

# Notes to Aldous Huxley's Brave New World

- Author: Aldous Huxley (1932)
- Publisher: Flamingo
- Version: Modern Flamingo Classic, published 1994
- Size: 237 pages
- Officially the page numbering starts at the manuscript “Brave New World”.

## contents

- Introduction by David Bradshaw
- Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)
- Quotation by Nicolas Berdiaeff (French)
- Huxley's Foreword (1946)
- Brave New World

## Summary

Huxley largely describes the standard manipulation methods of religious and/or political systems, which are well-known to the the “Alphas” (insiders/leaders), and remain hidden to the lower castes (named “Epsilons”). The methods involve brainwashes, delusion, “*soma*”, satisfaction for the laborers. An Alpha authority explains the Savage how society works. He will have to be conditioned to feel satisfied either partially by *labor* or by *soma*. Any other behavior will lead to instability, pain and suffering. There is no god except for the idea of absence.

God manifests himself as an absence. God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. People believe in God because they've been conditioned to believe in God. Society designs its gods as just, but their *code of law* is dictated by the people who organize society. For this reason Huxleys books have been banned from or censored in many eras and countries.

In fact Huxley does not describe a Utopia nor a distopian society. In fact he describes the current standard, an iceberg-shaped hierarchy of unknowing Epsilon masses being ruled by a minority of Alphas, who manipulate the underdogs by somatic means (alcohol, drugs, freshly printed money, whatever may be found...).

Political ignorance seems to prevail, but nobody cares, except for an early warning observer like Huxley. That is – in short – the Brave New World, our brave new world.

There is not too much to be discussed. If you disagree to Huxley's theses you might belong to the ignorant lower class – and if you are sure and agree you may also be one of the Alphas.

It is true that aged people loose their violent aggression and may devote the rest of their life to Soma. It is true that growing old leads to pain and despair. It would be fine to end life before the pains become unbearable. Just observe what happens to your parents and you will see where the sorrow starts and ends. There is no doubt the Utopian vision may lead us to a better control of life spans. But that is just a minor detail of Huxley's observations. His major topic (manipulation) obviously has not been identified as an existing mechanism.

I wonder why Huxley's book has been considered as fiction. The idea to consider it as fiction merely proves how good the manipulation is doing its job. Society probably never changed the basic mechanisms. In the end people look back to their life and identify how their life may have been controlled by mechanisms like religion, payment, somatic beverages and pills. To me this is just magic: describing a standard process as if it were utopian – and none of the readers will notice the author merely describes reality...

## Notes to the introduction

- In an essay published May 1931 D.H. Lawrence described how New Mexico changed him forever by liberating him from the great era of material and mechanical development. Huxley's *Savage Reservation* appears to owe much to this essay, the *Plumed Serpent* (1926) and *Mornings in Mexico* (1927) (8).
- In the 1946 Foreword Huxley explains that in a newly written *Brave New World* he would offer the *Savage* a third alternative option (9).

## Notes to the intro “Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)”

- Contacting D.H. Lawrence, Russell, Maria Nys (1919) (2)
- Huxley was condemned by the *Daily Express*, his books were censored and censored, or even burned in Cairo (3) (No wonder for an author who is warning by telling the plain truth).
- Resistance against the vulgarity and perversity of mass civilization (ca. 1927) (4)
- In *Ape and Essence* (1948) *rapid deforestation, pollution and ecological “imbecility”* are leading to an *apocalypse* (6)
- *Walt Disney* merely understood every third word (in Huxley's synopsis of “*Alice in Wonderland*”) (6)
- *Time must have a stop* (1944) is an anthology illustrating “the highest common factor of all higher religions” (6)
- “*The Art of seeing*” (1942): defending Bates' method of eye-training (7)
- *The Doors of Perception* (1954) → inspired the Doors, → psychedelic sixties (mescaline) (7)
- After a fire, which destroyed all his belongings Huxley felt like *a man without possessions and without a past* (8).
- In the end his eyesight was damaged (9)

