televisions, to which she simply answers, "that's my family" (65). This great inclusiveness with the unreality intended by the creators of this TV shows deprives the spectators from developing relationships with actual people and, therefore, from acquiring feelings for them, preventing them from building their “human” side and individuality.

Furthermore, with the people only focusing on their “unreal reality”, which has all their attention and time, they overlook the totalitarian system and social reality they are living in. The emptiness they could feel due to the authoritarian regime and their shallow lifestyle and relationships is fulfilled with these entertainment media. They consider their lives so blissful because of these that they prefer to evade the pressure and anxiety of the severe and militant system they would suffer if it was not for these. This alienating characteristic comforts the citizens and pacifies them distracting them from rebelling against the government.

In addition, with television programmes, they are provided with a script in which they determine what they have to respond when the actors and actress in the play address them and ask them questions. Mildred, excited about the idea, explains it like this, “they write the script with one part missing... When it comes time for the missing lines, they all look at me out of the three walls and I say the lines” (30). This, at a certain extent, also determines the behavior and mentality of these individuals, since they are not given the option of answering what they would answer of their own discretion either, but what they have already been given. This also forms a potential alienating factor in people's minds.

These entertainment media are also strongly linked to propaganda and to the fomentation to consumerism. In this relevant and constant issue in people's lives, advertising and interest in mass consumerism has a significant impact. These two matters are broadcast by all entertainment media, from radio on urban transport to the citizens' parlors evolved by TV screens. On one of Montag's trips on the subway, it can be seen the repetitive, catchy, and insistent effect of a toothpaste advertisement on the passengers:

The people who had been sitting a moment before, tapping their feet to the rhythm of Denham's Dentifrice, Denham's Dandy Dental Detergent, Denham's Dentifrice



Dentifrice Dentifrice, one two, one two three, one two, one two three. The people whose mouths had been faintly twitching the words Dentifrice Dentifrice Dentifrice...The people were pounded into submission; they did not run, there was no place to run. (103)

This fragment is a description from Montag's perspective, who considers it something irritating and unbearable, as he has begun to see the reality of the society in which he lives. On the contrary, the rest of the passengers, who are alienated and suggested, repeat, enjoy, and sing the melody of the advertising. These passengers represent how they are so accustomed to this type of persistent and assertive propaganda. As Barker declares, "consumption is largely based not on commodities but on spectacle" (493). In essence, it is the "spectacle" the thing that attracts the consumers, not the quality, effectiveness, or even the necessity of this dentifrice. Another example of the effectiveness of this powerful encouragement of the consumerism can be found in Mildred's perseverance on buying another television screen, "It'll be even more fun when we can afford to have the fourth wall installed. How long you figure before we save up and get the fourth wall torn out and a fourth wall-TV put in? It's only two thousand dollars" (30). Although having already three wall-TVs, she is not completely satisfied. She considers that it will only be "funny" with the purchase of a new one, even though its price is "one-third of my yearly pay" (31), as Montag's answers.

Compulsive consumerism keep people from feeling fully satisfied or happy without the consumption of expensive and unnecessary material goods. This continuous existential dissatisfaction is one of the objectives of the state, in order to maintain the strict capitalist system. Hence, the subjects are deprived of their happiness for the purpose of the promotion of consumerism and, to achieve this, they are emotionally forced to compulsively consume in search of happiness.

Finally, the shallow, distracting, and reality-evading contents is the direct substitution of culture of the books that is lacking. This is the replacement of the intellectual content with the substandard culture intended by the state. Consequently, the entertainment media are an important means of implementation of the state's mentality and behavior. For this reason, the government puts such emphasis on the expansion of the coverage of its effects. Captain Beatty explains, "Radio. Television. Things began to have mass...And because they had mass, they became simpler" (71). The simplicity in the contents mentioned by Beatty is an attempt to reach as many people as possible. Therefore, its trivial nature is also a unifying homogeneous element, designed to massify the mentality of the subjects, standardizing their ideas, behavior, emotions, feelings, etc. The shallow type of information broadcasted is also easier to remember and less controversial. Beatty also remarks:

If the government is inefficient, top-heavy, and tax-mad, better it be all those than that people worry over it... Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to more popular songs or the names of state capitals or how much corn Iowa grew last year. Cram them full of noncombustible data, chock them so damned full

of 'facts' they feel stuffed, but absolutely 'brilliant' with information. Then they'll feel they're thinking, they'll get a *sense* of motion without moving. And they'll be happy, because facts of that sort don't change. (80)

In this case, Beatty is commenting on how this type of content makes subjects consider themselves as cultured people, a consideration that facilitates the disinterest in the culture collected in books. Equally important is the fact that these individuals are totally satisfied with their situation, they live in their vacuous reality with full conformity.

