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Modern Utopia:

a reading of Brave New World,

Nineteen Eighty-Four, and

Woman on the Edge of Time

in the light of More's Utopia

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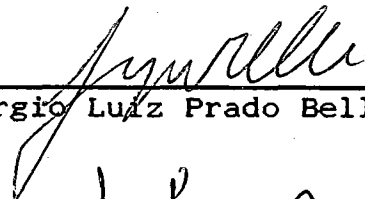
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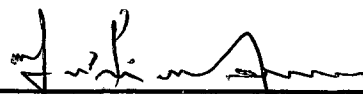
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The things,
good Lord,
that we pray for,
Give us the grace
to labor for.

Sir Thomas More

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ABSTRACT

This Thesis discusses the changes that have occurred in the utopian genre starting with Thomas More's Utopia and analysing three modern novels: Huxley's Brave New World, Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time.

The first chapter deals with Thomas More's Utopia as social criticism of sixteenth century English society. The notions of utopia and dystopia are discussed based on this novel.

Chapter II discusses the origins of Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, as well as the backgrounds which led Orwell to write the novel. Then, Utopia, Nineteen Eighty-Four is classified in the utopian/dystopian genre.

Chapter III shows the development of Huxley's literary works up to his Brave New World. Then, the novel is compared to Nineteen Eighty-Four. Both criticize totalitarian forms of government. The Chapter ends with the comparison of Utopia to Brave New World and shows how the novel fits into the utopian/ dystopian genre as social criticism.

Chapter IV deals with Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time as a modern utopia and compares the novel to Nineteen Eighty-Four, Brave New World, and Utopia. It also establishes the relationship between Woman on the Edge of Time and the utopian/dystopian genre as social criticism.

Finally, the Conclusion discusses the utopian/dystopian genre of literature as being in fact a subtle form of social criticism.

RESUMO

Nesta dissertação discutem-se as mudanças ocorridas no gênero utópico, a partir da Utopia de Tomás Morus, através da análise de três romances modernos: O Admirável Mundo Novo, de Aldous Huxley; 1984, de George Orwell; e Woman on the Edge of Time, de Marge Piercy, todos embasados na Utopia, de Tomás Morus.

No primeiro capítulo discute-se a Utopia de Morus sob o aspecto de crítica social à sociedade inglesa do século dezesseis. Trata-se ainda das definições de utopia e distopia com base na obra de Morus.

No Capítulo II discutem-se as origens do romance 1984 e os eventos que levaram Orwell a escrevê-lo. O romance é em seguida classificado no contexto das noções de utopia e distopia.

O Capítulo III é dedicado ao desenvolvimento das obras literárias de Huxley até o momento em que o escritor publica O Admirável Mundo Novo. Em seguida o romance é comparado com 1984. Representam ambos uma crítica aos regimes totalitários de governo. O capítulo finaliza com uma comparação entre Utopia e O Admirável Mundo Novo e com uma discussão sobre a maneira como esta última obra se enquadra no contexto de utopia e distopia.

No capítulo IV discute-se Woman on the Edge of Time como uma utopia moderna e compara-se o romance com 1984, O Admirável Mundo Novo e Utopia. Estabelece-se ainda o relacionamento que existe entre Woman on the Edge of Time com

o gênero utópico.

Finalmente, Na conclusão discute-se o gênero utópico como uma forma sutil de crítica social.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION - - - - -	x
CHAPTER I - Thomas More's Paradigm - The <u>Utopia</u> - - - - -	1
NOTES on Chapter I - - - - -	22
CHAPTER II - George Orwell's <u>Nineteen Eighty-Four</u> - - - - -	25
NOTES on Chapter II - - - - -	56
CHAPTER III - Aldous Huxley's <u>Brave New World</u> - - - - -	59
NOTES on Chapter III - - - - -	89
CHAPTER IV - A Feminist Utopia - Marge Piercy's <u>Woman on the Edge of Time</u> - - - - -	93
NOTES on Chapter IV - - - - -	137
CONCLUSION - - - - -	143
BIBLIOGRAPHY - - - - -	147

INTRODUCTION

After verifying that both utopian and dystopian literature are marked by the presentation of alternative fictitious societies I took to investigating the reasons which led the authors to produce these societies, what features distinguish the utopian from the dystopian societies and what features they might have in common. This dissertation is, therefore, an attempt to discuss the related notions of "utopia" and "dystopia" in three novels by three major twentieth century writers: Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, Huxley's Brave New World, and Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time. In order to proceed with the investigation I begin with an analysis of the genre as it appears in Sir Thomas More's Utopia and then proceed to the discussion of the concept of dystopia and of its significance in each of the novels mentioned above.

The next step is the comparison between Nineteen Eighty-Four and Utopia in order to analyse the similarities and differences between them. Then I analyse Brave New World, comparing it to both Utopia and Nineteen Eighty-Four. At last, I chose, among the many American utopias, to analyse Woman on the Edge of Time, for it presents both utopian and dystopian societies and deals with the most recent social

problems of the twentieth century through a feminist perspective. This novel is compared to the other three novels in order to demonstrate how the notion of utopia has developed over the years.

My first chapter is thus devoted to More's Utopia and to the idea of utopia and dystopia as social criticism. In chapter Two I deal with Nineteen Eighty-Four even though it was published over a decade after Huxley's Brave New World because Orwell presents a future society in a more recent year, 1984. Chapter Three is devoted to Brave New World, which describes a society placed 600 years in the future. Finally, in Chapter Four, I analyse the feminist novel Woman on the Edge of Time, by Marge Piercy, giving particular emphasis to the way the idea of utopia has changed from More's times to our days.

CHAPTER I

THOMAS MORE'S PARADIGM

THE UTOPIA

George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Aldous Huxley's Brave New World are considered as dystopian novels, whereas Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time is considered by most critics as a utopian novel, so, before any kind of social analysis can be made, they must be analyzed in the light of Thomas More's Utopia (which was written in 1516 and in Latin).

Robert M. Adams asserts that "though small in size and flippant in tone, it [Utopia] is in fact two very heavy books"¹ of which the first volume describes Thomas More's meeting with the Portuguese adventurer Raphael Hythloday, introduced by More's friend Peter Gilles. In this first part Raphael tells More and Peter Gilles about the existence of a distant land called Utopia in which there were none of the social evils common to European societies, especially to English society. Thus the full title of the book: Concerning the Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia. This first part is dedicated to a discussion between More and Hythloday in which Hythloday criticizes the English system of government and praises the Utopian way of life, openly contrasting it to sixteenth century English society. Hythloday

also mentions certain political events of the time and points out how the English government is incompetent in dealing with public affairs. The first book ends with More expressing his desire to learn more about the Utopian life style and arranging a meeting with Hythloday in which he is to describe the Utopian way of life in greater detail.

The second book of Utopia is More's account of Hythloday's description of the Utopian way of life. It includes detailed descriptions of geographical, economic, cultural and political aspects of the country and implies a criticism of the English flaws, as the society described alludes to the English social system and criticizes it in an indirect way by showing how another nation solved problems which were similar to those of the sixteenth century England in a completely satisfactory manner. Thomas More uses Utopia, therefore, to criticize English society, directly in the First Book and indirectly in the Second Book. He makes extensive use of devices such as satire, irony, mockery and puns.

In order to demonstrate how More's Utopia has been object of much controversy, I am going to present, in this chapter, the opinions of several critics concerning Thomas More and his Utopia and comment on their views. Then I am going to discuss how Utopia behaves as social criticism and define the concepts of "Utopia", based on More's book, and I intend to develop the notion of "dystopia", based on the novels as well as on the opinions of different critics on the matter.

The significance of Utopia is a very controversial issue: According to C. S. Lewis "all [critics] seem to be agreed that Utopia is a great book, but hardly any two agree as to its real significance."² Petitfils³ believes this is due to the apparent vagueness the field of Utopia takes on owing to

the subjectivism it seems to be impregnated with. Each theorist to study the matter considers his own as the only significant view, regardless of the resulting proliferation of conflicting views.

Starting with the critics of More's own time we have Erasmus, who considers Utopia as a "iollye inuention, 'pleasantly' set forth";⁴ More himself, several years later, classifies it along with books better fit for burning than to be translated; half a century later Thomas Wilson applauds it as one of the best among "feigned narrations and wittie invented matters (as though they were true indeed)."⁵

Having been exhaustively discussed by scholars and critics in the field for over centuries, the notion of "utopia" remains controversial. Therefore, a great volume of critical and analytical literature has accumulated over these years. However, due to the obvious spatial and temporal limitations, only a few of the most prominent scholars and critics have been chosen to be quoted in this chapter. Their different approaches to Utopia as well as to the author himself are described below.

If sixteenth century critics seemed to take Utopia lightly, this is not so with most modern scholars, who tend to consider it a serious matter. Some consider it a literary masterpiece in which More proposed "prophetic remedies for the problems of an outworn social system".⁶ Others assert his book presents a conservative medieval-style society patterned on the monasterial system; yet others "feel that the book can be understood in terms of its literary form or genre,"⁷ along with other imaginary commonwealths which preceded Utopia.

KARL KAUTSKY is interested in More as a precursor of Socialism. In his opinion More produced an efficient materialist society which did an excellent job at solving the

economic difficulties of his time. He believes that More's ability to think methodically and to generalize was due to his condition as humanist, which also enabled him to see beyond the horizon of his time and country thus predicting the advent of Capitalism and making an assault upon it even before it had been instituted.

R. W. CHAMBERS sees More as spokesman of a medieval and monastic way of life. Contrary to Kautsky's point of view, Chambers argues that Utopia was not written for nineteenth or twentieth century Socialists. He insists that

few books have been more misunderstood than Utopia. It has given the English language a word "Utopian" to signify something visionary and unpractical. Yet the remarkable thing about Utopia is the extent to which it adumbrates social and political reforms which have come to be regarded as very practical politics. Utopia is depicted as a sternly righteous and puritanical State, where few of us would feel quite happy, yet we go on using the word 'Utopia' to signify an easy-going paradise, whose only fault is that it is too happy an ideal to be realized.⁶

Chambers also points out that Utopia is based on the four Cardinal Virtues the heathen might attain - Wisdom, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice - which resulted from the influence of Plato's The Republic, plus the three Christian Virtues - Faith, Hope, and Charity. These three virtues are also practiced by the Utopians, in spite of their not being a Christian nation. According to Chambers, the heathen virtues present in his book demonstrate More's medieval tendencies. However, the Christian Virtues are supported by the Cardinal virtues and not replaced by them, as would be the norm in an unchristian society.

Chambers states that "the underlying thought of Utopia always is, with nothing save reason to guide them, the Utopians do this; and yet we Christian Englishmen, we Christian Europeans....!"⁷ What is implied is that the Utopians,

although not being Christians, but guided by reason only, are even better than the Christians of More's time. However, Chambers believes that "More did not mean that Heathendom is better than Christianity. He meant that some Christians are worse than heathen."¹⁰

Chambers also says that Utopia is a prospect against the New Statesmanship, that is, against the Autocratic Rulers of More's own time to whom everything was allowed, and that Utopia is against the progressive ideas of More's time, thus leading back to the idea of a medieval monastic society. Furthermore, by tying the Heathen Virtues to the Christian Virtues More "makes his heathen Utopians into unexpected allies of the Catholic faith."¹¹

RUSSEL A. AMES sees More as a liberal bourgeois criticizing feudal cruelties and irrationalities. He believes Utopia was in fact a program for social reform. He asserts that:

The hypothesis may be very seriously projected that the Utopia in every detail had a practical meaning in More's day. This is not to say that More was urging his contemporaries immediately to institute in their societies every practice of the Utopians. The hypothesis implies, rather, that those Utopian practices which were fantastic consistently indicated a practical line of conduct which would be understood by sympathetic readers.

12

Ames also agrees with Chambers when he states that "the Utopians, guided by reason and also by their basically sound religion, have almost achieved a truly Christian ideal which they live by while we Christians do not."¹³ Utopia is meant to teach social and religious truth.

Ames believes More wishes to demonstrate in his Utopia that the English economic situation of the time was the cause of the social evils and that the upper classes would not be better off by abusing the lower classes or by prompting them to a

better life with eloquent words. By doing so the only result would be the impoverishment of their own country.

J. H. HEXTER, on the other hand, sees Utopia as preaching the need for reform of the conscience. Hexter accuses More's "ideal" society with no private properties, no money, and with the obligation to toil, of not being the ideal society of Modern Socialism which many seem to believe it to be. He states that More's description is incomplete for not showing "all the struggle, all the suffering, all the constraint"¹⁴ necessary to reach such a condition. It is his opinion that More did not believe that a mere rearrangement of the economic organization of society would be enough to eradicate the roots of social evils. For this reason he produced a society with laws that limited the scope of individual human desires and which was governed with the use of extensive and permanent coercive powers. As to the religious aspect of Utopia, Hexter points out that from all the sins vented in the English Christendom of his time More chose to abolish sloth, greed and pride from his ideal commonwealth on the grounds that they alone were the cause of the existing social evils.

ROBERT C. ELLIOTT believes Utopia is a satire of the English social system starting from the First Book in which Hythloday openly attacks the "severity of the punishment and the social conditions which drive men to theft."¹⁵ And he considers More one of the greatest satirists ever born. Elliott also agrees with Chambers' view that "the underlying thought of Utopia always is, with nothing save reason to guide them, the Utopians do this; and yet we Christian Englishmen, we Christian Europeans..."¹⁶ Elliott states that "the very presentation of Utopian life has a satiric function in so far as it points up the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be."¹⁷ In

other words, Elliott believes More's intentions when writing Utopia were to make evident the flaws of the English society by contrasting them with an ideal model, which does not necessarily depict More's "ultimate ideal".

ROBERT M. ADAMS holds that Utopia is the product of a moral idea and that, like any other ideological society, it tends to convert the safety of the basic idea into a supreme law, and tailor the people to serve it efficiently."¹⁸ He supports his argument by referring to the Utopians' lack of history. He says the little history they have is practically inconsequential: the shipwreck of a Roman vessel carrying Roman and Egyptian passengers some 1200 years before, and a "recent" war between the Alaopolitans and Nephelogites, in which the Utopians sided with the Alaopolitans, with no consequences for themselves. He also points out that their neighbors conveniently appear when needed and then disappear when no longer needed. Their mercenaries, the Zapoletes, are considered stupid by Adams, who also sees contradictory qualities in them for they show "incorruptible fidelity towards their employers,"¹⁹ yet an increase in salary of only a penny a day is enough to make them change sides. "Thus," says Adams, "the Utopians can use them confidently, yet betray them unscrupulously," without their ever "catching on to the game."²⁰

Adams asserts that due to this affected environment the Utopians lack individuality. And for having sacrificed certain aspects of their humanity in favor of certain other aspects of their personality to the benefit of the community, "the Utopians aren't full human beings."²¹ He asserts that More has demanded upon them "inhuman" and "superhuman" qualities so they could have their "decent society". Adams believes it is "too radical, too impractical and one sided."²²

His book, genial and jocose as it is, implies a grim tonality too - as if it were saying: these are moral athletes, stripped of everything (all impediments, all possessions, all extraneous desires), and conditioned from youth to the austerities of the good life; yet it's by an absurd concatenation of contradictory qualities that they can solve the problem of good government. People have said for years that under its jokes, the Utopia is a serious book. Under its seriousness, it is also an absurd book.²³

JOSÉ TEIXEIRA COELHO NETTO²⁴ believes that the Utopian Thought envisions a new life style based on the political rearrangement of society stilted on new social structures with the purpose of creating a better, more perfect society. Furthermore, he states that on choosing to write about a perfect society More was writing about a society which solved the problems of the society he himself lived in, a society lacking social conditions for survival of the lower cast, which he so vehemently disapproved of. However, Teixeira Coelho asserts that More was not a revolutionary, but a liberal politician who wished to take advantage of the positive aspects of the society of his own time and subtly introduced new ideas which might spur the desire to improve social conditions without as much as bringing on a revolution. In other words, More seems to be using Utopia as an instrument for presenting his suggestions for a better society.

Nevertheless, everything which is conceived through the utopian thought does not necessarily turn out for the best of the community, partly because the solutions are imposed upon the community, and partly because utopian idealizers tend to overrationalize the societies they envision. The inhabitants of these societies can be seen as mere puppets, people without a life of their own, robots. For these people life would be dull and with no distractions. There would be no ups and downs, no good or evil, no moral or immoral. In fact, Teixeira Coelho

believes that to live in these Utopias would be uninteresting, depressing and frightening, due to the harsh sentences for those merely suspected of seduction or adultery, the so called "pleasures of life". Then, Utopia may not be the promised land of grain and wine one would expect. Teixeira Coelho goes on to suggest that utopias might in fact be something inherently evil, our Mr Hyde aspect rather than our Dr. Jekyll side.

JEAN-CHRISTIAN PETITFILS deals with Utopia through the socialist perspective and sees More as attacking the society of his own time, which was dominated by Capitalist tendencies, with profit as its main and sole objective, besides criticizing the unproductive aristocracy of English society as well as the religious fanaticism of his contemporaries. Petitfils believes More is inciting mankind to change their behavior, at the same time he does not propose Utopia as a social model which will necessarily be followed, as can be perceived at the end of the Second Book in his disillusioned observation:

Yet I confess there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia which I wish our own country would imitate - though I don't really expect it will.²⁰

The main problem Petitfils sees with the proposal of perfect societies is that the idealizers too often overrationalize reality besides restricting themselves to but one solution, which they believe is the sole solution to the problem. Another complaint Petitfils presents against Utopian authors is their ignorance concerning human diversity, while trying to make people fit into their rigid standards.

In an attempt to simplify the notion of utopia, Petitfils defines it as a detailed description of an imaginary world, a harmonious city or community in which the author projects his own phantoms and dreams. Therefore, the objectives and characteristics of each utopian society will be as varied as

there are different ideals and objectives.

Kautsky, as we have seen, sees Utopia as an instrument used by More to criticize the Capitalist system even before its advent. He believes this was possible due to More's extraordinary ability to forecast social sequels. He states that More wrote Utopia to be read "as a goal which humanity should strive to attain."²⁶ Chambers on the other hand argues that More had no socialist inclination whatsoever in the Marxist tradition, and that far from being materialistic he preached Christianity. Furthermore, Chambers asserts that More was contrary to the progressive materialistic ideas which were taking form at the time and leading away from Christianity. I interpret Chambers' "UNDERLYING THOUGHT"²⁷ as meaning that he believes More considered Christian attitudes as being rationalistic and that this could be proved by observing the utopian principles which were based on common sense alone and yet resembled true Christian manners.

Ames is also an advocate of the belief that More, in Utopia, was criticizing the misdeeds of English society. Furthermore, he believes Utopia was a program for social reform, which More expected that his contemporaries would gradually adopt. Ames also believes More was trying to teach his contemporaries some social and religious truth. Hexter too, like Chambers, disagrees with the assumption that More had pre-socialist ideals. He sees More as a social critic who perceived the decline of Christianity and, through Utopia, wished to propose solutions to the social problems of his time. However, contrary to other critics, Hexter does not suggest that More intended his model to be adopted by English society. Elliott follows the same line as Chambers, Ames, and Hexter in arguing in favor of the Roman Catholic interpretation of

Utopia which considers More as one of the greatest prescribers of the Christian Faith. Elliott also sees More as a social critic and satirist and asserts that he used his extraordinary sense of humor to convey his social criticism in an ironical fashion which "few satirists of any time could improve on."²⁸

Adams maintains that "Utopia was the product of a moral idea"²⁹ in which More expounded the necessity for total organization and total discipline in order to make it work in a social environment. Furthermore, he believes that More, in Utopia, presented an "angry and honest critique of contemporary conditions, along with its recommendation for reform."³⁰

Teixeira Coelho believes that More wished to suggest new ideas which would arouse in his contemporaries the desire to improve the social conditions of their own time without disturbing the existing social order. So, he sees Utopia as being written to make people aware of the English social problems using a society which was opposite to the English society to make the English social flaws seem more evident by contrast.

Petitfils shares Kautsky's belief that More was a Socialist propagandist wishing to criticize the incoming Capitalist system and the rising bourgeois class, as well as the religious fanaticism which Petitfils believes was taking place at the time. Petitfils' nonchalant approach to religion, or Christianity, clashes with the opinion of those critics who believe More was criticizing the fanaticism of some rulers of the state who insisted on being recognized as leaders of the church as well. He believes More's Utopia was a critical book aimed at making society aware of its injustice and at inviting men to change their own ways but does not propose Utopia as a

model to be copied.

Thus, the discussion of More's intentions in writing Utopia alone is in itself a controversial issue. Among the many scholars quoted above we have those who believe More was criticizing the whole English social system, and those who believe his criticism is directed towards the religious fanaticism which was supposedly occurring at the time, contrasting with those who see him as preaching Christianity all the way through the book. Some people believe More was proposing the utopian model as a program for social reform to be adopted by the English people. Still others are against this idea, and believe his description was a mere satire of English society. And, of course, there are those who believe that Utopia is just a "recommendation for reform" and not a full-fledged program ready to be employed. Furthermore, the word, "utopia", coined by More, can be read from the Greek as "happy place" as well as "no place", suggesting it as a goal that humanity should strive to attain.

Despite all these different opinions and beliefs concerning Thomas More's Utopia, critics and scholars seem to agree on at least one point: they see Utopia as a criticism of sixteenth century English society. They believe that More is not satisfied with the English social, economic or religious status and uses Utopia to voice his discontent. Since Utopia is the book to lend its name to the "utopian genre" of literature I believe that, as in Utopia, all literature of this kind must originate from the author's dissatisfaction with the course of events in the society of his own time. But, we must notice that the degree of dissatisfaction might vary from author to author, resulting in different degrees of criticism. However, the wish for a better future is common to every human being and not

necessarily a virtue of utopian writers. Teixeira Coelho says that the hope for a better future characterizes what is called the "utopian thought". It does not take the form of a delirious or fantastic composition. It relies on true social tendencies, analyzing their flaws and problems, and produces an improved version of this society which solves the social problems detected by the idealizer. Since each individual sees social aspects from a different perspective, it is only natural that we should expect that utopias take on an infinite variety of shapes. Furthermore, due to their idealistic nature, the solutions proposed by the utopian author are very seldom put into practice. However, when a utopian goal is put into practice and is reached, the idealizer immediately sets new goals. Then, the Utopian aspiration can be said to be renewable, continuous, and unattainable. Thus the Websterian definition of "utopian" as being something visionary and unpractical.