## Foreword (1949)

- *Rolling in the muck* is not the best way of getting clean (1)
- The *Savage* is only offered two alternatives: an *insane life* in Utopia or the *life of a primitive in an Indian village* (2)
- The *Savage's* religion, that is half *fertility cult* and half *Penitente* ferocity (2)
- Religion would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of Man's Final End (→ Tao / Logos) (3)
- Great is the truth, but still greater is *silence about truth* (8)
- *Marriage licenses* like *dog licenses*, good for 12 months (10)
- “You pay your money and you take your choice” (10)

## Notes to Brave New World

- *Stamp collectors* compose the backbone of society (2)
- In *Epsilons* we don't need human intelligence (12)
- The secret of happiness and virtue is: *Liking what you've got to do* (13)
- We condition the masses to *hate nature* and to *love sports* (19)
- Most historical facts are unpleasant (20)
- The child's mind is the *sum of the applied suggestions* and the adults' mind too. But all these suggestions are our suggestions – the suggestions from the State (25)
- “*Oh Ford!*”, he said, “*I've gone and woken the children.*” (25). As an alliteration “Oh, Ford!” equals “Oh, Lord!” (25, 71)
- College of *Emotional Engineering* (59)

- Pretty good at inventing phrases – the words that *make you jump*. It's not enough for the phrases to be good, but what you make with them ought to be good too. (62)
- All men are physico-chemically equal (65) and useful sources for phosphorus recovery (65)
- Religious symbolism: *Sign of the T* - “*I drink to my annihilation*” - a couple of *Solidarity Hymns* – *Soma* tablets - “*For I am U and U are I*” - “*Orgy–Porgy*”, “*Kiss the girls and make them One*” (capitalized!) (72-75)
- “*She doesn't mind being meat*” (82)
- *Soma* doses: “*I take a gramme and only am*” (94)
- “By his heretical views on sport and soma, by his refusal to obey the teachings of Our Ford.... he has proved himself an *enemy of Society...*” (134)
- “*O, brave new world, that has such people in it*” (144) as a “semi-religious” hymn.
- Most of our girls are *Freemartins* (146)
- “*Love's as good as soma*” (150) in a song.
- Optimal populations are always ice-berg shaped: 10% (the Alphas) above, 90% (the Epsilons) below levels – no strain on the mind or the muscles: Seven and a half hours of mild, *unexhausting labor* and then the *soma* ration, games and *unrestricted copulation* and the *feelies*. → What more can they ask for? (204).
- Technically it would be simple to reduce the labor to a four hours/day level. It has been tried, but it didn't work: instability, unrest and an excessive abuse of *soma* (204).
- Every *discovery in pure science* is potentially subversive. Even *science* may be considered as an enemy... (205).
- “Happiness has got to get paid for” (208).
- Authors may produce better scripts in bad climates (209)
- There used to be something called God – before the *Nine Years' War*: “God in the safe and *Ford on the shelves*” (210)
- Independence was not made for man – it is an *unnatural state* (212)
- As passions grows calm our reason becomes less troubled in working, less obscured by images – whereupon God emerges *as from behind a cloud*. You can only be independent of God while you've got youth and prosperity. Well, we've got youth and prosperity right up to the end. What follows? Evidently, that we can be *independent of God*. Religious sentiment therefore is superfluous. (212-213)
- God manifests himself as an *absence*. God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. People believe in God because they've been *conditioned* to believe in God (214).
- The gods are just, but their *code of law* is dictated by the people who organize society (215).
- *Christianity without tears* – that's what soma is. (217)
- Once in a month we *flood the system with adrenalin* (219).
- The Savage is claiming the *right to be unhappy* (219).
- Pain's a *delusion* (229).
- *Maiden of Matsaki* (229).
- In the end the Savage *probably* commits suicide (237).