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"Dystopia: a caricature of the world we live by"

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ABSTRACT:

This work makes a close reading of two novels, *1984* published by George Orwell in 1948, and *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley. My aim is to prove that their dystopian format covers up not just a form of criticism of the social and cultural context in which they were written. Furthermore, I believe that the dystopian novel is a hybrid form that also hides a caricature of that society. My argument shows, that this hybrid format, where fiction and reality begin to intermix in the first half of the 20th-century, is fostered by the cultural climate and events taking place during that period.

My analysis draws not only on the two novels aforementioned. I make use of critical ideas developed by Professor Fernando Ángel Moreno about dystopian works and science fiction. I have selected works by two different authors in order to elaborate on a more general framework for my idea. Fernando Ángel's approach is an important contribution to my theoretical background, and his essays have helped me to understand better the belonging of dystopia to the Science Fiction genre and, more importantly, the contexts of dystopian creation and its social rejection.

My paper is divided in four parts: 1) an introduction which deals with the historical period during which dystopian works became widespread; 2) the theoretical background which deals with Science Fiction as a genre and dystopia as a subgenre; 3) the body of my research, where the novels become the subject of a formal and sociological analysis; and finally, 4) the conclusion where a summary of the ideas presented is offered.

Key words: Huxley, Science Fiction, Orwell, caricature, dystopia, utopia

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Dystopia: a caricature of the world we live by

0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. The boom of dystopian texts among the 20th Century

Although the border between utopia and dystopia is not very clearly delimited, I am not going to enter here on this topic. Allow me to start with the generalization that at the beginning of the 20th century, many critics have agreed, a new literature genre emerged in the Western World, corresponding to a new frame of mind: the dystopian. Scholarly sources agree that this frame of mind may have been the consequence of the historical events taking place in Europe, and expanding to other regions of the world, a social context involving the aftermath of several wars, post-war economic and political crises, and even fear of a possible nuclear holocaust.

The atmosphere of insecurity, in a climate of technological growth oriented towards human destruction, led, together with other causes, to a peculiar frame of mind, sensed by sensitive people who affirmed, like Virginia Woolf, that after 1910 the world, and humanity, began to change. Change became widespread and persistent. This acceleration in the perception of changed has continued to increase. Hence the title of this essay: "Dystopia: A Caricature of the World we live *by*".

We live *in* the world, but the world is not the same as it was when the first dystopian novel was written. *We*, a Russian modernist dystopian novel by Yevgeny Zamyatin was completed in 1921 and published in English in 1924 by E. Dutton in New York. With the preposition 'by' I want to emphasize this fact: that time goes *by*, and that the world is in constant movement. Dystopian perceptions change accordingly.

Fernando Ángel Moreno writes that the ideological basis for these insecurities, in a world where continuous and rapid change become more and more difficult to assimilate, lied on three important pillars: "La base ideológica de este cambio se encontraría en tres pilares principales: la muerte de Dios, la muerte de la cultura como disfrute de una élite exclusivista y la crisis de la idea de <<futuro>>, en cuanto esperanza de considerable mejora." (2011: 61)

Owing to the historical moment, the boom of autarchies and the brutal violence, there was a generalised feeling that the human kind would end with his own species. The human way of life and its advance and progress were nothing but a shortcut to the loss of rights and liberties and, thus, the destruction of humanity as such.

Hence, writers adapted their writings to this coetaneous mentality, asking themselves what was going to happen to the world they lived in (and *by*), and how society would end up. Their forecast was obscure, they could not visualize any progress if social life continued in the same direction. As a result, dystopias were born, that is, science-fiction texts depicting an exaggerated image of what was happening, and portraying a feasible future crowded with technological advances and totalitarian regimes where humanness was annihilated.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Science Fiction

Science fiction is usually confused with fantastic literature. This is due to the creation of different worlds, which do not correspond with the reality we live *by*.

However, those of us who study literature should be aware of the differences between both genres. First of all it is important to notice that the fantastic belongs to non-mimetic or non-realistic literature. Fernando Ángel Moreno gives in his work *Teoría de la Ciencia Ficción* some useful patterns to distinguish between Fantastic Literature and Science Fiction.

