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Aldous Huxley - The Search for Nirvana:

From Dystopia to Utopia

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně a uvedl jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

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1. Introduction

“The search for Nirvana, like the search for Utopia or the end of history or the classless society, is ultimately a futile and dangerous one. It involves, if it does not necessitate, the sleep of reason. There is no escape from anxiety and struggle.”¹

This was written by Christopher Hitchens as a closing statement in a foreword to the 2003 edition of *Brave New World* and perfectly summarizes his feelings towards Huxley’s fascination with the possibility of what our society will become in the future.

When it came to dystopian and utopian literature Huxley was a very important figure. In his work he critiqued our society in hopes for a better future for mankind, and his focus was especially on the positive and negative effects that technology had on our society. Because of this he heavily influenced many parts of our modern popular culture.

When Huxley began to write *Brave New World*, he did so because he found the utopian aspirations presented in H.G. Wells’s novel *Men Like Gods* overly optimistic.² Wells’s work predicted a perfect world three thousand years ahead of its time and ended on a quite idealistic note of the possibility of our society once achieving the same utopia.

This thesis will compare two of the novels written by Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* and *Island*, their features and why Huxley chose to write both of the novels. Both works were written in the 20th century, thirty years apart, and carry strong political, sociological, religious and scientific themes, with the main characters usually in opposition or clashing with the social norms of the societies they are dealing with. *Brave New World* and *Island* can be categorised as dystopian and utopian literature respectively.

Both of the novels are about the influence that rapid technological advancement has on society and how it can corrupt or better mankind in various ways. In *Brave New World* Huxley focused on technology and the capacity of a godless, uniform society, that was created for the purpose of comfort above all, to handle the further advancement of technology.

However, in the novel he wrote thirty years later, *Island*, he focused on the corruption of a spiritual and morally pure society by a foreign nation that was more

¹ Christopher Hitchens, *Love, Poverty, and War: Journeys and Essays* (New York, NY: Nation Books Avalon Publishing Group Inc., 2004), EPUB e-book, under “Huxley and Brave New World.”

² Ronald T. Sion, *Aldous Huxley and the Search for Meaning: A Study of the Eleven Novels* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010), 127.

technologically advanced and shows us that even a society that uses technology only to better mankind and rejects any harmful scientific advancements, can still be harmed by different cultures and ideologies that do not follow the same rules. Many repeating themes can be seen in each of these novels as well as in his other works. Both of the novels depict a society that is corrupted by technology, is ruled by an oligarchy and is isolated from any other culture. In both of these novels the protagonists are not a part of their culture and do not follow their social and cultural norms.

The aim of this thesis is to understand how Huxley's perception of the future of mankind changed over time through the comparison of both of the novels, the main characters, the societies that Huxley created, and the tools he used to flesh them out, while bearing in mind the historical, political and technological background mainly in the United Kingdom and The United States of America, as well as world events surrounding the writing of the novels and Huxley's personal life.

I will divide the analysis of Huxley's work into six chapters. This introduction being the first chapter, the second chapter will focus on Huxley's life and the influence his family and upbringing had on Huxley, including his cultural and economic background. I will also bear in mind the people, artists and ideologies he was influenced by. This information will serve as a background for the reasons Huxley has for his philosophy. The third chapter will discuss the historical, political and technological background within Huxley's lifetime, while focusing mainly on the United Kingdom and The United States of America in the 1930s and 1960s when *Brave New World* and *Island* were first published respectively. In the fourth chapter I will discuss dystopia and utopia in literature, the history of the genre, the relevant works by other authors that influenced Huxley, and outline what a dystopian and utopian society looks like. I will also look into some of Huxley's other works that are relevant to the themes of dystopia and utopia. In the fifth chapter I will focus on the novel *Brave New World*. Starting with a brief general analysis of the main characters, the role do they play within the given social norm of the novel and some additional themes of the novel, following with a deeper analysis of the three themes that connect both of the novels. The sixth chapter will focus on Huxley's novel *Island* and the information that was gathered in the analysis of *Brave New World* will be put into context alongside this novel. The same themes that were analysed in the previous chapter will be discussed here and then compared. The seventh chapter will focus solely on the relevance of Huxley's novels to today's society. In

the conclusion I will outline contemporary western society and compare it with the analysis of Huxley's life, his philosophy and both of his books.

The reason for comparing *Brave New World* and *Island* is that each of these books represents Huxley's different view on the world. *Brave New World* was written in a time when Huxley feared that the unstoppable advancement of technology would eventually destroy the fabric of western civilization as we know it. *Island* on the other hand was written at the end of his life, after he developed a keen interest for researching drugs and after his first wife died and he was diagnosed with cancer. Each of these books represents a different part of his life with a different view of the future. Through both of these novels Huxley is trying to answer a complicated question about which path the contemporary society should take. Both of the novels are a product of their time and are influenced by the current cultural climate as well as Huxley's own personal life experiences and views that changed over time.

I choose to further compare three main themes and their connection between *Brave New World* and *Island*. First theme that will be discussed is the theme of drugs and how Huxley's perception changed on this topic over time. Huxley was fascinated with drugs and even wrote *The Doors of Perception* to describe his experience taking mescaline. To understand Huxley's fascination with drugs is a big part in understanding his dystopia and utopia as they are omnipresent in both *Brave New World* and *Island* and play a big part in the society.

The second will be the theme of a doomed system, where the fact that the utopia of *Island* was doomed from the beginning will be discussed, as well as Huxley's intentional and unintentional hints at the possibility of an instability within the dystopian society of *Brave New World*, a world that was supposed to be without a flaw. This is important to understand in context of Huxley's view of the future of mankind and how it changed between both of the novels.

The last theme will be that of an outsider coming into a foreign culture and how Huxley was able to use this foreigner as a tool to help move the narrative, create conflict and paint a better picture of the dystopian or utopian society. The second part of this theme will focus on the society itself and try to look on each of the aspects of Huxley's fears and hopes for the future of western civilization.

2. Huxley's life

Huxley was born in 1894 at the end of the Victorian era, and while he never joined the army on the account of his poor eyesight, he lived through both of the world wars. He saw the horrors that new technology brought to warfare, which influenced the way he saw the future of humankind and their relationship with technology, a topic that is present in many of his works. With each passing year of Huxley's life, technology was becoming more intertwined with the everyday life of mankind.

