

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Ústav cizích jazyků

Bakalářská práce

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Interpreting Future: *Fahrenheit 451* vs *Brave New World*

Olomouc 2019

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Prohlášení:

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla v ní všechny použité zdroje a literaturu.

Souhlasím, aby práce byla uložena na Univerzitě Palackého v Olomouci a zpřístupněna ke studijním účelům.

V Olomouci dne

I would like to thank Mgr. Andrea Hoffmannová Ph.D. for her comments on the content of my thesis. I would also like to thank Mgr. Jakub Vémola for his kind and valuable advices. Finally, I would like to thank my family and partner for their patience and support.

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Abstract

The thesis deals with the comparison of two dystopian novels – *Fahrenheit 451* and *Brave New World* – and their interpretation of future. The first chapter defines the genres of utopia, anti-utopia, and dystopia with respect to their historical development. The second chapter comprises the authors' short biographies and background information to the selected novels. The comparison is to be found in the third chapter. The novels are analysed and compared in the context of three common themes: society, technology and books, and their analysis is compared with phenomena found in the current society.

Introduction

I have been fascinated by the dystopian literature since I read *Fahrenheit 451* for the first time as a teenager. The visions of future suggested in this dystopian novel and the way it strikes a chord with the current society and its issue has always seemed to me rather frightening, yet also captivating. *Fahrenheit 451* brought me to other dystopian novels, including *Brave New World* and I have been fond of the fusion of science fiction and social criticism ever since.

I have chosen for my thesis *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451* because I wanted to explore into depth the predictions and the visions of future according to the authors. In the past, I have written several school essays considering either *Fahrenheit 451* or *Brave New World*. However, I was not able to express all my thoughts and fully develop my ideas because I have always been limited by the number of words or pages. Therefore, I decided to reconsider my ideas about these novels and express them in this thesis.

My aim is to offer the description of the literary genres of utopia, dystopia and anti-utopia and introduce both the authors and the selected novels in the first two chapters. In the third chapter I will analyse and compare *Fahrenheit 451* and *Brave New World* in order to find the common features both authors suggested as possible future development of society. Afterwards I will compare the analysis with the state of the current society supporting my arguments with relevant articles and essays. Finally, I should be able to tell which predictions have become true and which have not.

Both *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451* have been discussed and analysed in many books by many different authors. From all the literature supporting my ideas and claim, I need to mention *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism* by Keith M. Booker because I found it vital for the comparative part of my thesis. For defining the crucial terms of utopia, dystopia and anti-utopia I found very erudite the publications edited by Gregory Claeys.

1. The origins of dystopia

Before analysing any work of art, it is necessary to learn about its origin and its creative process. Literature, as well as other art forms, reflect their historical period with its defining events and trends and nearly always react to the previous literary movement or predominant genre. Ordinarily, they tend to point out the flaws of the previous methods and beliefs and replace them with a new approach, sometimes using the crucial elements of the original genre or movement.

When analysing any dystopian book, one should lay down features typical for utopian literature, define it, then map its development into other subgenres and finally describe dystopia as a literary genre.

1.1. Utopia

Utopia as a word was coined by Thomas More, English lawyer and the author of the fiction *Utopia*, in 1516 from two Greek words: *ou* or *u* meaning no or not, and *topos* meaning place. The word was used to name both the unexplored island and the book itself. From this fact we can derive two meanings of the word: it can be either a term for a fictive ideal place, or a specific type of narrative.¹ More is rightfully considered the coiner of the word utopia, yet he cannot be attributed the authorship of the utopianism itself. The idea of utopianism can be traced back to Ancient Greece and it went through a long development, comprising the myth of the Golden Age, the medieval belief of a joyful afterlife, or a tale of a land of plenty, before it was taken up by More. More's concept of utopia is influenced by the Renaissance, which introduced the Ancient Greece and Rome as a new ideal for Europe of Renaissance period, then by humanistic logic, which suggests the society should rely on its own reason instead of divine intervention or chance, and finally the change in geographical horizons, that expanded the mental boundaries as well.²

As a literary genre, utopia usually follows a more or less stable structure and was influenced by other genres, such as travel literature, journals or even science fiction. The crucial part is a journey to an undiscovered land, where the traveller is offered a

¹ CLAEYS, Gregory and Lyman Tower SARGENT, ed., *The Utopia Reader*, p. 1-3.

² VIEIRA, Fátima, *The concept of utopia*, p. 3-6.

guided tour, during which they learn about local social, political, economic and religious rules. The utopian society is often opposite to the author's, which allows them to point out the flaws they consider critical. What most utopias have in common is scepticism about any individual's ability to live in harmony with the rest of the society, therefore laws restricting individuality are implied in order to create an ideal society. The main purpose of utopias is not only to criticise the society but also to suggest solutions that could be adopted by readers who could apply them and actually make a difference.³

From this brief definition of utopia, an important idea emerges. It is the idea of individuality-restricting laws or regulations, which emerges in both dystopian novels, which will be discussed later. However, there are still rather important milestones on the way to dystopia, that need to be mentioned.

1.2. Satirical utopia and anti-utopia

The eighteenth century, which follows the baroque epoch, is a period of reason and critical thinking. It is probably not a coincidence that utopia is submitted to critical evaluation and utopian societies are found unattainable. The criticism and this rather negative approach are reflected in two new subgenres: satirical utopia and anti-utopia. We may consider them as paving the road for dystopia.

Satirical utopia is dealing with the image of unknown lands that are again different to this world. However, these lands cannot be reached by available technologies or at all. In this case, the believability of these civilisations is less important than the fact that they stay opposite to the reader's world. The depiction of utopian state systems is not important either. What is important is the traveller's adventure and the value of the real world they learn through it. Suddenly, the utopian society is not assessed in a positive way. Some flaws of the real world can be even demonstrated by the utopian country for satirical purpose. Probably the most congruent example of satirical utopia is *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift.⁴

³ VIEIRA, Fátima, The concept of utopia, p. 7-8.

⁴ VIEIRA, Fátima, The concept of utopia, p. 15-16.

