

ENGLISH B EXTENDED ESSAY

NAME: INCI CANSU AYDIN
CANDIDATE NUMBER: D1129014
SUPERVISOR: ATIYE GÖZDE SIDAR
SCHOOL: TED ANKARA COLLEGE
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RESEARCH QUESTION: HOW IS SOCIETY CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE NOVEL "BRAVE NEW WORLD" AND WHAT ARE THE CONNECTIONS TO OUR WORLD?

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ABSTRACT

“The Brave New World” is a fantastic novel written by Aldous Huxley in 1932. In this new era, government fully controls the society. The real aim of the government is to keep the stability. The state exercises its control over society by using technological tools. The population growth is mainly controlled with technological means and medical intervention. From the very beginning, the life of an individual is programmed and conditioned according to a caste system.

In the novel technology is not used for the search for truth and knowledge as it should be, but is used to control humanity. When state mentions a scientific improvement, its actual meaning is the use of a more sophisticated technology for controlling society, not the increase of real scientific explorations and experiments. Real science and real scientists are not valued. The comfort and happiness in Huxley’s new world is totally false and makes people’s eyes blind. This big lie is fueled with the “soma”. Soma, a kind of happiness drug, is used as an effective tool for achieving stability.

Universally accepted moral values and human rights of our current civilization, like freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and political participation, are forbidden or limited to the people according to their caste in society. When we look at our contemporary world, the individualism in developed

countries and barriers on political participation and human rights abuses in underdeveloped countries we may see some similarities as well.

The irony and controversial governance of people in the novel has deeply drawn my interest. I have conducted some research activities and found the similarities and contradicting points between Huxley's and our current world. My findings have shown me that the careless and ignorant attitudes of people and irresponsible and selfish policies of governments lead communities to a totalitarian state. I saw how incredibly events in the novel are becoming real, accompanied with speedy developments in science and technology. I want to draw the attention of people to the violation of universal human rights overall.

In this novel Huxley talks about a utopian world where pain, poverty, hatred, unhappiness, hunger etc. are eliminated. Yet, in reality it is a ruthless world which enslaves humanity. In such a society the power holders cannot be controlled and prevented from creating a totalitarian regime. Replacing a totalitarian government requires great effort, solidarity, sacrifices and time.

"The Brave New World" is an extraordinary fantastic and fictional novel written by Aldous Huxley about 80 years ago. In this new era of humanity a very well organized government system controls the society and the civilization for the sake of order and stability by keeping people in an artificially created world of happiness. The World State's motto is "*Community, identity, stability*" (Huxley, pg.1). The declared aim of the strict state control is the eternal happiness of the human beings, though the real aim is the control of society and to carry on the smooth functioning of state. There is virtually nothing remaining uncontrolled or unconditioned or unmanaged. Indeed, this is a totalitarian state.

The events in the novel mainly take place in London where one of the Hatching and Conditioning Centers is located. In this center the bottled human embryos are fertilized, preconditioned according to some series of program and after 285 days (9 and a half month as normal pregnancy period) come to the world. The needed ovaries are extracted from women. This process is called "*Decanting*" and it replaces live birth. Decanting is a complicated activity which needs close monitoring and various applications in it. There are no family ties; there are not any mothers, sisters, brothers or any other relatives. The people must live as individual members of the society.

In our modern world, the family and close relatives still have a very unique and effective place in the growing up process of children. For physical and mental health of children, protection and guidance of parents, the living conditions and behavioral attitudes within a family shape, create and teach the adult of the future. Especially existence of a mother and a father is desperately needed for healthy children. It requires real patience, absolute hard work, great struggle and enough time to raise a child. This was not different in early primitive cultures. The family also emotionally shapes the moral and characteristic ways of the children. It teaches the meaning and the purpose of life, and helps the continuity of cultural values such as protection for the baby, support for the young, respect for the parents and elderly, protection of the weak and care for the sick and elderly.

Although the pregnancy and giving a birth process are quite different in our contemporary world, there are impressive technological improvements in health issues. Mass vaccinations against communicable diseases, early diagnosis of fatal health problems, and use of high-tech devices to diagnose and cure serious illnesses have greatly improved average life expectancy of the people. Downs syndrome, for example, a serious genetic illness in which a person has 47 chromosomes instead of 46 can be diagnosed by some tests which are conducted during the pregnancy period¹. In this way this illness can be avoided or the pregnancy, if necessary, can be terminated.

