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A NEW BRAVE OLD WORLD: WHAT ZYGMUNT BAUMAN, THOMAS ERIKSEN AND ALDOUS HUXLEY (MAY) HAVE IN COMMON

Abstract

The paper examines the relevance of Aldous Huxley's widely known comfortable dystopia, depicted in the novel *Brave New World* – along with some additional material drawn from his other, earlier writings – by comparing it to two relatively recent books from the social sciences: Zygmunt Bauman's *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (1998) and Thomas Hylland Eriksen's *Tyranny of the Moment* (2001). It then analyzes the differences and similarities between the ideas espoused in the three books and enquires what they might bring to the general debate about our condition, focusing specifically on the problems of our (in)ability to correctly describe and predict the relationships between the present, the past and the future, and on the function and relevance of meta-narratives.

One question that haunts the background of literary research into works that are not really contemporary is their relevance for the world they are being read in. If one devotes considerable time and effort to investigating a text or a writer, eventually a question arises and demands some – even if perfunctory – answer. That question is: *why/how does this matter?* That a work or an author could be thought a "classic" does not grant immunity to such questioning. Even if one concedes, for the sake of discussion, that there is such a thing as "being a classic" (despite all the ongoing debates about canonicity, textual authority and so forth), it does not have to be synonymous with "being relevant" – granting the status of a "classic" can be paying lip-service to a predecessor one does not really engage with.

That possibility, of becoming a bronzed but silent "classic", a respected but irrelevant grandparent, is possibly a particularly bad fate for works that attempted to actively talk to or dialogue with their readers, to engage them

in discussion, and have earned a reputation based on precisely this quality. A subcategory of such works of particular interest to me are dystopias, i.e. depictions of "non-existent societ[ies] described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived" (Sargent, 9).[1] The very word "contemporaneous" in this definition highlights the importance of historical context for dystopian narratives, an importance Sargent explicitly acknowledges elsewhere in his paper by writing that texts of this kind "are historical artifacts that are brought into being at particular times and places" (6).

The fate of a "classic" dystopia can be, from this vantage point, particularly ironic: it first captures the readers' attention because of its evocative power – some key concepts or phrases, reflective of the nightmarish universe, may even become household names – but eventually that power diminishes, specifically due to the fact that the work has become so accessible, and has simultaneously been placed in such high regard as a "classic" one *ought* to reference.

One could make an argument to that effect, for example, about George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Relatively many people can reference *Big Brother*, *doublethink* or *thought crimes*, and in our high-surveillance, networked world this kind of vocabulary might be very relevant. On the other hand, it is at least possible (and maybe even likely) that most people referencing Orwell's dystopia do not actually mean to evoke the dread of being completely dehumanized and eventually murdered by the perverted police state, à la Winston Smith. In other words, Orwell may have supplied his readers with a tool for comprehending the nightmare of *Big Brother* but, inadvertently, also led to the monster's domestication: the *Big Brother* we think of now probably no longer kills his subjects, but simply stares at them through CCTV (there is, of course, an added layer of irony here if one considers that this bit of Orwellian vocabulary was eventually used as a reality TV show name).

It could be suggested that, perhaps, this deterioration of a particular dystopian myth is simply the consequence of core relevance loss. If dystopias are rooted in the historical reality of their times then, perhaps, each generation or community, experiencing its own historical reality, needs its own dystopian myths to discuss its own fears and can only be expected to use the dystopias of older generations as mental shortcuts, establishing its own concepts using old vocabulary.

1. The core question

At the heart of this paper lies the exploration of this problem with reference to a different dystopian legacy, one that is relatively often put side by side

with Orwell's: the one stemming from Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). The dystopia's (and the author's) status as a classic (to the extent that label is ever valid) can hardly be disputed. In a fairly recent book, offering a general overview of some contemporary literary trends, in a chapter dealing with dystopias, Fiona Tolan devotes a section to Orwell and Huxley, treating them as foundational for the genre (233–235). The title of Michael Coren's 1995 opinion piece boldly asserts that: "We owe a great debt to Aldous Huxley – semi-blind but a colossal visionary." And Ronald Sion, in a relatively new book of Huxley scholarship, does not shy away from the v-word either:

> While some of his predictions may seem quaint or outdated with the passage of time, on essential human issues his original satire remains right on target. Huxley was a remarkably clear-sighted visionary, and the thematic essence of his fiction is powerful, insightful, and resonates with the modern age. (11).

