

Reading the Discourses of Power in Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World'

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ABSTRACT: The first time I read *Brave New World*, I felt that I was far too young. This book dealt with drugs and sex and suicide, topics I had seldom encountered so bluntly as a preteen; but I am glad I did, because it has shaped the way I see the world ever since. Its bold and harsh commentary on pleasure as either vice or release, on social hypocrisy, on the acceptance of oblivion, on the obliteration of humanity and culture was unlike any I had read — besides, possibly, *Lord of the Flies* or *A Clockwork Orange*, which I devoured soon afterward.

KEYWORDS-Huxley's, discourses, brave, new world, reading

I. INTRODUCTION

It remains a behemoth in American literature for a reason. Much of its timelessness has to do with the fact that it is, at its core, a statement on human nature; as long as we remain, these haunting tales about the hidden pockets of our souls will be relevant.

Much of Aldous Huxley's work can be (and has been) dissected thoroughly over the years, unveiling constant new layers of complexity. Sometimes, I read it solely for the powerful prose. Other times, I read it to pick apart the characters who are contradictions upon contradictions. I went through an anxious phase, a few years ago, where I became overly preoccupied with the dangers of genetic modification, so reading *Brave New World* at that point in time was simultaneously therapeutic and a masochistic way to kindle my anxieties.[1,2,3]

In the interesting years since the 2016 election, however, the book has taken on a new sense of gravity, one of the most unexpected thematic aspects (for me) coming back to sound on my conscience, like a resounding gong. So busy was I bemoaning the treatment of nature, of art, of the family unit that I often relegated the dichotomy between painful truths and escapist pleasures at the back of the list — that is, until now.

The year is 2540, or 632 years AF (After Ford), and the setting is England, or the 'World State'. This society is a would-be utopia where pleasure is the priority: sexual libertinage is the norm, people have no parents, and commitment is discouraged. Drugs (specifically the drug of choice soma) is authorized and abundant, and orgies, and leisure abound. But of course, as is the case for any dystopian future, reality is much more grim. Consumerism and innovation have replaced humanity, and this affects the realms of science, technology and religion, among many others.

In chapters 16 and 17 of the novel, the reader is confronted with two antithetical points of views, which pit pleasure against truth, and which are heralded respectively by the "Savage" John and the World Controller Mustapha Mond. If both men are to be believed, the onset of one necessitates the eradication of the other. [4,5,6]

And yet, they both claim this stance for the greater good, and for the sake of happiness. This said happiness, for John, takes the form of sacrifice and pain while Mustapha Mond favors stability and instant gratification. While it is universally understood that the society depicted in *Brave New World* is not a desirable one, one cannot help but be seduced by the ideas put forth so eloquently by the Controller, which laid the ground for my internal debate: is the happiness that John speaks of such a big price to pay for stability? In other words, knowing how societies across time and place have been long divided, corrupted and

torn apart, is this greater good that Mustapha Mond speaks of such a repulsive thing after all?

I have often asked myself this, and deemed it an easy one to answer, depending on how complacent and/or guileless I was feeling at the time: of course the World State would be a horrible place to live.

But I found myself for the first time, two years ago, pausing before it. Adulthood is thankless in general, but coupled with many debilitating factors such as mental illness and the uncertainties of finances, school, work and strained relationships, it is an even more punishing phase of life.

And then the election happened, and with it, the rearing of the ugly heads of brazen misogyny, open intolerance, and other forms of devastating societal blights. These things have always been here, or course, but the sharp uptick in rampancy has made disillusionment impossible to shake off.

I could not believe I was allowing my thoughts to go there, and yet, there they went: being able to escape the world, or else pacify it at all cost, two of the most fundamental things Brave New World condemns, had become too tempting to ignore.

How had I suddenly found myself agreeing with Mustapha Mond?

When we meet John, the “Savage”, he is a breath of fresh air: he has never lived in the World State and does not espouse the way of life of the other characters, Bernard Marx, Helmholtz and Lenina Crowne. [7,8,9]

There is an discernible parallel with the story of the colonist John Smith, except that it is flipped: here, John is considered the anomaly, similarly to the way warped and injudicious opinions about Native Americans would have labeled them uncivilized, barbaric. Huxley’s John is dubbed “Savage”, and brought into a new society where he discovers a horrifying spectacle: being still accustomed to the notions of so-called morals and commitment, he is repulsed by the World State, but at the same time, he feels ashamed for wanting the very things he cannot bring himself to accept, and this internal battle will result in his eventual suicide. John represents an interesting struggle between the pull of tradition and culture, and the pull of temptation.

Bernard, Helmholtz and Lenina have been brainwashed to accept the World State lifestyle, and while they are themselves anomalies, compared to the rest of Huxley’s society, they still find John odd, strange. Their skewered view of life clashes with John’s, who has always known culture (namely Shakespeare), traditional religion, and a drug-free life. But it soon becomes clear that the conditioning is not only a one-way occurrence: in the same way that the characters are unable to comprehend his way of life on the Reservation, John is just as disoriented when he goes to the capital.

The verses of Shakespeare he spontaneously recites are no less mystifying than the slogans the other characters spew out, at times, out of habit or for lack of better words. They are all a product of their rearing, whether they realize this or not. All of this contradicts the idea of fate that concerns people individually (I was meant to find my own meaning in life, not given my own meaning in life), and this grim portrait of inescapable destinies and lack of control subtly shows that the characters will be powerless against the events to follow.

“John represents an interesting struggle between the pull of tradition and culture, and the pull of temptation.”

On the other hand, we have Mustapha Mond (‘monde’, or world in French, as it happens). He is sociopathic, but wears the costume of a benevolent, articulate, and self-possessed father figure.

The chapters in question (16 and 17) reveal that Mustapha Mond used to be a curious and revolutionary scientist, and what is more, still has access to the very thing he bans, namely books, religious or otherwise. He has chosen to abandon that way of life for one of control and stability. He does not deride the old world, but rather, believes that humans were

enslaved to immaterial things like their emotions and their unpredictable desires and beliefs; he would rather they be enslaved to material things that can be reproduced endlessly, and tailored to tastes and demands. [10,11,12]

What could go wrong, right?

Mond, additionally, admits to abominable theories, like the inequality of human beings, the beauty of science used on genetics and creation, and the inherent hierarchy of things depending on their value. He gladly admits that ancient societies, with their beauty, art, and passion were beautiful, but he renounces this in favor of longevity (which ironically contradicts the instant gratification of mass consumption) and stability; this, he would rather do under the cover of hedonism rather than totalitarian oppression.

