DYSTOPIA AND HUMAN NATURE
AN INQUIRY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Since the emergence of the first forms of government as we know it, in Ancient Greece, a number intellectuals and thinkers began to recognise may flaws in either the structure of power, or in the nature of institutions, or in society's arrangement. Throughout history they sought after an alternative to the current system which could maximise order, and efficiency within the society. Due to the nature of authority however, which was traditionally bound to an elitarian group holding the reins of power, they could not directly address its problems or criticise in a clear way the institutions; thus, utopias were born. A utopia is an imaginary society or community having near-perfect qualities, in which order and well-being are emphasised as to point out, by contradiction, the inconsistencies of the society which the author of a given utopia belongs to. During the long tradition of utopias authors consistently presented the readers with a situation of happiness and complete satisfaction for the individual, and this common traits held true until the 20th Century, when this trend ultimately shifted. Works such as "A Modern Utopia" by H.G. Wells, and "News From Nowhere" by W. Morris (both written in the eve of the new century) described a context that despite having the aforementioned features, also expressed an underlined fear and anxiety for the increasing velocity of progress and for the consequent alienation of the individual from the newly industrialised, and somewhat mechanic society. After the triumph of positivism and rationality in the past century, intellectuals began to manifest humanitarian concerns about the condition of individuals under an absolute order. Subsequently, although retaining its formal elements and modes of functioning utopias began to turn into dystopias, pictures of invented societies which maintained the same order and efficiency of their utopian counterparts, but also were characterised by dehumanisation, authoritarian regimes and the decline of communities.

The question I want to pose with this paper therefore is: can utopias and dystopias be distanced solely by the effects that the institutions cast upon the individual's well-being? Yet again, is any kind of provision intended to forcefully influence individuality inconsistent with the human nature, independently from its moral or ethical content? In order to answer these questions I will first give examples of a dystopia's functioning from three works, which were written in the wake, and after the Second World War.

The choice of these books is grounded on the fact that all of them were written, to a substantial extent, as a response to the happenings of the 20th Century, which shacked to the core the previous conception of the world, and history; also, every one of these works contain some commonalities with actual historical circumstances, as I will discuss in the second section of this essay. Finally, my decision is strongly dependant on the fact that it is commonly accepted that some elements in these books hold true even for contemporary societies.

Nevertheless, in the first section I will provide for a brief synopsis of each work, and will discuss the main features of its dystopian regime; then, in the second section, I will compare these features throughout the three works and try to relate them to an historical occurrence; lastly, I will discuss and answer the above stated questions, in order to demonstrate that utopias and dystopias are two sides of the same coin, and that any attempt to artificially construct the individuals' imaginary equally falls short on the requisites of a properly humane life experience.

Chapter 1

1.1. Brave New World - A. Huxley

1.1.1. Synopsis

In *Brave New World* we are presented with a world where countries are no more, and the World State exercises strict control over the whole of the planet. The novel opens in the Central London Hatching and Conditioning Centre, where children are artificially created, or rather mass produced following a procedure called the Bokanovsky and Podsnap Process. During the process newborns are divided into five categories, which they will retain for the rest of their life: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon. The Alphas are destined to be the leaders and bureaucrats of the World State, as opposite to the Delta and Epsilon, which will inevitably become part of the ignorant, and enslaved working class. Children are conditioned throughout their early lives to fall within the standards of the social class they are assigned to; Deltas, for example, are brainwashed into despising flowers and books. The director of the centre explains to visitors that they are taught to do so through "hypnopaedic" (sleep-teaching) methods, which further serves to instruct the infants about the state's morals.

What first strikes the reader is the fact that although social stratification is absolute under the World State, social mobility is not a matter of discussion anymore. In fact, the social status of the parents doesn't have any impact on the children future. But then again, the interaction between parents and children is null, and the concept of family became obsolete. As the Director leaves the visitors Mustafa Mond, one of the ten World Controllers, goes further explaining the structure of the mechanised society, and the history of the World State. He particularly emphasises on the efforts made by the State to eliminate emotion, aspirations and human relations from society.

The picture then changes to the Alpha citizen Bernard Marx, an unusual character within the scene. Bernard is "funny-looking" despite being a member of the social elite, and is a loner and an introvert. However, there are two features that keep him apart from the rest of the Alphas: he dislikes the soma, a state-distributed drug somewhat similar to heroin, of which the use as a recreational means is encouraged, and he struggles to approach the opposite sex. While this should not impress a contemporary reader, in *Brave New World's* society male-female relationships are devoid of any emotional or even biological meaning, and the sexual act is limited to pleasure. In fact, the Director will resign from its position when Bernard will face him with his son, driven by the shame of being a (biological) father. The plot unfolds around the discovery of a boy which lived apart from society, and thus is a savage. At the end of the book, Bernard confronts Mond debating the value of the World State's policies, and eventually argues that society as it is dehumanise the citizens. Mond unfathomably answers that stability and happiness are more important than humanity while the savage boy, John, claims that with the sacrifice of art, religion and science life is not worth living. After a series of disgraceful events John finds that he became part of the World State society as well, and hangs himself.

1.1.2. The State limits the means for the individual to determine himself

One could legitimately argue that an individual living under the World State, not only is refrained from taking personal action or constructing its own opinion, but is also structurally banned from forming its identity. Arguably, the most part of what we define as identity is constituted during childhood; in this period the child learn to react to reality from experience, and from imitation of the close individuals. However, the family

background and the social context also play a fundamental role in the child's determination. In *Brave New World* this process is overridden by an artificial counterpart which equally imbues values, and even rational processes, to the children relative to their pre-determined status. By substituting the role of family during the years of formation, the World State also cements its position as the sole and absolute authority. Another essential feature of this institution is that the state has full control over the magnitude and composition of society. To prevent social distress, or unwanted aggregation, the state keeps balance over population. Neither the brute and ignorant working class nor the enlightened elite can reach a proportion which would allow them to organise themselves. Nonetheless there are other implications to the way the World State policy manages birth control and eugenics. Following along the lines of Freudian theory of development, personality is the compound of Id, Ego and Superego.

The Id, that is the place where instincts and basic drives are located — more generally, the subconscious— is the first part of the self that is formed. Superego follows, being constructed during childhood in relation with the norms, rules and values that the infant has absorbed from its social surroundings (Freud, 1949). Finally Ego, which can be thought as the identity in its obvious sense, works as a medium between the two opposite sides. Back to *Brave New World*, we see how the intervention of the Hatching and Conditioning Centres affect the construction of personality. Whereas it is not clear how, and the extent to which the Id can be influenced, the Superego is carefully manipulated through hypnosis so to be roughly identical through the group of assessment, and bound to specific standards. Again, when children are finally able to leave the nursery they are undertaken, similarly to the functioning of a chain production, by a specific organ within the Centre and are raised as stated by a protocol. The whole of their activities, teachings and experiences are scientifically planned.

Therefore, there is little left for the children to understand and interpret on their own. Conclusively, the Id is kept at stake thought their lives by a series of provisions including scheduled sport-time, free hours, interpersonal relations and, most importantly, by drugs which induce a state of ecstasy and incomparable pleasure (Nozick, 1974). Thus, all the spheres of action in which instincts can outburst, even resulting in deviance (as in oppression of sexual drives, or sociality issues), are thoroughly analysed and arranged in a way that deprive them of their proper instinctual meaning.

1.1.3. Obedience is ensured by institutions

Yet another argument would be that, overlooking the impact of conditioning on childhood the individual is still alienated from its humanity, and from social participation. We've seen before that in *Brave New World* society is divided along the lines of five groups, with a clear hierarchy among them. The membership to these groups is not earned, nor can be rejected; it is determined from birth, and each individual is not only the social, but also the genetic expression of his or her group. Each group is furthermore isolated one from another by distinct residential quarters, or rather closed towns, and has access to a limited set of activities, ranging from sport to recreation. The only thing they have in common is the use of some, which is provided by the adequate organ of the state, to be sure. Therefore, the already close to zero relationship that happens within the state and the citizens is further fragmented in well regulated relationships among the state and each group, respectively. This structure makes it impossible for the groups to organise and unite their interest; the latter, in this fashion, are strictly attached to the respective group which is in turn lacking the political basis to uphold them.

Interaction between groups is discouraged, and nearly eliminated by the absence of similarities between groups' values, objectives and habits. We will find a analogous situation in the next section, when we will discuss the role of the proletarian ghetto in Orwell's *1984* (Orwell, 1949).

Nonetheless, the individual's identity is also targeted by the World State policies. One core function of the identity is to define needs, and desires, and the subsequent mode of action in attaining them, which has to be suited to the norms and rules included within one's personality (Doyal & Gough, 1991). If we've seen that the aforementioned norms and rules are single-handedly imposed by the state, the provision could not be effective enough in preventing unwanted, or impulsive behaviours by the hands of the citizens. Therefore, the society is designed so to hinder the desire-formation of need-impulse process in two ways: on one hand, society is arranged so that desires are satisfied in the fasted and most impersonal fashion as possible.

The obstacles to the desires satisfactions are broke down before they could result in deviant behaviour. On the other hand, the administration of soma takes two forms. First, it exhaust the output of dopamine and serotonin through the continuous and artificial stimulus to their production (Ricaurte, 1985); we should here remind that those hormones can be thought as the fuel for enthusiasm and euphony, which can translate to violence when the

circumstances do not respond to one's emotional inputs.

Second, the state monopoly on this drug establishes a mechanism of compliance-reward, which pays off the individual for the suppression of certain desired in exchange for a substitute of that pleasure (Huxley, 2000). However, I will postpone this discussion to the second chapter. I would like to emphasise on two points about how obedience is ensured in *Brave New World*, instead.

The first feature to strike us, as compared to the following works I will discuss, is the absence of violence in this society. There is no police, war, or crime. This means that deviance is not balanced by repressive norms, or by projecting a social imaginary of fearsome institutions; rather, it is structurally eliminated from the scope of human behaviour. As we discussed above, there is no strong desire or reason to act violently, or under impulse.

Citizens are constantly sedated by easy satisfaction and entertainment.

The second feature, which is even more interesting in my opinion, is the mode in which the state acts in relation to the nature of its subjects. We already described the compliance-reward mechanism, but we shall turn now on its main implication. Within the framework of desire-formation of need-impulse the propeller of action, what actually breaks the wall between thought and action, is the notion of tension. Which tension should be described as escalating from the starting point to the projected one, which is in turn a blurred idea of satisfaction (Maslow, 1943).

The engine here, to keep the mechanic metaphor, is that tension is growing in the direction of the object of desire and is hardly stopped by the realisation of wish. Whereas in *Brave New World* society the locus in which tension is levied, and desire is solved, in very clear, and it is soma, what is not vivid instead, is the cause of desire, being every commodity easily available for fruition.

Thus, there is no need for the individual to look beyond this very simple structure, and to deviate from the regime's dictates.

1.1.4. Consent and Dissent

The last consideration on the society of *Brave New World* will be divided in two elements: the nature, and functioning of consent; and the abolition of dissent. Describing consent within Brave New World can prove a challenging exercise. The reason for this is that the society we are presented is a logical, static and dehumanised entity. It is devoid of an historical dimension, and at the same time it lacks any internal or external drives.

Society appears as in a somewhat twisted scenery of dolls, where everything is both functional and motionless.

Therefore it would be difficult to either confirm or refute consent, for the very reason that there is no input to react to. Nonetheless we have talked about how the individual is taken apart from its basic human meanings; now, we should turn to another dimension of identity, which is dependent on the concept of the 'Other'. The identity, whereas fully constructed, functions as a filter to interpret and understand reality. Either stage of identity taken on its own, is insufficient in defining a consciousness.

Any identity has its own symbolic content, and includes a certain semiotic attitude or value. By the interaction between diverse elements of significance, which include but is not limited to human interaction, a full identity and consciousness is formed within the individual; the joint essence of the two will be the means through which the individual relates itself, and its own imaginary, to reality.

However, if we assume that the 'Others' are equally devoid of identity as the subject of study, we will be faced with a situation in which symbolic content is determined by institutions, and every symbol is attached to a direct action. So to say, the Other becomes a sexual intercourse, an argument, a pay-check. The Other is embodied within the symbolic content of its actions, which is in turn determined by institution (Castoriadis, 1997).

Consent here, is therefore expressed as the compound of the mass' voices, which feed one another. In the last section of the book, we can see that even the deviant behaviour undertaken by John (the savage), which engages in self-harm in front of the bewildered mass, is transformed in a tragic, although symbolic, compliance to the values of that society.

In fact, the mass outburst in a massive orgy that envelopes John, which thus loses its integrity and possibility of refusal. The metaphor here powerfully expressed signifies that no 'discourse' is possible among the individuals —discourse intended as the manifestation of a distinct consciousness, capable of weight its own reaction to circumstances — apart from the pre-assigned response to, say, enthusiasm (Bettelheim, 1943). Dissent, on the other side, is much easier to asses in Huxley's work. It is however, in the sense that no clear dissent can be expressed in the state of affairs. This is mainly because, as said above, there is no obvious oppression expressed by the state to which the mass could react. Dissent is thus structurally eliminated as an expression of human emotions and aspirations. Even in the case dissent should manifest, it sure is as an expression of a purely individual consciousness and is therefore cared of in isolation, as is agreed that John will live in a peripheral lighthouse, before

the bitter end.