Given what has been suggested above, when one is confronted with such a show of reverence one should ascertain its quality. Is it indicative of real, practical, contemporary relevance? Or is it either the wishful thinking of those who simply like or admire Huxley's work, or maybe even just lip-service and academic hype? After all, Huxley's dystopian book is now eighty years old, and, furthermore, dystopian fiction has certain generic characteristics that can make it rather unappealing even when it is far less dated. For example, George Woodcock calls Huxley's work "avowedly didactic" and suggests that Huxley "is willing to sacrifice something of elegance, something of pattern, to make sure that his homily does not go unheard", (19), which summons up less flattering images than all the talk of Huxley-as-visionary.

Before delving deeper into the problem it is important to signal one more thing. I use the phrase "dystopian legacy" rather than simply "(a) dystopia" for a reason. It is widely recognized within Huxley scholarship that Huxley's work is – in a sense – an organic intellectual whole. He was interested in ideas rather than in characters or plots, as recognized by Jerome Meckier, who calls him "a dramatizer of ideas" (2006: 322) and (less flatteringly) suggests that many of Huxley's characters "are often little more than a series of ideas covered thinly with skin and given to talkativeness" (2006: 21). Meckier also draws attention to the fact that Huxley had fleshed out his ideas in the essays he so frequently wrote, including the ideas behind *Brave New World* (2001: 245). In other words, Huxley's fiction is often heavily essayistic and his essays are of significant importance to his fiction, and, therefore, his dystopian ideas can, to an extent, be encountered in both.

Given that, the rest of this analysis shall use an approach that is, perhaps, somewhat counterintuitive or unorthodox. Namely, instead of discussing the relevance of *Brave New World* as a closed text, a single dystopian novel, I will

include some of Huxley's essayistic work predating *Brave New World*, as a kind of intellectual context, even though most current readers are probably not conversant with the essays (although it could be reasonably argued that Huxley's contemporaries might have been). I do believe it is almost indispensible to do so, if one wants to ask not just what the reader takes away from Huxley's novel but also what Huxley possibly meant the reader to take away.

2. The exempla

The two books used to represent the social science side of this analysis are *Globalization: The Human Consequences* by Zygmunt Bauman and Thomas Hylland Eriksen's *Tyranny of the Moment*. The choice is in some ways a boon and in others a problem. Both these books are, in terms of genre and origin, definitely unlike Huxley's work. Both were written by academics – one by a sociologist, the other by a social anthropologist – and neither of them is fiction, although both are, judging by the composition, meant mainly for the general educated readership.[2] Huxley's dystopian writing, on the other hand, is largely fictional (while the essays inform *Brave New World*, it is unlikely the dystopian ideas would have captured the popular imagination without novelistic treatment) and written by an amateur erudite. And yet I would argue that for all the difference there is a significant similarity: all the books are manifestations of sociological interest, i.e. concern with the state of society. It is on these, perhaps controversial, grounds that the paper stages a confrontation between Bauman, Eriksen and Huxley, although it has to be stressed that the approach presented here is primarily that of literary studies. In a sense, the present paper takes the liberty of treating the two sociological texts as if they were literature, not delving into the issues that are particular to either sociology or social anthropology.

For the sake of fairness it should probably also be mentioned that there is no grand idea underlying this selection. The juxtaposition of these three books is simply the result of a certain unintentional discovery. There may be, and in all probability quite likely are, books that lend themselves to a similar analysis as well as, or even better than, the ones presented here. Additionally, while both Bauman's and Eriksen's opinions seem to be valued in their relevant disciplines, they obviously should not be treated, in this staged dialogue, as spokesmen for their whole disciplines.

A good illustration of the nature of the unintentional discovery to be discussed are the following three quotes:

> [...] increased prosperity has rendered self-denial less desperately necessary (and therefore less meritorious) than it was for the majority of men and women a few

> generations ago. Rationalization has led to overproduction, and overproduction calls insistently for a compensating overconsumption.

> The way present-day society shapes its members is dictated first and foremost by the duty to play the role of the consumer. The norm our society holds up to its members is that of the ability and willingness to play it.

> It is evident that the role of the consumer has grown in importance [...] and that the war over the free seconds and pence in the lives of consumers is being intensified every fleeting moment.