TERMINOLOGÍA SOBRE LA FICCIÓN PROYECTIVA					
Relación con la realidad	Aceptación	Términos académicos	Términos no académicos	Ejemplos	Efecto
Imposibilidad en la realidad en cualquier momento	Aceptadas por el personaje, pero no por el lector modelo (imposible)	Maravillosa	Fantástica	<i>El señor de los anillos</i>	Asombro
	No aceptadas por el personaje ni/o por el lector modelo (imposible)	Fantástica		<i>El hombre de arena</i>	Desasosiego, incomodidad angustiosa
Imposibilidad en la realidad con los medios actuales	Aceptadas por el personaje y por el lector modelo (improbable)	Ciencia ficción	Ciencia ficción	<i>2001, una odisea espacial</i>	Asombro
	Aceptadas por el personaje y por el lector modelo (improbable)	Prospectiva		<i>Rascacielos o Blade runner</i>	Prospección, replanteamiento de cuestiones socio-culturales

(Fernando Ángel Moreno in *Teoría de la Literatura de Ciencia Ficción: Poética y Retórica de lo Prospectivo*. 2010: 121)

The most important characteristic of the 'Fantastic' is that the world and the events described within the artistic work, in the case literary, cannot become true. Science Fiction, on the other hand, is usually based in technological, scientific and/or sociological developments, so that events are more likely to become real.

Another important difference between literature of the Fantastic and Science Fiction is the way in which the hypothetic worlds are created. As already mentioned, science fictional worlds are based on continuous developments, making only necessary advances in time. However, literature of the Fantastic introduces magic or mystic elements, strongly depending on the imagination of the author.

As it is shown in the table above, Fernando Ángel also distinguishes two branches within the commonly known as *literatura fantástica* and *ciencia ficción*. According to him, there is a difference between *literatura fantástica*, which introduces fantastic elements within the real world, and *literatura maravillosa*, which directly creates a fantastic/marvellous world, which is completely separated from the real world where the author and reader live, creating a feeling of total surprise in both characters and readers, rather than the astounding and –in many cases- awe-inspiring feeling generated by the *literatura fantástica*.

Tzvetan Todorov also describes fantastic literature in his work *The Fantastic* as a host of inexplicable events or elements within the real world. He writes that

In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know....there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination-- and the laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality--but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us (1975: 25).

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Within *ciencia ficción*, Fernando Ángel makes a distinction between *ciencia ficción* itself and *literatura prospectiva*. By *ciencia ficción* he refers to a hypothetic future world which awakes an astounding feeling, closer to the emotions aroused by *literatura fantástica*, whereas the *literatura prospectiva* refers to a future world, which is a result of the current society, and implies a reconsideration of the effective socio-cultural values. Aware of these differences, I approach the definition for Science Fiction, in the words of Prof. Moreno:

Un género que habla de lo real y de lo que no es posible en este momento histórico, pero que rechaza lo mágico, lo esotérico, lo mítico, lo religioso (como verdad revelada) y lo alegórico como tal. En esto consiste el género y eso busca el aficionado al género: zambullirse en algo que es, pero no es, pero puede ser. (2010: 68)

Thus, it is important to note that Science Fiction refers to something which may be possible at some point in time in the future; not real now, but which might end up being real.

1.2. Dystopia – a subgenre within science fiction

The main subject of this work is Dystopia, therefore it is important to understand what a dystopia is, and this would be impossible without being familiar first with the concept of Utopia. The entry of Utopia in the Oxford Online Dictionary reads:

utopia

Line breaks: utopia

Pronunciation: /juːˈtɒpiə  /

NOUN

An imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. The opposite of [dystopia](#).


Origin

mid 16th century: based on Greek *ou* 'not' + *topos* 'place'; the word was first used in the book *Utopia* (1516) by Sir Thomas More.

Given this definition, it is important to compare it to its antonym:

dystopia

Line breaks: dystopia

Pronunciation: /disˈtɒpiə  /

NOUN

An imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one. The opposite of [utopia](#).

Origin

late 18th century: from *dys-* 'bad' + *utopia*.

