The Mother-Child Relationship in E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

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Abstract
This article compares E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" (1909) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) by focussing on the mother-child relationship in order to explore the relation between these works, particularly the influence of the former on the latter. The article first compares Vashti and Kuno in "The Machine Stops" with Linda and John in *Brave New World*. Both mothers appear to represent technology, progress, and rationalism, while both sons appear to represent nature, tradition, and imagination, but the two texts deconstruct this binary opposition to a certain degree. These futuristic narratives also depict a mother's mixed feelings of love and hatred towards her son as well as an indefinable, special relationship between mother and child, who look identical but are different individuals. Compared with Forster's story, Huxley's novel delves deeply into the psychology of the son and closely delineates the rational system of reproduction. These differences, to some extent, reflect the development of contemporary contexts of psychoanalysis and reproduction. The present article concludes that, regarding his representation of mother and son, Huxley owed much to Forster in terms of theme, plot, and characters.

Keywords: E.M. Forster, Aldous Huxley, mother-child relationship, reproduction, futuristic story

She was ashamed at having borne such a son,
she who had always been so respectable and so full of ideas.
E.M. Forster, "The Machine Stops" (1997, 103)

And I *was* so ashamed. Just think of it:
me, a Beta – having a baby: put yourself in my place.
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (2007, 103)

1. Introduction

E.M. Forster's short story, "The Machine Stops" (1909), is known as an important work in the history of utopian literature, and its influence on subsequent pieces of dystopia, particularly Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), has also been pointed out by scholars (see Claeys 2017, 334). However, curiously enough, it has not been examined in detail what kind of influence Forster's tale had on Huxley's novel. This article is an attempt to address this matter.

In fact, "The Machine Stops" has two aspects; it can be read as "social" fiction and "personal" fiction (see Stone 1966, 22). One of the themes spreading over both is the mother-child relationship. Significantly, this is also true of *Brave New World*. The mother-child relationship is a crucial perspective for reading these texts together. There have been several studies that, although not directly discussing this theme, have given some suggestions about it. By applying Eve Sedgwick's criticism of binary opposition in the context of sexuality, Ralph Pordzik interprets Forster's story as "a text allegorically dramatizing the problem of engaging a literary coming-out while at the same time denying the presence or feasibility of such an act of public identification" (2010, 55). Yohei Ando analyses the representation of masculinity in Forster's narrative and argues that the author wishes to undermine gender norms that deny the diversity of gender (see 2014, 216). On the other hand, with an interest in gender, critics have placed Huxley's descriptions of reproductive technologies in the contemporary context of reproduction (see Squier 1994, 133–67; Deery 1996, 103–10; McLaren 2012, 19–20). Nevertheless, no studies seem to have examined both works together, with a particular emphasis on the representation of mother and child. In this article, by focussing on the mother-child relationship, I would like to compare "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World* in order to explore the relation between these writings, especially the influence of Forster's tale on

Huxley's novel in terms of theme, plot, and characters. My approach is primarily a close reading of these texts with regard to historical contexts; it also observes, supplementarily, theoretical concerns about postcolonialism, psychoanalysis, and so on.

Let us start by reviewing the connection between these two authors. Forster and Huxley were not on close terms and did not leave many comments on each other. Yet when both of them attended the International Congress of Writers in Paris in 1935 as British delegates, Forster, in his letters, called Huxley "the only bright spot" among the members and appreciated that he "made a very good speech" (letter to Charles Mauron [31 May 1935], Lago 1985, 131; letter to Alice Clara Forster [22 June 1935], Lago 1985, 132). About *Brave New World*, he also stated that the novel is "often disgusting, but it is witty and vivid, the scenes bite in" (letter to May Buckingham [10 August 1935], Lago 1985, 136). Huxley, too, was familiar with Forster's writing. According to his essays and letters, Huxley read at least *A Passage to India* (1924), *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) and *Abinger Harvest* (1936).[1] Under the aggravating situation of international politics, including the rise of Nazis, Huxley wrote a letter to Forster on 17 February 1935, confessing frankly: "I share your gloom about the period, and add to it a considerable gloom about myself" (Smith 1969, 391). Although he displayed an interest in Bertrand Russell's idea of the progress of "scientific technique" as "a straight, un-undulating trajectory," Huxley wondered "if that straight trajectory isn't aiming directly for some denial of humanity" (Smith 1969, 391). This kind of anxiety about scientific advancement seems to have motivated the two novelists to work on their imaginative fiction, although the time of each publication was different.