#### **4.4. Encouragement of a Fast-living Society**

In like manner, there is an encouragement for a fast-living style of society that is also provided by propaganda and consumerism. As Seed annotates, the individuals are absorbed “entirely by their roles as consumers, whether of sedatives, soap-operas, or fast cars” (229). As aforementioned, the consumerism and the TV shows conform a relevant and very powerful source of distraction. Comparatively, the fast cars and the speed with which they go along the highways, with the prohibition of going slower, can be taken as a metaphor for the kind of life these subjects are living. These people are encouraged to have a very fast-paced life, without time for preoccupations or reflections. Similarity, there is not any possibility of stopping or slowing down to meditate or to try to avoid this mode of life.

#### **4.5. War**

The matter of how war is portrayed in the novel is also an important element in the limitation of the fundamental liberties to be able to have individuality and free thought. With the extreme censorship, the information regarding exterior questions is exceedingly limited and manipulated. These people are deceived into believing that the outside countries are as healthy and prosperous as theirs, and that the war they are waging is proceeding properly and they are safe and harmless. This is stated by Montag when he begins to emerge from his alienation: “We’ve started and won two atomic wars since 1960! Is it because we're having so much fun at home we've forgotten the world? ... I’ve heard rumors; the world is starving and we’re well fed. Is it true, the world works hard, and we play?” (96). This oblivion of the outside world is a parallelism to the indifference to their own interior reality. Their government is depriving them of their individuality, freedom, and of the capacity of develop these. The optimistic information they get of the war is another comforting and alienating component of the regime to maintain the citizens pacified.

War also reinforces the alienating factor of severe consumerism. Military influence is very much present in the daily lives of citizens. As an illustration, the firemen's entity is a military-based institution whose function is to persecute, repress, imprison, or execute book possessors; and that has effective tracing and lethal weapons such as the Mechanical Hound. This familiarity with the military promotes the manufacture of weapons, which is an important source of the state's income. Being so

beneficial to the country, the government is interested in people supporting war and, therefore, the existence of suppressing forces such as firemen. Hence, the government of *Fahrenheit 451* is a warfare state, with a military-industrial complex that create a mass consumption economy in a society formed by conforming consumers (Baker 493). Consequently, as mass producers and compulsive consumers, citizens see arms as any other asset. Therefore, the effects of these weapons are also trivialized. In other words, the death produced by a weapon (like the Mechanical Hound) is totally meaningless for them, and it is even shown as a television spectacle. This is, therefore, a result of the importance given by the government to matters related to war.

#### 4.6. Fear

The last mechanism of individuality suppression in *Fahrenheit 451* is fear. It is the most powerful element against the individuals that resist to be alienated or that begin to think independently. Things such as questioning the system or having a book have the consequence of being considered a criminal and being persecuted or even executed. It is out of fear that people suppress from themselves any trace of developing any individual idea or consideration that might be considered inappropriate or illegal. This rejection of doing things such as reading can be found when Mildred says, "...if Captain Beatty knew about those books--" ... Her face grew amazed and then horrified. "He might come and bum the house and the `family.' That's awful! ...Why should I read? What for?" (95). In this quotation, it can be seen how the people consider the risk of reading is greater than its benefits. The same thing happens also with the idea of developing a personality of their own. Being different from the unification of mentality is something that can lead, with a significant possibility, to their death. This is the case of Clarisse, that was triggered and executed for being or thinking different from what is being settled as the correct mentality. Captain Beatty, in charge of her investigation, comments on her case:

Clarisse McClellan? We've a record on her family. We've watched them carefully. Heredity and environment are funny things. She was a time bomb. The family had been feeding her subconscious. She didn't want to know how a thing was done, but why...You ask why to a lot of things and you wind up very unhappy indeed, if you keep at it. The poor girl's better off dead. (79)

In this fragment he suggests that her death was propitiated by her inconvenient curiosity and her different way of thinking. Although the government's alienating and reality-evading systems are highly effective, there are severe punishments and intimidations for the disobedient ones.