¹*Down Syndrome Overview*, available on line at <<http://www.nytimes.com/health/guides/diseases/down-syndrome/overview.html>.> accessed on 03 December 2011

The state, in Huxley's new world, exercises its control over society by using technology, over which it has absolute control as well. The population growth is mainly controlled with technological means and medical intervention. Technology is not used for the search for truth as it should be, but to control humanity. When the state talks about scientific improvement, its actual meaning is the use of a more sophisticated technology to control purposes not the increase of real scientific explorations and experiments. Real science and real scientists are not valued. World Controller Mustapha Mond describes the science as a manual for cooking,

"All our science is just a cookery book, with an orthodox theory of cooking that nobody is allowed to question, and a list of recipes that must not be added to except by special permission from the head cook". (Huxley, pg. 225)

He and other world controllers do not allow people to look for truth especially by means of science. They consider true science as a great danger to the stability of society since it may encourage and lead people to question and riot against the system. For this end Mustapha Mond explains the solution and he says *"We can't allow science to undo its own good work"* (Huxley, pg. 227). The state uses the science and technology to produce more tools to control society. It has no intention to allow scientific freedom. The World State prioritizes happiness at the expense of truth. State provides happiness by supplying immediate gratification of everyone's need for food, desire for sex, clothes and so on. The state prevents its citizens from acquiring scientific truth but also eliminates humanly acts of love, friendship, and family relations. The search for truth is so appealing that the state applies any

measures to block it. Orgy-porgy is such a meeting, a Solidarity Service which is held every month. The state tries to eliminate strong emotional feelings in this way. But such measures also show that the state still has some doubts about controlling the entire human nature.

From the very beginning, the life of an individual has been programmed and conditioned according to a very strict caste system. All the people have preplanned lives which mean their fates are decided from the beginning. Their lives are kept clear of problems such as diseases, hunger, unemployment, sexual limitations, old age sufferings and generally physical and biological hindrances. In that sense government controls birth, life and death through some comprehensive and well-designed mechanisms. As director Tomakin puts it "*all conditioning aims at that: making people like their inescapable destiny*" (Huxley, pg.16).

The preconditioning is so constructed that it supports a caste system consisting of 5 echelons which are alphas, betas, gammas, deltas and epsilons. The alphas are the top intelligent and physically have the biggest and best body shape. They are superior to all other caste groups and destined to be the leading cadre of society. The betas and gammas are less intellectual and physically smaller compared to the alphas. The gammas and the deltas provide the manpower for the jobs. They are the workers. The epsilons form the lowest group. They have virtually no intelligence and they are physically the smallest. The caste system is defined generally by the oxygen supplied during the fertilization and artificial pregnancy. The alphas are provided a full amount of oxygen and the lower groups less. Epsilons get the

minimum amount. As less oxygen mainly affects brain functions and also physical development, epsilons come to the world as morons. They can do only menial work for society. Every caste group has some privileges with respect to their superiority. The welfare of society is accomplished by high consumption of goods. The production is never disturbed. More production and more consumption are encouraged. The state's economic rule is based on these mottos: "*Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches*" (Huxley, pg.49). None of the old or broken items are repaired or reused. This is the base of economic stability.

The life in developed western countries is similarly based on high consumption of goods. It is also the fuel of a more stable economy. Consumerism is on the rise since the industrial revolution and doesn't seem to cut speed². Middle class families, which form the backbone of society, have high consumer habits. They spend more for a luxurious life. They buy expensive cars, wear last fashion clothes, dine in first class restaurants, and travel for entertainment. Citizens of rich countries are receiving and consuming an unbalanced portion of world resources. They consume more energy, more water, and more food. Consumptions of developed western countries are five times more in terms of global energy³ and six times more in terms of freshwater⁴ compared to poor and under developed African countries. Moreover these countries are siphoning the natural resources of underdeveloped countries and pouring out fully poisonous substances to air, sea and land. According to Blacksmith Institute's World Worst Pollution Problems Report 2010, there are 2000 dangerously

²Chambers, Mortimer, et al. *The Western Experience*, 9th ed., New York, NY, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. (pgs.878-879)

³ BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2011, available on line at <http://www.bp.com/statistical_review> accessed on 27 November 2011

⁴ Pacific Institute, Freshwater Withdrawal by Country and Sector Data Table 2, Available on line at <<http://www.worldwater.org/table2.html>> accessed on 21 December 2011

polluted sites in 40 countries. Over 100 Million people might be affected with serious consequences of this pollution. Heavy metals like lead, mercury, chromium and toxic substances like arsenic, pesticides and radio nuclides pose a direct and severe threat to human health⁵. Most of the gravely polluted sites have been identified in developing and low income countries due to cheap labor and raw material processing for industrialized rich countries. They are ruthlessly polluting the environment. The poor and weak are treated as inferior like lower castes in "new world."