As it is indicated in the Oxford Online Dictionary, both concepts are opposites, originating in the 16th and 19th-centuries respectively. The humanist Sir Thomas More, wrote his work *Utopia* in 1516. The work consisted on a description of an island called in the same way, in which the society is depicted as stable and where happiness takes precedence. Although utopian texts are supposed to portray an image of an idyllic world, many times the reader may think it is not. Both dystopia and utopia tend to resort to autarchies which violate people's freedom of choice in their paradoxical search for happiness.

No obstante, finalmente se descubrirá que no siempre es la razón la que falla, sino que todo se apoya en un sofisma. A partir de la confianza de la sociedad ficticia en dicho sofisma, se produce una ironía trágica, al describirse el bien buscado por los sabios y altruistas gobernante es precisamente, como en toda dictadura, el origen del dolor y el sufrimiento de los ciudadanos. (Moreno 2011: 58)

The most important differences between utopia and dystopia are the intention and the tone in which they are written. Utopias are more formal proposals and dystopias almost sarcastic and exaggerated depictions of the coetaneous society of their authors. As explained by Prof. Moreno, dystopias create a sense of tragic irony. This is precisely my point in this essay: that this ironic tone resembles the one we can find in caricature.

2. FROM HUXLEY'S BRAVE NEW WORLD TO ORWELL'S 1984

2.1. Written Caricatures

The Oxford Online Dictionary defines caricature in the following way:

caricature

Line breaks: cari|ca|ture

Pronunciation: /'kærɪkətʃə (ə) , 'kærɪkətʃ:/

NOUN

- 1 A picture, description, or imitation of a person in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create a comic or grotesque effect:

'a crude caricature of the Prime Minister'

The features of caricature resemble those of dystopian texts, where the sarcastic tone can be read between the lines. Thus, irony stands as a symbol for the disagreement between the speaking voice or point of view (that may correspond to the author) and the cultural context and socio-political system that articulates the discourse. The way in which certain elements -including point of view, characterization etc.- are treated stands for this irony.

This irony is also a result of the temporal gap generated in the narrative. In order to create these idyllic states, it is necessary to travel either in time or space, as the facts narrated in the texts do not correspond to reality. As dystopias are a projection of what the world could be, they are usually situated in a distant and prospective future. Thus, Dystopia perfectly fits in what Fernando Ángel describes as *literatura prospectiva*, and therefore a subgenre of science fiction.

Como hemos visto, la distopía, en ese sentido, no es más que la extrapolación de los inconvenientes derivados de la aplicación absoluta de un determinado sistema a partir de un sofisma, tal y como el ser humano ha aprendido tras la puesta en práctica de numerosos sistemas de todo tipo. [...] Por ello, a diferencia de otras novelas realistas, en las distopías no se critican uno o varios aspectos de una sociedad compleja, sino a toda la sociedad en su conjunto. (2011: 62-63)

I would like to offer an example by focusing on the fact that an abnormality in *Brave New World* is the non-promiscuity. For instance, D.H.C. explains to the students how sexuality looked like in Ford's times in the following extract:

"What I'm going to tell you now," he said, "may sound incredible. But then, when you're not accustomed to history, most facts about the past do sound incredible. [...] For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations

afterwards, erotic play between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!): and had therefore been rigorously suppressed." A look of astonished incredulity appeared on the faces of his listeners. Poor little kids, not allowed to amuse themselves? They could not believe it. "Even adolescents [...] like yourselves..." "Not possible!" (*Brave New World* 33)

The incredulity of the students, their laughter and the way in which the director exposes the facts, creates a satirical and even grotesque view of the "past", which was current at the time when the text was written. The formal aspects of satire and the thematic aspects of disbelief emphasize this image, apparently ridiculous, making the reader feel astonished before the world depicted in the text. Readers may think that it would be impossible to come to such an end, considering their moral strong, and finding, to some extent, hilarious that the characters in the novel take their own values as worthless, whereas they find theirs inconceivable. The simple fact that characters and readers find themselves in the same –and simultaneously the opposite- frame of mind is, in its essence, ironic. Nevertheless, the most ironic element is the fact that the intention of the author is to draw a possible future, the inevitable end towards which humanity is moving, both grotesque and sarcastic in its exaggeration, and which –in my opinion- unveil the caricature of both the world, and the society.