Indeed, apart from the mother-child relationship, there are similarities in the settings of "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World*. This is partly because, at least according to their own comments, Forster and Huxley began to write these pieces as reactions to H.G. Wells's work (see Forster's Introduction to the 1947 edition of *Collected Short Stories*, 1997, xvi; Huxley's letter to Kethevan Roberts [18 May 1931], Smith 1969, 348). Both are set in a futuristic World State where the majority of human beings believe in progress and lead a "civilized" (convenient, comfortable, healthy) life, depending on, or being controlled by over-developed science and technology. A catchphrase in Forster's future – "How we have advanced, thanks to the Machine!" (Forster 1997, 97) – is equivalent to

[1] See Huxley, "By Their Speech Ye Shall Know Them" (1924), 2000, 382; "If My Library Burned Tonight" (1947), 2002, 374; letter to Mrs Kethevan Roberts (28 November 1930), Smith 1969, 343; Murray 2002, 208.

a maxim in Huxley's future – "Progress is lovely" (see Huxley 2007, 86–87). On the other hand, religion, literature, and other forms of traditional culture are tabooed or banned as being uncivilized or savage. Most of the citizens feel no doubts about the present conditions because they are effectively brainwashed or conditioned by the central authorities. While Forster envisages humans literally spending almost all their life inside an individual room, Huxley imagines that each of them "goes through life inside a bottle," in that they are controlled from birth to death (Huxley 2007, 196). Each world is divided into two parts – the civilized and the primitive. In Forster's future, the majority of humanity lives in an artificial environment below the ground but a small group of people appear to survive on the devastated surface, whereas in Huxley's future, most of the world is unified through civilization but there remain exceptional regions called the Savage Reservations.[2] These similarities of the settings are enough to suggest a close relation between "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World*. In order to understand this relation more deeply, the following sections will examine their representations of mother and child.

2. Vashti and Kuno

The main characters of "The Machine Stops" are no doubt Vashti and Kuno. The plot begins with their meeting through the blue plate and ends with their actual meeting and death together above the ground as a result of the Machine stopping. Their exchange of words covers most of the story.

Vashti is "a woman, about five feet high, with a face as white as a fungus" (Forster 1997, 87) and "without teeth or hair" (92). She is an "advanced" lecturer who, like the majority of her contemporaries, worships the Machine as "the spirit of the age," never questioning the validity of the Book of the Machine or the policies of the Central Committee (90). While disliking physical activity and contact, Vashti values intelligence, which, however, mainly functions in a realistic, rational, and calm way. For her, seeing nature such as the earth, sea, and stars is nonsense because it provides "no ideas" (88–89, 98).

[2] In principle, this article does not add quotation marks to "civilized," "savage", and other similar words, except for particular cases. This is because, as argued later, *Brave New World* questions rather than confirms these concepts, and these words in the text do not testify to Western-centred discrimination against those who are called "savages." The present article also uses "(American) Indians" instead of "Native Americans," following Huxley's use of the former in the text.

On the other hand, Kuno apparently embodies a kind of "atavism": "The very hair that disfigured his lip showed that he was reverting to some savage type" (103). Indeed, led by "the spirits of the dead" as well as his interest in nature, he comes out onto the surface of the earth, where it is said "no life remains" (89, see 101–02). Kuno, a "muscular" man who is "possessed of a certain physical strength" (100), emphasizes the bodily senses, particularly those of "space" and of "touch" (105). He not only adores heroes such as Orion, a hunter in Greek mythology who became a constellation, and Alfred the Great, King of Wessex (see 89, 106, 118), but also undertakes a life-risking escapade after hardening his muscles. Sceptical of the Committee, he thinks and acts for himself. He is passionate and imaginative, preferring God to the Machine (see 108).

It is thus natural that both the mother and the son admit they are "too different," "having nothing in common" (105, 112). Overall, Vashti represents machinery, civilization, progress, intelligence, reason, and realism, while Kuno represents humanity, nature, tradition, body, enthusiasm, and imagination. Summarizing their relationship like this may give the impression that the story thematizes the opposition between two sets of values, a familiar subject in Forster's many novels. Indeed, as well as this mother and son, the contrast between two sets of values – the underground world with artificial light, which symbolizes technology and progress, and the earthly world with sunshine, which symbolizes nature and tradition – certainly appears to dominate the entire story.

However, "The Machine Stops" deconstructs the binary opposition to a certain degree. The world of machinery and progress sometimes intermingles with that of nature and tradition. The image of the Machine repeatedly overlaps the images of religion and god. People pray to and worship the Machine, treating the Book of the Machine (instructions against every possible contingency published by the Central Committee) as their greatest support in life (see 88, 91, 95, 99–100). Finally, the Machine publicly comes to reign like the God, who is "omnipotent, eternal," and the Book of the Machine officially becomes the Bible, which gives a "strange feeling of peace" (110–11). Science is thus associated with religion, the future (or modernity) being associated with the past (or antiquity). Ironically, people who believe they have rejected superstition and trusted in their reason and civilization can no longer be differentiated from "the devotees of an earlier religion" (117). Such confusion can be found in the relation between machinery and human nature, too. As suggested in the scene where Kuno calls a doctor for Vashti, the mechanical and the human are not necessarily in opposition but rather compatible: "the human passions still blundered up and down in the Machine" (93).