Perhaps the most bothersome aspect of Mond's ideology is that some of it almost makes sense — or rather, is presented in a beautiful package of eloquent argumentation; and while I never agreed with him, I did always respect that his dystopia took the form of pleasure and recreation, rather than the obliteration of it, even if it's only surface-deep. We have all read Orwell's 1984, witnessed the repugnant violence of Gilead (The Handmaid's Tale), panted through the clawing horror of Koushun Takami's Battle Royale.

Yes, Brave New World is a poison-filled candy, but at least it tastes good.

While I also always believe that Mond has the capacity for a chilling brand of cruelty, he does not make overt use of force in the book — after all, despite rebelling in the novel, neither John, Bernard nor Helmholtz are killed, when they would have easily been disposed of in a story like Fahrenheit 451.

Everything with Mond is in the power of suggestion. John proves to be a formidable opponent to the World Controller, but at the end of their discussion, Mond is not "defeated"; still, I always admired John's zeal and willingness to see the torch burn to its end, because I myself was infused with the same sense of righteous passion.

But, as I watched far-right groups get emboldened across the world in the last two years, I began to eye John's passion with the condescension of a jaded, weathered old soul.

The man has no idea what he's talking about.[13,14,15]

Better yet: human beings are terrible, have always been terrible, will always be terrible, and maybe this world isn't worth fighting for. Maybe we do deserve to be screwed over, because of how we've screwed over all the second chances History has given us.

And indeed, as initially monstrous as Mond's stance might appear when confronted with the society we the readers have always known, one starts to see more sense in it than what John naively endorses.

John is repulsed by the fact that things like culture and love have been relinquished for consumption and superficiality; however, this argument is a feeble one, if we consider that even in the world we readers live in, where aforementioned culture, religion, artistic expressions and the like are established, they have not brought about the respect or faith that John is so keen to defend.

"The authenticity that John deplors has not always been as present as he would like us to believe."

Loving bonds are betrayed nonetheless, art and culture are derided by many, and the existence of God has long been questioned and tested. The authenticity that John deplors has not always been as present as he would like us to believe (Mond addresses this when he states that "people believe in God because they've been conditioned to believe in God" (235)). It would, then, be innocent to presume that this is a predilection that we naturally tend to embrace; in this perspective, the "Brave New World" is not so undesirable. Mond's following statement on the World State captures this notion best:

There aren't any losses for us to compensate; religious sentiment is superfluous. And why should we go hunting for a substitute for youthful desires, when desires never fail? A substitute for distractions, when we go on enjoying all the old fooleries to the very last? What need have we of repose when our minds and bodies continue to delight in activity? of

consolation when we have soma? of something immovable, when there is social order? [16,17,18]

Conditioning has saved society from the aforementioned conflicts and struggles, and is this not what humanity has been striving for, for eons? John paints a rosy picture of the world as it was before, and as it still could be, quoting Shakespeare's most poignant verses in the process. But there is another, from *Romeo and Juliet* that supports Mustapha Mond's motivations more than his own:

These violent delights have violent ends/And in their triumph die, like fire and powder/Which, as they kiss, consume./ ...Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so./Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow. [19,20,21]

Mond argues in favor of the sort of stability that has always eluded us, that which we have always taken for granted. It used to ring hollow in my ear, because in it, I saw something inauthentic, hypocritical. But still, the gong resounded again. His are not just airy theories. Mond makes it easy for people to follow his doctrine, instead of endorsing forceful domination:

The world is stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. ... They've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. (220)

The means are, in no way, laudable; but the ends, in light of centuries of struggle is not a horrible thing to strive for. Caste systems, unequal distribution of riches, as well as nonsensical social hierarchies having almost torn humans apart, a world in which everyone belongs somewhere and is satisfied is more than conceivable: it almost seems right.

Almost.

As tantalizing as Mustapha Mond might appear, a closer examination of his stance proves otherwise. Let's take a look at two of his central arguments, namely:

We haven't any use for old things here. ... Particularly when they're beautiful. Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. [22]

and

God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. [23]

Art and culture, first of all, are not as obsolete and useless as Mond would have us believe: they are rich pillars of society, outlets for powerful emotions which can inspire rousing sentiments in people, and the total lack thereof has given way to that which John condemns: indecency. While John has a tendency to jump to conclusions, as I mentioned above, one could argue that Mond's society promotes promiscuity (of an economic, social and/or ethical nature). This in turn, if Huxley is to be believed, has led to the breakdown of notions such as trust, loyalty and principle.

This seemingly perfect society, moreover, that purports to keep unhappiness and anxiety at bay hasn't exactly done that: soma, the vice of choice, seems to be less of a recreational drug than an antidepressant. Lenina is frequently ill at ease, as are Helmholtz and Bernard, proving that there is no escaping our own nature: why would we want distraction from a reality that should be superlative, perfect, exciting?

Another element makes Mond's idea of the greater good rather less convincing: the fact that he himself doesn't even seem altogether convinced by it. In fact, he downright admits to regretting the existence he used to lead. He is in contact with the very thing that he helps ban (books, Bibles, art), and was once in the same position as the three rebels (Helmholtz, Marx and John) — he simply chose to cast his die in favor of conformism.

This humanizes him while simultaneously making his motivations seem even less humane. He even agrees with Helmholtz when the latter calls his vision a horrible one:

Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the overcompensations of misery. And, of course, stability isn't nearly so spectacular as instability. And being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt. Happiness is never grand. [24,25,26]

This, along with the island where all the other intellectuals who don't agree with the regime are exiled, is a testament to the repeated failings of this seemingly ideal system.

Lastly, Mond at times contradicts himself: he rejects commitment because it involves passion, yet he endorses stability. He rejects deep or long-term feelings, yet claims,

If ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, ... there's always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. (237-8)

Finally, his society is founded on science and innovation, and yet he admits that "even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy. ... It isn't only art that's incompatible with happiness; it's also science. Science is dangerous ..." (225).

All of this, however, does not prove that Mond is completely wrong: it only proves that this debate is not so easily resolvable.