The social aspects the author wishes to criticize is one of the variables which can influence the format of the society proposed by the author, who, by giving more attention to certain aspects he considers more important, invariably neglects others he does not believe significant. Examples of this can be seen in Utopia, where More overstresses the lack of private property and forgets about human necessity to strive for something of his own. Or the imposition of identical garments for all the inhabitants of Utopia, neglecting human individuality and taste for variety. In Nineteen Eighty-Four, for instance, George Orwell is so preoccupied with the State taking over the control of the individual and his privacy that he forgets to place virtuous individuals in his society. Similarly, Aldous Huxley, in his Brave New World, suggests that six hundred years in the future the geneticists and biologists might be able to control

human psychological and physical development to produce human beings pre-programmed for specific tasks, as the Deltas, who were programmed for more physically demanding tasks which dismissed the need of intellect. While elaborating on the genetic and biological development of science Huxley does not consider the possibility that in the future there might be computerized machines to do the most ungratifying tasks reserved, in Brave New World, to the Deltas, thus simplifying things for the leaders who would not have to go to the trouble of "producing" and conditioning all the workers needed, since computers are more easily programmed than human beings. In fact, Huxley was among the first to admit his lack of foresight concerning nuclear fission in the Foreword to his later editions.

Marge Piercy too, in Woman on the Edge of Time, has her priorities in the feminist ideals, as we shall discuss further on. In her utopian future society Piercy includes solutions to almost all the revindications of twentieth century popular movements, such as ecology, health, participatory democracy, and so on. However, due to her priority to prove that everyone is equal in Mattapoissett by having to "go into defense" -- men, women, scientists, or farm workers alike -- Piercy ends up making her "ideal society" not so flawless after all. For example, her suggestion of the necessity to include military service implies some kind of threat to society, and the mere shadow of war, even if it is an external threat, lurking over any society at any time would be enough to make most of its people lose their sleep.

Since I will repeatedly use the term "utopia/utopian" in this thesis it is necessary that I arrive at a definition of what I consider the basic meaning of utopia. What then is More's

Utopia? Of course his primary intention in writing Utopia was to produce an ideal commonwealth. Nevertheless, once we begin to dwell upon the matter we are able to perceive that what More really had in mind was the desire to criticize the society of his time, that is, the sixteenth-century English social organization. In the First Book of Utopia he makes a direct attack on international intrigues through Hythloday's open condemnation of specific events of the time; in the Second Book he switches to an ironic attack on the evils of his contemporary society with Hythloday's descriptions, in which English society can be negatively compared to the utopian society. In other words, More's work intends to denounce and criticize the English social abuses. Taking this fact into consideration I propose that the author's dissatisfaction with the society of his own time, or any of its aspects, as evinced through his social criticism, in whichever form it might appear, i.e.: satire, irony, mockery, comparison, contrast, or direct attack, be considered the basic premise to mark utopian and dystopian literature.

In literature there are supposedly several different kinds of utopian social projects. Petitfils has his own classification in which he points out three different types of utopias according to the authors' objectives:

In the first group he includes the fables in their simplest form where no political implication or signification is apparent. Utopias of this category are intended for literary purposes alone.

The second category includes the critical or moral utopias: he states that this way of writing allows, through the indirect process of fiction, the awakening of consciousness to society's evils and imperfections. Under the pretext of

describing far removed unknown civilizations, the author is able to portray the social aspects of the society of his own time in order to elude government censors. According to Petitfils these satires are not to be taken as social models. The three novels to be dealt with in this thesis could be included in this category: Brave New World, which portrayed a society six hundred years in the future, shows Huxley's wish to awaken his readers to the inhuman tendency of technology of his time; Nineteen Eighty-Four, at the time it was written, portrayed a society thirty-six years into the future and in it Orwell wishes to admonish his readers against the problems which might result if the State were to be allowed to control the private lives of the citizens; Woman on the Edge of Time portrayed two alternative societies: one located in New York, in which there are all sorts of repulsive, artificially created pleasures, used by Piercy as a caution against the irrational way we are destroying nature; the other located in the paradisiacal Mattapoisett (New England) which is presented as an alternative to the former and in which Piercy seems to be saying: If nature is respected and people take a more human attitude towards nature and one another this is what our future might be like.

According to Paul Turner, More uses fiction to "create a context" which might enable him to waive off any responsibility to the subversive opinions vented in the dialogue and he adds that the only person responsible for such opinions is Mr. Raphael Hythloday, not More himself. This procedure was quite necessary in More's time when the least hit of "unorthodoxy" could "land one in the tower". After all, opposition to the government ended up costing him his life in 1535. However, times and attitudes have greatly changed since More's days, so it

would be an overstatement to maintain that Huxley, Orwell, and Piercy were trying to elude censorship through fiction.

The third category Petitfils proposes includes those social utopias which are meant to be authentic, coherent and systematic projects meant to be put into practice. Within this category Petitfils states that there are a great number of types. Some demand the return to past values and ruminate over the ancient myth of the primitive "golden age". Examples of these are seen in the Eastern Taoist School or in Ovid's Metamorphoses, or even in Vergil's Georgics, together with Thomas More's Utopia, Bacon's New Atlantis, Campanella's City of the Sun, and, more recently, Huxley's Island. Others, on the other hand, are future oriented, expecting the redemption of the world by means of scientific and technological advances. There are puritan, as well as liberal utopias. Some emphasize equality, others, liberty. The socialist and fascist utopias can also be included in this category.

The striking transformation which the world has gone through since the time More created his Utopia has greatly influenced modern ideas of a perfect society as well as the objectives of social utopias. Many of the dreams More had in 1516 are a fact today and to a greater extent taken for granted. Great issues of the past, such as eight-hour work days, are practiced today, resulting in longer hours for leisure and self improvement. All improvements noticed today, when compared to the past, are due to the development of science and technology. "However," says Petitfils, "men don't seem to give the due importance to these advances."³¹ They seem to have lost their appeal and men begin to see the future full of dangers and uncertainties. The utopians today, in general, avoid presenting us a pleasant vision of the future in their newfangled social

schemes. What is known today as the utopian discourse deals less with bounty and happiness than with pollution, ecology and survival, according to Petitfils. The optimism of the past seems to have been superseded by a new wave of pessimism which, in spite of all the modern scientific improvements which have taken place in recent years, seems to be asserting that "utopias can come true" and these authors do their best to avoid them in order to return to a non-utopian society, a little less perfect but a lot freer.

This new form of pessimistic utopia, represented in Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four, which describes the future in apocalyptic terms, has been discussed as a new literary genre in opposition to the utopian genre. Some call it "counter utopian" literature, whereas others call it "anti-utopian" and utopian satire. However, this genre is more commonly known as "dystopian literature", and it is this way I will refer to it in this thesis.

Teixeira Coelho defines as dystopian those societies which are openly shown as evil. However, they would be better defined as being those societies which are presented in such a way that they become abominable. This does not necessarily mean that utopian societies do not have their abominable aspects; they do, for, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter, priorities and ideals vary from person to person, resulting in ideological conflicts, i.e., what is seen as a positive aspect by one author can be seen as repulsive by others. Certain aspects in Utopia itself, which may not have been considered negative in 1516, such as the need for passports to travel within the country, the uniformity of garments, the lack of freedom of speech and the harsh penalties imposed upon those who dared speak against the state, for instance, are nevertheless

repulsive to us in the twentieth century. Therefore, one of the main differences between utopian and dystopian literature lies in the author's impression: if he himself believes he is describing a better society, he is creating utopia. In this case the dystopian qualities which might appear are involuntary; however, if he believes he is describing a repulsive society, what he is creating is a dystopian society. In this case he forces situations and aspects to be repulsive, so they are by no means accidental. In both cases criticism of society is a central feature.

Utopian authors generally describe an ideal past society, or a more perfect contemporary one, in order to compare it with the society of their own time to show their readers how ridiculous certain aspects of the society to be criticized are; dystopian authors criticize their contemporary society by projecting its social tendencies into the future and describe a society which might evolve from these malignant tendencies, should they continue to exert their influence. However, due to its admonitory nature, dystopian literature must not be considered an attempt to predict the future necessarily. As a matter of fact, very few aspects of these descriptions are likely to come true, as can be proved by the disastrous miss Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four would be, were it to be considered an attempt to predict what London would be like in the year 1984.

When I describe utopian authors as imagining a contemporary society and dystopian authors as imagining a future society I am by no means stating this as a supreme rule. What I wish is to describe a tendency, for there are exceptions to be found, such as the Mattapoissett society, in Woman on the Edge of Time, describing a utopian future society; or the

Lilliputian's society in Gulliver's Travels describing a contemporary dystopian situation.

An interesting development took place in the evolution of the "utopian thought" ever since the first masterpieces were produced. Based on my observations of the tendencies of the novels I analysed, I was able to outline several different stages which the utopian thought went through: The first stage was the idealization of more perfect and better social structures which would solve the social problems present in their time, such as, poverty, the abuse of economic power, the incompetence of certain rulers, the overvalue of money, and many others. In this stage writers and philosophers produced a great number of projects and novels suggesting solutions to these problems.

The last stage of the Utopian evolution, which is more contemporary, results from the observation of the previous stage which was concerned with the implantation of utopian projects. Since most of these projects were forced upon the population from above and in the form of revolutions which culminated in dictatorial regimes, there were a few cases of tragic failures such as the massacres caused by the Russian Revolution and during the Nazi domination. Therefore, the tendency of the last stage is to move away from absolutist forms of government as ideal and produce pessimistic social descriptions, the dystopias, as if trying to warn us that utopias can come true, and prompt us to fight against their institution.

Among the novels of the last stage, Woman on the Edge of Time is an exception, presenting both dystopian and utopian societies in the future. It could be that this novel is a precursor of the next stage of the utopian genre, which would be the same as the first stage and would feature the description of

future perfect societies, demonstrating hope for a better tomorrow and faith in human nature, in reaction to the pessimistic dystopian tendencies. The new stage of utopian thought will probably strive so that every human being be treated alike; that no person go unprovided for; that no one be considered superior to others for having more properties; that the most able, honest, and competent administer public affairs; that private property be abolished; that there might be freedom of speech and religious belief; that education be public and readily accessible to all. This list could go on and on to cover hundreds of pages and still not be complete. However, if we pay closer attention to the demands contained in them, we will see that most of them are as old as civilization itself, thus reinforcing the theory of the renewable and unattainable nature of utopian thought.

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²⁹ Adams, Sir Thomas More 198.

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³¹ Petitfils, Socialismos 182.

CHAPTER II

GEORGE ORWELL'S

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

In order to analyze Nineteen Eighty-Four properly in this chapter I will review some details about the author and his novel, and the historical background of the time it was written.

It was in 1948 that Eric Arthur Blair published his novel Nineteen Eighty-Four under the pseudonym of George Orwell. What Orwell seems to have wished to do was to show what life would be like in a totally inhuman world, in which the governing class kept its power by means of brute force, distortion of the truth, rewriting history and by mesmerizing the population.

One of the most practical aspects in Nineteen Eighty-Four for critics and scholars lies in the fact that the society Orwell devised was placed at only thirty-six years into the future, so that even a person who was a teenager at the time would be able to witness the arrival of the year 1984 in a normal life span and check whether Nineteen Eighty-Four had or had not any value as a social prediction and whether Orwell showed any forecasting virtues.

Eric Blair was born in 1903 already with the status of a "British Gentleman", for his father worked for the British Civil Service in India. Therefore, Eric himself lived the life of a British aristocrat. He studied at Eton and served in Burma. However, later on in life, he took up writing covered by a

feeling of guilt for belonging to the English upper class (many scholars believe it was his feeling of guilt that led him to change his name for the less aristocratic George Orwell). Then, in the twenties he took to wandering through the London slums making acquaintance with drunkards and bums while collecting material for his future writings.

In 1936 he became a Leftist, a Socialist, fighting for the Spanish Republicans and taking part in several battles against the Communists, where he was wounded and had to withdraw from the battlefield. It was after returning to England and reading newspaper articles and reports of the battles in which he took part that his hatred for the Communists actually took roots. In an essay "Looking Back on the Spanish War" he states:

I saw great battles reported where there had been no fighting and I saw complete silence where hundreds of men had been killed. I saw troops who had fought bravely denounced as cowards and traitors and others who had never seen a shot fired hailed as heroes of imaginary victories, and I saw newspapers in London retailing these lies and eager intellectuals building emotional superstructures over events that had never happened. I saw, in fact, history being written not in terms of what happened but of what ought to have happened according to various "party lines".¹

From then on Orwell began a lifelong private literary battle against Communism, trying to win with words the battle he felt he had lost in the battlefields.

During World War II he was denied a military position at the front so he joined the Home Guard while working for the BBC. It was also around this time that he joined the Left wing of the British Labour Party in spite of disagreeing with its philosophy and considering it an ill version of Socialism. Although World War II was being fought mainly against Hitler, Orwell doesn't seem to have been affected by Hitler's Nazism - he was concerned with the diffusion of Communism throughout the world instead. So, despite the Russians being allies of the English against the

Nazis, Orwell came up with Animal Farm, which was a satire of the Russian Revolution and the years that followed it. In order to produce a simple story which could be easily translated into other languages he wrote about a farm in which the animals turned against their masters. In the story the pigs decreed themselves the leaders of the revolution, the other animals were to be their servants. The pigs were treated to the best while the others got the scum. They kept their subjects under control by lying and altering the facts. The story ends with the pigs becoming dictators, thus betraying the Revolution.

Orwell finished Animal Farm in 1943, but due to its political implications regarding England's Russian Allies, he had a hard time getting it published; it was only in 1945 that he was able to do so. By then the war was at its end and the Russians were once more seen as Communists and Animal Farm became an astounding success enabling Orwell, from then on, to live on his writings and start working on his masterpiece, Nineteen Eighty-Four, in which he describes a society which could be considered an extension of The Stalinist Russia of the thirties. Other types of totalitarianism play a small role in this novel. There are but a couple of references to the Nazis and to the Inquisition. In the very first part of the book Orwell makes reference to the Jews a couple of times, giving us the impression that they would be object of persecution in the novel. However, the topic seems to fade away, as if he did not wish to turn the readers' opinions against the Nazis.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is but an exclusive portrait of Stalinism. In 1948, about the time the novel was being written, the Cold war was at its "coldest" stage. Thus, the popularity of the book. According to Asimov, it was almost a matter of patriotism, in the Western World, to buy it and discuss it, and

maybe read some parts of it. However, Asimov also states that he himself considers it a "boring book, didactic, repetitive and devoid of action."² At first the popularity of the novel among the conservatives was greatly due to its unmistakable anti-Soviet position and because the way of life portrayed in the London of 1984 was what the conservatives imagined it to be like in Moscow in 1949.

Orwell, however, did not live long enough to witness the success his novel became, nor to see how the year 1984 really turned out. He ended up dying in a hospital in London in 1950, at 46, victim of tuberculosis, only a few months after the publication of the book. The awareness of the imminence of death after long years of suffering from the disease was, in part, the reason his novel had such a pessimistic and bitter tone. Orwell himself admits that his illness had affected his humor in writing Nineteen Eighty-Four. In a letter to Fred J. Warburg he says:

I am not pleased with the book but I am not absolutely dissatisfied. I first thought of it in 1943. I think it is a good idea but the execution would have been better if I had not written it under the influence of T.B.³

The political situation of the world is another factor which might have contributed to the excess of horror and pessimism in Nineteen Eighty-Four. Looking back at the late thirties, while Orwell was already collecting material for his novel, we see that there still were superstates ruled by tyrants whose desires, although unjust, cruel and corrupt, were the absolute law. It seemed that these tyrants would rule forever, unless overthrown by an overwhelming external force. Benito Mussolini, in Italy, and Adolf Hitler, one of the world's most powerful and brutal tyrants who ever ruled over Germany, are two examples. Nevertheless, Orwell saw Mussolini's power overthrown

after a twenty-year government, and Hitler was defeated after twelve years of terror.

Orwell, however, did not spend much time on Hitler or Mussolini. His greatest enemy was Stalin, and in 1949, when Nineteen Eighty-Four was published, Stalin had ruled implacably over Russia for twenty-five years, surviving a terrible war, in which his country had had great losses, and ruled steadily on giving no visible signs of weakness. Orwell must have thought that neither time nor fortune would ever be able to overthrow his government, and that he would continue indefinitely in power getting stronger and stronger by the day. Therefore, it is exactly this way that he pictures Big Brother. Stalin's greatest enemy was Leon Trotsky who was, at the beginning of the Revolution, one of Stalin's partisans, later on transformed into the public enemy number one, for having gone against the injustices practiced by the party. Likewise, in Nineteen Eighty-Four, Goldstein took part in the revolution which led Big Brother to power but was expelled from the Party later on, after criticizing some of its flaws. Goldstein has the same Jewish features as Trotsky. i.e., he had

a lean Jewish face, with a great fuzzy aureole of white hair and a small goatee beard a ... long thin nose, near the end of which a pair of spectacles was perched.⁴

On the other hand, Big Brother's face "with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features"⁵ resembled Stalin's. Furthermore, the England of 1984 that Orwell depicts has gone through the same phases the Russian Revolution witnessed. Russia performed a series of purges in the thirties, so did the Ingsoc in the fifties, among many other similarities between Stalin's Russia and Big Brother's London of 1984. In short, it is quite evident that, besides criticizing all forms of dictatorship and absolutist systems of government, Orwell wishes to criticize

Stalinism most vehemently.

Leonida Kretzer, in her M.A. dissertation "Brave New World & 1984: A Comparison"⁶, points out that in gathering material for Nineteen Eighty-Four Orwell borrows many of the aspects and events found in the novel from books he read dealing with totalitarianism. Among these books she mentions Gulliver's Travels, which Orwell praises in his essay "Politics Vs Literature", giving special attention to part III where he sees Swift as attacking totalitarianism. He states that in this part of the book Swift

has an extraordinary clear prevision of the spy-haunted 'police state', with its endless heresy-hunts and treason trials, all really designed to neutralize popular discontent by changing it into war hysteria.⁷

It is from this book that Orwell, most probably, took the idea of including the "minutes of hate" against the enemies of the Party and of the persecutions and dud trials of the traitors. The idea of the brainwashing form of education, as seen in room 101 and the torture sessions, may well have also been borrowed from Gulliver's Travels, i.e., from the way the citizens of Laputa taught their children,

by inscribing the lessons on a wafer and causing them to swallow it, or propose to abolish individuality altogether by cutting off part of the brain of one and grafting it on to the head of another.⁸

The ideas of Newspeak and its principles may also have originated from the way Swift's Laputians "invent simplified languages" in order to limit the population's means of expressing their feelings.

The Managerial Revolution⁹, by James Burnham also, seems to have influenced Orwell in writing his Nineteen Eighty-Four. Burnham predicts that in the future the world will end up divided into three super-states engaged in constant war among themselves. Thus, Orwell's dividing the world of 1984 into

Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia, which are continuously at war.

Jack London's The Iron Heel also played a great role in influencing the outcome of Nineteen Eighty-Four. London, together with Burnham, shared Orwell's pessimistic view of the order of things. In his book he predicts a conflict between the capitalists and the proletariat in which the capitalists would be the winning party and would rule over society as unyielding tyrants. The desire for power is achieved in both novels with the use of force and oppression. A good example of London's influence in Nineteen Eighty-Four can be seen in the following extracts:

- We will grind you revolutionists down under our heel.¹⁰
- If you want the picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever.¹¹

These two passages convey a strong image and symbolism of the type of totalitarianism their authors were trying to describe. Still from The Iron Heel Orwell might have gotten the idea of writing his appendix about "The Principles of Newspeak", for London's novel has a similar type of appendix added on so as to give the impression of having been written-in seven years after the story had been finished.

The posters of Big Brother pasted onto the walls, Winston's varicose ulcer, and the trial of Jones, Aaronson and Rutherford with their confession of imaginary crimes seem to have come from Arthur Koestler's Darkness at Noon,¹² in which the hero, Nicholas Salmanovitch Rubashov, is forced into confessing crimes he had not committed and he also suffered from an abcess in a tooth which, like Winston's varicose ulcer, afflicted him whenever he was under pressure. Instead of Big Brother pasted everywhere, Rubashov had to put up with posters showing the face of "Number One" scattered around.

H. G. Wells was one of Orwell's favorite childhood authors and his admiration does not seem to have waned as he grew older. Wells was an optimist who believed in the human nature and we can sense his influence in Nineteen Eighty-Four in "The Book" which was attributed to Goldstein and shows "the vision of a future society unbelievably rich, leisured, orderly and efficient."¹³ In Well's The Sleeper Wakes, the use of loudspeakers at every corner continuously transmitting distorted versions of facts resembles Winston's job at the Ministry of Truth where he had to rewrite history from the Party's perspective, thus producing distorted versions of past events. The loudspeakers also remind us of the telescreens continuously blaring at Winston whenever he took a wrong move.

Finally, the novel said to have influenced Orwell the most was a novel called We, by the Russian author Eugene Zamyatin, which besides having given Orwell ideas for his Nineteen Eighty-Four, is said to have also provided Huxley with a great many ideas for his Brave New World. Orwell's Big Brother resembles Zamyatin's "Well Doer" who is also the deified chief of state, and Zamyatin places the citizens of his country in glass-walled apartments where they can be watched by the police through telescope-like instruments called "tubes" from helicopters hovering over the buildings. London of 1984, on the other hand, has telescreens in every home and public place, and microphones strategically planted, so the "thought police" can keep an eye on all the Party members. The helicopters are also present "snooping into people's windows."¹⁴

It is interesting to note how the criminals in Nineteen Eighty-Four are "vaporized", while, in We, an electric machine "liquidates" the enemies of the Party by transforming them into a transparent watery substance. All records of the

past are destroyed in We. Orwell also tampers with the past in his novel, by having, in the novel, all historical accounts rewritten to fit the Party's needs. Although the State, in We, is totalitarian and keeps everyone under surveillance, there still is a group of people who elude the police and meet to conspire in an old house preserved as a museum. Similarly, Orwell has Winston and Julia meet in an old room, where the past is preserved like in a museum, going against the Party's regulations.

The protagonists of both novels had illegal affairs. In their meetings in their secret room Julia committed crimes such as drinking real coffee and wearing make-up and perfume, whereas I-330 committed crimes such as drinking, smoking, and wearing skirts. Julia also dreamed of finding a "real woman's frock" to wear in privacy. Notice how the crimes they committed consisted of doing things which were common for the people of Orwell and Zamyatin's time. D-503 and Winston kept diaries at the risk of being discovered and the authors executed by the police. This kind of activity is considered highly subversive in both societies. Winston, D-503, and their friends were caught and tortured. Both Winston and D-503 were spared, however, only to be brainwashed by state agents, and both ended up betraying their lovers. Public executions are also present in both novels - Zamyatin uses a guillotine-like machine to perform the executions in his novel, whereas Orwell presents public hangings as massive public celebrations. In both novels the sacred duty of every citizen is to turn their friends in at the smallest hint of unorthodoxy.