It is thus not surprising that the relationship between Vashti and Kuno is also not merely contrasting. In fact, the mother and the son share some similarities in their personality. (This is exactly why they can ultimately reach a reconciliation.) Probably Vashti herself is vaguely aware of this, especially when she recognizes that "there was something special about Kuno – indeed there had been something special about *all* her children" (93; emphasis added). Finding out Kuno has been sentenced to Homelessness (virtually a death penalty), Vashti is "ashamed at having borne such a son, she who had always been so respectable and so full of ideas" (103). Even this feeling is actually based on her assumption that she and her son, by nature, are supposed to be identical. Kuno's narrative of the primitive or earthly world absorbs her not just because she is "inquisitive" like Kuno but also because she herself is probably interested in the primitive (see 105–06).

In reading "The Machine Stops" as a tale of mother and son, their affection should be most noticeable. At first sight, this point also seems to show a contrast: Vashti does not love her son while Kuno loves his mother. Certainly, in response to Kuno's request for her to "meet face to face," Vashti thinks it very troublesome, flatly replying that she can "scarcely spare the time for a visit" (88). Even when Kuno, "flesh of her flesh," is standing before her eyes, she cannot help feeling: "what profit was there in that?" (99). Regretting having borne an incomprehensible son like him, Vashti finds her talk with him "a disastrous waste of time" and judges him to be "mad" (106, 108): "Was he really the little boy [...] to whom she had given his first lessons in the Book?" (103). Apparently, Vashti does not worry much about her son, destined for death, and she never contacts or meets him, even though he comes to stay in a room not far from her own. To her, Kuno is no longer her son but a "man who was my son" (112). However, a closer reading of the text will convince one that these descriptions are not enough to grasp the whole picture of this mother's attitude towards her son. At the beginning of the short story, on hearing from Kuno, Vashti's "face wrinkled into smiles" (87), and after all, she decides to travel all the way to the other side of the earth to meet him by taking an air-ship. This is because, although "Parents, duties of," says the Book of the Machine, "cease at the moment of birth," she still remembers "Kuno as a baby, his birth," and his existence is still "special" to her (93). The substantial reason why Vashti is reluctant to meet Kuno is that, probably like the majority of the people of this world, she "dislike[s] [taking] air-ships," which involves seeing nature and having contact with other people (88; see 94–97). She is also personally "frightened of the tunnel" to the air-ship station, which appears to remind her of the traumatic birth of "her last child" (92). Vashti certainly does not openly express

her affection, but this is because it is not desirable according to the spirit of this age: "She was too well-bred to shake him [Kuno] by the hand" (99). Rather, one may find in the representation of Vashti the reality of a mother's psychology concerning her child, namely the mixed feelings of love, hatred, and so on.

On the other hand, Kuno seems to be consistently attached to his mother. When removed to the public nurseries, Kuno visited her repeatedly while she visited him once (see 93). His resistance to the Machine can be read as his resistance to his father. Vashti treats the Machine as if it were her husband or Kuno's father, for example, when she kisses, caresses, and is comforted by (the Book of) the Machine, as well as when she admonishes her son by citing the words of the Machine (see 90–91, 95, 117). The obstinacy of Kuno's defiance against the Machine, resulting in his escape from the Machine's realm, may also suggest his intense jealousy towards, and his strong desire to free himself from, this quasi-father. In the earthly world, Kuno encounters a girl – although it is not clear whether she really exists or is an illusion – but cannot have relations with her because she is soon killed by the worms (the mending apparatus, i.e., an agent of the Machine) (see 108). He is also not allowed by the Machine to have a child (see 102). The final reunion of the mother and the son, which is rather unexpected to the readers, suggests that Kuno has come to Vashti's room to see her in the last moment of his life. All of these factors seem to be enough to demonstrate that Kuno's love for the other sex has been consistently directed towards Vashti alone.

It is by no means appropriate to interpret the relationship between Vashti and Kuno as an antagonistic configuration or as one lacking mutual affection. The final scene of the story most graphically depicts their ideological and personal commonality. By quitting her blind devotion to the Machine and abandoning her Book of the Machine – namely, physically and mentally opening "her prison" – Vashti can reunite, or unite for the first time, with her son. They become one in both mind and body:

> They wept for humanity, those two, not for themselves. They could not bear that this should be the end. Ere silence was completed their hearts were opened, and they knew what had been important on the earth. Man, the flower of all flesh, the noblest of all creatures visible, man who had once made god in his image, and had mirrored his strength on the constellations, beautiful naked man was dying, strangled in the garments that he had woven. [...] The sin against the body – it was for that they wept in chief [...]. (117)