Several of these castigations are shown, in TV live programmes for instance, as a reminder of the consequences of being against the system. Therefore, the technology plays a relevant role in this spread of fear among the population. As aforementioned, the insubordinate subjects are persecuted to death and presented as a TV show, or being incarcerated or even burnt alive in front of the passive or amazed gaze of bystanders and their own neighbors. Regarding this issue, Baker states that "the spectacle of death is one

that keeps the citizens pacified (or perhaps ideologically anaesthetized)” (493). Apart from the frivolous and entertaining conception of death previously explained, this type of spectacle is the most impactful and effective method of scaring those who are reconsidering to inflict the law. This type of retransmission of chastisements is considered more important than the actual situation of the war. For instance, when Montag’s persecution is broadcast on TV, the citizens are more concerned with this event than with the fact that the enemies are about to bomb the whole city. But, as the narrator states in the novel, “The circus must go on, even with war beginning within the hour” (172).

## **5. COMPARISON OF THE DEHUMANIZING ELEMENTS IN *BRAVE NEW WORLD* AND *FAHRENHEIT 451***

Considering that *Brave New World* was first published in 1932 and *Fahrenheit 451* in 1953, this gap of 21 years implies differences or different uses in the suppressing elements of individuality. Nevertheless, there are also similarities to be found that are shared and that lend themselves to analysis and comparison. With this in mind, the similarities that both novels have in common are: the prohibition of literature, the importance of technology and science, the individual thinking as the main threat, and the influence of mass entertainment. Regarding the differences, these are: the differential manner of control, the differing perspective on the possibility of opposition and escape, the existence of sexual promiscuity and the issue of the suppression of the sense of family.

### **5.1. Similarities**

#### **5.1.1. Prohibition of literature**

There is an elimination of writings and traces of previous intellectualism in both novels. Its objective is the destruction of the possibility of developing independent thinking, that is, the prevention of the opportunity of expanding the subject's mind. They want to avoid imagination, creativity, plurality of ideas, subjectivity, and therefore individuality and personality. This can be seen from Captain Beatty's words in *Fahrenheit 451*, "Once, books appealed to a few people, here, there, everywhere. They could afford to be different" (72). An abhorrence or fear of the simple idea of reading is also promoted and implemented, and it is at this point, however, that a difference can be discerned.

In *Brave New World*, individuals are conditioned from childhood to abhor reading as it is an isolating and non-consumptive activity. This is achieved by providing children with electro-shocks when they approach or show any interest in books. Books are also banned because of the threat posed by their emotional, creative, and subjective impact. However, in *Fahrenheit 451* people are afraid to read or have books since this would imply the possibility of imprisonment, their house, and all their possessions burned, and even the possibility of being burned alive. On the other hand, in the novel of Bradbury, literature is not considered a danger because of its emotional charge, but of the intellectual one. Yet, there is also a convergence in this difference, and it is that in both cases fear, and even pain, is used in order to make the subjects eventually reject their interest in reading. In both novels the importance of the literature is highlighted. Reading is necessary for the intellectual and emotional enrichment and for the development and multiplicity of the mentalities of the subjects, that is, the possibility of being free and independent.

#### **5.1.2. Influence of the technology and scientific advances**

As dystopian novels set in a near future there is a great influence of the technology and science in society. This relevance of technology is essential to facilitate the dystopian conditions of both pieces. Also, in both cases, technology is the primary means, essential for executing and expanding the alienating elements. Technological and scientific advances are used by the government to create and maintain the desired conditioned, conformist, consumerist, and passive society.

In *Brave New World*, technology is the key instrument that makes viable the existence and functioning of the type of society it describes. Because of scientific and technological advances, the state is able to literally create its citizens according to its own criteria and needs. It is also present in the conditioning they suffer in order to fulfill the social roles determined by the government. Science and technology is also what facilitates the creation of a drug so peaceful, tranquilizing, and evasive that it makes individuals unable or unwilling to realize the reality or rebel against the system. Similarly, in *Fahrenheit 451* technology forms the main source of entertainment and reality evading present in this society, that is, the television and radio. Moreover, through these, propaganda and consumerism are promoted. But the most extreme application of technology and science is the Mechanical Hound, the firemen's lethal and tracking weapon in charge of chasing and executing the book owners.