Although so many common points can be detected between Nineteen Eighty-Four and We, as well as with the other novels, we cannot really accuse Orwell of plagiarizing this or

that novel because the themes can be detected in many other novels Orwell had had the opportunity to read before producing his final masterpiece. As a matter of fact Orwell only got hold of a copy of We at the end of 1945 after having heard about it in Gleb Struve's 25 Years of Soviet Russian Literature at the beginning of 1944. In a letter to Gleb Struve dated 14 February 1944 Orwell thanks him for sending the book and shows interest in reading We. He says:

It has already roused my interest in Zamyatin's We, which I had not heard of before. I am interested in that kind of book, and even keep making notes for one myself that may get written sooner or later.¹⁵

Therefore, Orwell is able to free himself from any more serious accusation of plagiarism by mentioning about his previous intentions of producing a similar novel in the near future. However, this is not to say that he has not borrowed a great many of his ideas from We as well as from the many other books he read. Although, as Kretzer says in her thesis, "the assumption [is] that every book should be an original creation of its author, not the re-arrangement of borrowed ideas,"¹⁶ this is absolutely impossible due to the great volume of literature produced on each of the possible themes. Furthermore, as Steinhoff puts it, "all of Orwell's writings were variations of the same theme, a theme that finally found full expression in Nineteen Eighty-Four."¹⁷ Orwell himself admits in his essay "Why I Write":

Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it.¹⁸

In the first chapter of her thesis Kretzer argues that Nineteen Eighty-Four is in fact a sum of all the events and situations that marked Orwell's life, just as "all of Orwell's writings are variations of the same theme": a frontal criticism

of Communist-like totalitarianism, which found its final and most marked expression in Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Like every great literary work, Nineteen Eighty-Four also generates a great deal of controversy. Some critics see it simply as a negative Utopia, while others consider it an allegory or metaphor of contemporary social aspects, a realistic picture of the totalitarianism of its time. While some critics believe Orwell is attacking Communist totalitarianism alone, others believe he is against all kinds of closed systems of thought from Catholicism to Communism. Some examples are the way "The Book" is looked upon by the counter-revolutionaries as an equivalent of the Bible, and the rituals the Party members use to worship the Party, an irony towards the rites of the Catholic Church. Another allegory is seen in the way the Party members consider themselves "priests" and their "god" is Big Brother, who is always present and "watching you". One of the most striking examples is seen in Part II, Chapter 8, where O'Brien serves wine and white tablets in a pagan Communion Service, while Winston and Julia answer questions similar to those asked by Catholic priests at the Renewal of Baptismal Vows. Robert Lee explains that Orwell uses religious metaphors for ironical purposes, i.e., he uses them in a "worldly context to suggest the corruption of the system, the perversion of eternal values by the secular demands of politics."¹⁷

The criticism of Communism is conveyed through the images of Big Brother, resembling Stalin, and Goldstein, his enemy, resembling Trotsky, besides the Party's ascent in Nineteen Eighty-Four going through all the stages the Russian Revolution witnessed. Another great similarity to Communism can be seen in the Party's Three-Year plans which are a satire of the Russian plans. And, of course, the constant repression and

the eternal fear of being turned in by any acquaintance for the least suspicion of treason help give Orwell's London of 1984 the same atmosphere as the Stalinist Russia.

Does the novel have any value as a prediction of the future? This is one of the questions frequently raised in discussing books which present societies in the future, as happens with Nineteen Eighty-Four, Brave New World and Woman on the Edge of Time. Almost all critics seem to agree that Nineteen Eighty-Four was not intended to be a prediction of the future, with the exception of a few, like Erich Fromm, who asserts, in an edition of Nineteen Eighty-Four published by the New American Library in 1961, that Orwell's predictions are coming true. He says:

Books such as Orwell's are powerful admonitions, and it would be very unfortunate if readers presumptuously interpreted Nineteen Eighty-Four as a mere description of Stalinist barbarity and not perceive that the book has a lot to do with us today.²⁰

Most social analysts maintain that novelists who write about the future are, in many cases, describing what they believe society would be like if certain trends should be predominant. In Nineteen Eighty-Four, for instance, Orwell pictured a society which he thought would evolve should state totalitarianism, following the Stalinist model, predominate in England. In other words, due to the negative aspects he portrays, we might say he is in fact criticizing this tendency by using future projection to illustrate the exaggerations he believed might occur. Since what Orwell wants to do is criticize the totalitarian system, we should read his descriptions in Nineteen Eighty-Four not as what he believes will happen in the future, but what he despises and hopes will not come true. Orwell's novel is, in fact, his means of admonishing his people of the evils which might occur in the future and prompting them

to change their ways.

Either by sheer coincidence or by Orwell's nightmares having come true, some aspects Orwell described in his novel happened quite nearly the way he described them. The first example is his putting the telescreen into every home, every room even. In the late forties the TV set was beginning to become accessible to the middle class which at that time could hardly afford one. Today, it is true to say that TV sets can be found in every home, and in many cases each household holds several sets. The difference however is that today's sets are not capable of spying on people, nor "strike the time", the way his did. Furthermore, the sets at the Ministry of Truth had dials on them to call for specific materials. There are however today closed circuit camera systems which are specially designed to watch houses, apartment buildings, and companies.

In Nineteen Eighty-Four Orwell described the division of the world into three blocks, or super powers, Eurasia, Eastasia and Oceania, which were in constant state of war. To decide how to divide the superpowers today can become a very tiring task due to political instability. Two however, are more or less stable, the Soviet bloc and the United States. These two are in fact, as they have been since 1945, in a constant state of rivalry. Still in Politics Orwell described the victory of Communism and China's independence from the Soviet bloc, which are true today.

Another amazing insight Orwell had was by describing the older persons' difficulty in adapting to the metric system as can be seen in the encounter Winston has with the old fellow who cannot get the bartender to "draw him off a pint of gin" because they only served it in half litre measures. In fact, even today the population who grew up with inches, feet, pints and ounces,

have a hard time going metric.

In almost all other important respects, however, there is no similarity whatsoever to what has happened in fact up to 1984, and to try to find similarities is to stretch the imagination too far. Orwell himself puts an end to most discussion on the issue in a letter he wrote to Francis A. Henson, on 16 June 1949, in which he states:

My recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable and which have already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism. I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily will arrive, but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it could arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences. The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasize that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere.²¹

As I discussed in Chapter One, Utopia can be considered social criticism, for it originates from the author's dissatisfaction with the society of his own time, or any of its aspects, as evinced through his social criticism, in whichever form it might appear, i.e.: satire, irony, mockery, comparison, contrast, or direct attack. Thus, Nineteen Eighty-Four also originates from Orwell's dissatisfaction with the tendency of the English society in the forties, markedly from the State's totalitarian tendency of moving towards the Stalinist model which was adopted in Russia at the time. Furthermore, Orwell includes satire, irony and comparison, among the devices he uses to convey his social criticism. More, in Utopia, feels the same kind of dissatisfaction towards English society. He is against the tendencies observed in the sixteenth century Britain that were leading towards the yet unheard-of capitalist economy

and driving thousands of peasants from their farms to lead lives of begging and robbery in the bigger cities.

Both More and Orwell play with words in an ironical manner. More is ironical when he names places, things and people. Writing his book in Latin he uses Greek names ironically in several occasions. Starting with the name of the island of Utopia, which when translated means "no place" or "nowhere"; the capital city is "Amaurot", meaning "dream", or "dark city" or even "city in the air"; there is a river that runs through Amaurot called the "Anyder", that is, "dry river" or "river with no water". The Utopians at one time engaged in a war against the "Alaopolitans", the "citizens without a country"; their allies were the "Nephelegetes" who were the "people born in the clouds"; when they needed help they hired the "Zapoletes", "busy sellers", who were their mercenaries. They celebrated the first and last days of every month as holy days: on the first days they celebrated the "Cynemern", or "dog-day", and on the last days they had their "Trapemen", "turning days". Furthermore the description of Utopia is made by "Hythloday", "nonsense", who visited the island together with his friend "Apinatus", "Mr. Silly Nonsense".

Orwell too has a special way in dealing with words ironically. Long before writing Nineteen Eighty-Four he demonstrated preoccupation with the future of the English language, as can be perceived in his essay "New Words"²² written around 1940, in which he shows his concern with the development of the English language. He believed the English language was losing its expressiveness. In his novel he sets down his fears in the form of a new language, called "Newspeak". This language is created to limit human beings' means of expressing feelings and ideas. One of the strategies is to

eliminate all ambiguity and consequently eliminate all kinds of literature. So in Newspeak, all ambiguous words are replaced by words with less or no flexibility at all. Another strategy is to compound several words into one, as can be seen in the word "Newspeak" itself, formed by new+speak. The irony in the language can be perceived through the names of the government ministries, which are: "Minitrue", or Ministry of Truth, where facts are altered to fit the Party's likes; "Minipax", which is the Ministry of peace, where prisoners are tortured and executed; "Miniplenty", the Ministry of Plenty, which is in charge of seeing that there be no lack of anything the population might need - when what happens in fact is scarcity of everything for everyone but the Inner-Party Members.

The Party's slogans are in themselves quite ironical and confusing. The slogans

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

which are written atop the building of the Ministry of Truth, where Winston works, also witness Orwell's irony, for they are at the same time confusing and contradictory, but the people are led to believe that they are loaded with significance. Another Party slogan runs: "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past."²³ This slogan is a confession that the Party is meddling with the facts, that is, rewriting history. The irony is that nobody is able to understand it that way, and tend to understand it as a patriotic, optimistic view of the future based on the efforts of the past.

The low quality, awful cigarettes, gin, and coffee they get are labeled "Victory Gin", "Victory Cigarettes", and "Victory Coffee". However, those who taste them end up feeling

in fact "defeated", rather than "victorious", due to their horrible taste. Anybody who used to belong to the Party but turned against it would become an "unperson", the person would be executed or "vaporized", and all records showing that he had ever existed were destroyed. Nobody could even think about that person from then on without being guilty of "thoughtcrime". Furthermore, anybody who committed a minor crime and sentenced to forced labor would be sent to "joycamps".

Utopia and Nineteen Eighty-Four resemble each other also in the intentions of their authors: More sees many flaws in the English social system. So he wishes to show his fellow Englishmen that the situation can be changed, as it has been in the island of Utopia. If he doesn't propose Utopia as a model for the English society, at least he shows them that the social evils present in their society are solvable. In other words, More hopes for a better future for his society. Orwell too, hopes for a better future for his society. However, his Nineteen Eighty-Four, as a "moral Utopia", seeks the awakening of consciousness of his fellow Englishmen to society's evils and imperfections through the description of the Russian society of his time, whose ill Socialism was being envied by the English statesmen wishing to copy it, and places it in London a few years into the future so as to make them think better of the possible consequences its implantation might have. Both books achieve their objectives through criticism: Orwell criticizes the Stalinist Socialism and its injustices, whereas More criticizes the incoming Capitalist system and the unproductive aristocracy.

One of the main differences found between the two books is that Utopia showed solutions to the problems of the time while Nineteen Eighty-Four only forecasted possible problems

without offering any insight as to their possible solutions. Another difference is in the way the social flaws are evinced: by juxtaposition in Utopia and by allusion in Nineteen Eighty-Four. The utopian society is the exact counterpoint of the English society, whereas the "Ingsoc" system of Nineteen Eighty-Four is an equivalent of the Stalinist system. Another great contrasting point lies in the way the social aspects are presented. Utopia is divided into two books, the First Book being presented in the form of a dialogue between More and the fictitious Portuguese traveler Hythloday. This dialogue is reported by Sir Thomas More as having actually taken place. The Second Book is Hythloday's description of the island of Utopia and of its people, laws and customs, as told to Thomas More. Therefore, Utopia is a descriptive book in which there is no plot nor characters, and Nineteen Eighty-Four is in the traditional novel format, that is, there is a plot told by a narrator. In this form we are left to infer many of the aspects of the society described, for they are not written out nor clearly stated. There are, of course, descriptive passages in which the aspects are clearly exposed. Nevertheless, both books are able to criticize the aspects their authors repudiate through an indirect form, by projecting their society into another time and another place.

One of the problems I see with the way More presents his society is that there is no way we can observe the effect of this kind of society on inhabitants, nor can we have an idea of their probable behavior in such an environment. In Utopia the people seem to be tailored for that kind of society. Nobody seems to go against anything. They just accept everything unquestioningly. In Nineteen Eighty-Four the largest part of the population also seems to accept things unquestioningly, but

in his novel Orwell allows for human diversity. Winston, Julia and others fight for what they believe, and even go against the Party's regulations. And of course, there are the "proles", who have their own way of life independent from the rest. I cannot accept that anyone could produce a society so perfect as not to have any internal disagreement or conflict, like the one More proposes. His society is a society of puppets without a life of their own who are governed by means of coercive powers, harsh sentences, and rigid standards, which frighten people into obedience and give no room for human diversity. Those negative aspects of More's Utopia tend to become less visible to the reader because More's book is basically description and argument without the dramatic intensity of conflicting characters.

In my first chapter I argued that one of the distinctive features between utopian and dystopian could be made through the analysis of the kind of society the author believed he was presenting: if he believed he was describing a better society, a society which solved the problems of the society of his time, then he was creating a utopian society; if the author believed he was describing a society that is abominable to whoever reads or hears about it, he is creating a dystopian society. Dystopian literature is in fact a satire of utopian literature, and is often referred to as "burlesque of utopia". In fact, dystopia has also been known as "utopian satire". Therefore, among the distinctive features we might also place the satirical tone it usually takes on.

This chapter would not be complete if there were not a more detailed comparison between Utopia and Nineteen Eighty-Four, so I will finish by pointing out the most important similarities and differences between the two societies. For this, I will make use only of the Second Book of Utopia, in

which More reports on Hythloday's description of "The Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia."²⁴

The Geography and General Aspects

Utopia is described as a country placed on a paradisaical island somewhat the size of England with geographical features such as to make it safe from any number of invaders. On the island there are spacious cities built exactly alike, and which are not more than twenty-four miles apart. Each city is surrounded by a strip of farm land at least ten miles wide which supplies the cities with an abundance of food. All surplus is shared among the cities with no need for payment or retribution of any kind. Every two years the farm population is completely replaced by people coming from the city who will stay for another two years. At harvest time the people from the city come out and help with the harvest. All the houses are large houses built by the community to house at least forty adults under the direction of a master and a mistress. The customs, language, institutions and laws are the same in all the cities of the island.

Airstrip One is how England is called in Oceania of Nineteen Eighty-Four. There is no greater description of the island as there is in Utopia. However, we can infer that there are some farm areas, for the proles catch trains during holidays to go get butter and other dairy products there during the holidays due to the great lack of food in London. In "The Book" we are told that farm life is kept quite rudimentary so the crop will be kept at its minimum output. There is no surplus and misery is common and stimulated.

The Cities

In Utopia the cities are described as beautiful and ordered. The streets are twenty feet wide and lined with handsome three storey stone houses facing each other. In their back yards their dwellers plant flowers and grow fruit trees which, during their season are laden with fruit. Their doors are never locked and any person who wishes to visit any household is welcome. Every ten years all the dwellers switch homes so there will be no attachment to the house nor sense of property.

As to the capital city, Amaurot, it resembles London in several aspects. There is a tidal river, the Anyder, which flows through the city, and reminds us very much of the Thames, only less polluted than it was in More's time, and stone bridges resembling the London Bridge. The cities are surrounded by fortifications built to protect them and ward off any enemy attack.

If Utopia is described in favorable terms, the London of 1984 is depicted as abominable and decaying. The scenery Winston could see from his apartment window was depressing: There were

vistas of rotting nineteenth century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron. their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions... the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow-herb straggles over heaps of rubble... there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken-houses...²⁵

The only buildings that were not in ruins were the great, massive windowless buildings that housed the Party agencies like the Ministry of Truth, which caused more fear than admiration. Even the buildings which housed the Outer-Party members were not any better off. In Winston's building for instance "The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats... The lift... even at the best of times it was seldom working"²⁶. The most annoying

aspect however, is that each Party member is constantly watched through the telescreens which are placed in each and every room. Like in Utopia, England is also protected from enemy attacks. However, this is done by more modern "Floating Fortresses" placed strategically at sea.

Political Organization

In Utopia every thirty households elect every year one representative (phylarch). Every ten phylarchs also elect every year a head phylarch. It is the duty of the two-hundred phylarchs to elect, when necessary, the prince, who rules for life. This is done by secret ballot.

The head phylarchs consult with the prince at least every other day to discuss public matters and settle disputes. Besides the head phylarchs two different phylarchs are invited to each session. It is a rule that no decision be taken before being discussed in at least three sessions. Furthermore, it is capital offense to discuss public matters outside the Senate or Popular Assembly. They say that this is to avoid conspiracy.

Since the Ingsoc system of government is hierarchical and pyramidal, power is concentrated in the hands of the minority of the population, i.e., two percent, who are the inner-Party members. Eighty-five percent of the population are the proles and slaves. The other thirteen percent consist of the Outer-Party members. "Admission to either Branch of the Party is by examination, taken at the age of sixteen"²⁷. The members of the Party of each region are in charge of administering their own area. There is no capital city. The Ruler is a fictitious character, "Big Brother", created to stand for an almighty leader who knows everything, and is always right, and who took power by means of a revolution. The Inner-Party members own

everything and make all the laws according to their desire. The basic political structure is similar to the Stalinist system, only a little harsher and more totalitarian.

The Utopian prince and Big Brother share the characteristic that both govern for life. However, Big Brother is immortal so his rulership will be forever. As in Utopia, the population of Oceania is forbidden to speak about any kind of public affair or about any other subject the Party might consider subversive under the threat of being eliminated. The greatest difference however, is that in Utopia the officials are elected every year, whereas in Oceania a Party member remains in that condition for life and only ascends if he shows enough ambition.

Education, Occupation and Leisure Activities

Everybody in Utopia gets agricultural education besides the training for a particular activity of his own choice. The women, however, do the lightest work and the men are assigned to the heavier jobs. The son is taught his father's trade. Nevertheless, if he wishes to pursue another career he is free to do so; but he has to move to another household where that trade is practiced. If a person wants to learn a second trade he is also free to do so. If, however, the city needs one of them more than the other, he has to follow that particular career. Intellectual activity is voluntary for both men and women, and those who want to become scholars are exempted from other trades provided they do satisfactorily in their studies. The Phylarchs are also exempted from other trades, but they do not take advantage of this and in their free time pursue other productive activities.

The Utopians work only six hours a day and are supervised

by the Phylarchs so that nobody idles during work hours. Although the working hours are so few, they are able to produce more than enough to go around because everybody really works. However, when the warehouses are full and there is nothing else which needs doing, the officials decree shorter working days so the people can spend more time devoting "themselves to the freedom and culture of the mind"²⁸. Every Utopian is free to do what he wishes in his leisure time "provided he does not waste them in roistering or sloth, but uses them busily in some occupation that pleases him"²⁹. Furthermore, there are no gambling games which might be pursued by the Utopians in their leisure time, and the only two games they do play are Moral games aimed at teaching a lesson.

Professional education in Oceania cannot be said to exist. At least it is not evident in the book. All we know is that Winston and his colleagues work at rewriting history in the Ministry of Truth, but where and how they learned their skills is a mystery. Among the proles we see a few bartenders, wash women, and shop owners; the others seem to be just bums hanging around. The education the children get cannot be properly called "education" either. It seems more like brainwashing in which the children are taught untruths according to what the Party wishes and to be professional spies and traitors in behalf of the Party, in Associations called "Youth League and Spies" and "Junior Anti-Sex League" advocating complete celibacy for everybody. In other words "Party Loyalty" was deeply ingrained in them

by careful early conditioning, by games and cold water, by the rubbish that was dinned into them at school and in the Spies and the Youth League, by lectures, parades, songs, slogans, and martial music, the natural feeling had been driven out of them.³⁰

Besides the eight-hour work days, Party members are expected to

put in extra work hours on special occasions such as when Oceania changed sides in the war and Winston had to work eighteen hours a day for a stretch of five days, eating sandwiches and sleeping on mattresses in the hallways of the Ministry. Besides the normal activities the Party members are also required to use their spare time working for Party propaganda groups.

In principle a Party member had no spare time... It was assumed that when he was not working, eating, or sleeping he would be taking part in some kind of communal recreation.³¹

Since so few people actually worked in activities to feed and supply the country's basic necessities it is hard to understand how Ingsoc survived. The philosophy of the Party is that the more the population suffers, the more easily they are controlled. The slogan "Ignorance is Strength" conveys this idea, for the more ignorant they keep their subjects the stronger the Party becomes.

The educational and occupational philosophies contrast; in Utopia the citizens are educated and oriented towards productivity, whereas the citizens of Oceania are uneducated and oriented towards consumerism.

Clothing and Garments

The Utopians' clothes are practically identical among themselves with a slight distinction between sexes and marital status of the citizens. Their clothes were home-made, all-purpose, and all-season leather garments which hung loosely over their bodies providing great comfort and protection from cold and heat. They were made to last up to seven years. For going out and for special occasions they would all wear a natural wool cloak over their regular clothes. This wool cloak

was made to last for up to two seasons. They wore no jewelry or adornments of any kind.

The explanation given for this unique way of dressing is that if everybody dresses alike there will be no tendency of showing prejudice towards other people who wear poorer quality clothes, nor will there be anybody dressing in better clothes than the rest. Therefore, the clothing scheme is to warrant equality among the people.

In Oceania the Party members also dress almost alike. The Outer Party members wear blue overalls which are the Party uniforms. The overalls are also very comfortable and seem to last for quite a long time. Within the Outer Party there are several different groups as the Spies, which wear accessories like a red handkerchief around the neck to distinguish them from other groups, as the Anti-Sex league and their scarlet sash around the waist. The Inner Party members all wore black overalls to distinguish them from the Outer Party members.

Although the uniforms make the Party members look alike, their only function is to show that they are a separate class. The Party "dresses its members in a uniform which was at one time peculiar to manual workers and was adopted for that reason"³². They try to trick everyone into thinking that it is a labor movement controlled by the working class. Party members are forbidden to dress as they wish. They must wear the uniform at all times and are not allowed to wear any kind of adornment other than the red group-indicators. When Julia put make-up on in her secret meetings with Winston, they both knew it was a crime and punishable were she caught wearing it.