Anti-utopian literature, even though it shares the narrative aspects and methods with utopian literature, takes an opposite direction. Its purpose is to expose weak parts of utopian ideas and present their unsustainability. The utopian ideal is lampooned and criticised. Anti-utopia tries to forewarn the society that the utopian vision is impossible to achieve and an attempt to do so could end in disappointing anti-climax.⁵

Even though the literary terms anti-utopia and dystopia are very often considered interchangeable, there are differences. According to them, we may distinguish between anti-utopia and dystopia. The term anti-utopia is older than the term dystopia and it is used for anti-utopian pieces which describe the flaws and corruption of a want-to-be utopian society without offering a possibility of altering the given course. The matter of hope is considered the crucial difference between the anti-utopian and the dystopian genre. Whereas anti-utopian literature leaves the reader hopeless, a dystopian novel or short story should suggest a possibility of change and return of a liberated society.⁶ Therefore the dystopian literature deals with the most intensified scenario in which the dystopian society is usually at the breaking point where all the dysfunctional machineries are revealed and the systems of government and the society collapses.

1.3. Dystopia

The first use of dystopia as a word was recorded in 1868 in John Stuart Mill's parliamentary speech. The word differs from *utopia* in the prefix *dys-* coming from the Greek *dus* meaning bad, abnormal or diseased. Dystopia as a literary genre uses narrative schemes similar to utopia, but comprises pillars established by previous subgenres which evolved from utopia. Dystopian literary works follow the negative approach of the older genres derived from utopia, satirical utopia and anti-utopia, and is deeply distrustful of man's ability to create a perfect society. However, a dystopia should provide at least an intimation of hope along with a moral bottom line.⁷

⁵ VIEIRA, Fátima, The concept of utopia, p. 16.

⁶ PAVLOVA, Olga, Literární dystopie a pokusy o její vymezení ve světovém a českém kontextu.

⁷ VIEIRA, Fátima, The concept of utopia, p. 16-17.

As the aforementioned lines suggest, the idea of a utopia gone wrong dwelled in authors' minds since the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Gregory Claeys considers the eighteenth century the first dystopian turn in literature, taking into consideration the reflection of the utopian idea in fictional utopian works and a response to them in the form of satirical fictions. Claeys also mentions two important authors and their pieces that influenced the development of dystopian novel. The first crucial literary work is the *Essay on Population* by Thomas Robert Malthus which indicates two major patterns of later dystopian tendencies: population control and socialism. The other one is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* which is usually considered an initiating text of science fiction but for the purpose of dystopian literature, a theme of science gone out of control can be found there.⁸

The second dystopian turn, according to Gregory Claeys, dates back to late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The optimistic spirit of the industrial era is transformed into a period of confusion from the newly gained scientific progress and the human inability of moderating its destructive forces. This perception intensifies in the twentieth century during the First and the Second World War. From the last decade of the nineteenth century on, the pessimistic tone in the dystopian course is getting stronger; eugenics and negative predictions regarding socialist revolution are becoming the main themes of dystopian novels.⁹

Dystopian novels of the second turn also strike a chord with Freud's psychoanalysis. Freud suggests in his *Civilization and Its Discontents* that an ideal society cannot be reached by any reform because the rules of the society are incompatible with certain human impulses and therefore a content civilization is an illusion. As we can see, the dystopian turn reflects many other spheres of human activity and during the twentieth century it is getting more influential in culture in general. Even though there is an attempt in the 1960's to resurrect the utopian trend in literature, the dystopian and anti-utopian course based on three cornerstone pieces: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* and George Orwell's *1984*, became firmly rooted in popular culture. The idea of achieving utopia was found

⁸ CLAEYS, Gregory, *The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell*, p. 107-110.

⁹ CLAEYS, Gregory, *The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell*, p. 111-112.

impossible and undesirable and was replaced by the dystopian and anti-utopian trend probably for good.¹⁰

¹⁰BOOKER, Keith M., *The dystopian impulse in modern literature: fiction as social criticism*, p. 9-18.

2. Selected novels in the context of their authors' lives

The following chapter offers brief bibliographies of the authors of selected novels and summarises the crucial pieces of information about the genesis of the chosen novels. The aim of this chapter is to suggest the ideas and events and the political and social atmosphere which influenced the novels and the authors discussed.

2.1. Aldous Huxley

Aldous Leonard Huxley was born on July 6, 1894 in Godalming in Surrey, England to a family of intellectuals.¹¹ His paternal grandfather T. H. Huxley was a famous Darwinian and his father Leonard Huxley edited the literary magazine *Cornhill*.¹² To follow in the intellectual footsteps of his family, Aldous Huxley attended Eton, which he had to leave within two years because of a sudden illness which caused his temporary blindness. After he regained sight, he continued with his studies at Balliol College in Oxford.¹³ In Oxford he affiliated with Lady Ottoline Morell's society of intellectuals. After graduating he came back to Eton, this time as a teacher. However, his academic career was far from successful which resulted in him deciding to focus on writing. As a journalist he moved with his wife to London, where their first child was born.¹⁴

Even though Huxley is famous for his novels, he started with different literary genres. His first published works were collections of poems, such as *Jonah* and *The Defeat of Youth* and short stories.¹⁵ While writing those and his first novel, *Crome Yellow*, he still worked as a journalist. However, after being offered a contract for two books per year, he left his journalistic career and focused completely on writing.¹⁶ After an unpleasant affair, Huxley's family left England and settled down in Italy in 1923. Huxley turned the feelings and thoughts from this experience into his next novel, *Antic Hay*. Huxley spent the following years in Europe mainly by meeting the

¹¹ Aldous Huxley, *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

¹² BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Aldous Huxley's Brave New World*, p. 12.

¹³ Aldous Huxley, *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

¹⁴ REIFF, Raychel Haugrud, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, p. 17-20.

¹⁵ BRADSHAW, David, *Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)*, p. xxx-xxxi.