1.2. 1984 - G. Orwell

1.2.1. Synopsis

The book *1984* introduces the reader to the bleak and grim atmosphere of a society under strict regime, in which every movement, habit, and fragment of an individual's life is recorder and controlled. The main character, Winston Smith, is a low-ranking member of the ruling Party in London, in the nation of Oceania. The latter is one of the three superstates that rule over the world, along with Eurasia and Eastasia.

All the aspects of social and private life, as we said, are controlled by an unclear entity called the Big Brother, which monitors the citizens through a device which is installed is every household. The device thus dictates their daily routines, ranging from morning exercise to feast days participation; it also updates the citizens about food rationing and the state's foreign affairs.

In fact, the three superstates appear to be stuck in a strenuous and never-ending war among each other, which seems to be indefinitely still at the ending stage. Winston Smith is deeply tormented with the oppression exercised by the Party in the forms of prohibition of love affairs, thought control, threat of violence and abolition of privacy at any level. Therefore, he buy off the black market a diary in which he can vent his subversive ideas. However, he eventually falls in love with a coworker from the party and engages in a secret relationship with her; throughout their meetings Winston slowly discovers a side of society that he never knew, and learns about the ways of life of the proletariat, which struck him for their image of freedom. Nevertheless, he becomes the target of O'Brien's attentions; he is a higher ranking member of the Party, although Winston suspects him to be part of the brotherhood, a mysterious group lead by Goldstein that works to overthrow the Party.

Ultimately Winston is mistaken, and ends up being arrested by the Thought Police, of which O'Brien is a member, and taken to the Ministry of Love. There, he finally witness the existence of the most feared room 101, in which the deepest fears of an individual take form to torment him or her. Conclusively, in order to escape the torture Winston turns in his lover. When he meets her again after the events he does not love her anymore; he accepter the Big Brother.

1.2.2. The state limits the means for the individual to determine himself

We will discuss three ways in which the state oversees the identity and personality of its citizens in *1984*: through the abolition of privacy and self-property; through the limitation and control of thought; and through the institutionalised organisation of instinctual emotions. First, the individual is constantly monitored. However, control does not operate solely on its most obvious level, that is, home-cameras. If it were so, what the overseer looked after would be generally law abidance, or the behaviours that may infringe the moral code imposed by the state. Instead, the individual is not only checked against what he or she should not do, but even against what he or she should do, to be considered a functional member of society.

For instance, the individual is ought to actively participate in national festivals, including their preparation; otherwise, there is a list of routine activities that he or she must attend. Again, there are two implications to this fact. On one hand, the 'space of freedom' is further reduced from a situation in which the individual is forcefully refrained from certain acts.

That is, whereas there is a clear legal code that clarifies the conditions for illegality, the individual is free to act within the boundaries of what is allowed; even in a strongly repressive system he or she could adapt to the context and operate on that reality, so to find out what he or she is allowed to do to gain personal satisfaction without going against the law. This attitude would even somewhat empower the idea of identity, in the sense that the relationship between the individual, and the legality space which he can operate with can take many shape, depending on the person.
On the contrary, when the individual is obligated to follow a specific code of conduct which also places deep roots in its daily habits, he is alienated from the positive value of his legal, and social character. The result is that his or her interaction with reality is institutionalised, and has to follow the line of a 'thin path' of action.

Second, the individual is deprived of its private dimension and thus entirely becomes the reflection of its social dimension (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1995). The activities he pursues in the closed space of his or her house are the same of those of his or her neighbours, therefore the individual knows for sure that nearly every action he takes is a collective one. However, the dimension of collectivity here is a strongly anonymous and impersonal one; within the discourse imposed by the state (with the support of monitoring device, even chit-chats are recorded and regulated) no sign of individual opinion or tendency can be shown (Tong, 1995). Along

with manifestations and public events the life of the individual is enclosed in a system of planned reality, and planned daily existence.

The point for the institution, may even not be that of brainwashing every single citizen into loving the regime dictates, but sure is that of impeding the heteronomy to be manifest (Jacobson & Schlink, 2000). As the subject becomes absorbed in the dehumanised mass of people, he loses its very will to divert, or to form a personal point of view. Respectively, another institutional organ in added to the picture in order to ensure the stability of a helpless, amorphous mass; that is the office appointed for the draft of Newspeak.

The office is tasked with the simplification of the English language, which mainly translates in the removal of all the words that are deemed to be unnecessary. The aim of this operation is for every broad concept to be summarised in just one word, to which then one could add a number of prefixes as to roughly emphasise one valence over another. Language is a symbolic code used to assess reality, and a semiotic code for the transmission of intent. Arguably, the effect of the Newspeak policy on these characteristics of would be relatively small, considering that the capacity of the individual to recognise and translate reality into a transmittable codex. Nonetheless, there is another important feature to the structure of language; that is, it is needed to fragment, and then transpose reality into assessable logical entities.

In the process of deconstructing reality into mathematical terms —so that object A equals meaning B- and reconstructing it on the basis of a symbolic system of language, the individual learns to understand not only the external content of reality, say the physical and explanatory level, but also the implicit relationship between the property of matter (reality) and its representation(significance) (Castoriadis, 1997). Therefore it is intrinsic in the existence of language the capacity to define new ides, gather new understandings of reality, and elaborate innovative relationships between concepts. Banning the speculative nature of language, the aim of the Party is to deprive the mass of the means necessary for the interaction with the exterior on an individual and exclusive level.

In addition to the exercise of the aforementioned office one should turn its attention to the organ in which Smith works: the Ministry of Truth.

There, he is tasked with the scrutiny of gathered historical informations, and the possible removal of those facts that, either contradict another Party's statement or are unnecessary within the historical picture of Oceania.

Identity as a social phenomena is strictly bound to the possibility of recognition within the 'Other' (as previously intended, an other in general)

and within the historical context of authority. Controlling both the shape of these factors the state ultimately alienate the individual from society, which is in turn, the only dimension in which he is permitted to live.

Lastly, having determined the Superego of the individual throughout the vertical imposition of norms, rules and values (see above), and the Ego through the continuous control of the individual's activities, a framework of social myths and introduction of an artificial imaginary is devised to manage —to the possible extent—the individual's subconscious, the Id.

Whereas it is clear that the outlet of anxiety and impulses is unavoidable at a certain point, a series of events and activities are designed to make it happen under the state control. Among a number of national festivals that fall within the scope of propaganda, the recurrence of the "three minutes of hate" is the most interesting one. There are two dimensions that we are discussed before acting together in this circumstance: the lack of an obvious figure to which the emotions are addressed, and the collective nature of the exercise. In fact, the 'three minutes of hate' is about expressing a strong disapproval towards Goldstein, the so-pictured enemy of the Party, and venting all the suppressed drives.

By the nature of the mass, during the time of the occurrence the individual is enveloped in a stream of violent, bewildered cries and emotions directed towards what we could see as a totem, a symbol of what is to be despised and abhorred. The circumstance is not about Goldstein or any other figure, rather it is about the representation of cause of evil. The unclear nature of the enemy is so designed as to be the recipient of any negative thought from the individual, thus distracting and at the same time emptying him or her of of the most urging impulses of violence (Doob, 1949).

1.2.3. Obedience is ensured by institutions

We have previously discussed the structure of control. The latter is an inescapable and total presence in the life of an individual. This fact alone, could possibly explain the complete submission to the state. However, yet another fundamental factor for the state control is the limitation of thought. The system is made efficient by the presence of the fearsome Thought Police, an organ established to analyse and judge individual behaviours on the basis of compliance to the code of the Party. Apart from the real content of this institution, which is forceful removal of deviant tendencies, the fear of persecution plays a key role here.

Nonetheless, the mental availability to 'subversive thoughts' is simply overridden by the constant state of fear an individual has to experience for the very fact that he just began to harbour such thought, and deviated from the regime models (Logan & Cowan, 1984). Furthermore, there is a lot just to the fact that within the social imaginary cast by the institutions all those elements that are most vivid, as in the case of the actual punishment, are all but clearly shaped and defined.

Thus, to the impact of fear of institutions we should add fear for the unknown, which is essential for magnifying the effects of a repercussion.

Of course, fear plays another important role in the structure of obedience and control. In fact, it acts on the vertical level from institutions, but also on an horizontal level among citizens. Their function as good members of society in fact is not limited to simple compliance to the above stated rules, but includes also the monitoring of other citizens and their behaviour.

This fact produces further fragmentation within society, and thus the impossibility to form coalitions that is attached to it (Bramstedt, 2013). Therefore the individual is forced to keep an appearance of integrity throughout every moment of his day, and meanwhile projects restriction on the other, by sole proximity. Ultimately, what is of most interest is the fact that the object of oppression shifts from the institution to the neighbour, the passerby, the coworker; eventually he is to be blamed for the arrest of anyone close to the observer. Thus, the individual is irremediably alienated from the groups which he interacts with, even within family; in addition, he is even more incline to observe clues of wrongdoing in others' actions and to report them. Conclusively, the device of control is contracted around the individual so that he or she may perceive the situation as a 'me against all'.

1.2.4. Consent and Dissent

At this point, it would be only logical for one to conclude that the Party manages social opinion simply by banning and persecuting every form of dissent; this in fact, would be only the most obvious aspect on which the control of dissent is based. However, we shall go further into assessing this structure of control.

There are at least three levels in which the state addressed, either directly or indirectly, the issue of dissent.

The first one would be the most direct and obvious action, that is, the

actual pursue of 'thoughtcrime'. Assuming that, ignoring both the exogenous and the endogenous factors of influence of the formation of dissent, the individual still managed to perceive and, more importantly, elaborate a critique of the authority, he or she would lack the capacity to express it. The are actually two macro-areas in which the freedom of thought and expression could be diversely assessed: the space of proper society, and the proletarian ghettos.

Proceeding in order, the former would sure be an unviable option if an individual wished to manifest his or her critique. We previously have gone through the structure of mutual control that is established between the members of society. In order to ensure that the confession of discontent will not cost him or her a report to the Thought Police, the individual has first to survey whether his or her interlocutor is trustworthy. This exercise could although prove risky; the is no clarity of whatever are the conditions not to surpass the limit that would result into an arrest.

Therefore, there are two barriers to the communication of dissent from one individual to another: the fear of repercussion during the exploration of reliability, and the fear of report after the actual confession (Sofen, 1954). To these, one should also add the possibility of being overheard by one of the numerous undercover police agents. Whereas the latter situation, that of proletarian ghettos, we should first clarify before detailing the conditions of possibility.

The aforementioned districts can be considered the sole place on which the grip of Party's control is eased; in fact, a number of illegal activities are allowed in these areas, ranging from prostitution to gambling.

These areas are in fact relatively free, or rather to be considered as grey zones, although the access to them on the behalf of 'proper' members of society is strongly discouraged. When Winston Smith visits one of these ghettos however, the 'freedom' he finds seems to be devoid of its positive meaning. In his eyes it takes the form of exaggeration of leisure, and uncontrolled hedonism; none of the member of the proletariat appears to be fully aware of what happens under the Party's oppression and what's more important, to have any interest about that. Either because the poor mass is intentionally kept outside of the picture by ignorance, or because of the immense distance between one society and another, any attempt to explain the horrors of the Party's oppression or to engage the proletariat into an organised source of dissent is useless. The manifestation of dissent within this social group falls on deaf ears.

Going back to the main topic, the second way in which dissent is eliminated is by structurally negating the possibility of any discourse about

dissent (Young, 2015). Nonetheless, we should look at the same institution in which the main character works, the Ministry of Truth. We should remind that the task of such institution is to manage and contract historical facts.

The argument here is that any possible comparison to the actual context of society is eliminated from the picture. While this provision is useful to the Party to gather whatever historical phase of event could legitimate its authority, it also freezes the state of affairs into cold, motionless matter of fact. Without the proper means of debate the situation cannot be challenged, and the Ministry of Truth's efforts are entirely directed to the eradication of those very means; namely historical facts, informations about foreign countries and so on. Lacking this data it would indeed be difficult just to prove that there are actually other options to the structure of authority.

Having alienated society from its relative nature, any argumentation becomes enclosed within the dialectics of the Party, and this is from where we will start our conclusive point.

Newspeak, as we've seen, is the elaboration of original English —here referred to as Oldspeak— intended to replace it. The maybe most important goal behind the introduction of Newspeak is to limit language to an extent which makes the vocabulary available to the individual referential to the thought that can be properly expressed. Every word that is not pertinent to the ideological content of the Party's discourse is made sure to disappear; for instance, the word free cannot be used anymore to signify individual freedom.