The proles, as the lower caste, could not wear clothes as refined as the Party members' and had to wear whatever they could get hold of. In this way the proles had their own

individuality with no two alike. Although more poorly dressed they seemed to be more human and more individuals.

Social and Business Relations

In Utopia, each city consists of a maximum of six thousand households. Each household consists of blood relations, and the family organization is Patriarchal. When a girl marries she moves into her husband's household, and when a boy marries he brings his wife into his own household. They all must obey the oldest man in the family.

Whenever the population exceeds the maximum number, the exceeding citizens are transferred to colonies in foreign lands which they have conquered. Although they help support the natives in the conquered country, they do not mingle with them.

Each city is divided into four districts, each of which has a central warehouse where the head of each household can get what his family needs "without any sort of payment or compensation"³³. The philosophy behind this is that abundance eliminates greed.

Every thirty families hold their meals together in "spacious halls" at given hours, and the slaves are in charge of doing the particularly heavy work. The infants have special nurseries where they are tended by voluntary nurses; the others are seated and treated according to their age and position in the household and community. Before meals begin they have a short ceremony in which a moral topic is read.

Their dinners are light, their suppers rather more elaborate, because dinner is followed by work, supper by rest and a night's sleep... Never a meal passes without music, and the dessert course is never scanted; during the meal they burn incense and scatter perfume, omitting nothing which will make the occasion festive.³⁴

While the family structure is preserved in Utopia, the

Party in Nineteen Eighty-Four aims at dismembering this age-old institution. Anti-Sex leagues are out to destroy the traditional family unit and thus produce anarchy within the population and, therefore, make the Party stronger. O'Brien says:

We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes an egg from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality...³⁵

The excess population is cut down by the bombings which the proles are subjected to daily.

If abundance is true in Utopia, scarcity is the keyword for Oceania, for it is in this way the Party believes it will keep control. As to their meals, the Party members also have them together in community cafeterias. However, the conditions of the cafeteria and of the food served there are greatly contrasting to the "Utopian halls" as can be noted in the following passage:

In the low-ceilinged canteen, deep underground, the lunch queue jerked slowly forward. The room was already very full and deafeningly noisy. From the grille at the counter the steam of stew came pouring forth, with a sour metallic smell which did not quite overcome the fumes of Victory Gin... On each [tray] was dumped swiftly the regulation lunch - a metal pannikin of pinkish-grey stew, a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of milkless Victory Coffee, and one saccharine tablet... The gin was served on to the metal-topped table, on the corner of which someone had left a pool of stew, a filthy liquid mess that had the appearance of vomit.³⁶

If this is what Party members have to put up with at meal times, I would hate to think what the proles go through in order to eat.

Travel Requirements

To travel to another city in Utopia is only possible with

the written permission of the prince whenever the person is not needed in his own city, and there is also a date set for the return. Upon arriving in the other city the traveler must look up the local artisan with whom he will board and work while in the city. Severe punishment is in store for whoever travels without the permit.

To travel within one's own district also requires consent from the head of the household and his wife, and the traveler is also expected to engage in half a day's stint of work to be fed by the hosting household. Since there are no alehouses, taverns, or brothels, the traveler is forced to search for a hosting household in order to have a place to stay.

Passports are also required for Party members traveling within Oceania and punishment is equally severe as in Utopia for those who risk traveling without one and are caught. The proles, however, are free to wander as they wish inside the country. Within their own districts, Party members can move around a little more freely but can be stopped for questioning whenever found a little further from home than needed. They do, however, have alehouses in Oceania where they can go to "forget" their problems.

It seems that More believed that freedom to travel around as one pleases was unproductive behavior. Orwell included the same kind of travel restrictions but pictured them as repulsive, meaning that he despised this kind of control.

Further discrepancies between the Utopian society and the society of Oceania are in the way they deal with religion. Utopians admire men who pursue a religion and honor a god.

Their religious principles are of this nature: that the soul of man is immortal, and by God's goodness it is born for happiness; that after this life, rewards are appointed for our virtues and good deeds, punishments for our sins. Though these are indeed religious beliefs they

think that reason leads men to believe and accept them.⁹⁷

Although they respect all forms of religion, they despise those who do not believe in the immortality of the human soul, and regard these people as "far below the dignity of human nature"⁹⁸.

The Party, in opposition, disregards all forms of religion. They are capable of executing a person for having merely pronounced the name of God, as happened with the poet Ampleforth, who "allowed the word 'God' to remain at the end of a line"⁹⁹ in his translation of one of Kipling's poems. The only religion they do accept is their own worship of the Party, in which Big Brother is their god, and they have appointed themselves priests of the Ingsoc.

Regarding adultery, both societies have the same approach. It is severely punished. In Utopia adulterers are turned into slaves, and in Oceania they are tortured and frequently killed. The reasons for such severe punishment are different in each case, though. In Utopia it is regarded as immorality, and in Oceania, the Party sees it as treason and disobedience to the laws.

When comparing both societies we see that they are in fact quite contrasting. In Utopia society is pictured in a more favorable way; and Nineteen Eighty-Four it is repulsive society. However, both books seem to be saying similar things, i.e., certain aspects of society would be better if they could be different from what they are. More and Orwell may diverge on some aspects, such as the need for passports, mainly because they are writers of different centuries. Therefore their way of exposing their worries also diverge greatly. More should be read as saying: "This is what I think society should be like"; and

Orwell as saying: "I hope this never happens."

Finally we are able to see how priorities and preoccupations have changed from More's time to Orwell's. More forwards the idea, which was popular in his days, that society, in order to be ideal, must be controlled and uniform. That is, everybody should dress alike, think alike, look alike and act alike so there would be internal order and stability. By the time Orwell wrote his Nineteen Eighty-Four there was a group of philosophers who feared this kind of social order and preached a freer form of society in which the State would leave the individual free to lead his own way of life without interfering in such personal matters as dress, sex, religious and political beliefs, or how an individual might spend his free time. In this sense we can perceive that Utopia and Nineteen Eighty-Four are the exact opposite of each other.

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² Isaac Asimov, ed., "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (New York: Field Newspaper Inc., 1980).

³ Orwell & Angus, Collected 4: 507.

⁴ George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty - Four (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd/Secker & Warburg, 1980) 13. Nineteen Eighty-Four was first published in 1949 by Martin Secker & Warburg. All quotations were taken from the 1980 edition.

⁵ Orwell, 1984 5.

⁶ Leonida Campestrini Kretzer, "Brave New World & 1984: a Comparison," diss., Federal University of Santa Catarina, 1985. - Kretzer's work has been very helpful in my reasearch for data on both Orwell's and Huxley's backgrounds and literary works.

⁷ Orwell & Angus, Collected 4: 249.

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- 18 Orwell & Angus, Collected 1: 28.
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- 23 Orwell, 1984 31.
- 24 Sir Thomas More, Utopia ed. and trans. Robert M. Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1975) 3.
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- 26 Orwell, 1984 5.
- 27 Orwell, 1984 168.
- 28 Orwell, 1984 44.
- 29 Orwell, 1984 41.
- 30 Orwell, 1984 58.
- 31 Orwell, 1984 69.
- 32 Orwell, 1984 173.
- 33 More, Utopia 45.
- 34 More, Utopia 48.
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36 Orwell, 1984 43.

37 More, Utopia 54.

38 More, Utopia 80.

39 Orwell, 1984 185.

CHAPTER III

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Although Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Huxley's Brave New World have many features in common, as we shall discuss in this chapter, we must notice that their authors' lives and works were not as similar as one would expect. As Kretzer¹ points out in her thesis, their backgrounds were, in fact, quite contrasting. Aldous Leonard Huxley was born on July 26, 1894, in Goldaming, England, member of one of England's most distinguished families, grandson of the great biologist, teacher, and writer, Thomas Henry Huxley, and great-nephew of Mathew Arnold, the famous literary critic, poet and essayist. Aldous, like Orwell several years later, studied at Eton, where he entered with the intention of becoming a doctor, but had to change his plans after contracting an ailment that left him almost blind. Two years later, with an improved, but weak, eyesight he entered Balliol College, Oxford, specializing in English Literature and Philosophy, since a scientific career was out of the question due to his problematic eyesight. The comparison of Huxley's background to Orwell's helps us to understand where and why there are differences in style between the two authors.

While Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four was the product of his whole literary career, his final masterpiece, Huxley's

Brave New World was written early in his career, in 1932, after his Crome Yellow, Antic Hay, Those Barren Leaves and Point Counter Point. Furthermore, Huxley's literary experience was long-lived, beginning in 1916 with some of his verses published in "Wheels" and ending in 1962 with his final novel Island. It is interesting to note that while Orwell's whole life spanned only 46 years, Huxley's literary career alone lasted almost that long. Huxley published his Brave New World 37 years before his final novel, Island, and during this period many changes took place within his style and points-of-view. A good example of this transformation can be found in his Brave New World Revisited, published in 1959, where he makes some comments and considerations on Brave New World in an attempt to bring it up to date to his more mature point of view.

Despite the seventeen year gap between Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four, we must notice that both novels were products of a same era and preoccupied with the same social evil, i.e., the totalitarian tendency of the state. Nonetheless, the difference in tone between the two novels seems to indicate that they are from completely different eras. Huxley, as a social satirist, presents Brave New World in a satirical but pessimistic form, whereas Orwell presents the world of Nineteen Eighty-Four in a heavier, apocalyptic tone. This difference in tone is partly explained when we check on the state of world affairs previous to the novels' publication. Nineteen Eighty-Four was published after the end of World War II with the defeat of Hitler's Nazi totalitarianism, at the cost of millions of lives and the establishment of Soviet Communism. Therefore, we can say that Orwell was influenced by this era of sorrow and suffering, which resulted in his pessimistic

novel. Brave New World, on the other hand, was produced in the post-war era between World War I and World War II, a period of recovery and reconstruction in which many changes in science and technology were taking place, resulting in what is known as "progress". Totalitarianism was, of course, present in Europe and in many other places throughout the world. However, it was, in many cases, in its initial stage, as Hitler's Nazism and Mussolini's Fascism for instance. Then, if Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four is pessimistic in tone due to the influence of World War II, Huxley's Brave New World can be said to be lighter in tone influenced by the period of reconstruction and scientific and technological development in which it was written.

As Kretzer points out in her thesis, there is a lot more written on Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four than on Huxley's Brave New World, which is surprising, considering that Huxley had a head start of about thirteen years over Orwell and his career outlived Orwell's also for about thirteen years. Furthermore, Huxley's family had more of a literary background than Orwell's. Nevertheless, the fact is that, compared to Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, Huxley's Brave New World has been a little less than overlooked by general criticism. Even so, here again, as one would expect, controversy was generated. Peter Firchow², for instance, in the introduction to Aldous Huxley - Satirist and Novelist considers Huxley one of England's greatest social critics and satirists. Firchow asserts that

Huxley is a satirist even when he is a novelist, poet, essayist; and although satire is not his only perspective on life, it is certainly the only one that is continuous and fundamental in his work.³

Despite all these traits Huxley seems to have been

greatly misread and misunderstood even among his contemporaries.

Firchow points out that

a great part of what was said about Huxley by his contemporaries, especially distinguished ones like Eliot, Gide, Maugham, and Virginia Woolf, has been more or less unfavorable.⁴

More modern scholars also seem little willing to "revise their verdict". Among Huxley's most eminent critics Firchow cites David Daiches, Arnold Kettle, Cyril Connolly, and Sean O'Faolain, who wish to minimize Huxley's skill as a novelist and assert that he uses the novel as a springboard for expressing his own ideas. However, Huxley, a critic himself, was always able to fend off any attack in the style of a great satirist, as can be witnessed in the foreword to the 1946 edition of Brave New World:

I have been told by an eminent academic critic that I am a sad symptom of the failure of an intellectual class in time of crisis. The implication being, I suppose, that the professor and his colleagues are hilarious symptoms of success. The benefactors of humanity deserve due honour and commemoration. Let us build a Pantheon for professors. It should be located among the ruins of one of the gutted cities of Europe or Japan, and over the entrance to the ossuary I would inscribe, in letters six or seven feet high, the simple words: Sacred to the Memory of the World's Educators. SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS CIRCUMSPICE.⁵

Here we are able to notice that Huxley's satirical style is certainly present in his replies.

Although criticism of Huxley has taken on many forms and "borne many different names",⁶ the basic objection to his writing has always been that his novels do not present "'real' human beings."⁷ Woods, for instance, regards Huxley's characters as "damaged souls; but it is not a matter of local disease, rather a cosmic cancer."⁸ Firchow explains that

His characters, so this line of criticism ran (and still runs), were either mere allegorical statements of moral or intellectual positions or else, what was even worse, mouthpieces for Huxley's own ideas, which could be and often were much more efficiently and appropriately

presented in essay form."

This criticism seems to be well-founded when we analyze the characters he presents in Brave New World. Among his stereotypes there is the "intellectual who has developed his mentality but pathetically neglected the emotional and physical sides of life,"¹⁰ which is represented by Bernard Marx. Then "there is the promiscuous female"¹¹ represented by Lenina Crowne who exemplifies the dehumanization which takes place in a technologically oriented society. Mustapha Mond, the World Controller, is an example of the somatonic character who achieved power by relinquishing art and freedom over comfort and power.

Among Huxley's many critics we have Peter Bowering and Jerome Meckier, who are among the few who actually attempt to show that Huxley's techniques of fiction warrant serious consideration. However, most critics tend to agree that the comment Huxley made regarding Anatole France, in which he says that "he does not understand characters in the sense that, say, Tolstoy understands them; he cannot, by the power of imagination, get inside them..."¹² would also be the best description of Huxley's own characters.

In the novel Brave New World Huxley shows several aspects of his extraordinarily rich and malleable character, demonstrating at the same time his skills as philosopher, critic, scientist, economist, moralist and human being, to mention a few. Therefore, Brave New World brings forth the "frustratingly encyclopedic nature of his fiction."¹³ Due to this amplitude, Brave New World is read and interpreted in a great variety of ways. The novel is described, for instance, as portraying

A world society in which whatever has been found valuable

in marriage (the family, the spirit of free intellectual inquiry, the powers of the gifted individual, the resources of emotional maturity, etc) is sacrificed to a trinity of universal objectives: community, identity, and stability.¹⁴

Another aspect discussed regarding the novel is how it deals with the methods of mass production and rigid standardization which "are conceived as a carry-over from industrial to human engineering"¹⁵ resulting in assembly lines for "producing" human beings who are bred and preconditioned in the Pavlovian style into a handful of fixed types tailored for specific functions in the "social machine". Happiness too is guaranteed in much the same way by standardizing desires at the sensory level, thus avoiding social conflicts.

Birnbaum sees in Brave New World a satire of chemistry, physics, physiology and other sciences; and in his description of the society Huxley portrays in the novel he asserts:

In this state of the future, the power of the world has been centralized into the hands of ten directors. Every person is under the control of the government. Even his birth is carefully controlled so as to insure a proper proportion of Alphas, Betas and so on down to the lowly Epsilons. Under this centralized government, everybody is "happy". There are no neuroses, no psychoses, no inhibitions, no diseases, no economic insecurity. Everything has become standardized and predictable. In this state of the year 2600, the only thing to fear is not fear itself, but the threat of unorthodoxy. All wisdom, all initiative, all creativity, all problems have been assumed by the directors of this super-government.¹⁶

In the description above we are able to perceive Huxley's eclecticism in dealing at the same time with various topics and aspects in his fiction. From the descriptions, we gather that Huxley deals with expertise in Brave New World with the following topics: the sacrifice of freedom and individuality in favor of artificial happiness; the problems involving totalitarian and centralized governments; caste societies; imposed happiness; standardization of all aspects of life, including feelings, resulting in the loss of individuality.

Besides these main topics which can be inferred from the description above, we are able to name many others, such as: ethics concerning birth control; the right to arts and religion, the right to grow old and the right to suffer, or simply, the right to be unhappy; the dehumanization brought on by scientific and technological progress; the liberalization of sex; conditioning education; etc.

Despite the rich variety of topics present in Brave New World, which demonstrate the author's knowledge in the different human sciences, Huxley's novel is today considered oversimplistic in the light of modern sociology. Toffler says Brave New World describes a society "based on high technology and low complexity: the machines are sophisticated but the social and cultural relationships are fixed and deliberately simplified."¹⁷ Toffler is correct when he asserts that social and cultural relationships are fixed. However, when compared to the technology of the eighties, Brave New World cannot be considered so far ahead. Scientists can today duplicate and even outdo any technological aspect of the New World. Nevertheless, the fact that everyone seems to benefit from the technology of the New World is in itself a great advantage over today's technology.

Both Orwell and Huxley were passionate defenders of the freedom of the individual, and in order to protect it from its enemies they launched themselves into personal campaigns against totalitarianism by exposing in their novels the cunning schemes of totalitarian leaders and dictators. Orwell, however, as we have discussed in chapter two, went further to reach his intent. He concentrated all his effort in criticizing what he considered the greatest evil of all, the Stalinist form of Communism. Huxley, on the other hand, in spite of also being against

totalitarianism does not, as Orwell, restrict himself to this or that social or political system. The two main devices Huxley and Orwell use in Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four to demonstrate their beliefs of the dangers of totalitarianism are satire and irony; Orwell, for criticizing Stalinism, produces a society which duplicates Stalinist Russia. Furthermore his description of Big Brother resembles Stalin and Goldstein resembles Trotsky. However, he never mentions these historical characters by name.

Huxley, although less poignant in his criticism concerning the Soviet leaders, does not hesitate before using the names of some of the Communist dictators in his novel, even though the characters which bear these names have little or no similarity to their inspirers. Bernard MARX, for instance, is an insecure character seeking fame and recognition, LENINA Crowne is a promiscuous female character in a society where promiscuity is the norm. Then there is Polly TROTSKY, an "innocent" child, shown in the novel engaged in "erotic play" with boys her own age in the gardens of the "Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre".

Huxley does not limit himself to mentioning names of the Russian Revolution either. In his novel, for instance, he called "Bokanovski" a process of fertilizing the human egg in order to allow it to divide and subdivide until forming up to 96 identical individuals who work on the less gratifying tasks in the New World. When choosing the name of this process Huxley was probably inspired by the French public official Maurice Boknowski, who was famous for advocating a plan for outlawing war around 1927 and had no theory whatsoever on human fertility. Benito Hoover, Bernard's "too hairy" and easy going friend might have inherited his first name inspired on the

Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, who came to power some 10 years previous to the publication of Brave New World and was overthrown only in 1943 with the end of World War II. Helmholtz, Bernard's good friend, could also have been inspired on the great German scientist Herman Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz, who distinguished himself in Anatomy, Physiology, Physics and Mathematics. The Helmholtz in the novel, although also very distinguished, distinguishes himself in literature, that is, producing literature in the "Writing Department" of the "Ministry of Propaganda", instead of in science.

After comparing the characters Huxley presents in Brave New World to the probable sources he might have taken their names from, we are able to notice that Huxley tends to make an inversion, that is, the characters in the novel tend to be the opposite of the real-life characters. Bernard Marx, for instance, is a shy person who abhors negative publicity, whereas Karl Marx was a revolutionary constantly exposing himself to criticism. Lenina Crowne, like Bernard, was a peace-loving person whose only preoccupation was with herself, quite different from Nikolai Lenin, who was a revolutionary and whose main preoccupation was with the people of his country. Then, Polly Trotsky, pictured in the novel as the innocent child, is in every aspect a counterpoint to Leon Trotsky, the stubborn revolutionary of the Russian Revolution.

When mentioning characters called Marx, Lenin, or Trotsky, one would expect that they be at least similar in some respects to these historical figures. This however, does not happen with the characters in Brave New World. It is comical to imagine Marx as a shy introspective person, or Lenin and Trotsky as inconsequential young women, or even Mussolini walking around gnawing away at "sex-hormone chewing-gum" in the

American easy-going mannerism. By portraying his characters this way Huxley is able to achieve the irony in his novel.

Huxley's fiction previous to Brave New World follows a pattern which is similar to the pattern we see in Orwell's novels previous to Nineteen Eighty-Four, that is, we notice that in everything written previous to Brave New World Huxley exercises the ideas he would use in the novel. Where Huxley and Orwell differ, however, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, is that while Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four was his last masterpiece, Huxley's Brave New World was produced right at the beginning of his career, after Crome Yellow, Antic Hay, Those Barren Leaves and Point Counter Point, all of which have aspects in common with Brave New World. By looking into these aspects we are able to follow the development of the ideas Huxley presents in his Brave New World. In Crome Yellow, for instance, Huxley seems to demonstrate his dissatisfaction with English society, especially with the upper classes. It satirizes the English middle and high classes which were known to spend their days engaged in useless activities.

In Crome Yellow the idea of nihilism and futility which was common in the twenties is explored in great detail by Huxley. This idea is evident in the setting in the novel which is a country-house where a group of people spend a lazy weekend eating, drinking and engaged in aimless conversations. This sort of activity is also criticized in Brave New World, where the inhabitants of the London of the future are compelled to practice, in their spare time, meaningless sports which lead to consumerism.

It is in Crome Yellow also that Huxley's preoccupation with a technologically advanced future society, as presented in Brave New World, begins to take shape. Mr. Scogan, one of the

characters, argues about the state of the future society, saying:

An unpersonal generation will take the place of nature's hideous system. In vast state incubators, rows upon rows of gravid bottles will supply the world with the population it requires. The family system will disappear...¹⁸

What Mr. Scogan seems to be doing here is describing "London's Central Hatchery and Conditioning Centre" in Brave New World, where babies are in fact "decanted" from bottles and the family unit is extinct.

Mr. Scogan also makes some considerations about the stability and organization of the future society. The future society Mr. Scogan envisions takes the form of a class society in a Rational State, in which human beings would be separated into distinct species according to the "qualities of their mind and temperament". Psychologists would "test each child born and assign it to its proper species".¹⁹ Then, after being classified, each child would receive the education suitable to those of its species. Control over the population would be achieved by educating them from the earliest infancy into believing that there is no happiness to be found except in work and obedience, and into believing that they are extremely important persons and everything they do is "noble and significant". Mr. Scogan goes on and says:

For the lower species the earth will be restored to the centre of the universe and man to a pre-eminence on earth. Oh, I envy the lot of the commonalty in the Rational State! working their eight hours a day, obeying their betters, convinced of their own grandeur and significance and immortality, they will be marvelously happy, happier than any race of men has ever been. They will go through life in a rosy state of intoxication, from which they will never awake.²⁰

Mr. Scogan seems to be describing the same principles which were to appear in Brave New World described by Mustapha Mond, one of the ten World Controllers, when lecturing Helmholtz

and the Savage on the principles guiding the new society. He says:

The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave.²¹

So we see that both Crome Yellow and Brave New World deal with control and social stability through ignorance and the conditioning of the lower casts into an artificial state of happiness.

