

# Brave New World

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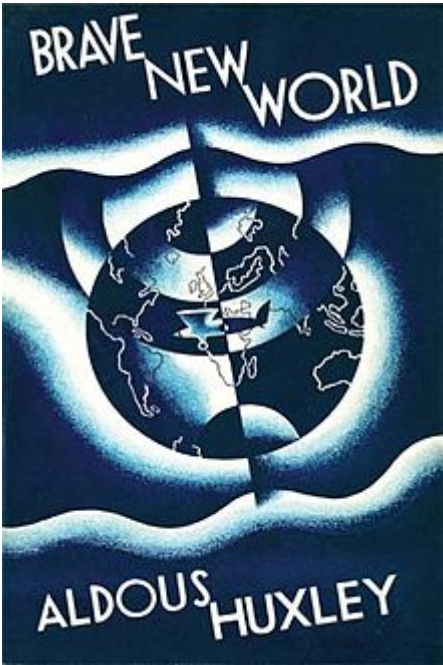
***Brave New World*** is a novel written in 1931 by Aldous Huxley and published in 1932. Set in London in the year AD 2540 (632 A.F.— "After Ford"—in the book), the novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation, and classical conditioning that combine profoundly to change society. Huxley answered this book with a reassessment in an essay, *Brave New World Revisited* (1958), and with *Island* (1962), his final novel.

In 1999, the Modern Library ranked *Brave New World* fifth on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.<sup>[2]</sup> 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",<sup>[3]</sup> and the novel was listed at number 87 on the BBC's survey The Big Read.<sup>[4]</sup>

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*Brave New World*



First edition cover

<b>Author</b>	Aldous Huxley
<b>Cover artist</b>	Leslie Holland
<b>Country</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Genre</b>	Science fiction, dystopian fiction
<b>Published</b>	1932 (Chatto & Windus)
<b>Pages</b>	311 (1932 ed.) <div>63,766 words<sup>[1]</sup></div>
<b>OCLC</b>	20156268 ( <a href="https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/20156268">https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/20156268</a> )

# Title

*Brave New World's* title derives from Miranda's speech in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Act V, Scene I:<sup>[5]</sup>

O wonder!  
How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,  
That has such people in't.

— William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act V, Scene I, ll. 203–206<sup>[6]</sup>

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<sup>[7]</sup> and satirised in *Candide, Ou l'Optimisme* by Voltaire (1759).

## History

Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in his house in Sanary-sur-Mer, France in the four months from May to August 1931.<sup>[8]</sup> 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.

Huxley said that *Brave New World* was inspired by the utopian novels of H. G. Wells, including *A Modern Utopia* (1905) and *Men Like Gods* (1923).<sup>[9]</sup> Wells' hopeful vision of the future's possibilities gave Huxley the idea to begin writing a parody of the novel, 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."<sup>[10]</sup> Unlike the most popular optimist 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' own *The Sleeper Awakes* (dealing with subjects like corporate tyranny and behavioural conditioning) and the works of D. H. Lawrence.

George Orwell believed that *Brave New World* must have been partly derived from the novel *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin.<sup>[11]</sup> However, in a 1962 letter, Huxley says that he wrote *Brave New World* long before he had heard of *We*.<sup>[12]</sup> According to *We* translator Natasha Randall, Orwell believed that Huxley was lying.<sup>[13]</sup> The scientific futurism in *Brave New World* is believed to be cribbed from *Daedalus* by J. B. S. Haldane.<sup>[14]</sup>

The events of the Depression in Britain 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.<sup>[15]</sup> The *Brave New World* character Mustapha Mond, Resident World Controller of Western Europe, is named after Sir Alfred Mond. Huxley visited Mond's technologically advanced plant near Billingham, north east England, shortly before writing the novel, and it made a great impression on him.<sup>[15]</sup>

Huxley used the setting and characters in his science fiction novel to express widely held opinions, 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. Not only was Huxley outraged by the culture of youth, commercial cheeriness

and sexual promiscuity, and the inward-looking nature of many Americans,<sup>[16]</sup> 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.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Plot

