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Bakalářská práce

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**Comparing the dystopian themes in the novels *Brave New World*
by Aldous Huxley and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury**

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Čestné prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně pod vedením Mgr. Petra Anténeho, M.A., Ph.D. s využitím pramenů, které jsou uvedeny v bibliografii.

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Podpis 

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Annotation

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Klíčová slova:	Konec civilizace, 451 stupňů Fahrenheita, Huxley, Bradbury, dystopie, utopie, kontrola
Anotace v angličtině:	The bachelor's thesis deals with the analysis and comparison of the dystopian themes in the novels <i>Brave New World</i> and <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> . The literature review provides definitions for the terms utopia and dystopia, biographies of Aldous Huxley and Ray Bradbury, and an introduction to the novels. The core of the thesis is the analysis and comparison of the chosen dystopian themes.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Brave New World, Fahrenheit 451, Huxley, Bradbury, dystopia, utopia, control
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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Defining the terms utopia and dystopia	2
2.1.	Utopia.....	2
2.2.	Dystopia	2
3.	Biography of Aldous Huxley.....	4
4.	Biography of Ray Bradbury	6
5.	Introduction and a brief description of both novels	7
5.1.	Brave New World.....	7
5.2.	Fahrenheit 451	8
6.	Analysing dystopian themes in both novels and comparing them	10
6.1.	Government control in <i>Brave New World</i>	10
6.2.	Government control in <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	11
6.3.	Comparing the portrayal of government control in the novels	13
6.4.	Censorship in <i>Brave New World</i>	14
6.5.	Censorship in <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	15
6.6.	Comparing the portrayal of censorship in the novels	16
6.7.	Image of a perfect society in <i>Brave New World</i>	16
6.8.	Image of a perfect society in <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	17
6.9.	Comparing the portrayal of the image of a perfect society in the novels	18
6.10.	Lack of free will in <i>Brave New World</i>	19
6.11.	Lack of free will in <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	21
6.12.	Comparing the portrayal of lack of free will in the novels	23
6.13.	Conformity and lack of individuality in <i>Brave New World</i>	24
6.14.	Conformity and lack of individuality in <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	26
6.15.	Comparing the portrayal of conformity and lack of individuality in the novels	27
7.	Conclusion.....	29
8.	Bibliography	31

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis aims to analyse and compare the chosen dystopian themes in the novels *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. The literature review provides definitions of the terms utopia and dystopia, biographies of both authors and a brief introduction to the novels. The analytical part of the thesis deals with the analysis of the selected dystopian themes and their subsequent comparison. The analysed themes are government control, censorship, image of a perfect society, lack of free will, and conformity and lack of individuality.

1. Introduction

Brave New World and *Fahrenheit 451* are two seminal works of dystopian fiction, that continue to captivate readers with their profound insights to this day. *Brave New World* is a novel written by Aldous Huxley, published in 1932, which envisions a society seemingly residing in a utopia. The residents of this world are no longer born naturally, as they are produced in incubators. In this world, perpetual youth, health, and unfettered relationships create a facade of unceasing happiness. Conversely, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, published in 1953, paints a picture of a world where firemen no longer extinguish fires but rather produce them to burn books. *Fahrenheit 451*'s society is numbed by entertainment and repressed intellectualism. Both novels offer a distinct perspective on the perils of a society pushed to extremes in a dystopian setting. They serve as cautionary tales painting societies plagued by their governments, technological advancement, and the loss of individuality. This thesis provides an analysis of the dystopian themes present in both books and then compares them. The dystopian themes discussed are government control, censorship, the image of a perfect society, lack of free will, and conformity and lack of individuality. The themes are not analysed in a specific order of importance or determined by the amount of information provided for each theme in the books, but rather arbitrarily; overlaps among the themes occur as well.

The literature review section of the thesis delves into various publications, describing the terms utopia and dystopia and explaining their meaning. It also touches upon the biographies of the respective authors and finally provides introductions and brief descriptions of both novels.

The aim of the thesis is to analyse and compare the dystopian themes of both books to see how similar or different they are in their portrayal. The objectives are to identify the prevalent dystopian themes in the books, conduct independent analyses of these themes, and finally compare and contrast the themes in their portrayal. The research methodology for this thesis involves a comprehensive examination of primary literary sources through close reading and analysis and engaging with secondary sources to supplement the understanding of the texts. The thesis aims to offer nuanced insights into the portrayal of these themes with the expected outcomes that although both novels share the same dystopian themes, they manifest them in markedly distinct ways.

2. Defining the terms utopia and dystopia

2.1. Utopia

“Utopia is about how we would live and what kind of a world we would live in if we could do just that” (Levitas, 2010, p. 1). This opening quote by Ruth Levitas in her book *The Concept of Utopia* encapsulates the fundamental essence of what utopia is. On the same page, she then notes: *“Utopia is then not just a dream to be enjoyed, but a vision to be pursued”* (Levitas, 2010, p. 1), suggesting that utopia not only presents an image of the ideal life but also serves as a call to action. The term utopia originates from Greek, signifying no (or not) place (*u* or *ou* = no; *topos* = place). Invented by Thomas More in 1516, the word plays on eutopia, meaning a good place. Consequently, the core characteristic of utopia lies in its nonexistence, coupled with a defined location in time and space to lend credibility. Furthermore, the depicted place must be perceptibly good or bad to resonate with the intended audience. While all fiction describes a place that doesn't exist, utopian fiction particularly delineates either favourable or unfavourable non-places (Claeys, Sargent, 1999, p. 1). Claeys and Sargent also provide a helpful categorization on the same page for the terms of utopia and eutopia:

- *Utopia*—a non-existent society described in detail and normally located in time and space.
- *Eutopia* or *positive utopia*—a utopia that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which the reader lived (Claeys, Sargent, 1999, p. 1).

When talking about utopia as a literary genre, Veira notes that utopia represents just one facet of utopian thought. Typical narratives feature a protagonist journeying to an unknown place, such as an island or country, where they explore that society's way of life and then they return to their own country with the message that there are alternative and better ways of societal organization (Vieira, 2010, p. 7). However, as Veira then points out, utopia is not an idea of perfection as it only engages in speculative discourse about superior social organization, which is primarily human-centred, and that these societies often employ rigid laws (Vieira, 2010, p. 7).

2.2. Dystopia

“The adjective dystopian implies fearful futures where chaos and ruin prevail” (Claeys, 2017, p. 5). Derived from Greek roots, much like its counterpart utopia, dystopia originates

from two words: *dus* and *topos*, translating to a bad or unfavourable place. Initially coined and spelled as *dustopia* in 1747, it evolved into *dystopia* by 1748, denoting an unhappy country. Its significance was emphasized in 1868 during a speech by John Stuart Mill in Parliament (Claeys, 2017, p. 274). Dystopian narratives, as Moylan says, emerged as a response to the tumultuous events of the twentieth century. He implies that the unprecedented challenges and conflicts of that era provided fertile ground for the exploitation of dystopian societies in literature (Moylan, 2000, p. xi).

As Claeys explains, dystopias are commonly labelled as conservative, yet they can offer sharp critiques of the societies they portray. The term *dystopia* is often used synonymously with *anti-utopia* or *negative utopia*, in juxtaposition to the idea of *utopia* or *eutopia*. It characterizes imaginary societies where adverse social and political circumstances dominate, functioning as a satirical commentary on idealistic dreams of *utopia* or as a warning against undesirable ways of life (Claeys, 2010, p. 107). It must also be said that *dystopia* is not just the opposite of *utopia*. Tally Jr. notes in his recent publication: *“for dystopia is not simply the flipside of utopia. Scholars of utopia and dystopia have long known this, of course, and the relationship between the literary forms on the one hand, and the social, political, economic, and cultural forces and networks on the other, are different in complex and interesting ways”* (Tally Jr., 2024, p. 11). In essence, the exploration of *dystopia* transcends mere opposition to *utopia*.