The problems concerning real love and physical sexuality are also common to both novels. In Crome Yellow we find Denis, a naive and oversensitive young man, in love with Anne, who has some traits he despises. Therefore he is led to feel attraction towards her and at the same time repulsion, and were it not for the intervention of his friends, this conflict would have led him to suicide. This conflict seems to repeat itself in Brave New World between John (the Savage) and Lenina. In this case, however, there were no friends there to interfere. In both cases we notice the male character's desire to escape, rather than try to face and solve the conflict.

In Point Counter Point, written right before Brave New World, Huxley presents a continuation of the conflict between sexuality vs. love which had its start in Crome Yellow. According to Kretzer most of the characters in Point Counter Point "are unable to harmonize the life of the body and the life of the soul." She also says that the characters are all "pleasure-seeking people who have not fully developed their personalities. They care for only one single aspect of their personality: either sexual, intellectual, or spiritual."²² The

theme of "sexual desire and unfulfillment due to the body/soul conflict" is, as Kretzer puts it, "stretched out to its last consequences in Brave New World, where man has turned into a barbarian, a slave of science and physical sensations."²³

Point Counter Point also discusses the theme of birth control which was to be explored to a greater extent in Brave New World. In Point Counter Point we find several occasions where human beings are criticized for having so many children and for increasing the world population at a faster ratio than the food production. We can notice a preoccupation with the future of the world food production which was not accompanying the growth of the population. In Brave New World this preoccupation is taken still further. The mere suggestion of having children, or even constituting a family, was abhorred. The words mother and father were considered immoral and despised by all.

Although many themes and topics discussed in Brave New World can be found in all of Huxley's preceding novels, Point Counter Point and Crome Yellow are just about the only ones in which these similarities can be more easily detected. In Orwell's works, however, these similarities are far more obvious and evident. In other words we can say Orwell's novels are all "variations of the same theme," while Huxley tends to be more eclectic.

Brave New World is considered the last novel of the first period of Huxley's career. In it he goes to extremes to solve all the sexual conflicts and the problems of emptiness which were a constant theme in his first novels. Eyeless in Gaza, written right after Brave New World, is then considered the turning point in Huxley's literary career. It is the novel where he begins to present a new mystical and holistic nature,

putting aside all the problems discussed up to Brave New World. So, Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Huxley's Brave New World can, in fact, be likened in the sense that they both mark the climax mounting towards a fixed objective. The difference, however, between Huxley's and Orwell's career is that while Huxley's Brave New World has an aftermath, which can be represented by Brave New World Revisited, Orwell's points of view in Nineteen Eighty-Four are taken as being his final word. Kretzer raises the possibility that "if Orwell had not died shortly after writing Nineteen Eighty-Four, had he lived for another three decades, he might also have changed his point-of-view."²⁴

The ideas authors present in their novels might come from a variety of sources which would be difficult to pinpoint were we to try to identify them. In the Chapter on Orwell I made a number of suppositions on probable sources for Orwell's ideas. For Huxley, however, this kind of "guessing game" is a bit more difficult due to the limited amount of literature on Huxley's literary works. Some parallels have been made, however, linking Huxley's Brave New World to other literary works available. Among these parallels we find mention of Huxley criticizing "the 'Wellsian' hope of a better future."²⁵ Firchow also says that:

Brave New World is also an attack on the present's conception of the future. Specifically, it is a parody of H. G. Wells's optimistic fantasy of the future, Men Like Gods, this is confirmed by Huxley in a letter dated May 18, 1931: "I am writing a novel about the future - on the horror of the Wellsian Utopia and a revolt against it."²⁶

In this case what we have is not exactly a "parallel" but an inversion of the Wellsian ideas presented in Brave New World. We see that what Huxley really intends to do with Wells' fiction is mock and ridicule it and not "borrow" Wells' ideas. However,

Wells plays an important part in influencing the ideas in Huxley's fiction.

Since Huxley's themes are so varied and universal it is difficult to assert that he actually borrowed this or that idea from this or that particular book or author. Orwell, however, on more than one occasion insisted on linking Brave New World to the Russian novelist Eugene Zamyatin's We, which was translated into English in 1924. Despite Orwell's insistence that Huxley actually "plagiarized" We in Brave New World, this does not seem so obvious after comparing the novels.²⁷ As Kretzer asserts, "the theme in both novels is alike: the destruction of humanity in men by the establishment of a scientific tyranny where men are made to fit society and not society to fit men";²⁸ the plot, the style and the characters, on the other hand, are different. We is, for example, written as if it were the character's chain of thought and presented in the format of a diary, whereas Brave New World takes up basically the traditional narrative style.

Among the similarities we might notice that both novels offer happiness in exchange for freedom, that social stability is sought by both societies as a final goal, that families have been abolished by the State, that the State interferes with all private and sexual affairs, and that promiscuity is encouraged. Furthermore we can notice that both novels portray two different worlds within themselves: one which is controlled, within certain geographical boundaries; and another one, a marginal one, where the people, in spite of being seen as primitive, have more individual freedom. Arts also in both novels are controlled by the State. The poets, for instance, are forced into writing State propaganda. Religion has been abolished in both novels, and the State takes over the role of creator, requiring that

everyone take part in "State worship" services.

Kretzer nicely sums things up in the conclusion to her second chapter where she says:

Although Huxley's is a more sophisticated world than that of Zamyatin and though science has reached a higher degree of advancement in Brave New World than in We, both worlds share the same purpose of picturing the destruction of the individual in a highly technological and rational society where "I" is suppressed by "we". In both worlds you are not "one" but "one of"; you are just a cog in the big machine of the state.²⁹

Although Orwell is quick to accuse Huxley of plagiarizing We, Brave New World has, in fact, less in common with Zamyatin's novel than Nineteen Eighty-Four does. However, in order to be fair to both Huxley and Orwell, it is important for us to take into account their different styles and personal contributions to the novels and disregard the similarities among them. For, as we know, similarities are bound to occur among novels of the same genre. Therefore, if Brave New World, Nineteen Eighty-Four and We belong to the same genre, i.e., the dystopian genre, then there will certainly be aspects and situations which make them resemble each other. These novels attack and criticize totalitarian forms of government. Orwell, as we have discussed, concentrates his attention on the Stalinist form of totalitarianism; Huxley makes a more general criticism and does not suggest that any specific form of totalitarianism is worse than the rest, and Zamyatin concentrates his criticism on the tendencies of totalitarian states interfering in the private lives of each citizen and eliminating their individuality.

The main setting of both Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four is the city of London envisioned several years in the future - 36 in Nineteen Eighty-Four and around 600 in Brave New World. The governments portrayed in both novels

are totalitarian and control the individuals' lives in all respects. They try to gain control over the population by having the State take over the family functions in order to disrupt society and strengthen the State. The children are then educated, or "conditioned", by the the State to conform to the needs of the community. One of the devices used by both systems is to condition children, and adults as well, through the endless repetition of party slogans. In Nineteen Eighty-Four the most common slogans are: "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength"³⁰; "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past"³¹. There are also "educational" songs as:

"Under the spreading chestnut tree
I sold you and you sold me:
There lie they, and here lie we
under the spreading chestnut tree,"³²

which incite people to turn their friends in if they suspect of them.

In Brave New World there is a much greater variety of educational sayings which are taught by having the children listen to endless repetitions over loudspeakers as they sleep. Some examples are:

"Everyone belongs to everyone else." (p.26)
"Ending is better than mending." (p.33)
"I do love flying, I do love having new clothes." (p.32)
"The more stitches the less riches." (p.36)
"A gramme in time saves nine." (p.59)
"A gramme is always better than a damn." (p.60)
"Civilization is sterilization." (p.81)
"Streptocock-Gee to Banbury-T, to see a fine bathroom and W.C." (p.81) or
"Cleanliness is next to Fordliness." (p.73)

In many cases Huxley mocks children's rhymes which were popular in the England of the twenties, as he adapts and adulterates them to fit his satire. The rhyme

Streptocock-Gee
To Banbury-T
To see a fine bathroom

And W.C. (p.81)

illustrates this device by parodying

Ride-a-cock-horse
 To Banbury Cross,
 To see a fine lady
 Upon a white horse
 With rings on her fingers
 And bells on her toes
 She shall have music
 Wherever she goes.

According to Kretzer this sort of parody "implies a criticism of the distortion of traditional values which have been twisted to fit the needs of an overdeveloped society."³³ Through this kind of parody, Huxley tries to illustrate how social and religious values were being replaced in England at the time. The Cross in the rhyme, being replaced by the "T" of "Technology", shows Huxley's preoccupation with the materialistic tendency of the society of his time. The horse, which represents man's integration to nature, has been banned in the rhyme, showing Huxley's preoccupation with man's flight from nature. The inclusion of "Streptocock-Gee", a kind of bacteria, in the rhyme also shows Huxley's preoccupation with society's overrating asepticity.

Further examples of Huxley's "playing around" with popular sayings are: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," which becomes "A doctor a day keeps the jim-jams away," showing his preoccupation with man's moving away from natural forms of medicine; or "Mending is better than ending," which becomes "Ending is better than mending," demonstrating his preoccupation with the consumerist tendency of Western civilization and its castaway goods. Another example is: "A stich in time saves nine," which becomes "A gramme in time saves nine," or even "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," which becomes "Cleanliness is next to Fordliness."

The same kind of parody is found concerning religious services and traditions. In the New World God has been abolished, at least God known as an almighty deity, creator of life, as he is considered in our present world. In the New World, instead of worshipping a superior being, people worship Technology. According to Mustapha Mond, when he lectures John about the "Modern World", people turn to God when they grow older and calmer, after their youthful passions give way to the pains that accompany old age, and what is left for them is only the hope for a better afterlife. In other words, they turn to God for healing and comfort. In the New World, however, health and youthfulness are stretched right to the end. So they feel no pain, no discomfort, and no need to worry about old age and its consequences. Furthermore, Mond argues that this has made the modern man "independent" of God. Although Mond believes that "there quite probably is" a God, he admits that to the modern man he presents himself as an "absence". Mond says: "God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness,"³⁴ However, humanity has the need to worship a greater being, even if a mere hero, and to provide for this necessity, the New World offers religious-like celebrations in which technology, instead of God, is praised. In Brave New World technology is personified by "Ford", or Henry Ford, who stands for the CREATOR of modern technology, for being the first to use successfully the assembly line system to produce great numbers of T-model cars in record time. So, Ford replaces God in the New World and the Christian cross is replaced by the letter "T" from Ford's T-model car. Here again, we see Huxley's concern with the tendency of inversion of values which he perceived happening in his own time, and exemplifies with the substitution of the worship of God as creator of life, with the worship of

Ford, creator of technology.

One of the religious-like services we find in Brave New World is the "Solidarity Service," which parodies the Christian Communion celebration. In the Christian tradition services are celebrated on Sundays, whereas in the New World those services are held on Thursdays. The Catholic sign of the cross made over the heart is replaced by the sign of the "T" made over the stomach. The bread is replaced by "soma tablets", and the wine replaced by "strawberry ice-cream soma", which is the symbol of the technological world in which young people gather for meetings around soda fountains. The Christian Communion is celebrated in remembrance of Jesus' last supper in which his 12 disciples took part; the Solidarity Service parodies it by also having 12 participants taking part eating the soma, drinking the ice-cream soma and singing ritualistic songs which remind us of the hymns sung in church, along with other responsive readings such as, "I drink to the iminence of His coming"³⁵ which follows the Christian belief of the return of Christ. The Solidarity service, however, ends in an orgy session. Communion, on the other hand, ends in meditation.

Huxley's concern with religion is so great that he presents many other religious analogies. One example is his turning the Westminster Abbey into the "Westminster Abbey Cabaret"³⁶ The Archbishop of Canterbury becomes the "Arch Community Songster of Canterbury"³⁷, who is in charge of the orgy sessions. Several Biblical passages are also parodied in Brave New World, such as the episode in the Book of Mark in which the disciples rebuked the children that were gathering around Jesus, which is mirrored in the novel in this passage:

"Go away, little girl," shouted the D.H.C. angrily. "Go away little boy! Can't you see that his fordship is busy?"³⁸

In the Bible Jesus shows his love for the children by asking them to come nearer. He said:

do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.³⁹

Ford is also known to love children. Lenina says "Our Ford Loved Infants"⁴⁰. The philosophy of the New World is that everyone is happier if acting like an infant. The analogy, in both cases is that salvation is achieved by behaving as a child. In the New World, however, salvation is considered the state of happiness, whereas to the Christians it is the gaining of the kingdom of God. The analogy can be completed by comparing Mustapha Mond, his Fordship, to Jesus and the D.H.C. to one of his disciples who shooed the children away.

Besides the Biblical parodies Huxley also inserts several folk sayings and proverbs replacing GOD or LORD by FORD. For example:

"There were those strange rumours of old forbidden books hidden in a safe in the Controller's study Bibles, poetry - Ford new what."(p.23)

"But these people have never heard of our Ford"(p.73)

"Ford helps those who help themselves"(p.145)

The expression "Oh Ford!" in substitution of "Oh Lord" or "Oh God" is also used many times throughout the novel. Still another case of inversion occurs in replacing the traditional Christian calendar which uses b.C and A.D. with b.F. (before Ford) and A.F. (anno Fordi).

According to Kretzer, Huxley uses the technique of replacing the spiritual values by the material values to create an anticlimax and bathos (deflation), in which the reader builds up a mental picture of a religious setting and is deceived with a pagan description where the "spiritual forces represented by religion have been replaced by secular deities."⁴¹

The episode in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four in which Winston and Julia visit O'Brien also parodies the Solidarity Service Ceremony. However, the religious metaphors in Nineteen Eighty-Four are mainly to achieve irony, which Orwell does by infusing them into a "worldly context to suggest the corruption of the system"⁴² and add "moral shock" to his criticism, contrasting to Huxley's anticlimax and bathos in the presentation of his religious parodies.

We might notice that when comparing Thomas More's Utopia to Brave New World the similarities are as evident as the differences. However, it is Huxley's desire to criticize English society by showing a repulsive society, which he believed would evolve from it should the present trends persist, that makes Brave New World a dystopian novel. Due to its hedonistic nature, Brave New World is, at first view, a perfect, "utopian", society concerned with the well-being of its citizens. This impression is, however, undone with further reading; we find situations which can be considered repulsive, such as the mass-production of human beings, the loss of individuality among the citizens, the open promiscuity and the consumerist orientation, to name a few. Therefore we might notice that this society does not diverge too much from Orwell's London of 1984. In fact, as Kretzer points out in her thesis, we might say that the society Orwell presents in Nineteen Eighty-Four is leading towards the type of society Huxley presents in Brave New World, that is, the New World is the result of Nineteen Eighty-Four's Ingsoc.

Upon examining the differences and similarities between Utopia and Brave New World we must keep in mind the kind of fictitious societies the authors are presenting. Thomas More, presents a better world upon which he would like society to be

founded. Huxley, on the other hand, is trying to portray a society he repudiates and hopes will not come true. What Huxley really means to do is to alert mankind against the evils he believes might result should the existing situation persist. Despite the antagonistic intentions of their authors, both societies share a great many characteristics, as we shall now see.

Starting in Book Two of Utopia, where Hythloday describes the geography and main features of Utopia, we are able to detect the many similarities between Utopia and the New World envisioned by Huxley. In both cases the citizens are made to feel safe in their environment. Utopia propitiates an extremely safe island to protect its citizens against any sort of enemy attack; the New World society is also safe due to the absence of war or any other kind of conflict in the world, even death does not seem to be a problem there. The cities in both societies are also very carefully planned to please the citizens as well as to be practical. According to Hythloday they all follow "the same plan, and have the same appearance"⁴³. He also adds that "if you know one of their cities you know them all, for they're exactly alike"⁴⁴. The similarity of language, customs, institution, laws and other aspects reminds us very much of the New World in which everything is standardized, i.e., the New World also has uniform customs, and language, etc, as can be illustrated in the appearance of the groups of 96 identical twins in each Bokanowski group.

There are also diverging points in each society. Their dwellings, for instance, despite being the most sophisticated for each situation, diverge in the number of people living in each unit. In Utopia they are units of three-storey houses to house large numbers of people, while the New World offers

individual compartments which do not permit the interaction of individuals. As to the way nature is looked upon we might notice that Utopia stimulates a greater contact with nature and the New World society is against any sort of contact with nature's beauty on the grounds that natural pleasure cannot be taxed.

One of the most striking differences between Utopia and the New World lies in the sexual relationship. In Utopia, to any couple known to have had intercourse out of wedlock the most degrading punishment is allotted. Prostitution, therefore, is an unpardonable crime. In the New World, on the other hand, it is Marriage which is considered a public offense and the interchanging of sexual partners is the expected behavior. Sex is freely practiced and talked about in the New World and orgy sessions are frequent. Moral codes are antipodes to each other in the two societies; what one pictures as being moral, the other abhors as being immoral.

The Utopian political system, as described by Hythloday, could at first be considered democratic due to its participatory aspects. However, after a second examination, it rather resembles communism instead. The Utopian system takes on the characteristics of a police state trying to keep control over the opposing party for considering the discussion of public matters outside the senate a punishable crime. Such a style of government is also present in the New World in a more discreet form, for the citizens who voice discontent with any of the social aspects are banned to remote islands so as not to endanger the existing order. However, contrasting to Utopia's "communism", the New World encourages consumerism, in order to create a market for their products. While the Utopians get all their goods free of charge, the citizens of the New World are made to pay for each and every item. Furthermore, the Utopians

settle for basic items whereas the "New Worlders" are induced to acquire luxury items such as perfume and fancy adornments.

In Utopia all citizens are required to do agricultural work; in fact, agriculture is taught at all schools as a mandatory course which includes field trips for practice, and each family must spend two years at agriculture. This kind of activity is comparable, by its importance, to military service in many countries, in which people are drafted for a stipulated period of time to devote themselves to that specific task. Besides the agricultural education, the Utopians have also other professions which follow family tradition. In each family the "family profession" is taught from father to son. In the New World, however, agriculture is practiced by a third of the population who, thanks to modern technology, are able to produce more than enough food for the entire population. As happens with the farm workers, the professionals of other fields are themselves "produced" according to society's needs. Human eggs are fertilized and sent to the "Social Predestination Room" to be "labelled" and have their future defined. The Alphas, for instance, who are the intellectuals, have a more oxygenated circulation than the lowly Epsilons, who are oxygen-starved during their embryonic stage to be less capable of rationalizing and more subject to receiving and carrying out orders. Education in this society is achieved mostly by conditioning. For this there is the "Conditioning Centre" which is in charge of conditioning children from their earliest ages, in the Pavlovian style, to hate flowers and books for instance.

Both Utopia and the New World societies make use of labor as a way to keep the population busy and take peoples' minds off things which might cause discontent and lead to rebellion. In this sense, leisure is also a major preoccupation. Utopia awards

holidays whenever the surplus is such that there is no storage room left; then, holidays are decreed, disguised as a prize to the working class. Idleness, however, is prohibited, and the state checks to ensure that everyone is doing some "productive" activity during their leisure time, such as a constructive hobby or an educational game. Gambling, we must notice, is outlawed in Utopia. The New World also offers predetermined leisure activities such as games, parties, social meetings and other more sophisticated forms of socialization, including fancy discotheques and "the feelies" kind of movies. For the lower castes "soma" is available at a more accessible price. However, all leisure activity in the New World must be oriented towards consumerism, and those activities which do not induce spending, such as reading a book or sightseeing, are prohibited. It is also interesting to note that in either society, whichever activity is chosen, it must not be done alone.

Although both societies seem to have different approaches to labor and leisure, we must notice that their goals are practically the same: The Utopians are kept busy under the pretext of being useful to society, while the "New Worlders" are kept content by being made to believe that their spending has the social aspect of producing more jobs. In other words, both cases propose to keep social stability by keeping everybody busy and under surveillance all the time.

As to the clothing, the Utopians favor the more economical types of garments. As Hythloday describes them,

Their work clothes are loose garments made of leather which last as long as seven years. When they go out in public, they cover these rough working-clothes with a cloak. Throughout the entire island, everyone wears the same colored cloak, which is the color of natural wool.

45

In the New World, however, it is sinful to wear the same clothes

for over a short period, for, as mentioned above, the social tendency is towards consumerism. The children are conditioned to hate old clothes through a battery of slogans which are repeated daily:

I do love having new clothes ... old clothes are beastly ... we always throw away old clothes. Ending is better than mending.⁴⁶

If clothes in Utopia are all alike to denote an equal distribution of riches among citizens, the New World does exactly the opposite. Each social class wears a different color work-suit. The Alphas, for instance, wear grey; the Deltas wear khaki; the Epsilons; black; and the Gammas, green. How to dress out of work hours seems to be optional as long as one dresses as best as he can, which again leads towards consumerism and class stratification.

While the Utopian family unit is patriarchal with family members subject to the oldest male parent and the women restricted to household chores, the New World society is based on individual units. There is no family relationship to cause people to feel strongly. Thus, according to Mond, the world is kept stable. Men and women in this system share the same chores, unlike the Utopian society in which women are denied more physically demanding jobs. However, the problem of physical stress is solved in the New World by the lower castes, which are "produced" in order to take over the heavier jobs. This behavior is comprehensible when taken by an openly stratified society as the New World's, but the Utopians' use of slaves to do the "dirty" work is a question that might seem a bit contradictory since Utopia supports an equalitarian social system.

Population growth control in Utopia is dealt with by having the excess population transferred to other locations so as not to override their cities. As to birth control, however,

there is no ruling, for the number of children in each household is not limited. The New World, on the other hand, controls the population growth by artificially generating human beings in bottles whenever there might be need for more workers. Natural procreation is considered repulsive, and contraceptive methods are profusely taught through drills and conditioning.

Production in both Utopia and the New World are community matters and everything is geared for maximum efficiency. Utopia is an example of the domestic type of economy in which items are crafted by hand, whereas the New World production is highly technological, following the tendencies of the Industrial Revolution. The way the products are distributed show the political inclinations of each society. In Utopia, the goods are distributed free of charge to whoever might be needing them, following the communist ideals. In the New World, profit is the preoccupation with the sale of the products, demonstrating a capitalist system.

In Utopia, mealtime receives great relevance by being an occasion for all members of a community to meet and talk about their daily affairs. In the New World, on the other hand, mealtime is less stressed as being a time for confraternizing and is considered an occasion for orgy sessions, spending bouts at expensive private clubs, and high society meetings. Common everyday meals aren't even described in Brave New World.

