

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ALDOUS HUXLEY'S BRAVE NEW WORLD: THE ENCROACHMENT OF SCIENCE OVER HUMAN SPIRIT

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ABSTRACT

Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) shows that in order for a utopian society to achieve a state of stability, a loss of individuality, and the undoing of Mother Nature must occur. Huxley's description of a futuristic society that replaces freedom and morality with the false obsession of identity and physical pleasure is the painful price that society would pay when the needs of progress deny the identity of human beings and consider them as valueless in comparison with the importance of machines. This novel is not only science fiction, but also a foresight into the destiny of coming years.

INTRODUCTION

Brave New World, a dystopian novel by Aldous Huxley, is set in London in "the year" 2540. The novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology, biological engineering, and sleep-learning that combine to change society. People all around the world are part of a totalitarian state, free from war, hatred, poverty, disease, and pain. They enjoy leisure time, material wealth, and physical pleasure. In it, the author questions the value of 1931 London using satire and irony to portray a futurist world in which many of the contemporary trends in British and American societies have been taken to extremes.

DISCUSSION

Actually, Huxley meant to write a satirical and fictional novel, but it turned out to be a scientific prophecy. He wanted to warn the former (his contemporary) society of the danger of scientific progress, or progress in general. The danger occurs when the weapons, media and industry, science and technology play a crucial role. People, in the novel, long to be born again with all technological devices and facilities, so that they could use them. They do not want to look at the past; their new world is happy without dangers or wars or problems, and progress has been the method of achieving this situation. Without such a system of mass production in terms of creating embryos, stability would not have been achieved. In factories of mass production, human beings could be also created to fit the needs

of the new society. But Huxley wants to warn his readers that there is a big danger in progress because of the horrible consequences when technologies are applied without rational methods. To gain progress, man should be so rational, so aware of everything that he may abuse science. Progress also may cost people to lose feelings, individualism, and humanity. So, we have to decide between completely dehumanized progress and real love, feelings, and simplicity. The Science here is potentially dehumanizing force. In this novel he visualizes a planet without moral control, presided over by a single world government. As a part of Huxley's satire in this novel, he visualizes a planet without moral control, presided over by a single world government. Designer humans are created in laboratories to fit the needs of a society whose highest goals are utilitarianism and happiness, which is the ultimate objective of humanity. But, family is gone and so is any sense of spirituality. The new trinity in Huxley's mind would be Henry Ford (the idol), soma (a wonder drug), and sex.

In the novel Huxley deals with the idea of creating stable society depending mainly on a totalitarian regime to exercise power. Community, the first motto, is established by dividing the population into segments in which the Alphas function as intellectual superiors, and another caste, called "Epsilons" performs menial labor. Identity is established in the Conditioning Center where embryos are separated into five groups. Stability is maintained through the limitation placed on the intelligence of each group. (WWW.Thomas)

Huxley enables us to recognize that there are horrible evils beside goods in achieving stability. He pushes us to choose: either our misery-ridden but still richly human world, or rigid, conditioned society. In this satirical novel, man succeeded in eliminating disease, war, hatred, pain, aggression, poverty, and anxiety but this victory comes at a heavy price. It costs a lot for this stability. It ignores humanity, for it creates a government which believes that stability can be achieved if people think and look the same. It demands robots, not people. Ignorance of emotions is the big cost this stability has paid. It is the fuel that derives man to act on a belief or a dream, to become a better person, to grow and learn and to love

(WWW.Gehlhaus). This government of Brave New World discourages emotions and does its best to eliminate any deep feeling or passion. Huxley shows that the government fears any negative emotions, according to them, when the Controller states: "*Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the over-compensations for misery*" (BNW, Chap. 11).