Vashti and Kuno snuggle together, and as if to represent their physical union, his "blood spurt[s] over her hands," the two's blood coalescing into one (118). They "touch, [...] talk, not through the Machine", and "kissed [kiss]" (118). They die together, putting their hopes in "men on the surface of the earth": "For a moment they saw the nations of the dead, and, before they joined them, scraps of the untainted sky" (118). In the final scene above, they embody and symbolize the destiny of humanity. Even though the two are certainly "different," it is suggested that they are not alternative but are both necessary, should coexist, because each of them has her/his own value – the mental and the physical, the calm and the passionate, the realistic and the imaginative. The problem is that the former has overwhelmed the latter. Human beings are remiss in their efforts to "only connect" as remarked in the epigraph of *Howards End* (1910).

3. Linda and John

Although not as central as the relationship between Vashti and Kuno, the relationship between Linda and John is also important with regard to the personality and destiny of John, the protagonist in the latter half of *Brave New World*. Linda is originally a Beta-Minus worker in the Fertilizing Room in London, namely in "civilized" society. About 20 years previously, she came to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico with her boyfriend, Thomas (now the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning Centre), and was left there by him after he accidentally lost sight of her. She gave birth to a boy and has lived with him and "savages" in the Reservation since then. Linda looks "fat" and ugly, and "two of the front teeth [a]re missing" (Huxley 2007, 102). Having been conditioned to be "civilized," she lives happily at least in London and entertains no doubts about this technological and totalitarian world. Her son, John, has grown up in New Mexico and comes to be called "Savage" after he enters London with his mother. In the "primitive" society he was "lonely" just because he was "different" from others (119), and this loneliness is never healed even in the "civilized" society.

The Savage is very critical of the state of civilized society, and after his mother's death, begins a resistance movement for "manhood and freedom" (187) only for it to fail. John is caught by the police, and his friend Bernard predicts he will be "killed" by the authorities (187–88). Significantly, elements of old culture that have been abolished or forgotten in the civilized society, such as Zuñi, Christianity, and Shakespeare, have formed his personality. Thus, unlike civilized people, John longs for self-sacrifice

and heroism (see 100–01, 119). Although his attitude towards romance is ascetic, John tends to emphasize the body and action; he has a habit of "whip[ping]" himself in self-reproach (see 100, 219–20, 223) and believes it is necessary to engage in life-risking challenges (such as hunting a lion) in order to get married (166). Basically, Linda represents technology, civilization, and progress – i.e., new culture and humanity – while John represents nature, savagery, and tradition – i.e., old culture and humanity. Although she happened to live in the Savage Reservation, Linda is proud of being "civilized" (103–05) and is not regarded by Londoners as a "real savage" like her son because she was "hatched out of a bottle and conditioned like anyone else" (133). She judges John, who is drawn to "primitive" culture, to be "mad" (105) and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, which he loves, to be "[u]ncivilized" and "full of nonsense" (113). Meanwhile, John deems Linda's only book, *Practical Instructions for Beta Embryo-Store Workers* (somewhat equivalent to the Book of the Machine), to be "beastly" (112).

However, it is also true that the relation between civilization and savagery (primitivism), which appears to be oppositional, is effectively deconstructed in *Brave New World*. The image of "civilization" repeatedly overlaps the images of "savagery" and "primitivism." What is most conspicuous is that the car king, "Our [Henry] Ford," has replaced "Our Lord" as a messianic figure of the World State. This substitution can be found everywhere in the text, but to cite just one example, "T," coming from the Ford Model T, has taken the place of every Christian cross. This is how science and religion, machine and god, overlap in this novel, too. Moreover, conditioning citizens to be "civilized" is not perfect. Bernard, who is individualistic because of his inferiority complex, and Helmholtz, who is individualistic because of his superiority, are clear cases, but other civilized characters also often behave in an "uncivilized" way. For instance, Lenina loves the same man for too long, Thomas cannot shake off his memories of his former girlfriend, and Linda, as discussed later, sometimes takes an "uncivilized" attitude towards John.