The preconditioning provides the base for the smooth functioning of the society and goes on also after birth. In the novel this conditioning follows on in the Social Predestination Room where nurses format, create and shape individuals according to the caste system. One of the conditioning ways is sleep-teaching or "*Hypnopaedia*". Hypnopaedia is a very effective way to teach and condition people about their place and duty in society. Such teachings are repeated several times during sleep and provide a kind of thought control.

"Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do. Because they are so frightfully clever. I'm awfully glad I'm a beta, because I don't work so hard. And we are much better than Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. Oh no, I don't play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They are too stupid to be able to read or write"(Huxley, pg.27),

⁵ Blacksmith Institute's World Worst Pollution Problems Report 2010, available on line at <<http://www.worstpolluted.org>> accessed on 21 December 2011

The Hatching and Conditioning Center is a factory which produces humans. However the production is not virtually human. These people are like robots made of organic tissue. They are expected to live and work in the way they are pre-programmed. The government aims to shorten the growth process of epsilons in six-years time, for example, to supply enough man power for the needed work.

"Pilkington, at Mombasa, had produced individuals who were sexually mature at four and full-grown at six and half... but socially useless. Six year old men and women are too stupid to do even Epsilon work" (Huxley, pg.15)

This is in fact slavery. But these slaves are not aware of their situation. Because the government uses various tools to keep them under control and have them feel themselves content with the system.

With our moral understanding the caste system and preconditioning is a kind of enslavement. The worst of all is that this enslavement is done by intentionally creating handicapped people. When we say alphas are fully healthy both in mental and physical ways, then we may anticipate that betas are 20%, gammas are 40%, Deltas are 60% and Epsilons are 90% disabled. The state exercises a kind of tyranny by limiting the mental and physical health of its population. To make this unacceptable treatment acceptable, people are conditioned from fetus to death. Mustapha Mond explains this process as the major tool for the stability:

"The world is stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't"(Huxley, pg.220)

They are like modern slaves destined to live and die unconsciously. They are unable to understand and compare their lives, needs and expectations. There are no challenges to force them to fight or no real losses to feel sad. They do not know the meaning of success and achievement. Government does not allow its citizens to work harder, get promotion or rewards. The citizens have no right to deserve what they ask for. No real satisfaction takes place. They simply live and obey the rules of their Ford. The government uses absolute power and does not share a bit of it.

When we think of our modern world and the evolution of civilization, we are very sure to say that the caste system is unfair and against universally accepted human rights. People belonging to higher castes are not really hard workers. That is a lie for lower castes so that they don't envy or riot against the government; disobey the rules causing the disruption of stability. The aim of physical and mental conditioning and creating lower caste weak and dumb is to prevent these people from looking for fairer share of wealth, justice and more rights. That is in a way achieved; all caste groups are thoroughly happy and have no jealousy of the upper cast groups. They are just content with what they have. They believe, or better to say made to believe, that they have everything they deserve. Throughout the book, we do not see any problematic lower caste individual, on the contrary the problematic ones, Bernard and Helmholtz, belong to alpha plus group, the most intellectual caste group. Bernard Marx, a well-educated, full intellectual and a brilliant alpha is not fully happy with the system. He thinks the caste system and social predestination are somehow

not fair. A human being should not be inferior or superior to another from the very beginning with the manipulation of an unrighteous authority.

In the modern world, daily life supports and encourages people for individual achievements. To be happy is not very easy. One must work hard and deserve happiness. The success and failures of people depend on their acts. They chose their way and make their decisions with their free will. Freedom has absolute importance. Freedom of thought and speech is strongly protected. Moral and ethical rules force people to observe and obey the limitations. In this way the smooth and peaceful functioning of society is achieved. The distribution of power is regulated with laws. There are legislative, executive and judiciary bodies that exercise their power with rules and limits of laws. The governmental decisions and policies reflect the ideas of the community and protect and support its well-being and interests. There are also different kinds of civil institutions which we generally name "non-governmental organizations-NGOs". These institutions have direct or indirect effects on government policies and in the political affairs. They mostly conduct their affairs to improve and support the conditions and expectations of people. They help people to be more conscious about government affairs and participate in political decisions.

