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“WORDS ARE LIKE X-RAYS”: EDUCATION AS A MECHANISM OF CONTROL IN ALDOUS HUXLEY’S *BRAVE NEW WORLD*

Abstract

The concept of education has been implicitly or explicitly present as a central theme of the modern dystopian fiction stemming from the early twentieth century, so it comes as no surprise that it plays a pivotal role in Aldous Huxley’s nightmarish society aptly described in his seminal novel published in 1932, Brave New World. Taking into account John Dewey’s famous dictum which states that “the conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind” (1997: 101), this paper aims to explore Huxley’s novel as a fictionalised warning against how exactly education¹ can be used as a mechanism of mass control and a tool of societal exploitation. It aspires to do so by applying two theoretical frameworks in concord with surveillance pedagogy: Paulo Freire’s banking concept of education and Michel Foucault’s docile bodies and bio-power.

Keywords: Brave New World, education, Foucauldian docile bodies and bio-power, Freirean banking concept, ideology, power.

¹ At a first glance, the notions which one connects to the term *education* can appear straightforward and rather self-explanatory. However, if we consider more closely its definition, education entails the following:

- “1. the act or process of acquiring knowledge, especially systematically during childhood and adolescence
2. the knowledge or training acquired by this process
3. the act or process of imparting knowledge, especially at a school, college, or university
4. the theory of teaching and learning
5. a particular kind of instruction or training” (Collins English Dictionary Online, 2011).

For the purpose of this paper and bearing in mind its topic (as well as the titular novel’s content), this exploration will namely focus on definitions 1, 3, and 5.

***BRAVE NEW WORLD* AND MECHANISMS OF CONTROL: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Prior to venturing into the exploration of the concept of education as a mode of control, it is only fitting to briefly contextualize the socio-political sphere of the “brave new world” around which it revolves. In constructing the technocratic, bourgeois society of the World State, Huxley juxtaposes both the watershed technological advancements of the opening three decades of the twentieth century and the interim period of the First World War, which Eric Hobsbawm defines as *the Age of Catastrophe*. Largely influenced by the Great Depression, especially its 1929-1931 stage, Huxley’s World State is evocative both of the “old-fashioned liberalism dying or seeming doomed” and the rise of Italian fascism under Benito Mussolini as one of the “three options competing for the intellectual-political hegemony” (Hobsbawm, 1994: 107) during the late 1920s.²

But, if one is truly to investigate the exertion of control in *Brave New World*, it is impossible to bypass its real-life industrial, philosophical, psychological, and educational counterparts which ultimately produce and shape education as a mode of control. Huxley seems to openly perceive Henry Ford’s introduction of the T Model in 1908 as an accentuation of consumerist values, which results in the creation of phenomena such as mass society and shapeless people, later (un)identified by Wystan Hugh Auden as *unknown citizens*.³ What arises from this output is the emphasis on society’s welfare, as apparent and dominant in the second half of the eighteenth century, namely through Jeremy Bentham’s then influential philosophy of utilitarianism.⁴ Huxley drives the essence of this philosophy – to extend the actions which augment the happiness of the majority of population – to an extreme opposite, constituting an antipode in which such societal structure actually causes the death of the individual. This is only furthered by the effects of what Huxley (2001) terms *hypnopædia* or sleep-teaching. An educational construct used in the nightmarish World State, sleep teaching is largely modelled after Ivan Pavlov’s studies on classical conditioning and primarily based on the amalgamation of environmental stimuli and behavioural responses.

2 This claim can also be purported by the fact that Huxley created his fictionalised world by re-shaping his own reality: during the 1920s, not only did he work at Brunner and Mond, a high-tech chemical plant in Billingham, North East England, but he also spent a considerable amount of time in Italy, living with his then wife, Maria Nys, and visiting his friend, D. H. Lawrence.

3 As Cheney Ceil states while comparing the protagonist of Auden’s famous poem to Eugene Ionesco’s *The Leader* or Kurt Vonnegut’s *Harrison Bergeron*: “Auden’s *The Unknown Citizen* is written in the voice of a fictional government bureaucrat and it uses parody to protest the numbing effects of modern life – its indifference towards individuality and identity” (2012).

4 One of the fundamental theoretical constituents of Bentham’s philosophy of utilitarianism is *the principle of utility*, a term which he borrowed from David Hume and Claude Adrien Helvétius. Bentham originally defined it in his 1789 treatise titled *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* as the “principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness” (Bentham, 2000: 14).