The novel opens in London in AF 632 (AD 2540 in the Gregorian calendar). The society described above is illuminated by the activities of two of the novel's central characters, Lenina Crowne and Bernard Marx, and the other characters with whom they come into contact. Lenina, a hatchery worker, is socially accepted and contented, but Bernard, a psychologist in the Directorate of Hatcheries and Conditioning, is not. He is shorter in stature than the average of his Alpha caste—a quality shared by the lower castes, which gives him an inferiority complex. His intelligence and his work with hypnopaedia allow him to understand, and disapprove of, the methods by which society is sustained. Courting disaster, he is vocal and arrogant about his differences. Bernard is mocked by other Alphas because of his stature, as well as for his individualistic tendencies, and is threatened with exile to Iceland because of his nonconformity. His only friend is Helmholtz Watson, a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering. The friendship is based on their feelings of being misfits (in the context of the World State), but unlike Bernard, Watson's sense of alienation stems from being exceptionally gifted, intelligent, handsome, and physically strong. Helmholtz is drawn to Bernard as a confidant.



Huxley hailed Billingham as a "triumphant embodiment" of the principles of planning, an "ordered universe in the midst of the larger world of planless incoherence".<sup>[15]</sup>

Bernard takes a holiday with Lenina at a Savage Reservation in New Mexico. (The culture of the village folk resembles the contemporary Native American groups of the region, descendants of the Anasazi, including the Puebloan peoples of Acoma, Laguna and Zuni.) There they observe ceremonies, including a ritual in which a village boy is whipped into unconsciousness. They 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, and 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 "civilization" because of her shame at her pregnancy. Neither Linda nor John are accepted by the villagers, and their life has been hard and unpleasant. Linda has taught John to read, although from only two books: a scientific manual from his mother's job in the hatchery and the collected works of Shakespeare. Ostracised by the villagers, John is able to articulate his feelings only in terms of Shakespearean drama, especially the tragedies of *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. Linda now wants to return to London, while John wants to see the "brave new world" his mother has told him about. Bernard sees an opportunity to thwart plans to exile him, and gets permission to take Linda and John back. On his return to London, Bernard is confronted by the Director, but turns the tables by presenting him with his long-lost lover and unknown son. John calls the Director his "father", a vulgarity which causes a roar of laughter. The humiliated Director resigns in shame.

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. However, his triumph is short-lived. Decrepit and friendless, Linda goes on a permanent *soma* holiday while John refuses to attend social events organised by Bernard, appalled by what he perceives to be an empty society. Society drops Bernard as swiftly as it had taken him. Lenina and John are physically attracted to each other, but John's view of courtship and romance, based on Shakespeare, is utterly incompatible with Lenina's freewheeling attitude to sex. Lenina tries to seduce John, but he attacks her for being an "impudent strumpet". John is then informed that his mother is extremely ill. He rushes to her bedside, causing a scandal as this is not the "correct" attitude to death. Some Delta children who enter the ward for "death-conditioning" irritate John to the point where he attacks one physically. He then tries to break up a distribution of *soma* to a lower-caste group and is set upon by the outraged recipients. Helmholtz, who has been called by Bernard, also becomes involved in the fracas.

Bernard, Helmholtz and John are brought before Mustapha Mond, the Resident "World Controller for Western Europe". Bernard and Helmholtz are told they are to be exiled to islands, seen by society at large as a punishment for antisocial activity. Bernard pleads grovelling for a second chance, but Helmholtz welcomes the opportunity to be an individual, and chooses the Falkland Islands as his destination, believing that their bad weather will inspire his writing. Mond says that Bernard does not know that exile is actually a reward. The islands are full of the most interesting people in the world, individuals who did not fit in the World State community. 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 by saying 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 "continue the experiment".

John moves to an abandoned hilltop "air-lighthouse" (meant to warn and guide helicopters) there, near the village of Puttenham, where he intends to adopt an ascetic lifestyle in order to purify himself of civilization and make amends for his mistreatment of his mother. He practises self-mortification, and his self-flagellation is witnessed by bystanders, turning him into a sensational spectacle. Hundreds of sightseers, hoping to witness his behaviour, arrive at John's lighthouse; one of them is Lenina. At the sight of the woman whom he both adores and loathes, John attacks her with his whip. The onlookers are whipped into a frenzy by the display and John is caught up in a soma-fueled orgy. The next morning, John remembers the previous night's events and is stricken with remorse. Onlookers and journalists who arrive that evening find that he has hanged himself, his body twisting aimlessly in the lighthouse.