¹⁶ REIFF, Raychel Haugrud, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, p. 20.

requirements of his contract, therefore the novel *Those Barren Leaves* and other pieces were written.¹⁷

Huxley's next destination was France, where he moved in the early 1930's with his family. The most influential works written during his French stay are the novel *Point Counter Point* and his prominent piece *Brave New World*.¹⁸ In the light of the upcoming war Huxley inclined to the pacifist movement and eventually became its head. When the situation in Europe became unbearable, Huxley's family moved to the United States. During the World War II, Huxley took the job of a scriptwriter and participated in films such as *Jane Eyre*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Pride and Prejudice*.¹⁹

In his personal life Huxley was drawn to the spiritual and therefore searched for hope and ideals in the Eastern religions and spiritual movements. In the 1950's Huxley started experiment with hallucinogenic drugs and this experience led straight to *The Doors of Perception*.²⁰ Then he came back to his most famous piece and created *Brave New World Revisited*, which reconsiders the ideas of the previous novel and expresses even more pessimistic predictions. In his following utopian novel called *Island* (1962), Huxley applies his knowledge of Eastern philosophy and develops a new society based on spiritual growth of an individual.²¹ Unfortunately, many critics as well as readers found the novel rather tedious. Due to a serious illness Huxley was not able to produce many other literary works. Aldous Huxley died on November 22, 1963.²²

2.2. Brave New World

Brave New World is a novel written by Aldous Huxley in 1931 and published in 1932. The plot takes place in London in 632 after Ford (2 540 A. D.) and it is built around a want-to-be utopian society of a specific genetic caste system based on determination and controlled creation of people where the central person of religion is Henry Ford. According to the previous classification of literary genres derived from utopia, *Brave*

¹⁷ REIFF, Raychel Haugrud, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, p. 20-23.

¹⁸ REIFF, Raychel Haugrud, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, p. 24.

¹⁹ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Aldous Huxley's Brave New World*, p. 10.

²⁰ Aldous Huxley, *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

²¹ REIFF, Raychel Haugrud, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, p. 33.

²² BRADSHAW, David, *Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)*, p. 38.

New World is an anti-utopia which leaves the reader with no trace of hope or no sign of change in life of the anti-utopian society in the conclusion.

The motives that led Huxley to the idea of this novel might be of various origin. In the first place, the influence of other literary pieces cannot be omitted. The most obvious is the influence of William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* reflected in the name *Brave New World* itself. Needless to point out that William Shakespeare is mentioned in the play countless times as the main resource of education in the reservation of savages. Another novel very often mentioned together with Huxley's *Brave New World* is the dystopian novel *We* by the Russian writer, Yevgeny Zamyatin. Being written earlier than *Brave New World*, *We* is often considered its source of inspiration and Huxley was even suspected of copying some of Zamyatin's ideas.²³

The scientific aspect of the novel and the dystopian society itself have been inspired by Huxley's roots because his grandfather was a distinguished scientist and so was Huxley's brother. The novel was written in the 1930's, in the period after World War I when European states were still dealing with the consequences of the war and the economic crisis of the late 1920's on the one hand and with the immense technological advances on the other. Another crucial element was the rise of totalitarian regimes which corresponded with Huxley's fear of people referring their freedom and own will to the surveillance of government.²⁴

Huxley did not declare his piece a prophecy in the first place but rather a careful warning. However, after World War II he admitted that his vision originally set in the distant future might be closer than he presumed.²⁵

After being published, the novel was very well accepted in Britain but was not very popular in the United States for its rather dark vision of the future. It was not perceived very well by most of the critics, too. They often found it tedious, of a simple plot and rather flat in the narration. Many readers felt offended by the sexuality

²³ LOHNES, Kate, *Brave New World*.

²⁴ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Aldous Huxley's Brave New World*, p. 12-14.

²⁵ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Aldous Huxley's Brave New World*, p. 13-15.

represented quite openly in the novel because of which it was banned in Ireland and various schools in the U. S.²⁶

2.3. Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920 in Waukegan, Illinois.²⁷ Apart from Waukegan, Bradbury's family lived in Tucson, Arizona. Both of these places are believed to have influenced Ray Bradbury's writing, Waukegan as a source of nostalgic ideas and Tucson as an inspiration for Bradbury's later piece, *The Martian Chronicles*. When he was fourteen, his family moved to Los Angeles which he called home for the rest of his life/where he lived for the rest of his life.²⁸

As a young adult, Bradbury was a passionate reader of fantasy horror and science fiction stories and with the same passion he later became the author of his first collection of horror short stories, *Dark Carnival* (1947).²⁹ In the same year, he married his lifelong wife, Marguerite McClure. He was recognized as a science fiction author since his next compilation of short stories, *The Martian Chronicles*, focusing on a conflict between humans attempting to colonize Mars and the Martian population, was published in 1950, followed by an equally successful collection, *The Illustrated Man*.³⁰ His works have been translated to many other media such as comics, radio or television. In the 1950's, Ray Bradbury also published his first novels, *Fahrenheit 451* and *Dandelion Wine*. Whereas *Fahrenheit 451* is a dystopian novel set in the future full of technological devices, *Dandelion Wine* is a rather nostalgic and autobiographical story of a young boy, strongly influenced by Bradbury's home in Waukegan.³¹ Adaptations of Bradbury's writings peaked in 1960's and 1970's and so did his career. In the 1970's Ray Bradbury shifted his literary focus to/towards poetry and drama rather than prose. He also contributed to the television series *The Ray Bradbury Theatre* (1985–92) broadcasting his adapted short stories. In his final novel,

²⁶ REIFF, Raychel Haugrud, *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*, p. 96-99.

²⁷ GREGERSEN, Erik, Ray Bradbury.

²⁸ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, p. 9.

²⁹ GREGERSEN, Erik, Ray Bradbury.

³⁰ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, p. 10.

³¹ GREGERSEN, Erik, Ray Bradbury.

Farewell Summer (2006), Bradbury re-visited the themes of *Dandelion Wine* once more.³²

For the incredible number of films and series based on his works, Ray Bradbury's name was added to the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Further on, Bradbury was honoured with the National Medal of Arts.³³ Ray Bradbury died on June 5, 2012 in Los Angeles.³⁴

2.4. Fahrenheit 451

Fahrenheit 451 is a dystopian novel comprising three parts: The Hearth and the Salamander, The Sieve and the Sand and Burning Bright. The main character is Guy Montag, a fireman living in a society which found books a source of suffering and danger, disrupting comfortable and effortless life gained through technology; commissioned firemen with searching and destroying them. Guy Montag is tempted by the dangerous books and eventually starts breaking the law by keeping some of the books destined for destruction and reading them. *Fahrenheit 451* can be recognized as a dystopian novel because it concludes with a conflict which may be seen as bringing change to the life of the dystopian society.

Fahrenheit 451 was written in 1952 and published in 1953 at the beginning of the McCarthy's era which brought upon the United States the ambience of suspicion.³⁵ The atmosphere of insecurity associated with McCarthy's witch hunts, the Cold War and the new weapons together with the remaining memory of the horrors caused by the totalitarian regimes during World War II meant that *Fahrenheit 451* with its secretly totalitarian regime and anti-totalitarian mood was at that time most topical. While creating the plot, Bradbury was influenced by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as a novel of dystopian society of citizens controlled by pleasure and indulgence which suggests that the motif of progress and technology taking over power in the modern society seemed real at that time.³⁶

³² GREGERSEN, Erik, Ray Bradbury.