Finally, when taking into account the previously explicated *strata*, the World State of the *Brave New World* outlines what Hannah Arendt refers to as “organization of totalitarian movements” (Arendt, 1968: 385). With Mustapha Mond, one of the ten omnipotent World Controllers, at helm, the aforementioned structure relies on an “intimate circle around the Leader” for whom “ideological clichés are mere devices to organize the masses” (Arendt, 1968: 385). Louis Althusser furthers these notions within his systematization of the modes of control, or rather, the ruling power’s outer and inner mechanisms of mass surveillance and domination which will be explicated in detail in the remainder of the paper. It will also attain a specific perspective on the concept of education and its (ab)use as represented in the titular novel.

EDUCATION THROUGH FOUCAULTIAN *DOCILE BODIES* AND *BIO-POWER*: SOCIAL PREDESTINATION AND EXERTION OF POWER

When exploring the notions and applications of surveillance pedagogy (or the pedagogy of the observed), one needs to rely on its critical theories which seemingly coincide with what Louis Althusser terms Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). As a part of the *public domain*, RSAs coincide with the ruling body’s association with “the government, the administration, the army, the police, the courts, the prisons, etc.” (Althusser, 2014: 243). All of these instruments function by some form of physical violence and repression (though not necessarily in their entirety), the explanation of which seems quite logical if one looks closer into the constituents of their name. Alongside Huxley’s *Brave New World*, the institutionalization of violence also permeates the dystopian society of Anthony Burgess’ *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). In relation to this, Čerina (2015) explores the disciplinary function of the police as one of the state’s enforcing mechanisms. She concludes that

the government is not as interested in fighting crime as it is in maintaining the semblance of stability. The bullies who are roaming free are now being admitted to police stations. By turning the police into a criminal body, the government encourages violence, seeking to contribute to the citizens’ paranoia and to ultimately achieve obedience through fear (my translation)⁵ (Čerina, 2015: 9).

Education in itself falls under a different type of apparatus to be explained later on, but what may serve as a proper introduction for the exploration of educational basis aligned with the World State’s power is most vividly represented in an episode from Chapter 2, when the Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre visits the

5 Original text: “Vladu ne zanima toliko borba protiv zločina koliko očuvanje privida stabilnosti. Nasilnike koji su na slobodi počinje se primati u policijske postaje. Pretvarajući policiju u kriminalno tijelo vlada potiče nasilje, želeći doprinijeti paranoji građana te u krajnjoj mjeri postići poslušnost putem straha” (Čerina, 2015: 9).

newly decanted⁶ (Beta) children. One of the nurses present introduces the reader to the “learning processes” of “Elementary Class Sex and Elementary Class Consciousness” (Huxley, 2001: 43), which are basically brainwashing courses designed to modify all of the newly created “human beings” to fit into their colour-and-purpose designated societal caste:

Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they’re so frightfully clever. I’m really awfully glad I’m Beta, because I don’t work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and the Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I *don’t* want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They’re too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides, they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I’m *so* glad I’m Beta (Huxley, 2001: 43–44).

What is more, not only are these children modified immediately after the moment of their artificial inception, but they are also exposed to severe social predestination processes of sleep-teaching/*hypnopædia*, whose extent and severity are best summed up in the following excerpt:

They’ll have that repeated forty or fifty times more before they wake; then again on Thursday, and again on Saturday. A hundred and twenty times, three times a week, for thirty months. After which they go on to a more advanced lesson (Huxley, 2001: 44–45).

From this literal creation of subservient followers and an over-arching political force embodied within the World State and Mustapha Mond, the World State’s power is made concrete, allowing for Huxley’s fictionalisation to be explored through the outer and inner rim of Michel Foucault’s theory of *Panopticism*⁷:

The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen. It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up (Foucault, 1995: 201–202).

6 The novel introduces the process of *decanting* which may be seen as equivalent to birth. However, it is used to literally denote that the World State pours babies out of the bottles they were gestated in, only to mechanize the entire process of creating a subservient society. Such sterilized population is then prepared for their place in the world, thus upholding the State motto of “Community, Identity, and Stability”.

7 Jeremy Bentham sketched out his “penitentiary inspection house” in one of his many *Panopticon Writings* (originally from 1790, 1791): “The building is circular. The apartments of the prisoners occupy the circumference. These cells are divided from one another, and the prisoners by that means secluded from all communication with each other. The apartment of the inspector occupies the centre” (Bentham, 1995: 35). However, Foucault’s theory of *Panopticism* (as explicated above) does not observe the *Panopticon* merely as an architectural blueprint. It develops from it and uses the literal building as a metaphor for a disciplinary mode of power and an outline of a political mechanism.

However, Foucauldian readings related to notions such as *docile bodies* and *bio-power* provide a more vocal and precise conclusion when it comes to the concept of education being used as a mechanism of control.