When exploring the literary aspects of dystopian fiction, Claeys explains that the pivotal literary works that establish the genre of *dystopia*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, share amongst other dystopian narratives similar themes such as: *“quasi-omnipotence of a monolithic, totalitarian state demanding and normally exacting complete obedience from its citizens, challenged occasionally but usually ineffectually by vestigial individualism or systemic flaws, and relying upon scientific and technological advances to ensure social control.”* (Claeys, 2010, p. 109). Regarding dystopian narrative, Rosenfeld notes: *“There is always someone who suffers, and dystopia is told from the point of view of that one”* (Rosenfeld, 2020, p. 64). Expanding upon that, Claeys writes that literary *dystopia* draws upon the narrative techniques of *utopian* literature, but with a pessimistic outlook (Claeys, 2010, p. 17). However, Claeys also notes that while the bleak future scenarios of *dystopia* might evoke despair in readers, the primary objective of these works is quite different. According to him, these outcomes should serve a moralistic purpose, encouraging the reader to understand that societal trajectories can take different paths (Claeys, 2010, p. 17).

3. Biography of Aldous Huxley

Aldous Leonard Huxley was a well-known English author and critic born on July 26, 1894, in Godalming, Surrey, England, who passed away on November 22, 1963, in Los Angeles, California. He's famous for his sharp mind and the cleverness of his writing. While Huxley wrote a wide range of works, his novel *Brave New World* steals the spotlight, as it is not only regarded as a literary classic but a pioneering example for subsequent dystopian science fiction (The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024).

As Murray writes in his biography *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual*, Huxley hailed from a lineage of esteemed Victorian figures, being the grandson of a renowned Victorian scientist and the great-nephew of Matthew Arnold, a prominent Victorian poet and critic. Therefore, he served as a bridge connecting the realm of high Victorian liberal intellectualism with the unpredictable trajectory of the twentieth century, a transition unforeseen by the fervent, forward-thinking reformists of his time (Murray, 2009, p. 16). In approximately 1915, Huxley joined a group of authors and intellectuals at Lady Ottoline Morell's residence, Garsington Manor House, situated close to Oxford, where he met T.S. Eliot, Bertrand Russel, and others as well as his wife Maria Nys, who was a Belgian refugee. Despite suffering from keratitis, resulting in partial blindness during his education, he managed to graduate in 1916 at Oxford's Balliol College (The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024). He contributed to the *Athenaeum* under the pseudonym Autolycus from 1919 to 1921, following which he primarily focused on his writing (Bloom, 2011, p. 9).

It was with his first two novels, *Crome Yellow* (1921) and *Antic Hay* (1923), that Huxley would be known as a significant writer (The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024). In 1930, Huxley bought a small house in southern France, where he wrote his most celebrated work, *Brave New World* (1932) (Bloom, 2011, p. 10). *Brave New World* signalled a pivotal moment in Huxley's career where he expressed scepticism toward 20th-century political and technological advancements. *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) again critiques modern society, intertwining with Huxley's fascination with Hindu philosophy. *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* (1939), published shortly after his relocation to California, sees Huxley exploring American culture (The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024).

Huxley's notable later works include *The Devils of Loudun* (1952), a psychological examination of a historical event of 17th-century French nuns, and *The Doors of Perception*

(1954), detailing his experience with mescaline. His final book, *Island* (1962), presents a utopian portrayal of a society in the Pacific Ocean (The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024).

In his later years, Huxley was awarded numerous honours, such as an award from the American Academy of Letters in 1959 as well as his appointment as a Companion of Literature by the British Royal Society of Literature in 1962 (Bloom, 2011, p. 11). Throughout his life, Huxley remained deeply concerned with the ramifications of science and technology on 20th-century existence, notably depicted in *Brave New World* (The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024).

4. Biography of Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury, born on August 22, 1920, in Waukegan, Illinois, U.S., and passing away on June 5, 2012, in Los Angeles, California, was an acclaimed American author renowned for his remarkably imaginative short stories and novels. His works combine a poetic style, nostalgic childhood reflections, sharp social critique, and a keen awareness of technology's dangers (Gregersen, 2024).

Gregersen notes, that in his youth Bradbury grew fond of horror movies like *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), the literary works of L. Frank Baum and Edgar Rice Burroughs, as well as the inaugural issue of *Amazing Stories*, the pioneering science fiction magazine (Gregersen, 2024).

In 1934, Bradbury moved to Los Angeles, where he later became a member of the Los Angeles Science Fiction League and started to get support from other writers. His story debut, *Hollerbochen's Dilemma* (1938), found its way into the league's fanzine, *Imagination!* In 1939, he launched a fanzine of his own, *Futura Fantasia*. In 1941, his first professional sale, *Pendulum*, appeared in *Super Science Stories*. Bradbury's initial narratives, often infused with fantasy and horror, appeared in magazines like *Weird Tales* before being compiled in *Dark Carnival* (1947) (Gregersen, 2024). In the same year, Bradbury wed Marguerite McClure, who remained his spouse until her passing in 2003 (Bloom, 2006, p. 10). His distinct style, marked by vivid imagery, stood out in the pulp magazine scene. By the mid-1940s, Bradbury's stories were featured in prestigious magazines like *The American Mercury*, *Harper's*, and *McCall's*, demonstrating his versatility across pulp and high-end publications (Gregersen, 2024).

Notably, Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), stands out as his most acclaimed and unforgettable work. Despite being labelled as a science fiction author he himself asserted that *Fahrenheit 451* was the sole contribution to the genre. In reality, the majority of his work encompasses elements of fantasy, horror and mystery. Later in his life, he focused on poetry and drama. He garnered numerous honours for his contributions, such as an Emmy for his animated adaptation of *The Halloween Tree* (1994) and the National Medal of Arts (2004) (Gregersen, 2024). Over thirty-five movies and TV adaptations have been created from Bradbury's stories, earning him a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (Bloom, 2006, p. 11). In 2007 he was granted a Pulitzer Prize in recognition of his illustrious career (Gregersen, 2024). "He is a Grand Master of the Science Fiction Writers of America and living inductee to the Science Fiction Hall of Fame" (Bloom, 2006, p. 11).

5. Introduction and a brief description of both novels

5.1. Brave New World

It was between the periods of World War I and World War II when Aldous Huxley wrote *Brave New World* (1932). Due to this time notable for technological optimism, Huxley crafted a dystopian realm to offer critique. Huxley's grandfather Thomas Henry Huxley was a notable biologist and a supporter of Darwin's theory of evolution, so it is likely that Huxley drew inspiration from him in his narrative (Lohnes, 2024).

The title originates from a quote in William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, which describes the process of constructing a new society. John is supposed to represent the character of Caliban, someone who is also described as a "savage" (Lohnes, 2024). In the 1946 introduction Huxley referred to the book as a "utopia" employing the term neutrally (Claeys, 2017, p. 360). Margaret Atwood describes it as: "*a perfect-world utopia or its nasty opposite, a dystopia, depending on your point of view*" (Atwood, 2007, p. ix).

The novel was largely met with disapproval. It faced bans in numerous libraries and continues to be listed among censored books to this day. Parents and educators deem its themes unsuitable for children (Lohnes, 2024). However, as Greenberg and Waddell write: "*Brave New World has long been deemed one of the most inventive, enjoyable, multifaceted, and satirically impudent futurological fictions written during the twentieth century*" (Greenberg, Waddell, 2016, p. 1).