2.2. Science Fictional Elements

Both texts, *Brave New World* and 1984, share some science fictional elements evident in the dystopian subgenre. These elements have to do, mainly, with the technological aspects treated in the novels. Allow me to offer several examples.

In *Brave New World*, for instance, one of the first futuristic elements is the fact that babies are no longer conceived in their mother's uterus, but in tubes. This is explained in the first chapter by the director to the students visiting the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre: "'And this," said the Director opening the door, "is the Fertilizing Room.'" (7). And later on, in the description that follows: "One egg, one embryo, one adult-normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo [...]" (10)

The totalitarian government described in the novel uses only one single egg to create many specimens. The idea is to create many identical clones. These children do not have parents, and are brought up by the authorities, being conditioned to occupy determined positions in society, like specific things, and reach a fixed level of intelligence. The explanation is given by the director and Mr. Foster:

"'Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!'" (11)

"'And the bottles come in here to be predestined in detail.'" (14)

"We also predestine and condition. We decant our babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future [...] Directors of Hatcheries, [...] reducing the number of revolutions per minute," Mr. Foster explained. "The surrogate goes round slower; therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals; therefore give the embryo less oxygen. Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par. [...] The lower the caste, [...] the shorter the oxygen.'" (16-17)

Consumption within a brutal capitalism is promoted in the novel. Even spare time activities, such as golf, sports and so on, involve further expenses. In the Hatchery and Conditioning Centre the guided visit continues: "We condition the masses to hate the country, [...] but simultaneously we condition them to love country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport." (24)

Criticism of the US Fordian system is evident in paragraphs such as:

Strange, [...] strange to think that even in Our Ford's day most games were plays without more apparatus than a ball or two and a few sticks and perhaps a bit of netting. Imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It's madness. Nowadays the Controllers

won't approve of any new game unless it can be shown that it requires at least as much apparatus as the most complicated of existing games. (31)

Another curiosity of this futuristic world imagined by Huxley is the way in which they deal with sex. Sexual relations are promiscuous, they are taught to have relations with everybody since they are children. Normal kids are supposed to play erotic games together, and if they don't they are considered to have an anomaly. The motto of society, in relation to this topic, is "Everyone belongs to everyone else", fomenting promiscuity. We observe a nurse telling the director about an issue she's having with a little boy at the conditioning centre:

It's just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play, I'd noticed it once or twice before. And now again today. He started yelling just now...[...] And so, [...] I'm taking him in to see the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything's at all abnormal. (32)

Simultaneously Lenina, one of the Antagonists, speaks to her friend Fanny about her private life, particularly her relation to Henry Foster:

I really do think you ought to be careful. It's such horribly bad form to go on and on like this with one man. At forty, or thirty-five, it wouldn't be so bad. But at your age, Lenina! No, it really won't do. And you know how strongly the D.H.C. objects to anything intense or long-drawn. Four months of Henry Foster, without having another man – why, he'd be furious if he knew...[...]Of course there's no need to give him up. Have somebody else from time to time, that's all. He has other girls, doesn't he?" [...] Lenina shook her head. "Somehow," she mused, "I hadn't been feeling very keen on promiscuity lately. There are times when one doesn't. Haven't you found that too, Fanny?" Fanny nodded her sympathy and understanding. "But one's got to make the effort, [...] one's got to play the game. After all, everyone belongs to everyone else.(41-43)

Morals in *Brave New World's* society are completely different from the ones fostered in the 1930's. Promiscuity is an obligation for everyone. This way, government prevents people from developing real feelings for anyone, as falling in love and other feelings destroy, according to the authorities, stability. Their motto is in fact: "COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY".

Let us now turn to Orwell's work, where we find some contradictions. Here, for example, promiscuous behaviour is treated as 'thought-crime'. It is not allowed to have sex, and marriage is only permitted for the aim of procreating, and children must be artificially conceived.