Firstly, the society of the World State, namely by constructing and maintaining the previously explicated social castes, adheres to what Foucault, in his seminal study titled *Discipline and Punish*, terms *docile bodies*. According to his perception, each citizen of a state (and the World State, for that matter) represents an analysable and manageable *corpus* which is seen as docile, in the sense that it “may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault, 1995: 136) with the result of creating “the celebrated automata, (...) political puppets, small-scale models of power” (Foucault, 1995: 136). The powers-that-be attain the dominant type of power in question and subtly impose it upon their citizens, and the citizens choose to embrace it willingly. Foucault also offers three modes of creating what he calls “the relation of docility-utility” (Foucault, 1995: 137), or simply put, discipline. These disciplinary measures entail *the scale of control*, or “a subtle coercion, (...) an infinitesimal power over the active body” (Foucault, 1995: 137), *the object of control*, or “the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization” (Foucault, 1995: 137), and *the modality of control*, or “an uninterrupted, constant coercion”, “supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result” (Foucault, 1995: 137).

John Dewey (1997) states that “the full development of private personality is identified with the aims of humanity as a whole and with the idea of progress” (1997: 100). However, his “explicit fear of the hampering influence of a state-conducted and state-regulated education upon the attainment of these ideas” (Dewey, 1997: 100) is realized within the World State’s “educational sciences”, disciplinary tools which aim to strip the citizens of any form of individuality, including, respectively, their education. Thus, not only does the political machinery of the *technotopia*⁸ that is *Brave New World* deconstruct the very fundamentals of education, teaching, and schooling “as means by which the individual is enabled to develop or unfold toward some absolute form of rational being” (Ball, 2017: 30), it also accentuates only the social role of “the conditions and contexts within which individuals are produced and made up” (Ball, 2017: 30). Developing identity through education is therefore replaced with disintegrating identity through social predestination: “We also predestine and condition. We decant our babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future (...) Directors of Hatcheries” (Huxley, 2001: 21).

The actual elongation of these processes relates to the object(s) of control, made all the more disturbing by physicalizing the teaching highly dependent on the individual’s future societal role. Best illustrative of such approach to de-individualizing a human being is the electro-shock teaching method applied to Delta children from the moment of their decantation:

8 *Technotopia* can be defined as “a governance model in which policy decisions” are “made by a technocracy, a depoliticized branch of government that is staffed by highly educated scientific and technical specialists, to the exclusion of politicians or interest groups” (Pfaffenberger, 2008).

Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks. Already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder (Huxley, 2001: 33).

However, a question that poses itself when examining this mode of discipline is related to the ruling power's intention of even applying it. Simply put, both the World State and Mustapha Mond as its leader consciously deprive their citizens of the ability to independently formulate their own origins which, "once found, are often taken to constitute an explanation of things" (Ball, 2006: 27), but are also commonly "the starting point for the evolution or development of things" (Ball, 2006: 26-27). Their origins, however, are not shattered, but are poignantly modulated so as to fit the World State's (social and industrial) ideal:

Primroses and landscapes, he pointed out, have one grave defect: they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy. It was decided to abolish the love of nature, at any rate among the lower classes; to abolish the love of nature, but not the tendency to consume transport. For of course it was essential that they should keep on going to the country, even though they hated it (Huxley, 2001: 35).

What this violent re-shaping of the basic human right or the moral ability to consciously make a choice actually ties into is the modality of control imposed upon the citizens. It is, in fact, deliberately accepted by the citizens in lieu of Bentham's utilitarian world-views on the majority's happiness, but the actuality lies in its polar opposite driven to the extreme in the shape of what Foucault terms *bio-power*.⁹ The latter construct is tied to the World State's regulation of its subjects through "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault, 1998: 140), one of which remains in concord with sex and reproduction. These issues, alongside gender roles, societal hierarchy, and the distribution of power, also pervade other notable dystopian novels, such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). While commenting on the previously mentioned questions and relating them to Atwood's fictional state of Gilead, Vuković (2019) concludes that its society sees and treats women as

(...) hierarchically subordinate to men and prone to weakness and sin, with their primary function being to extend the species and to secure posterity, regardless of their place in the hierarchical system: *the handmaids* give birth, *the marthas* are the housewives, *the aunts* are in charge of overseeing and educating the handmaids, whereas *the wives* socially rank the highest. However, all remain obedient to both men and draconian (religious) laws in

9 According to Foucault, the concept of *bio-power* can also be understood as "the power over life", or a mode of power which "evolved in two basic forms, (...) two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations". The first of these poles, *the anatomo-politics of the human body*, focuses on how to discipline an individual or a particular body with a certain aim, whereas the second pole, *the bio-politics of the population*, seems to be more interested in the "species body" (Foucault, 1998: 139), dealing with the collective rather than the individual.