The plot is set in the year AF 632, which is equivalent to 2540 CE, where "AF" means "after Ford", referring to Ford as the society's revered deity. The futuristic world is devoid of individuality and emotions, where every aspect of life is controlled. Huxley portrays a society scrutinized by scientific manipulation and social conditioning. The citizens are put into predetermined classes – Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons and they range from highest social status to lowest. They are crafted through genetic engineering and conditioning to unquestioningly embrace their predetermined role within the caste (Lohnes, 2024).

One of the main characters, Bernard Marx, travels to the "savage reservation" with his love interest, Lenina Crowne, where they encounter Linda and her son John, who Marx figures out is the Director's son due to a conversation he had with the Director earlier. Because Marx has been threatened with potential exile by the Director, he decides to escort Linda and John back,

hoping to expose him for this crime since procreation is forbidden, and he succeeds, which ultimately culminates in the Director's resignation (Lohnes, 2024).

John's integration into the World State proves tumultuous as he witnesses his mother Linda decline and eventually die due to her addiction to the tranquillizing drug "soma." John begins to resent the society and ultimately chooses to seek solace in isolation at a lighthouse; however, he becomes a spectacle as he engages in self-flagellation, and he is soon driven by rage and starts lashing people in the crowd as well. After that, he succumbs to sleep under the influence of soma, and the following morning, he is overwhelmed by guilt, so he takes his own life (Lohnes, 2024).

5.2. Fahrenheit 451

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), the title referencing the temperature at which paper burns, describes a society which regressed into a dystopian state where books are systematically destroyed by firemen. The novel portrays a dystopia which offers a critique of democratic mass culture and conformity. The society is rich but intolerant, with culture reduced to superficial entertainment, dulling critical thought. The pursuit of equality leads to conformity, with firemen acting as its enforcers (Claeys, 2017, p. 457). Bradbury in the book introduction notes: "*The book seems to have a life that goes on recreating itself*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 6). The enduring impact of *Fahrenheit 451*'s critique of censorship and adherence to societal norms remains significant from its inception to the present day (Bauer, 2024).

The plot unfolds in an unidentified city of a distant future where the story introduces Guy Montag, a fireman tasked with destroying homes harbouring books. Following his duty, Montag meets Clarisse, who is somewhat peculiar. As he returns home, he finds his wife of ten years, Mildred, has overdosed on sleeping pills. Despite the incident, Mildred acts as if nothing happened while Montag continues to have conversations with Clarisse until her death in a car accident (Bauer, 2024).

Montag begins to have doubts about his work after he is sent to incinerate the house of an old lady. In a pivotal moment, he saves her Bible as she perishes in the blaze. After that, he stays at home. Captain Beatty, the firehouse chief, pays Montag a visit and talks to him about the importance of firemen and how books were banned because they caused inequality and unhappiness. When Beatty departs, Montag shows Mildred his secret book collection and starts reading it. Montag recalls his encounter with a retired English professor, Faber, and decides to contact him. At Faber's place, Montag convinces Faber to teach him about books, and Faber

consents. Equipped with a communication device, he leaves his house. Upon returning home, Montag tries to read poetry to Mildred's friends, who then leave distraught. The following day Montag discovers his house is scheduled for destruction upon being reported by Mildred. Montag torches his own home but, in the end, turns the flames on Beatty and kills him. Fleeing from the law, he eventually makes it to the countryside, where he meets a group of men who have memorized books in order to reconstruct society. The novel ends with the city being destroyed and the men forging ahead to shape a new beginning (Bauer, 2024).

6. Analysing dystopian themes in both novels and comparing them

6.1. Government control in *Brave New World*

Brave New World, written by A. Huxley, portrays a future where the World State exerts absolute control over its citizens through many means, such as conditioning, drugs, and entertainment. Mustapha Mond discusses how the World Controllers first tried to shape the populace with force but then later resorted to less violent means of control, which proved to be more effective in conditioning the population to adapt to a new world order (Huxley, 2007, p. 43). The shift to a subtler form of control, shows the World State's highly sophisticated and insidious nature.

The use of hypnopaedia is one of the forms of control that the government uses to instil societal norms and a rigid caste system, which shapes individual identities and societal roles, therefore manipulating people. Because of this form of conditioning, deeply ingrained from an early age, people are wired to think a certain way. For example, when Lenina talks about the colour that Deltas wear: “*‘What a hideous colour khaki is,’ remarked Lenina, voicing the hypnopaedic prejudices of her caste*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 53), she is displaying how effective this form of control is in enforcing class divisions. These “suggestions,” as the Director calls them, are played to children and adults alike more than forty times per night (Huxley, 2007, p. 24). Statements such as: “*I’m so glad I’m a Beta.*” and “*Gammas are stupid*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 22) are firmly entrenched in their minds as absolute certainties, which is also noted by the narrator in this passage after Mustapha Mond repeats the famous hypnopaedic proverb “everyone belongs to everyone else”: “*The students nodded, emphatically agreeing with a statement which upwards of sixty-two thousand repetitions in the dark had made them accept, not merely as true, but as axiomatic, self-evident, utterly indisputable*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 34). This actively shows how strong hypnopaedia is, leading to a society where people just accept and keep up with the way things have been told to them without questioning.

The strategic use of the drug Soma and mind-numbing sexual entertainment acts as a dual mechanism to keep the population in a state of complacent contentment and distract them from the realities of their controlled lives. Soma serves as an easy way to achieve happiness, but this science created state can confuse individuals and hinder or even eliminate their understanding of social change and themselves (Kuang, 2019, p. 60). This drug is easily accessible, with

people carrying it around in their pockets or even having it served with coffee. The drug is also addictive, and we can see that not having a dose on oneself can cause severe distress, like when Lenina visits the reservation and witnesses a violent ritual, saying, “*I wish I had my soma!*” a few times (Huxley, 2007, p. 100). Soma is also a part of hypnopaedic conditioning as people have different sayings about it, like “*A gramme is better than a damn.*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 100). Meanwhile, the encouragement of promiscuity serves as a means of control by shifting the focus of people towards physical pleasure and away from emotional bonding, deep relationships, or even a slight desire for a family. One of the pivotal moments while examining the mechanisms of control by Feelies, which are a futuristic version of the cinema that includes visual as well as stimulating aspects, presents itself when John asks Dr. Gaffney if people undergoing the hypnopaedic process read Shakespeare, and he retorts with: “*If our young people need distraction, they can get it at the feelies. We don’t encourage them to indulge in any solitary amusements*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 142). This response encapsulates the state’s philosophy towards individual thought and creativity, steering people away from personal pursuits.

Another worthy mechanism of control in *Brave New World* is the Bokanovsky’s process, which shows the power of the government to influence even the biological aspect of human life. As D. K. Jones says, the Bokanovsky's Process has the potential to address all social issues by engineering and preconditioning every individual in society to not only accept but also favor their predetermined role and status, as determined by the Alpha-Plus scientists, the ruling World Controllers and that this approach would eradicate personal ambition and discontent, effectively resolving the entire problem. He then goes on to say that the whole problem is that individuals will never be satisfied (Jones, 2003, p. 1).

It is evident that the government of *Brave New World* has its people in a firm hold with the citizens conditioned from birth, drugged throughout the day, distracted by sexual or other stimulation, and even altering their biology. The World State has created an unyielding control that is rarely challenged.