Two of the most notable relatives that Huxley had were his grandfather, Thomas Henry Huxley, and his aunt, Mary Humphry Ward. Huxley's grandfather, a respected biologist, was a follower of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, first published in 1859 in *The Origin of the Species*, almost from the beginning, a highly controversial topic at that time. Nicknamed "Darwin's Bulldog" he coined the term agnostic and at one time taught H. G. Wells biology.³ While he certainly left big shoes to fill for his grandson, Thomas Henry Huxley died just a year after Aldous Huxley was born. Nevertheless, he later became an influence in his literary writing.⁴

Huxley's aunt, on the other hand, played a different role in the influence of Huxley. Writing mainly about faith and society she was advocating for Christianity to serve to the people, rather than to itself. It was yet another highly controversial idea that Huxley was exposed to from his family. Later, due to his blindness and the death of his mother, Huxley spend a lot of time with this aunt. According to his friend, Charles Harman, there was a collection of complete works of his aunt in almost every room of the house.

The death of his mother from cancer in 1908 was another big influence on a fourteen year old Huxley. A citation from Juliette Huxley can give a better insight into this: "It was to Aldous the irreparable loss; a betrayal of his faith in life ... he never got over it,"⁵

On the other hand, the relationship he had with his father was complicated. Leonard Huxley was an editor of Cornhill magazine, and overall a complicated man.⁶ After the death

³ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 127.

⁴ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 8.

⁵ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 16.

⁶ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 13 - 15.

of Julia Huxley, Leonard quickly remarried a much younger woman, which certainly did not help the already fragile relationship Aldous had with his father.⁷

It is no secret that Huxley's family was a relatively wealthy one with a scholarly background, especially in science and literature. Aldous Huxley was born in a neo-gothic Victorian house called Laleham and his brother Julian was a well-respected scientist and the first Director-General of UNESCO.⁸ The only person the Huxley family does not mention often is Huxley's only sister, Margaret, who lived with another woman and ran a school with her.

One of the major events in Huxley's life was his visit to Garsington Manor, where he met Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence and his first wife, a Belgian World War I refugee, Maria Nys.⁹

Huxley was diagnosed with incipient blindness at age seventeen, he then had to teach himself how to read Braille until 1913, when his vision was partially restored.

He died on November 22, 1963, on the same day that J.F.K. was assassinated.¹⁰ On his deathbed, he asked his wife to administer an injection of LSD.¹¹

⁷ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 15.

⁸ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 13-15.

⁹ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 18.

¹⁰ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 171.

¹¹ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 199.

3. Historical Background to *Island* and *Brave New World*

The following two subchapters about the 1930s and the 1960s are here to give an overview of the cultural setting and world events that Huxley was experiencing at the time of writing *Brave New World* and *Island*. For the 1930s subchapter *A Brief History of Great Britain* by William E. Burns is used as a resource and for the 1960s *The Unfinished Nation* by Alan Brinkley. The reason for this is that Huxley gradually became a part of the American culture after writing *Brave New World* and as a result became more Americanized which would naturally also influence his writing.

3.1. The 1930s and Huxley

The United Kingdom entered the 1930s more diverse, secular and democratic than ever before. Despite that, not everything was going well in the United Kingdom during the 1930s. The Great Depression had economically incapacitated the lower-class, and communism and fascism began brooding as a result, although not to the extent as in other European countries. Hitler had revitalized Germany and gathered many admirers including many people in the United Kingdom, as well as did Mussolini. The Communist Party of Great Britain was created. Britain was giving Hitler territorial concessions in the hopes of avoiding war and Russia, as well Germany, was becoming more of a threat with every passing year; another war with Germany seemed inevitable. The reason why Britain was trying to avoid conflict was because the military technology improved substantially compared to the First World War. Britain also began to research atomic bombs, later sharing their research with the United States of America. There also was a great cultural exchange between the United States of America and the United Kingdom in the 1930s.

As a writer, Huxley moved around the world a great deal, living and working in many different places. When he began to write *Brave New World* he was living in Sanary, France, where German-Jewish exiles soon began to gather thanks to the increase of power of Nazism in Germany.¹² As Sanary was very attractive to artists and especially writers, during his stay, he was able to meet many writers with whom he would exchange ideas.¹³

¹² Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 260.

¹³ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 260.

In England the Second World War and the rise of feminism helped to introduce contraception to the public, as did the Scottish scientist Marie Stopes through her popular book *Married Love and Wise Parenthood (1918)*.¹⁴ Like Aldous Huxley, Marie Stopes was a firm believer in eugenics, something that Huxley would later discuss in *Brave New World Revisited*¹⁵. As a part of the cultural exchange Huxley would move to the United States in 1937.¹⁶

3.2. The 1960s and Huxley

When Huxley published his last novel before his death, he was living in Hollywood in Los Angeles, California. The 1960s were an era of great prosperity and scientific achievements for many Americans. Just a year before publishing *Island* in 1962, the first American travelled to space and America experienced a 250 percent growth in its gross national product between the end of WWII and 1960. It also experienced major population growth and industrialization. In 1961 the “man of the year” of the *Time* magazine was not a specific person, but “the American scientist”. Penicillin, vaccine against polio and new pesticides were invented. As well as colour television, solid-state devices that could be used instead of vacuum tubes, which meant many electronic devices got considerably smaller, and which made the birth of modern computers possible.

However, not all inventions were that positive: in 1952, the United States successfully detonated the first hydrogen bomb, which meant that America and the Soviet Union began to put tremendous resources into their development. Intercontinental ballistic missiles were being tested, as well as nuclear missiles that could be fired below the surface of the ocean from a submarine.

The American society also saw major changes, especially the American middle-class, in this era nicknamed as the “people of plenty” by the historian David Potter.¹⁷ A third of the nation’s population lived in the suburbs by 1960.

¹⁴ William E. Burns, *A Brief History of Great Britain* (New York, NY: Checkmark Books Infobase Publishing, 2010), 194.

¹⁵ Burns, *A Brief History of Great Britain*, 194.

¹⁶ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 18.

¹⁷ Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People* (New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2010), 735.

4. Dystopia and Utopia

Now that Huxley's life and his background during the writing of both of the novels was established, it is important to define and understand what the terms dystopia and utopia mean. Defining these terms in the context of other Huxley's works, as well as other writers that wrote similar major works on this topic, will aid in the comparison between *Brave New World* and *Island*.