Gilead. Because of this forced obedience, the fourth or the first wall of the state of Gilead also survives – the sexual exploitation of the handmaids through the process of the so-called *Ceremony* (my translation)¹⁰ (Vuković, 2019: 2225-2226).

What is more, these disciplinary techniques align with the abuse of education through constant coercion of children, who are in turn “taught” to feel comfortable with sexual relations at a young age. Simply put, the children are encouraged, namely through a complex social system of rewards and punishments for (not) committing, to exercise in erotic games, one of them called “Centrifugal Bumble-puppy” (Huxley, 2001: 47). These games then further the World State’s continuous felicity, which in result allows the children to “love” the system when they grow up, having no need (nor the fully developed ability) to question it in their minds:

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. Even adolescents like yourselves (...) barring a little surreptitious auto-erotism and homosexuality – absolutely nothing (Huxley, 2001: 51).

Bearing in mind all of the aforementioned and exemplified concepts, another question which requires an answer is the World State’s actual aim in the application of these instruments (or, as Althusser (2014: 243) calls them, RSAs). The process of birth, social predestination, and sexual relations are all related to the principle of effective teaching or immersive education of the newly decanted children up

(...) until at last the child’s mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child’s mind. And not the child’s mind only. The adult’s mind to, all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides, made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions (Huxley, 2001: 46).

When this general aim is achieved, the World State has successfully “educated” its “student” to be a proper Audenesque *unknown citizen*, or rather a shapeless being devoid of oneness and personal integrity. In their deconstruction of surveillance pedagogy on the example of a popular film (*Dead Poets Society*), Peter McLaren and Zeus Leonardo (1998) examine such total control over a “student” in accordance with a complex interplay of fiction and reality. By quoting Shumway (1994), who states that

10 Font editing done by Vuković. Original text: “Žene su hijerarhijski podređene muškarcima, vjeruje se da su sklonije slabostima i grijehu, a njihova osnovna funkcija je produženje vrste i osiguravanje potomstva, bez obzira na mjesto u sistemu hijerarhije: sluškinje (*handmaids*) su one koje rađaju, marte (*marthas*) su domaćice, tetke (*aunts*) su zadužene za nadgledanje i edukaciju sluškinja, supruge (*wives*) su najviše rangirane, ali su sve – poslušne, kako muškarcima tako i drakonskim (religijskim) zakonima u Gileadu. Upravo zahvaljujući prisilnoj poslušnosti opstaje i četvrti ili prvi zid države Gilead – seksualna eksploatacija sluškinja kroz proces tzv. Ceremonije (*The Ceremony*)” (Vuković, 2019: 2225-2226).

(...) the body for Foucault is not just a euphemism for the sexual, and is only one aspect of the way the body is constructed in schooling. The body is used by Foucault to indicate the fact that disciplinary controls are not merely memorized and accepted, but actually form the body itself. One could say that they are habits in the sense that they work without the conscious choice of an individual, but are ingrained in the very posture and musculature of the body (McLaren and Leonardo, 1998: 133),

the authors call into question a concept of disciplinary micro-technology¹¹ in relation to education, as well as the purpose of its application. As a concluding point of this particular section, one dares to observe how Foucault correlates such micro-technological modes of control to those that teachers and educators (explicitly or implicitly) apply in their classrooms:

A well-disciplined body forms the operational context of the slightest gesture. Good handwriting, for example, presupposes gymnastics – a whole routine whose rigorous code invests the body in its entirety, from the points of the feet to the tip of the index finger. The pupils must always ‘hold their bodies erect, somewhat turned and free on the left side, slightly inclined, so that, with the elbow placed on the table, the chin can be rested upon the hand, unless this were to interfere with the view; the left leg must be somewhat more forward under the table than the right. A distance of two fingers must be left between the body and the table (...)’ (Foucault, 1995: 152).

In other words, when teachers try to monitor and regulate the child’s physical movements by using “timers, bells, and whistles”, by “insisting that students line up in single file lines” or that they adhere to the pre-planned seating arrangements, or even through “enforcement of proper posture, pencil grip, and dress code (uniforms)” (Frederick, 2013: 13), they assume the exact same role enacted by prison guards. Gallagher (2010) furthers this by stating that “instructions to sit up, for example, sometimes have an effect akin to pulling the strings of a set of puppets: the children’s slumped bodies would immediately straighten, heads lifted and alert”, but goes on to add that, even if the teachers do not “have the monopoly on surveillance”, everyone seems to become “caught up both in being surveyed and in surveying” (Gallagher, 2010: 265).