6.2. Government control in *Fahrenheit 451*

Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* often delves into the concept of government control through the firemen and technology. The government's control is evident through its actions to eliminate literature and media that might provoke differences and originality (Bloom, 2006, p. 11). Because of this clear annihilation of independent thought, the oppressive regime enforces conformity between citizens.

Government control is unmistakably seen in firemen whose job is to burn books to prevent the spread of knowledge and ideas, further suppressing intellectual thought and destroying any desire to question how things are. The consequences of this strict control can be seen in this passage of the book, where Clarisse is talking to Montag, and she says: “*Sometimes I sneak around and listen in subways. Or I listen at soda fountains, and do you know what?*” *‘What?’ ‘People don’t talk about anything’*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 43). This passage and many more in the book show just how little people think about things. Montag even calls out the strange behaviour he thinks Clarisse has because of her non-conformity, saying: “*You think too many things*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 16). The government’s suppression of intellectual freedom has resulted in a society where meaningful conversations and thoughtful discussions are scarce, enforcing a more passive acceptance.

Another form of government control is portrayed with the use of technology. By dictating what people see and hear, the government shapes the citizens into their image, limiting alternative viewpoints to things and ensuring that the narrative aligns with its own agenda. As Bloom writes, Bradbury targets the root causes of American conformity in his work, highlighting the government and corporations' role in fostering this uniformity. He points out how they use technology – in the form of television, sports, amusement parks, and advertising – to suppress introspection and obscure alternative lifestyles that deviate from established societal norms (Bloom, 2006, p. 6). In the book, this is exemplified by the parlor walls and the Seashell radios, which isolate people from each other and create a dependency on technology. Mildred is a character heavily affected by and addicted to large screens and radios. On page 30 of the book, she talks about a programme that she finds entertaining and remarks: “*It’s really fun. 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*” (Bradbury, 2008). Montag then responds by saying that two thousand dollars equates to one-third of his yearly pay, but Mildred appears indifferent to the financial implications. Another time she talks with Montag about what a fun time she had the night before while watching the parlour walls declaring: “*I had a nice evening,*” *she said, in the bathroom. ‘What doing?’ ‘The parlour’ ‘What was on?’ ‘Programmes.’ ‘What programmes?’ ‘Some of the best ever.’ ‘Who?’ ‘Oh, you know, the bunch’*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 66). Mildred never reveals what kind of programmes she was watching, indicating that what is broadcasted is superficial and lacking in substance. As Goriach observes, this so called “telegraphic language,” which consists of incomplete sentences and excessive tag-questions demonstrate the empty

thoughts of characters like Mildred (Gorlach, 2020, p. 108). Her inability to provide specifics about the programme also indicates a certain level of detachment toward the content and shows the emptiness of entertainment.

It would be safe to say that the government in *Fahrenheit 451* has complete control over its citizens to the point where even thinking differently is frowned upon. The citizens perceive the government as an impenetrable barrier, which could be seen in the book when Captain Beatty says: “*Any man’s insane who thinks he can fool the Government and us*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 46). As can be observed here, they believe they can do little to influence or challenge the tremendous force of the government.

6.3. Comparing the portrayal of government control in the novels

One of the similarities that is apparent in the novels is that both their governments exude absolute control over their citizens, though the methods used to portray it are quite different.

In *Brave New World*, the government's control is profoundly entrenched and multifaceted, extending into every aspect of human life - biological, psychological, and social. From the moment of birth, or to be more accurate, creation through the Bokanovsky’s Process, individuals are moulded to fit into a specific societal role (Lochner, 2023). Their status, occupation, and intellectual capacity are predetermined, leaving no room for personal choice or development. Unlike the inhabitants in *Fahrenheit 451*, the people of this society do not even get a chance to have a different viewpoint on things since their identity is shaped by hypnopaedia, which reinforces this control, instilling beliefs and values that align with the state's objectives. The government also utilizes Soma to keep the population in a state of passive contentment, eliminating any desire for change or rebellion. Because each class is conditioned to be content with their place in society, it creates an illusion of harmony and stability, which could be seen in this passage where Lenina quotes a hypnopaedic motto: “*‘Yes, everybody’s happy now,’ echoed Lenina. They had heard the words repeated a hundred and fifty times every night for twelve years*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 65). This constant repetition not only reinforces the contentment of each class with their assigned role but also subtly eliminates the capacity for individuals to gain happiness in any form other than what the state has prescribed.

In contrast, *Fahrenheit 451* presents a government that exercises control primarily through censorship and manipulation of information. The banning and burning of books are the regime's primary tools for maintaining power (Bloom, 2006, p. 11). By restricting access to diverse ideas

and historical knowledge, the government seeks to prevent critical thinking and dissent. The firemen, including the protagonist Montag, enforce this censorship. The government also uses mass media, such as parlor walls, to bombard the populace with an incessant stream of trivial content, further numbing their minds and distracting them from the reality of their oppression. Unlike the people in *Brave New World*, the citizens of this dystopian world are not part of a caste system that is entirely brainwashed, so they are motivated by fear and not by chasing pleasure. Another difference is how their respective governments treat people who step out of line. While in *Fahrenheit 451*, they will be sent to prison or killed, in *Brave New World*, people are merely exiled to live with their own ideas on an island of their choosing.

6.4. Censorship in *Brave New World*

Society of *Brave New World* lives under the constant control and censorship through a few means that manifest in the novel, such as controlled information, suppression of literature, and the mono-religion.

The suppression of literature and control of information are the most profound forms of censorship in the novel. All books published before A. F. 150, which is A. D. 2058, were banned, including texts like the Bible and certain poetry, as noted by the Director (Huxley, 2007, p. 29). This prohibition is also seen in the hypnopædic saying: “*ending is better than mending*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 42), suggesting that anything old is undesirable, including old books. In one passage, there is a reference to Shakespeare and the pyramids, quoting: “*You’ve never heard of them, of course,*” highlighting the censorship of historical and literary knowledge, followed with: “*Such are the advantages of a really scientific education*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 44). The extent of conditioning is so great that individuals are tightly controlled into having disdain for reading and thinking, which is exemplified in this excerpt where they find the idea of it ridiculous: “*spend their time reading, thinking – thinking!*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 47). This further proves that the society’s thorough conditioning deters almost everyone from thought and intellectual pursuit. The only approved reading materials are propaganda newspapers, each tailored to different castes. For example, “The Hourly Radio” is for upper castes, while “The Delta Mirror” is designed for Deltas, a newspaper written solely with one-syllable words (Huxley, 2007, p. 56). Helmholtz is an example of someone who stands out, as he feels an almost instinctual urge to write, however, despite this inner drive, he struggles with expressing himself due to the absence of creative writing in the World State. Being faced with the dilemma of writing something of meaning about the world around him, he says: “*Can you say something*

about nothing?” (Huxley, 2007, p. 60), expressing his frustration with the limits imposed on him by the thorough censorship of his society. Conditioning plays a big role in the censorship of literature as well. Many are conditioned to hate books; such is the case with Deltas. The sentiment is evident on pages 16-17, where we witness Delta’s conditioning process, where the babies go through shock therapy upon exposure to books and flowers, which will ultimately instill hatred towards them. As Bloom writes: “*The students understand the necessity of conditioning the lower castes to despise books (as too much learning is dangerous)*” (Bloom, 2011, p. 25). This shows the censorship regarding knowledge acquisition.