With our current understanding of civilization, the control and limitation of state in the novel is totally unfair or not just. Moral values and human rights like, freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, political participation, freedom of travel, equal education right, equal jobs and earnings, equal social benefits and

even freedom of love, which are universally accepted rights for humanity, are forbidden or limited to the people according to their caste in the society.

We may find more differences between the new world of Huxley and our contemporary understanding of civilization and values. The situation in our world, however, is not so bright in terms of general practices of human rights and civil freedom. When we look at the highly individualist life in developed countries and limitations on political participation and human rights abuses in poor and underdeveloped countries, we may see some similarities as well.

Regarding human rights issues, the outlook is not very promising especially in poor and developing countries of the 21st Century. Racial discrimination, anti-Semitism, unequal treatments of minorities are still major problems. Although slavery was abolished in the U.S. after January 1, 1863 with the "*Emancipation Proclamation*"⁶, it took a century to grant real equal rights and end segregation following the peaceful but also painful Civil Rights Movement of African Americans under such leaders as Martin Luther King Jr. Before enactment of the Civil Rights Act on June 11, 1963 President Kennedy told the Americans on TV:

*"Are we to say to the world and, much more importantly, to each other that this is a land of free except for negroes; that we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race except with respect to Negroes?"*⁷

⁶D.J.Boorstin, B.M.Kelley, *A History of The United States*, pg.349

⁷D.J.Boorstin, B.M.Kelley, *A History of The United States*, pg.791

The Civil Rights Act ended racial discrimination and granted equal rights for the Black Community.

There are crimes related to the abuse of children and women. Forced prostitution is widespread and women are used as sex slaves⁸. They are victims of human trafficking for coercive or deceived prostitution. Although the international laws strictly prohibit such crimes and define heavy punishments, the organized crime groups carry on violations due to the lucrative earnings. Sex trafficking has devastating effects especially on children prostitutes. They are subject to long lasting physical and psychological damage. They are transmitted HIV/AIDS type diseases, they become drug addictive, they become pregnant against their will, and mostly they die at a young age.⁹ According to various reports, it is estimated that between 100.000 to 600.000 children might be the victims of prostitution alone in the United States of America¹⁰. UNICEF reports, on the other hand, reveal that nearly two million children are subjected to coercive prostitution¹¹. Children work even for daily food. And in some cases they are employed as soldiers. They are forced or deceived to serve as combatants in armed forces.

Illegal trafficking of people is widespread on and around the borders of rich and poor countries. By the end of 2010, 43.7 Million people left their homes due to human

⁸ *United States of America Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report June 2011*, available on line at <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/index.htm>>, pg.8, accessed on 12 November 2011

⁹ *United States of America Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report June 2011*, available on line at <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/index.htm>>, pg.10, accessed on 12 November 2011

¹⁰ *Seduction, Slavery and Sex*, July 15, 2010, available on line at <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/15/kristof.html>> accessed on 11 December 2011

¹¹ *United States of America Department of State, What is Modern Slavery*, available on line at <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/what/index.htm>> accessed on 19 December 2011

rights abuses, prosecution or conflicts which threatened their lives¹². For cheap labor, people in poor countries are forced to work for very little money. United Nations researches say that 600.000 to 800.000 people are trafficked across borders every year including 12.000 children as slaves on cocoa fields in Africa¹³. It is regarded that human slavery is becoming again a major issue in 21st Century. To reach and access better living conditions people leave their homelands and migrate to economically rich and politically free and democratic countries. According to "*The Economist*", a British weekly magazine:

*"More Chinese people live outside mainland China than French people (nearly 66 Million) live in France and some 22 Million ethnic Indians are scattered across every continent"*¹⁴.