Through this amalgamation of monitored kinesthesia, a specific spectacle of participant observation, and a rather strict spatial orientation, classrooms become separate spheres of hierarchical power designed so that “the teacher can observe children at all times while self-regulating their own behaviours” (Frederick, 2013: 13). If one connotes these perceptions to the sterile, quasi-learning areas built as replacements for classrooms in the World State, while also bearing in mind that the decanted children are monitored at all times and that their behaviour is regulated by various extreme measures, fictional accounts may serve as vessels for real-life warnings on what not to do and how not to approach teaching in a

11 In relation to this concept, Foucault writes the following: “What the apparatuses and institutions operate is, in a sense, a *micro-physics of power*, whose field of validity is situated in a sense between these great functionings and the bodies themselves with their materiality and their forces” (1995: 26).

classroom. Otherwise, they may simply end up being factories which the ruling power (the teacher, the head offices, or even the entire educational system) uses to exert its power over the person's body (and, later on, his or her mind).

EDUCATION THROUGH FREIREAN *BANKING CONCEPT*: ERADICATION OF THOUGHT AND DISSEMINATION OF IDEOLOGY

Having achieved a complete and resolute dominion over the citizen's body, the World State initiates what it perceives to be a Herculean task to obtain an effective control over the citizen's mind. By applying what Althusser refers to as "the plurality of Ideological State Apparatuses (IDAs)" (Althusser, 2014: 243), or "a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions" (Althusser, 2014: 243), the reader of *Brave New World* is familiarized with the institutions in the *private domain*, through which an ideology can be disseminated and practicalized. These include various educational institutions and schools, media outlets, churches, social and sports clubs, (the concept of) family, and many more.

However, these realizations only come into fruition if a study can pinpoint their importance in the general dystopian discourse, but also in the sense of a (critical or surveillance-related) pedagogical text. Paulo Freire's *banking concept of education* has been contextualized, examined, assessed, and reviewed positively or negatively by many studies over the past years, but it still proves to be the most effective tool for a concrete and fruitful analysis of a novel bound with such a grave socio-political milieu.

The *banking concept of education* can simply be defined as the process by which "the teacher leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content" and "turns them into *containers* or *receptacles* to be filled" (Freire, 2006: 72) by some form of content or knowledge. Freire exemplifies such process by focusing on what he terms "the outstanding characteristic of this narrative education", that is, "the sonority of words, not their transforming power":

"Four times four is sixteen; the capital of Para is Belem." The student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what four times four really means, or realizing the true significance of "capital" in the affirmation "the capital of Para is Belem," that is, what Belem means for Para and what Para means for Brazil¹² (Freire, 2006: 71).

Such passivation of the students' involvement in the learning process can easily be compared to a fictional example of mechanical learning called "the principle of sleep-teaching, or *hypnopædia*" (Huxley, 2001: 39), first used "officially in A.F.¹³ 214" (Huxley, 2001: 40).

¹² Quotation marks originally used by Freire.

¹³ *A.F.*, a term introduced by Huxley in the novel, relates to "anno Fordi" or "in the year of Our Ford", which finds its zero year in the introduction of the T Model in 1908. Taking into account the novel's

Modelled after a peculiar real-life experiment conducted in the Woodland Road Camp, a penal institution in Tulare County, California, sleep teaching was first introduced through

(...) miniature loudspeakers which were placed under the pillows of a group of prisoners who had volunteered to act as psychological guinea pigs. Each of these pillow speakers was hooked up to a phonograph in the Warden's office. Every hour throughout the night an inspirational whisper repeated a brief homily on "the principles of moral living" (Huxley, 2000: 67).

It relates to the process of implementing information in the child's mind while it is asleep, completely eradicating any active doing on the student's behalf and his/her subsequent understanding of the topic to be learned. Huxley (2001) exemplifies this by introducing the case of a boy named Tommy who was supposed to learn the length of the river Nile:

"The Nile is the longest river in Africa and the second in length of all the rivers of the globe. Although falling short of the length of the Mississippi-Missouri, the Nile is at the head of all rivers as regards the length of its basin, which extends through 35 degrees of latitude"¹⁴ (Huxley, 2001: 40).

However, when asked which river is the longest during the following morning, Tommy was left bewildered and unable to answer the question. He was able to mechanically recall all that was said to him about the river Nile, but was not able to understand what these words actually meant:

"Well now, which is the longest river in Africa?"

The eyes are blank. "I don't know."

"But the Nile, Tommy."