The unforgivable crime was promiscuity between Party members. [...] The aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act. Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy, inside marriage as well as outside it. All marriages between Party members had to be approved by a committee appointed for the purpose, and [...] The only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party. [...] There were even organizations such as the Junior Anti-Sex League, which advocated complete celibacy for both sexes. All children were to be begotten by artificial insemination (ARTSEM, it was called in New- speak) and brought up in public institutions. (65-66)

Moreover, the partition of goods is firmly made, and –except for the members of the inner party- everyone lives under poverty conditions, which reminds rather to a communist regime. Thus, "Winston wrenched his body out of bed-naked, for a member of the Outer Party received only three thousand clothing coupons annually, and a suit of pyjamas was six hundred- and seized a dingy singlet a pair of shorts that were lying across the chair." (31)

Partition of goods is regularly made, and data are changed according to Big Brother's needs, making history evolve following his predictions, so that everyone thinks that the Party is omnipotent.

As short a time ago as February, the Ministry of Plenty had issued a promise (a "categorical pledge" were the official words) that there would be no reduction of the chocolate ration during 1894. Actually, as Winston was aware, the chocolate ration was to be reduced from thirty grams to twenty at the end of the present week. All that was needed was to substitute for the original promise a warning that it would probably be necessary to reduce the ration at some time in April. (39)

Memory is erased through these changes, leaving a lack of historical knowledge among population. The protagonist of the novel, Winston, works in the Ministry of Truth, making the necessary changes to the corresponding documents.

What happened in the unseen labyrinth to which the pneumatic tubes led, he did not know in detail, but he did know in general terms. As soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of 'The Times' had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs—to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct, nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place. (39-40)

Technological advances also appear in *1984*. Big Brother is a figure of the party, present everywhere by means of tele-screens; omnipresent in everyone's house, place of work, in the streets, etc. This represents a great advance because the tele-screen not only projects but also sends images and sounds of what is happening at the other side:

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. (2)

Another example is the following quote:

Winston was in –victory Square before the appointed time. [...] Then he saw the girl standing at the base of the monument, reading or pretending to read a poster which ran spirally up the column. It was not safe to go near her until some more people had accumulated. There were telescreens all around the pediment. (113-114)

Not only these advances, but also the shift to future times -2040 a.F. and 1984 in each case- is evidence for the science fictional elements of the works. A rupture with the mimesis takes place, in order to provide a world in which these events may occur.

2.3. The Unavoidable Ending of Dystopian Texts

With some exceptions, such as *Fahrenheit 541* by Ray Bradbury, the usual ending of dystopian works, is not precisely a happy one. The ones standing against the authorities do not end in a good place, something predictable under dictatorships.

On the one hand, *Brave New World* ends with Bernard's exile and Helmholtz's death. Unable to deal with guilt problems related to the death of his mother and not fitting into the

government's prototype, he decides to hang himself. He hates the values and life style of *civilization*, he does not share the idea that "everyone belongs to everyone", neither does he stand the constant consumption of soma. Being obliged to participate in those rituals, leads him to suicide.

On the other hand, *1984* ends with a more metaphoric death. Winston figuratively dies, as his humanness is ripped off him. He gives up his ideals, his values. After being tortured he is hollowed out and refilled with Big Brother, he is only capable of loving Big Brother and no one else. He is also conscious of this psychological death, Orwell appoints it in the last lines of the novel:

Winston, sitting in a blissful dream, paid no attention as his glass was filled up. He was not running or cheering any longer. He was back in the Ministry of Love, with everything forgiven, his soul white as snow. He was in the public dock, confessing everything, implicating everybody. He was walking down the white-tiled corridor, with the feeling of walking in sunlight, and an armed guard at his back. The long-hoped-for bullet was entering his brain. He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother. (297-298)

It is important to have such an end for this kind of works because they show what might happen. They function as a moral from which we can extract what we are doing wrong in order to change it. Orwell himself gave an interview in the BBC, before he passed on, in which he tried to warn people about the dangers of maintaining the same direction:

I think that a line for the book being a draught parody, something like 1984 could actually happen. This is the direction the world is going in at the present time. In our world, there will be no emotions except fear, rage, trap and selfabasement. The sex instinct will be eradicated, we shall abolish the orgasm. There will be no loyalty, except loyalty to the party. But always there will be the intoxication of power. Always, at every momento there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling an enemy, that is helpless. If you want a picture of the future imagine a boot, stamping on a human face, forever. A moral, to be drawn from this nightmare situation, is a simple one: don't let it happen, it depends on you.