Another common example of censorship in the novel manifests through the imposition of mono-religion upon the society. There is simply no freedom to choose one’s beliefs, as adherence to Fordism is the only way. Ford is their god, as evidenced by the phrase “*Ford, their savior*” (Bloom, 2011, p. 29), showing that they believe in his divine guidance and omnipotence, and they frequently reference his name akin to Christian practices. The clever wordplay created by Huxley is evident in the substitution of “Oh, Lord!” with “Oh, Ford!” Furthermore, the societal reverence for Ford can also be seen in “Ford’s Day,” which is a celebration marked by anticipation of Ford’s arrival. While Christianity, as well as other religions like totemism and ancestor worship, persist, they are only practiced in the Savage Reservations, highlighting the marginalization of alternate beliefs. By this religious conformity, Huxley exposes the oppressive censorship and suppression of cultural diversity.

6.5. Censorship in *Fahrenheit 451*

“*‘Once upon a time!’ Beatty said. ‘What kind of talk is that?’*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 47). It is evident to readers familiar with *Fahrenheit 451* that this fictional world is built upon censorship, particularly concerning books. Any possession of a book results in immediate arrest; such is the hard oppression induced by censorship in the novel. Nevertheless, not everyone adheres to this law, and defiance against it persists as many still own a book, which is where the fireman’s job comes in since they are tasked with burning the prohibited literature.

Characters of *Fahrenheit 451* are heavily regulated in their consumption of information, leaving them with limited choices, which effectively imposes censorship upon them. As Beatty remarks: “*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*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 80). This encapsulates the prevailing attitude of how individuals are deprived of the opportunity to have any information so that they can form their own opinions on the matter. Beatty further argues

against exposing people to the ideas of philosophy or sociology as people will be happier if they know how to do manual labour like putting a TV wall together rather than thinking about the scale of the universe, which will make them feel depressed and lonely (Bradbury, 2008, p. 80).

6.6. Comparing the portrayal of censorship in the novels

Brave New World and *Fahrenheit 451* both channel the theme of censorship through the ban on books; however, there are substantial differences in their approach. While in *Brave New World*, access to reading materials is severely restricted, with the only accepted reading materials being state propaganda, in *Fahrenheit 451*, the banned literature remains prevalent in the homes of many individuals. Unless the citizens actively seek out banned literature, which is also unlikely due to their conditioning, access to such materials is virtually non-existent in *Brave New World*, which is a stark contrast to *Fahrenheit 451*, where the books persist.

A similarity can be seen in how the books handle other forms of information. In *Brave New World*, a single religion is enforced, mirroring the sentiment expressed in *Fahrenheit 451*, where Beatty talks of providing individuals with only one or no side of a question. Both narratives then reflect a shared inclination towards the control and censorship of information by providing one or no side to choose from.

Overall, the core theme of censorship in the novels does not differ considerably, however the portrayal of it diverges significantly. Both novels exhibit a similar form of censorship through the prohibition of literature and other information, albeit through different methods. Ultimately, the theme of censorship exhibits both distinctions alongside noteworthy parallels.

6.7. Image of a perfect society in *Brave New World*

While control and conditioning are the most prominent aspects of this theme, they are complemented by the portrayal of technological advancements and the pursuit of comfort. It is important to recognize that the World State presents itself as a utopia, yet the novel reveals a starkly contrasting reality. The idyllic facade of this world is tainted by the methods through which it was attained. Through the brainwashing techniques of hypnopaedia and emphasis on instant gratification at the expense of individuality, the society's facade of perfection is marred, revealing the dark truth beneath the surface. The pursuit of stability and happiness for everyone comes at the cost of freedom and genuine human experience. As Snyder writes, the novel challenges the idea that advancements in technology and science will bring about flawless

future. Instead, the novel demonstrates how these visions of a perfect society are flawed and they lead to dehumanization and control rather than genuine happiness (Snyder, 2011, p. 92).

“*Yes, everybody’s happy now*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 65). This hypnopaedic motto recurs four times throughout the novel and serves as a poignant symbol of the extensive level of conditioning the society of *Brave New World* goes to in order to make such a statement. Hypnopaedia, of course, as well as soma, make the individuals of *Brave New World* really persuaded into thinking that their world is a utopia, thus justifying and internalizing these control mechanisms imposed upon them to make people believe this way of life is acceptable. These powerful instruments efficiently manipulate citizens to ensure their compliance with the World State’s dictates while keeping the citizens from knowing the reality of their circumstances. Every individual lives under constant surveillance in *Brave New World*, whether it be by technology, machinery, or their neighbours. This pervasive monitoring is justified under the belief that “everyone belongs to everyone else” (Kuang, 2019, p. 57), and when they have any dissenting thoughts or behaviours not supported by the World State, it is immediately addressed to uphold the illusion of contentment.

With all those advancements such as surveillance and quick advanced transportation, which provide an idea of a perfect society from an outsider’s view, *Brave New World* creates a pretence of a great world to live in, but the purpose of those things, of course, lies in the manipulation to control the population.

6.8. Image of a perfect society in *Fahrenheit 451*

In the world of *Fahrenheit 451*, the inherent flaws may be glaringly obvious to our eyes, but they often remain hidden from its own citizens. The government presents a facade of harmony attained by prioritizing superficial happiness and promoting ignorance by suppressing knowledge.

The phrase “ignorance is bliss” is certainly fit to represent how individuals in *Fahrenheit 451* view their world. The society is made to believe that they are genuinely content and that they live in a blissful environment. However, Montag begins to undercover this facade and he sees that this portrayal is deceptive. As Clarisse observes: “*but you know, we never ask questions*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 41). Another time Montag reflects as he is arguing with Mildred: “*We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were really bothered? About something important, about something real?*” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 69). After that, Montag remembers that just a week prior Mildred overdosed on sleeping pills, although he then notes

“But that was another Mildred” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 69), indicating that Mildred is at her core really unhappy with her life, which can be observable in the depiction of her depression through adjectives like cold and empty, such as when she is lying in a cold bed or staring at empty screens (Gorlach, 2020, p. 100 - 102). However, her depression is further intensified by the daunting consequences she would face if she, in fact, deviated out of the line and allowed herself to be unhappy.

The theme of happiness occurs in the novel a few times. It seems important to the people of this society to always be happy, equating it with a sense of heightened status. This sentiment can be seen when Montag is talking to Mildred, and he tells her he is not happy, to which she replies: *“‘I am.’ Mildred’s mouth beamed. ‘And proud of it’”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 85). By saying she is proud of being happy, she highlights her belief that being happy is a kind of achievement. Similarly, Captain Beatty reflects on another occasion that due to societal conditions, which he says were the technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure, *“you can stay happy all the time”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 76). It seems that the characters incorporate the adjective “happy” every chance they get suggesting it is a conditioned response or a genuine desire to believe in the truth of this statement. Despite Beatty’s references to their world as a “happy world” (Bradbury, 2008, p. 81) and again when he says: *“Here we go to keep the world happy, Montag!”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 142), he ultimately lets Montag kill him when they have a confrontation indicating that he was dissatisfied with his life. Even though Beatty is, as Gorlach calls him *“the main promoter of the ‘having fun’ philosophy”* (Gorlach, 2020, p. 110), this instance offers a stark comparison to the societal pretense of happiness. It is, therefore, apparent that *Fahrenheit 451* truly only presents an image of a perfect society, while the reality reveals the discontent among its citizens.

6.9. Comparing the portrayal of the image of a perfect society in the novels

In *Brave New World* the World State utilizes hypnopaedia and soma to condition its citizens into perceiving their society as perfect. Although *Fahrenheit 451* does not employ the same techniques, it instead relies on constant repetition of the adjective “happy” when describing oneself or their world. This reliance on repetition could be interpreted as another form of conditioning indicating that the novels share the same form of control. Additionally, in *Fahrenheit 451* society is subdued by ignorance and superficial happiness, akin to the methods

of *Brave New World*, where drugging oneself with soma serves as a means of inducing ignorance and superficial happiness as well.