Travel requirements seem to be the same in both societies. In Utopia one is "free" to travel wherever he might wish as long as the reason for the trip and its duration be known and approved of by the authorities. This is also the case of the New World where one is free to move around inside the city but must get a permit from the department director in order to leave the city.

Although the New World children are conditioned to hate natural beauty, artificial beauty is sought by the upper class members in the form of fancy party clothes and adornments to reveal their superiority. Here again, consumerism is justified as being a way to create jobs for the lower classes who are in charge of producing these items. Personal adornments in Utopia are shunned and considered, together with gold and any other jewelry, as marks of disgrace. Although artificial beauty is used for widening class differences in the New World, it is not worshiped in itself. Mond explains that it is "universal happiness [that] keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't".⁴⁷ To Mond, happiness isn't compatible with many aspects of the traditional civilizations. He even asserts that "god isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness."⁴⁸ This contrasts with the Utopian belief "that the soul of man is immortal, and by God's goodness it is born for happiness."⁴⁹ Utopia is a deity worshiping type of civilization and the New World worships technology instead. However, despite the different philosophical values, both societies "look toward pleasure and happiness as their ultimate end".⁵⁰

N O T E S

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⁴⁵ More, Utopia 43.

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⁴⁷ Huxley, New World 155.

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CHAPTER IV

A FEMINIST UTOPIA

MARGE PIERCY'S

WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME

Compared to Utopia, Nineteen Eighty-Four and Brave New World, Woman on The Edge of Time has an insignificant amount of critical material due to the fact of its being published so recently. Besides, I would like to point out that researching criticism of contemporary novels in Brazil is quite difficult due to the lack of material. As a matter of fact the only material I was able to find on the novel was an article written by Deidre Burton which appeared in "The Journal of English Language and Literature," which was published by the English Language and Literature Association of Korea in 1983, entitled "Linguistic Innovation in Feminist Utopian Fiction." In her paper Burton sets out to show how Woman on the Edge of Time presents linguistic innovations which mark it as an authentic feminist novel, as we shall discuss later on in this chapter.

Being a feminist novel makes Woman on the Edge of Time quite interesting to read due to the presentation of a world view through a feminine perspective and to the preaching of feminist ideals, such as equal rights and opportunities for men and women, the possibility to share child rearing and domestic

tasks with their partners, among many others.

Piercy's novel is a feminist novel particularly in the way it presents the protagonist, who is a 37-year-old Mexican-American woman, Connie, who, besides having to cope with all the social problems common to all women, is part of a minority group and suffers all kinds of injustices from society and family. She is repeatedly locked up in mental institutions for child abuse and had her daughter taken from her; she is also accused of anti-social behavior which was the alleged cause for her being kept locked away from society in the different mental institutions. The description of Connie's environment and difficulties are seen through the feminist perspective and show how she is trapped into difficult situations which would never be problematic for white people in New York city, where she lives.

What makes Woman on the Edge of Time a utopian novel is the fact that Piercy presents a new society, in the future, built around the rearrangement of social structures so that it becomes an idealistic place contrasting with the violent and decadent environment Connie grew up in. Connie is chosen by a citizen from the future to make contacts with the year 2137 and in her visits to the future she finds a civilization which has solved all the problems of the everyday life she had in her own time.

There are a great number of books nowadays which present sociological theories dealing with the future. Among them I would like to mention Alvin Toffler's Future Shock, published in 1970, which describes the emerging trends which will be shaping tomorrow's family life, the rise of new subcultures, life-styles, and human relationships. This book is of great importance because it gives us a clear picture of the decade in

which Woman on the Edge of Time was published: fads and preoccupations of the seventies and the revindications of different groups. It is important for us to know about the social aspects of the period in which the novel was being written in order to analyze its utopian and feminist aspects. I do not have any evidence in order to state that this or that author influenced any aspect of Piercy's novel. But it is possible that Piercy had been reading Future Shock as she wrote Woman on the Edge of Time due to the similarities between them. These similarities can, of course, be explained by their being books dealing with social aspects of the same time and place. Nevertheless there are some conflicting points of view.

Alvin Toffler says that much of what has been written about the future deals with it in "a harsh metallic note."¹ However, Woman on the Edge of Time deals a lot more with the human side of tomorrow than with catastrophic aspects as appear in Nineteen Eighty-Four and Brave New World, which Toffler says are "precisely those least likely to dominate tomorrow."² Another idea Toffler presents in his book is that the future will not develop in straight lines as many believe it will. And when talking about her society, Luciente, the person from the future, tells Connie: "Our tecnology did not develop in a straight line from yours."³ So, when Toffler digresses about the possible future of society, his words sound like Luciente speaking:

The super-industrial revolution can erase hunger, disease, ignorance and brutality. Moreover, despite the pessimistic prophecies of the straight-line thinkers, super-industrialism will not restrict man, will not crush him into bleak and painful uniformity. In contrast, it will radiate new opportunities for personal growth, adventure and delight. It will be vividly colorful and amazingly open to individuality.⁴

Toffler might well be describing the society of Luciente's time in which the problem of starvation was eradicated from the world, and disease no longer existed due to better diets and physical fitness. Education is available to everyone and lessons are taught in practical, amusing and interesting manners and personal disagreements are dealt with by means of discussions leading to agreements, thus eliminating violence. Variety is also a keyword in "Mattapoissett", Piercy's town of the future: nobody dresses or looks like each other, and activities, hobbies and professions are also as varied as the people of the place.

Concerning architecture and building Toffler asserts that in the future there will be more and more buildings with movable inner walls which might adapt to different uses, what he calls "Modular Fun Palaces". In Mattapoissett most buildings also follow the same orientations. When Luciente takes Connie to visit their meeting house for instance, we are introduced to it in this exchange:

Arm in arm they strolled toward the meetinghouse, a building long and low like a loaf of bread.

Inside it was larger than she would have thought, for it was built into the hill. "For meetings we use only a part, so we are more face to face. walls can be dropped at any point. This is the biggest it gets."⁵

Along with the adaptable buildings we are also introduced by Toffler to the "Modular Family" which he says might be common in the future. By "Modular Family" he means the kind of family formed and re-formed by members who come and go. As an example he mentions the executive who is transferred to a different city "Under this scheme," he states, "the executive not only leaves his house behind, but his family as well. The company then finds him a matching family at the new site. Some other itinerant executive then 'plugs into' the family left behind."⁶ Although this kind of arrangement might seem astonishing at

first, we might notice that this is exactly what happens in the society of Mattapoissett, with a few differences of course. There don't seem to be any executives, as we know them, in this society nor do the companies, or any other superior, choose which family the newcomer might fit into. It is a matter of the individual choosing his family on an agreement basis.

Still talking about families Toffler introduces the idea of the possibility of, in the future, doing away with the female uterus altogether. He says that "Babies will be conceived, nurtured and raised to maturity outside the human body."⁷ Mattapoissett too features "test-tube babies." There are special buildings, the "Brooders" in which the whole population is "produced" in vitro, sparing the women the inconvenience of childbearing. Toffler goes on to assert that "this new birth technology will strike home on earth, splintering our traditional notions of sexuality, motherhood, love, child-rearing, and education."⁸ Indeed, in Luciente's future world there is a great turnabout in the sexual roles of the population. Luciente, for instance, is at first seen as a young man by Connie in their first encounters. However, later on Connie discovers that Luciente is really a woman. This same undefinability is seen in many other citizens as well, but it is not restricted to their appearance. Parra, another citizen of the future, informs us that "all coupling, all befriending goes on between biological males, biological females, or both."⁹ Therefore, motherhood, and child-rearing and education must forcibly suffer transformations. Since the children have no biological mothers, the selfish child/mother bond ceases to exist, so there is a greater possibility of each child having more than one mother without causing disputes. In fact, in Mattapoissett, three "mothers" are allotted for each child, but no

father is provided, which marks a considerable change from our traditional family structure. Education too is remodeled in Luciente's society. Why send children to school with so many mothers to look after them? The transformations which occurred in education lead back to its origins, for, in Mattapoissett, the children are educated by participating in the daily activities and, later on, by being tutored by specialists in the field they choose to follow.

Toffler also predicts that in the future people will be able to redesign their own bodies with the use of genetic engineering to take on any desired function. Now, there must be a good reason for all the parents in Mattapoissett to be mothers. Well, one reason is that by dealing with genetic engineering even the male "Mattapoissettans" have the "privilege" of breast feeding their children. Notice Connie's surprise when she witnesses this fact:

He [Barbarossa] sat down with the baby on a soft padded bench by the windows and unbuttoned his shirt. Then she felt sick.

He had breasts. Not large ones. Small breasts, like a flat chested woman temporarily swollen with milk. Then with his red beard, his face of a sunburnt forty-five-year-old man... he began to nurse.¹⁰

According to Toffler we might also experiment in the future a "gradual relaxation of bars against polygamy."¹¹ More than a relaxation, Mattapoissett offers an extinction of the institution of marriage. Sexual bonds do exist, but in a more liberal form, with "handfriends" becoming "pillowfriends" and "pillowfriends" becoming "handfriends" again with no hard feelings after having broken up the sexual relationship.

Another aspect to be considered in the future, according to Toffler, is that

machinery will increasingly perform the routine tasks; men the intellectual and creative tasks. Machines and men both, instead of being concentrated in gigantic factories

and factory cities, will be scattered across the globe, linked together by amazingly sensitive, near-instantaneous communications. Human work will move out of the factory and mass office into the community and home...The factory whistle will vanish.¹²

In Mattapoisett Connie is taken to visit a pillow and comforter factory where she discovers everything is automatic. Luciente adds that

"Its mechanical... The analyzer oversees it, with constant monitoring and feedback. In operations like the brooder, most everything is automated, but we need human presence because mistakes are too serious... Manufacturing and mining are better done by machines. Who wants to go deep into the earth and crawl through tunnels breathing rock dust and never seeing the sun? Who wants to sit in a factory sewing the same four or five comforter patterns?"¹³

The "factory whistle", a synonym of fixed work hours, is also banned in Luciente's society. If everyone pitches-in the work load can be reduced for everyone. Luciente explains

"We put a lot of work into feeding everybody... With most everybody at it part time, nobody breaks their back and grubs down to dust like old-time farmers... Instance, in March I might work sixteen hours. In December, four..."¹⁴

So, Toffler's idea of work moving out into the home and community is put into practice in the novel. Communications too are instantaneous through the "kenners", which each individual wears on his arm, and which is linked to a central computer which provides any kind of information needed, as well as instant communication with any other person anywhere.

On arts Toffler quotes McHale, who says that the future of art "seems no longer to lie with the creation of enduring masterworks."¹⁵ In Mattapoisett paintings and drawings are displayed in the dining halls for everyone to look at:

On the translucent panels designs had been painted or baked in -- she could not tell -- in a wild variety of styles and levels of competence, ranging from sophisticated abstracts, landscapes, and portraits to what must be children's drawings...¹⁶

"We change the panels all the time," Jackrabbit said. "For instance, say I make one and later it stales on me.

I make a new one. Or if everybody tires of one, we discuss and change."¹⁷

The linguistic development, according to Toffler, is another aspect to be considered in the society of the future. He argues that language has always suffered transformations from time to time and the future should not mark a variation of this fact. He illustrates by asserting:

Were Shakespeare suddenly to materialize in London or New York today, he would be able to understand, on the average, only five out of every nine words in our vocabulary. The Bard would be semi-literate.¹⁸

Connie is victim of the same kind of "illiteracy" when talking with the citizens of the society in the future. She is introduced to a great variety of new words which, at first, set her confused, as the "semi-literate Bard". However, later on she is able to adapt to the new vocabulary satisfactorily.

Since the intention of this chapter is not specifically to trace the similarities found between Toffler's sociological treatise Future Shock and Woman on the Edge of Time, only the most obvious and relevant aspects have been commented on in order to illustrate the issues taken up by Piercy in her construction of her utopian society.

Another social analyst to make predictions about the future of society is John Naisbitt in his book Megatrends. Naisbitt's ideas are quite similar to Toffler's in most aspects despite having published his book in 1982, about five years after the publication of Woman on the Edge of Time. This time lapse, however, does not invalidate Naisbitt's study as a point of reference for studying the social aspects of the seventies, as most of Naisbitt's data was based upon this decade. Again, due to the focus of this chapter I will only deal with two of the aspects which add to Toffler's observations. The first idea Naisbitt forwards is that civilization is moving towards a

decentralized form of government which includes participatory democracy. In Luciente's time this dream has come true: all the people are invited to take part in the meetings where decisions are being taken. However, if any person fails to appear at all of the sessions the members of his "family" have a friendly chat with him to "coerce" him into participating more in the political meetings. For less important matters the decisions can be taken by representatives who volunteer to represent the interested party according to his or her interests. Each town, then, has its own government, which assembles with the others on general interest decisions.

The second idea Naisbitt presents is that "The building block of society is shifting from the family to the individual."¹⁹ This does not mean that in the future the families will disappear from society. What Naisbitt means is that the traditional family as we know it will no longer be common. Instead, the individual will act more independently without feeling tied to the family when taking personal decisions. Mattapoissett also features a family system in which family bonds can be easily untied and the members can fit just as easily into another family. This is made even easier without the father/mother type of family government. Their living quarters contribute to such independence, for each person has a room of his own, which allows for privacy and detachment.

Besides its relationship with the futuristic projections of Naisbitt and Toffler, Woman on the Edge of Time, as a utopian novel, also shares many aspects with classic utopian literature of the pre-Christian era. According to Petitfils²⁰ Antisthenes, one of the first known utopian authors, founder of Cynicism, in one of his dialogues, known as "The Republic", imagined a society with principles which despised materialistic

tendencies and private property. The followers of this philosophy tried, by means of the power of persuasion and by setting examples, to establish a society in which there would be no racial differences. In a way, the society of Mattapoissett follows the same orientations, as there is no private property and there is no sort of discrimination. The government and personal relationships are established by parliamentary means avoiding the use of force as in Antisthenes' social project. Hippodamus of Miletus, who greatly influenced Plato's philosophy, presents an urbanistic kind of social system based on civility and fraternity among the citizens. In his society he included a great number of social meetings, public associations and meals in common in order to "develop sociability". Society should be valued over each citizen's privacy. The future society in Woman on the Edge of Time shares the same basic principles of civility and brotherliness with Hippodamus' model: all meals are eaten in common dining rooms, social meetings are programmed with surprising frequency and all associations are public. Privacy and individuality, however, are valued over society in Mattapoissett, which is characterized by the importance it gives to the individual and his privacy.

Plato's Republic can also be instrumental for the comprehension of Piercy's novel. It has been described as depicting an aristocratic communist state founded on justice as its main principle, and having three main social functions -- production, defence and government. Some of the social characteristics of the Republic have a lot in common with those of the other societies we've already seen as well as with the society of Mattapoissett. The members of the ruling class in Plato's society have their meals together in great dining halls. These people do not marry, and men and women alike participate

in the exercises and war games, and receive the same kind of education; none of the members of the ruling class are entitled to any kind of property, and like in Luciente's time genetic selectivity is used to ensure a balance among all the races. However, Plato's society diverges from Luciente's time in aspects such as slavery and class division between the ruling class and the people in general. Plato, of course, describes an aristocratic state.

When comparing Woman on the Edge of Time with these classic examples of utopian literature novels we can see that the similarities are strong enough to consider the former a "utopian novel". However, as we have seen in the first chapter of this thesis, we need more than just similarities to consider a novel utopian. It must, first of all, take the form of social criticism originating from the author's dissatisfaction with the course of events in the society of his own time. Like More, who expresses his dissatisfaction with sixteenth century English society by comparing it to a more perfect society in which all the unsatisfactory conditions have been solved, Piercy also devises a more perfect society, placed in the future. Piercy, however, criticizes different aspects she considered unsatisfactory in modern society.

Piercy's criticism takes on the same themes of the social tendencies in the seventies. Some of these themes are: movements towards participatory democracy, and a decentralized government; anti-nuclear and pacifist movement; ecological, naturalistic, and conservationist movements; health and nutrition movements; anti-racist movements; sex liberation movements; the feminist movement.

In her novel Piercy created two very distinct future societies. The main future society is the one Luciente comes

from, placed in the year 2137 in the township of Mattapoissett, Massachusetts, and it holds all the qualities of a utopian society. The "alternative" future society takes place around the same year but in the megalopolis of New York City and fits into the dystopian category of utopian society. With the utopian society of Mattapoissett Piercy seems to be suggesting what the future will be like if nature is respected and people take a more human attitude towards nature and one another. With the dystopian society, on the other hand, she seems to be pointing to the future man must expect to have if he does not mend his way and present trends persist. Thus, we have social criticism expressed by the juxtaposition of the present day society with, on the one hand, a better, improved version in which the revindications of the different minority groups are achieved, and on the other, with an abominable version in which all the fears and apprehensions of humanity have become real.

Let's see how Piercy deals with the revindications of the different groups and movements in her novel:

The seventies were marked by a strong movement towards a more participatory democracy and towards a less centralized form of government. In other words, some groups fought for a government, or governments, in which the common, everyday citizen could participate in the decisions which affected his own life. Since a central government could not fulfill the needs of the different groups, these movements also fought for a decentralized government in which each region could solve its own problems in its own ways. Mattapoissett offers such a government. All citizens are invited to take part in government decisions as desired, each township has the autonomy to take its own decisions at local level and for inter-communitary aspects; representatives, who volunteer to defend the different causes,

represent their communities in greater assemblies. The only problem I see in this political scheme is that everybody must participate at one time or another in community decisions, otherwise they are reprimanded by the other members and coaxed into participating, which is a negative point for freedom of choice.

Anti-nuclear demonstrations and movements were going strong in the seventies in quest of deactivating nuclear power plants, and pacifist groups were fighting for the extinction of nuclear weapons. This pacifist anti-nuclear tendency can be perceived in Luciente's society manifested in songs such as:

"Someday the past will die,
 the last scar heal,
 the last rubbish crumble to good dirt,
 the last radioactive waste decay
 to silence
 and no more in the crevices of the earth
 will poisons roll..."²¹

The poem compares the "radioactive waste" of nuclear power plants to "poisons in the crevices of the earth" and, therefore, criticises the use of nuclear devices which are "poisoning" the earth. In a dialogue over breakfast Morningstar tells of a nuclear disaster -- "I dreamed I flew into the past. I flew to that river and kept that nuclear power plant from killing everybody in Philadelphia."²² This sort of criticism can be quite pungent in the way it is presented, by letting us learn that in the future there will be a nuclear disaster with many victims and talking about it as if it had already happened.

The dystopian society presented in the novel is also used to criticize the indiscriminate use of nuclear devices. Upon reading about Gildina's society we find that absolutely all aspects are abominable, since they form a society which resulted from the projection of all the aspects that, in Piercy's opinion, were negative in the seventies. Therefore, everything from this

society must be viewed as social criticism at its best. For instance, on a pamphlet Connie picked up which listed the movies available in Gildina's apartment, we learn that in this evil society there is a class of people who have profited from and strived for nuclear devices, the so called "nuke fission families", ranked in the upper caste of society and involved in repulsive extravagances involving the negotiation of organs of people still living. In other words, we are led to understand that this class of "nuke fission families" actually "raise" people to supply them with the organs they might need for transplants to enable them to prolong their lives.

One of the strongest and most widely spread movements of the seventies advocated that mankind should live in greater contact with nature and abandon everything which is artificial, while protecting nature against its predators in order to keep the planet in perfect ecological balance. Throughout the presentation of Luciente's society we are taken on a tour through a bucolic country, where all aspects seem to have taken nature, the ecological balance of nature, and the rational use of natural resources into consideration.

The first time Connie visits Mattapoissett, for instance, she is surprised at what she sees. Here is her account:

She looked slowly around. She saw . . . a river, little no account buildings, strange structures like long-legged birds with sails that turned in the wind, a few large terra-cotta and yellow buildings and one blue dome, irregular buildings, none bigger than a supermarket of her day, an ordinary supermarket in any shopping plaza. The bird objects were the tallest things around and they were scarcely higher than some of the pine trees she could see. A few lumpy free-form structures overrun with green vines. No skyscrapers, no spaceports, no traffic jam in the sky...²³

Luciente adds: "We don't have big cities -- They didn't work."²⁴ Notice how the absence of the massive cement structures and traffic congestions, common to the big American

cities, in itself creates a peaceful and naturalistic habitat in accordance with the demands of the most fanatical ecological enthusiast. The criticism implied in "They didn't work" is obvious to any reader. But this peaceful and natural scenario is not limited to "downtown" Mattapoisett. The suburbs remind us of the Biblical Garden of Eden with its

huts crawling with grape vines and roses, the orchards hung with small green fruit, the covered tanks where fish were spawning under translucent domes. Growth seemed to swarm over the land...They were walking a broad path beside the tidal river. Every twenty feet wooden benches stood.²⁵

They set out along a narrow paved way wandering a pleasant route over a high curved bridge across the river, under big and little trees, past roses drooping under the load of the rain, past willows, past boats and corn patches with pole beans and pumpkins interplanted...²⁶

Who wouldn't just love to live in such a country? I can't imagine anybody who would shy from an invitation to live in this "Garden of Eden". As in Thomas More's Utopia, Piercy devised this society to tempt her contemporaries into wishing for such a society and, who knows, maybe even strive to achieve this near-perfection. Criticism is again achieved by contrasting this perfect world to the less-perfect present day world.

Still, other more direct forms of criticism concerning ecology and environment protection can also be found in the novel. For instance, when Luciente comes to the present to visit New York City in Connie's time...

Luciente acted barely in control... he said, "Look. I have to leave. This place unnerves me. The air is filthy. The noise shakes me to the bone."²⁷

Or, later, when Connie visits Luciente's time she recalls...

That time I came down on the streets of Manhattan, I'd thought I'd go deaf!...In a way we could half envy you, such fat, wasteful thing-filled times!²⁸

Criticism is also made with the future charging the past -- Connie's time -- for having destroyed nature...

Our ancestors destroyed water as if there were an infinite amount of it, sucking it out of the earth and dirtying and poisoning it as it flowed.²⁹

Still, to show us how nature is respected, compared to the society being criticized, Luciente's time features "Earth Advocates" who are the people who voluntarily speak on behalf of the "total environment", and the "Animal Advocates" who defend the animal life. There are specific holidays in the year to celebrate nature and animal life, such as the "Washoe Day" in which the ability to communicate with animals by means of sign language is celebrated. Respect for nature, however, has purposes other than mere bucolism, as Luciente explains...