4.1. The Definition of Dystopia

Dystopia is defined by Chris Ferns, the author behind *Narrating Utopia*, as a parodic inversion, a satire of contemporary society, as well as the utopian ambition.¹⁸ George Orwell in his novel *1984* has envisioned quite a straightforward dystopia of a totalitarian regime, compared to Huxley's *Brave New World*. *1984* was part of the dystopian literature because the totalitarian government was intentionally oppressing the freedoms of its citizens by violence, censorship, constant surveillance and being in a perpetual state of war. This argument can be further supported by the fact that when writing *1984*, George Orwell took inspiration from Stalinism.¹⁹ The World State in *Brave New World* has no war, no violence, no crime and everyone is happy. But it also lacks art, religion, self-expression, individuality and free will. The dystopia that Huxley created in *Brave New World* is complicated to fully define as such because, as was mentioned before, it was written as satire after Huxley read H.G. Wells's greatly optimistic utopian book *Men Like Gods*, as Huxley later admitted in a letter from 1962.²⁰ It is a regime that was created with the good intention of being a utopia and defines itself as such, but each time Huxley reveals more information about this world, it is clear that it is far from it. H. G. Wells's optimism in the possibility of future utopian society might have been seen by Huxley as naivety rather than trust in the good nature of humankind. As a result, Huxley's *Brave New World* is critical of his contemporary society, the utopian aspirations, as well as H. G. Wells's book *Men Like Gods*. It is also important to note that H. G. Wells strongly disliked *Brave New World* and that the two had a complicated

¹⁸ Chris Ferns, *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender Form in Utopian Literature*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 109.

¹⁹ Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World: Revisited* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1959), 12.

²⁰ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 127.

relationship.²¹ Unlike Aldous Huxley, H. G. Wells, at the end of his life, wrote a very pessimistic book, seeing the usage of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.²² *Mind at the End of Its Tether*, first published in 1945, was only about 34 pages long, but it expressed a terrible pessimism for the future of mankind. Quite the opposite to what Aldous Huxley arrived to at the end of his life. Same as with H. G. Wells, the difference in tone in Huxley's post WWII work is evident in *Ape and Essence*. Huxley began to fear what technology could be capable of even more after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²³

4.2. The Definition of Utopia

While there were earlier literary works that could be categorized as utopian, the term "utopia" was first coined and popularized in *Utopia* by Sir Thomas More published in 1516.²⁴ The root of the word may either come from a word meaning "no place" or "good place" (ou-topos and eu-topos respectively).²⁵ According to Chris Ferns this ambiguity was intentional.

*"Utopia then, may be defined as both a good place, an ideal (or at any rate, more perfect) society, yet at the same time one that does not exist—desirable, perhaps, but at the same time unattainable."*²⁶

This sets up a precedent that all literary utopias are by their origin always set up to fail or be regarded as "too optimistic". Ronald T. Sion, the author of *The Search of Meaning* that analyses eleven of Huxley's novels, then defines utopian literature as "generally attempting to portray a future society as a model against which one may judge current conditions."²⁷ Both of these definitions complement each other well, as utopia may be an unattainable, ideal society by which we judge the current state of our contemporary society. Other well-known literary works on this topic include *A Modern Utopia*, and *Men Like Gods* by H. G. Wells and *Islandia* by Austin Tappan Wright. Later on, writers began parodying the

²¹ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 262.

²² Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 127.

²³ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 166.

²⁴ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 2.

²⁵ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 2.

²⁶ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 2.

²⁷ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 125.

utopian aspirations of idealists as it seemed to them that a true utopia could never be fully attainable.

4.3. Differences in Dystopia and Utopia

The question of how to implement utopia or dystopia, however, is not the same with both of these. While utopia is created by the people, for the people to obviously benefit from the society to the fullest extent, there are two major paths to a dystopian society in literature. In **George Orwell's 1984**, the society got taken hostage by an oppressive totalitarian government, something that could be considered an outside force when compared to **Huxley's Brave New World**. Huxley's vision of the dystopian world was far darker and much more complicated: a system of government that is neither a full democracy nor totalitarianism, since each of the citizens has been conditioned by the World State to perfectly fit into it. Because of this, every citizen is a part of the oppressive force that makes this society a dystopia, and every citizen oppresses themselves as well as others. It is a society that did not handle the technological progress well and let itself be influenced by comfort and ignorance rather than by freedom and truth.

As for which of these types of dystopias were expected in the future of humankind: after the Second World War and the publication of **1984**, Orwell's version seemed more likely. But with the vast technological advancement that the western society has made towards the technology that is beginning to resemble Huxley's vision of dystopia, this is beginning to change. In a book *Amusing ourselves to Death* published in 1945, Neil Postman explores the idea that we will become so preoccupied with pleasure, that our society will become what Huxley has feared, controlled by drugs that bring us pleasure, the equivalent of the "feelies" and ignorance. He argues, that the classical dystopia of totalitarian regime that most people envision when we talk about dystopias is less likely to occur in the future, than the complicated world that Huxley envisioned in *Brave New World*.

4.4. Ape and Essence – Huxley

To understand more about Huxley's dystopia, it is important to mention *Ape and Essence*. It was another one of Huxley's novels that depicted a dystopian world that Huxley

so feared would be our future. When writing *Ape and Essence*, Huxley was living in the desert with his first wife and had just witnessed the atrocities of the Second World War.²⁸ In this novel, however, humanity is not enslaved by its desire for comfort, it descends into chaos after a devastating nuclear war of World War III. That is not to say that Huxley began fearing a mutual nuclear destruction more than humanity being enslaved by their own inventions.

When Huxley was writing *Brave New World* he had already witnessed one world war, which may have deepened his doubts concerning humanity. But after the Second World War, Huxley's view of dystopia has shifted even further, which can be seen by the tone that he chose for *Ape and Essence*. The First World War paled in comparison when it came to sheer death and destruction when, compared to the Second World War. It was at this time, that Huxley began to seek spiritual enlightenment.²⁹ And it was at this time, that he began to form his ideas about the ideal society. He was finally able to fully form these ideas fourteen years later in his novel *Island*. It is also important to note that *Ape and Essence* is the exception to Huxley's writing with its happy ending.³⁰ Contrary to the themes in his literary writing, Huxley was a pacifist and once proposed that non-violence should be a part of human nature.³¹ The key part being that he proposed that it "should". From the tone of his works as well as his vision of the future of mankind it is understandable to assume that Huxley did not believe in the good nature of humanity.

The novel contains many themes that are also present in *Brave New World* and *Island*. Huxley's fascination with the theme of sex appears even in this book, as well as his fascination with death and technology. Another theme present is his common practice of explaining everything through a character that is well informed of the history of the dystopia or utopia. This key character can be understood as Huxley's own voice, as it is with Mustapha Mond in *Brave New World*.³² Like Mustapha Mond, the Arch-Vicar, from Huxley's *Ape and Essence*, explains how humanity has caused such dystopian world. One of the other themes that are present in *Ape and Essence* is overpopulation, a topic that Huxley covered in *Brave New World Revisited*. His argument on why one should fear overpopulation was that

²⁸ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 155.

²⁹ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 155.

³⁰ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 160.

³¹ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 155-163.

³² Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 158.

an effective death control was easily achieved even with limited means, but an effective birth control requires the cooperation of the masses and is in opposition to many religious traditions.³³

4.5. Chrome Yellow – Huxley

Another one of Huxley's important works that gave the foundation to his future writing was *Crome Yellow*. It was Huxley's first novel, published in 1921. The novel draws from his experiences at the Garsington Manor in a comic perspective.³⁴ At the beginning of the novel, one of Huxley's characters, Mr. Scogan, shares his views on the future of society that closely resemble the society in *Brave New World*.³⁵

“An impersonal generation will take place of Nature's hideous system. In vast state incubators, rows upon rows of gravid bottles will supply the world with the population it requires. The family system will disappear; society, sapped at its very base, will have to find new foundations; and Eros, beautifully and irresponsibly free, will flit like gay butterfly from flower to flower through a sunlit world.”³⁶

As was the case with Mustapha Mond and the Arch-Vicar, Mr. Scogan could be considered, thanks to this quote, as the manifestation of Huxley's voice. This also provides evidence that Huxley held these beliefs for no less than a decade, before he finally explored them fully in *Brave New World*. It is also important to note that this novel was controversial due to its sexual nature, a theme that would be repeated again and again in many of his following novels.³⁷

³³ Huxley, *Brave New World: Revisited*, 16.

³⁴ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 21.

³⁵ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 22.

³⁶ Aldous Huxley, *Crome Yellow* (Hamburg: The Albatross Verlag G. M. B. H., 1933), 29.

³⁷ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 23.

5. Brave New World

5.1. Introduction

For someone who is a part of Huxley's World State, it is not entirely clear if the society should be considered as utopian or dystopian. While it is intended as a dystopia for the reader and John, the average Delta and Epsilon might have a different view. From birth they are purposefully trained and prepared for a specific job and specific life with even their needs being controlled. They lack the capacity to question the state of the world, since they have just enough intelligence capacity to do the job they were assigned. Even though they are essentially slaves, for them, this world is perfect. In his book *Aldous Huxley: and the Search for Meaning A Study of the Eleven Novels*, Ronald T. Sion hints that there are more types of literary dystopia:

*"...a distinction is sometimes made between utopian novels that portray an ideal world and dystopian stories that predict a more dismal future. George Orwell's 1984, for example, is clearly dystopian in describing a future slave state. Huxley, on the other hand, is more subtle in his ironic depiction of a new world devoted to pleasures. Many moderns would be inclined to accept this apparently happy future, but this society would represent a hell for sensitive and humane people."*³⁸

An argument could be made, that it depends on how much one values truth above anything else. The world in *Brave New World* is certainly cruel to the less fortunate, but cruel in such a way that everyone who is not at the top of the social and intelligence ladder, that being an alpha plus, still reaches their full potential at work with their skillset, and is completely satisfied with all the abundance of entertainment and distractions. It is the smartest ones, the alpha pluses, who have to sacrifice the most in order to make this system work. Huxley briefly mentions that there are ten world controllers, and the one that is introduced in the novel, Mustapha Mond, even admits that he read Shakespeare and proclaims that sacrifices have to be made in order for the system to work.³⁹ Perhaps Huxley is trying to delve into the fact that there is a point where humanity can be sacrificed in

³⁸ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 125.

³⁹ Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1947), 38, 258-260.

exchange for comfort.⁴⁰ The Deltas and Epsilons are happy and, to their knowledge, fulfilled, but the Alpha pluses, even with all the conditioning they get, are forced to sacrifice for the good of the World State.

One could look at the state of the world in *Brave New World* as two sides of a coin, with one side being the World State and the other being the Savage Reservation. The World State is secular, happy, full of entertainment and prosperity, and the other one is free. The dialogue that John has with Mustapha at the end of the book touches on this very topic. Huxley uses this dialogue in order to explore the idea that without freedom no one can truly be happy. John claims his right to be unhappy and experience all kinds of pain in his life because without it life has no meaning to him.

"All right then," said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be unhappy." "Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen to-morrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind."⁴¹

All this raises a question about how stable the World State really is. While the current state of the affairs has clearly existed for so many generations that there is almost no one to remember how it really was before, Huxley doesn't give much information on when the World State is taking place. Through the whole novel, there are numerous mentions of the Nine Years War, which became the breaking point where humanity abandoned their way of life for the current state of the world.⁴² *Brave New World* starts in the year 632 A. F., which is a reference to the year that Henry Ford, the inventor of the assembly line, was born.⁴³ Henry Ford was the man who gave the world the assembly line together with the concept of mass production. For Huxley, it was not enough to create a society that has no interest in religion, he wanted to completely devoid any mention of it so that even time is looked at differently. It serves as an indication of how much this society is different compared to ours.

⁴⁰ Alessandro Maurini, *Aldous Huxley: The Political Thought of a Man of Letters* (London: Lexington Books, 2017), 39.

⁴¹ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 283.

⁴² Huxley, *Brave New World*, 269-270.

⁴³ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 128.

5.2. Drugs – Soma

The drug that is being used in *Brave New World* is a multipurpose one. "...half a gramme for a half-holiday, a gramme for a week-end, two grammes for a trip to the gorgeous East, three for a dark eternity on the moon..."⁴⁴ It numbs emotions, provides easy escape from reality and helps you sleep with essentially no drawbacks. The word "essentially" is important because while soma is being represented as having "*all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects*"⁴⁵ at first, when Linda, John's mother, is taken back to the civilization, we learn from her doctor that large doses do shorten the lifespan and even larger ones can kill you. This however does not worry the citizens of *Brave New World*, they live with no concern for their own mortality and are conditioned to accept death as part of life. Nobody even questions that you get terminated when you turn sixty.

Soma is used to control and subdue the population, mixed with propaganda slogans that are fed to the citizens of *Brave New World* at an early age. Slogans like "*a gramme is better than a damn*"⁴⁶ "*A gramme in time saves nine*"⁴⁷ and "*I take a gramme and only am*"⁴⁸ are being uttered automatically by the well-conditioned citizens as if they were the only ones who knew them. Soma is used to replace any free time anyone has for thinking so free thought is voluntarily exchanged for a temporary pleasant experience and long term goals are forgotten. Huxley plays with this theme as the common human nature always seems to be seeking comfort and pleasure over truth and freedom, as he puts it in *The Doors of Perception*: "*The urge to escape from selfhood and the environment is in almost everyone almost all the time.*"⁴⁹ As Mustapha Mond puts it, it is also used to inhibit mankind's thirst for religion and spirituality, a concept that is unwelcome in this world ruled by technology, sex and effectiveness. "*Christianity without tears—that's what soma is*"⁵⁰.

The way that soma works seems also important, other drugs that could be even vaguely compared to soma always have some drawbacks, a period where the user would

⁴⁴ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 66.