Ultimately, it can be said that the novels depict different methods of ensuring their perfect image, but they share a common theme of control through conditioning and implementing ignorance. Despite the surface differences, at their core, the mechanisms used to maintain their utopian facade are fundamentally similar in both worlds.

6.10. Lack of free will in *Brave New World*

Brave New World is apparent in its portrayal of the lack of free will among the novel's citizens through various elements such as caste systems, conditioning, and the drug soma. In Huxley's *Brave New World*, human beings have no free will and, thus, cannot exercise any control over their lives. Moreover, they are conditioned and made through many means so as not to be unhappy.

The rigid caste system serves as a stark manifestation of the fact that the World State offers no autonomy, but the people of *Brave New World* do not seem to share the same idea. They are born into their predetermined caste, with no avenue for upward mobility or alteration of their societal position. This lack of agency is established even before birth as the embryos are manipulated to determine their caste affiliation. The caste system is special in *Brave New World* since the individuals are tailored to fit into their caste through the Bokanovsky's Process, further solidifying this control. They are, of course, deprived of the opportunity to question this predetermined fate, as the embryos of lower caste members undergo manipulation during the incubation period, which involves exposure to alcohol and oxygen shortage, therefore making the citizens fit right into their caste since they lack the intelligence to be anywhere else. All of this can be seen as Henry Foster, an Alpha who works in the Department of Hatcheries and Conditioning, notes: "*Reducing the number of revolutions per minute*" and "*Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 10-11). It must be pointed out that they do not view it as something bad or inhumane in the book, as exemplified by the director: "*Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 5). The caste system is upheld as a mechanism for societal order and efficiency. Consequently, individuals are then assigned professions based on their status, reinforcing the stratification of society. Alphas assume positions of leadership like administrators and managers, Betas engage in technical roles like mechanics and laboratory technicians, Gammas and Deltas undertake manual labour such as servants and factory workers, while Epsilons are

relegated to menial tasks of the lowest level like sewage work. Helmholtz Watson, an Alpha plus who yearns for something more, exemplifies how individuals in the high castes possess an advantage in shaping their lives. Their superior intellect enables them to question the current circumstances rather than obeying them blindly (Kuang, 2019 p. 58). This form of hierarchical structuring, of course, benefits the World State, which prioritized uniformity and productivity over individual autonomy: “*The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single boganovskified egg*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 5). To reference a human being as a mere “product,” such as is the case here for Gammas or Deltas, underscores the World State’s systematic dehumanization of its citizens. This depiction highlights the extent to which individuals are reduced to commodities within a meticulously controlled societal framework, devoid of any semblance of free will (Peller, 2011, p. 113). Similarly, another illustration of this dehumanization can be seen when Henry Foster remarks: “*‘But in Epsilons’, said Mr Foster very justly, ‘we don’t need human intelligence’*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 11). The dismissiveness with which they refer to someone based on their usefulness, coupled with the outright denial of human intelligence attributed to Epsilons, epitomizes a deeply sinister attitude of the World State, where the absence of free will renders individuals as nothing more than predetermined cogs in the machinery of society (Peller, 2011, p. 115).

Another significant manifestation of the lack of free will is evident through conditioning, particularly through the use of hypnopaedia. This method serves as a powerful tool for controlling the thoughts and behaviours of the individuals within the World State. As Mack notes: “*they are brainwashed into an unquestioning acceptance of the state motto: Community, Identity, Stability*” (Mack, 2011, p. 75-76). From an early age, individuals are subjected to repeated messages while they sleep to make them think a certain way and have predetermined attitudes. For instance, in the “Elementary Class Consciousness,” which is a hypnopaedic program, a speaker talks from the wall, saying: “*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 a Beta*” (Huxley, 2007, p. 22). This actively shows that as a means of subduing free will and thought, the World State uses this manipulation to make people accept and embrace their predetermined social roles, leaving no place for an individual thought on the matter. The individual’s beliefs and preferences are systematically moulded by the repetition of these messages, successfully eradicating the capacity for independent thought and free will.

Soma as a means of enforcing the World State's suppression of citizen autonomy must be mentioned. Soma functions as a potent tool, being very effective in steering people away from scepticism and from creating any new ideas or emotions. This sentiment is echoed through what Henry Foster remarks: "*Glum, Marx, glum*" and "*What you need is a gramme of soma*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 46). After Bernard takes the soma, he is met with Henry's reminder of their common hypnopaedic saying: "*And do remember that a gramme is better than a damn*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 47). By inducing feelings of content upon consumption, Soma quells any inclination towards change. It is always conveniently present in someone's pocket, ensuring that nobody ever lacks a dose. Soma holds such significance for citizens that they queue up to receive their ration, as noted by Bernard, when he observes Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons waiting with tickets after completing their work to get their ration (Huxley, 2007, p. 143). This portrayal underscores the societal reliance on soma, as individuals willingly submit to its sedative effects in exchange for the temporary relief of having an unpleasant experience. It would be fair to say that they are addicted to this drug as can be seen in this passage: "*or if ever by some unlucky chance such a crevice of time should yawn in the solid substance of their distractions, there is always soma, delicious soma*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 47). Here soma is presented as the remedy for any form of unease. Bernard, in the following excerpt, shows how individuals in such a pain-free world yearn for a piece of real, authentic experience even if it entails negative emotions. His inner monologue on the prospect of being exiled to Iceland highlights this sentiment: "*Often in the past he had wondered what it would be like to be subjected (soma-less and with nothing but his own inward resources to rely on) to some great trial, some pain, some persecution; he had even longed for affliction*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 89). This shows the human desire for a choice over one's emotional state, since with a society saturated with soma-induced happiness, the citizens of the World State have no other choice but to feel happy.

6.11. Lack of free will in *Fahrenheit 451*

Fahrenheit 451 has a few means of portraying the theme of lack of free will, with the novel censorship being the first one, then suppression of intellectual pursuits, and the pervasive societal manipulation and control exercised by those in power, ultimately illustrating a dystopian world with no individual autonomy.

It is quite apparent that the society of *Fahrenheit 451* lacks free will due to the prohibition of reading books. Despite discussions of censorship in earlier chapters, it still plays a significant role when addressing free will as that is its exact function - to forbid and suppress something,

thereby stripping people of their autonomy. Many are even afraid of just seeing or touching a book which shows the deeply ingrained nature of this fear. Mildred's reaction is exemplary when her foot merely scrapes one of the books Montag has, and she quickly pulls it away as if she will get arrested just for doing that, revealing her deep-rooted fear of not following what the government wants (Bradbury, 2008, p. 87).