The first of those comes from a 1931 essay by Huxley, entitled "Obstacle Race" and included in the collection *Music at Night* (2001, III: 140), the next is from Bauman's book (80), and final one from Eriken (136–137). The quote from Huxley's essay is also obviously thematically related to some of the consumerism-focused scenes in *Brave New World*, such as the conditioning of Delta children (2005: 19–22) or hypnopaedia sessions, including this one (emphasis added):

> In the nurseries, the Elementary Class Consciousness lesson was over, the voices were adapting *future demand to future industrial supply*. "I do love flying", they whispered, "I do love flying, I do love having new clothes. [...] (2005: 48).

Indeed, an awareness of a consumerist inclination in society is a topic of significant importance for all three books under discussion (although Bauman places much more emphasis on it than Eriksen) and one that comes as no big surprise to anyone interested in Huxley's dystopian legacy. After all *Brave New World* is sometimes used to facilitate student discussions about consumerism (see: Wilkinson, 2010).

There is so much commonality on the issue that the rest of this paper could probably be devoted solely to analyzing Bauman's and Huxley's respective observations concerning consumerism – the chapter "Tourists and Vagabonds" in *Globalization* would be particularly well suited for that. One could discuss the dynamics of desire in a consumer society, geared to produce ever new seductions and provide instant but transitory satisfaction (Bauman: 78, 81), translated in the fictional World State into "no leisure from pleasure", a chore, as one needs to "get through two rounds of Obstacle Golf before dark." (2005: 55). Or one could discuss Bauman's contention that consumerism requires that everything be provisional (81) and how that relates to the emotionally and intellectually sterile society in *Brave New World*.

But, as has been said, to find concern with consumerism in *Brave New World* and, more broadly, in Huxley's relevant writings, is no surprise at all. A much more interesting commonality can be glimpsed when Bauman discusses a certain general characteristic of "this late-modern or postmodern world of ours." He posits that we are now faced with "a world with reference

points set on wheels and known for their vexing habit of vanishing from view before the instruction they offer has been read out in full, pondered and acted upon." (78). A world where the ideas of rest or immobility no longer make any sense.

This concept that we are living in an age that is provisional and ever-changing, not just in its consumption but in its ideology, tends to be embraced by at least some theorists of "postmodernism." For example, as part of his contribution to the volume *Evil After Postmodernism*, Larry Bouchard writes that "One of the more common definitions of postmodernism is sustained suspicion about foundations or 'meta-narratives'" (Geddes: 32).[3]

In the context of these claims, made both by Bauman and by various literary and philosophical theorists, it is instructive to see what Huxley had to say on the matter. In the essay "The Modern Spirit and the Family Party", first published in *Vanity Fair* in 1922, he declared: "Between them, the war and the new psychology have smashed most of the institutions, traditions, creeds, and spiritual values that supported us in the past." (2001, I: 32). And if one delves into his fiction from the corresponding period, specifically into the novel *Antic Hay*, one finds the following:

> 'But really,' Gumbril insisted, 'you can't say "dream". Can you now, seriously?' [...]
> 'And why not?' Lypiatt asked.
> 'Oh, because one simply can't.' [...] 'Not in this year of grace, nineteen twenty-two.' (1960: 45)

The tone in which Huxley speaks of this shattering of values significantly differs from the way many literary and philosophical theorists of post-modernity speak. Judging by the tone of their writing, the theorists, relatively often, seem to actually applaud the state of affairs or at least embrace it. Huxley is definitely not as optimistic about the result of all this creed smashing.

In this Bauman's tone, which is much more pessimistic, seems more akin to Huxley's. For example, the sociologist devotes a considerable part of the relevant chapter of *Globalization* to positing that this provisional nature of postmodern life divides people into the profiting class of tourists and the class of vagabonds who "are allowed neither to stay put [...] nor search for a better place to be" (93). While this is probably not the exact reason why Huxley would be likely to question and, perhaps even reject, the un-anchoring and suspension in fluidity, there is a certain similarity in their points of view.[4]

A final commonality I would like to discuss is visible mainly in Eriksen's *Tyranny of the Moment*. The main theme of this book is the way contemporary technological and societal changes have influenced our

collective sense and use of time. In its briefest formulation, the argument seems to be that "Time is hacked up into such small pieces that there is hardly anything left of it." (5–6) and that those small pieces are stacked atop one another in "fast time", instead of being joined into larger wholes of "slow time". This results in a number of things: serial monogamy, i.e. continually "going back to square one" in relationships because one is repeatedly planning family life anew (131); the loss of ability to reflect and spot causality (e.g. 117); a cult of youth and flexibility, hindering success in some important societal roles (135); pressure on family life, which is increasingly seen as "a kind of spare tank of time to be filled or emptied depending on the number of other activities to hand" (132).