We have far more land growing food than you did. But, Connie, aside from the water table, think of every patch of woods as a bank of wild genes. In your time thousands of species were disappearing. We need that wild genetic material to breed with...³⁰

Pollution has been, for the last century, perhaps the greatest hazard for ecologically-minded groups. In Piercy's time, however, demonstrations and campaigns for "clean air and clean water" were at full speed and influenced Piercy in these particular aspects. In several passages the criticism against irrational use of natural resources and pollution reflect the philosophy of the time. For instance, when discussing Connie's time Luciente preaches...

A factory may also produce pollution -- which takes away drinking water downstream. Dead fish we can't eat. Diseases or gene defects. These too are products of that factory. A factory uses up water, power, space. It uses up time, the lives of those who work in it... We use up a confounded lot of resources. Scarce materials. Energy. We have to account. There's only one pool of air to breathe.

³¹

Contrasting to the perfect Mattapoissett, Gildina's future time shocks us with its filthy, polluted and artificial aspect.

Speaking about life in this future Manhattan Gildina says:

The richies don't live down here. Too much . . . thickness. The air's too thick . . . But you should see

where I was born! You're born coughing and you pass off to Geri coughing ... I always thought the sky was yellow till I came here. Now I know it's a real pale gray-blue, just the prettiest color."²²

Everybody, from middle class up, must live in air-conditioned environments in order to get away from all the pollution. So, when asked about sunlight Gildina is surprised...

"Light? How? From outside? Oh, I guess when you get up high enough. This is just the hundred twenty-sixth floor. But even up on the sun plaza what's to see ... You can make out some other towers in this plex. But you can't see down or any farther. How could you? It's thick. It's air. How could you see through air?"²³

Here we discover still another shocking aspect of Gildina's future; massive skyscrapers cover the landscape and, together with the air pollution do not let the sun reach the earth. Social criticism in this case resembles what Orwell was doing in Nineteen Eighty-Four by exaggerating social tendencies and speculating on what the world would be like in an envisioned future if they persisted on their course.

Preoccupation with physical fitness, health and natural diets were also a major concern in the seventies. Exercise was a must for a great part of the American population, with jogging scoring above all other kinds of exercises, which included cycling, swimming and aerobics, among many others. The most popular diet featured natural ingredients such as whole grain cereals rich in fibers. Vegetables and fruit were essential, and refined chemical elements such as sugar and salt were prohibited. Many groups banned meat altogether and took up true vegetarian diets. Piercy, as expected, also takes to these principles and presents them in her novel as a way to demonstrate how happy life could be if they were followed as in Luciente's society, and how drastic things would be if they were ignored as in Gildina's society.

Several aspects of Mattapoissett suggest that exercising

is a daily activity. All inhabitants are muscular and strong people -- true portraits of physical fitness. Their most common means of transportation for medium distances is the bicycle and for the shorter distances they walk. Most of their daily activities are done outside in the fresh air and involve physical activities. Their diet is also the healthiest possible. Take this meal for instance:

Large platters of food passed from hand to hand: a cornbread of coarse-grained meal with a custard layer and crusty, wheaty top; butter not in a bar but a mound, pale, sweet and creamy; honey in an open pitcher, dark with a heady flavor. The soup was thick with marrow beans, carrots, pale greens she could not identify, rich in the mouth with a touch of curry. In the salad were greens only and scallions and herbs, yet it was piquant, of many leaves blended with an oil tasting of nuts and vinegar with a taste of . . . sage? Good food, good in the mouth and stomach. Pleasant food.³⁴

Notice how the meal described above features enough natural food and fibers to suit most tastes. A typical breakfast would include:

Whole grains, nuts, sunflower seeds, blueberries, yogurt. The milk tasted of full flavor... Herb tea in large pots steamed.³⁵

When Connie noticed they weren't drinking coffee she questioned her new friends about it, to which Barbarossa answered:

"Coffee, tea, sugar, tobacco, they all took land needed to feed local people who were starving. Now some land is used for world luxuries, but most for necessary crops. Imagine the plantation system, people starving while big fincas owned by foreigners grew for wealthy countries as cash crops a liquid without food value, bad for kidneys, hearts, if drunk in excess."³⁶

In this exchange two different aspects are criticized: the abuse and overdosage of products believed to produce unpleasant side effects as coffee, tea, sugar and tobacco, and the capitalist mentality of planting more lucrative crops instead of healthier ones, using up necessary land strictly for profit. In Mattapoissett, however, these "luxuries" are planted, but in a

smaller scale, and their consumption greatly reduced and controlled.

Meat consumption is also greatly cut down despite the many herds seen in the rural areas. According to Luciente "mammal meat is innefficient use of grains."³⁷ And adds that meat is served only during holidays in well-balanced feasts similar to this one in which they served

A cold cucumber soup flavored with mint. Slices of a dark rich meat ... in a sauce tasting of port. Dollops of a root vegetable like yams but less sweet and more nutty -- maybe squash? ... A salad of greens with egg-garlic dressing. Something rubbery, pickled, hot as chili with a strange musky taste. Young chewy red wine... a graham fruit bread.³⁸

We are also informed that this "rich meat" is "spit-roasted geese" and that the bread is baked daily. And in order to avoid food poisoning from pesticides and herbicides, which were a common complaint of the seventies, the people of Mattapoissett spend their spare time walking down the plantations picking caterpillars off the vegetables.

In Gildina's apartment Connie noticed there was no kitchen and asked her:

"Where you cook food?"

"Cook it?" Gildina led her to a corner by the outside door, which looked like a bank vault's. There was nothing in the corner she could identify as a refrigerator or a stove. A drawer opened automatically when a button was pressed, to dispense transparent packets Gildina demonstrated for her. She opened one with a hiss of inrushing air that seemed slowly to soak through the mass inside. She was surprised to see it begin steaming.

At Gildina's invitation she tasted the food on a thin shiny plate. The food was heavily spiced but ultimately tasteless and gummy.³⁹

As it turned out all the food in Gildina's time was produced artificially and there was no natural food to be found. In fact, Gildina was nauseated by the mentioning of eating "raw tissue" such as vegetables. She also informs us that everybody in their society has some kind of gastric illness, as ulceric tumors and

colonic malachosis, which result from their artificial diet.

Criticism of eating habits is achieved through contrast between the types of meals in Mattapoissett and the Future Manhattan and how these eating habits influence health and physical disposition. In other words, the message seems to be: If present eating habits continue, in one hundred and sixty years from today humanity will end up eating that awful food Gildina has to eat, but, if we switch to natural food, we can certainly expect to have wonderful and tasty meals like those in Luciente's society.

The way meals are treated in Woman on the Edge of Time is quite revealing for consolidating the novel as feminist. Compared to Utopia, Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four, Woman on the Edge of Time is the only one to give us detailed descriptions of the meals themselves. Orwell, on the one hand, does give a detailed description of the meals served in the Party's cafeteria, as described in Chapter II, but his description is centered on the food's disgusting appearance rather than on what it consisted of and how it was made. Piercy, on the other hand, goes further in her descriptions and gives us details of how the different dishes are prepared, what spices are used, and even the way the dishes are displayed, besides the usual impression of taste and smell. We are also informed that everyone in the family is "entitled" to preparing a meal, and it is not a task reserved for the mother or for women. This can be considered a considerable victory over sexism.

Racism and discrimination had been greatly discussed before the seventies and had once more broken out as great waves of Latin and Oriental immigrants surged into the States and were being assimilated by society. New York City, in particular, became famous for the gang wars which involved the different

minority groups causing them to be seen as social burdens and, consequently, discriminated against. Anti-discrimination movement groups, supported by the media, fought heated battles for the recognition of these minority groups as productive members of society. Piercy too, in Woman on the Edge of Time, roots for the minority groups, and chooses the Mexican-American population as representative of the other groups. In Mattapoissett there is no predominance of race. In fact, the whites are outnumbered by dark skinned-people, like the Mexican-Americans and Negroes, who are present in about the same number.

Luciente herself is described by Connie as having an "Indian face", and later on we learn that her village descends from a tribe of "Wamponaug Indians" -- Piercy here probably refers to the Wampanoag indian tribe of the Algonquian stock that lived in the Southeastern part of Massachusetts at the time of the Pilgrims. Bee, a black-skinned citizen, in charge of the "Brooder" in Mattapoissett, explains why most of the population is dark-skinned

"At grandcil -- grand council -- decisions were made forty years back to breed a high proportion of darker-skinned people and to mix the genes well through the population. At the same time, we decided to hold on to separate cultural identities. But we broke the bond between genes and culture, broke it forever. We want there to be no chance of racism again. But we don't want the melting pot where everybody ends up with thin gruel. We want diversity, for strangeness breeds richness."*

Criticism of racism is achieved by actually eliminating this evil in a perfect future society and by asserting that the mixture of races can indeed bring "richness" and variety to society.

Racism does not seem to be a problem in Gildina's society either. In order to avoid racial conflicts the dark-skinned

people have the option of changing their skin color in plastic surgery. Socially, this can be seen as a solution, but might end up having serious psychological consequences to the population. This apparent solution is, of course, a disgusting one to readers of the novel, so, criticism is achieved in the ironic fashion of Huxley in Brave New World.

Finally, sexual freedom and woman's liberation are the strongest trends in Piercy's novel. In just about any direction we look, we are able to spot evidence of the struggle towards freedom of sexual choice and towards a more feminist society. Sexual freedom is an issue which has many aspects, among which we could mention: freedom for choosing sex partners and freedom for talking frankly about sexual issues, both of which imply upsetting age-old taboos. Even so, Mattapoissett has been able to overthrow these evils and offers the citizens of the future a taboo-free society in which sex is no longer a motive for "dirty" jokes or for economic exploitation. Men and women can choose freely their partners and cut relations just as easily, with no hard feelings. When Connie asked Luciente whether she liked women, for instance, she replied

"All women?" Luciente looked at her with a slight scowl of confusion. "Oh, for coupling? In truth the most intense mating of my life was a woman named Diana -- the fire that annealed me... But it was a binding, you know, we obsessed. Not good for growing. We clipped each other. But I love Diana still and sometimes we come together. . . . Mostly I've liked males."⁴¹

Through this exchange we can tell that Mattapoissett offers ample sexual freedom and that all kinds of relationships are accepted without any questioning, be it between man and woman, between two men or two women. It is amazing to notice how Luciente and Diana still "come together" at times with no problem at all after their relationship has fallen apart.

Children also have the same freedom adults do concerning

sex. Touring the children's building, for instance, Connie came across "two children, a boy and a girl of six or seven... seriously engaged in an attempt to have sex together."⁴² Magdalena quickly explained... "Mostly they learn sex from each other. If a child has trouble, we try to heal, to help..."⁴³ The "sex philosophy" in Mattapoissett is based on a wider philosophy. Magdalena adds:

Our notions of evil center around power and greed -- taking from other people their food, their liberty, their health, their land, their customs, their pride. We don't find coupling bad unless it involves pain or is not invited.⁴⁴

Sexual intercourse is not mandatory as in Brave New World, nor does it take on licentious proportions due to the freedom involved. It is at once a healthy and unrestricted activity practiced by all who wish to. There are of course those who choose chastity, and, unlike the behavior perceived in Huxley's New World, their decisions are respected and admired. As Magdalena, who has an important position being responsible for the children and the children's building, and who, like her Biblical counterpart Mary Magdalene, the reformed and repentant prostitute in the Book of Luke, chose chastity. Freedom to speak publicly about one's sexual preferences is also a characteristic to be found in Mattapoissett. For this I cite the example of Jackrabbit's wake, in which the family members and friends were expected to speak their hearts out. During this occasion several of the members spoke about their sexual relations with Jackrabbit and how they felt about them. As Connie put it "people sat naked with their emotions pouring out."⁴⁵

It might seem contradictory to maintain that this aspect of Mattapoissett is a social criticism, all we have are solutions to some of the problems seen by the different revindicatory groups of Piercy's time. Criticism, then, is implied, and

achieved only by making bold comparisons, as is the case of More's Utopia. Gildina's society, however, takes on a more evident aspect of social criticism. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it figures as an extension of present time tendencies, in the style of Huxley's Brave New World, and ridicules its original society.

If Mattapoissett clears all sexual taboos and figures as paradise, Gildina's future society inflates them to unmeasurable proportions, causing her future to be considered abominable. Sex in this society is sold, negotiated under contracts which demand exclusiveness. The women in this society act as sexual pleasure machines to the men who keep them locked up in antiseptic apartments with all the paraphernalia needed to enhance sexual pleasure. They submit to plastic surgery which deforms their bodies in order to make themselves more "sexually attractive". Gildina, for instance, is described by Connie as

a cartoon of femininity, with a tiny waist, enormous sharp breasts that stuck out like the brassieres Connie herself had worn in the fifties -- but the woman was not wearing a brassiere. Her stomach was flat but her hips and buttocks were oversized and audaciously curved. She looked as if she could hardly walk for the extravagance of her breasts and buttocks, her thighs that collided as she shuffled a few steps.⁴⁶

The women in this society are "discardable": if at the end of their contracts they aren't able to get another one soon, they might end up in one of those organ banks.

Sexual freedom does not exist in Gildina's society: relationships are strictly sexual and between men and women, as can be perceived by Gildina's repulsion at touching Connie, considering it a "lesby" attitude. Her submission to Cash, her "man", is perceived in the number of hours she spends every day to get ready for his arrival; nearly two hours putting makeup on. She says, "the painting is what counts."⁴⁷

Feminist ideals are present in all the solutions shown in Mattapoissett, which can be said to be a "feminist" society. To name a few we might mention: a world in which sexual differences don't really make a difference; a world in which racism and segregation no longer exist; where children are not only woman's responsibility, but society's; where household chores as cooking, cleaning, sewing, etc... are not seen as "woman's business"; a world in which there is social peace; where health and education are the main assets; a world in which sharing and giving really happen.

As we have already discussed, sexual differences really don't exist in Mattapoissett. Luciente, for example, is at first thought to be a man but later on is discovered to be a woman. Barbarossa, a man, has breasts and nurses his child. Sexual intercourse or "mating" can be done between men and men, women and women, as well as between man and woman. One contradictory aspect, however, lies in their philosophy of child conception. Luciente explains:

"It was part of women's long revolution. When we were breaking all the old hierarchies. Finally there was that one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return for no more power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding."⁴⁸

The Mattapoissettan philosophy of giving up their power of giving birth in order to achieve equality doesn't seem to fit their philosophy of a life in greater contact with nature, natural food, physical fitness and so on. In fact, the description of Mattapoissett's brooder resembles Huxley's dystopian "Hatchery" in Brave New World, rather than a true solution for human procreation. Notice how mechanical birth seems to be in Mattapoissett, as Bee shows Connie the "Brooder":

"Here embryos are growing almost ready to birth. We do that at ninemonth plus two or three weeks. Sometimes we wait tenmonth. We find that extra time gives us stronger babies." He pressed a panel and a door slid aside, revealing seven human babies joggling slowly upside down, each in a sac of its own inside a larger fluid receptacle.

...All in a sluggish row, babies bobbed. Mother the machine. Like fish in the aquarium at Coney island. Their eyes were closed. One very dark female was kicking. Another, a pink male, she could see clearly from the oversize penis was crying. Languidly they drifted in a blind school.⁴⁷

Notice how Piercy's description, above, resembles Huxley's description of the "Hatchery":

The bulging flanks of row on receding row and tier above tier of bottles moved the dim red spectres of men and women with purple eyes and all the symptoms of lupus.

Mr. Foster duly told them.

Told them of the growing embryo on its bed of peritoneum... Explained why it had to be stimulated with placentin and thyroxin. Told them of the corpus luteum extract. Showed them the jets through which at every twelfth metre from zero to 2040 it was automatically injected. Spoke of those gradually increasing doses of pituitary administered during the final ninety-six metres of their course. Described the artificial maternal circulation installed in every bottle at Metre 112...

"Tropical workers start being inoculated at Metre 150," Mr. Foster explained to the students. "The embryos still have gills. We immunize the fish against the future man's diseases."⁵⁰

In both descriptions we notice that there are "rows" of embryos growing at the same rate inside transparent containers and that they are compared to "fish". Furthermore the machines in which the embryos are developed are referred to as having human qualities. Connie, for example, refers to it as "Mother the machine", while Huxley puts "maternal" circulation into his machines. Huxley gives greater importance to the "mechanisms" involved in the process of artificial procreation, whereas Piercy shows greater interest in the human aspect of the process. Piercy, for instance, refers to the embryos as "human babies" whereas Huxley calls them "red spectres"; for Piercy the babies' eyes were "closed", for Huxley they were "purple". Huxley, in Chapter One of Brave New World, gives detailed

descriptions of the processes involved in procreation. Piercy, on the other hand, is not so enthusiastic in describing the processes but digresses vigorously about the advantages in store for everyone who makes use of the process.

Still regarding procreation we must keep in mind that, despite the similarity between the processes in Brave New World and Woman on the Edge of Time, the intentions their authors had when writing them were quite different. Huxley wished to shock his readers with the way human beings were produced; Piercy, on the other hand, wished to present this artificial way of producing people as a solution to a social problem. If both Huxley and Piercy use the same strategy to achieve opposite effects, then, I'm forced to say that one of them must be mistaken. I don't think social concepts have changed so much since 1932 as to make artificial birth today less abominable. I do believe this particular aspect in Piercy's novel is contradictory however, because it goes against the general "natural life" disposition preached in every aspect of the society. In this context it can, therefore, be seen as abominable. However, as I discussed in Chapter I, not all aspects of a utopian society need to be seen as perfect, for each utopian creation is its author's individual response to the problems he/she envisions. So, if some, including myself, do not see artificial procreation as the achievement of perfection, this does not mean Piercy did not intend it as so. Woman on the Edge of Time can still be considered a utopian novel.

Freedom from household obligations was another of the feminist revindications of the late sixties and seventies. Not that people in general dislike to do household chores, but we must agree that doing the same repetitive things day in day out, after some time, will end up making anyone have a nervous

breakdown. After all, human beings were not built for mechanical jobs. In Mattapoissett technology comes to aid domestic laborers. People, not only women, are free to volunteer for cooking and preparing the different meals. However, it is not the cooking itself which is seen as the tiring work. It is the cleaning up after the meals which causes the greatest conflicts. Connie is debriefed by Luciente on the details:

"...every night we have a chef and four assistants."

"Who cleans up?"

"Mechanically done. Nobody wants to wash dishes."

"In my time neither. Does it really work?"

"Better than people, more patient. For washing dishes, we are willing to spend precious energy."

"Couldn't a machine cook too?"

"Fasure. But not inventively. To be a chef is like mothering: you must volunteer, you must feel called."

⁵¹

One more domestic task which is ordinarily placed upon the woman is the raising and care of babies, toddlers, and children. It would not be fair to assert that the women of the seventies would rather leave the job to men to do alone. But it is true that to take care of three or four kids every single day of the year, while the husband goes out to work, is a very ungratifying task that deserves to be shared. So, in Mattapoissett, the traditional family structure is rearranged in order to produce a better balanced work force in the home. Instead of each mother taking care of three or four children, each child has up to three mothers to tend to it. According to Luciente "The children are everyone's heirs, everyone's business, everyone's future."⁵² The mother figure is so important for feminists that the father has been eliminated in favor of two "mothers" to "break the nuclear bonding."⁵³

How housecleaning is done and who does it is not mentioned in the novel. We are left to guess at it based on the general aspects. I believe that cleaning is either done

automatically or else each person might be responsible for cleaning up his/her own room. Still, in Mattapoissett each adult is entitled to his/her own room. Teenagers, after the "rites of passage", also get a room of their own. As Luciente tells Connie:

"We each have our own space! Only babies share space! I have indeed read that people used to live piled together." Luciente shuddered... "How could one live otherwise? How meditate, think, compose songs, sleep, study?"⁵⁴

Piercy, here, criticizes the "crowding" of several people into one bedroom as still happens in most households today. This criticism can also be extended to husband and wife sharing the same room. Luciente informs us that "pillow friends", which in Mattapoissett substitute the husband/wife relationships, come together only for mating and then return to their own rooms. It is then implied that privacy is guaranteed.

Despite all the positive aspects found in Mattapoissett, there is a war going on in some distant corner, and, apparently, the city is not in immediate danger. However, war does exist, and its existence is capable of bringing uneasiness even to the most stable society, which does not happen in Luciente's future society; thus, war seems to be out of place in Piercy's novel. The question then, is: Why does Piercy put war at all in her novel? One possible reason could be to have Jackrabbit killed in it before reaching old-age in order to describe the mourning process involving premature death. Another reason could be to illustrate how the society is really equalitarian, and everyone -- every single person -- is required to put in six months of defense, fighting at the front, disregarding age, race, sex, or social position.

In Deidre Burton's article "Linguistic Innovation in Feminist Utopian Fiction", mentioned at the beginning of this

chapter, we have an interesting view of how Piercy uses linguistic innovation to forward her ideas. According to Burton linguistic innovation is a "recurrent characteristic" of the language used in the idealized worlds of feminist fiction. It is natural to expect that in the future there will be new words to define the new aspects of society. As Burton points out, in Woman on the Edge of Time, these linguistic innovations are presented to the reader with no didactic explanation whatsoever, which forces the reader to assimilate them as the story unfolds.

Among the vocabulary innovations we have:

- catcher = a person who can receive thought waves
- sender = a person who can send thought waves
- rib = a joke
- mems = family members
- person = he, she
- kenner = a wrist communicator
- holies = holographic movies
- fooder = a dining hall
- kidbinder = a person who can look after children
- coms = persons who share the responsibility of mothering a child
- brooder = a building in which artificial procreation is done
- defense = military service
- grandcil = the highest political assembly
- worming = a ritualistic meeting to settle disagreements
- comp = inclination, tendency

Several new verbs are also introduced, such as:

- to intersee = to agree
- to comprend = to understand
- to inknow = to understand as by intuition
- to give back = to die

to feather = to please

to graze = to come into mental contact

to bump along = to do things in an ungracious manner

Expressions are also added:

fasure = certainly

frames of redding = ways of understanding

to be velvet = to be pleasant

paint the bones = to flatter

G'light = replaces: good morning, good afternoon, etc...

be guest = welcome

to feel yin-and-yan sure = to feel absolutely sure

tens and tens = many

talk a blue streak = talk a lot, talk too much

zo? = all right?