Mond and John stand categorically on two standpoints of a same debate, and their respective opinions on the Model Society are completely tinted by their own experiences: for John, passion and truth entail pain, while for Mond, stability necessitates sacrifice:

Knowledge was the highest good, truth the simplest value Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. ... Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. ... What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? ... People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. ... It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. [27,28,29]

But why must they be mutually exclusive? Why can't we strive for stability and happiness? There is no shameful motivation in what Mond wants, and what John espouses is morally right. I have come to see this in recent years especially, when every day feels like it could be the one that triggers a war, or at best, another divisive argument that rips our cohesion apart.

But the unwillingness to find stability in happiness and happiness in stability is where the flaw lies. As long as the defenders of one and the other are unwilling to moderate and compromise, John's society will always seem unstable to Mond, and Mond's society will always seem monstrous. The previous quote demonstrates that indeed, when one has gone through wars and the horrors that mankind is capable of, the happiness that John speaks of is seemingly not such a big price to pay for stability. When people are torn apart by massive casualties and we all walk on unpredictable grounds, it isn't unreasonable to want something more quiet, something more boring, almost.

The nuance is that this is only a temporary solution. We need collective stability, but not so that we can grow apathetic and stick our heads in the sand like self-righteous ostriches: we need it so that we can rest a bit, catch our breaths before attempting to rebuild, learn from our mistakes.

Start again.

Similarly, while his vision is melodramatic, ("I like the inconveniences. ... I don't want comfort. ... I want real danger I want sin. ... I'm claiming the right to be unhappy. Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; ... the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind. ... I claim them all." (240)), life as John imagines it is necessary: he says to Mond "getting rid of everything unpleasant instead of learning to put up with it. ... But you don't do either. Neither suffer nor oppose. ... It's too easy" (238).

Pain is inevitable, but we need it, because it makes us, as a whole, more empathetic, more aware, more cautious, and more wise.

And so, while it is understandable that sometimes, we want nothing more than to board a space shuttle and fling ourselves away from everything and everyone, Mond's vision of stability is, ultimately, nothing more than cowardice. It is hollow and superfluous — almost passive. If pleasure and contentment are so easy to acquire, then they become a commodity, and thus, worthless. If they are worthless, they sour, becomes harder to bury or escape, as the unhappiness of the main characters attests. What is more, peace is not a destination: it is a constant, constant work in progress, a process we must never let rest for too long. As the world changes, we must change with it, and adapt our notions of justice to be as far-reaching and all-inclusive as possible.[30,31,32]

“If pleasure and contentment are so easy to acquire, then they become a commodity, and thus, worthless.” I realized this, as I contemplated my old question again, the last time I revisited the book: is this world even worth fighting for? Do we deserve to be given so many second chances? Answer: our world is only as strong as we are willing to suffer for it.

That aforementioned gong has resounded in my head with mounting urgency; and having seen the world go through so much in recent years, the pendulum swinging to the extremes, and still swinging for more, I believe that I have finally come to understand the true meaning of Aldous Huxley's Brave New World.

What John strives for appears, at first, as a bittersweet way of life: pain for passion, trauma for beauty, and misery for truth. In light of the many horrors mankind has instigated, the stability that Mond embraces is commendable. In light of the bone-deep exhaustion I and countless others have felt, it is understandable. Faced with Mond's smooth, gentle coercion — hell, it is even desirable.

But ultimately, the happiness John espouses is indeed an onerous price to pay for serenity. We need to strive for both: for peace that is genuine, and for happiness that is deserved, lest we rest on laurels we haven't earned and strive for ease over effort; only then can we be genuinely happy, for our societies will (hopefully? possibly? maybe?) be dependable ones. It is our responsibility to not let the ball drop, not when political rhetoric has become vitriolic, not when empathy has become sorely, sorely lacking. Not when suicide rates have literally skyrocketed, not when we are dealing with crises on so many levels. No matter how daunting, no matter how virtually impossible the task. We've seen countless other examples of History sidling down atrocious paths, and others just like us, just as unsure and scared and clueless, have picked up the torch and done their best.

In the words of Albus Dumbledore: “Remember, if the time should come when you have to make a choice between what is right, and what is easy”.

Yes, this world is worth fighting for.[31,32,33]

If not for us, for those who will come after us. I say this with an edge of cynicism, with a twinge of fatigue, with even an iota of skepticism, but I say it still.

II.DISCUSSION

Brave New World is a dystopian novel by English author Aldous Huxley, written in 1931 and published in 1932.^[2] Largely set in a futuristic World State, whose citizens are environmentally engineered into an intelligence-based social hierarchy, the novel anticipates huge scientific advancements in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation and classical conditioning that are combined to make a dystopian society which is challenged by the story's protagonist. Huxley followed this book with a reassessment in essay form, Brave New World Revisited (1958), and with his final novel, Island (1962), the utopian counterpart. This novel is often compared to George Orwell's 1984 (1949).

In 1999, the Modern Library ranked Brave New World at number 5 on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.^[3] In 2003, Robert McCrum, writing for The Observer, included Brave New World chronologically at number 53 in "the top 100 greatest novels of all time",^[4] and the novel was listed at

number 87 on The Big Read survey by the BBC.^[5] Brave New World has frequently been banned and challenged since its original publication. It has landed on the American Library Association list of top 100 banned and challenged books of the decade since the association began the list in 1990.^{[6][7][8]}

Title

The title Brave New World derives from Miranda's speech in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Act V, Scene I:^[9]

O wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,

That has such people in 't.[30,31]

—William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act V, Scene I, ll. 203–206^[10]

Shakespeare's use of the phrase is intended ironically, as the speaker is failing to recognise the evil nature of the island's visitors because of her innocence.^[11] Indeed, the next speaker—Miranda's father Prospero—replies to her innocent observation with the statement "'Tis new to thee."

Translations of the title often allude to similar expressions used in domestic works of literature: the French edition of the work is entitled *Le Meilleur des mondes* (The Best of All Worlds), an allusion to an expression used by the philosopher Gottfried Leibniz^[12] and satirised in *Candide, Ou l'Optimisme* by Voltaire (1759). The first Standard Chinese translation, done by novelist Lily Hsueh and Aaron Jen-wang Hsueh in 1974, is entitled " (Pinyin: Měilì Xīn Shìjiè, literally "Beautiful New World").

Huxley wrote *Brave New World* whilst living in Sanary-sur-Mer, France, in the four months from May to August 1931.^{[13][14][15]} By this time, Huxley had already established himself as a writer and social satirist. He was a contributor to *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue* magazines, and had published a collection of his poetry (*The Burning Wheel*, 1916) and four successful satirical novels: *Crome Yellow* (1921), *Antic Hay* (1923), *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), and *Point Counter Point* (1928). *Brave New World* was Huxley's fifth novel and first dystopian work.