2.4. Social Rejection of Dystopian Works

One basic problem of this kind of texts is that they are written as prospective literature, moving further than the reality that exists at the time when they are written. They take for granted, predict, and imagine facts which can or not occur, breaking the mimesis analogy framework and transforming them into non-realistic texts, which people confuse with fantastic literature.

Dystopia, as well as science fiction, is a repudiated genre for scholars, due to its apparent lack of connection to reality, its non-function as a historical source. But it may be that their ambiguity and features resembling caricature remove these works from the canon of aesthetically valuable texts.

Furthermore, dystopias, as well as science fictional texts have, so to say, an expiry date. Once the year or period their stories are projected in arrives, if their "predictions" are not fulfilled, they lose their value, a further proof that science fiction is rather contemplated –by the non-experts- as a science rather than literature. Therefore, if it is not exact it is immediately devalued. This is also indicated by Fernando Ángel Moreno:

Este rechazo se apoya también en una impresión de que se trata de un género efímero, por cuánto tiene de profético. ¿Y qué existe más efímero que una profecía tras cumplirse la fecha o el objetivo de su predicción? [...] Por último nos encontramos con la <<irrealidad>> del género: el mayor problema con el que ha de bregar la ciencia ficción, así como su comparación con la literatura fantástica." (2010: 5)

2.5. Veracity of the predictions made by Dystopian texts

Dystopian texts do not have the power to predict the future. They only offer approximate versions of what it might become that only sometimes become true. For instance in *1984*, the character of Big Brother, created by Orwell, becomes everyday more real, thanks to our voluntary participation in social networks. We upload our photos, publish where we are and whom we are with; present our opinions on the net and share with everybody the things we like. Nowadays many companies search for their candidates in Facebook, look at their profiles and decide whether or not they want them to be a part of their company, just following their movements on the net. In this sense, Facebook or Twitter are unconscious ways of controlling society. One example is the way certain keywords are followed and traced by federal authorities in US.

Art becomes day by day a burden for governments. Artists do not contribute, or so it would seem, to functional progress, primarily focused on science and technology. Here in Spain, the Ministry of Education is developing a study plan in which philosophy won't be studied in high school anymore, and music will be eliminated in primary school. Many grades have been suppressed from university, such as the grade in "Modern Languages", which substituted the old 'philologies', except in the case of English Studies, Spanish Philology and Classical Studies, whose potential was measured in terms of student enrolments.

Thanks to the technological advances, books are less necessary and less appreciated by readers, since most of the members belonging to new generations are devoted to the *telescreen*, or the internet, smartphones and other screen formats. Even inside the classroom, books are put aside and laptops and projectors are used in their place. This can be contemplated as necessary progress, and technology does indeed offer cheaper forms of information support, where students can follow a lesson projected on the screen without the need of printed sources. E-books are substituting paper, and people can freely download works, creating further economic problems for writers and publishers, and discouraging the apparition of new books. As a book lover- this situation has led to a worse appreciation of books. The charm of turning a page, the smell of the paper, even the smell of old books or being able to see at first glance at how much the reader has progressed in his/her reading, and how much of the reading is left, which –in my opinion- catches the reader, making her eager for more, has been lost.

Fahrenheit 451 is an example of the alienation provoked by new technologies, everyday more evident in the lack of inter-personal relationships and human contact. "The family" in *Fahrenheit 451*, is nothing but Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Whatsapp. Nowadays, it is easy to find out that a friend of yours has got married and you have not been invited to his wedding just by looking at Facebook. Or to read on his or her wall about a great decision he/she has made, without having previously told you about it. Even telephonic calls, which preserve a greater part of human interaction, are less frequent, substituted by written Whatsapp, SMSs and e-mails. Moreover, humans have lost their pleasure for holding a conversation with someone by whom they are accompanied. It is quite unpleasant to be with someone, trying to discover what he/she is testing on his mobile phone, or reading someone else's posts on FB instead of listening to you. Sadly, this is becoming our day by day. How many times do we go out for dinner to a restaurant and see two people sitting at the same table both with their smartphones in their hands, not even looking at the person in front of them? The term *techno-zombie* is everyday more of a reality.