The structural differences are very well summarized by
Burton:

a marked decrease in objects after transitive verbs
a marked decrease in articles and markers of possession
a marked decrease in the use of pronouns, often using
proper names instead
substitution of 'person' for nominative third person
pronoun (this also means 'a man' or 'a woman')
substitution of 'per' for accusative third person pronoun
ee

The new words, expressions, and structural modifications
Piercy uses in the feminist society of the future have the
function of freeing language of the male biases in terminology
and concepts, which are ingrained in the English language. The
use of "person" and "per" to refer to people in general without
the implication of gender helps to create the equality
envisioned by feminists. The introduction of new nouns and verbs
also has the function of expurgating the "old" androcentric
linguistic tendencies to create new concepts for thinking,
talking about, and referring to the new social aspects which are

present in Mattapoissett.

Brave New World shares many common aspects with Nineteen Eighty-Four, as discussed in Chapters II and III. However, Woman on the Edge of Time has less in common with these two dystopian novels. In Nineteen Eighty-Four, for instance, the introduction of a new language to expurgate past memories reminds us of Mattapoissett's new vocabulary. Flying vehicles which can take off vertically, maneuver quickly and hover in the air seem to be the preferred type of aircraft in all three societies. Huxley's New World and Orwell's London make use of helicopters, Piercy's Mattapoissett makes use of technology to make the "floaters" quieter than helicopters but they have the same functions. The obligation to participate in political meetings is also common to Orwell's and Piercy's novels. However, in Orwell's London the attendance is obligatory yet with no right to participate in decisions.

In order to achieve a more direct social criticism, Orwell includes "The Book" which contains a utopian proposal to contrast with his dystopian London of '84. In "The Book" we encounter "the idea of an earthly paradise in which men should live together in a state of brotherhood, without laws and without brute labour,"²⁵ which sounds like a faithful description of Mattapoissett. Piercy also includes an opposite society in Woman on the Edge of Time, she presents a second, dystopian, future society which appears as the Manhattan Gildina lives in. The description of Gildina's society as one in which all the citizens are policed twenty-four hours a day, under constant threat of war, and in which hardly any of the household equipment seem to work properly, might very well fit Orwell's London of '84.

Brave New World, although belonging to the dystopian

type of utopian literature, shares more in common with Woman on the Edge of Time than it does with Nineteen Eighty-Four due to its hedonistic nature. Among the similarities we might find the "Hatchery" with its bottled babies in the New World, compared to the "brooder" in Mattapoissett. Sex is free and unrestrained in both the New World and in Mattapoissett. There are even episodes in which children are observed engaged in sexual activity in each novel, as we have already commented on in the present and previous chapters. In the twenties and thirties movies were becoming a popular means of entertainment, so, Huxley improved on the old film technology and created the "feelies", which featured real fragrance and tactual effects. In the forties it was television which was becoming popular, so, Orwell spread sophisticated closed circuit systems in every room to spy on the citizens as they "watched" television. Piercy's Mattapoissett society and the Manhattan of the future both make use of the three-dimensional holographic movies with all the sensorial features imaginable; Mattapoissett presents movies with beautiful scenery and themes varying from sexual freedom to protection of wildlife species in extinction; Gildina's era presents movies featuring sex and violence. More doesn't explore these forms of entertainment in Utopia only because they hadn't even yet been imagined, otherwise he would probably see them as excellent means of indoctrinating his Utopian citizens.

The intimate family and child/mother relationships are presented ironically by Huxley as something evil, as can be perceived in Mustapha Mond's monologue:

And home was as squalid psychically as physically. Psychically, it was a rabbit hole, a midden, hot with the frictions of tightly packed life, reeking with emotion. What suffocating intimacies, what dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between the members of the family group! Maniacally, the mother brooded over her children (her children)... brooded over them like a cat over its

kittens; but a cat that could talk, a cat that could say, "My baby, my baby," over and over again. "My baby, and oh, oh, at my breast, the little hands, the hunger, and that unspeakable agonizing pleasure! Till at last my baby sleeps, my baby sleeps with a bubble of white milk at the corner of his mouth. My little baby sleeps..."⁵⁷

Presented hyperbolically in order to try to be shown as negative, these aspects are meant to be seen as adequate and normal human behavior. Mattapoissett, on the other hand, has also ridded the world of the selfish, suffocating, over-emotional mother/child relationships, describing their absence, however, as better suited for society itself, by breaking the "nuclear bonding" and conflicting with the ideals presented by Mond.

The way both novels deal with death and man's relationship to nature after death are very similar. In Brave New World, for instance, death is taken as something natural which happens at a certain age (60, in general); people are conditioned not to think about it and to see it as normal as possible. Examples of this attitude are vivid in Chapter Fourteen, in which the Savage's mother, Linda, is on her deathbed and a group of children enter on a field-trip to the "morgue" to see dead and dying people. As Dr. Gaffney explains,

"Death conditioning begins at eighteen months. Every tot spends two mornings a week in a Hospital for the Dying. All the best toys are kept there, and they get chocolate cream on death days. They learn to take dying as a matter of course."

"Like any other physiological process."⁵⁸

Although natural death is also taken as an unavoidable "physiological process" in Mattapoissett, it is not described as shockingly as it is in the New World, as can be illustrated by the way Sappho's death is faced in Chapter Eight. Luciente says:

"But why not die?... Sappho is eighty-two. A good time to give back... Everybody gives back. We all carry our death at the core -- if you don't inknow that, your life is hollow."⁵⁹

Neither society believes in life after death, or, as Dr.

Moody calls it, "life after life", in his book with the same title. Since all religions speculate about the final destiny of the individual, we can say that both the New World and Mattapoissett have nature as their religion, for both believe that man is reintegrated to nature after death. Henry, in Chapter Five, comments to Lenina: "Fine to think we can go on being socially useful even after we're dead. Making plants grow."⁶⁰ A similar idea is presented in Chapter Sixteen, during the ceremony of Jackrabbitt's burial in the officiator's lines which read:

"Only in us do the dead live. Water flows downhill through us. The sun cools in our bones. We are joined with all living in one singing web of energy. In us live the dead who made us. In us live the children unborn. Breathing each other's air, drinking each other's water, eating each other's flesh, we grow like a tree from the earth."⁶¹

In Woman on the Edge of Time Piercy is much more concerned with the death aspect than Huxley is in his novel. Piercy, for instance, devotes a whole chapter to the description of the ceremonies, philosophies and rites involved in Jackrabbitt's wake, funeral and burial, besides spending a few more pages on the description and explanation of Sappho's death, whereas Huxley's novel only mentions the subject quickly and goes on to other matters.

Several rituals and ceremonies in which nature is praised resemble the traditional Christian rites, such as the burial ceremonies in which a small meditation is done and the family members and closest friends all throw handfuls of earth over the body and plant a tree in memory of the deceased. During the wake "ceremonial" gowns are worn by the mourners and coffee is served steaming hot. All the deceased's worldly possessions are laid alongside the coffin with him. The body is never painted or embalmed in order not to lose the "natural" aspect and so it

will rot and return as quickly as possible to "mother nature". The Sixth Commandment: "Thou shall not kill", is taken seriously in Mattapoissett. However, we learn there is a war going on and all the inhabitants have to volunteer a "sixmonth" at the front, some time or another, and take part in the fighting. Due to technological advances, war is not fought in the customary bloody ways as it used to be: people are bombarded with sound waves that knock them out, the enemy is rarely seen, and when they are, there is no way of knowing if the machines attacking them are robots or if they are controlled by human beings. In any case, before each round of shots is fired, Luciente prays: "Forgive-me, if you are living and I kill you."⁶²

The ritual of accepting the responsibility of mothering a child, which is also taken very seriously, resembles the traditional Christian Wedding Ceremony. Notice how the rituals proceed:

Now all three knelt, the old woman getting down slowly but stubbornly on her gnarled knees. Barbarossa stood before them like a priest officiating Mass. "Do you, Sojourner, desire this baby to be born?"

"I, Sojourner, desire to mother this child."

"Do you, Jackrabbit, desire this baby to be born?" and then "Do you, Connie, desire this baby to be born?"

She said softly, "I do."⁶³

"Thanksmaking" is another religious-like ceremony which resembles American Thanksgiving, with a certain similarity to Christian Communion Services and Lent period observances. Luciente describes Thanksmaking as an occasion in which

they fast for twenty-four hours and go around asking for forgiveness from everyone we have offended in the year past. It comes right at the end of fall harvest, when all our crops are in except a few root crops we winter over, and the greenhouse stuff. Then we feast and go around the fooder breaking bread together, eating slowly and for hours. Wine and turkey...⁶⁴

The "bread breaking" and the "wine", in Mattapoissett, allude to Christian Communion Services, as did the ceremony in which

Winston and Julia participated with O'Brien serving the wine and the white tablets, in Chapter 8, Part two, of Nineteen Eighty-Four, and the "Solidarity Services" in Brave New World, in which soma tablets are served with "strawberry ice-cream soma" in groups of twelve people alluding to the twelve disciples in a mock celebration. From these examples we can see that the Holy Communion is the Christian Sacrament which is most frequently alluded to by utopian and dystopian authors who, by referring to the Holy Communion, show us their Christian backgrounds and their preoccupation with this ritual for "cleansing the spirit". Another aspect which is evinced with the presentation of the Communion rites by all three authors is their criticism towards the mechanical and hypocritical attitudes of certain contemporary Christians.

Most songs and poems presented in Luciente's society can be said to be religious, for the main theme is always nature and conservation. Here are some examples:

- A lullaby song:

"Nobody knows
how it flows
as it goes.

Nobody goes
where it rose
where it flows.

Nobody chose
how it grows
how it flows.

How it grows
how it glows
in the heart of the rose..."⁶⁵

- A popular song:

"Someday water will run clear,
salmon will thunder upstream,
whales will spout offshore,
and no more in the depths of the sea
will the dark bombs roll.

Sweet earth, I lie in your lap..."⁶⁶

Notice how this song manages to deal with several of the aspects which were being discussed in the seventies, as water pollution, survival of the whales and nuclear weapons carried by submarines. It can also be said to be "religious" due to its reference to nature as a superior being, with the earth figuratively holding mankind on its lap.

Children are taught to be thankful at early ages with song-prayers such as:

"Thank you for fruit.
We take what we need.
Other animals will eat.
Thank you for fruit,
carrying your seed.
What you give is sweet.
Live long and spread!"⁶⁷

Gratitude is not the only message conveyed, rational use of natural resources and sharing are also preached in this song. Still many other songs and poems are used in Mattapoisett for illustrating feelings concerning war, love, sadness and happiness. However, the general theme, which is present in them all, is respect for nature.

Finally, to conclude the considerations on Woman on the Edge of Time, it would be appropriate to make a number of parallels with Thomas More's Utopia, to verify to what extent utopian thought has changed since the Sixteenth Century. Raphael Hythloday, in Book Two of Utopia, gives a systematic description of the different aspects of the utopian society and of the Island of Utopia itself. The first aspect discussed concerns "The Geography of Utopia." In this section Hythloday makes a general description of the landscape and other general details, such as the fortification of the island, which is adequately protected against any enemy attack. Mattapoisett too, features safety as one of its main aspects. However, unlike

Utopia, the fortifications are not visible; Mattapoissett is conveniently set well out of the way of any possible conflict area.

Hythloday points out that all the Utopian cities are identical in shape, size and number of inhabitants, quite different from Mattapoissett, which advocates freedom for each region or area to adopt whichever aspect best fits its necessities. The Utopian households are described as great buildings housing an average of thirteen adults. Whether each person is entitled to his own room is not indicated. In Mattapoissett, we are told, each family also occupies one building. The number of persons per household is not mentioned. However, each adult has a room of his own.

The Landscape of Mattapoissett resembles Utopia in its bucolic and pastoral settings. Both cities are built around natural environments suggesting naturalism as the best way of life. And, all their citizens take part in planting, caring for, and harvesting their crops. Hythloday explains:

Agriculture is the one occupation at which everyone works, men and women alike, with no exceptions. They are trained in it from childhood, partly in the schools where they learn theory, and partly through field trips to nearby farms, which make something like a game of practical instruction.⁶⁶

The same argument is used by Luciente: "Most of what children must learn, they learn by doing."⁶⁷ A customary scene Connie witnesses in Mattapoissett attests to this philosophy.

An old man with a wispy beard was slowly picking blackberries, eating some, putting most in a basket over his withered arm... With him was a child who was eating rather more than picking and singing with him sometimes in unison... interrupting with questions ...which he slowly answered.⁷⁰

This is the model of education found in both Utopia and Mattapoissett, i.e., learning through practice. And the produce and manufactured goods which result from their labor are shared

among the different regions of each society as needed. Professional apprenticeship in both cases also follows the same orientation, that is, both societies feature the master/disciple type of education with the apprentice moving in to learn from the professional he has chosen.

The work philosophy is similar in both novels, that is, if everybody really works, then the job can be finished in less time, leaving more time free for other activities such as hobbies and socializing. The difference, however, is in the work schedule: in Utopia, the work hours are preset, whereas in Mattapoissett each person has his/her task which can be done at his/her convenience. Another difference is perceived in the freedom for choosing the spare-time activity. In Utopia all citizens are required to take up only certain activities the state considers "constructive", whereas in Mattapoissett each person is free to do whatever he/she wishes.

Amaurot, the capital city of Utopia has a tidal river, the Anyder, which has the same details as the tidal river in Mattapoissett, with its bridges and clear waters. The Utopian cities are well organized and with many gardens, which resemble the gardens and organization of the cities in Luciente's society.

Private property is abolished in both societies, nobody owns a house or any other object; whatever is needed can be gotten freely. The same principle of sharing is evident in both societies. Utopians have a common marketplace where they store everything that is produced, and whenever in need

The head of each household looks for what he or his family needs, and carries off what he wants without any sort of payment or compensation.⁷¹

In Mattapoissett any object one desires is also available free of charge. However, here it is not required that the head of the

household retrieve whatever is sought; any individual can collect what he needs.

Clothing is a conflicting issue discussed in both, Utopia and Woman on the Edge of Time. Utopians all wear

the same style of clothing, except for the distinction between the sexes, and between married and unmarried persons. Their clothing is attractive, does not hamper bodily movement, and serves for warm as well as cold weather; what is more, each household can make its own.

72

Furthermore, their work clothes are made of leather, all the same color and made to last up to seven years. Each citizen has but one set of clothes.

Although the clothes in Luciente's society follow the same principles of comfort, practicality and durability as in Utopia, people wear a great variety of styles, colors and patterns, and each person is allowed to have as many clothes as he/she wishes. Sex and civil status do not require different clothing styles as in Utopia. As Connie witnessed, their

overalls or tunics came in almost every color one could name, many faded with washing and age, although the fabrics seemed to hold up.⁷³

Innovations are also introduced in Luciente's future society. Connie tried on a pair of trousers which featured

an adjustment in the seams so that they could be tightened or loosened, lengthened or shortened. A woman would not outwear them if she gained or lost twenty pounds.⁷⁴

These innovations would certainly facilitate the life for many people in any society. I would consider, in fact, this kind of clothes a woman's salvation, since getting into clothes has for long been a great female frustration, since society demands that women be "beautiful" at the cost of their own comfort.

The preparing of meals is also similar in both societies. In Utopia the women are in charge of "planning the meal, as well as preparing and cooking the food."⁷⁵ The cleaning up,

however is left to the slaves. The planning and preparing the meals in Mattapoissett is done by volunteers, not only the women; the cleaning up is done by machines. The difference here is that technology came to the rescue of the slaves, resulting in a slave-free society. Mealtime also shares many common characteristics in both societies. It is considered a festive occasion in which the community gathers to talk and eat good quality and tasty food. In Utopia, however, the men are required to

sit with their backs to the wall, the women on the outside, so that if a woman has a sudden qualm or pain, such as occasionally happens during pregnancy, she may get up without disturbing the others.⁷⁶

In Mattapoissett, there is no type of place designation; each person may sit at the table wherever he/she desires independent of sex or age.

If Utopia is notably a patriarchal society in which the wives are required to "kneel before their husbands"⁷⁷ and in church the women are required to sit to the left apart from the men who sit on the right, Mattapoissett, as a feminist society, comes to woman's rescue with its society in which the father/mother distinction is completely eradicated and everyone participates in all social aspects.

Utopia, despite being a patriarchal society, allows everyone, women as well as men, to take part in military service. Hythloday explains that

on certain fixed days, both men and women alike carry on vigorous military training so they will be fit to fight should the need arise.⁷⁸

And at war

They place each woman alongside her husband in the line of battle; and in addition they place around him all of a man's children, kinsmen, and blood- or marriage-relations.⁷⁹

Except for the children taking part in the battles, the Utopian

Military organization is quite similar to that of Mattapoissett, in which everyone must take part in military training during six months some time or other.

In More's patriarchal Utopia sexual intercourse is considered "legal" only between husband and wife; any relationship outside wedlock is punishable with a lifelong sentence of slavery and, in some cases the penalty is death. Piercy's feminist Mattapoissett, on the other hand, presents a sexually free society in which there are no marriage bonds, so the individuals are free to choose their sexual partners as they wish, with no risk of being punished for this.

The technological innovations found in Mattapoissett which contrast with the simplistic Utopian way of life, result from Piercy's contact with modern world facilities and show that she approves of many of these advances. The kenner, for instance, which is worn by every citizen, is very useful for getting information from central computers as well as for communicating with each other. Transportation is also improved with the floaters and dippers which provide a pollution-free and silent means of transportation. Utopia, on the other hand, resorts to the same means of transportation and communication as in the sixteenth century, and the household appliances, which allow for all the comfort found in Mattapoissett, are replaced in Utopia by slave work.

Analysing the many dissimilarities between the Utopian society and the society of Mattapoissett we might notice that they contrast precisely in those aspects which have changed with time. For instance, in More's time the preoccupation was with the disorderly form in which immigration was happening in England, causing More to adopt in his "better society" the use of passports to travel from one place to another; Piercy's

experience as twentieth century author and citizen has shown that immigration is not the problem, but, peace, ecology, health and gender equality are the social revindications. Utopia is then More's answer to the revindications of sixteenth century English society, whereas Mattapoissett is Piercy's answer to the revindication of American minority groups of the sixties and seventies. Therefore, Piercy's novel Woman on the Edge of Time can be said to be an updating of Thomas More's Utopia.

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61 Piercy, Woman 322-323.

62 Piercy, Woman 331.

63 Piercy, Woman 250.

64 Piercy, Woman 174.

65 Piercy, Woman 136.

66 Piercy, Woman 227.

67 Piercy, Woman 279.

68 Robert M. Adams, ed., Sir Thomas More - Utopia - A

New Translation - Backgrounds - Criticism (New York: W. W.

Norton & Company Inc., 1975) 40.

69 Piercy, Woman 136.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have tried to show that utopia, as a literary genre, has changed significantly since the origin of the prototype systematically defined by More. His Utopia presents a social criticism of the sixteenth century English society. In his criticism he does not make a direct attack on the English government, but creates a parallel fictitious society in which all the problems of the society of his time are solved. In this case, his criticism is achieved by contrasting this better society on the distant island of Utopia to the less perfect English society.

The problems More finds in the society of his time are, of course, different from the problems Huxley, Orwell or Piercy find in their times. By analyzing the problems More deals with in Utopia we can perceive that he is against the uncontrolled immigration of the population of the rural areas to the cities, which brought about poverty and hunger and resulted in the strict travel requirements found in Utopia. More is also against the unproductive upper classes of the English society and this resulted in the creation of a society in which no class division existed and in which every citizen had an equal share of responsibilities and duties. More finds the English custom of wearing pompous garments in order to aggravate social distinction another repulsive aspect in the English social system and dons everyone in Utopia with uniform clothing.

Orwell, in Nineteen Eighty-Four, is preoccupied with

the totalitarian tendencies of the English society of the forties and wishes to admonish his fellow contemporaries as to the dangers of communism and other totalitarian systems of government. In order to achieve his criticism of these abominable aspects Orwell devises a future time society in which all the possible evils that the totalitarian government might bring are present and contribute to make the London of the year 1984 abominable and repulsive. Thus, Orwell's criticism is achieved by means of projection.

Huxley, in Brave New World, also wishes to criticize the English society of his own time, and among the problems he sees and wishes to criticize are the consumerist tendencies of his society, the destruction of traditional family values, the standardization and mass-production of goods, and the licentious form sex was being practiced. Like Orwell, Huxley projects his fictitious London into the future and presents the society he imagines might evolve from the tendencies perceived in his time. However, unlike in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, the citizens in Huxley's New World are not controlled by means of coercion and brute force, they are "programmed" to be adequate by means of conditioning, starting from their "incubation" and continuing through childhood. Therefore, the torture and physical suffering, scarcity and unhappiness found in Orwell's novel are not present in Huxley's novel. Here the reader is spared the horror of the descriptions of a police state but is upset by the matter-of-fact attitudes portrayed in Huxley's Hedonistic society.

Piercy, in Woman on the Edge of Time, criticizes lack of equal rights and opportunities for men and women, the prejudice against minority groups, the destruction of nature, among many other social aspects. The society which is

criticized, however, in this case, is not the English society, but the American society, more specifically, the situation of the lower class in New York City. Like Orwell and Huxley in their novels, Piercy creates a future society to function as a default for the society of her days. However, she goes further and presents two distinct future societies: a utopian society, as More's Utopia, and a dystopian society, as Orwell's and Huxley's. The novel is centered around the utopian society of Mattapoissett, in which all the problems Piercy sees with the American society are solved. Therefore, Mattapoissett can be seen as a "perfect" society. The dystopian society, on the other hand, is presented as Huxley and Orwell do with theirs, that is, Piercy projects all the repulsive aspects into the future and presents a nauseating society in which its citizens are forced to live in artificial environments due to the great levels of air pollution.

Within the framework of criticism we are able to perceive that each author criticizes different aspects he/she considers negative in the society of his/her own time. Therefore we might say that the societies presented in the utopian/dystopian genre of literature might vary from author to author in each historical period.

Dissimilar as they are, however, the four novels I have discussed have in common the fact that they criticize society. They represent, therefore, the utopian and dystopian genres of literature, and they originate from the authors' dissatisfaction with the society of his/her own time, or any of its aspects. Furthermore, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Brave New World, and the society of Gildina in Woman on the Edge of Time fit into the dystopian kind of literature: they are intentionally presented by their authors as being abominable.

Utopia and Mattapoisett, on the other hand, are presented as solutions to the social problems their authors wished to criticize. Then we have two kinds of social criticism involved: the kind which criticizes and shows the probable results the negative aspects might bring on, and the kind which, besides criticizing, presents solutions to the problems involved.

Finally I would like to point out that both utopia and dystopia are a form of social criticism which can tell us much not only about the social aspects of the time each novel was written, but also about the authors' opinions on the different social aspects and the possible solutions to the social problems.

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