"The - Nile - is - the - longest - river - in - Africa - and - second..."

"Then which river is the longest, Tommy?"

Tommy burst into tears. "I don't know," he howls¹⁵ (Huxley, 2001: 41).

By using such an example, Huxley (2001) consciously over-accentuates both the previously explicated notion of mechanical learning and the structure of verbalism through which the students learn without the concept of understanding. He does so with the aim of issuing a warning against the utilization of these learning processes, which ultimately

setting in AF 632, this means that the action takes place in AD 2540 (according to the Gregorian calendar), whereas the first official use of *hypnopædia* would date back to AF 214 or AD 2122.

14 Quotation marks originally used by Huxley.

15 Quotation marks originally used by Huxley.

serve to produce Eliotesque *hollow men*¹⁶ or Thoreauan *wooden men*¹⁷. Much like in the society of *Brave New World*, both of those constructs are only taught to follow the ruling body's imposed ideology and social stigmas, best disseminated through all the applicable technological means. While re-visiting his novel in a series of essays in 1958, Huxley (2000) also commented on the then easy usage of contemporary apparatuses which blur the very concept of education and the idea which the ruler aims to instil in the ruled:

Thanks to compulsory education and the rotary press, the propagandist has been able, for many years past, to convey his messages to virtually every adult in every civilized country. Today, thanks to radio and television, he is in the happy position of being able to communicate even with unschooled adults and not yet literate children (Huxley, 2000: 44).

As has already been explained, the citizens of the World State are genetically modified and pre-destined in "Infant Nurseries and Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Rooms" (Huxley, 2001: 29), which serve as artificial and sterile replacements of the lively, socially engaging educational institutions (in which children should not only be educated, but also mingle with their peers to develop basic interactional and social skills). The World State furthers their practical application and mass production of subservient masses through several processes, all of which have in common the annihilation of one important notion that Freire calls upon. They extinguish the students'

flame of resistance that sharpens their curiosity and stimulates their capacity for risk, for adventure, so as to immunize themselves against the banking system. In this sense, the creative force of the learning process, which encompasses comparison, repetition, observation, indomitable doubt, and curiosity not easily satisfied, overcomes the negative effects of false teaching (Freire, 1998: 12).

Therefore, not only is the interaction through which people may learn suppressed, but so are the institutions and material matters which serve as sources of new information and knowledge. Initially, the World State resorted to violent tactics of removing such institutions, as seen on the example of "the famous British Museum Massacre" when "two thousand culture fans were gassed with dichlorethyl sulphide" (Huxley, 2001: 78). However, the World Controllers' totalitarianist approach to creating only one centre of all knowledge under the State's supervision proved to be difficult to implement among the people, which is the reason why they opted for

16 Named after one of Thomas Stearns Eliot's most famous poems, *the hollow men* can be defined as "shapeless, colourless" men whose "life force is paralyzed", and when they move, there is no motion, just "contorted images of the painful, yet anesthetized walking dead" (Grimes, 2019) aimlessly wandering about.

17 Henry David Thoreau defines *the wooden men* in the following passage taken from his 1849 essay titled *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*: "The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, *posse comitatus*, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well" (Thoreau, 2004).

(...) the slower but infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopædia (...), an intensive propaganda against viviparous reproduction (...), accompanied by a campaign against the Past; by the closing of museums, the blowing up of historical monuments (luckily most of them had already been destroyed during the Nine Years' War); by the suppression of all books published before A.F. 150 (Huxley, 2001: 79).

Derived from these modes of controlling the spread of knowledge is also the World State's censorship of books and classical literary and religious texts, such as "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, (...) Shakespeare's Othello, (...) Cardinal Newman, (...) Maine de Biran" (Huxley, 2001: 365-366), and a plethora of others. Obedience does not arise from having zero options, but from having only one option to consider, and that is exactly what the World State furthers by constituting a teaching-learning process which results in the students' dilapidating understanding of the subject matter.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the society which kills the languages, such as "Polish, (...) French, and German" (Huxley, 2001: 36), also aspires to murder all other forms of written (and spoken) word. Two notions to consider, which ultimately relate to fundamental human freedoms and are inspired by or derived from the very process of education, are the students' abilities to read and to think critically of what they had read and of their immediate surroundings. While exploring the seemingly relatable "brave new world" of another notable dystopian novel, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), Ljubica Matek (2014) calls into question the necessity to further the learner's abilities to read,

because *reading* induces the most diverse feelings in humans, feelings which cannot be controlled, while also *encouraging critical thinking*¹⁸ which – as stated by the state apparatus embodied within the characters of the firemen whose duty is to burn the books – makes people unhappy; therefore, it is the State's duty to free the society of books, sources of calamities, and evil (my translation)¹⁹ (Matek, 2014: 306-307).