One can better understand this feature of the text by considering the relation between civilized society and the Savage Reservation. In a pueblo, the Indians' religious ceremony ironically reminds Lenina, a civilized visitor, of the rituals performed in her civilized society, such as Solidarity Services, Ford's Day celebrations, and a lower-caste Community Sing (97). It is worth adding that this point can be confirmed on the level of the author's creativity as well: Huxley deliberately disturbed the opposition between civilization and primitivism. Although in his descriptions of New Mexico he admitted to his use of Smithsonian Institution publications on American Indians (see Plimpton 1963, 165), Huxley actually also consulted the writings on "primitive" cultures by anthropologists

such as Bronisław Malinowski and Margaret Mead in order to imagine London life in the future (see Huxley's letters to Julian Huxley [13 July 1929; 12 October 1929], Smith 1969, 314, 318; letter to Norman Douglas [7 January 1930], Smith 1969, 326; letter to Kethevan Roberts [28 November 1930], Smith 1969, 343). Consequently, some images of both societies are similar or interchangeable. However, a more essential understanding can be obtained by speculating about why Savage Reservations exist and why civilized people want to visit them. Apart from the economic reason mentioned in the text (see 141), one can think of more substantial reasons. Assuming the historical fact that human societies have derived their identities negatively (see Said 1979, 54), the existence of the Savage Reservations, or "savages," may be required by the World Government to make and maintain its citizens, who are not completely conditioned, as the "civilized" (see Ozawa 2019b, 104). In another sense, the Savage Reservations are exceptional spaces to which old cultures repressed in civilized society have escaped. Civilized people may want to visit them precisely because of their repressed desires for the old customs (see 2019b, 105).

Similarly, the relationship between Linda and John cannot be viewed only as oppositional. Linda, who has visited the Savage Reservation, must have an interest in something primitive or savage that is tabooed in civilized society. Physically and mentally, she cannot be regarded as being completely "civilized" in that she not only gave birth to a baby but has formed a special, personal relationship with him somehow or other. As Vashti gives Kuno lessons in the Book, Linda teaches John to read (111), eventually enabling him to absorb "uncivilized" cultures such as the literature of Shakespeare. It is also overhasty to brand John merely as a "real savage" or a critic of the World State. John as a boy used to like Linda's talk of "the Other Place," i.e., civilized society (110), and being drawn to this image of utopia, he comes to decide to visit London: "O brave new world that has such people in it. Let's start at once" (121; see 177). In Linda's words, John was also conditioned a little by her (see 105).[3]

Linda's affection for John is not simple. She certainly does not seem to love him very much because she was conditioned not to love an individual deeply (see 104–05);

[3] As Patrick Brantlinger indicates, the majority of Victorian intellectuals assumed "the racial superiority of white Europeans" and believed in their responsibility to cast "the light of civilization" on the races they thought to be primitive or savage (1988, 8). Yet towards the end of the nineteenth century, diverse boundaries including those between races began to be seriously disturbed for several factors such as "fears of regression and degeneration" (see Showalter 1990, 4–5). Such ambiguity was certainly reflected in Forster's 1909 text and became more evident in Huxley's 1932 text.

"everyone belongs to everyone else" is one of the proverbs every citizen remembers (see 34, 37, 40, 104, 180). As a civilized Beta, Linda is "so ashamed" at having borne John (103, see 105), treats him as a nuisance in her love affairs, and even abuses him at times. Yet this hatred is intertwined with love, as portrayed in the following scene:

> "I'm not your mother. I won't be your mother."
> "But, Linda ... Oh!" she slapped him on the cheek.
> "Turned into a savage," she shouted. "Having young ones like an animal ... If it hadn't been for you [...]. [...] That would have been too shameful."
> He saw that she was going to hit him again, and lifted his arm to guard his face. "Oh don't, Linda, please don't."
> "Little beast!" She pulled down his arm; his face was uncovered.
> "Don't, Linda." He shut his eyes, expecting the blow.
> But she didn't hit him. After a little time, he opened his eyes again and saw that she was looking at him. He tried to smile at her. Suddenly she put her arms round him and kissed him again and again. (109–10)

Looking back on her life in the Reservation, Linda confesses: "It's too revolting [to have children]. And to think that I ... Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford! And yet John *was* a great comfort to me" (105). She has a traumatic fear of childbirth, which echoes Lenina's dread of imagining having her own baby (see 96, 103).

In contrast, John has been consistently attached to Linda since his infancy and has never accepted her meeting other men to such a degree that he tried to murder one of her lovers, Popé (see 108, 114–15). John not only criticizes Thomas, "a bad, unkind unnatural man" (101), but also comes to kill him socially in that his coming to London brings down ruin on his "father" (131–33).[4] John cannot love any other woman in a sexual sense (see 117–18, 148–49, 168–72, 227–28), partly because when approaching another woman he thinks of Linda, feeling as if he were betraying his beloved mother: "Poor Linda whom he had sworn to remember. But it was still the presence of Lenina that haunted him" (222); "Oh, Linda, forgive me. Forgive me, God" (223). On hearing that Linda is dying in the hospital, John hurries to her sickbed but cannot tolerate her remembering Popé in her dream. True or

[4] This scene, in which Bernard has the Director meet with John and Linda, appears to be based on a scene in *Howards End* in which Henry Wilcox is embarrassed and leaves when Helen arrives with Leonard Bast and Jacky, a woman whom Henry seduced and abandoned in Cyprus.

not, he assumes that he has "killed her" (179–81). Although he starts a self-sufficient life in Surrey Heath, John cannot escape from the images of Linda and Lenina, finally committing suicide. He thus joins the nations of the dead, where his mother is waiting.