Furthermore, every broad concept that could fall under a number of different interpretations is translated into a single word; during this operation however, it is ensured that an ideological meaning is attached to the term, and that the latter conform to the Party. The implication of this procedure is, for instance, that when an individual is asked to argument the basis for dissent he or her is prevented to broadly elaborate thoughts through words, but is rather limited to the automatic pronunciation of what expression he has available, and which partly reflects a contradiction to the critique itself (Orwell, Appendix: The principles of New speak. Nineteen Eighty Four, 1949).

One last curious speculation on this point is that nearly all the composite words of the vocabulary —we will in brief discuss the categorisation of words within Newspeak — are made of two or three syllables and so are phonetically reproduced in a quick, flowing and mechanic fashion (Orwell, Appendix: The principles of New speak. Nineteen Eighty Four, 1949). The point therefore is that this arrangement further encourages the systematic recurrence to pre-determined forms of

speech, which of course are provided by the institution. As we just noted, Newspeak vocabulary can be divided into three broad categories: 'A words', 'B words' and 'C words'; we, however, will focus of the first two categories. 'A words' are all the words of general use and purpose; there is no particular ideological operation behind them.

Such words are continuously diminished for the sake of thought impoverishment.

What we shall emphasise on instead, is the group of 'B words'; this category pertains all the words that define political thought. Thus, the words are so arranged as to impose a desirable attitude on the speaker, in the sense that they reject the possibility of any aspect of the Party's ideology to go along with a negative value (Hitchens, 2003).

Also, these words are again constructed to inherently include an ideological content. A good example of this would be the term "joycamp" (which stands for concentration camp); the word clearly express a value as opposite to its real meaning. Conclusively, the compound of this three elements we have analysed negates the possibility of dissent being elaborated, constructed, and expressed.

1.3. Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury

1.3.1 Synopsis

The third and last book that I will discuss describe a rather mild and peaceful picture, compared to the drastic nature of the other two.

The main character, Guy Montag, works as a firefighter in a futuristic American city. However, his works is not so in line with that of a traditional firefighter: instead of putting out fires, he is tasked with the incineration of books. Thus, we are projected within *Fahrenheit 451's* society; one in which books are disposed, as is every form of art, where culture is disregarded and interpersonal relations are kept at the barest minimum. As in the other two works the main character is the only voice of reason within the deformed society, and finds himself surrounded by an oppressive and dehumanised context. In the time of the book the individual is encircled in what can be defined as a 'plastic dream; every household possess a wall-wide screen which transmits all kinds of frivolous entertainment from sunset to dawn, and uses a device called the 'Seashell', a radiophonic earplug that takes the place of the screen whereas the individual goes outside his house.

Montag however, is somewhat fashioned by the books and wants to know the reason behind the actual anti-cultural policies. Although he is first discouraged from his chief fireman Beatty, he eventually takes the step and enters in possession of a clandestine copy. From that point onwards he begins to be further disillusioned about the world he lives in as his wife attempts suicide, and an old lady to which he starts to feel close is found in possession of a library and killed being burned alive along with her belongings.

Nevertheless, he goes on investigating about the disappearance of the old lady just to find that her murder has been covered up; afterwards, Beatty tries to make him cope with a reality he must accept but fails to convince him. During an escalating series of events his wife Mildred reports the presence of a hidden book in their house and Montag is thus forced to explicitly revolt to the system that oppresses him.

He burns down Beatty with his flamethrower and escape the attempts to arrest him; he finally manages to break free and disappear from the scene. Finally, he approaches a group of people that still read books, or rather memorise them entirely so to prevent their extinction.

Eventually he becomes an active part of the subversive group and as the book ends, bombs are descending onto the city to symbolise a full-scale catastrophe; the book retainers begin their march to resurrect again the most important operas of humankind.

1.3.2. The state limits the means for an individual to determine himself

The first and foremost element we should address in order to discuss the role of the state in relation to the individual in this work in certainly the nature of culture within *Fahrenheit 451's* society. However, it is worth noting that although culture is subject to institutional limitation and control the way in which this operation is performed greatly differs by what we could see as a forceful imposition. In fact, in a segment of the book the chief Beatty cares to explain to Montag how, and why book where abolished from society.

The way he puts it cultural content was never violently targeted, but naturally came to extinction as a result of society. He particularly stresses out the fact that repression of culture began as minority groups began to occupy an increasingly important space within the political discourse, and consequently requested the uphold of what they perceived as their legitimate

interest. The latter, would have been mainly restricted to concerns about identity preservation (Bradbury, 1953).

This tendency, Beatty goes on explaining, started to repeat itself through the whole of the minority groups up to the point in which the problem of assessing the new found multicultural dimension of society would prove impossible, at least under the consideration of the said minority groups sensitivity. Therefore, authors and intellectuals naturally stopped producing new material. Nevertheless, we shall not stop considering the reliability of the character's words. Instead, what we are interested in is the effects of the factual abolition of culture.

We shall divide the argument into two parts: the consequences of the lack of art within society, and the aggregating effect of the same provision of individuality.

To start off we should hinge on what has been previously said about the creative nature of language. Art, as a compound of symbolic elements creating a line of interaction between the source of the symbols and the recipients of them, can be understood as a language. In addition to that, being a relatively freer language —that is on the ground of the fact that it is not bound by strict rules, say, grammatical rules— it is more apt to acquire a self-feeding and creative nature.

Nonetheless, this aspect does not relate only to those that properly understand art, or the artists themselves, but is linked to the comparative structure of the human relationship with reality. Whatsoever information the individual has gather during his or her lifetime in fact acts as a bank, which is then consulted by unconscious processes whenever he or she is faced with whatever new object or circumstance; by analysing the similarities of circumstance the individual can thus opt for one reaction or another, based on his or her previous experiences, and the latter's results (Vernon, 1970).

Although art itself, does not nearly constitute the entirety of this mechanisms' functioning, it sure plays a great role in creating new conditions for understanding, and in exploring unprecedented ideas.

Therefore, the complete disappearance of this very way of understanding and communication has the effect of stabilising reality in whatsoever fixed context it is presented with, drastically reducing the possibilities of evolution. And that is exactly the situation the characters of *Fahrenheit 451* are faced with; a static and ever repeating picture of routine.

The latter, it is important to note, regards almost completely a virtual substitute to reality. Here we should also add that whereas culture is not abolished, it is operationalised by institutions. Indeed certain production have survived the censorship, but nonetheless have acquired another

essence; that is, to be harmonised with the symbolic content of the institution's message and act as a concert into determined an artificial imagine of society; with constructed norms, rules and values to keep the subject steadily under control. Once engaged with the newly formed 'culture' through the continuous exposure to the above stated entertainment devices the individual is set not to deviate from the imposed standard.

Going further, the second implication we are to discuss is the role of individuality within the context of absolute cultural homologation. The control exercised by a collectivity acting upon a standardised code of conduct is proves here even more oppressing that the use of force by the hands of authority. In fact, rather than being faced with a situation in which opposing the propaganda is a risk in face of repercussion, the individual finds himself in a context in which the other simply do not understand him; he is ultimately alienated from his or her social group from the very moment the decision to deviate from the common uses is taken. Oddly enough, Montag is not reported by his chief Beatty even when he indirectly admits the possession of a book; he is reported by his own wife instead, which begins to suspect him because of his non-compliance to the common behaviour (for instance, standing in front of the entertainment device all the day).

Therefore, I shall emphasise again, the 'arrest' —intended as the abrupt separation with social group of belonging — happens in the very moment the individual starts to take interest in what is not common for the whole of the society, and not when his actions are discovered. The concept of forced uniformity will come in handy discussing the sequent section, to which I readdress the reader.

1.3.3. Obedience is ensured by institutions

We concluded the previous section roughly describing *Fahrenheit 451's* society uniformity. We shall apply this very concept to introduce the discussion about how obedience is safeguarded. First however, I'd like to point out that the uniformity that we are going to analyse in respect to obedience is related to just one of the aspects of obedience; that is civil obedience, namely the total compliance to the law, as opposed to civil disobedience, which consists in going against the law without exercising violence or causing uproars (Fortas, 1968). The behaviour of the main character, Montag, cannot be conscripted within the idea of civil disobedience because he actually resorts to violence when he burns Beatty

alive; rather, a civil disobedient character would be that of Clarisse, an old lady which Montag is acquainted with and which clandestinely stores books. Therefore we should address the case of Montag while discussing the violent enforcement of laws, in the next section.

We have previously explored the routine of citizens in *Fahrenheit 451's* society; they appear as subjects devoid of interest, aspiration or goals. The society so intended can be enclosed in the space of a living room, in from of the huge and flashy television screen. As simple as it seems, civil obedience within this society is almost entirely about complying with this very modelled and not to wonder further, for instance, about the incoming war that as we know will eventually sweep everything away.

Nevertheless, when Montag's wife discuss the upcoming conflict with her friends he does it in a literally, 'frivolous' manner. It indeed a noteworthy fact that throughout the book there is no mention of any activity apart from the aforementioned entertainment, the firefighters' mansions and the rarely found cases of reading books. Bare of the historical dimension, again, and of any social movement the society is still.

Coming to the point, this structure establishes a relationship between citizen and rule that is symbiotic rather than submissive. Thus two completely different spheres emerge within the common individual's imaginary: one to which he belongs, on the side of civil obedience, and in which he is totally absorbed as a natural part of it, and an opposite one which appears to be antagonistic in regards to the former (Blass, 1999).

Therefore, order and conformity are enforced vertically, but also on the horizontal level with substantial effects. The deviant individual has thus to face a two-sided opposition to his or her activity: a passive opposition which results at best in isolation, and ultimately in report, and an aggressive one by the side of police. Again, it has been noted that the performance of either police or of the firefighters eventually leads to the death of the criminal.

However, it should be also noted that death is not a direct consequence of persecution, and that people are burned along with books in the case they are not willing to separate from them at the moment of incineration. Meaning that the books themselves are the matter of vicious repression, and not the individual possessing them. That is because once the illicit object is eliminated, there is no possibility for the lone individual to bring disruption upon society.

Nonetheless, this is not the case when the criminal act falls beyond the simple gathering of banned items. Whereas the violation is more serious the enforcement device shifts from firefighters to the infamous 'hound'. The hound is the only product of technology that we know to be harmful to

human beings; it is indeed programmed to chase down dissidents and kill them.

The hound here is a metaphor for the brutal side of the futuristic government, that seems to completely change its nature and behaviours as the individual deviates excessively. What is important to note however, is the fact that in certain cases the whole of the legal rights of an individual are suspended, as he is chased down without being submitted to a trial solely for the mass entertainments; in fact, every chase of the hound is broadcasted through televisions. This reinforces the claim that institutions desire to uphold the division of society in two concurring sides, that of compliers and that of dissidents.

Thought the public chase the criminal is in fact dehumanised and becomes a symbol for disruption, dangerous tendencies which ought to be avoided in order to be a functioning part of society and to enjoy its benefices.

Through this operation the state thus ensures to cement the social imaginary of imposed conformity against any attempt to organise dissent (Taylor, 2003). In this section however, I will not go further explaining the nature, and reaction to dissent. That is because I feel that the previous discussion sufficiently explains the role that I would attach to it, and because I desire to avoid repetition. In the next chapter therefore we will discuss the common traits between the three presented dystopias and the links that can be traced from them to actual historical circumstances.

Chapter 2

2.1. Common traits between dystopias

In this section I shall consider the commonalities between the presented dystopias; in order to do so, I will first compare the logic of standard utopias to the conclusions we have drawn from the previous chapter, which concern the functioning of dystopias. This point will indeed be crucial for the last section of this work in that we will prove dystopian regimes not to be naturally evil, or inefficient, but rather controversial in regards to human nature. In an ideal situation, namely the utopia, the construction of reality and the institution of social imaginary take place both in the institutional, and the private sphere, with the latter being prior to the former. Having acquired the proper means for the understanding of reality, the collectivity

of individuals may thus engage in the rationalisation of needs and their satisfaction (Mannheim, 2013).

The institutional framework is therefore a direct result of the compound action of these elements, and is eventually driven by the elaboration of the individual on his or her essence. The aforementioned mechanism might, or should be, at the core of the democratic system; also, it should be the logical implication of any effort towards the development of society. In the case of dystopias instead, the structure of needs and aims of the individuals is single-handedly determined by the institutions; furthermore, a consistent construction of reality is hindered and avoided by the latter.

Nonetheless, the phenomena we have described is present throughout every regime we are analysing; we shall now discuss its implications. The first necessary condition for the creation, and maintenance of a subject (i.d. an independent individual, with an exclusive personality) is the free elaboration of the unconscious, which ultimately results in a given understanding of reality (Simon, 2001). That is , the individual alone must reflect on his or her role within a given context, and choose the means and modalities on which he or she will ground his or her relationship with the exterior, and with the unconscious.

The consequent activities - in its most basic meaning, the act of living - are to be considered within the space of an individual's reflection on its own circumstances. The latter, is sure to be combined with a set of rules which are drawn from rational nature of the conscious over the unconscious, and which eventually is shared among subjects as a consequence of communication and interrelation.