## Characters

**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", 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 shallow 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. However, 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 ostracizes himself from society and attempts to purify himself of "sin" (desire), but is finally unable to do so and hangs himself in despair.

**Bernard Marx** – an Alpha-Plus sleep-learning specialist at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. Bernard 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. Bernard's independence of mind stems more from his inferiority complex and depressive nature than from any depth of philosophical conviction. 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 doesn't enjoy communal sports, solidarity services, or promiscuous sex. He doesn't even get much joy out of *soma*. Bernard is in love with Lenina but he doesn't 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. Success goes to his head. Despite his tearful pleas, he is ultimately banished to an island for his non-conformist behaviour.

**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* after 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.

**Lenina Crowne** – a young, beautiful fetus technician at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. 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 their 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 but will use *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". He is uniquely aware among the characters of the novel 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 genetic 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 the World State). Fanny's role is mainly to voice the conventional values of her caste and society, particularly the importance of promiscuity: she warns Lenina that she should have more men in her life because it looks bad to concentrate on one man for too long, then warns her away from a new lover whom she considers undeserving, yet is ultimately supportive of Lenina'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.

**The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (DHC)**, also known as **Thomas "Tomakin"** – He 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, however, when Bernard returns from the Reservation with Linda (see below) and John, a child they both realize 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 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). 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.

**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.<sup>[18]</sup>

**Darwin Bonaparte** – a "big game photographer" (i.e. filmmaker) who films John flogging himself. Darwin Bonaparte is known for two other works: "feely of the gorillas' wedding",<sup>[19]</sup> and "Sperm Whale's Love-life".<sup>[19]</sup> He has already made a name for himself<sup>[20]</sup> but still seeks more. He renews his fame by filming the savage, John, in his newest release "The Savage of Surrey".<sup>[21]</sup> His name alludes to Charles Darwin and Napoleon Bonaparte.

## Others

- **Freemartins**: These women have been deliberately made sterile by exposure to hormones during fetal development. In the book, government policy requires freemartins to form 70% of the female population.

## 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 also attempts to kill him. He gave Linda a copy of the Complete Works of Shakespeare.
- **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.

## 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. Huxley's description of Ford as a central figure in the emergence of the *Brave New World* might also be a reference to the utopian industrial city of *Fordlândia* commissioned by Ford in 1927.
- **Sigmund Freud**, "Our Freud" is sometimes said in place of "Our Ford" due to the link between Freud's psychoanalysis and the conditioning of humans, and Freud's popularisation of the idea that sexual activity is essential to human happiness and need not be limited to procreation. It is also strongly implied that citizens of the World State believe Freud and Ford to be the same person.<sup>[22]</sup>
- **H. G. Wells**, "Dr Wells", British writer and utopian socialist, whose book *Men Like Gods* was an incentive 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 he, as a World Controller, has access to a selection of books from throughout history, including the Bible.
- **Thomas Robert Malthus**, whose name is used to describe the contraceptive techniques (Malthusian belt) practised by women of the World State.
- **Reuben Rabinovitch**, the character in whom the effects of sleep-learning, hypnopædia, are first noted.

- **John Henry Newman**: Mustapha Mond discussed Cardinal Newman with the Savage after reading a quote from his book.