In this way, "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World* have many similarities in the characterization of mother and child as well as in the plot centring on them. Both mothers believe in the present civilization while their sons, beyond their understanding, are rebellious against its authority, preferring nature, old culture and values of humanity such as passion and bravery. Each mother-child relationship appears to be a binary opposition but both texts carefully deconstruct it. Even though both sons are "savages," Vashti, an advanced thinker, is fascinated by Kuno's account of his adventure on the savage earth, and a similar interest can be found in Linda, who visited the Savage Reservation out of curiosity. Although both mothers seem to lack affection for their children, they actually entertain mixed feelings of love and hatred towards them. The sons are consistently attached to their mothers, which makes it difficult for them to fall in love with other women or perform sexual acts. With these points in mind, it can be argued that in his representation of mother and son Huxley consciously or unconsciously owed much to Forster's short narrative.

However, it is also worth noting the differences in their descriptions of mother and son. One of these concerns where the emphasis is placed on the mother-child relationship. In Forster's story, Vashti is the protagonist or at least a main character, ranked with Kuno. She is an intellectual who can be her son's opponent in debate somehow or other, although she is often severely attacked by him. In the end, they reconcile, empathize, and die together. The meaning and value of their deaths, as argued before, are not different. In contrast, in Huxley's novel, John is the protagonist, and Linda is not intelligent enough to discuss the rights and wrongs of civilization with her son. Instead of her, the World Controller Mustapha Mond plays the role of John's opponent in the highlight scene (see Chapters 16 and 17). And Linda and John die separately, not together. For the plot of the whole story, Linda's death is not as important as John's. Because John's role is the main one (and because the work itself is much longer than Forster's), his psychology, particularly towards his mother, is complicated compared with Kuno's. The presence of Linda's lover and husband (John's real, not metaphorical, father) adds to this complexity.

Assuming that Huxley was inspired by Forster in his representation of mother and son, why did he introduce such a difference? This can be discussed from various angles, but in the light of historical contexts, one cannot ignore the influence of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, especially on the Oedipus complex. In "The Machine Stops," the Oedipal relationship is not clearly represented. Curiously, Kuno's biological father is not

mentioned at all. Yet, as stated before, the Machine is an entity like his father in that it is loved by his mother and threatens his existence, preventing him from engaging in sexual acts and having children. Kuno, who loves Vashti, resists the Machine, and though it is not a direct result of this campaign, his attempt comes to fruition in the sense that the Machine ultimately collapses and he metaphorically unites with his mother.

In *Brave New World*, John's relationships with his parents are easier to explain concretely in terms of the Oedipus complex. The son is too attached to his mother to love other women, and ostracizes his father socially. Forster claimed never to have read Freud's writing, and since the English translation of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), in which the outline of Oedipus complex first appeared, was not available until 1911, he probably did not know the theory itself (see Buchanan 2010a, 125). Even so, the possibility of the influence from the Oedipus story cannot be ruled out.[5] On the other hand, as shown by his choice of Freud as a messianic figure of the World State (see 33), when writing his novel, Huxley knew just as much or more about Freud's psychoanalysis than his contemporary intellectuals, although he was critical of Freud's analytical style and some aspects of his arguments.[6]

Huxley's emphasis on the Oedipal motif in *Brave New World* can also be considered biographically, in relation to his senior friend D.H. Lawrence as well as Huxley himself. While editing *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence* (1932), Huxley prepared and wrote *Brave New World* from May to August of 1931 (see Bedford 2002, 755), and modelled the Savage partly on Lawrence, who had lived in New Mexico for two years (see Miller 2008, 153–58; Buchanan 2010b, 113–17). It is thus not surprising if John embodies the Oedipal aspect of Lawrence, as described in *Sons and Lovers* (1913). Moreover, one can take into account Huxley's own attitude towards his parents. In 1908, as early as the age of 14, Huxley lost his beloved mother Julia and, though probably not for a single reason,

[5] In 1903, Forster had already written "The Road from Colonus," another story with the Oedipal motif.

[6] Interestingly, in a letter to his father dated 24 August 1931, immediately after finishing *Brave New World*, Huxley remarked that the novel adumbrated "abolition of the family and all the Freudian 'complexes' for which family relationships are responsible" (Smith 1969, 351). For the similarities of *Brave New World* to Freud's work other than the Oedipal theory, see Buchanan 2010b, 110–13; Higdon 2013, 96–103. Huxley was particularly dissatisfied with Freud's reductionist tendencies: "The basic Freudian hypothesis is an environmental determinism that ignores heredity, an almost naked psychology that comes very near to ignoring the physical correlates of mental activity" (Huxley, *Literature and Science* [1963], 2002, 140). For the influence of Freud on Huxley's early work, see Ozawa 2016, 194–98.

came to hate his father Leonard, who remarried in 1912.[7] Some critics even suggest that Huxley's dislike of Freud can be associated with the fact that his own life appears to be readily explicable by the Oedipal theory (see Thody 1973, 16–17).