A passage in *Crome Yellow* contains a brief pre-figuring of *Brave New World*, showing that Huxley had such a future in mind already in 1921. Mr. Scogan, one of the earlier book's characters, describes an "impersonal generation" of the future that will "take the place of Nature's hideous system. In vast state incubators, rows upon rows of gravid bottles will supply the world with the population it requires. The family system will disappear; society, sapped at its very base, will have to find new foundations; and Eros, beautifully and irresponsibly free, will flit like a gay butterfly from flower to flower through a sunlit world."

Huxley said that *Brave New World* was inspired by the utopian novels of H. G. Wells, including *A Modern Utopia* (1905), and as a parody^[16] of *Men Like Gods* (1923).^[17] Wells' hopeful vision of the future's possibilities gave Huxley the idea to begin writing a parody of the novels, which became *Brave New World*. He wrote in a letter to Mrs. Arthur Goldsmith, an American acquaintance, that he had "been having a little fun pulling the leg of H. G. Wells", but then he "got caught up in the excitement of [his] own ideas."^[18] Unlike the most popular optimistic utopian novels of the time, Huxley sought to provide a frightening vision of the future. Huxley referred to *Brave New World* as a "negative utopia", somewhat influenced by Wells's own *The Sleeper Awakes* (dealing with subjects like corporate tyranny and behavioural conditioning) and the works of D. H. Lawrence.^[19] For his part Wells published, two years after *Brave New World*, his own Utopian *Shape of Things to Come*. Seeking to refute the argument of Huxley's *Mustapha Mond*—that moronic underclasses were a necessary "social gyroscope" and that a society composed solely of intelligent, assertive "Alphas" would inevitably disintegrate in internecine struggle—Wells depicted a stable egalitarian society emerging after several generations of a reforming elite having complete control of education throughout the world. In the future depicted in Wells' book, posterity remembers Huxley as "a reactionary writer".^[20]

The scientific futurism in *Brave New World* is believed to be appropriated from *Daedalus*^[21] by J. B. S. Haldane.^[22]

The events of the Depression in the UK in 1931, with its mass unemployment and the abandonment of the gold currency standard, persuaded Huxley to assert that stability was the "primal and ultimate need" if civilisation was to survive the present crisis.^[23] The *Brave New World* character *Mustapha Mond*, Resident World Controller of Western Europe, is named after Sir Alfred Mond. Shortly before writing the novel, Huxley visited Mond's technologically advanced plant near Billingham, north east England, and it made a great impression on him.^{[23]:xxii}

Huxley used the setting and characters in his science fiction novel to express widely felt anxieties, particularly the fear of losing individual identity in the fast-paced world of the future. An early trip to the United States gave *Brave New World* much of its character. Huxley was outraged by the culture of youth, commercial cheeriness, sexual promiscuity, and the inward-looking nature of many Americans;^[24] he had also found the book *My Life and Work* by Henry Ford on the boat to America, and he saw the book's principles applied in everything he encountered after leaving San Francisco.^{[23]:viii}

Plot

The novel opens in the World State city of London in AF (After Ford) 632 (AD 2540 in the Gregorian calendar), where citizens are engineered through artificial wombs and childhood indoctrination programmes into predetermined classes (or castes) based on intelligence and labour. Lenina Crowne, a hatchery worker, is popular and sexually desirable, but Bernard Marx, a psychologist, is not. He is shorter in stature than the average member of his high caste, which gives him an inferiority complex. His work with sleep-learning allows him to understand, and disapprove of, his society's methods of keeping its citizens peaceful, which includes their constant consumption of a soothing, happiness-producing drug called "soma". Courting disaster, Bernard is vocal and arrogant about his criticisms, and his boss contemplates exiling him to Iceland because of his nonconformity. His only friend is Helmholtz Watson, a gifted writer who finds it difficult to use his talents creatively in their pain-free society.

Bernard takes a holiday with Lenina outside the World State to a Savage Reservation in New Mexico, in which the two observe natural-born people, disease, the ageing process, other languages, and religious lifestyles for the first time. The culture of the village folk resembles the contemporary Native American groups of the region, descendants of the Anasazi, including the Puebloan peoples of Hopi and Zuni.^[25] Bernard and Lenina witness a violent public ritual and then encounter Linda, a woman originally from the World State who is living on the reservation with her son John, now a young man. She, too, visited the reservation on a holiday many years ago, but became separated from her group and was left behind. She had meanwhile become pregnant by a fellow holidaymaker (who is revealed to be Bernard's boss, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning). She did not try to return to the World State, because of her shame at her pregnancy. Despite spending his whole life in the reservation, John has never been accepted by the villagers, and his and Linda's lives have been hard and unpleasant. Linda has taught John to read, although from the only book in her possession—a scientific manual—and another book John found: the complete works of Shakespeare. Ostracised by the villagers, John is able to articulate his feelings only in terms of Shakespearean drama, quoting often from *The Tempest*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. Linda now wants to return to London, and John, too, wants to see this "brave new world". Bernard sees an opportunity to thwart plans to exile him, and gets permission to take Linda and John back. On their return to London, John meets the Director and calls him his "father", a vulgarity which causes a roar of laughter. The humiliated Director resigns in shame before he can follow through with exiling Bernard.^[28,29,30]

Bernard, as "custodian" of the "savage" John who is now treated as a celebrity, is fawned on by the highest members of society and revels in attention he once scorned. Bernard's popularity is fleeting, though, and he becomes envious that John only really bonds with the literary-minded Helmholtz. Considered hideous and friendless, Linda spends all her time using soma, while John refuses to attend social events organised by Bernard, appalled by what he perceives to be an empty society. Lenina and John are physically attracted to each other, but John's view of courtship and romance, based on Shakespeare's writings, is utterly incompatible with Lenina's freewheeling attitude to sex. She tries to seduce him, but he attacks her, before suddenly being informed that his mother is on her deathbed. He rushes to Linda's bedside, causing a scandal, as this is not the "correct" attitude to death. Some children who enter the ward for "death-conditioning" come across as disrespectful to John, and he attacks one physically. He then tries to break up a distribution of soma to a lower-caste group, telling them that he is freeing them. Helmholtz and Bernard rush in to stop the ensuing riot, which the police quell by spraying soma vapor into the crowd.