Obviously, people of **BNW** have to renounce things as feelings, beauty, truth, and frankness to achieve their stupid happiness. They have no right to question their real needs. Even science must be controlled for it may menace stability of the society. This needs a lot of sacrifice and society has to keep itself immobile. It does not want any change that may modify the "perfect" world. Science can bring stability, but it can also cause extra thinking and investigations. Its people have to limit themselves to what is giving to them by the Controllers:

Now—such is progress—the old men work, the old men copulate, the old men have no time, no leisure from pleasure, not a moment to sit down and think—or if ever by some unlucky chance such a crevice of time should yawn in the solid substance of their distractions, there is always soma, delicious soma, half a gramme for a half-holiday, a gramme for a week-end, two grammes for a trip to the gorgeous East, three for a dark eternity on the moon; returning whence they find themselves on the other side of the crevice, safe on the solid ground of daily labor and distraction, scampering from feely to feely, from girl to pneumatic girl.

(BNW. Chap.3)

People of this World can find beauty in acting sex but not in art. Beauty is very important to them in daily life, in women, parties, or sex but not in literature. One of the things that shows the society in **BNW** so different is the lack of spirituality in which people are produced in factories without the existence of mothers and fathers, the absence of families. Each person is raised in a test tube rather than a mother's womb, and the government controls every stage of this development from embryo to maturity. Paradoxically, with the absence

of unity and family, the novel points out the lack of values and family structures while children grow up. They are obliged to dislike roses and books, the two symbols of beauty, feelings, past, and history through electric shock while they are still babies. The State chooses how and what each child will learn. The parental relationship of father and mother to a child is totally neglected.

Surely, dehumanization finds its way into society when emotion and humanity have been eliminated. Art and personal expression can be affected by the restricted stability. Wisdom does not arise from stable happiness, but rather from tragedies of man. Without literature, without pain, people will never think and learn, they will live in a stable society where nothing will ever change. Man, in the New World, consumes, fornicates, takes a violent passion surrogate (soma), and operates the machinery that makes it all possible, but man does not read, write, think, love, or govern himself. Art, virtues, religion, family, and friendship are all valueless.

Religion, a product of an individual's thinking of creation, is gone. People in the story neither taught religion nor thought of God. Instead of thinking of afterlife, they remain true to their society when a character states: "Fine to think we can go on being socially useful even after we're dead" (BNW, Chap. 4). They are conditioned so highly to be run by the state depending on the mother nature and liberated from emotional ties "They are refused any opportunity to plan their own property, change their role, rank or employment in society. Or even live permanently with another person of their choice" (Ibid, Chap, 2). Everyone in the BNW is essentially parentless, they are not born to a mother or father. Instead, a single fertilized egg is cloned repeatedly until ninety-six separate embryos are present. From the cloning process the identical embryos are put in tubes and then grow until they are ready to be born (WWW.Gehlhaus).

Huxley's novel is, of course, science fiction but, yesterday's science fiction is rapidly becoming today's fact. He is also able to make penetrating insights to anticipate what may happen in the coming years and what kind of cost that society may pay for the sake of stability. For example; Huxley makes the point that nuclear power is complex and

potentially destructive and therefore a bad option. He prefers instead the development of regional energy self-sufficiency, which would minimize the social power held by any group. Most of Huxley's insights are fully relevant more than half a century after they were first published (www.Martin). For example, The Gulf War (1991) was an attempt to control oil supplies. Another example, when Huxley concerns about nuclear power and his support for decentralized energy sources (Ibid). Indeed, he stands against many terms that affect people and societies as well nowadays as nationalism, centralization, dehumanization, and mobilization for the interests of political elites. Huxley does not merely satirize the development of society, but also provides a frustrated outlook on the future.

CONCLUSION

Brave New World is a masterpiece of science fiction. His interest in science, its use and misuse, points out the accuracy of his presentation and the horror of his envisioned Utopia. Huxley concludes that man has little chance to save himself and he is moving rapidly towards self-destruction. He expresses this concern satirically as how a society could ignore individual dignity in the process of worshipping science and machines? He holds opinion that the corrupted power does not come out of the advancement of science, but rather the misuse of this advancement when the moral standards have been lowered and substituted by dehumanization, affronted love and emotion, and ignorance of individuality. There is no true love, family, science, art, religion, and history.

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