Bearing in mind all of the explicated processes which adhere to the banking concept of education, the World State's aim undoubtedly lies in limiting the students' "capacity to go beyond the factors of conditioning, which is one of the obvious advantages of the human person" (Freire, 1998: 12-13). What is more, it also relates to Foucauldian *docile bodies* and the *bio-power* which supersedes them as it sees

(...) men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely

18 Font editing originally done by Matek.

19 Original text: "*Fahrenheit 451* prikazuje totalitarističko društvo u kojemu je pisana riječ utjelovljena u knjigama denuncirana kao nepoželjna, jer *čitanje* kod ljudi izaziva najrazličitije osjećaje što ih nije moguće kontrolirati i uz to *potiče kritičko mišljenje* koje – kako tvrdi državni aparat utjelovljen u likovima palitelja knjiga – čini ljude nesretnima, te je državi dužnost osloboditi društvo od knjiga, izvora nesreće i zla" (Matek, 2014: 306-307).

they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them (Freire, 2006: 73).

What remains, then, after all of these processes have been set into motion, is exactly that: a *what*, and not a *who*; an (un)person devoid of places to visit, people to learn from, books to read, options to consider, ideas to discuss; an empty shell turning into a receptacle filled with an ideology of the ruling body which is, unbeknownst to the ruled body, termed *education*. The "educators" of the World State thus actually form the "apparatus of cultural managers who cannot stray far from the bounds set" by "the forces that have the power to dominate the state" (Chomsky, 1989: 36)²⁰, those forces in the novel being the ten World Controllers (Mustapha Mond amongst them) who keep everything in line via numerous disciplinary mechanisms. Furthermore, the World State, as a dominant power with the aim of legitimising itself, blurs the concept of education and the dissemination of ideology by

promoting beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself²¹ (Eagleton, 1991: 5-6).

The citizens of the World State are thus decanted, genetically modified and socially predestined to serve a specific caste whose very existence depends on only furthering the State's desires, kept in line through sex and artificial opiates such as the drug *soma*, but also conditioned and "taught" how to live without self-integrity, personality, or any sense of freedom.

In such a nightmarish world, the concept of education does not (and simply cannot) bode any better. Even though the World State obsessively applies numerous physical mechanisms of control (RSAs) to adamantly "stabilize" its society (that is, to rigorously puppeteer it to its will), it is the application of psychological mechanisms of control (ISAs) that ultimately drives the citizens into blindly adhering to the *dictum* which only augments the society's subservience, while simultaneously eradicating their oneness. This is best summed up in the following, almost anthemic adage produced by the World State: "When the individual feels, the community reels" (Huxley, 2001: 143).

20 It is worthy to note that, in this particular case, Chomsky writes about the political function of state-controlled media in the late 20th century. However, even though his focus is not on the education system *per se*, he does claim that the media serve a societal purpose, but a rather different one: "It is the societal purpose served by state education as conceived by James Mill in the early days of the establishment of this system" (Chomsky, 1989: 26). In relation to the latter statement, Mill believes that "the first object undoubtedly to be provided for in the formation of a government is the obedience of the governed". This can be achieved either through "force or affection": "every where, with variation only in degree, the object has been to accumulate force enough ... to train the minds of the people to a virtuous attachment to their government" (quoted in Silver, 2007: 87).

21 Font editing originally done by Eagleton.

DYSTOPIAN TEXTS AND THEIR PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL

The sudden surge of popularity surrounding dystopian literature (as well as its television and film adaptations produced in the previous decade) may incite the readers to perceive these texts merely as fictionalised and imaginative futures which can never come to fruition. For example, while she was writing for her blog titled “Book Whisperer”, Donalyn Miller (2010), *Education Week’s* columnist and language arts teacher in Fort Worth, Texas, commented the following in regards to dystopian texts:

I consider my own classroom when I think about why dystopian science fiction books are popular. My students love these books because they love good stories. Action-packed battles between good and evil forces, strange, futuristic worlds, protagonists who fight for what’s right when the adults in their lives can’t or won’t – it’s great storytelling stuff (Miller, 2010).

However, even then, Miller (2010) must have been aware of the multi-layered nature of dystopian texts and their lying undertones, as well as the possibility of achieving an educational aim while teaching such texts. Otherwise, she would not have chosen to teach such novels at all.