RESULTS

Bernard, Helmholtz, and John are all brought before Mustapha Mond, the "Resident World Controller for Western Europe", who tells Bernard and Helmholtz that they are to be exiled to islands for antisocial activity. Bernard pleads for a second chance, but Helmholtz welcomes the opportunity to be a true individual, and chooses the Falkland Islands as his destination, believing that their bad weather will inspire his writing. Mond tells Helmholtz that exile is actually a reward. The islands are full of the most interesting people in the world,



individuals who did not fit into the social model of the World State. Mond outlines for John the events that led to the present society and his arguments for a caste system and social control. John rejects Mond's arguments, and Mond sums up John's views by claiming that John demands "the right to be unhappy". John asks if he may go to the islands as well, but Mond refuses, saying he wishes to see what happens to John next.

Jaded with his new life, John moves to an abandoned hilltop lighthouse, near the village of Puttenham, where he intends to adopt a solitary ascetic lifestyle in order to purify himself of civilization, practising self-flagellation. This draws reporters and eventually hundreds of amazed sightseers, hoping to witness his bizarre behaviour.

For a while it seems that John might be left alone, after the public's attention is drawn to other diversions, but a documentary maker has secretly filmed John's self-flagellation from a distance, and when released the documentary causes an international sensation. Helicopters arrive with more journalists. Crowds of people descend on John's retreat, demanding that he perform his whipping ritual for them. From one helicopter a young woman emerges who is implied to be Lenina. John, at the sight of a woman he both adores and loathes, whips at her in a fury and then turns the whip on himself, exciting the crowd, whose wild behaviour transforms into a soma-fuelled orgy. The next morning John awakes on the ground and is consumed by remorse over his participation in the night's events.

That evening, a swarm of helicopters appears on the horizon, the story of last night's orgy having been in all the papers. The first onlookers and reporters to arrive find that John is dead, having hanged himself.

Characters

Bernard Marx, a sleep-learning specialist at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. Although Bernard is an Alpha-Plus (the upper class of the society), he is a misfit. He is unusually short for an Alpha; an alleged accident with alcohol in Bernard's blood-surrogate before his decanting has left him slightly stunted. Unlike his fellow utopians, Bernard is often angry, resentful, and jealous. At times, he is also cowardly and hypocritical. His conditioning is clearly incomplete. He does not enjoy communal sports, solidarity services, or promiscuous sex. He does not particularly enjoy soma. Bernard is in love with Lenina and does not like her sleeping with other men, even though "everyone belongs to everyone else". Bernard's triumphant return to utopian civilisation with John the Savage from the Reservation precipitates the downfall of the Director, who had been planning to exile him. Bernard's triumph is short-lived; he is ultimately banished to an island for his non-conformist behaviour.

John, the illicit son of the Director and Linda, born and reared on the Savage Reservation ("Malpais") after Linda was unwittingly left behind by her errant lover. John ("the Savage" or "Mr. Savage", as he is often called) is an outsider both on the Reservation—where the natives still practice marriage, natural birth, family life and religion—and the ostensibly civilised World State, based on principles of stability and happiness. He has read nothing but the complete works of William Shakespeare, which he quotes extensively, and, for the most part, aptly, though his allusion to the "Brave New World" (Miranda's words in *The Tempest*) takes on a darker and bitterly ironic resonance as the novel unfolds. John is intensely moral according to a code that he has been taught by Shakespeare and life in Malpais but is also naïve: his views are as imported into his own consciousness as are the hypnopedic messages of World State citizens. The admonishments of the men of Malpais taught him to regard his mother as a whore; but he cannot grasp that these were the same men who continually sought her out despite their supposedly sacred pledges of monogamy. Because he is unwanted in Malpais, he accepts the invitation to travel back to London and is initially astonished by the comforts of the World State. He remains committed to values that exist only in his poetry. He first spurns Lenina for failing to live up to his Shakespearean ideal and then the entire utopian society: he asserts that its technological wonders and consumerism are poor substitutes for individual freedom, human dignity and personal integrity. After his mother's death, he becomes deeply distressed with grief, surprising onlookers in the hospital. He then withdraws himself from society and attempts to purify himself of "sin" (desire), but is unable to do so. He finds himself gathering a lot of trouble for both his body and mind. He soon does not realise what is real or what is fake, what he does and what he does not do. Soon, everything he thinks about or feels just becomes blurred and unrecognizable. Finally he hangs himself in despair.

Helmholtz Watson, a handsome and successful Alpha-Plus lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering and a friend of Bernard. He feels unfulfilled writing endless propaganda doggerel, and the stifling conformism and philistinism of the World State make him restive. Helmholtz is ultimately exiled to the Falkland Islands—a cold asylum for disaffected Alpha-Plus non-conformists—after reading a heretical poem to his students on the virtues of solitude and helping John destroy some Deltas' rations of soma following Linda's death. Unlike



Bernard, he takes his exile in his stride and comes to view it as an opportunity for inspiration in his writing. His first name derives from the German physicist Hermann von Helmholtz.

Lenina Crowne, a young, beautiful foetus technician at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. Lenina Crowne is a Beta who enjoys being a Beta. She is a vaccination worker with beliefs and values that are in line with a citizen of the World State. She is part of the 30% of the female population that are not freemartins (sterile women). Lenina is promiscuous and popular but somewhat quirky in her society: she had a four-month relation with Henry Foster, choosing not to have sex with anyone but him for a period of time. She is basically happy and well-conditioned, using soma to suppress unwelcome emotions, as is expected. Lenina has a date with Bernard, to whom she feels ambivalently attracted, and she goes to the Reservation with him. On returning to civilisation, she tries and fails to seduce John the Savage. John loves and desires Lenina but he is repelled by her forwardness and the prospect of pre-marital sex, rejecting her as an "impudent strumpet". Lenina visits John at the lighthouse but he attacks her with a whip, unwittingly inciting onlookers to do the same. Her exact fate is left unspecified.