³³ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, p. 11.

³⁴ GREGERSEN, Erik, Ray Bradbury.

³⁵ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, p. 12.

³⁶ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, p. 13.

The novel was not inspired only by *Brave New World*, but it was born as a result of various ideas and experiences. Firstly, there was Ray Bradbury's love of books and libraries which he transformed into his short stories about people burning books and other people saving their content by learning them by heart. One of his stories considering books and their role in the future is also *The Fireman*, which later became a rudiment for *Fahrenheit 451*.³⁷ The idea of walking as an uncommon behaviour, which is also included in the novel, came from Bradbury's own experience when he was stopped by a policeman for walking and questioned about the purpose of his activity.³⁸ All these various sources of inspiration gave rise to a novel which offers readers a complex and credible picture of a future dystopian society with roots one may observe since 1950's.

Fahrenheit 451 has been held in high regard since its publishing in 1953. The period of its origin and the course of the story won this novel a significant place among anti-totalitarian art. *Fahrenheit 451* was adapted for the screen in 1966 by François Truffaut³⁹ and again in 2018.

³⁷ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 2-3.

³⁸ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 3.

³⁹ BLOOM, Harold, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, p. 13.

3. The comparison of the novels and their interpretations of the future

The following chapter comprises the comparison of the selected novels, *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451*, in three fields: society, technology and books. The aim of this chapter is to recognize similar themes, compare them, and finally find which predictions made by the authors may be observed in current society. I consider in the final aim Western society only, because both authors set the plot predominantly in either the future United States or Great Britain.

3.1. Society

The main concern of all dystopian and anti-utopian novels is society. These novels tend to reflect the change in social standards and qualities, caused mainly by political and technological progress. Anti-utopian and dystopian societies have often forsaken their former ideals in order to follow technological growth, or because of a radical change in political course. This chapter comprises the theme of society as described in the selected novels. Its aim is to describe the crucial characteristics of the societies and the interpretations of the future according to the authors.

The most important characteristic of any civilisation is its state system and the amount of freedom it ensures to its citizens. Both the dystopian civilisations considered can be labelled as forms of a totalitarian state, implying censorship and oppression of free will. Even though a clear ideology is not stated in *Fahrenheit 451*, we assume that the regime is not democratic. It oppresses individuality and potentially dangerous thinking by using firefighter forces to assure its total power and security of the state.⁴⁰ In this unitarian system, books are found the most dangerous matter, therefore they are forbidden, and their keeping is punished by law. Books are burnt, and their owners are arrested or killed.

In *Brave New World*, the position of the state apparatus is firmly stated and indisputable. The governing World State is a sovereign system which has retained its

⁴⁰ NAXERA, Vladimír, Ondřej STULÍK and Jaroslav BÍLEK, *Literární a filmové dystopie pohledem politické vědy*, p. 65.

total power and preserves it. The World State, similarly to the regime in *Fahrenheit 451*, uses police force to suppress any sign of revolt. Unlike *Fahrenheit 451*, police in *Brave New World* use more gentle methods to suppress, mainly audio effects and the drug soma.⁴¹ The main difference between the novels is the state of the civilisation with respect to the period described in the plot. Whereas *Fahrenheit 451* is a dystopian novel describing a dystopian society days and hours before its potential collapse, *Brave New World* is an anti-utopian piece dealing with a fully developed and stable state. We might assume that the total state of the civilisation is reflected in the severity of the state forces and the systems themselves. In other words, firefighters in *Fahrenheit 451* have to try very hard to keep the utopian illusion alive and the reality far away, because outside their borders, there is a war raging and, should the population see the real state of things, the whole system might collapse. In *Brave New World*, the police forces do not need to put too much effort into keeping order, because the World State is consolidated and almost perfectly stable.

The pillars supporting both regimes discussed in the novels are citizens. In both cases, the governing system is unconditionally respected and followed by the average citizens. The repressive procedures of the governments which were mentioned above might be one of the reasons that cause obedience of the citizens. Another reason might be the education and conditioning applied in the dystopian societies. The people in Ray Bradbury's vision are educated and raised in fear of books and love of technology, therefore they do not find the book-destroying regime harmful. The citizens of *Brave New World* are artificially conditioned and divided into several castes of diverse intellectual abilities. None of the castes, even the highest and most intelligent one, is able to speak up against the governing system and its restrictions, because they are not informed enough and are not able to gain other knowledge than that presented by the World State.⁴²

The inhabitants of both novels share a common feature of participating actively in the course of the system by reporting anything suspicious. In *Fahrenheit 451* they

⁴¹ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 188-189.

⁴² NAXERA, Vladimír, Ondřej STULÍK and Jaroslav BÍLEK, *Literární a filmové dystopie pohledem politické vědy*, p. 61.

report their acquaintances for keeping books.⁴³ In *Brave New World* they are occupied with whether their friends alternate partners often enough.⁴⁴ The people are numbed mainly thanks to the state censorship, offering them only mindless fun and not demanding job. These restrictions are presented as a way of keeping the citizens happy and safe. The fact, that the majority of the population do not find this setting disturbing indicates a serious crisis in the society.

The social crisis is reflected in interpersonal relationships. In *Fahrenheit 451*, marriage is preserved but it is no longer a sign of a firm relationship, but rather a formal procedure. Marriage, as represented by Mildred Montag and her friends, is not a serious commitment but rather a temporary state. One of Montag's friends is married for the third time and it is probably not her last marriage because her husband is about to leave to fight in the upcoming war. However, she does not really dwell on her commitment because she can get married again easily whenever she wants to.⁴⁵ The television programme, the family, broadcasted on giant television walls is often considered more important than real partners and potential loss of the television walls is perceived as a bigger tragedy than a loss of a lifelong partner.

Brave New World offers a more escalated prediction. Marriage does not exist anymore and monogamous relationships are viewed as something unhealthy and anti-social. Promiscuity is considered an important social value, therefore people with the highest number of sexual partners are considered by the major society considered very well-behaved. Contemplating the promiscuity in *Brave New World*, we might find out that the roots of this social attribute can be found in consumerism. Consumerism became the main idea after the great Economic Collapse. However, it did not influence only the economy and industry but also relationships. The inhabitants of the World State were encouraged to alternating partners, according to the motto "everyone belongs to everyone else".⁴⁶ Sexual relationship was devaluated on the same form of fun such as leisure activities like cinema or concerts and it was appointed a public matter. According to Keith M. Booker, sexuality became only a

⁴³ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 152.