This distorted use is something obvious in both novels. It can be observed the devastating effects of scientific research and technological advances and their applications in controlling the behavior and mentality of the population. They are mainly used as instruments of creation, channels of transmission, and as weapons of punishment. Without the effectiveness of these devices, the economic and social systems would not be able to sustain themselves.

### 5.1.3. The individual thinking as the main threat

Both governments know that individual thought is a threat capable of destroying the totalitarian state, so they establish a severe and effective system of control and manipulation over the population. With the aim of putting an end to "dangerous" individuals, they range from exile, as in the case of *Brave New World*, to the creation of a powerful lethal tracking weapon the Mechanical Hound that eliminates the population, as in the case of *Fahrenheit 451*, in the form of spectacle and example.

All the measures they adopt, the institutions they create, and the initiatives they develop have the same goal: the alienation and unification of the minds of all members of the population. Freedom of thought, individuality, and the absence of any kind of manipulation are totally incompatible with the functioning of the states described in both novels. For this reason, there are institutions such as the *Fahrenheit 451* firemen department or the hatchery and conditioning centres, in charge of preventing the traits of

the future personality or eliminating the already existing devices that convey cultural or intellectual content.

Also, in both cases there is an intentionally precarious and alienating education to form these conformist and passive subjects. Individuals who have read or think differently are labeled as dangerous or delusional. These people are punished in both cases so that they do not spread their dangerous and harmful ideas. In *Brave New World*, the punishment is less violent: they are banished to an island with more people in their situation; while in *Fahrenheit 451* the punishments are more drastic: the imprisonment or execution of these people. Therefore, free thought is the most powerful and effective weapon the protagonists have to fight these states.

#### 5.1.4. The influence of mass entertainment

In both *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451*, the various effects of the means of mass entertainment can be notably observed. In both cases, the consequences are very similar. As Huxley comments on his own novel, “non-stop distractions...are deliberately used as instruments of policy, for the purpose of preventing people from paying too much attention to the realities of the social and political” (*Revisited* 37). This reality-evading characteristic is one of the main reasons why people in both novels disregard what the society or even their personal life they live is really like. The systems reflected in both cases are based on the Ancient Roman period: bread and circus. The governments encourage their citizens to consume this type of entertainment in order to divert their attention from the totalitarian and shallow reality they are assigned to live.

Also, these entertainments are one of the primary means of dispersion of the collective mentality and behavior. The images or situations that are portrayed on television or in the sensory cinema present the behaviors that are afterwards imitated by people. For instance, in *Brave New World*, the movies with erotic content and the transmission of the sensations the actors are feeling to the public promote the sexual promiscuity the state wants as a distracting element. In like manner, in *Fahrenheit 451* there are the television programmes that, with its scripts, determine how individuals should behave in the presence of what they consider their family, that is, the actors and actresses. With these people, incapable of differentiating reality from fiction, this is an important model of conduct and thought for them.

## 5.2. Differences

### 5.2.1. Differential manner of control

One of the most notorious differences between the two novels is the differential manner of control of the population. These are totally opposite. In *Brave New World*, the government utilizes both types of pleasure, the physical with the sexual relationships, and the psychological with the consumption of Soma, distractions such as the cinema or the

music halls, or the reward system, with which they provide amounts of Soma to individuals who behave in an exemplary manner. In contrast, in *Fahrenheit 451* the control of the behavior and mentality of the individuals is achieved by fear. This type of control is more active and direct, while the one portrayed in the previous case is more passive and indirect. However, both are equally effective, and both states dispose of the ones they have been unable to alienate. Moreover, the way of the disposition of these people is also similar. In *Brave New World*, they are simply exiled to another place, while in *Fahrenheit 451* they are executed, several times in public or in a live TV show.

### 5.2.2. The perspective on the possibility of opposition and escape

Inversely related with the previous section there is the differing perspective on the possibility of opposition and escape. In the pleasure state of *Brave New World*, there is the impossibility of rebellion or escape. Bernard Marx comes to question his society and lifestyle. However, through community acceptance, Soma's consumption, her sexual relationship with Lenina, orgies and music halls dispel his discontent, doubts and, consequently, her independent thinking. On the other hand, there is the case of John the Savage. He rejects everything despite having a positive attitude towards what he would find in civilization at the beginning. He actively rebels by rejecting the control elements analyzed in this paper by rejecting a purely sexual relationship with Lenina or by throwing away amounts of Soma. Then he isolates himself from the city and its lifestyle and returns to his way of living in the Reserve, punishing himself every time he wanted to fall into the traps of the system. However, he eventually succumbs to sex and Soma. When he realizes that he has done what he rejected and that there is no escape from this type of society, he ends up committing suicide. This tragic conclusion illustrates the absolute impossibility of refusing or escaping the means of manipulation by the government. Both examples illustrate the effectiveness of the current system.