⁴⁵ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 63.

⁴⁶ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 64.

⁴⁷ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 104.

⁴⁸ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 121.

⁴⁹ Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1968), 52.

⁵⁰ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 280.

feel even worse than before he took it. Soma on the other hand keeps the user in “productive condition” under the effects of the drugs and after it. When taken in moderation, it will help the individual to fit into the society and work ethic, rather than make him an unproductive outcast. The drug is even so intertwined within the society, that Bernard Marx is considered an outcast for refusing to use it. It is a perfect drug for a society that is exceptionally productive and driven by consumerism.

The usage of drugs is a very strong theme in a lot of his works, in a short book *The Doors of Perception*, first published in 1954, Huxley describes his experiment with mescaline, a strong psychedelic found in cacti that has been used by Native Americans for religious ceremonies. Huxley seemed fascinated by drugs and how they can be used to better or subdue mankind. He elaborates on his view on drugs in *Brave New World Revisited*, published in 1958, where he names various kinds of already existing legal and illegal drugs and argues that parts of the fictional drug soma are already available.

5.3. Doomed System

While *Brave New World* was written as a satire of the utopian vision that many of Huxley’s contemporaries held, especially H. G. Wells, it also exhibits many themes that are working against the system that was put in place. Most of the main characters are faulty human beings, something that the system of *Brave New World* was trying to eradicate. The way that Bernard Marx acts seems strange to everyone else around him: he refuses to take soma, does not socialize as well as everyone else does and feels like an individual.⁵¹ He consciously, as well as subconsciously, rebels against the system of the World State. However, his human faults seem to fade after he meets John, brings him back and uses him to advance his own career and social standing. He trades his humanity for a better position in a society he despises by shifting the focus on someone who, like him, broke the social norm.⁵² He gladly sold out someone, who like him had faults in the current social climate.

Lenina is somehow, against all the conditioning, drawn to monogamous relationships. She is interested in Bernard, basically an outcast in their society and John, a

⁵¹ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 114.

⁵² Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 151.

literal rebel and an outcast. For the majority of the novel, she is fighting with her desires and views against her conditioning and the current culture. She is forced to act “properly” as the culture dictates, when her friend Fanny starts to worry about her “anti-social monogamous relationship with Henry Foster.”⁵³ After John appears, he is the only man she desires.⁵⁴ She even makes a mistake when injecting vaccinations to embryos, something that should not happen to someone who is a “*perfect product of the hatchery and conditioning process.*”⁵⁵

The other two faulty human beings are Helmholtz Watson and The Director of Hatcheries. Watson is tired of writing propaganda slogans and wants to write poetry. He is an exceptional product of the system with his looks, good social standing and intelligence, but he only finds friends in outcasts like Bernard and John, with whom he is finally able to share his love for poetry. The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning has a child with a woman, which is forbidden. These hints of accidental insubordination may exist due to the fact that Huxley believed that the true human nature is hard to suppress and control even with all the propaganda, drugs and conditioning. Perhaps the way how the main characters subconsciously resist the world order is trying to convey that the true concept of “utopia” in the eyes of the ten world controllers will never work as it is intended to.⁵⁶ But that is not to say that Huxley did not fear the future western society turning into what he envisioned in *Brave New World*, on the contrary.

It is also important to note that this society goes to great lengths to remove the outsiders and the rebels. Such a society is equipped with variety of places to ship these non-conforming individuals.⁵⁷ This fact alone shows that the regime is prepared for events such as a non-conforming individual and that these events happen frequently. It also shows that the system that was put in place does not allow for individuality even of a single being, as it might poison the whole society. From this standpoint, the society suddenly looks a lot more fragile than before. One might also speculate if these places for non-conforming individuals actually exist, given the stance that this society has towards death.

⁵³ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 149.

⁵⁴ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 220.

⁵⁵ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 148.

⁵⁶ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 142.

⁵⁷ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 114.

5.4. The Outsider and the Society

As was mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, Huxley made most of his main characters in *Brave New World* with certain human faults, but only three of his characters can be considered outsiders of the cultural norm of the society. The first one is obviously John, to whom they, when he is brought to the World State, refer as “the Savage”. Huxley used John as the voice of reason and pure innocence, that served as a comparison to the society of *Brave New World*, as much as he used him for advancing the plot of the novel. When Bernard and Lenina first met John at the savage reservation, he explained to them, how they treat him and his mother, because they do not belong to the reservation. Later, he is used to show the vanity of the people from the World State, and to further explain the stance on death and death-conditioning that this society has. When John finally meets one of the World Controllers, Mustapha Mond, he explains to him that this new society was created because humanity wanted comfort above everything else.⁵⁸ John then argues that life has no meaning for him without all the things that this society has gotten rid of. John helps to convey the message that this society is wrong not just by pure description of the inner-workings of the society, but on a deeper level comparing his values against everyone else’s. He is there to create conflict between the two approaches to life and happiness. The way this dialogue between Mustapha Mond and John hits on central questions of the novel suggests, that the content of the monologue is the manifestation of Huxley’s own reasoning. The side of Mond showing contempt for how things are and a rational sacrifice of personal freedoms to ensure a happy life. And the side of John, irrational, passionate, spiritual and free.

The second outsider is Bernard Marx, Bernard is the odd one out when it comes to the society in the world state. Like John, he is also there to create conflict, but through a different perspective on the world. Bernard does not really know why he is unhappy and why he feels different than everyone else. As was mentioned above, he does not take soma often, which could mean that he enjoys the feeling of being different. After the conversation he had with the Director, who was threatening him with an exile to Iceland for his “odd” behaviour, Bernard suddenly felt even more as an important individual, rather than just one

⁵⁸ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 129.

of many the citizens of the world state.⁵⁹ At the beginning he is only focusing on being himself, almost rebelling against the system. Only later, when he is in a much better social standing thanks to John, he starts to focus on pleasure, like everyone else, and almost completely forgets about his individuality.

The last of the outsiders is Helmholtz Watson. As was said before, Helmholtz was an exceptional product of the system, at least on the outside. On the inside he was much like Bernard, only with no noticeable negative traits. Unlike Bernard, Helmholtz had all the comfort that the world state has offered, but he still strove for freedom and individuality. Also unlike Bernard, he is not so confused by this, and when being send to seclusion, he accepts his fate gracefully as if this was the inevitable conclusion to his existence.⁶⁰

The fact that all of these outcasts are drawn to each other and have established a friendship with one another, while at times difficult, is exactly what the World State was trying to prevent. It was the beginning of a cultural revolution that could, theoretically, bring the whole World State down.

⁵⁹ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 114.

⁶⁰ Huxley, *Brave New World*, 270.