⁴⁴ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 34-35.

⁴⁵ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 122-125.

⁴⁶ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 34.

product which can be freely bought and sold.⁴⁷ Consumerism became also the main topics of the new religion of comfort and pleasure with Henry Ford constituted as the new god.⁴⁸

Consumerism as a significant theme is represented in both novels. Ray Bradbury suggests that consumerism supported the loss of people's interest in books. Once books were abandoned for less demanding pastimes, more suitable for all minorities, mass-culture and consumerism prevailed.⁴⁹ Consumerism in *Fahrenheit 451* controls the lives of ordinary citizens and makes them blind to serious issues and social problems. They are watching the news about politics and war on their enormous screens but the only action they consider taking is buying another television wall. Consumerism in *Brave New World* is again presented in even more escalated vision. Small children are taught consumerism by hypnopaedia, a process of night-learning, and the entire society is encouraged to keep buying new things.⁵⁰ By constantly replacing old things with new ones and by denying aging by advanced science, the citizens lose, according to Keith M. Booker, the idea of time and temporality which makes them unable to change anything or speak up against the ruling system.⁵¹

In their predictions, both authors suggested a turn from a democratic course of society to a totalitarian one. In the background of this turn stands the incapability to give up a comfortable life provided by technology. The citizens are offered minor roles, for example looking after their friends and neighbours and reporting any violations of law, to have an illusion of participating in the power. However, they do not possess any factual power and, in addition to that, they are deprived of matters in life which evoke real emotions. If they are angry or sad, they are offered soma in *Brave New World* and a fast ride in a car in *Fahrenheit 451* to get rid of such emotions.⁵² Both societies got rid of stable love relationships because, as it is interpreted by Keith M. Booker, passion is a threat to stability of totalitarian

⁴⁷ BOOKER, Keith M., *The dystopian impulse in modern literature: fiction as social criticism*, p. 53.

⁴⁸ NAXERA, Vladimír, Ondřej STULÍK and Jaroslav BÍLEK, *Literární a filmové dystopie pohledem politické vědy*, p. 55.

⁴⁹ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 76.

⁵⁰ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 42-44.

⁵¹ BOOKER, Keith M., *The dystopian impulse in modern literature: fiction as social criticism*, p. 65.

⁵² BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 84.

regimes.⁵³ Therefore, sex and marriage are devaluated to meaningless concerns to avoid any strong affection by the supported promiscuity and the replacement of actual family by the television one. Along with culture and goods, people became through their sexuality a part of the offer of the consumeristic society. Consumerism and all-pervading idea of everlasting beauty and youth represented in *Brave New World* are, according to Booker, the reasons why the population distracted by them from time is not able to approach to a decision which might change the established system.⁵⁴

Comparing the predictions made by Aldous Huxley and Ray Bradbury with the reality of the Western society, we may state that the totalitarian regimes are not structuring our everyday life. Considering the nature of our society, Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman talks about liquid modernity. Therefore, we might claim that current society is not defined by a strict totalitarian rules but rather by its constant change and ambivalence with no stability, as Bauman suggests. This trend is, according to him, reflected in relationships, too. If a relationship is not working according to our plan, we change our partner. Bauman is afraid that the approach of consumerism might prevail in the sphere of relationships and replace loyalty which is not suitable for the consumer society. The approach of consumerism is tied up with the tendency to always have a possibility to reconsider and change our decision. It also means to have things and relationships only if they bring joy. If they became difficult to sustain, they are replaced by a new one.⁵⁵

Zygmund Bauman reflects on the issue of children as well. The inclination to keep the doors still open is becoming in lives of young people more often implied approach. Combined with postponing decisions, it makes it more difficult to decide whether to have children or not. Bauman suggests that even children are victims of consumerism to some extent. They are often perceived as an object which should bring their

⁵³ BOOKER, Keith M., *The dystopian impulse in modern literature: fiction as social criticism*, p. 53.

⁵⁴ BOOKER, Keith M., *The dystopian impulse in modern literature: fiction as social criticism*, p. 65.

⁵⁵ GÜMPLOVÁ, Petra, *Láska bankrotuje*.

parents feelings of joy and satisfaction. This ambient feeling is caused by the idea that for every sacrifice there must be a compensation.⁵⁶

In general, Baum's interpretation of our society meets Huxley's and Bradbury's predictions. Family might be soon seen as too big a sacrifice, as it is interpreted in *Fahrenheit 451* and eventually consumerism might lead to Huxley's prediction of a promiscuous society which creates children artificially in order to eliminate responsibility and unpleasant factors.

3.2. Technology

Technology is one of the most crucial elements of both novels. The novels take place in a more or less distant future and it is almost canonical to accompany such narration with descriptions of fantastic gadgets and futuristic machines. However, the vision of technological progress represented in dystopian novels is not entirely optimistic. On the contrary, these novels tend to predict the negative consequences of technological booms and forewarn of the potentially dangerous impact on people. The following chapter focuses on the technology represented in *Fahrenheit 451* and *Brave New World* and the authors' interpretation of the future development in this field.

Technology in both *Fahrenheit 451* and *Brave New World* creates in the lives of the population a comfortable layer between them and the reality. Douglas C. Moore writes in his thesis in the context of *Fahrenheit 451* about Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality which suggests that post-modern humans live in a simulation based on signs and models instead of the real world. This approach tends to wash down the differences between reality and fiction.⁵⁷ In Bradbury's vision, technology builds a perfect simulation of the reality around the citizens who do not realise the real danger of the war or the state system they are living in, or even the troubles that may appear in their own families. The communication with family members, colleagues and people on the streets is prevented by seashells, small headphones embedded in people's ears all the time.⁵⁸ In *Brave New World*, a new drug called soma is used to

⁵⁶ GÜMPLOVÁ, Petra, Lásky bankrotuje.

⁵⁷ MOORE, Douglas C., *Fahrenheit 451: Temperature Rising*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 28.

restrict the unpleasant reality instead of a device.⁵⁹ Booker explains that the comfort provided by technological advancement and the constant supply of fun and new products offers an atmosphere of conformity which creates a population unable to question the decisions made by the governing regime. The progress of technology creates a reality pleasant enough not to change anything and, at the same time, it provides everything without any labour; therefore, people do not tend to put any effort into building or modifying anything.