## 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*.<sup>[23]</sup>

- **Bernard Marx**, from George Bernard Shaw (or possibly Bernard of Clairvaux or possibly Claude Bernard) and Karl Marx.
- **Henry Foster**, from Henry Ford, American industrialist, see above.
- **Lenina Crowne**, from Vladimir Lenin, the Bolshevik leader during the Russian Revolution.
- **Fanny Crowne**, from Fanny Kaplan, famous for an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Lenin. Ironically, in the novel, Lenina and Fanny are friends.
- **George Edzel**, from Edsel Ford, son of Henry Ford.
- **Polly Trotsky**, from Leon Trotsky, the Russian revolutionary leader.
- **Benito Hoover**, from Benito Mussolini, dictator of Italy; and Herbert Hoover, then-President of the United States.
- **Helmholtz Watson**, from the German physician and physicist Hermann von Helmholtz and the American behaviorist John B. Watson.
- **Darwin Bonaparte**, from Napoleon I, the leader of the First French Empire, and Charles Darwin, author of *The Origin of Species*.
- **Herbert Bakunin**, from Herbert Spencer, the English philosopher and Classical liberal,<sup>[24]</sup> and Mikhail Bakunin, a Russian philosopher and anarchist.
- **Mustapha Mond**, from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of Turkey after World War I, who pulled his country into modernisation and official secularism; and Sir Alfred Mond, an industrialist and founder of the Imperial Chemical Industries conglomerate.
- **Primo Mellon**, from Miguel Primo de Rivera, prime minister and dictator of Spain (1923–1930), and Andrew Mellon, an American banker and Secretary of the Treasury (1921–1932).
- **Sarojini Engels**, from Friedrich Engels, co-author of *The Communist Manifesto* along with Karl Marx: and Sarojini Naidu, an Indian politician.
- **Morgana Rothschild**, from J. P. Morgan, US banking tycoon, and the Rothschild family, famous for its European banking operations.
- **Fifi Bradlaugh**, from the British political activist and atheist Charles Bradlaugh.
- **Joanna Diesel**, from Rudolf Diesel, the German engineer who invented the diesel engine.
- **Clara Deterding**, from Henri Deterding, one of the founders of the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company, and Clara Ford, wife of Henry Ford.
- **Tom Kawaguchi**, from the Japanese Buddhist monk Ekai Kawaguchi, the first recorded Japanese traveller to Tibet and Nepal.
- **Jean-Jacques Habibullah**, from the French political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Habibullah Khan, who served as Emir of Afghanistan in the early 20th century.
- **Miss Keate**, the Eton headmistress, from nineteenth-century headmaster John Keate.
- **Arch-Community Singster of Canterbury**, a parody of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Church's decision in August 1930 to approve limited use of contraception.
- **Popé**, from Popé, the Native American rebel who was one of the instigators of the conflict now known as the Pueblo Revolt.<sup>[25]</sup>
- **John the Savage**, after the term "noble savage" originally used in the verse drama *The Conquest of Granada* by John Dryden, and later erroneously associated with Rousseau. Furthermore, from the prophet John the Baptist.

## Critical reception



Upon publication, Rebecca West praised *Brave New World* as "The most accomplished novel Huxley has yet written",<sup>[26]</sup> Joseph Needham lauded it as "Mr. Huxley's remarkable book",<sup>[27]</sup> and Bertrand Russell also praised it, stating, "Mr. Aldous Huxley has shown his usual masterly skill in *Brave New World*."<sup>[28]</sup>

However, *Brave New World* also received negative responses from other contemporary critics, although his work was later embraced.<sup>[29]</sup>

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.<sup>[30]</sup>

## Fordism and society

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". The World State calendar numbers years in the "AF" era—"Anno Ford"—with year 1 AF being equivalent to 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.

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 (see nature versus nurture); 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*



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 egotism. 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*, Orwell added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that our fear will ruin us. Huxley feared that our desire 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.<sup>[31]</sup>

## *Brave New World Revisited*

*Brave New World Revisited* (Harper & Brothers, US, 1958; Chatto & Windus, UK, 1959),<sup>[32]</sup> written by Huxley almost thirty years after *Brave New World*, was 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.