Lack of free will is also further exemplified in the disdain towards intellectualism within the society of *Fahrenheit 451*. As Beatty cynically remarks: "*More sports for everyone, group spirit, fun, and you don't have to think, eh?*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 75). Intellectual pursuits are derided. The term "intellectual" became a derogatory epithet, as Beatty notes: "*the word 'intellectual', of course, became the swear word it deserved to be*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 76). Individuals are actively discouraged from thinking in a different manner and especially asking the question of "why" something that is exemplified when Beatty talks about Clarisse: "*She didn't want to know how a thing was done, but why*" He then says: "*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*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 79), suggesting that questioning leads only to discontent, which is therefore undesirable, further proving that being unhappy is a way of living not supported by the government. Moreover, Beatty's remark suggesting Clarisse is better off dead underscores the government's disregard for individual lives, as elucidated by Anwar: "*Human life is dispensable like 'disposable tissue paper'*" (Anwar, 2016, p. 247). Those in power perpetuate this suppression of intellectual autonomy by supplying the populace with superficial information. Beatty elucidates this secret strategy by stating: "*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*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 80). This form of manipulation displays the deliberate effort to stifle independent thought, further illustrating how intellectual thinking as a form of autonomy is not encouraged and how people are manipulated into conformity. Moreover, the pervasive influence of technology is evident in the society's reliance on four-wall televisions, further discouraging independent thinking. This is highlighted by Faber, an old English professor, who responds to Montag's observation about people having enough off-hours for leisure, to which Faber retorts that none of those off-hours are intended for thinking. Faber remarks: "*If you're not driving a hundred miles an hour, at a clip where you can't think of anything else but the danger, then you're playing some game or sitting in some room where you can't argue with the four-wall television*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 109). He then continues: "*It tells you what to think and blasts it in. It must be right. It seems so right. It rushes*

you on so quickly to its own conclusions your mind hasn't time to protest" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 109). In this manner, Faber illustrates the extent to which control is implemented to reinforce the suppression of critical thinking.

Yet another important manifestation of this theme is portrayed by societal manipulation and control such as when Clarisse discloses to Montag that "they," presumably those in positions of authority within the government or elsewhere, make her go to therapy (Bradbury, 2008, p. 33). Another good example is again vocalised by Clarisse as she says: "*they didn't want people sitting like that, doing nothing, rocking, talking; that was the wrong kind of social life. People talked too much. And they had time to think*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 83). This pervasive control extends even to the train radio, which plainly bombards passengers with nonsense as the author observes: "*The people were pounded into submission.*" They even tap their feet and mouth the constant saying of: "*Denham's Dentifrice, Denham's Dandy Dental Detergent, Denham's Dentifrice Dentifrice Dentifrice*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 103), ensuring that they are incessantly occupied with meaningless words to deter independent thought. Montag attempts to block them out by focusing on his own thoughts but eventually succumbs to frustration and gets off the train. Additionally, he also refuses to take the escalator because he wants to move on his own (Bradbury, 2008, p. 104).

6.12. Comparing the portrayal of lack of free will in the novels

One major difference between *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451* in their depiction of the lack of free will is the mechanisms used to enforce this control. In *Brave New World*, individuals are coerced to believe they are content with their place in society through a combination of biological, psychological, and societal forms of control. With their caste system, conditioning through hypnopaedia and soma, the citizens rarely question their predetermined roles, whereas *Fahrenheit 451* employs an approach centred around censorship, suppression of intellectual pursuits, and societal manipulation to suppress autonomy.

The caste system in *Brave New World* operates as a cornerstone for depriving individuals of free will. With their predetermined caste system, they can never choose a single aspect of their life. In contrast, *Fahrenheit 451* has no biological mechanism of control, making the control of free will less rigid. This is evident in the heightened significance of firemen and police as they are deployed much more often compared to the relatively infrequent exile to the island in *Brave New World*. It also must be said that being sent to an island to live with one's ideas is considerably much more lenient than having one's possessions burnt and being sent to

jail. Even though people in *Fahrenheit 451* are not as tightly controlled, they are just as much lacking free will as the ones in *Brave New World*, if not more, for the fact that their punishment is harsher.

To make people accept their place in society, *Brave New World* employs conditioning through hypnopaedia, which has been enforced since birth. In *Fahrenheit 451*, individuals are tightly controlled by mindless consumption of media. Both dystopias employ these methods to deter independent thought. Additionally, while *Brave New World* keeps its citizens docile with soma, *Fahrenheit 451* instils fear through censorship, prohibiting access to books and intellectual pursuits.

In conclusion, while both novels depict societies devoid of free will they differ in their approaches used to enforce this control. Nevertheless, both dystopian societies utilize coercive methods to ensure conformity and suppress individual autonomy, albeit differently.

6.13. Conformity and lack of individuality in *Brave New World*

“In this society, which is based wholly upon conformity, what happens to those who are unique?” (Bloom, 2011, p. 33). Conformity and lack of individuality are two pivotal themes throughout the narrative of *Brave New World*, frequently present in the words or actions of characters. They surface through three primary representations: the absence of personal relationships, the suppression of solitude, and conditioning.

The absence of personal relationships is a recurring theme in the novel, reflecting the societal emphasis on polygamy, which is taught from a young age, as depicted in the motto “everyone belongs to everyone else,” which has been played to the people through hypnopaedia. It is established that the word “monogamy” is a swear word, and those abstaining from multiple relationships are deemed deviant. A fitting portrayal of this occurs in a conversation between Lenina and Fanny about her relations with Henry Foster, where Fanny gets mad at Lenina as it seems as if she was engaging in monogamous behaviour with Henry contradicting societal norms. Lenina confides to Fanny that she has not been feeling promiscuous as of late eliciting sympathy from Fanny. However, Fanny reminds Lenina that she must try because “everyone belongs to everyone else” (Huxley, 2007, p. 33 – 37). Lenina’s desire to spend more time with Henry indicates that she is forming a subconscious relationship with him, yet societal expectations of polygamy prevent her from acting upon her desires. The peculiar nature of this societal mindset becomes apparent when John professes his love to Lenina, to which she responds with sexual advances, only to be met with John’s revulsion as he

calls her a whore (Huxley, 2007, p. 168 – 170). However, as Kuang notes, Lenina can only conceptualize love in the physical terms due to her conditioning (Kuang, 2019, p. 58), meaning she is not at fault.

Suppression of solitude is another way of portraying conformity and lack of individuality in the novel, as being on one's own is undesirable and an abnormal behaviour. Bernard serves as a prime example of how anti-social behaviour is viewed in the World State, because his physical differences make him an object of ridicule. Bernard's inner monologue reflects the alienation he feels: "*The mockery made him feel an outsider; and feeling an outsider he behaved like one*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 55 – 56). Bernard, on a few occasions, tries to be alone with Lenina, who fails to grasp the significance of it. He also shares his troubles with John, saying: "*Alone, always alone*" to which John responds: "*Linda always said that nobody was ever alone there*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 118). Additionally, Fanny's perspective provides an insight into how others perceive Bernard's situation when she remarks: "*'And then he spends most of his time by himself – alone.' There was horror in Fanny's voice*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 38). The use of the term 'horror' to describe something entirely ordinary in our society shows the depth of their belief that solitude is atypical.

The final mention of this theme comes to life through conditioning. As it is with most themes in the novel, conditioning affects the theme of conformity and lack of individuality as well. Greenberg and Waddell explain that through the subjugation of hypnopaedic slogans, the masses are subdued into conformity, where well-being has taken over meaning (Greenberg, Waddell, 2016, p. 62). Through conditioning, the World State ensures uniformity of beliefs and fostering conformity. The sole individuals capable of feeling dissatisfaction are just a few Alphas (Caitrin, 2007, p. 49). For example, Helmholtz acknowledges that he and Bernard are different due to their 'mental excess' (Huxley, 2007, p. 58), which is also echoed by Henry, who remarks on Bernard's resistance to conditioning: "*Some men are almost rhinoceroses; they don't respond properly to conditioning*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 76). While many others are conditioned to the habit of taking soma, Bernard declines it on multiple occasions and expresses his determination to remain himself, even if it means he will behave inadequately (Huxley, 2007, p. 77). Bernard is also conscious of his conditioning influencing his individuality as he says: "*if I could, if I were free – not enslaved by my conditioning*" and "*not so completely a part of something else. Not just a cell in the social body*" (Huxley, 2007, p. 78). Lenina does not take well to Bernard's talk, and she begins to cry, further exemplifying the extent of control she is under because of conditioning. The uniform behaviour of citizens is humorously captured

in this sentence: *“Like chickens drinking, the students lifted their eyes towards the distant ceiling”* (Huxley, 2007, p. 8), likening human beings in a way that portrays their conformity. Moreover, this extends to the perception of family, which is depicted as something smutty to the point of being disgusting. This is evident when Mustapha Mond explains the concept of family to students, eliciting a reaction of turning pale and nausea from them (Huxley, 2007, p. 30 – 31).