6. Island

6.1. Introduction

Island was a utopian novel that Huxley finished a few months before his death. The novel has many themes similar to those of *Brave New World*, with the exception that this novel was more focused on the concept of utopia than the narrative of the story. Huxley set out to create a template of a utopia as he saw it before his death. During writing this novel, Huxley already knew he was suffering from cancer. The story of Will Farnaby, the protagonist of this book, is just a background through which Huxley is able to focus on the presentation of what he views as a perfect society.⁶¹

Huxley had many doubts about this book and felt that it is not as good as his flagship dystopian novel, but he wanted to “balance the picture of *Brave New World*.”⁶² Even though much preparation went into this novel it was not accepted well anyway.⁶³ Readers and reviewers were disappointed in the overwhelming amount of utopian ideology and underwhelming lack of plot.⁶⁴

The novel focuses more on Huxley’s search of a perfect utopian aspiration, rather than on the plot itself. Therefore, Huxley used much of his personal views and experiences while writing it. For example, the death of Lakshmi in the novel very closely resembles the death of his first wife, Maria.⁶⁵ We can also notice certain similarity between the protagonist of the novel and Huxley himself reaching enlightenment through the use of drugs. There are also similarities between this novel and *Brave New World*, the usage of drugs, unrestricted sexual freedom and living in the present are all themes that are present in both of the novels. The birds that call attention to the present can also be compared to the brainwashing propaganda of the *Brave New World*.⁶⁶ Both societies in *Island* and *Brave New World* are also isolated from other cultures, one by sea and the other by a wall which is a common theme in the utopian novel.

⁶¹ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 177.

⁶² Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 444.

⁶³ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 444.

⁶⁴ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 445.

⁶⁵ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 446.

⁶⁶ Murray, *Aldous Huxley: a Biography*, 447.

*More and Francis Bacon are only two of the many writers who place their utopias on islands; Tommaso Campanella's City of the Sun is rendered impregnable by its sevenfold walls; while more recent writers have set their fictions in the future, on other planets, or both.*⁶⁷

It stands to reason that isolation is a necessity, when it comes to dystopian and utopian literature. It enables the comparison of the given society with a more “normal” one. Albeit in *Brave New World* the World State was not so much isolated from the reservation as the reservation was isolated from the World State.

6.2. Drugs - moksha-medicine

In Huxley's later work, the drug that is being used is called “moksha-medicine”, a fitting name since it is being used as a way to achieve spiritual liberation for the human mind. Combined with meditation, the natives of Pala use moksha-medicine to reach higher states of consciousness, to achieve the enlightenment of the mind and to free themselves from the ego.⁶⁸ To the natives of Pala the moksha-medicine is a tool, rather than an addiction or a drug, like for many tribes and cultures it is more of a part of a spiritual ceremony.

6.2.1. Moksha-medicine VS soma

While the moksha-medicine does not have much in common with soma from *Brave New World*, one thing can be said for certain, that it is a form of a psychedelic drug that is found in fungi.⁶⁹ Compared to soma in *Brave New World*, the difference is clear right in the name of the drug. The moksha-medicine is used as a way to help the natives in realising their full spiritual potential, while Soma is there to pacify, subdue and control the masses. While the moksha-medicine is taken only occasionally, soma is used daily in large quantities. And while soma has multiple effects and uses, the moksha-medicine only has one purpose.

⁶⁷ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 2.

⁶⁸ Aldous Huxley, *Island* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1964), 142.

⁶⁹ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 165.

⁷⁰ Huxley, *Island*, 141.

6.2.2. Huxley's view on drugs over time

From the tone that *Island has*, Huxley's views on drugs have changed when compared to *Brave New World*. When Huxley's first wife died in 1955, he read *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, a book that is preparing one for death and the afterlife. Both of these events had been also an influence on his stance on drugs and his writing.⁷¹ As was the fact, that while in the process of writing *Island*, he was diagnosed with malignant cancer of the mouth, the same disease that his mother died from when Huxley was just a child.⁷² Huxley started with the viewpoint that drugs are capable of influencing the human mind so greatly, that they can be used to control human nature, and that they can be easily misused by a government or a dictatorship to further their agenda. But that started changing after he experimented with mescaline and wrote *The Doors of Perception* in 1954. Struck by grief and faced with his own mortality by his wife's death, and influenced by *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, he "openly defended the use of psychedelic drugs like LSD as a means of enhancing conscious awareness, and he experimented with mind-altering drugs himself."⁷³ His stance on drugs was very possibly changed further because he was again confronted by his mortality when he was diagnosed with cancer. Influenced by all these things in rapid succession, Huxley's world was shaken and his belief that drugs are the way of widening the consciousness even strengthened. The fact that he intentionally died under the influence of LSD further confirms his change of stance on drugs.⁷⁴ To someone who is not very familiar with Huxley, it might seem that he advocated the usage of drugs but nothing could be further from the truth. Huxley advocated the usage of drugs for the sole reason of reaching enlightenment.⁷⁵ He saw drugs as a tool rather than an easy escape from reality, much like the people of Pala did.

6.3. Doomed System

The explanation as to why the society of Pala was doomed from the start is much more straightforward than that of a *Brave New World*, considering the grim ending of *Island*.

⁷¹ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 170.

⁷² Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 170.

⁷³ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 170.

⁷⁴ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 199.

⁷⁵ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 176.

The society in Pala was pacifistic, focusing on spiritual self-fulfilment and only living in the moment. Commendable human traits indeed, but their focus on improving themselves allowed them to ignore all outside forces that were trying to change their way of life.⁷⁶ The Rani and Murugan disagreed with everyone else on many things that were inherent to their culture. They even ignored the possibility of ulterior motives of Will Farnaby, as well as the impending danger of an invasion by Colonel Dipa. Because of all these forces, the invasion, or any other way of destruction of the Palanese culture, was inevitable.

The reason that the Rani disagreed with the Palanese culture was that she was the queen of the neighbouring country, Rendang. The reason why Murugan had such opposing views to the Palanese people's way of life was that he was brought up in Europe, where he learned all the traits and world views that Huxley saw as a negative part of the western culture.⁷⁷ For Huxley, Murugan is an epitome of a person who will inevitably destroy all the hope for a utopia. It just took one man in the position of power to make a single decision and change the fate of the perfect utopia forever. Murugan inherited all the stereotypical negative traits: greed, envy, puritanism, aversion to drugs and a dangerous love for technology. All the traits that Huxley saw as negative in the western culture and feared they would destroy our civilization and turn it into a real-life dystopia. The narrator's last sentence of the book conveys that Huxley wanted to point out that while the desire to create a utopia is admirable, there will always be greed and ignorance that will poison such aims, but that should not stop humanity from striving toward the utopian society.⁷⁸ It is no coincidence that Murugan is also one of the names of a god of war in Hinduism.