Mustapha Mond, Resident World Controller of Western Europe, "His Fordship" Mustapha Mond presides over one of the ten zones of the World State, the global government set up after the cataclysmic Nine Years' War and great Economic Collapse. Sophisticated and good-natured, Mond is an urbane and hyperintelligent advocate of the World State and its ethos of "Community, Identity, Stability". Among the novel's characters, he is uniquely aware of the precise nature of the society he oversees and what it has given up to accomplish its gains. Mond argues that art, literature, and scientific freedom must be sacrificed to secure the ultimate utilitarian goal of maximising societal happiness. He defends the caste system, behavioural conditioning, and the lack of personal freedom in the World State: these, he says, are a price worth paying for achieving social stability, the highest social virtue because it leads to lasting happiness.

Fanny Crowne, Lenina Crowne's friend (they have the same last name because only ten thousand last names are in use in a World State comprising two billion people). Fanny voices the conventional values of her caste and society, particularly the importance of promiscuity: she advises Lenina that she should have more than one man in her life because it is unseemly to concentrate on just one. Fanny then warns Lenina away from a new lover whom she considers undeserving, yet she is ultimately supportive of the young woman's attraction to the savage John.

Henry Foster, one of Lenina's many lovers, he is a perfectly conventional Alpha male, casually discussing Lenina's body with his coworkers. His success with Lenina, and his casual attitude about it, infuriate the jealous Bernard. Henry ultimately proves himself every bit the ideal World State citizen, finding no courage to defend Lenina from John's assaults despite having maintained an uncommonly longstanding sexual relationship with her.

Benito Hoover, another of Lenina's lovers. She remembers that he is particularly hairy when he takes his clothes off.

The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (DHC), also known as Thomas "Tomakin", is the administrator of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, where he is a threatening figure who intends to exile Bernard to Iceland. His plans take an unexpected turn when Bernard returns from the Reservation with Linda (see below) and John, a child they both realise is actually his. This fact, scandalous and obscene in the World State, not because it was extramarital (which all sexual acts are), but because it was procreative, leads the Director to resign his post in shame.

Linda, John's mother, decanted as a Beta-Minus in the World State, originally worked in the DHC's Fertilizing Room, and subsequently lost during a storm while visiting the New Mexico Savage Reservation with the Director many years before the events of the novel. Despite following her usual precautions, Linda became pregnant with the Director's son during their time together and was therefore unable to return to the World State by the time that she found her way to Malpais. Having been conditioned to the promiscuous social norms of the World State, Linda finds herself at once popular with every man in the pueblo (because she is open to all sexual advances) and also reviled for the same reason, seen as a whore by the wives of the men who visit her and by the men themselves (who come to her nonetheless). Her only comforts there are mescal brought by Popé as well as peyotl. Linda is desperate to return to the World State and to soma, wanting nothing more from her remaining life than comfort until death.

The Arch-Community-Songster, the secular equivalent of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the World State society. He takes personal offense when John refuses to attend Bernard's party.

The Director of Crematoria and Phosphorus Reclamation, one of the many disappointed, important figures to attend Bernard's party.

The Warden, an Alpha-Minus, the talkative chief administrator for the New Mexico Savage Reservation. He is blond, short, broad-shouldered, and has a booming voice.^[26]

Darwin Bonaparte, a "big game photographer" (i.e. filmmaker) who films John flogging himself. Darwin Bonaparte became known for two works: "feely of the gorillas' wedding",^[27] and "Sperm Whale's Love-life".^[27] He had already made a name for himself^[28] but still seeks more. He renews his fame by filming the savage, John, in his newest release "The Savage of Surrey".^[29] His name alludes to Charles Darwin and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Dr. Shaw, Bernard Marx's physician who consequently becomes the physician of both Linda and John. He prescribes a lethal dose of soma to Linda, which will stop her respiratory system from functioning in a span of one to two months, at her own behest but not without protest from John. Ultimately, they all agree that it is for the best, since denying her this request would cause more trouble for Society and Linda herself.

Dr. Gaffney, Provost of Eton, an Upper School for high-caste individuals. He shows Bernard and John around the classrooms, and the Hypnopaedic Control Room (used for behavioural conditioning through sleep learning). John asks if the students read Shakespeare but the Provost says the library contains only reference books because solitary activities, such as reading, are discouraged.

Miss Keate, Head Mistress of Eton Upper School. Bernard fancies her, and arranges an assignation with her.^[30]

IV. CONCLUSION

Others

- Freemartins, women who have been deliberately made sterile by exposure to male hormones during foetal development but are still physically normal except for "the slightest tendency to grow beards." In the book, government policy requires freemartins to form 70% of the female population.

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Of Malpais

- Popé, a native of Malpais. Although he reinforces the behaviour that causes hatred for Linda in Malpais by sleeping with her and bringing her mescal, he still holds the traditional beliefs of his tribe. In his early years John attempted to kill him, but Popé brushed off his attempt and sent him fleeing. He gave Linda a copy of the Complete Works of Shakespeare. (Historically, Popé or Po'pay was a Tewa religious leader who led the Pueblo Revolt in 1680 against Spanish colonial rule.)
- Mitsima, an elder tribal shaman who also teaches John survival skills such as rudimentary ceramics (specifically coil pots, which were traditional to Native American tribes) and bow-making.
- Kiakimé, a native girl whom John fell for, but is instead eventually wed to another boy from Malpais.
- Kothlu, a native boy with whom Kiakimé is wed.

Background figures

These are non-fictional and factual characters who lived before the events in this book, but are of note in the novel:

- Henry Ford, who has become a messianic figure to the World State. "Our Ford" is used in place of "Our Lord", as a credit to popularising the use of the assembly line.
- Sigmund Freud, "Our Freud" is sometimes said in place of "Our Ford" because Freud's psychoanalytic method depends implicitly upon the rules of classical conditioning,^[citation needed] and because Freud popularised the idea that sexual activity is essential to human happiness. (It is also strongly implied that citizens of the World State believe Freud and Ford to be the same person.)^[31]
- H. G. Wells, "Dr. Wells", British writer and utopian socialist, whose book *Men Like Gods* was a motivation for *Brave New World*. "All's well that ends Wells", wrote Huxley in his letters, criticising Wells for anthropological assumptions Huxley found unrealistic.
- Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, whose conditioning techniques are used to train infants.
- William Shakespeare, whose banned works are quoted throughout the novel by John, "the Savage". The plays quoted include *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure* and *Othello*. Mustapha Mond also knows them because as a World Controller he has access to a selection of books from throughout history, including the Bible.
- Thomas Robert Malthus, 19th century British economist, believed the people of the Earth would eventually be threatened by their inability to raise enough food to feed the population. In the novel, the eponymous

character devises the contraceptive techniques (Malthusian belt) that are practiced by women of the World State.