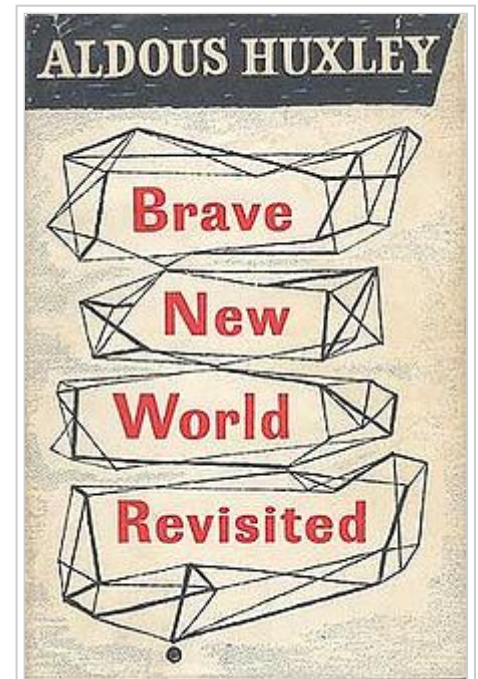
Huxley analysed the causes of this, such as overpopulation as well as all the means by which populations can be controlled. He was particularly interested in the effects of drugs and subliminal suggestion. *Brave New World Revisited* is different in tone because of Huxley's evolving thought, as well 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 known as a counterpart to his most famous work.

## Censorship/banning instances, accusation of plagiarism

The American Library Association ranks *Brave New World* as No. 52 on their list of most challenged books.<sup>[33]</sup> The following list includes some notable incidents in which it 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.<sup>[34][35]</sup>
- 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.<sup>[36]</sup>
- The book was banned in India in 1967, with Huxley accused of being a "pornographer".<sup>[37]</sup>
- In 1980, it was removed from classrooms in Miller, Missouri among other challenges.<sup>[38]</sup>
- 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).<sup>[39]</sup> Smolarski 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."<sup>[40]</sup>
- George Orwell claimed that Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) must be partly derived from *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin.<sup>[41]</sup> However, in a letter to Christopher Collins in 1962, Huxley says that he wrote *Brave New World* as a reaction to H. G. Wells's utopias long before he had heard of *We*.<sup>[12]</sup> According to one translator of *We*, Natasha Randall, Orwell believed that Huxley was lying.<sup>[13]</sup>
- 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*".<sup>[42]</sup>
- In 1993, an unsuccessful attempt was made to remove the novel from a California school's required reading list because it "centered around negative activity".<sup>[43]</sup>
- In 2010, the book was listed on the American Library Association's "Most Challenged Books" list.<sup>[44]</sup>



First UK edition

## Related works

- *The First Men in the Moon* (1901) by H. G. Wells. A lunar population lives in a single harmonious society, where the offspring starts life in small containers. There it is decided what kind of caste they will belong to for the rest of their existence, and their development at this stage is influenced to make sure they fit their caste perfectly.
- *We* (1921) by Yevgeny Zamyatin
- Looking forward to *Brave New World*, Huxley's own *Crome Yellow* (1921), Ch V, has Mr Scogan, a believer in "the goddess of Applied Science", looking forward optimistically to "the next few centuries" when "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."
- *Men Like Gods* (1923) by H. G. Wells. A utopian novel that was a source of inspiration for Huxley's novel

- *The Scientific Outlook* (1931) by philosopher Bertrand Russell. When *Brave New World* was released, Russell thought that Huxley's book was based on his book *The Scientific Outlook*, released the previous year. Russell contacted his own publisher and asked whether he should do something about this "apparent plagiarism". His publisher advised him not to, and Russell followed this advice.<sup>[45]</sup>
- *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell
- 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*."<sup>[46]</sup>
- *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by Ray Bradbury
- *Walden Two* (1948) by B. F. Skinner. Skinner was a Harvard psychologist who put his formal research in Operant Conditioning and Behaviorism into fictional practice by creating a utopian society based on these scientific principles.

## Adaptations

### Theatre

- *Brave New World* (<http://www.royalandderngate.co.uk/whatson/2015-2016/Royal/BraveNewWorld/?view=Standard>) (opened 4 September 2015) in co-production by Royal & Derngate, Northampton and Touring Consortium Theatre Company which toured the UK. The adaptation was by Dawn King, composed by These New Puritans and directed by James Dacre