Compared with Forster, Huxley certainly deepened the psychology of the son, partly because of the influence of Freud's discourse on the Oedipus complex, which placed an emphasis on the son rather than the mother. It can also be argued that his relativization of the role of the mother in the whole plot reflected the gender asymmetry involved in Freud's theory.[8]

4. The System of Reproduction

However, the most striking difference regarding the mother-child relationship between Forster's and Huxley's works concerns how they imagined and portrayed the system of reproduction. Forster's tale focuses on the individual relationship between Vashti and Kuno, whereas Huxley's novel is more interested in the systems of reproduction itself. Unlike *Brave New World*, "The Machine Stops" lacks specific explanations of the present structure of the world and how it was established.

Forster's future, set a few centuries after the time of his writing (see 117), adopts natural reproduction, and Vashti, too, has given birth to children. Yet reproduction is placed under state control in terms of number and quality. The "death-rate was not permitted to exceed the birth-rate" (112; see 98), and not everyone can become a parent. A man who is travelling in the same air-ship as Vashti and who has so little physical strength as to drop his Book of the Machine is "sent to Sumatra for the purpose of propagating the race" (98; see 94), while Kuno's "request [to be a father]" is "refused by the Committee. His [i]s not a type that the Machine desire[s] to hand on" (102). To the Machine, because of his ideology and "physical strength," Kuno is a dangerous and undesirable being who is not "adapted to his surroundings": "By these days it was a demerit to be muscular. Each infant was examined at birth, and all who promised undue strength

[7] Huxley fictionalized his view of his mother and father in his autobiographical novel, *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936).

[8] Freud developed some aspects of his psychoanalysis based on himself, and his arguments, including his notion of Oedipus complex, tended to be male-centred and has been denounced by feminists and other critics for his "replication of patriarchal values and masculinist assumptions" (see Elliott 2014, 71–72, 114–15).

were destroyed. [...] it would have been no true kindness to let an athlete live; he would never have been happy in that state of life to which the Machine had called him" (100).[9] Children are removed to the public nurseries, having hardly seen their mothers, because, according to the Book, the duties of parents "cease at the moment of birth" (93).

On the other hand, *Brave New World* devotes its first three chapters to explaining in detail the fundamental systems of the 26th century World State, especially reproduction and conditioning. Under its motto "Community, Identity, Stability," Ford's principle of mass production has been applied to human reproduction, all citizens being born not from their mothers but through ectogenesis. The Government rigorously controls the number and quality of its citizens, producing members of each class (from Alpha to Epsilon) based on intelligence and physique in fixed proportions. As soon as they are born, children are made, through wordless conditioning and hypnopaedia, to become desirable citizens who live happily without any doubt about their status or the policies of the World State. They have no parents. In fact, because everyone now belongs to everyone else, there are no such special relationships as family or marriage (see 33–34). According to Mond, this is the result of the (radical) application of Freud's psychoanalysis, which was "the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life" (33): "Mother, monogamy, romance. High spurts the fountain; fierce and foamy the wild jet. The urge has but a single outlet. My love, my baby" (35). The words "parent," "mother," and "father" sound obscene or gross (see 19, 131–33), and the appearance of Linda and John not only brings laughter to London citizens but also becomes a scandal to the Director. Meanwhile, in the Savage Reservation, "children still are *born*" and the inhabitants "still preserve their repulsive habits and customs ... marriage, [...] families ... no conditioning" (88–89). Civilized visitors, Bernard and Lenina, are shocked to see "two young women giving the breast to their babies" (96).[10]

"The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World* share something in common in that reproduction is managed by the state in terms of number and quality, and childcare is also monopolized by it. On the whole, Huxley's system of reproduction appears to rationalize Forster's. In Huxley's future, natural reproduction has been replaced by artificial reproduction, and families and parents do not exist. This is why, as cited in the epigraph

[9] The paragraph including this passage was certainly based on Wells's discourse of degeneration in *The Time Machine* (1895) (see Wells 1996, 77–81).

[10] Here, Lenina shows her hatred more explicitly than Bernard (see 96). This is not only because of their gender difference but also because Bernard is not as conditioned as Lenina and still holds traditional values.

of the present article, Vashti is "ashamed at having borne *such a* son," while Linda is "ashamed" at "having *a* baby" itself (emphases added). Because of his detailed descriptions of the system of reproduction, it may be argued that Huxley narrated a story of mother and child against the backdrop of the system, or that he developed the personal theme of the mother-child relationship into the public theme on reproduction.