In the case of *Fahrenheit 451*, although the control is stricter and more violent, there is a possibility of escape, and even there is the promise of the beginning of a utopia or of a new civilization based on freedom. Montag begins as a perfect example of suggestion. He does not question his life, work, or the lifestyle of his community. Nevertheless, this changes when he realizes that in the past things were different and that the government cruelly executes the individuals that think for themselves. He begins to question his work, the importance of literature, his relationship with his wife, the presence of propaganda and the media, and the authorities' extremist and totalitarian policies. He opposes all these things: he saves, hides and reads books, he is separated from his wife, destroys the television sets in his house, and becomes a fugitive. His change is such that in his escape he burns to death his superior, who represented the mentality and morals of the system for him. After destroying and escaping the means of the state's control, he manages to reach a free community whose goal is to spread the literature they know throughout the country. Parallel to this promise of a new beginning, the city is completely destroyed. Therefore, not only is there a feasible, though difficult, possibility of escape,



but also the opportunity to end the totalitarian system and start a new one based on individual thought and freedom.

Under those circumstances, it can be seen that the pleasure state of *Brave New World* is more addicting and compelling than the terror state of *Fahrenheit 451*. This is because the first state is enjoyable, and it is more difficult for the people to resist the type of life it offers. On the other hand, the second one terrified the citizens, a fact that makes them desire to escape.

### 5.2.3. Sexual promiscuity and the concept of family

There is a great difference in the matter of the family, and, consequently, the sexual promiscuity. In the case of *Brave New World*, the concept of family is something of the past, undesirable, and pernicious. This is because it is related to emotions and feelings. And, due to the inexistence of families, there is a high sexual promiscuity. In the case of *Fahrenheit 451*. There are families and, therefore, monogamy, as well as natural breeding. But, at the same time, the family role is very superficial, and it is transferred to the actors and actresses of the TV programs.

Although there is this great difference, there is a similarity in the sense that, in both cases, the concept of family is something distorted. Even if family is something common in *Fahrenheit 451*, the relationships between its members are very superficial. They do not have any affectionate feeling for each other. So, though there is a different perspective regarding families, its concept is misrepresented in both cases.

## 6. CONCLUSION

*Brave New World* reflects relevant characteristics that concerned Aldous Huxley and that he criticized and made people conscious of when he wrote his most famous novel after the World War I. Issues such as consumerism, the obscure implication of the technological and scientific advances, and the moral and sexual relaxation in the Roaring Twenties are represented with their most disastrous consequences for the population in a near future. And these features are part of the government's strategic plan to create a dehumanized civilization that will remain peaceful and conformist for the benefit of the state.

On the other hand, *Fahrenheit 451* reflects Ray Bradbury's concerns after World War II and in the middle of the Cold War. With a repressive system founded on fear and based on measures such as the law of prohibition, the burning of books and the persecution, imprisonment and execution of bookkeepers, more distracting mass entertainment means that replace the role of families and promote mass consumerism, and so on, an effective repression of individuality and free thought is effected.

And although both novels show two apparently different types of society, several of these alignment mechanisms coincide. Although it can also be observed that the existence of different elements is due to the different influence and experiences lived by the authors in relation to the different historical conflicts lived by each one. Nevertheless, both want to highlight their fear of certain aspects that occurred at the time and that they see as a threat to the individuality and basic rights of human beings in the near future if no action is taken to prevent it.

If an analysis is attempted to relate some of the elements analyzed to the present, some similarities can be observed. For instance, the distracting and fundamental role of the mass entertainment means in the individuals' lives can be compared, in the present world, to that one of the social networks. Also, social networks' influence is increased by the propaganda, and this in turn acquires a greater range of dispersion and influence through social networks, that is, they feedback each other. Moreover, along the same lines, the increasingly growing globalization process could also be compared to a unification phenomenon expanding the massive consumerism. So, as Huxley states, "the nightmare of total organization, which I had situated in the seventh century After Ford, has emerged from the safe, remote future and is now awaiting us, just around the next corner." (*Revisited* 4)

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