The authors suggest in their novels that technology plays the main part in the form and existence of a family. According to Ray Bradbury, the actual family becomes secondary in lives of the people living his dystopia. For it is the problems and disadvantages a real family brings, it is replaced with a television programme which is projected on the enormous parlour walls in every living room. The television family substitutes the real family without its disadvantages and offers an almost never-ending company. It is also interactive and it creates the illusion of the audience getting involved in the acted dull dialogues.⁶⁰ The citizens of Bradbury's state tend to approach the television family as if they were their own kin. They are distracted from the reality by the colourful screen and the fun provided by the actors.

The issue of family illustrates rather well the storyline describing the session of Mildred Montag and her friends Mrs Phelps and Mrs Bowles. The ladies, watching a television programme, are asked by Montag about their husbands and children and the upcoming war. A reader learns that Mrs Phelps is married for the third time and she does not care if her husband gets killed in the war or not. Mrs Bowles mentions her children living in a school dormitory who she meets only once in ten days. She compares the role of a mother to a chore because to her, taking care of her children is like washing clothes. To survive the time with her children, Mrs Bowles usually turns on the television programme and considers her role as a mother fulfilled.⁶¹ The

⁵⁹ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 134.

⁶⁰ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 30.

⁶¹ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 122-125.

relationship towards the real family is twisted and the characters in *Fahrenheit 451* are often more afraid of losing the television family than losing the real one.⁶²

Both authors suggest in their visions of the future a radical change of the traditional family. Whereas Ray Bradbury depicts the early stages of the decay of family, Aldous Huxley goes further in his prediction and completely erases family from the social structure of his civilisation and replaces it completely with technology. People are created artificially in factories under the surveillance of the World State and exclusively for its purposes.⁶³ The number of citizens is controlled and designed for the industrial and economical purposes of the World State. The traditional family is seen as a corrupting and unhealthy influence preventing the healthy balanced growth of a capable individual. Therefore, family is substituted by the Hatchery and Conditioning Centres which artificially produce individuals divided into castes. The parents' role is replaced by the state and its technology not only in the process of procreation but also in the process of education.

In *Brave New World*, children are educated from their early age by the process of hypnopaedia which uses recorded axioms designed to prepare them for their role in the social structure. Besides hypnopaedia, a conditioning according to Pavlov is applied for teaching the children the basic instincts important for the life in the anti-utopian society, such as hatred towards flowers and books.⁶⁴

Ray Bradbury reflects similar idea of victory of technology over human potential and books in the field of education. As was mentioned above, children spend nine out of ten days in schools and school dormitories. According to Bradbury, education consists of lessons of predominating physical education, television lessons and lessons of coping information about history. The lessons are taught by a television teacher who replaced qualified and erudite lecturers.⁶⁵

Contemplating the position in which we find the citizens of both novels because of technology we will find out that in conclusion, the aim of the regimes is to use

⁶² BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 148.

⁶³ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 1-14.

⁶⁴ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 15-24.

⁶⁵ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 41-42.

technology to separate people from each other. Technology is building an alternative version of reality, squelching the dialogues among members of family, teachers and students and even the thoughts in one's mind. The population of citizens silenced from a real communication and their own ideas is easily manipulated by technology and the totalitarian regimes controlling it. Technology serves as a reliable source of information because apart from the people, the risk of jeopardising the systems and its belief is minimal. However, as the problem is encountered by Booker, the science which brought the technological progress became a tool of oppression.⁶⁶

When people are separated, they can be abused by the technological progress even more. Huxley's prediction of artificial factory production of people is based upon the enormous progress which claims to bring happiness and better life to all people. In the hatcheries and conditioning centres of the World State people are losing their humanity because the human embryo becomes only a source of biological information. Wesley J. Smith points out the danger of dehumanization in connection with successful isolation of stem cells from embryos in 1998. He warns that the seeing human embryos as a source of genetic material might prevail over seeing them as potential babies in some cases. However, he does not consider this the aim but rather a way to enable the change of human genome.⁶⁷ Nowadays, Aldous Huxley's vision is not impossible. As Smith explains, technologically, we are capable of creating new life artificially and the biotechnological progress eroded the idea of human life being sacred. It appears that our society has become technologically advanced that it might fulfil Huxley's prediction. Smith finds our civilisation at a crossroads, deciding whether we will use biotechnology to improve our lives and prevent suffering or whether we will take the dangerous path suggested by Aldous Huxley.⁶⁸

Technology in education as presented by both authors means the end of human teachers and parental education. Nowadays, computers, smart phones and other devices are readily available, and they are used more often even in schools. The technological growth brings incredible possibilities in the educational area. Teachers

⁶⁶ BOOKER, Keith M., *The dystopian impulse in modern literature: fiction as social criticism*, p. 48-49.

⁶⁷ SMITH, Wesley J., *Brave new world is closer than you think*, p. 53.

⁶⁸ SMITH, Wesley J., *Brave new world is closer than you think*, p. 55-56.

may share with students interesting resources online, students may search for and compare pieces of information. However, technology in schools, which means nowadays mainly computers, brings a whole new sphere of risks. Apart from false or incomplete information, it is for example cyberbullying. Vivienne Collinson finds teaching as the traditional delivery of information replaceable by computers. However, she notes that teachers are crucial for the moral, social and intellectual progress of students.⁶⁹ To conclude, teachers can be replaced by technology to the extent of transmitting information. However, for a complex development of healthy and aware citizens, people cannot be substituted by computers. If we want the next generations to be morally and socially mature and be able to distinguish among false and reliable pieces of information, the role of teachers is irreplaceable.

3.3. Books

The following chapter comprises the subject of books as presented in the selected novels *Brave New World* and *Fahrenheit 451* their role in the dystopian and anti-utopian societies and a commentary on the predictions the authors made in this specific field. Significant matters and topics influencing the topic of books which the novels have in common are discussed and the selected novels are compared in the context of the topic.

The approach of the futuristic anti-utopian/dystopian civilisations towards books is determined by the specific development of the societies. On the one hand, there is *Brave New World*, suffering the harsh consequences of the Nine Year's War and the ensuing great Economic Collapse. In order to resurrect the economy, consumerism becomes a cornerstone of the new society. Therefore, the literature published before the Nine Year's War was banished and replaced by various types of entertainment supporting economy and social life which can be easily controlled.⁷⁰

On the other hand, there is *Fahrenheit 451*. The civilisation designed by Ray Bradbury did not undergo such a distinctive historical event which would be an impulse for a

⁶⁹ COLLINSON, Vivienne, Intellectual, Social, and Moral Development: Why Technology Cannot Replace Teachers.