### Radio

- *Brave New World* (radio broadcast) *CBS Radio Workshop* (27 January and 3 February 1956): music composed and conducted by Bernard Herrmann. Adapted for radio by William Froug. Introduced by William Conrad and narrated by Aldous Huxley. Featuring the voices of Joseph Kearns, Bill Idelson, Gloria Henry, Charlotte Lawrence,<sup>[47]</sup> Byron Kane, Sam Edwards, Jack Kruschen, Vic Perrin, Lurene Tuttle, Herb Butterfield, Paul Hebert, Doris Singleton.<sup>[48]</sup>
- *Brave New World* (radio broadcast) *BBC Radio4* (May 2013)
- *Brave New World* (radio broadcast) *BBC Radio4* (22, 29 May 2016)

### Movies

*Brave New World* (1980) Directed by Burt Brinckerhoff

- Kristoffer Tabori as John Savage
- Bud Cort as Bernard Marx
- Keir Dullea as Thomas Grahmbell
- Julie Cobb as Linda Lysenko
- Ron O'Neal as Mustapha Mond
- Marcia Strassman as Lenina Crowne (last name changed to "Disney")

*Brave New World* (1998) Directed by Leslie Libman and Larry Williams

- Tim Guinee as John Cooper<sup>[49]</sup>
- Peter Gallagher as Bernard Marx
- Leonard Nimoy as Mustapha Mond
- Sally Kirkland as Linda Lysenko
- Rya Kihlstedt as Lenina Crowne

### Future adaptation

In 2009, Ridley Scott and Leonardo Di Caprio announced that they would collaborate on a new adaptation of the book.<sup>[50]</sup> However, as of 2013, the project has been on hold while Scott has been involved with other projects.<sup>[51]</sup>

## Television

In May 2015, it was announced that Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment will bring *Brave New World* to the SyFy TV channel as a scripted series, written (adapted) by Les Bohem.<sup>[52]</sup>

## Publications

*Brave New World* (<http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/title.cgi?2319>) title listing at the Internet Speculative Fiction Database:

- *Brave New World*
  - Aldous Huxley; Perennial, Reprint edition, 1 September 1998; ISBN 0-06-092987-1
- *Brave New World Revisited*
  - Aldous Huxley; Perennial, 1 March 2000; ISBN 0-06-095551-1
- *Brave New World and Brave New World Revisited*
  - Aldous Huxley (with a foreword by Christopher Hitchens); Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005; ISBN 0-06-077609-9
- *Brave New World & Brave New World Revisited*
  - Aldous Huxley (with an introduction by Margaret Atwood); Vintage Canada Edition, 2007; ISBN 978-0-307-35655-0
- *Huxley's Brave New World* (Cliffs Notes)
  - Charles and Regina Higgins; Cliffs Notes, 30 May 2000; ISBN 0-7645-8583-5
- *Spark Notes Brave New World*
  - Sterling, 31 December 2003; ISBN 1-58663-366-X
- *Aldous Huxley's Brave New World* (Barron's Book Notes)
  - Anthony Astrachan, Anthony Astrakhan; Barrons Educational Series, November 1984; ISBN 0-8120-3405-8

Also publications for NSW HSC students.

## See also

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ■ Alpha (ethology)  | ■ <i>We</i>                           |
| ■ List of quotes from Shakespeare in <i>Brave New World</i> | ■ <i>Wir</i> (1982 film)              |
| ■ <i>The Glass Fortress</i> (2016 film)                     | ■ <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> (novel) |

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9. Aldous Huxley, *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. by Grover Smith (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 348: "I am writing a novel about the future — on the horror of the Wellsian Utopia and a revolt against it. Very difficult. I have hardly enough imagination to deal with such a subject. But it is none the less interesting work" (letter to Mrs. Kethevan Roberts, 18 May 1931).
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## External links

-  Quotations related to Brave New World at Wikiquote
-  Brave New World at Wikibooks
- 1957 interview with Huxley (<http://www.yoism.org/?q=node/143>) as he reflects on his life work and the meaning of *Brave New World*
- Aldous Huxley: Bioethics and Reproductive Issues (<http://somaweb.org/w/bioethics.html>)
- Audio review and discussion of *Brave New World* (<http://www.sfbrp.com/archives/111>) at The Science Fiction Book Review Podcast (<http://www.sfbrp.com/>)
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- Literapedia page for *Brave New World* (<http://literapedia.wikispaces.com/Brave+New+World>)



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