Therefore, the subject (or subjectivity) can be traced within the path of the direction and scope of the said activities towards an objective. We have previously undergone the discussion on the mechanism of needs satisfaction as the basis for individuality. Whereas the objective is determined, and placed externally from the individual, he or she lacks of an exclusive direction - that is to say, autonomy - and is engulfed in the amorphous totality of the mass. In fact, if the aforementioned scheme is cast on the entirety of society the latter becomes devoid of subjects, and is instead reflected solely by an homogenous collectivity.

Finally, the others are the drive for the response of an individual to the world (Castoriadis, 1997). Inasmuch the framework of exchange and interpersonal relation in suspended, and is static, the production of opinions and thoughts is stopped. Therefore, the basis for human advancement and the very essence of human cooperation is eliminated. In this respect, the institutions in both *Brave New World* and *1984* go further in defining the

nature of an individual's social life.

The notion of family is in fact manipulated in different ways by the two regimes; it is artificially banished or included within the framework of state's control, respectively.

What is interesting to note however is not the means by which this element is excluded from the social scenery, but rather the fact that family is equally treated both in utopias and dystopias. Nevertheless, family is the place in which the individual first learns about social roles and is introduced to norms; by intervening into this sphere the institution thus manages to impose an attitude which is consistent with the ruling ideology (Berneri, 1969).

There are two features of family however, which might be even more essential for the maintenance of a given order. First, family is an early source of authority. Here the individual learns to respect a hierarchy and to a certain extent, learns about the concept of collective good (Berzonsky, 2004).

Insofar as the institution manages to replace the family it gains the total submission of individuals to its authority, but even more important it benefits from the genuine commitment of the individuals to its cause.

Second, as much as family is an aggregating element it can also become a danger to the stability of the regime's rule. That is for the reason that family is a natural, closed group within the broader group of society. Not only it mimics the functioning of a society; its hierarchical structure, and the roles and norms shared among its members. Family can also constitute a society on its own, as it happens in the case of numerous tribal systems. Therefore, for an institution that pursues control over the members of society and which strives after stability of its rule, family may become an obstacle for the exercise of control.

Furthermore, even apart from family, any kind of genuine exchange between individuals is perceived by the institution as threat to stability as long as it falls beyond the monitoring capacity of its organs. Nonetheless human relations are one of the main targets of regulations, which are designed so to limit, if not eliminate, any possibility of coalition outside the structures of power.

Yet another natural tendency that is operationalised by the institutions in order to make it subservient to the regime's ideology is the essence of pleasure; the said instrument recurs both in *Brave New World* and in *Fahrenheit 451*. The operation undertaken by the institutions in this case is the rationalisation of pleasure, namely the arrangement where the tension of desire is satisfied as simply as possible.

The research of pleasure is indeed a drive having a tremendous force of both aggregation and disruption, depending on the conditions of fulfilment of a given desire (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Consequently, the elimination of the aforementioned drive might lead to a set of relevant implications: the individual may be weakened in his or her capacity of experiencing discomfort, and to question his or her wellbeing; this may happen because he or she is deprived of an object or idea to aspire to. Also the feeling of alienation is augmented by this means, for the reason that the experience of pleasure is no longer an exclusive one, namely one which is dependant on the individual's behaviour and choices, but rather becomes a common practice or even a matter of simple consumption.

Again, the content of human interaction is banished from the consideration of pleasure, and often is even meaningless in regards to the attainment of the latter. Similarly, the classic understanding of natural roles is deformed by the institutions in every of the three situations. Sex genders are in fact objectified throughout these imaginary societies.

The notion of the 'Other' that we have previously analysed in the first section is sure widely constructed around the idea of differences, among which one of the most essential is the difference between genders. Going further into explanation, the recognition of the other sex is crucial for the identification of an own's identity, and is an element of strong influence on an individual's personality and behaviours (Macdonald, 1979). Nevertheless the perception of the said difference is a factor that is hardly understood and monitored by the institution. Therefore gender is made so to be fully recognised and defined solely in the most superficial aspects of its nature; for instance, the very biological meaning of the difference is the only to be accepted and incentivised.

The 'Other' thus becomes nothing but a device for procreation and, as in the case of *Brave New World*, of pure recreation. The intrinsic content of diversity, which can be open to countless readings leading subsequently to a number of responses, untraceable both in their content and extent, is in this way summarised to the spontaneous result of instincts. The features of authority we have seen so far are all intended to reduce, to a certain extent, the individuals' expressions of identity to a set of pre-determined activities and behaviours that can be fully explained within their actual, or merely substantial content; meaning that every possible manifestation of the self is inevitably a manifestation of the collective, homogenous will (Castoriadis, 1997).

Therefore action, understood as any statement of identity, is confined to a unilateral symbolic meaning, namely its factual content; consequently, the

expression of an individual is devoid of its interpretative and speculative nature. Insofar there is no questioning of the 'Other's intent, there can be no understanding of the circumstantial reality; the social tissue is thus broken.

Nonetheless, another mechanism is enacted by the presented institutions in order to deprive the individual of its sense of belonging; that is the manipulation and eradication of history. In each of the literature works we are presented with a state of affairs that is no clearly explained or even linked to some past events; history is static.

Although the means through which facts are manipulated change across the works, what matters to us is the relation between history and society, and between individual and history. On the former side, a society is a direct reflection of its history; the past provides for the justification for the legitimacy of authority, and also provides the logical grounds for the structure of power and whatsoever political arrangement in established in the given society.

In this sense, history is an explanatory factor. Furthermore, the recorded past can prove, or refute, the consistency of the actual order. Having acquired this device of information the institution sure can freely determine the scope and extent of its authority. Again, on the individual's side, history is a instrument of recognition. Whereas there is no term of comparison to the present condition the individual has no means of judgement over the actual state of affairs (Calhoun, 1994). Therefore, there is no possibility of opposing to a situation on the ground of past experiences and, quoting Thucydides, "it is not history that repeats itself, but humans". Linked to the side history's manipulation there is yet another recurrent feature; that is the arrangement that justifies the trade off of freedom for security.

As current as it may seem, this operation is magnified under these institutions to the point that a constant state of war is cast upon society so to implement even more restrictive measures (Levi, 1997). In 1984 for instance, it may serve to channel the frustration of the population towards an unshaped enemy, and to instil a sense of intrinsic distrust amongst the members of society; here, the war is made as vivid as possible to the subjects, and is manifested, for example, through the constant adjustment of food rations. Inasmuch we have seen that history is an artificial concept in these societies, war is an occurrence that can be, and is, constructed by the institutions. The effects of this invention are multiple: first, as we have noted, a state of war is used to justify oppressive measure; second, along with a constant propaganda it can increase significantly the commitment of the population to the state's cause; and, last but not least, it serves as a

distraction from the actual conditions of the society.

The most important effect however, considering the functioning and objectives of a repressive institution, is the control of dissent; the exercise of the latter control, is further eased by the presence of conflict. Dissent is brought about by an impulse that may be a response to a wrong an individual has been subject to, or that stems from questioning an own's circumstances; in this sense, dissent is a direct product of intellectual proliferation (meaning a consistent and efficient exercise of thought). This very capacity of the individual of speculating and developing ideas is hindered by the institutions, as we have seen.

Dissent however, may also be a product of the projection of an individual's hopes, morals and beliefs over the actual state of society (Young, 2015). It is thus through the elaboration of an alternative solution, and the comparison of the former to reality, that an individual can construct dissent. To be sure, the institutions we are analysing by any means attempt to eliminate the conditions from which dissent can be generated: we refer to the binding of language to the regime's dictates, as in 1984, and the consequent limitation to the means of visualising another order; or else to the general impoverishment of the individual's culture and autonomy, as in both *Brave New World and Fahrenheit 451*.

The above-stated provisions however concern the passive side of dissent, namely the prior formulation of it, which does not necessarily results in given factual response (e.g. manifestation, rioting); there are in fact two additional ways in which dissent is managed by the institutions. That is directly, through the use of force, and indirectly thought the institutionalisation of consent.

The use of force clearly includes the resort to threats, the manipulation of fear, and the monitoring of private life.

Nevertheless, these instrument may prove ineffective against the possibility of collective mobilisation on the side of population. Therefore, most of the institutions' efforts are directed towards the avoidance of such occurrence; first comes the continuos propaganda, designed to engage those subjects that are most gullible into a fervent nationalism.

Education plays a major role in this scheme, as it forms the awareness of the individual. Those who are not influenced by the propaganda are thus distanced from those who are affected by it, consequently negating the conditions for social aggregation.

Second the defectors, or dissenters, are stigmatised by the propaganda. They are represented as to become the source of evil within society; their presence is indeed operationalised in order to create a fetish to which the

rest of population can relate on a personal level, as to an intimate enemy or even the cause of the general disruption. Inasmuch this mechanism is most salient within the society of *1984*, it can be reckoned also in the society of *Fahrenheit 451*.

Effectively, the defector is shown as a prey to the police's hound through television broadcast, so that viewers can sympathise with the exercise of violence and feel a part of the punishment. Thus the enforcement, and more importantly the guilt of murder, is to a certain extent shared among spectators and institutions.

Third, one of the most effective means to ban dissent and to introduce further control is the creation of an imaginary of danger. Thought the deterrence of social disruption people are forced to accept repressive measure that are supposedly for their protection (Huxley, 2000).

From this point thus, we return to the establishment of a constant state of war, and the introduction of an eerie menace which, it is important noting, is never clearly stated. In this way, the presence and nature of the omen can be manipulated by the institution as needed; furthermore, contrary to the objective essence of danger an unshaped and unclear one translates into doubt, which is then another essential element for the control of society on the horizontal level.

Finally, I would like to point out that in some of the cases described, dissent is actually made possible by the institutions.

Considering the prohibition of certain thoughts throughout these societies this proposition may seem strange, but here I present tow situations in which dissent can be expressed without causing one's arrest or even worse, disappearance. The first situation is strongly dependant on the functioning of propaganda. The perfect propaganda is one that roots on the primal instincts of human beings -violence, to state one- and which translates them into actions that are justifiable under the actual ideology (Stanley, 2015). Through this operation, instincts are replaced with a sort of faith in the reality of the ideology's content.

Furthermore, propaganda must be concise and simple. It is the redundant and mechanic repetition of propaganda that mutates claims into unquestionable facts, a still interpretation of any circumstance (Huxley, 2000).Once the system of propaganda is well established there is no space left for doubt; in fact, we witness the main character of *Brave New World* assessing the problems of his society, and yet he is neither stopped or banished. That is because the echo of one voice is not sufficient to destabilise the current ideology.

However, there is yet another element to that. Whereas ideology is

placed within the core of human understanding, and along with human instincts, by no means the subject can even comprehend the reason of the dissent. This is exactly what happens both to the characters of the aforementioned work and *Fahrenheit 451*. In fact, it is the very act of communication that is undermined by the institutions through education, propaganda, and predetermined customs.

Similarly, insofar dissent is a product of questioning reality basing on an own's understanding, different social groups or individual can assess dissent from various points of view. In this case, it is only through the unification of these perspectives that coalition is made possible and effective.

Therefore, by creating structural barriers in between different groups within a society the institution is sure to create a void of understanding. This phenomena is visible through *Brave New World's* society, but is even more interesting to explore in 1984.

We mentioned that at some point in the story the main character accesses the proletarian district, where he uncovers an unknown, parallel society in which the very freedom he struggles to obtain is not so bright as he imagined it. Nonetheless, the proletariat is deemed by the institution not to be capable of creating an opposition to the regime, and thus is segregated apart from the functioning society. It is striking that what is conceded to one side of society mirrors that which is banned to the other side. Therefore, these two elements are arranged so to be managed depending on the output they are expected to produce; be it manufacture, or services. Those with an higher aptitude are by this logic the more oppressed for the reason that a piece of information, or any degree of freedom in their hands could play a different role if compared to the use a peasant could make of them. On the other hand, the violent proletarian mass could hardly be controlled had it comprehended the state of affairs.

However, the institution is sure to separate these groups by the means of language, and also of ideology. In fact the lower strata of society is presented to the citizens as a vile mass of brutes, that should be feared and despised.

In conclusion, we have undergone the common features and structures of dystopias through the presented works; in the next section, we will discuss how the logic behind the regimes of *1984* and *Brave New World* are mirrored by actual historic cases.

2.2. Dystopias in history

The 20th Century was the theatre of the worst conflicts and atrocities of humankind; as the legacy of the industrial revolution, with the increased standards in living conditions attached to it, began to fade and the world became enveloped in the flames of war many intellectuals changed their perspective on the future and on the consequences the destruction would bring about. In fact, both Orwell and Huxley first-handedly witnessed the horrors of war and published their works respectively in 1949 and 1932. Despite the fact that the two books were chronologically separated by the biggest and most destructive world conflict, the conclusions of the authors did not fall too far apart one from another.