6.4. The Outsider and the Society

When looking for the outsider in Huxley's *Island* the choice is more obvious. The outsider in this case was Will Farnaby. He was a character that the reader could identify with and through which the reader could more easily learn about the Palanese society. Same as with John in *Brave New World*, Huxley used Will to help his narrative. Because Huxley wanted to explore his idea of a perfect society, an inquisitive outsider to a foreign culture

⁷⁶ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 172.

⁷⁷ Huxley, *Island*, 146.

⁷⁸ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 176.

was the perfect tool for this task.⁷⁹ Because of this, most of the book is about Will experiencing or learning about the aspects of the Palanese culture, either through hands-on experience or a dialogue, Chris Ferns called this a “guided tour.”⁸⁰ Another aspect of this is the ability to have western culture immediately reacting to the ideas, values and norms of the Palanese culture, which enables a further emphasis on the distinctions between western and Palanese cultures. While Will’s presence at Pala is not just simply as an observer, his story serves as a background to Huxley’s ideas and the narrative of a perfect society.⁸¹ Because of this and his battle with cancer, it is safe to assume that while finishing *Island*, Huxley knew that this will probably be his final message to the world, so he concentrated on laying out a template of a perfect society as much as it was possible. Will Farnaby was a vessel through which Huxley was able to convey a template of, in his eyes, perfect society, even though he did not believe such utopia would be possible.⁸²

The other two characters that are partially outsiders and partially rebels are the Rani and Murugan. But it is important to note that these characters are not here for the purpose of establishing a digestible narrative, but to create conflict in the story. The only reason why they could be marked as outsiders is that they do not hold the same values as the people of Pala. Their sole reason for existence is to undermine the established utopia.

Now that the outsider was analysed it is time to move shift attention to the society in *Island*. Pala was so isolated that it has missed the entire course of modern history.⁸³ Which is exactly how Huxley wanted his ideal utopia to be, untouched by the western culture, so he would be able to create one from nothing. The society itself, that Huxley created, was a fusion of western technology and eastern philosophy, an approach that Huxley thought would be the most beneficial for humankind to take.⁸⁴ This decision was heavily influenced by the death of Huxley’s first wife and his subsequent interest in Buddhism thanks to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

It is interesting to note that in *Brave New World*, much like in *Island*, the population lives in the here and now. But only in *Brave New World* this approach has a negative effect

⁷⁹ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 173.

⁸⁰ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 166.

⁸¹ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 168.

⁸² Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 173.

⁸³ Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 170.

⁸⁴ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 173.

on the population. In *Brave New World* the citizens are conditioned from an early age to be slaves to their desires of sexual lust and comfort in the present and the Palaese people have built their whole ideology around the concept of living in the present with even the birds reminding them of this concept.

Huxley's intellectual relationship with the future of humanity, as well as the perfect utopian aspiration, was complicated; even his perfect society had some unintentional flaws. It stood solely on the shoulders of two people and did not seem like a true democracy. The society in *Island* was a mix of extreme socialism with some elements of anarchy while still being under the rule of some form of a monarchy.

Ironically, the society in *Brave New World* does not differ that much compared to the society in *Island*, although the core elements are "more reasonably applied."⁸⁵ Both of the societies have complete sexual freedom, use drugs, and the children are indoctrinated into the system from an early age, without having the typical "nuclear family."⁸⁶ The only major difference being that the citizens of Pala are free, encouraged to pursue spiritual enlightenment and unlike the citizens of *Brave New World*, do not try to escape from reality.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 174.

⁸⁶ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 174.

⁸⁷ Sion, *Search for Meaning*, 174.

7. The relevance of Huxley's utopia and dystopia to today's society

7.1. Pop culture

While the utopian and dystopian themes were present in the 20th century theatres with movies like *Metropolis* (1927), *THX1138* (1971), *Logan's Run* (1976), *Blade Runner* (1982) *Brazil* (1985) and *Gattaca* (1997). The 21st century also does not fall behind with movies, series and literature like *Equilibrium* (2002), *The Hunger Games*, *Black Mirror* and *Altered Carbon*. Works involving utopian and dystopian themes actually seem to be more popular than ever.

George Lucas was certainly inspired by Huxley and his thoughts on an oppressive regime using drugs to control the masses, when he made *THX1138*, as well as Kurt Wimmer while making *Equilibrium*. The new and currently very popular shows on Netflix, *Black Mirror* and *Altered Carbon*, are also asking the same question about the advancement and usage of technology that Huxley asked in *Island* and especially in *Brave New World*.

7.2. Huxley's Prediction of Western Society

One of the reasons why Huxley feared that the western society would move towards a dictatorship was his rising concern about over-population, the other reason was over-organization.⁸⁸ But in 1958, when *Brave New World Revisited* was published, Huxley had no idea exactly how and how much our technology, in terms of communication, weapons and medicine, would skyrocket over the next 60 years. However, given the fact that he devoted most of his life to trying to understand and debate the effects that technology, communication, propaganda, and persuasion has on the masses, it is safe to say that he expected that technology would play a huge role in the way that people live and give, receive and process information. Huxley could however never predict, that everyone will be able to receive news instantly from anywhere, or at least not so soon.

One of the things that Huxley predicted very well was the amount of misinformation that in the past few years took over the politics of western societies. While there certainly always was a considerable amount of political narrative or borderline propaganda in every democratic country that had laws that allowed the freedom of the press, there never was

⁸⁸ Huxley, *Brave New World: Revisited*, 33.

such a breeding ground for misinformation as it is now. The abundance of information somehow managed to allow for news agencies to specialize even further according to their political affiliation.

8. Conclusion

This thesis set out to better understand the elements of Huxley's utopia and dystopia in two of his most famous novels, using the cultural and political background, as well as the analysis of some of his other notable works, while keeping in mind his personal life. Aside from focusing on the common themes between these two novels and bearing in mind the tools he used to make his point, the emphasis was on the answer to the question why he suddenly wrote about the utopian aspirations in a way that he once satirised. The two novels, published thirty years apart, were influenced by their period as well as Huxley's personal life, including but not limited to the death of his first wife, his view on drugs, spirituality, and his battle with cancer, as well as both of the world wars.

The 1960s in the United States of America were much more positive times compared to the 1930s that Huxley spent in England. Even with the Cold War still underway and a very strong anti-communist, anti-Russian sentiment, things were looking good in the United States of America. Huxley's personal life however worsened much more in the 1960s compared to 1930s. With his first wife passing and him getting diagnosed with cancer, Huxley was torn between his personal affairs and the now improving prospect of the future of mankind. All this influenced the difference in tone and the shift of focus in *Island* compared to *Brave New World*.