Test tube babies in *Brave New World* are the increasingly viewed babies *a la carte*. You can now choose (within a fringe, and paying a vast quantity of money) which eye or hair colour you want your baby to have, etc. And the brutal capitalism, the consumerism reflected in the novel's society are the current publicity and the deceptive idea that the most things we have the happier we will be.

Even the promiscuity advanced by Huxley in *Brave New World* has somehow become part of our reality. The motto "Everyone belongs to everyone else" reminds to the hippie movement, which took place during the decades of the 60,s and 70's, thirty years after *Brave New World* was written. Love was proposed as something to be shared with everybody. You weren't supposed to love just one person anymore, which meant you could have sex with whoever you wanted, the way you wanted and whenever you wanted. Sex was being expressed in a different way from which it had been expressed before. Sex in groups, sex in public spaces, sex with anyone, no matter which the genre.

A further characteristic of the hippie movement was the consumption of psychedelic drugs. The term *psyche Delia* is a term which finds its origins in the decade of the 1960's. It

derives from Greek, meaning manifestation of the soul. This implies an extreme stimulation of the senses, by the use of flashy colours and entails the consumption of psychedelic drugs. This is also manifested in *Brave New World* where people are induced to take soma for a "vacation" time. In the case of this novel, drugs are used to evade reality, whereas the hippies took psychedelic drugs not only in order to evade reality, but also for extol sensations. Still, in *Brave New World* they do also use them for ludic purposes, for example when they are going to sleep with another or go out for fun.

3. CONCLUSION

After presenting the differences between fantastic literature and science fiction, I hope I have made clear in some way that dystopian works form part of what we know as Science Fiction. According to this hypothesis, my paper should have clarified the moral intention behind dystopian texts, strongly connected to the characteristics of Science Fiction (displacement in time, abuse of technological advances and socio-political evolution/involution), as well as to its caricature intentions.

I shall remind the kind reader, that the adjective *caricature* forms part of my own harvest, although I hope my essay has contributed to make my position understood. To sum up, I want to go once again through the points I signalled as indicators of the caricature feature we encounter in dystopian works: fundamental 1) the tone in which the work is written and presented; 2) its intention of criticizing society, and most importantly 3) the extreme exaggeration to which elements of the socio-political systems presented in the novel are subjected.

I find important to encourage readings of this genre, and invite readers to give always a second thought and not prejudice books by their covers. Giving readings a second chance one is surprised and astonished by the hidden ideas and elements connected to reality that one can find in these texts.

If there is something I have learnt by heart after 5 years in college is that every piece of artistic work, not just literary, but also cinema, painting, and so on, has something behind. Once you learn how to look for it, how to search for that hidden pieces that may be there or just in your imagination, in your thoughts, you extract something good or critical out of almost everything, and it is incredible how, step by step, you become aware of this acquired faculty.

The veracity of the predictions made by dystopian texts, as well as every detail within any novel, is something ticklish when found to be real. Dystopian texts may appear to be futuristic and lack realism, but the truth is that every day we come nearer to a fatal ending, which may be even worse than the one depicted by dystopian authors. We should learn from our errors, it is important for us to be aware of history, and to maintain our integrity, our humanness, our individuality.

Literature functions as a historical, memorial source and as a warning, depending on the genre we choose. It is important for us to take this into account, and make use of it. Every reading should drive to a second thought, making our knowledge increase and preventing us from a fatal future.

It is in our hands to avoid another Nazi Holocaust, or to prevent ourselves from getting lost within capitalism and consumerism. It is in our hands to keep our rights -our individuality, our historical conscience- to not actively participate in the slowly creation of a Big Brother. Only we can prevent technology from governing our lives.

As humans, we are the ones to protect our species. If we lose our memory, our humanness is lost with it, and we die without it. Hence, we need to avoid passing our lives in front of a television, or a computer, or a smartphone. We should appreciate more our fellow humans as well as our creations, our art, our literature or our socio-political systems, because they are our history, and therefore our road away from alienation, our way to future.

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