- Reuben Rabinovitch, the Polish-Jew character on whom the effects of sleep-learning, hypnopædia, are first observed.^[31,32]
- John Henry Newman, 19th century Catholic theologian and educator, believed university education the critical element in advancing post-industrial Western civilization. Mustapha Mond and The Savage discuss a passage from one of Newman's books.
- Alfred Mond, British industrialist, financier and politician. He is the namesake of Mustapha Mond.^[32]
- Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of Republic of Turkey. Naming Mond after Atatürk links up with their characteristics; he reigned during the time Brave New World was written and revolutionised the 'old' Ottoman state into a new nation.^[32]

Sources of names and references

The limited number of names that the World State assigned to its bottle-grown citizens can be traced to political and cultural figures who contributed to the bureaucratic, economic, and technological systems of Huxley's age, and presumably those systems in Brave New World.^[33]

- Soma: Huxley took the name for the drug used by the state to control the population after the Vedic ritual drink Soma, inspired by his interest in Indian mysticism.
- Malthusian belt: A contraceptive device worn by women. When Huxley was writing Brave New World, organizations such as the Malthusian League had spread throughout Europe, advocating contraception. Although the controversial economic theory of Malthusianism was derived from an essay by Thomas Malthus about the economic effects of population growth, Malthus himself was an advocate of abstinence rather than contraception.

Critical reception

Upon its publication, Rebecca West praised Brave New World as "The most accomplished novel Huxley has yet written",^[34] Joseph Needham lauded it as "Mr. Huxley's remarkable book",^[35] and Bertrand Russell also praised it, stating, "Mr. Aldous Huxley has shown his usual masterly skill in Brave New World."^[36] Brave New World also received negative responses from other contemporary critics, although his work was later embraced.^[37]

In an article in the 4 May 1935 issue of the Illustrated London News, G. K. Chesterton explained that Huxley was revolting against the "Age of Utopias". Much of the discourse on man's future before 1914 was based on the thesis that humanity would solve all economic and social issues. In the decade following the war the discourse shifted to an examination of the causes of the catastrophe. The works of H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw on the promises of socialism and a World State were then viewed as the ideas of naive optimists. Chesterton wrote:

After the Age of Utopias came what we may call the American Age, lasting as long as the Boom. Men like Ford or Mond seemed to many to have solved the social riddle and made capitalism the common good. But it was not native to us; it went with a buoyant, not to say blatant optimism, which is not our negligent or negative optimism. Much more than Victorian righteousness, or even Victorian self-righteousness, that optimism has driven people into pessimism. For the Slump brought even more disillusionment than the War. A new bitterness, and a new bewilderment, ran through all social life, and was reflected in all literature and art. It was contemptuous, not only of the old Capitalism, but of the old Socialism. Brave New World is more of a revolution against Utopia than against Victoria.^[38]

Similarly, in 1944 economist Ludwig von Mises described Brave New World as a satire of utopian predictions of socialism: "Aldous Huxley was even courageous enough to make socialism's dreamed paradise the target of his sardonic irony."^[39]

The World State and Fordism

The World State is built upon the principles of Henry Ford's assembly line: mass production, homogeneity, predictability, and consumption of disposable consumer goods. While the World State lacks any supernatural-based religions, Ford himself is revered as the creator of their society but not as a deity, and characters celebrate Ford Day and swear oaths by his name (e.g., "By Ford!"). In this sense, some fragments of traditional religion are present, such as Christian crosses, which had their tops cut off to be changed to a "T", representing the Ford Model T. In England, there is an Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury, obviously continuing the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in America The Christian Science Monitor continues publication as The Fordian Science Monitor. The World State calendar numbers years in the "AF" era—"Anno Ford"—with the

calendar beginning in AD 1908, the year in which Ford's first Model T rolled off his assembly line. The novel's Gregorian calendar year is AD 2540, but it is referred to in the book as AF 632.^[40]

From birth, members of every class are indoctrinated by recorded voices repeating slogans while they sleep (called "hypnopædia" in the book) to believe their own class is superior, but that the other classes perform needed functions. Any residual unhappiness is resolved by an antidepressant and hallucinogenic drug called soma.

The biological techniques used to control the populace in *Brave New World* do not include genetic engineering; Huxley wrote the book before the structure of DNA was known. However, Gregor Mendel's work with inheritance patterns in peas had been rediscovered in 1900 and the eugenics movement, based on artificial selection, was well established. Huxley's family included a number of prominent biologists including Thomas Huxley, half-brother and Nobel Laureate Andrew Huxley, and his brother Julian Huxley who was a biologist and involved in the eugenics movement. Nonetheless, Huxley emphasises conditioning over breeding (nurture versus nature); human embryos and fetuses are conditioned through a carefully designed regimen of chemical (such as exposure to hormones and toxins), thermal (exposure to intense heat or cold, as one's future career would dictate), and other environmental stimuli, although there is an element of selective breeding as well.

Comparisons with George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In a letter to George Orwell about *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Huxley wrote "Whether in actual fact the policy of the boot-on-the-face can go on indefinitely seems doubtful. My own belief is that the ruling oligarchy will find less arduous and wasteful ways of governing and of satisfying its lust for power, and these ways will resemble those which I described in *Brave New World*."^[41] He went on to write "Within the next generation I believe that the world's rulers will discover that infant conditioning and narco-hypnosis are more efficient, as instruments of government, than clubs and prisons, and that the lust for power can be just as completely satisfied by suggesting people into loving their servitude as by flogging and kicking them into obedience."^[41]

Social critic Neil Postman contrasted the worlds of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* in the foreword of his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. He writes:

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions." In 1984, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us.