⁷⁰ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 44.

radical change of course. As Bradbury himself, using captain Beatty's voice, explains, the rise of the negative approach towards books is rather a result of a long-term development influenced and driven by three major factors: technology, the lobby of minorities and the culture of mass production.⁷¹

Technology as a reason of literature decline is reflected in both the selected novels. In *Fahrenheit 451*, the influence of technology is apparent from the very beginning of the development suggested. Since the twentieth century, technology accelerated the pace of everyday life and less time was being devoted to activities such as reading. Therefore, books had to be abridged to more digestible forms such as radio shows, short columns and items in dictionaries.⁷² We might assume from the description of the form of the television shows broadcasted that these steps taken in favour of technology go hand in hand with a simplification of the oral and the written culture. The characters on the shows usually use simple sentences, and so does the population represented by Montag's wife Mildred and her friends: "Doesn't everyone look nice!" "Nice." "You look fine, Millie!" "Fine." "Everyone looks swell." "Swell."⁷³

In the universe of *Brave New World*, books were eliminated in order to achieve the great economic restoration. Therefore, books were replaced with technology in almost all areas of the everyday life. To keep the relationship of the population towards books under control, small children were taught to subconsciously despise books via electric impulses and unpleasant sounds; hence, the spontaneous hatred and fear of books. The necessary knowledge is transmitted to children via simple proverbs and nursery rhymes during the so called hypnopaedia, a process of sleep-learning.⁷⁴ In the school environment, books were replaced by technology too. According to Huxley, the only remaining books are the books of references and the books of working instructions available only to adult workers trained by hypnopaedia enough to find books uninteresting.⁷⁵

⁷¹ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 76.

⁷² BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 76.

⁷³ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 121.

⁷⁴ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 20.

⁷⁵ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 112.

Because of the absence of books, the language used by the inhabitants of Huxley's society is very simple. In fact, they actually never leave the mental and verbal area of proverbs. They keep using them together with lyrics of current songs to express their feelings and thoughts. While interacting with each other, fragments of nursery rhymes and bits of pop culture seem to be sufficient. However, when Lenina Crowne is confronted with John the Savage and tries to express her feelings, she finds out that the lyrics "hug me till you drug me" are not satisfying enough for communication with a person living out of the anti-utopian paradise and out of the usual vocabulary.⁷⁶

It is noticeable that proverbs are given pivotal position in the language of the anti-utopian society of Huxley's novel. They are used instead of books and parental education to raise obedient citizens. In the roots of many of them can be found a trace of old English proverbs or sayings, as uncovers Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín.⁷⁷ In "a gramme in time saves nine" the saying "a stich in time saves nine" can be recognized, as well as "a gramme is better than a damn" can be interpreted as "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush". As we may observe, a traditional saying was transformed according to the current vocabulary and concepts to become more apprehensible. Rodríguez Martín further mentions the saying "safe as helicopters" which replaced the saying "safe as houses" and demonstrates on this example the complete dependency of the civilisation of *Brave New World* on technology.⁷⁸

The matter of technology relates to the issue of mass culture and mass production, mentioned by Bradbury as one of the factors who caused the fall of books. The simpler the books, the less intellectual capacity is needed to process their content. The decline of written culture was, in Bradbury's universe, followed by the rise of different, less demanding fun. Books, which previously provided variety in culture and entertainment were replaced by the unitarian mass culture of sports, fast cars, movies and television, suitable for all minorities and social groups.⁷⁹ Sports and other leisure activities support the team spirit and unintentionally prevent people from

⁷⁶ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 170.

⁷⁷ RODRÍGUEZ MARTÍN, Gustavo A., Proverb Modification in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

⁷⁸ RODRÍGUEZ MARTÍN, Gustavo A., Proverb Modification in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

⁷⁹ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 75.

spending time on their own. The television has a similar effect; it offers an illusion of a family still present in the living room, spending all the time with them.⁸⁰

Considering *Brave New World* and the mass culture, the leisure-time role of books is replaced by various technology devices and mass culture events too. However, similar to the new language of the population, the culture in general is rather plain, too. The main purpose of the entertainment is to offer a free-time activity, not too intellectually demanding and available for as many people as possible. It is also important for the World State to keep the people together because spending time on one's own is considered suspicious and anti-social.

According to Bradbury, minorities are the third reason for the extinction of books. "Bigger the population, the more minorities. Don't step on the toes of the dog-lovers, the cat-lovers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs, Mormon, Baptists, Unitarians, second-generation Chinese, Swedes, Italians, Germans, Texans, Brooklynites, Irishmen, people from Oregon or Mexico."⁸¹ In Bradbury's vision of the future the fear of offending minorities in the literary works caused the quality of literature to decline. In order to prevent any hard feelings, literature was castrated and deprived of any potential threads that could provoke or hurt any possible minority. However, this purified literature could not catch the attention of the readers because it lost everything that made it valuable and intriguing. In the world deprived of books which had a real content, technology won over books. The only literary pieces which survived were comic books and three-dimensional sex-magazines, which were suitable enough for the population who rejected books which make it unhappy and uncomfortable.⁸²

While considering the society of genetically modified citizens of *Brave New World*, we cannot talk about minorities because of the social structure, accepted by members of all castes. However, books are also viewed as a source of unpleasant experience and emotions because they contain outdated and deprecated negative emotions or family relationships. The pieces of art which could comprise such

⁸⁰ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 59.

⁸¹ BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 75.

⁸² BRADBURY, Ray, *Fahrenheit 451*, p. 76.

unwanted topics are replaced by entertainment which satisfies all the senses, even though it has no content. Whereas the citizens of the *Fahrenheit 451* universe are offered three-dimensional sex-magazines and comic books, the inhabitants of *Brave New World* spend their leisure time in the Feelies, a cinema where they can experience not only sound and picture but also touch.⁸³ However, this highly developed mean of amusement does not offer anything more than what appeals to the eye. All of the castes find the Feelies entertaining enough and, it is also supported by the governing World Controllers because it offers a distraction which does not endanger the World State by suggesting or inspiring any deep thoughts.