In this section, I will analyse the aspects in which history reflected the expectancies of the two authors; therefore Orwell's *1984* I will compare to the communist regime in the URSS, and Huxley's *Brave New World* to liberal America during the decade after 1960. The first and foremost distinction between the two orders would thus be the structure by which the institution ensures obedience and compliance to the dictates of ideology. Starting from 1984, which regime is mirrored -to a certain extent- by the communist rule in the URSS; obedience is ensured by the threat of punishment. Importantly enough, punishment here is not a relative value -in the sense that it is vertically exercised by the institution upon the individual - but an absolute one. Insofar the institution strongly incentivises the report of suspect behaviours, and subjects increasingly resort to the mechanism, the individual feels constantly observed and fears his relatives and friends. Therefore, he or she restlessly incarnates the ideal subject, and is engulfed into an existence of mechanic repetition of a role.

Whereas the individual is found in compliance with the aforementioned role, even in the most private aspects of everyday life, he or she is supposedly safe. Supposedly, on the ground of the fact that a report against him or her may be unmotivated.

If the individual deviates from the role however, he or she must face persecution and punishment. Again, it is interesting to note that both in the book, and in the actual historical context, the citizen has no clear perception of the consequences of punishment (Huxley, 2000).

Nevertheless, informations about the aforementioned practices is unaccessible for the lower strata of population; consequently, the individual may be sentenced to forced labour, exiled or even liquidated. The modes in which such judgement is made are unknown. Thus, fear and doubt jointly contribute to the emergence of a drive much stronger than simple dread.

Once more, one feature distinguishes the communist rule from that of another dictatorship. For the sake of comparison, we might consider the

structure of control under the National Socialist rule.

Arguably, all the provisions intended fro the submission of the individual to the party's ideology -here we refer to the instruments meant to bar the subject from proper political participation- were not cast upon the entirety of population. The leader knew well about the necessity of a skilled technocratic group, and also knew that the members of such group would have to be instructed differently from the mass; therefore control was arranged in different ways as regarding to the target of it (Fubrook, 1995). On the other hand, what greatly characterised the rule of communist leaders was an undermining paranoia, a constant state of anxiety towards the fellow members of the party and their allies.

In fact the line between being under-performing and being overly efficient was so thin that many members of the party were purged throughout the span of the communist rule, mainly under Stalin.

Finally the fear of repercussion, of torture and execution, was common to the whole of the subject to the rule apart solely from a small elite group, which variable notwithstanding.

The picture we get looking at the structure of control and compliance in *Brave New World* is quite different, and arguably similar to that undermining the society of liberal America in the above stated years.

Nonetheless, the scheme undermining the relationship between citizen's compliance and the institution is one based on reward. Consequently, the mechanism implies the possibility of a symmetrical punishment; that is, the exclusion from reward (Reith, 2004).

However, we shall go into details and explain how the said reward is understood.

First, the compliance made dependant on the possibility of a reward is not a positive value, but rather a static one. Meaning that the entity of the reward is not a increasing function of compliance. Nonetheless the citizen is not compensated for his or her active attempts to benefit society, or the institution''s ideology; he or she is gradually awarder through society's implied mechanisms to which, in any case, he or she must conform in order to be eligible for the reward.

One of these mechanisms, to make an example, would be that of free market; by entering the market the subject complies to the structure of society, and can access an increasingly higher set of goods and benefits.

Whereas he or she decide not to participate in the system, no punishment is designed apart from the exclusion from the profits of the market (Friedman, 2009). Within *Brave New World* society this scheme takes form in the conditional award of a share of soma; the latter, is a

chemical product capable of inducing an artificial state of pleasure and euphoria. In truth however, the distribution of soma is arranged on the basis of a caste system, where the maximum stock of dispensable drug is depending on the group of belonging.

Nonetheless, the subject eligibility to a certain amount of substance increases as a compensation for extra work-hours, or even for the increased participation in social activities. On the other hand, whereas the subject is not willing to perform above the expectations he or she is ought to receive the minimum amount of soma. What is worth emphasising in this structure is that wealth -here intended as the available stock of soma, elsewhere as the capability of acquiring goods- is a relative factor. To be sure, relative to the wealth of other members of society.

Going into details, wealth is not an absolute value; it is dependant of the presence of goods obtainable through it. Furthermore, wealth is related to the quantity of obtainable goods, and to the entity of obtainable goods.

We take as an example the situation in which A is not wealthy, and can access to, say, one unit of the less valuable good (1); consider also that goods are categorised so that the less valuable good is (1) and the most valuable is (5). B on the other hand is very wealthy and can collect ten units of (1), five units of (2), three units of (3) and so on. Therefore, the subject A is no matter what is excluded from the set of goods ranging from (2) to (5). From the same example we can draw two implications, concerning respectively the society of *Brave New World* and The liberal America society.

Insofar the subject B has collected then times the units of the same good as A, say soma, he or she can enjoy leisure ten times longer than A. Whereas soma represent the sole recreation activity within society the subject A is arguably excluded from the larger part of social participation. He or she is therefore isolated to a certain extent. Again, inasmuch one set of goods against another signifies the possibility of obtaining an exclusive asset or service, the subject reaching the goods (2) might have for instance access to medical treatment over the subject A. Or else, the subject A can be excluded from the possibility of a housing. He or she is therefore, a somewhat dysfunctional member of society.

Consequent to the differences in the structure of control over society, we may stress an important implication regarding what is incentivised through propaganda by one system or another. Moreover, both of the attitudes that are induced thought the latter hinge on different aspects of human nature.

As concerning to the duo *1984*-Communist URSS there is the

promotion and constitution of an underlining sense of guilt on the side of the individual (Hirst, 1984). Arguably, this feeling of guilt is imposed on the individual from two sides: on one side, the individual is made culpable not only of properly illegal behaviours; under the institution in fact, illegality takes an unclear form, thus intervening in those aspects that are commonly left outside the scope of legislation. We refer for instance to those aspects such as private activities, social life and so on. The individual is thus made culpable of a number of natural, and spontaneous behaviours.

On the other hand, the individual inserted in this framework gradually begins to feel remorseful in almost any situation, because he or she has no obvious understanding of what he should, or should not do. Furthermore, such attitude is relished by the institution, on the ground of the fact that the individual, whereas he or she is completely alienated from his or her legal character, might probably give up his or her initiative and start acting in a mechanical compliance to the regime's dictates. Eventually, driven by the fear of repression the individual becomes nothing but an automatic response to given inputs which are, to be sure, carefully designed to make society an auto-referential and static system. Thus, the institution manages to perpetuate the oppression.

Insofar the Communist-like regime stimulates the sense of guilt, the The *Brave New World*'s society, parallel to its analogy, incentivises hedonism within the individual (Berneri, 1969). In fact, in order for a system that revolts around the idea of pursuing an ever-increasing wellbeing to function, an individual that aspires to a mounting pleasure is needed.

Nonetheless, this attitude is imposed by equating the nature and quantity of the individual's assets to his or her social stance; society thus recognise the individual as the product of his or her attainments, both material and formal. To make an easy example, under this scheme the owner of an expensive and prestigious asset is somewhat more respectable and trustable than a destitute person. Therefore the subject completely adheres to the mechanism through which he or she can accede to the higher bundle of goods, and thus to an higher recognition. The individual is not limited in his activities by oppressing control, because what actually restricts him or her from deviating is his or her own social nature. If the individual refrains from participating into society he or she is not forcefully banished, but rather naturally excluded from it and thus isolated.

Conclusively, from this summarily analysis on the functioning of these very different dystopias we can note that although the mechanisms of control mirror each other the results do not fall to far apart one from another. They both consist, in fact, in an operationalisation of the human

nature with the aim of creating an artificial and self-repeating condition of order.

In the next section, I will indeed try to give an account of the ideas behind dystopias, and to relate their common ideological content to the human nature.

Chapter 3

3.1 The specular nature of utopia and dystopia

As mentioned in the introduction, the concept of utopia emerged long before that of dystopia; the latter however, cannot be understood solely within the contradiction of utopia. Both the ideas, fact, share many elements, and apart from those the same rough structure.

In this first section of the last chapter I will discuss the essence, and logic, of both utopia and dystopia, as to stress their similarities, links, and of course differences.

The point I want to make with the subsequent discussion is that, oddly enough, both these concepts relate to the same roots and then take different paths in their development. First, I would like to start by stating the obvious, in that both utopia and dystopia both originate from the critique of the society the author lives in. The latter may be, although rarely, a critique covering the whole of society and its institutions; it may also express the disapproval of the author in regards to limited aspects of society, as in the case of education or the legal system, to give an example.

Therefore, the main features of a given utopian context are built around the critique of an actual society; thus, they are meant to correct a seemingly unrighteous circumstance. This mechanism becomes even more salient if we consider that usually, the author found himself under a authoritarian rule (monarchy n.d.r.), in which he or she could not directly express his or her dissent. Following this logic, a utopia would be the presentation of a viable alternative to the actual order.

Dystopia, on the other hand, although sharing its critical nature with utopia, is grounded on the exaggeration of a given, or multiple elements found in the author's society of belonging. Instead of suggesting a solution to the issues defined by the author, the dystopia emphasise on the implications of the said issue, showing to what consequences it may lead. In this sense, the dystopia manifests the feeling of anxiety that the author projects on a certain aspect, which may be the concentration of

power for instance, or even the alienating nature of a given element within society.

Now, to give an hint of my final conclusion I would like to make a point on this consideration. Indeed, it is not only crucial to distinguish the relatively higher ideological content of the utopia, but also, and mainly, to define the diverse moral aptitude between the two ideas. Shortly, whereas the utopia is concerned with what is wrong and could be right, or better, the dystopia focuses on what is wrong and could be worse (Berneri, 1969). This point is fundamental for my discussion, in that it shows that there are no dramatic differences in the structure of a utopian state compared to that of a dystopian one; similarly, there are no pivotal deviations from the set of forms of government that both models utilise as a device of explanation.

Ultimately, the effects of either model on the individual would be - obviously depending on the considered cases- quite similar; it is the moral stance that nevertheless separates the two concepts. To be clear, insofar the utopia describes a context based on what is desirable and the dystopia defines a non-desirable situation, it is dependant on the author's perception of "desirable". Of course this contraposition is reflected within either of the two models.

Nonetheless we find that the positivist orientation of utopian authors is often incarnated in the ruling authority that watches over their respective imaginary societies. Utopian rulers are thus commonly associated, or correspond to the figures of scholars, philosophers, or in the classically Renaissance "universal man". By reason of this fact the utopian ruling class is led by rationality and by the logic of efficiency; this very rationality, applied to different aspects of society may result in provisions such as the recourse to slavery, introduction of the death penalty, banishment of deviant individuals and so on.

It is indeed interesting to note that in both models, dissenters are removed from the community; while is dystopias this measure takes the form of (forceful) control of the dissent, in utopias it is only grounded on the logic that a functioning society should not encompass disruptive elements.

On the other side, the traditional ruling class of dystopias may also engage in more serious acts of violence and terror, but surely it is defined by its strongly dehumanised character. Under the filter of narrative, a utopian community may represent the solidarity and unity of individuals sharing the goal of common good; in dystopias instead, it becomes the symbol for the collective submission of the individuals to the regime, and the aggregate personification of the manipulation cast by the institutions.

To be sure, in the next section I will consider the common areas of intervention among the two models. Before I do so, however, I shall illustrate three structural similarities between utopias and dystopias, in order to underline a certain degree of analogy in their mechanisms.

First, they both are arranged in a way as to establish the stability of rule, efficiency and perpetual order. Therefore, efforts are directed towards the crystallisation of one, or more social aspects around a given ideological content, manifested and operated through provisions and the institutions (Booker, Collins, Lathnam, Hall, Haschak, & Locke, 1995).

The aforementioned system results in that the individual is bound, in his or her essence, to the institutions and ideology. Second, both models emphasise on the formation, and presence, of a strong community. The latter, is meant to replace the private sphere of the individual (e.g. family, close friends) with a more open, manageable collective sphere; this collective dimension of the individual of course implies homogeneity within society, to the point of inducting a degree of depersonalisation (Berneri, 1969).

Third, in both utopias and dystopias the issue of education, and the formation of the individual, are targeted by the institutions in order to fully undertake the control of the said processes. Inasmuch it helps the institution to replace the sentimental role of the family, it is also intended to instruct the individuals about ideology during the stage in which he or she is more sensible to teachings.

3.2 Utopia and dystopia: two sides of the same coin

As we noted in the previous section, utopia and dystopia have a similar functioning. This however, is not to be understood as equating them to the same concept; although they follow many similar processes they are distinguished by the modality of the said processes, and the effects of the latter on the individual, and society as the collectivity of individuals. Obviously, under a dystopian rule the same provisions will be applied forcefully; the collective nature of the decision-making process will be surely be ignored. Also, the control and repression of dissent will be in this context more explicit, and likely it will be defined as a core feature of the regime.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that in the domain of utopias the positive effects of a given provision, as well as those of the institutional framework, are often expressed and stressed out through the reaction of the

population to the system. Thus the reader is not presented with an objectively perfect society, but rather it is the subjective filter of an element of the storytelling (be it an individual or the voice of society as a whole) - which, to be sure, mirrors the opinions of the author- that pictures the state of affairs as the most desirable and efficient.