Following the residual trace of the mentioned undertones is Philip Stoner’s 2017 overview of the evolution of dystopian literature, in which he peruses some general tropes which can be found and explored while reading dystopian novels. In the context of 1984’s Oceania, wherein no one is allowed to produce art, he emphasizes the dangers of the “Regulation of the Arts and Original Thought” (Stoner, 2017: 10). Bearing in mind that any fiction is in part based off of a shred of reality, this regulation of critical thought is something Nicholas Z. Scott, a creative writing lecturer in a prominent Shanghai university, seems to be worried about. In his recollection of teaching *Brave New World*, published in the form of an article on the webpage *Sixth Tone*, he perceives the effects of elitism and proceeds to discuss them on a daily basis:

My Chinese students speak fluent English, can afford the latest iPhone, and, based on our alumni statistics, are more likely than not to earn a graduate degree at an American university. We, in the rigid class hierarchy of “Brave New World”, are an entire institution of “Alphas” (Scott, 2016).

This leads him to think about the future of his students, but also about the future of education overall in the growingly industrialised and globalised world:

I worry about my students. I worry that they’re not creative enough, not entrepreneurial enough, that they’re not aggressive enough for careers in the 21st century. I worry that when they study abroad they’ll only talk to their Chinese friends. I worry that the time spent studying for the national college entrance examination, the *gaokao*, has robbed them of critical interpersonal skills. But most of all, I worry about perpetuating a privileged class of educational elites (Scott, 2016).

Adding onto these statements is Carolyn Geraci, a 7th grade reading teacher at Hamilton Middle School in Houston, who is currently teaching *A Sound of Thunder* by Ray Bradbury (1952). She stresses the importance of reading dystopian texts for the purpose of alleviating our fears of a nightmarish society in lieu of Huxley's World State. When interviewed for a website called *Education Week Teacher* by Kate Stoltzfus, Geraci states: "I think that dystopian lit(erature) provides a way for people to think about the future, even if it is in a negative fashion. After reading, we can look around and say 'That will not happen here', to assuage our fears" (Stoltzfus, 2017).

These worries, which at a certain point prove to burden any educator, may already hint at the necessity for reading *Brave New World* in concord with educational studies, but a point is best made if one juxtaposes this sphere to the novel's general place in dystopian discourse. *Brave New World* is largely considered a staple among the classics of the genre, and when it is situated face-to-face with another text of equivocal *gravitas*, such as George Orwell's *1984*, the readers are able to draw some, one would daresay, much needed conclusions.

David Castillo and Brad Nelson offer such a comparison in their 2019 exploration on the poetics of dystopian discourses. By quoting Neil Postman's 1985 critical study titled *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, the authors argue that

(...) what Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared that the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared that we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared that we would become a trivial culture (Castillo and Nelson, 2019: 11-12).

What Stoner (2017) and Castillo and Nelson (2019) therefore call upon is not only the eradication of thought and one's form of self-expression and self-exploration, but also the ruling power's desire to create a droningly obedient society by limiting its sources of information and the very shape of information, namely through exploitation of written and spoken knowledge and censorship. In doing so, all three authors issue a warning against the ruling body's possibility of construing a model of education which adheres to its own needs and desires, or rather, which traditionalizes and retrogrades the ever-developing concept of education to "teach" and "educate" the society never to usurp its power.

CONCLUSION

In an article issued by the *The Guardian* on 12 April 2011, Alison Flood offers *The American Library Association (ALA)*'s list of 10 books which Americans tried hardest to ban the previous year. Ranked third on the accounts of "insensitivity, offensive language, racism,

and sexual explicitness”, Huxley’s *Brave New World* was “banned in Ireland when it first appeared in 1932, and removed from shelves and objected to ever since”, but “it is still making waves today” (Flood, 2011).

If one takes into account both the previous statement and a quotation related to George Orwell’s worldview expressed in *1984*, which stipulates that he wrote his novel as a warning, and not an instruction manual, these waves mentioned by Flood need to remain in stronger currents. Issuing a statement towards that which should be done or, more importantly, against that which should not be done, serves as one of the most prominent aims of dystopian literature. The ability to produce an answer to these questions arises from knowledge partially attained through education, which also reveals the genre’s pedagogical potential and value, as well as the ever-growing hope for its more fruitful inclusion in classes to come and future readings.

To conclude, reading dystopian texts such as *Brave New World* through various prisms, one of it being surveillance (and/or critical) pedagogy, and examining concepts such as education, should coincide with the previously mentioned form of the warning. Because if it slips into the streams of the latter, the form of the instruction manual, dreams will not be the only stuff we the people (as individuals and citizens) are made on, and words will definitely penetrate the human body and mind like X-rays. However, they will not do so with the aim to reveal something, but will rather be intent on concealing everything.

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