The immense development in information technology allows people to communicate freely and access and share any information instantaneously all over the world. Internet and mobile phones provide great opportunities for individual rights of communication and freedom of expression. Social networking services like Facebook, Twitter and widespread mobile phones also allow people to communicate and share any information freely. On the other hand, these high tech information tools provide governments a good ground to monitor and scrutinize people. At the hand of totalitarian states, this approach seriously threatens private life and limits individual

¹²United States of America Department of State, *World Humanitarian Day Map*, August 19, 2011, available on line at <<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/fs2011/index.htm>> accessed on 19 December 2011

¹³R.Dearnly, S.Chalke, *Prevention, Prosecution and Protection-Human Trafficking*, available on line at <http://www.un.org.:80/wcm/content/site/chronicle/lang/en/home/archive/issues2010/empoweringwomen/humantraffickingppp>. accessed on 03 December 2011

¹⁴The Economist, *Mapping Migration*, November 17, 2011, available on line at <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/11/diasporas/print>> accessed on December 19, 2011

rights. According to US 2010 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, there are roughly six billion registered mobile phones around world, and more than 40 governments are issuing regulations which monitor and limit the communication and access to the internet¹⁵.

The comfort and happiness in Huxley's new world is totally false and makes people's eyes blind. This big lie is fueled with the "soma". Soma, a kind of happiness drug, is used as an effective tool in achieving stability. With some soma everything goes smoothly.

"What you need is a gramme of soma... one cubic centimeter cures ten gloomy" (Huxley, Pg.60)

"Agramme in time saves nine" (Huxley, pg.89)

"A gramme is better than a damn" (Huxley, pg.116)

According to Mustapha Mond soma helps people to deal with painful situations, and unpleasant feelings.

"And if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there is always soma to give you a holiday from facts" (Huxley, pg.237)

¹⁵ United States of America Department of State, *Introduction to the 2010 Country Reports on Human Rights practices*, <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/frontmatter/154329.htm>>, accessed on December 9, 2011

In his view, soma helps people to be good and obedient citizens. With some soma, they behave, act in patience, and are not disturbed with the misbehaviors of others.

"There is always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering"(Huxley, pg.238)

It is very frequently used by the people whenever an unpleasant emotion is felt. It covers the painful feelings and lets people feel better. The soma is distributed regularly and according to a defined ratio per head. *"Soma distribution! Shouted the loud voice, In good order, please. Hurry up"*(Huxley, pg. 209). The people numbed with soma and conditioned with cruel treatments have no desire to change or improve the functioning of the society

"They practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there is soma"(Huxley, pg.220).

Like "soma" in Brave New World, today many people are using anti-depressant drugs, like *Prozac*, *Seroxat*, which are commonly known SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitor)¹⁶. These drugs, so called "*happiness pills*", improve the mood of depressive people by increasing the serotonin activity in the brain. These kinds of drugs are the "*Soma*" of our world. Some psychotherapists, however, argue that these drugs do not cure mental illnesses but anesthetize patients and cover up the real source of the illness¹⁷. Moreover, experts warn that these drugs are addictive

¹⁶J.Laurance, Health Editor, *Antidepressant Drugs Don't Work*, February 26, 2008, available on line at <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health.htm> accessed on 23 November 2011.

¹⁷G.Greenberg, *The Serotonin Surprise*, July 1, 2001, available on line at <http://www.discovermagazine.com/2001/jul/cover/?searchterm=prozac.htm>, accessed on 27 October 2011

and may lead users to suicidal thoughts¹⁸. In "Brave New World" John "Mr. Savage" also tells people not to take soma. He considers soma as a dreadful substance which poisons humans both physically and mentally. *"Poison to soul as well as body"*(Huxley, page 211).

In this novel Huxley talks about a utopian world where pain, poverty, hatred, unhappiness, hunger etc. are eliminated. The society functions smoothly with its ideal regulations. People are happy and unaware of what they miss. But in reality it is a cruel and unfair world enslaving humanity. Indeed, "Brave new World" discloses the mishandlings of humanity in using high technology, living in ever individualist condition and ignoring the moral values and teachings of humanity. We understand what would happen in a society governed with strict limitations and which only relies on individual satisfaction and does not deal with the actual human needs. Ignoring the problems of other people and choosing an individualist life style leads to the disintegration of society. In such a society the power holders cannot be controlled and prevented from creating a totalitarian regime. Once a totalitarian government is established it requires great effort, solidarity, sacrifices and time to reestablish a democratic and free functioning state.

¹⁸ BBC News, *Health, Prozac Celebrates 10th Birthday*, January 21, 1999, available on line at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/259344.stm>, accessed on 17 October 2011.

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