Furthermore, the focus of the author on either certain groups within society or on specific situations has an important role in defining the moral character of a given state system. For instance, in both utopias and dystopias the presence of an enslaved group is a recurrent element, be it isolated from, or contingent to society; however in utopias, the perspective of the enslaved or prejudiced group is ignored. Instead, the author emphasises on the positive effects of such categorisation.

Similarly, a dystopia may well be centred around the condition of a member from the lowest group within society's hierarchy. Following, in order to further prove my point, I will discuss the elements that are recurring through most of both utopias an dystopias.

3.2.1 Family and Social Life

There are a number of aspects of the individual that are operationalised by both models; these aspects in fact concern the utmost definition of individuality from the exterior.

First, childhood, along with the processes of formation attached to it, is rarely a factor ignored by the institutions. Starting from the early years children are inserted into an educational framework -which includes, but is not limited to teaching - that is meant to install the ideology within their personality. Thus, what would normally need an order to be undertaken, becomes a spontaneous behaviour (Castoriadis, 1997). Furthermore, the individual learns about authority outside the structure of family; subsequently his or her commitment to the state acquires sentimental character.

Family, in turn, is rarely preserved as we are used to intend it. In fact, the institution of marriage is abolished throughout the majority of both utopias an dystopias. Nonetheless the concept of family under these models is closely linked to that of community; it becomes a subgroup of community and loses its intimate, exclusive quality.

Again, the activities of the family are to be absorbed in the activities of the community. This structure thus results in that the most proximate group in which the individual fully recognises him/herself and in which he feels to

belong to shifts from family and close friends, to community and the state.

Lastly social life, as we already noted, is regulated so as to revolt around given activities, and to follow a determined schedule of meetings and shared recurrences. After aggregating the totality of the individuals under a static, and solid community, the latter is never left unmonitored by the institutions.

In this way, the state directs its efforts toward the elimination of any risk or deviation that could endanger the integrity of society.

3.2.3. Artificial creation of the imaginary

Yet another common feature that we can find in many examples of the two models is the operation undertaken by the institutions in order to create an artificial imaginary, both social and personal, that envisions the ruling ideology. From this comes that the individual's cognitive capability in regards to the reality surrounding him has necessary to follow along the lines of a given ideology. Often at the core of the artificial imaginary there is a strongly charismatic element -which could be ideal, as religion in Andrea's *Christianopolis*, or more commonly incarnated in the figure of a leader, or leading group- which is presented having an absolute quality (Berneri, 1969). The relationship between the individual and the "charisma" is thus founded on a sense of fear, and submission, or else on a strong commitment generated by an artificial intimacy between the subject and the ruler.
However, what is important is that the individual's existence is dependant on the idea of a united, stable entity functioning on cooperation and solidarity. He or she is completely engulfed within the said entity so that the final aim of the collectivity is the preservation, and maybe proliferation, of the adamant and motionless state (Mannheim, 2013).

Nevertheless there is another element which is possibly more crucial throughout the models; that is desire. We can observe two mechanism through which the collectivity of individuals is maintained in utopias, as well as in dystopias: either through the complete satisfaction of desires, or though the liberation of the individual from material needs (Passerini, 2002).

Consequently, the individual is managed through his or her desires; those are fulfilled, or stigmatised. Either way the drive resulting from the tension of desire is operationalised by the institutions, and without doubt it cannot be possibly retained in its individual nature. That is to say, the

individual is barred from satisfying his or her egoistic wants if he or she does not actualise them within the framework of society, and thus within the framework of ideology. Due to the latter, the subjects learn to fulfil themselves within society.

3.2.4. Efficiency, order and stability

One last feature on which both the models insist consistently is efficiency, as related to order and stability as well. Arguably, a strong focus on efficiency is ought to bring about provisions that could be considered not properly humane, due to the cold logic of their nature. Often we are indeed presented with a structure that maximises the use of an individual, without however being concerned with his or her self-actualisation.

Within the geometry of a perfectly efficient system the individual gradually loses his or her capability to determine his or her own life course, along with the freedom of choosing the role that would most express his or her individuality (Levitas, 1990). The same is true for the attached ideas of order and stability, which are inserted within the framework of the state through provisions of diverse nature and sometimes to the point of oppression; in the context of a perpetual machine of the state the personal attitude is reduced to an automatic response to the institutionalised inputs (Castoriadis, 1997).

Nevertheless it is on the side of self-actualisation and personal fulfilment that I shall construct the conclusive argument of this paper; in the next section I will discuss the mechanics of desires' satisfaction and management within the two models.

3.3 The two models and the role of desires

In this last section of my paper I will discuss the role of desires as related to the personality and independence of the individual. Furthermore, I shall consider how utopia and dystopia intervene on this aspect, and finally the implications of such operation. In order to discuss this topic I will analyse the the element of desire within the framework of the hierarchy of needs theory; by doing so, I will define which areas of "desire" are covered by (the standard understanding of) the two models, and which ones are left outside the scope of provisions. First, however, I shall illustrate how desires interact with personality.

I would like to introduce the discussion by claiming that any desire, in

its most basic fashion, is generated by a respective need. Needs, as we shall further see in a while, can be arranged according to a hierarchic structure; therefore, certain needs have to be satisfied first in order for other needs to emerge (Maslow A. H., 1948). Moreover, as we descend the hierarchy, needs become increasingly difficult to satisfy; these in fact concern aspects such as love, or esteem, and thus their appease rests on exogenous factors.

Nonetheless any notion of need implies the presence of a motivation to resolve it, which motivation then acts within the individual in order to set him for the fulfilment of desire. Here, desire and need are almost interchangeable elements, by reason of the fact that a given desire emerge depending on the presence of the respective need.

To be clear, it is highly possible that the physiological need for nutrition will correspond to the appearance of a sense of hunger, and the consequent desire of food, in an individual. Motivation, in turn, will interact with the individual and his or her circumstances to make him satisfy the need, depending on the possibilities of satisfaction and the entity of the desire.

The stronger the need, the stronger the desire and its motivation (Maslow A. H., 1943).

While the aforementioned process is quite similar for the majority of subjects, whereas concerning basic needs (i.d. physiological needs), the matter gets increasingly diversified when we look at more complex needs (i.d. esteem needs, self-actualisation); the solution for these need (and the satisfaction of the respective desires) is in fact ambiguous, and the factors of the former rest not only on different personal attitudes, but also on exogenous items such as the external response, the context, and so on. Thus, in the wake of more complex needs every individual acts in a different way, and is supported by motivations of diverse entity and shape, depending on his or her character. Additionally, inasmuch a given need, say the need for love, is satisfied through conventional means (namely, thought a modality that is shared by the collectivity of individuals), the next need to be satisfied accordingly to the hierarchy, is hardly contained in the same process. Besides, certain needs can be arguably satisfied by the same process throughout different subjects, as in the case of the aforementioned need for love. Therefore, a viable solution would presumptively be that of leaving to the individual the freedom to chose his or her own means of satisfaction. Nonetheless, this is obviously a hardly preferred solution in dystopias, but in utopias as well. Following, I will treat every need separately and accordingly to the Maslow's hierarchy, while describing the traditional response of the two models to the respective counterpart.

3.3.1. The hierarchy of needs and the topoi

At the lowest point of the hierarchy, and thus the first needs to be satisfied, there are the physiological needs.

These are the simplest and the most basic needs, which concern mainly the functioning of the organism; the need for nutrition, or for sex, are both part of this group. The motivation attached to them is strong but also straight-forward, and has no strong implication on the personality of the individual as long as they are promptly satisfied. These needs are managed through their complete fulfilment, in the case of a context in which the model envisions an hedonistic character to the individual; otherwise, in situations where accomplishment through material objects is discouraged they are satisfied at their bare minimum.

Right after the physiological needs come the safety needs. The basic understanding of these needs takes the form of factual safety from danger, however it can be extended also to safety from new and unknown situation, which the individual cannot spontaneously react to. Whereas it is clear that factual safety is ensured by both utopias and dystopias -as the society is devoid of crime and to some degree, of conflicts, throughout most of the cases- it is interesting to note that both models naturally contain an element of aversion for any change in the state of the affairs. The satisfaction of this need, which is reflected in the paralysation of society in its current state, is also a powerful device for legitimising the static protracting of authority. In this case therefore, the fulfilment of desire meets the goals of the institutions.

Next, we find the love needs, which concern the desire of affection and belongingness, and of close friendship. Inasmuch it would prove difficult to summarise the responses of the two models to the need of meaningful friendships under one, recurrent mechanism, the way the desire for love is frequently managed is more easily defined (Maslow A. H., 1943). In fact, apart from some exceptions where intimate relationships are forbid and controlled by the institutions (see *1984* n.d.r.), both models generally treat this need with relative ease. Nonetheless the idea of love is often limited to either the procreational quality of human relationships, or to the hedonistic character of sexual intercourses. The need is therefore banished by operating the concept of love through the extrapolation of pleasure from its sphere, and the effortless and constant satisfaction of (solely) sexual drives.

Truly, in the former situation the procreational quality of sex is highlighted and encouraged, which operation is followed along by the elimination of moral and faithful restriction to sexuality; the result is that the

idea of love is overridden by its effects, and by the intrinsic instinctual drive within humans, to the point where the two elements equal each other. Furthermore, keeping constant that the realisation an own's procreational capability is easily accessible for all the members of society the institution manages absolve this need limitlessly.

The latter situation, on the other hand, produces a similar mechanism by replacing the notion of procreation with hedonism. Whereas pleasure is emphasised on within human relationships, and the attainment of pleasure is made universal and obvious, there need for love cease to subsist (Cabanac, Guillaume, Balasko, & Fleury, 2002). This, keeping in mind that ideology operates in the direction of making the ideas of love and pleasure equal in their stance, and in their quality.

Esteem needs, in turn, depend on two ideas: that of freedom and independence; and that of recognition from the others. Provided that discussing the degree of freedom and independence of the individual throughout the whole number of utopias and dystopias is problematic at least, due to the different nature of circumstances and the diversity of the factors that define these features, I will consider the most sensible aspect of the esteem needs; that is, recognition from the others.

Recognition from the others can be made dependant on two major factors: whether or not the individual is fulfilling effectively his or her role within society, and the exclusive qualities of the subject. Nonetheless under the utopian and dystopian models the question of social participation can hardly be treated as a variable, or as something defining an individual, as long as every individual is bound to place him or herself within the structure of society. More accurately, this dynamic is generally undertaken by the institution so that every individual is placed within the said structure roughly before he or she is born.

Due to this arrangement, the degree to which the need persist as regarding to the social role is questionable under the circumstances (Turner, Reynolds, Haslam, & Veenstra, 2006).

The other side of recognition instead, namely that related to the exclusive qualities of the individual, is purposely flattened by the institution in order to grant a level of homogeneity throughout the collectivity of individuals. In fact personal qualities are rarely incentivised under the two models, especially if considering a dystopian system; roles, besides, are barely assigned on the grounds of merit or talent. Insofar assuming a leading, or higher position within society is ought to some personal merit or preparation (see Campanella's *The City of the Sun*) the individual is not encouraged to nurture an own's talent or passion; pursuing a mastery is of

course allowed by the institutions but only as far as it concerns leisure, and is excluded from the structure of society.

Forasmuch as exclusivity is not a strong and positive value within the community, it looses its relative character of comparison, and consequently of affirmation. However, the matter of exclusivity does not affect only the sphere of recognition, and in fact is a core element regarding to the discussion of the last category of needs, namely the need for self-actualisation.

To be clear, I shall include in this last category a the ancillary need of cognition, that describes the necessity of the individual to engage in deep and fruitful thoughts, and to maintain openness towards new experiences.

This sphere of needs, in my opinion, is the one that most affects the uniqueness and identity of the individual; in fact it illustrates the need of the individual to constitute an obvious, and unprecedented contribution to human and society's development. The self-actualisation need is what drives the individual to realise his or her own potential, and what pushes him or her to distinguish the self from the collectivity (Heylighen, 1992).

Nevertheless, this is certainly the need that is least taken care of by the institutions, due to the fact that within the logic of the two models the absolute value in society is homogeneity. As I mentioned above, it is seldom true that a utopian or dystopian society cares to place the individuals within its structure basing on the logic of his or her inclination or capabilities; rather; the logic of utility within the two models is grounded on a functioning design. Thus, the institutions are solely concerned with the number of, say, manufacturers needed, or farmers required to get a given harvest accomplished. To be clear, they merely allocate the human capital into the empty sockets of their structure.

Nevertheless, it is hardly conceivable for an individual to recognise first, and then realise its personal (and exclusive) potential within an arrangement that pre-determines her or his position, and even course of life (Heylighen, 1992).

On the side of cognition, moreover, the individual is faced with a similar limitation. The presence of a strong and dogmatic ideological framework is obvious throughout virtually all utopias and dystopias; one may easily engage in speculation, especially in those situations in which philosophers and scientist constitute the elite group, but may do so only within the scope of the common, and shared discourse.

Two insurmountable obstacles keep him or her from enjoying a complete intellectual freedom: the aforementioned dogmatic nature of ideology; and, notably, the solid education that grounds him, or her, to the

roots of ideology's principles. Ultimately, the cognitive capability that the individual   exercises   is   enclosed,   and   thus hindered.