This difference between Forster and Huxley reflects to a certain degree the development of contemporary discourses on reproduction and motherhood. Although it is impossible to give here the total picture of the intellectual context on these subjects, by the 1920s reproduction and child rearing came to be thought of as national, racial matters rather than a woman's individual experience (see Squier 1994, 67). This public interest can be confirmed in, for instance, many volumes on reproduction and motherhood included in *To-day and To-morrow* (1923–1931), a series of more than a hundred titles which provided rich discussions about the present and future of Britain and other countries, and to which many of Huxley's acquaintances contributed. Huxley certainly owed much of his delineation of reproductive technologies to his friend, J.B.S. Haldane's *Daedalus or Science and the Future* (1924) (see Haldane 1924, 57–68). This biochemist foretold that the practice of ectogenesis – a word first used in this text, referring to fertilization outside the womb – would become popular by the end of the 20th century. Despite their differences in political ideology, many *To-day and To-morrow* contributors agreed that motherhood was in some sort of crisis.[11] For some contributors such as Anthony M. Ludovici, C.P. Blacker, and Norman Haire, reproduction was essentially an issue of nation, race, or humanity, while for others, such as Dora Russell, Vera Brittain, and Eden Paul, reproduction or motherhood was vital to both the public and a woman's personal life.[12]

[11] For instance, both the anti-feminist Anthony M. Ludovici and the feminist Dora Russell attacked British society for underestimating the value of the body by using nearly the same phrase: "the greatest revolt against the old notions of Life, Motherhood, and Domesticity" (Ludovici 1924, 30); "A revolt against motherhood" (Russell 1925, 42).

[12] From racial and national perspectives, Blacker advocated birth-control, which in his view would contribute to "a genuine and permanent world-peace" (see 1926, 95). As a eugenicist, Haire proposed "compulsory sterilization or contraception" to prevent the birth of "unhealthy" people (1928, 76–77). Meanwhile, Brittain tried to harmonize women's self-realization with the interest of the community (see 1929, 83–86). Paul regarded the maternal instinct as "real," something essential to women, and discussed the appropriate relation between the individual and the state (see 1930, 28–30, 51–56). For a comparison of *To-day and To-morrow* and Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928), see Ozawa 2019a, 168–69.

Huxley's prediction of reproduction as a supreme concern of the State, as well as his portrayal of an individual mother-child relationship against this background, can be positioned in the interwar debate as seen in *To-day and To-morrow*. *Brave New World* can also be read as a satire on some aspects of the discourses, especially the optimistic tendency regarding the impact of the progress of science and technology on the future of reproduction and women's life.

5. Conclusion

The comparison of "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World* from the perspective of the mother-child relationship has thus far revealed many similarities between these two works. Although the impact of Forster's story on the dystopian settings of Huxley's novel is known, the present article demonstrates that in his representation of mother and son, Huxley was consciously or unconsciously influenced by Forster. On the other hand, the mother, who is a main character of equal significance to the son in "The Machine Stops," plays a minor role compared to the son in *Brave New World*. The system of reproduction, shown only fragmentarily in the former, is also portrayed in much more detail in the latter as a more rational system. These differences reflect the contexts of psychoanalysis and reproduction which developed during the interwar period. Certainly, critics have discussed the influence of Wells's utopian fiction and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921) on *Brave New World* (see Firchow 1984, 57–64, 117–28; Baker 1990, 36–45). However, regarding the overall picture of the novel, especially its plot and important characters, Huxley actually owed more to Forster. Although my article has observed the mother-child relationship, comparison of these two works with a focus on other themes will bring to light other hidden aspects of these pieces and the authors.

Both "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World* represent the mother and child in an imaginary world. Precisely because of this non-existent setting, Forster and Huxley could freely envision the system of reproduction and a specific relationship between mother and child. What has not changed even after several centuries is suggested by them as something fundamental to humanity. Even though "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World* represent a mother-child relationship in the future, they do not simplify or idealize it with such stereotyped images as "maternal love." Rather, these futuristic narratives portray a woman's complicated feelings of love and hatred towards her son, and an indefinable, special relationship between mother and child, who look identical

but are different individuals.[13] By reading "The Machine Stops" and *Brave New World* together, and especially by observing the seemingly awkward relationship between mother and child and the surprising system of reproduction, we can realize that the maternal is constructed, the state of reproduction may be changed, and after all, we can think more flexibly about the mother-child relationship.

[13] For a theoretical study on the mother-child relationship, see Rose 2018. In the essay from which this monograph originated, Jacqueline Rose points out the complexity of a mother's love, which is ambivalent, mixed with hate, and suggests the creation of an environment which tolerates such complexity so that each woman can calmly experience being a mother (see 2014, 17–22).

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