The fact that Huxley slowly found a beneficial use in drugs, as well as still holding his original views on the vast possibilities of uses for drugs to subdue mankind, shows how much he changed his approach to life, which the novel *Island* follows. In *Island*, moksha-medicine was used for spiritual awakening of the human mind, but in *Brave New World*, soma was used as a way of controlling the masses. The sudden death of Huxley's wife gave him a different perspective on drugs and their usage, a theme that is omnipresent in *Island*. Connected with the drug research that Huxley volunteered to undergo thanks to his curiosity, the sudden shift is obvious when comparing both of the novels.

Hints of a failing system that was put in place are spread across both of these novels varying in degree. In *Brave New World* the world controllers and alpha pluses were slaves to their intelligence in a system that was limiting their need to grow as a human being. While most of the population was quite happy, they were the ones who suffered the most. Huxley's main protagonists in *Brave New World* were subconsciously and consciously

rebellious against the system they themselves were a part of. The theme of a failed system is even more obviously present in *Island*, where the whole utopia is destroyed by greed and ignorance in a matter of seconds.

The path of narration that Huxley chose was inherent to the theme of utopia and dystopia. Huxley's choice of a main protagonist was someone who the reader could identify with, to multiply the absurdity of dystopia, or to magnify the utopian aspiration by directly comparing it to western culture, as was the case with *Island*. The theme of an outsider makes sense in terms of better explaining the nuances of a new social, political and religious system. The completely secular World State also nicely compares with the deeply spiritual inhabitants of Pala - a second change of Huxley's focus that the death of his first wife had been the catalyst of.

From the analysis of the two novels it seems very clear that while Huxley started with the intention of satirising the utopian aspirations, thirty years later and facing his own mortality and desperately trying to reach spiritual enlightenment, he himself hoped for a better world, while never truly believing such an achievement would be possible.

9. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá prvky Huxlyho dystopie a utopie ve dvou jeho nejznámějších dílech v kontextu tehdejší kulturní a politické atmosféry a jeho dalších významných děl, s důrazem kladeným na Huxleyho osobní život. Kromě zaměření na prvky, které samotná díla měly společné, a nástroje které Huxley používal k prosazení svých názorů, byl důraz kladen na odpověď k otázce, proč najednou Huxley psal o utopii způsobem, který sám kdysi tak odsuzoval. Tato dvě díla, publikovaná třicet let po sobě, byla ovlivěné svou dobou, stejně jako Huxleyho osobním životem, včetně smrti jeho první manželky, přístupem k drogám, spiritualitě, bojem s rakovinou a oběma světovými válkami.

Šedesátá léta ve Spojených státech amerických byla mnohem více pozitivní než třicátá léta, která Huxley strávil v Británii. I přes studenou válku a velmi silný protikomunistický sentiment, byl život v USA velice příjemný. Huxleyho osobní život se ale o mnoho zhoršil. Po smrti jeho první ženy a poté, co mu byla diagnostikována rakovina, byl Huxley rozpolcený mezi zhoršujícím se osobním životem, a zlepšující se nadějí na budoucnost lidstva. Všechny tyto faktory ovlivnily změnu Huxlyho tónu v díle *Ostrov* v porovnání s románem *Konec civilizace*.

Skutečnost, že Huxley později našel prospěšné použití drog, i přes to, že i nadále měl obavu z možnosti zneužití drog k potlačení lidstva, poukazuje na to, jak moc změnil svůj přístup k životu, který zobrazuje *Ostrov*. V tomto románu, byla moksha-medicine používána k duchovnímu probuzení lidské mysli, ale v románu *Konec civilizace*, bylo soma používáno jako prostředek k ovládnutí populace. Náhlá smrt Huxleyho manželky a výzkum drog, kterého se Huxley díky své zvědavosti dobrovolně zúčastnil, daly Aldousovi novou perspektivu pohledu na drogy a jejich použití. Toto téma je v *Ostrově* všudypřítomné. Jeho náhlý posun je zřejmý, když se porovnají oba romány.

Náznaky hroutícího se zavedeného systému jsou v různých stupních roztroušeny v obou románech. V *Konci Civilizace*, byli ti, kdo ovládali svět, a alfa plus obyvatelé otroky své vlastní inteligence v systému, který omezoval jejich potřebu růst jako lidská bytost. Zatímco většina obyvatel byla v rámci možností šťastná, oni byli ti, co nejvíce trpěli. Huxleyho hlavní postavy se v *Konci Civilizace* vědomě i podvědomě bouřily proti systému kterého byly

součástí. Toto téma selhání systému je ještě zjevnější v románu *Ostrov*, kde je celá utopie během okamžiku zničena chamtivostí a nevědomostí.

Cesta narace, kterou si Huxley vybral, byla přirozená k tématu utopie a dystopie. Protagonistou byl vždy někdo, s kým se čtenář mohl ztotožnit, aby Huxley mohl znásobit absurditu dystopie, nebo zvětšit utopickou aspiraci přímým srovnáním se západní kulturou, jako tomu bylo u *Ostrova*. Toto téma někoho, kdo do systému nepatří, má smysl, pokud Huxleymu šlo o lepší vysvětlení rozdílů nového společenského, politického a náboženského systému. Svět kompletně zbavený náboženství je také ve výrazném protikladu s hluboce duchovními obyvateli Pala, což je druhá změna zaměření Huxleyho, jejímž katalyzátorem byla smrt jeho první ženy.

Z analýzy obou románů se zdá být velmi jasné, že zatímco Huxley začal s úmyslem zesměšnit utopické touhy, když o třicet let později čelil vlastní smrtelnosti, sám se zoufale snažil dosáhnout duchovního osvětlení. Sám doufal v lepší svět, a zároveň nikdy skutečně nevěřil, že by takový úspěch byl možný.

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11. Anotation

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11.1. Abstract

This thesis focuses on the comparison of the elements of dystopia and utopia in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and *Island*. It analyses them using a perspective of an outsider and tries to apply their models and rules to the real world using the history of the genre, Aldous Huxley's biography, his historical and cultural background as well as other relevant works as a means to better understand its significance.

Key words: Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, *Island*, dystopia, utopia

12. Anotace

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12.1. Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá porovnáním elementů dystopie a utopie v dílech Aldouse Huxleyho Konec civilizace a Ostrov. Tyto elementy analyzuje z vnější perspektivy a snaží se porovnat jejich modely a pravidla s reálným světem za použití historie těchto žánrů, autorova životopisu, jeho historického a kulturního původu a ostatních relevantních děl, jako prostředek k lepšímu porozumění jejich významu.

Klíčová slova: Aldous Huxley, Konec civilizace, Island, dystopie, utopie