All of these things can be easily found both in Huxley's dystopia and in the musings leading up to it. After all, the World State has adopted as one of its sayings of common sense the words: "Was and will make me ill" (Huxley, 2005: 104); is a place where solitary thinking can give one a bad reputation (34); where the cult of youth has been taken to its physical extreme, with medically arrested aging and "Galloping Senility wards" (198); and, finally, a place where there are no longer any pressures on the family because the family does not exist. All this to allow the regime to maintain a particular kind of ever-fluid social stability

Obviously, there is a world of difference between Huxley's dystopia and the portrait of our society painted by Eriksen in his socio-anthropological analysis. Much of it can be related to the free use of science-fiction devices in Huxley's world, to which the people of 2001 or even 2012 have little (e.g. extreme NTR) or no (arrested ageing) access. But if the devices were stripped away, as they are in Huxley's essayistic writing, one could observe a significant number of similarities. For example, in 1924 Huxley wrote "On Not Being Up-To Date" on the virtues of what Eriksen might call "slow time". He declared:

> To be free from the socially imposed necessity of knowing about novelties is to endow oneself with leisure and calm. It enables one to work; it leaves one at liberty to think – a process which, like almost everyone else, I used to detest, preferring to occupy my mind with the various substitutes for thought, from newspapers to the Freudian interpretation of dreams, which modern civilization provides in ever-increasing quantities for the relief of mind-haunted humanity. (2001, I: 375).

Some changes would have to be made – such as substituting television for newspapers and Facebook for Freud – if one were to make this quote fully directly relevant for today's world. Furthermore, in the interest of fairness, the argument should probably also be slightly toned down, given that Huxley was, at that time, influenced by the hyperbolic writing of the American social commentator L.H. Mencken (Bradshaw, x). But the core sentiment seems to

be consonant with Eriksen's observations, as Huxley apparently also experienced the crisis of "slow" time.

Similarly, in 1928, writing about the future of the family, Huxley observed: "grandmothers will be far too busy dancing and playing bridge to pay any attention to their grandchildren" (2001, II: 119) and while in actual fact it might currently be more often the case that it is the parents who have insufficient time to pay attention to their children, and the cause of this is their work rather than bridge, the general sentiment seems, again, strikingly similar in that both Huxley and Eriksen seem to see the family as approaching or undergoing a crisis due to a shift in social priorities.

3. The dialogue

But if that were all that reading Huxley could offer, it would not actually necessarily mean that Huxley's dystopian vision is relevant today. After all, would it not make more sense to devote time to contemporary non-fictional accounts than to fiction from four generations ago, if both of them are saying substantially similar things, but the fiction has to be commented upon to achieve its full impact? And even if literature scholars still feel obliged to discuss fiction rather than non-fiction, would there be any reason to do so beyond the confines of literary studies? In other words, is there anything that should make reading and discussing Huxley's dystopian legacy interesting beyond strict literary analysis and more along the lines of broadly understood theories of the contemporary (possibly "postmodern") condition, quasi-sociological discussions and so forth?

I would, rather obviously, posit that there is something interesting in Huxley's legacy in particular, even if it is dated in some aspects. But instead of trying to juxtapose all the possibly useful instances of difference in perspective, I would like to offer two broader suggestions, relating to historicity and meta-narratives.

The first issue of broad importance is that Huxley's work is already, in a sense, history. Some of his predictions were illuminating or even simply correct (as long as one applies them mainly to affluent Western countries). Some were wrong – we are, for example, still quite far away from enacting all of the World State's control mechanisms, even though Huxley had, by 1947, come to believe that "the horror may be upon us within a single century" (2005: xvii), as he suggested in a foreword to *Brave New World*. In that foreword he also reflects on what he perceives as the flaws of the novel and those reflections can also be instructive. He apparently eventually came to the conclusion he would have preferred, with the benefit of hindsight, to construct his dystopian vision somewhat differently and, in essence, more hopefully (2005: ix-x).

This historicity, the record of failed visions and misgivings of a man some are apparently willing to call a great visionary, can potentially serve as a corrective to our thinking just as much as the other, more successful, predictions may. For while the successful predictions might warn and challenge readers to ponder what seems to be approaching, the unsuccessful ones might serve as a reminder that even "great visionaries" have a hard time imagining the real future and its relation to the past. To take a simple example, one can be almost certain that, if the World State were created today, Henry Ford would not be deified – the deity of our own Brave New World would rather, quite probably, be some mastermind of the digital revolution.

When one is describing one's own times or extrapolating from them into the future, there is a temptation to view that which one's society has arrived at as the last and final development (today one could wonder, for example, what meaningful change is conceivable to postmodern theorists after the self-questioning project of postmodernism). Huxley's dystopian vision, with its predictions that are half right while being quite vehement, a vision that partly follows this dynamic of seeing the current as the ultimate, can be an instructive warning to contemplate from that perspective.

Furthermore, there is also a tendency, in some forms of analysis or theorizing, to treat a particular war, the sixties, or some other event as a milestone that changed the nature of reality, in a manner somewhat similar to the way the characters from *Antic Hay* (and, seemingly, to some extent Huxley himself) viewed the Great War. While that assessment can be true for the particular generation that experiences that specific crucial event (Huxley was clearly influenced by the Great War, for example), it seems that future generations usually find their own pivotal events (Huxley's modern readers are unlikely to think of the Great War as the moment when all creeds were smashed). That relative or transitory importance of apparently pivotal events is, I would posit, another thing that is worth taking away from a reading of Huxley's dystopian legacy.

The second major issue Huxley seems to be bringing to the table is more directly relevant for the field of literary analysis and for the treatment of *Brave New World* as a text. As some scholars have observed it can actually be *misread*, i.e. the reader can completely miss the point Huxley was apparently trying to make (which is something quite different than knowing that point and disagreeing with it). Professor Philip Thody, for example, once remarked:

> Most students to whom I've talked about *Brave New World* have confessed to me that they first of all read it because it depicted what you might call an adolescent's utopia, that everybody could have everybody else. (Nugel: 162)

And before one decides that the students have simply done so because they are unsophisticated readers, one should probably consider the philosophical and theoretical statements made at a much higher academic level, like this one by David B. Morris:

> Evil has long been understood by theologians and by popular audiences [...] as the *cause* of suffering. The postmodern era has redefined suffering *as* evil. Suffering becomes one of the few agreed-upon new shapes that evil assumes in the postmodern world. (Geddes: 60)

If Morris is right, so are Thody's students, even if they would arrive at the same conclusions about the World State from opposite directions. The students might begin with the fact that the World State satisfies appetites and Morris might be mainly concerned with the fact that it eradicates suffering, but they would both apparently end up endorsing it.

While Morris probably did not mean this statement to be any kind of comment on Huxley's novel in particular, since this remark is made in the general context of an article about AIDS as suffering from a postmodern perspective, and while one could also avoid the conclusion that seems to logically follow from his statement by positing that there is some less tangible form of suffering the World State citizens are subjected to, his assertion highlights a potential for conflict between certain kinds of postmodern theory and Huxley's legacy, even when that legacy is deemed topically relevant.

The idea that at least some forms of postmodernism render Huxley's dystopian fiction illegible is also supported by the dystopian theorist Erika Gottlieb:

> Huxley's and Orwell's standard of sanity is that of humanism, based on the assumption that there could be a consensus on what the human being's Final End is, [...] [a concept] many a postmodern critic, sadly, I think, would have difficulty recognizing, let alone endorsing. (73–74).

In this context, if, like, for example, Rachel Wilkinson, anyone wants to use dystopian literature to discuss the current social condition, whether with one's students, within literary studies, or on some broader forum, and whether it would be because, as Wilkinson suggests, it "exaggerates our modern context so that we can challenge it" (22) and "help[s] students deconstruct their contexts", (25) or for any other reason, a problem will arise. For the capacity of dystopias to stimulate a discussion is contingent on them being understood in the first place, i.e. not fundamentally misread. And given what has been said above, it appears that in order to avoid misreadings it might be necessary to discuss meta-narratives – truth, value, goodness, evil – even if one has some doubts about them, because without the vocabulary and

frame of reference that is part of those meta-narratives such works might become illegible.

In other words, Huxley's work offers us a paradox: it is topical and thus apparently worthy of being included in discussions of our current social condition, which some would term postmodern, but in order to include it we have to – at least temporarily – abandon the pervasive suspicion against meta-narratives that is commonly associated with postmodernism. To paraphrase *Antic Hay*: we have to be able to use the word dream in this year of grace two thousand twelve, even if we think we should not be using it, because without it we are increasingly likely to no longer comprehend Huxley's dystopian nightmare.

In this Huxley's work is different from the analyses offered by Bauman and Eriksen, for both of them are only descriptive. Eriksen formulates just a few suggestions for readers interested in reclaiming slow time and Bauman does no comparable thing. In both cases that approach seems understandable from a professional perspective – the business of the social sciences, in this case, is probably to explain what *is* and not necessarily what *ought to be*. Huxley's fiction, on the other hand, by transforming what *is* into what *might be*, actually forces, upon anyone reading it as social critique, the question of what *ought (not) to be*.

4. Conclusions

The present paper has, at its core, the question whether Huxley's dystopian legacy is still relevant and has anything special (although not necessarily unique) to add to the discussion about our condition (which some term "postmodern") both within the field of literature and beyond. If the answer to that question were negative, it would follow that that the reverential titles given to Huxley, such as when he is styled a visionary, are out of date at best and fake, formal show of respect at worst.

The comparisons with Zygmunt Bauman's *Globalization* and Thomas Hylland Eriksen's *Tyranny of the Moment* indicate that themes which preoccupied Huxley eighty years ago are still relevant and that at least some of his dystopian preoccupations are similar at their core to the diagnoses offered by the two theorists of society, although, of course, some elements differ significantly, most obviously in Huxley's fiction. What is especially interesting, however, is the way both Huxley's historicity as a thinker and the fictional, extrapolative nature of his main dystopian project, forces certain questions into the discussion.

The historicity of Huxley's writing about and around Brave New World, poised between the hopelessness after the Great War and before the advent

of Hitler's totalitarian state, contains an implicit question about the extent to which we correctly assess the differences separating us from the past and the way in which we are heading into the future. For, as can be seen in his writings from the early 1920s', he expressed a feeling somewhat akin to that which some theorists seem to ascribe primarily to our own age and its stipulated loss of innocence (see e.g. Hutcheon commenting on Umberto Eco, pp. 90–91). At the same time, the accuracy of his predictions was significantly questioned by the age of totalitarianisms and is still being questioned today, insofar as his thought still has little relevance for less developed or more dangerous regions of the world. A similar fate, of hitting the mark only partially, may await our predictions for the future. If so, Huxley's historicity could be an instructive specimen to reflect upon.

The fictional and extrapolative nature of most of his dystopian forecasts presents us with a different challenge. While discussing meta-narratives is avoidable with descriptive accounts, such as those provided by the social sciences, it becomes much more difficult to avoid when certain trends are taken to their logical limits and conclusions. This presents us with the paradox that, if we are not willing to discuss and acknowledge meta-narratives such as good, evil, truth, liberty or authenticity, we might possibly end up in a world deprived of any vestige of these things. A prospect that, probably, even many people unsure about or suspicious of meta-narratives find fundamentally rather unappealing.

NOTES

[1] Obviously other definitions of dystopias exist and the term itself is subject to some controversy. The definition used here is, however, widely acknowledged and seems sufficient for the purposes of this paper.

[2] Eriksen draws attention to the fact that his book has a "popular style and modest length," although is "not unambitious," in the very introduction (6), openly admits making some significant simplifications (37) and, in contrast to the strictly academic style, generally foregoes giving page numbers when referencing books. Bauman, while not highlighting the accessibility of the book as much, did fit the whole argument into less than 130 A5 pages (i.e. less than Eriksen's "modest length"), with just 63 notes in total, many of them bibliographic.

[3] See also, for example, Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, where she posited that: "The challenging of certainty, the asking of questions, the revealing of fiction-making where we might have once accepted the existence of some absolute 'truth' – this is the project of postmodernism." (48).

[4] While little attention is paid to this state of aimlessness in *Brave New World*, it could be posited that the stable World State actually originated from a series of such "creed smashing" events, similar in social effects to World War I, and mentioned by the World Controller during his history lecture in Chapter 3.

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