Journalist Christopher Hitchens, who himself published several articles on Huxley and a book on Orwell, noted the difference between the two texts in the introduction to his 1999 article "Why Americans Are Not Taught History":

We dwell in a present-tense culture that somehow, significantly, decided to employ the telling expression "You're history" as a choice reprobation or insult, and thus elected to speak forgotten volumes about itself. By that standard, the forbidding dystopia of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* already belongs, both as a text and as a date, with Ur and Mycenae, while the hedonist nihilism of Huxley still beckons toward a painless, amusement-sodden, and stress-free consensus. Orwell's was a house of horrors. He seemed to strain credulity because he posited a regime that would go to any lengths to own and possess history, to rewrite and construct it, and to inculcate it by means of coercion. Whereas Huxley ... rightly foresaw that any such regime could break because it could not bend. In 1988, four years after 1984, the Soviet Union scrapped its official history curriculum and announced that a newly authorized version was somewhere in the works. This was the precise moment when the regime conceded its own extinction. For true blissed-out and vacant servitude, though, you need an otherwise sophisticated society where no serious history is taught.^[42]

Brave New World Revisited

In 1946, Huxley wrote in the foreword of the new edition of *Brave New World*:

If I were now to rewrite the book, I would offer the Savage a third alternative. Between the Utopian and primitive horns of his dilemma would lie the possibility of sanity... In this community economics would be

decentralist and Henry-Georgian, politics Kropotkinesque and co-operative. Science and technology would be used as though, like the Sabbath, they had been made for man, not (as at present and still more so in the Brave New World) as though man were to be adapted and enslaved to them. Religion would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of man's Final End, the unitive knowledge of immanent Tao or Logos, the transcendent Godhead or Brahman. And the prevailing philosophy of life would be a kind of Higher Utilitarianism, in which the Greatest Happiness principle would be secondary to the Final End principle—the first question to be asked and answered in every contingency of life being: "How will this thought or action contribute to, or interfere with, the achievement, by me and the greatest possible number of other individuals, of man's Final End?"^[43]

Brave New World Revisited (Harper & Brothers, US, 1958; Chatto & Windus, UK, 1959),^[44] written by Huxley almost thirty years after Brave New World, is a non-fiction work in which Huxley considered whether the world had moved toward or away from his vision of the future from the 1930s. He believed when he wrote the original novel that it was a reasonable guess as to where the world might go in the future. In Brave New World Revisited, he concluded that the world was becoming like Brave New World much faster than he originally thought.

Huxley analysed the causes of this, such as overpopulation, as well as all the means by which populations can be controlled. He was particularly interested in the effects of drugs and subliminal suggestion. Brave New World Revisited is different in tone because of Huxley's evolving thought, as well as his conversion to Hindu Vedanta in the interim between the two books.

The last chapter of the book aims to propose action which could be taken to prevent a democracy from turning into the totalitarian world described in Brave New World. In Huxley's last novel, Island, he again expounds similar ideas to describe a utopian nation, which is generally viewed as a counterpart to Brave New World.

Censorship

According to American Library Association, Brave New World has frequently been banned and challenged in the United States due to insensitivity, offensive language, nudity, racism, conflict with a religious viewpoint, and being sexually explicit.^[45] It landed on the list of the top ten most challenged books in 2010 (3) and 2011 (7).^[45] The book also secured a spot on the association's list of the top one hundred challenged books for 1990-1999 (54),^[6] 2000-2009 (36),^[7] and 2010-2019 (26).^[8]

The following include specific instances of when the book has been censored, banned, or challenged:

- In 1932, the book was banned in Ireland for its language, and for supposedly being anti-family and anti-religion.^{[46][47]}
- In 1965, a Maryland English teacher alleged that he was fired for assigning Brave New World to students. The teacher sued for violation of First Amendment rights but lost both his case and the appeal, with the appeals court ruling that the assignment of the book was not the reason for his firing.^[48]
- The book was banned in India in 1967, with Huxley accused of being a "pornographer".^[49]
- In 1980, it was removed from classrooms in Miller, Missouri among other challenges.^[50]
- The version of Brave New World Revisited published in China lacks explicit mentions of China itself.^[51]

Influences and allegations of plagiarism

The English writer Rose Macaulay published *What Not: A Prophetic Comedy* in 1918. *What Not* depicts a dystopian future where people are ranked by intelligence, the government mandates mind training for all citizens, and procreation is regulated by the state.^[52] Macaulay and Huxley shared the same literary circles and he attended her weekly literary salons.

Bertrand Russell felt Brave New World borrowed from his 1931 book "The Scientific Outlook", and wrote in a letter to his publisher that Huxley's novel was "merely an expansion of the two penultimate chapters of 'The Scientific Outlook.'"^[53]

H. G. Wells' novel *The First Men in the Moon* (1901) used concepts that Huxley added to his story. Both novels introduce a society consisting of a specialized caste system, new generations are produced in jars and bottles where their designated caste is decided before birth by tempering with the fetus' development, and individuals are drugged down when they are not needed.^[54]

George Orwell believed that Brave New World must have been partly derived from the 1921 novel *We* by Russian author Yevgeny Zamyatin.^[55] However, in a 1962 letter to Christopher Collins, Huxley says that he wrote Brave New World long before he had heard of *We*.^[56] According to *We* translator Natasha Randall, Orwell believed that Huxley was lying.^[57] Kurt Vonnegut said that in writing *Player Piano* (1952), he

"cheerfully ripped off the plot of Brave New World, whose plot had been cheerfully ripped off from Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*".^[58]

In 1982, Polish author Antoni Smuszkiewicz, in his analysis of Polish science-fiction *Zaczarowana gra* ("The Magic Game"), presented accusations of plagiarism against Huxley. Smuszkiewicz showed similarities between *Brave New World* and two science fiction novels written earlier by Polish author Mieczysław Smolarski, namely *Miasto światłości* ("The City of Light", 1924) and *Podróż poślubna pana Hamiltona* ("Mr Hamilton's Honeymoon Trip", 1928).^[59] Smuszkiewicz wrote in his open letter to Huxley: "This work of a great author, both in the general depiction of the world as well as countless details, is so similar to two of my novels that in my opinion there is no possibility of accidental analogy."^[60]

Kate Lohnes, writing for *Encyclopædia Britannica*, notes similarities between *Brave New World* and other novels of the era could be seen as expressing "common fears surrounding the rapid advancement of technology and of the shared feelings of many tech-skeptics during the early 20th century". Other dystopian novels followed Huxley's work, including C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* (1945) and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).^[61]

Legacy

In 1999, the Modern Library ranked *Brave New World* fifth on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.^[3] In 2003, Robert McCrum writing for *The Observer* included *Brave New World* chronologically at number 53 in "the top 100 greatest novels of all time",^[4] and the novel was listed at number 87 on the BBC's survey *The Big Read*.^[5]

On 5 November 2019, BBC News listed *Brave New World* on its list of the 100 most influential novels.^[62] In 2021, *Brave New World* was one of six classic science fiction novels by British authors selected by Royal Mail to feature on a series of UK postage stamps^[33]

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