Conclusion

Having gone through the traditional mechanics of dystopia, and the similarities between the two models; and having considered the interaction with the hierarchy of needs theory, the first point of my conclusion should be clear.   Provided that both the hierarchy of need theory, and the effects of the two models on it are accepted, I maintain that the individual cannot, due to the structure of society, completely realise and fulfil him or herself, and thus his or her personality. Despite the fact that a subject may perceive him or herself to be accomplished within the boundaries of society, it is a matter that rests on the the span of the means of determination he or she is provided for by the institutions, and the consequent ideology. Furthermore, we've seen that the functioning of both utopias and dystopias share a variety of similar aspects.   In fact, avoiding to state the obvious by describing the negative character of dystopias, throughout the utopian literature we repeatedly find cases in which slavery and death penalty are accepted, thought and speech are channeled through a pre-determined rhetoric, and the existence of the individual is enclosed into a strict schedule of mandatory activities. Nevertheless, as far as morals goes we are taught that a good compromise does not equal the perfect solution, especially when it challenges the notions of human integrity, and independence; and there is no hierarchy between the elements that define humanity, so that certain can be neglected. Therefore what is left to judge the viability and righteousness of a given utopia (under the aforementioned circumstances, at least) is the standpoint of the author.   In conclusion, even if the claim about the limited nature of self-determination within the structures of the models is rejected, and if we acknowledge that the individual desires are managed to the utmost efficiency, we still confront the problem of freedom of choice in an individual's life course, and his or her inclinations. Ultimately, the argument can be summarised in one illustration, and the same shall constitute my inquiry: if most of the human experience depends on freedom of choice, is a context where ideas are determined, behaviour is fixed, and desires generated and fulfilled from the outside a viable, and humane alternative? I leave the answer to the reader.

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Utopia e distopia. Un'indagine comparativa

Introduzione

Nel corso della storia la produzione letteraria di diverse utopie ha stimolato la riflessione sulle condizioni, e sulla qualità di svariate società. Come nell'antica Grecia, con *La Repubblica* di Platone o Plutarco e la sua *Vita di Licurgo*, così in epoca rinascimentale e nell'era dell'Illuminismo, da cui ricordiamo rispettivamente la *Nuova Atlantide* di Bacone e *Appendice al Viaggio di Bougainville.* Ciascuno, tra i numerosi rimandi all'utopia, nasceva da un bisogno di riformulare l'assetto sociale corrente o anche di criticarne alcuni aspetti, senza però incorrere nelle antipatie dei governanti. È doveroso comunque notare che agli ambiziosi progetti di riforma proposti dagli autori corrispondeva un'implicita fiducia nel cambiamento, e nell'attuabilità dei modelli da loro descritti. Dunque è nel fattore della possibilità che si spiega la rottura della tradizione utopica a favore dell'emergenza invece di un concetto parallelo; quello di distopia. L'intellettuale, ormai disilluso rispetto alla capacità della società di correggersi, ha quindi iniziato a descrivere le estreme conseguenze dei mali da lui sospettati, ed intravisti nel contesto a lui contemporaneo. Eppure è curioso considerare che sottratto l'elemento morale riguardante il benessere degli individui, considerati nella prospettiva utopica ma anche distopica, i due modelli si presentino entrambi secondo i connotati dell'ordine invariabile, e dell'efficienza ostentata al punto del meccanicismo. Che siano pertanto anche gli effetti sulla capacità di auto-determinazione dell'individuo analoghi per entrambi i modelli ideali?

Al fine di fornire al lettore i giusti strumenti, così da permettere una risposta individuale e basata su considerazioni personali, nella prima sezione riassumerò tre pietre miliari nella letteratura distopica, e ne estrapolerò gli elementi essenziali; in seguito, considererò le meccaniche comuni per cui entrambi i regimi utopici e distopici impongono l'ideologia nell'immaginario comune, e seguendo il paradigma presentato da Maslow nella sua teoria sulla gerarchia dei bisogni umani descriverò la relazione tra il desiderio umano e i due modelli.

Il trittico delle distopie

In questa sezione, l'analisi di ogni singola opera letteraria seguirà lo schema seguente: una breve introduzione al contesto narrativo chiarirà al lettore i punti di riferimento per la comprensione della struttura della distopia; in seguito, descriverò il funzionamento di ogni distopia rispetto a tre sfere d'intervento. Queste sono, il modo in cui il regime impedisce l'auto-determinazione dei soggetti sottomessi, le modalità tramite cui l'obbedienza è assicurata dalle istituzioni, e la gestione del dissenso nelle corrispettive società.

La prima opera che ho deciso di considerare è *Il Mondo Nuovo* di Aldous Huxley. La società illustrata da questo libro è una in cui l'appartenenza ad una certa classe viene determinata e condizionata alla nascita da metodi eugenetici, e conseguentemente rinforzata tramite l'educazione all'ideologia dello Stato Mondo e la tecnica ipnopedica. Le categorie risultanti sono nominate secondo le prime cinque lettere dell'alfabeto greco e seguono una stretta gerarchia per cui gli individui Alfa, resi geneticamente superiori in ogni qualità, appartengono alla classe dirigente, mentre agli antipodi Epsilon, costituiscono l'amorfa forza lavoro.
Sono tre i cardini sui quali verte la manipolazione dell'individuo all'interno del fittizio Stato Mondo: l'educazione, la soddisfazione e il piacere.
Sul fronte dell'educazione, come sopracitato, sono diverse le operazioni compiute dalle istituzioni. Il primo meccanismo prevede un'accurata istruzione sull'ideologia corrente, compiuta durante i primi anni di vita dell'individuo. Oltre all'aspetto più palesemente manipolativo della provvisione però, è utile considerare la fattiva eliminazione del nucleo familiare. Sostituendosi alla famiglia nella formazione dell'infante, lo stato raggiunge due scopi: la cementazione della sua autorità su base emotiva, per cui l'individuo solo con estrema difficoltà può contravvenire ai dettati del regime, e la prevenzione del fattore coesivo familiare. Impedendo all'individuo di riconoscersi nelle sue relazioni più intime, le istituzioni ostacolano anche la sua futura capacità d'aggregazione all'interno della società, e al di fuori delle strutture di controllo statale.
Un'altra componente determinante nello schema decisionale dell'individuo, poi riflessa sulla sua esperienza, e quindi personalità, è la presenza del desiderio, dipendentemente dalle condizioni d'attuazione di questo e la repressione degli istinti esercitata dal soggetto. Ammettendo che la relazione tra il desiderio e l'individuo assuma una

forma condizionale al carattere dell'ultimo, e che tale relazione produca implicazioni sulla personalità di un uomo rispetto ad un altro la forzata omologazione del desiderio, e delle modalità per la sua soddisfazione operata dalle istituzioni, ha come ovvio scopo quello di prevenire l'indipendente affermazione di una singolarità nella persona. Ne *Il Mondo Nuovo* ad esempio, i rapporti sessuali sono inizialmente privati della giustificazione procreativa (il concepimento dei neonati è meccanizzato all'interno dei centri di incubazione e condizionamento), e poi strumentalizzati al fine di divenire un bene di consumo, diretto unicamente alla soddisfazione dei desideri viscerali. Di nuovo, questo meccanismo disincentiva ulteriormente la spontaneità dei rapporti umani, incanalandoli in uno schema rigidamente determinato.

Conclusivamente, grazie all'elaborazione di una droga chiamata *Soma*, il regime riesce ad indurre condizionalmente i soggetti in uno stato di piacere virtualmente infinito. La distribuzione della *Soma* è inoltre inserita nella struttura istituzionale, ed è garantita dallo stato. In questo modo, non solo le istituzioni controllano lo sfogo dell'istintualità facendosi garante del piacere, ma anche stabiliscono un meccanismo di ricompensa per cui l'individuo è premiato solo esprimendosi nella retorica dell'ideologia.

Insistendo sull'utilizzo della droga afrodisiaca da parte delle istituzioni, possiamo definire come questa abbia un forte ruolo anche nel mantenere un alto grado di obbedienza attraverso i diversi strati sociali. Se precedentemente abbiamo trattato la dinamica per cui la *Soma* è utilizzata come ricompensa per la conformazione, il collegamento speculare che la rende fattore determinante dell'obbedienza appare palese. In aggiunta, la quantità di droga distribuita è dipendente dal gruppo di appartenenza; gli Alpha, all'apice della struttura sociale, ne ricevono una scorta ben maggiore dei sprezzati Epsilon. Conseguentemente, tenendo in considerazione che il gruppo di appartenenza rappresenta necessariamente una capacità intellettiva superiore e che, in relazione a questo l'individuo Alpha abbia probabilmente una coscienza politica maggiore, la maggiore labilità degli individui di classe minore alla punizione rende l'organizzazione di movimenti clandestini decisamente problematica. Al fine di chiarire il concetto, se la minore portata intellettuale dei gruppi inferiori li rende sensibili all'organizzazione da parte dei gruppi superiori, il maggiore rischio legato alla diminuzione nella razione di *Soma* scoraggia fortemente i primi, la cui scorta è già bassa, ad esporsi ad una possibile punizione. La frammentazione sociale sulle linee della gerarchia di classi è quindi accentuata; in questo modo, l'istituzione esercita controllo su ogni

classe separatamente, e con relativa semplicità.
  Infine, prendendo in considerazione la gestione del dissenso all'interno della società de *Il Mondo Nuovo*, possiamo definirne due fulcri. Il primo è certamente il ruolo dell'ideologia, nella sistematica eliminazione delle condizioni per il dissenso. Un esempio di questa tendenza è l'assenza totale di una dimensione storica rispetto alla società, e alla legittimità dell'autorità. Senza dubbio la società de *Il Mondo Nuovo* si presenta come un blocco statico e sempiterno. Questo arrangiamento, se da una parte depriva l'individuo della sua identità (ovvero, dell'identità condizionale alla società), dall'altra ancor più sottrae ad esso i mezzi di comprensione della sua situazione all'interno del contesto sociale. Difatti, l'individuo non possiede un metro storico a cui paragonare positivamente, o negativamente, le circostanze attuali.
Un secondo punto è invece dipendente dalla nozione di "Altro", inteso come reazione esterna, ed estranea, agli stimoli dell'uomo sulla realtà circostante. Al punto in cui la comunità è costituita da una massa anonima, formata di individui impossibilitati ad affermare una propria individualità, l'espressione del dissenso, che per sua natura è contraddizione delle norme correnti, non trova spazio nell'immaginario collettivo e consuetudinario. Pertanto, ne *Il Mondo Nuovo* non si assiste alla violenza di una polizia oppressiva e instancabile (come, ad esempio, in *1984*); l'uomo è libero di esprimere il proprio dissenso fintanto che è privo di un rispondente al quale indirizzarlo.

  Agli antipodi dell'assetto edonista della società de *Il Mondo Nuovo* passiamo invece al capolavoro di George Orwell, *1984*. Se, nonostante la manipolazione profonda, la popolazione de *Il Mondo Nuovo* aveva accesso indeterminato al piacere, quella di *1984* si trova inserita in una struttura di controllo maggiormente oppressiva ed avvilente. Il mondo angoscioso di *1984* ci è presentato da Winston, un impiegato al Ministero della Verità. Tramite i suoi occhi è descritta la routine stretta ed intubata cui i cittadini sono sottoposti, e il controllo instancabile da parte di dispositivi video e della polizia.
  Il controllo è infatti il primo elemento essenziale ad ostacolare l'affermazione dell'individualità nel soggetto. Eppure la caratteristica della sorveglianza che più incide l'esistenza dell'uomo non è diretta verso la supervisione delle attività illegali, quando verso l'ispezione accurata e continua di attività prescritte dalla rispettiva istituzione; queste comprendono esercizi fisici o l'obbligatoria partecipazione agli eventi statali, per fornire degli esempi.

Nuovamente, la costrizione ci presenta due implicazioni fondamentali rispetto alla natura dell'uomo. La prima tra queste è l'erosione, quasi completa, dello spazio d'azione della persona; questo spazio, non è più limitato solo da ciò che all'individuo è proibito di fare, pensare o esprimere, ma è ulteriormente ristretto dalla forzata disciplina quotidiana. La seconda implicazione invece sfocia dalla partecipazione coatta agli eventi statali, che riempiono abbondantemente il tempo libero dei cittadini. Tramite il ricorso alle continue manifestazioni collettive le istituzioni mirano alla sostituzione nell'individuo della sfera privata, ed intima, con quella sociale. Attraverso questa espressione, certamente più palese, le istituzioni rafforzano il controllo e la manipolazione della base popolare.