The vision of the future presented in the two novels is quite similar. Both authors find technology the biggest enemy of books. The change of society caused by technology is reflected mainly in language, as was mentioned above. The same phenomenon is reflected by Nicholas Carr. He declares that adjusting to new technologies is reflected in metaphors commenting on ourselves. Carr compares the human brain to a computer.⁸⁴ However, the shift in language is not the most distinctive feature affecting the relationship towards books.

Both novels foreshadow a change in the way we think caused by overusing technologies or simplifying and eventually eliminating books. Nicholas Carr confronts the idea of the change of thinking in his article *Is Google Making Us Stupid?*⁸⁵ He describes the change of processing books and pieces of information from his own experience. According to his article, the main reason for the different processing of information is the enormous number of text and information we deal with on a daily basis via technological devices. The internet also plays its significant role in this change of the way we think. Because of the huge amount of information provided, we need to decode everything we read online.⁸⁶ Orlando Figes mentions the idea of vertical reading, rather than horizontal in order to achieve faster sorting of information.⁸⁷ Because of this change in thinking and reading, many people

⁸³ HUXLEY, Aldous, *Brave New World*, p. 29.

⁸⁴ CARR, Nicholas, *Is Google Making Us Stupid?: What the Internet is doing to our brains*.

⁸⁵ CARR, Nicholas, *Is Google Making Us Stupid?: What the Internet is doing to our brains*.

⁸⁶ CARR, Nicholas, *Is Google Making Us Stupid?: What the Internet is doing to our brains*.

⁸⁷ FIGES, Orlando, *Students don't read books any more. Why?*.

nowadays find enjoying a book quite demanding; the trouble with so called deep reading becomes more frequent. Since we are used to reading vertically and search for crucial information, horizontal reading for amusement is suddenly more difficult.

Further on Carr writes about the change of conventional media, which have to adjust their forms in order to follow up minds of readers who are used to the internet. Therefore, articles in newspapers are abridged and long texts and books are simply summarised.⁸⁸ This development responds to Bradbury's prediction made on the development of literature, which has to adjust its form to appeal to the society obsessed by technology.

The fear of books harming and offending a reader - in Bradbury's vision connected to fear of offending the minorities - is reflected in both novels. We are observing this phenomenon in current language rather than in the books published nowadays. The issue of gender is very topical and people who find this issue crucial for their self-determination appeal for using a genderless language. Vocabulary is adjusting in order to remain gender-neutral and therefore inoffensive. A typical example is the word fireman changed to firefighter. A demand to apply this approach in classical literature has not been made yet by any official places. So far, we cannot claim that this approach fulfils the escalated predictions of *Fahrenheit 451*.

⁸⁸ CARR, Nicholas, *Is Google Making Us Stupid?: What the Internet is doing to our brains*.

Conclusion

The main aim of my thesis was to compare the selected novels in three areas, specify the similarities and find whether it is possible to detect the authors' visions of the future in the today's society.

Analysing the novels and comparing them with the essays and articles reflecting the state of today's society, I found out that the predictions made by the authors can be divided into three categories according to their accuracy. In the first group, there are predictions comprising the critical level of consumerism and technology changing our perception of information and ability to read, which are rather accurate, even though they might be achieved by different means than predicted by the authors.

In the second category, there are the predictions comprising the family and teachers getting replaced by technology, restrictions for the sake of minorities, or artificial creation of people. These visions are represented only partially or hypothetically nowadays, and they do not reach the levels predicted by the authors.

The third category comprises the ideas of very strict censorship and totalitarian regimes. These visions cannot be applied to the current Western society in the form which was predicted by the authors. Even though these visions do not meet the reality of the Western society, they are present for example in China or North Korea.

Despite the authors present very similar ideas and visions, I have to mark that in general I found Ray Bradbury's visions and ideas more realistic and better corresponding with the present than the ones made by Aldous Huxley. This might be caused by the fact that *Fahrenheit 451* was published about twenty years later than *Brave New World* and the anticipation of the technological progress was therefore more realistic.

To conclude, we may claim that our society fulfils some of the visions suggested. Fortunately, we do not follow the most critical ones yet. However, we should be cautious to any development resembling the course depicted in the dystopian novels discussed.

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Resumé

Bakalářská práce se věnuje analýze a srovnání dvou dystopických románů, kterými jsou *451 stupňů Fahrenheita (Fahrenheit 451)* od R. Bradburyho a *Konec civilizace (Brave New World)* od A. Huxleyho, a jejich vizí budoucnosti. První kapitola definuje žánry utopie, dystopie a anti-utopie s ohledem na jejich vývoj. Druhá kapitola se zabývá životopisy autorů a pozadím vzniku děl, která jsou v práci porovnávána. Třetí kapitola je již věnována samotné analýze a komparaci knih podle zvolených okruhů. Analýza je následně porovnána se současným stavem společnosti. Cílem práce bylo porovnat vize autorů, najít společné prvky a zjistit, které z vizí autorů je možné zpozorovat v současné společnosti.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Anna Lukášová
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Andrea Hoffmannová Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2019

Název závěrečné práce:	Interpretace budoucnosti: 451 stupňů Fahrenheita vs. Konec civilizace
Název závěrečné práce v angličtině:	Interpreting Future: Fahrenheit 451 vs Brave New World
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce se věnuje analýze a srovnání dystopických románů 451 stupňů Fahrenheita a Konec civilizace. První dvě kapitoly se věnují žánrům utopie, dystopie, anti-utopie a životopisům autorů s ohledem na rozebíraná díla. Třetí kapitola se již zabývá samotnou analýzou a srovnáním děl ve vymezených problematikách a vize autorů jsou srovnány se současnou společností.
Klíčová slova:	Konec civilizace, 451 stupňů Fahrenheita, Aldous Huxley, Ray Bradbury, dystopie, komparativní analýza, technologie, knihy, společnost
Anotace v angličtině:	The bachelor thesis focuses on two dystopian novels: Fahrenheit 451 and Brave New World. The first two chapters deal with the genres of utopia, dystopia and anti-utopia, the biographies of the authors and the background information about the novels discussed. The third chapter comprises an analysis of the novels based on three common features: society, technology and books. The novels are compared with respect to the three categories and the authors' predictions are compared with the current state of society.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Brave New World, Fahrenheit 451, Aldous Huxley, Ray Bradbury, dystopian literature, comparative analysis, technology, books, society
Přílohy vázané v práci	CD
Rozsah práce:	38 stran
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk