

BRAVE NEW WORLD

AND TOYS OF PEACE: THE ROLE OF CHILDREN

In Brave New World, the author, brings us an idea of how people can live in the future.

Each person in this world is made in serie, they don't born. Human embryos do not grow inside their mother's wombs but in bottles. Biological or physiological conditioning consists of adding chemicals to prepare the embryos for the levels of strength, intelligence, and aptitude required for given jobs. They aren't free because they have been genetically designed in order to satisfy a society necessity. So we could say, people have been dominated by science.

I must talk about children and their role in this book. Basically I'm going to comment how do they receive their education when they are babes or teenagers.

However, to talk about this, we have got to mention some important characters and ideas that appear in the book.

First of all, babes are submitted by the Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning. Pavlov is famous for showing that animals can be trained to do something through a system of rewards and punishments. This is used on all babies to condition them to like or dislike certain objects. It is one of the main conditioning techniques which helps ensure social stability:

Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks, already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder.

Another example is the death conditioning. They carry a group of babes to the hospital, where the terminal patients are resting. They show the babes games, they give them delicacies to make the kids understand that the death isn't important, only happens.

Another conditioning system is called the hypnopaedia. In fact, this system really exists. Huxley pretends that it was discovered that people could learn ethics while sleeping and so this is used to help teach lessons which ensure the social stability. Suggestions written by the State:

Till at last the child's mind is this suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too – all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides – made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions!

This way of learning has a very close relation with Freud, the father of modern psychoanalysis. The utopian society believes that Ford (actually the pioneer of the production in serie system) and Freud are the same man, but Freud is the name Ford used when writing about psychology.

Those types of learning are used to construct a human, to make him strong and able to survive in a world made of orders. Also it is a way of education in which the kids know what it's good or not since they are in the incubators.

In the Toys of peace by Saki, we can observe another kind of children's behaviours. Bertie and Eric aren't teenagers yet. They have been educated like the majority of children there are nowadays. They have a knowledge about the world by looking around them. There are wars, tragedy, hunger, poverty, violence

and also there is a strong way of education reinforced by some cultural traditions; maybe wrong. When they are told to play with some puppets (that represents citizens and eminent people) and a dust-bin, they don't know what to do because they only see something that looks like a fort. During the contemporary epoch, children have always played with the same toys. Boys are relationed with games like football, lead soldiers (who fight to conquer a land) and girls have always played with puppets and little kitchens.

History has let us a very important bequest because of the wars. A huge quantity of history talks about violence and military values. We'd like to live in a pacific world, without hate. So we have to begin to change ourselves, and our behaviour towards the children. If we use to fight for what we think is our, the democratic values have no sense to exist. We must learn that nobody can force the others to do anything.

Children in Brave new world and in Toys of peace are both manipulated but not in a similar way. We must consider that children in BNW are manipulated by a superior entity, that makes people live in peace and respect each other. They're constructed, without dreams, and doing a functional job in the world. They don't have the possibility of dreaming. Whatever they do, always is organized and predicted. The difference with children in the story of Saki, is that they are manipulated by what they see everywhere, what happens in the world. However they are totally free, in fact they can decide by themselves, they are very close tied to the history and reflected to what people did in the past. They have the possibility to decide their toys, their type of live and everyone is unique and different.

The thinking of Freud and the psychoanalysis appears in the short story, too. When the children are gave the dust-bin, they make a comparison between a box (which an unknown function for them) and a fort. Their unconsciousness makes them relation the box (similar aspect with a fortress) with something they have ever seen in television or in pictures.

Children in BNW know, when they're just babies, what is wrong and what's not in order to comply with the established system. There's no chance to fight, they're forced to be good, and if not, they should live with the savages (defective people, with feelings, dreams, free). The difference between those and the guys in the story of Saki is that, they are free to think what they want, but always can change their mind and start to play with another kind of toys. Those which have a positive instinct, relationed to the democratic values. We can dialogue with them, because communication and language are the most important ways to be a person, to be a good person.

So, we can make a relation between the savages (of BNW) and the guys of the short story. They are free (although in BNW are forced to be separated from the valids), because they can consider all the possibilities of think what they want, and not being conditioned since they are babies:

(Savage) : But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.

Me too.