  All'interno di un contesto collettivo inoltre, le sensazioni sono condivise ed amplificate, grazie alle dinamiche della massa. Conseguentemente il sentimento che le istituzioni più si interessano a promuovere all'interno della società è la paura della punizione. Una volta stabilito che il controllo agisce in maniera assoluta sugli individui, esternamente grazie ai dispositivi di registrazione collocati in ogni casa ed ogni angolo di strada, ed internamente grazie alle indagini inarrestabili della Psicopolizia, ne consideriamo gli effetti all'interno dell'immaginario sociale. Accertata la coscienza universale di tale controllo, è interessante notare invece l'ignoranza (prodotta ed incentivata) rispetto alle sue conseguenze e le effettive ripercussioni. È certo, comunque, per tutti i membri della società che tale punizione sia la peggiore auspicabile. Ed è proprio su questo aspetto indefinito che le istituzioni insistono così da creare un'immagine di angoscia senza forma, sulla quale ogni individuo possa personalmente costruire la figura di ciò che più teme. Assicurato questo meccanismo, si assicura rispettivamente l'obbedienza completa della popolazione sulla base del terrore.

  L'elemento del dissenso a suo volta, pare essere interamente neutralizzato già solo dallo schema rigido del controllo; nonostante ciò un ulteriore provvedimento viene preso dal regime per abolire completamente la possibilità di dissentire. Questo è l'introduzione di una riforma linguistica, che prende il nome di New Speak, volta alla semplificazione omnicomprensiva del linguaggio. Non è difficile infatti riconoscere la connessione tra la lingua, in quanto collezione simbolica e referenziale, e la capacità elaborativa dell'individuo. Se la parola è un rimando fattivo alla sostanza della realtà, speculando sulla parola si specula corrispettivamente su di essa. In aggiunta, il New Speak contiene forti elementi ideologici riguardo alla natura morale dei concetti che esprime. Un esempio delucidante è il termine "joycamp", che definisce,

in antitesi all'attitudine positiva del prefisso "joy" (gioia), il campo di concentramento.

L'imposizione di questa riforma linguistica è intesa quindi a depauperare l'individuo della materia logica, e trasmissiva, per costruire un'idea coerente di dissenso. Non solo questo aspetto riguarda la capacità comunicativa (illustrativa) del linguaggio, ma ancor più riguarda la capacità di formulare un pensiero originale sulla base dei concetti.

Collegandomi alla caratteristica dell'impoverimento intellettuale e culturale volgo finalmente all'ultima opera del trittico: *Fahrenheit 451* di Ray Bradbury. Questa particolare distopia appare la più umana; l'individuo è infatti libero di costruire una propria intimità e di gestire il proprio tempo. Principale bersaglio delle istituzioni è invece la cultura, sotto forma scritta soprattutto, ma anche nelle sue diverse inclinazioni. Il protagonista, Montag, è parte della repressione culturale nella sua funzione di pompiere; ruolo che nella società di *Fahrenheit 451* è sconvolto fino rendere l'incenerimento dei libri la mansione principale. Sarà il comandante di Montag, Betty, a spiegare che i libri non sono stati aboliti forzatamente, ma sostituiti naturalmente da un tipo d'intrattenimento più veloce, che potesse seguire il ritmo della vita, e le preferenze, del pubblico.

Ogni casa ha pertanto installato un dispositivo d'intrattenimento multimediale (i.d. *seashell*) che riproduce senza sosta audio e video. La prima annotazione necessaria sul sistema per cui l'individuo è forzato all'omologazione, e quindi ostacolato nel definire un'individualità libera, è che l'imposizione non è verticale come nel precedente caso di *1984*, in cui questa veniva emessa dalle istituzioni; oltretutto non esiste organo statale preposto all'applicazione di misure uniformanti, o alienanti. È piuttosto sul piano orizzontale che si sviluppa invece l'imperativo di conformità alla norma. Gli individui sono infatti istruiti dalla stessa fonte che li intrattiene, a riconoscere anche in questa un modello di riferimento, comportamentale ed intellettuale. Ammessa la possibilità di sviluppare un pensiero individuale ed unico all'interno della società, come avviene per Montag, questo una volta trasmesso non viene condiviso né capito. La stessa attività comunicativa tra individui è limitata tramite il fornimento continuo di stimoli virtuali, ed eccitanti; vale qui ricordare che il dispositivo sopracitato (*seashell*) è collocato anche nell'apparato uditivo di ogni persona.

In aggiunta la cultura, come il linguaggio, rappresenta uno schema simbolico di rimandi alla realtà, nella sua sostanza ed apparenza, e quindi

costituisce una base interpretativa per l'interazione con la situazione circostante. Sottraendo non solo la cultura come storia ed esperienza umana, ma anche come attività verso cui lo sforzo degli individui è indirizzato, si preclude la possibilità di generare idee primogenite e nuove letture della realtà.

Fintanto che la costrizione nel campo della personalità non è accentuata in *Fahrenheit 451* rispetto le altre due opere, anche la presenza di un controllo oppressivo è poco esplicita. Questo, in quanto è percepibile una relativa capacità di scelta nell'individuo, e in funzione dell'assenza di un organo d'esecuzione repressivo. Pertanto tra le dinamiche che implicitamente mimano la sorveglianza delle autorità è fondamentale citare lo scrutinio cui gli individui si sottopongono mutualmente. Come accennato in riferimento alla conformità comportamentale, il costante giudizio del prossimo è un meccanismo che definisce anche l'obbedienza alle norme legali. Non appena l'individuo si rivolge ad attività considerate sovversive, questo subitaneamente è escluso dal gruppo, e percepito come un'entità estranea. La possibile denuncia perciò, difficilmente è ostacolata da riguardi come l'affetto o l'intesa di qualsiasi genere. Questa funzione è oltretutto rincarnata attraverso un fenomeno particolare: l'inseguimento dei criminali ricercati da parte del "segugio". Il "segugio" è una macchina progettata per rintracciare, catturare e liquidare i fuggitivi. L'intero processo è però ripreso e trasmesso su tutti i dispositivi mediatici in diretta. In questo modo, non solo gli individui implicitamente sono istruiti sulla conseguenza del crimine, ed ulteriormente ad accettare tale ripercussione come naturale. Essi divengono anche parte della stessa persecuzione e infine esecuzione del criminale, così reso incarnazione dei mali della società. Questo impianto è quindi costruito nell'immaginario sociale in modo che la reazione spontanea ad ogni deviazione dalla norma sia in primo luogo enfatizzata, e che successivamente venga percepita come parte dell'onere civile dell'individuo.

In conclusione, l'effetto coordinato dell'isolamento del soggetto nella massa, e del contenuto emotivo nella negazione all'eterogenia, rende l'individuo definitivamente incapace di esprimere, e rappresentare il proprio dissenso all'internò della società. Difatti, come descritto nell'opera, i pochi soggetti che decidono comunque di contravvenire all'autorità e di dedicarsi alla preservazione del patrimonio letterario sono ignorati, nei limiti del loro essere nascosti, e rilegati nello spazio dell'inattuabilità di un cambiamento.

L'uomo e i *topoi*

Dall'analisi precedente appaiono vividi gli elementi ricorrenti nelle diverse distopie: l'intervento profondo sull'aspetto familiare e formativo dell'individuo, la strumentalizzazione dei rapporti umani, la compenetrazione dell'ideologia e la quotidianità, e l'omologazione della base popolare. Eppure, gli stessi elementi si riscontrano senza difficolta in diversi esempi di comunità utopiche. Basti ricordare l'impianto educativo e familiare in opere come *La Repubblica* (Platone), o *L'Isola* (Huxley), ad esempio. Oppure, altre componenti discutibilmente umane presenti in alcune utopie, come la schiavitù in *Utopia* (Moro). Nondimeno è importante la considerazione sugli obiettivi preposti da entrambi i modelli utopici e distopici, riguardanti la cristallizzazione della società in un contesto d'ordine ed efficienza così ben congeniato da risembrare una macchina perfetta; meno, tenendo in considerazione la spontaneità intrinseca nell'essere umano.
In questa sezione discuterò quindi la relazione di entrambi i modelli con due aspetti dell'esistenza umana: l'immaginario, e il desiderio.

Un meccanismo sotteso da entrambe le istituzioni utopiche e distopiche è quello della creazione artificiale dell'immaginario, sociale quanto personale, dell'individuo. Da questo risulta che la capacità cognitiva dell'uomo sia irrimediabilmente ancorata ai dettati dell'ideologia. Il nucleo di quest'ultima è frequentemente la presenza di una figura carismatica incarnata da un'idea (ad esempio, il forte impianto religioso in *Christianopolis* di Andrea) o da un regnante. Ciò che però è fondamentale tenere in considerazione è che l'esistenza dell'individuo all'interno della società sia indissolubilmente legata ad un concetto di entità (statale) coesa, e stabile, cui sentirsi appartenente e in cui riconoscersi. Il fine condiviso da tutti i membri della società è pertanto la preservazione di tale ordine immobile. L'uomo, non è finito in se stesso ma è finito nella collettività dello stato. Alla creazione di quest'immagine negli individui corrisponde un ulteriore operazione sull'essenza del soggetto: quella sul desiderio. È difatti facile riconoscere due tendenze cui i due modelli interagiscono con questo aspetto; in un caso, l'attitudine edonista è fortemente incentivata è la soddisfazione dei desideri è garantita dalla società; specularmente, nell'altra situazione, il desiderio è scoraggiato tramite la stigmatizzazione dei beni materiali.

In entrambi i casi la motivazione derivante dalla risoluzione condizionale del desiderio è incanalata ed utilizzata dalle istituzioni, senza che l'individuo possa stabilire un rapporto univoco con le proprie tensioni. Chiarendo, in entrambi i casi all'individuo non è concessa la soddisfazione egoistica dei propri bisogni, se non al di fuori della struttura dello stato.

Al fine di esplicare la relazione tra i due modelli e il desiderio ricorro alla teoria proposta da Maslow sulla gerarchizzazione dei bisogni. È necessario comunque premettere come questi ultimi interagiscano con la personalità dell'individuo. All'affiorare di un bisogno, inizialmente, corrisponde la definizione di un desiderio all'interno del soggetto, volto al risolvimento dello stato di tensione. In questo senso, desiderio e bisogno sono due elementi paralleli. Attraverso il desiderio a sua volta viene concepita la motivazione a soddisfarlo, dipendentemente dalle condizioni di realizzazione e il carattere individuale. Fintanto che il bisogno, seguendo la gerarchia proposta da Maslow, è basso sulla scala (quindi va risolto come condizione per la nascita di un nuovo bisogno), questo è anche più facilmente assecondabile. Conseguentemente, prendendo come esempio i bisogni fisiologici (che comprendono il nutrirsi, il sonno, ecc.), è possibile concludere che la motivazione, come il percorso per la realizzazione del bisogno, siano equivalenti per ogni individuo. Scalando verticalmente la piramide di Maslow troviamo però bisogni sempre più complessi e dall'ambigua soddisfazione; mi riferisco qui al bisogno d'amore, o al bisogno di realizzare il proprio potenziale come persona. In questi casi, come la motivazione varierà a seconda dell'individuo considerato, anche l'esperienza nell'ottenere ciò che è necessario ogni soggetto affronterà delle scelte diverse, con attitudini differenti. L'effetto perciò del conseguimento della situazione desiderata, determina direttamente la personalità dell'uomo. Analizzando ordinatamente le modalità per cui le istituzioni garantiscono la soddisfazione di ogni singolo bisogno, rispettivamente alla gerarchia proposta, l'elemento comune alla maggioranza degli esempi (di utopia, e distopia) si presenta chiaro. Fintanto che il bisogno appartiene ad una categoria inferiore, questo è soddisfatto tramite la sua risoluzione o, come sopracitato, il suo scoraggiamento sostanziale nell'ideologia del regime. Giunti però agli insiemi di bisogni che dipendono da fattori estrogeni, come il bisogno di riconoscimento e stima, o completamente endogeni all'individuo, nel caso del bisogno di realizzazione del proprio potenziale, la rigida struttura sociale non è capace di adeguarvisi e assecondarli, data la loro natura fortemente

multi-dimensionale.

Conclusione

In definitiva quindi, l'uomo non ha accesso ai mezzi per realizzare completamente la propria personalità, né i propri bisogni. Nonostante la percezione dell'individuo sulla propria completezza dipenda a sua volta dalla società circostante e l'ideologia in essa intrinseca, la mancanza di fattori determinanti in questo riguardo costituisce una componente disumanizzante. Inoltre, seppur ammettendo l'assoluta efficienza all'interno dei modelli anche nei confronti dei bisogni descritti, rimane l'appunto sulla libertà dell'individuo di scegliere la propria strada per determinarsi, a seconda delle personali inclinazioni e caratteristiche.
  In conclusione, utopia e distopia sono due facce della stessa medaglia, seppure in una sia enfatizzata l'armonia e il rigore, mentre nell'altra l'avvilimento dell'uomo. Se l'utopia sia desiderabile, quandanche riconoscendo gli elementi in essa come meccanici ed imposti, è una questione di prospettive personali. Ed è in questo riguardo che formulo il mio interrogativo per il lettore: se parte maggiore dell'esperienza umana dipende dalla libertà di scelta, un contesto in cui le idee, il comportamento, e i desideri sono determinati e gestiti da una sorgente esterna, può essere ancora considerata un'alternativa auspicabile? Lascio il giudizio al lettore.