6.14. Conformity and lack of individuality in *Fahrenheit 451*

In the novel, conformity and lack of individuality are displayed mainly through the fear of nonconformity and a lack of meaningful relationships. As Beatty says: *“the sheep returns to the fold”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 137), he adeptly compares himself, fellow firemen, and Montag to sheep, which is a widely recognized metaphor for adhering to societal expectations, and in this dystopian case, to the law of the government.

Fear of nonconformity stems from the extensive censorship imposed upon the citizens of *Fahrenheit 451*, highlighting the manifestation of the lack of individuality. Clarisse is aware of the conformity and voices her opinion about the matter a few times, notably expressing: *“nobody says anything different from anyone else”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 43). A character epitomized by the anxiety of stepping out of line is Mildred. Her fear is depicted when she is presented with Montag’s book collection, quoting: *“He could hear her breathing rapidly and her face was pale and her eyes were fastened white”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 86). Furthermore, the reaction of Mildred’s friends when exposed to poetry by Montag shows the effects of stringent censorship to make people conform. Upon reading it to them, Mrs Phelps starts crying, and the women leave the apartment (Bradbury, 2008, p. 129 – 130). Montag then later describes the situation as follows: *“How like trying to put out fires with water-pistols, how senseless and insane”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 142), indicating the futility of attempting to convince the scared conforming individuals to form their own beliefs. Their fear of nonconforming to the law is also shown when they, as well as Mildred, report Montag to the firemen for a possession of books. A harrowing description is made by Montag when he is fleeing from the law after killing Beatty and he observes the compliant faces of people looking out of their houses as they obey police orders to look for him: *“night-frightened faces, like grey animals peering from electric caves, faces with grey colourless eyes, grey tongues and grey thoughts looking out through the numb flesh of the face”* (Bradbury, 2008, p. 179). This description encapsulates the conformity of citizens and the dread of not doing so. It is noteworthy that fear of nonconformity goes both

ways as is outlined by Montag when he says that individuals like Beatty were afraid of Clarisse (Bradbury, 2008, p. 87), supposedly because she was anti-social and therefore nonconforming.

The lack of meaningful relationships is another stark evidence of conformity. Due to society's constant preoccupation with distractions and fear of standing out, people become disconnected from one another, leaving their relationships, as Anwar puts it: "*devoid of the Emersonian values of friendship*" (Anwar, 2016, p. 248). Despite being married for ten years Montag and Mildred lack deep emotional connection. At the end of the novel Montag thinks of the fact that Mildred is dead because she was in the city when it was bombed yet he reflects: "*It's strange, I don't miss her, it's strange I don't feel much of anything*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 199), which is a sentence one would not expect from someone whose wife of ten years just died. Mildred's addiction to her wall televisions further distances her from Montag, as she instead forms connections with TV characters. Moreover, she even mourns for the lost characters when her house gets burned due to Montag's possession of books, saying: "*Poor family, poor family, oh everything gone, everything*" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 148). We do not see her mourning Montag, who is about to get arrested, confirming the fact that due to her conformity, she was unable to form any relationship with him. Additionally, during a conversation about their first meeting, neither Montag nor Mildred can remember where it occurred, indicating the shallow nature of their relationship (Bradbury, 2008, p. 58), reflecting the detrimental impact of conformity on human connections.

6.15. Comparing the portrayal of conformity and lack of individuality in the novels

While comparing the portrayal of this theme it becomes clear that both novels share the lack of meaningful and personal relationships due to conformity. In both novels, the individuals are disconnected from one another, which leads to their superficial and hollow relationships. Whereas *Brave New World* utilizes the promotion of polygamy and conditioning to uphold society's conformity, *Fahrenheit 451* focuses on censorship and distraction as its mechanism. However, both show the detrimental effects this has.

One distinction between the novels lies in their method of enforcing conformity. *Fahrenheit 451* relies on fear, whilst *Brave New World* uses conditioning. This creates a disparity between conforming out of fear and being virtually devoid of the option of nonconformity.

All in all, both novels offer valuable insights into the consequences of conformity. They share the same depiction of this theme through the portrayal of meaningless relationships, albeit

by different means, and they also differ in the method of enforcing conformity. This contrast highlights the nuanced approaches to exploring the theme of conformity and its impact on individual identity and human connection within dystopian narratives.

7. Conclusion

The thesis analysed the listed dystopian themes, subsequently engaging in a comparative analysis to identify both similarities and differences. Through this examination, several notable discoveries were made, shedding light on the relations between the themes and the dystopian works.

Among the various themes explored, the image of a perfect society as well as conformity and lack of individuality shared the most similarities out of all the others. Within the notion of image of a perfect society the novels shared a common theme of ensuring their image through implementing ignorance and conditioning, although they employed distinct methods. Similarly, in depicting the theme of conformity and lack of individuality, both works also shared the same depiction of a theme of shallow relationships, yet again diverged in their manifestations.

Conversely, the analysis reveals that the themes of government control and lack of free will had substantial disparities. The sole similarity seen in government control was the fact that both societies are subjected to an absolute control of their governments. The nature of this control is however starkly different. *Brave New World* subjugates every facet of human existence that being biological, psychological as well as social under governmental influence, whereas *Fahrenheit 451* emphasizes control through censorship and manipulation of information. There is also a stark contrast in the methods those dystopias use to enforce these themes so there is virtually no similarity between the novels in this aspect.

Censorship emerges as the only theme with both substantial differences and significant similarities. Both texts channel censorship through a ban on books; however, their portrayal is considerably different because books are almost non-existent in *Brave New World*, which is not the case in *Fahrenheit 451*. Moreover, both societies also share the manipulation of other forms of information by their governments, but again with contrasting means. *Fahrenheit 451* restricts access to information, while *Brave New World* employs a mono-religion ideology.

All in all, the thesis concludes that even though the novels shared some similarities, the methods used to portray every dystopian theme were always markedly distinct from one another. Each work crafts a unique narrative that employs distinct literary devices, mechanisms for control, and political contexts to explore these thematic elements. Thus, while parallels exist, the fundamental distinction in execution shows the individuality and complexity of each dystopian world. Finally, it is worth noting that there are still additional dystopian themes in both novels worth exploring, and perchance the examination of them could potentially reveal

further similarities. However, that remains a topic open to debate and warrants further investigation.

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Résumé

Tato bakalářská práce se věnuje analýze a porovnání dystopických prvků v románech *Konec civilizace* od Aldouse Huxleyho a *451 stupňů Fahrenheita* od Raye Bradburyho. Cílem práce je zjistit, jak jsou si romány ve svém ztvárnění podobné či odlišné. V přehledu literatury jsou uvedeny definice pojmů utopie a dystopie, životopisy obou autorů a krátké úvody do románů. Analytická část práce se zabývá analýzou vybraných dystopických prvků a jejich následným porovnáním. Diskutovaná dystopická témata jsou: vládní kontrola, cenzura, obraz dokonalé společnosti, nedostatek svobodné vůle a konformita a nedostatek individuality.