Brave New World Study Guide

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

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Contents

Introduction

Written in 1931 and published the following year, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a dystopian□or anti-utopian□novel. In it, the author questions the values of 1931 London, using satire and irony to portray a futuristic world in which many of the contemporary trends in British and American society have been taken to extremes. Though he was already a best-selling author, Huxley achieved international acclaim with this now classic novel. Because *Brave New World* is a novel of ideas, the characters and plot are secondary, even simplistic. The novel is best appreciated as an ironic commentary on contemporary values.

The story is set in a London six hundred years in the future. 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 pleasures. However, in order to maintain such a smoothly running society, the ten people in charge of the world, the Controllers, eliminate most forms of freedom and twist around many traditionally held human values. Standardization and progress are valued above all else. These Controllers create human beings in factories, using technology to make ninety-six people from the same fertilized egg and to condition them for their future lives. Children are raised together and subjected to mind control through sleep teaching to further condition them. As adults, people are content to fulfill their destinies as part of five social classes, from the intelligent Alphas, who run the factories, to the mentally challenged Epsilons, who do the most menial jobs. All spend their free time indulging in harmless and mindless entertainment and sports activities. When the Savage, a man from the uncontrolled area of the world (an Indian reservation in New Mexico) comes to London, he questions the society and ultimately has to choose between conformity and death.

Author Biography

Aldous Huxley was born on July 26, 1894, in Laleham near Godalming, Surrey, England, but he grew up in London. His family was well-known for its scientific and intellectual achievements: Huxley's father, Leonard, was a renowned editor and essayist, and his highly educated mother ran her own boarding school. His grandfather and brother were top biologists, and his half-brother, Andrew Huxley, won the Nobel Prize in 1963 for his work in physiology. When he was sixteen, Aldous Huxley went to England's prestigious Eton school and was trained in medicine, the arts, and science. From 1913 to 1916 he attended Balliol College, Oxford, where he excelled academically and edited literary journals. Huxley was considered a prodigy, being exceptionally intelligent and creative.

There were many tragedies in Huxley's life, however, from the early death of his mother from cancer when he was just fourteen to nearly losing his eyesight because of an illness as a teenager, but Huxley took these troubles in stride. Because of his failing vision, he did not fight in World War I or pursue a scientific career but focused instead on writing. He married Maria Nys in 1919, and they had one son, Matthew. To support his family, Huxley pursued writing, editing, and teaching, traveling throughout Europe, India, and the United States at various points.

Huxley published three books of poetry and a collection of short stories, which received a modest amount of attention from critics, before he turned to novels: *Crome Yellow* (1921), set on an estate and featuring the vain and narcissistic conversations between various artists, scientists, and members of high society; *Antic Hay* (1923) and *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), both satires of the lives of upper-class British people after World War I; and *Point Counter Point* (1928), a best-seller and complex novel of ideas featuring many characters and incorporating Huxley's knowledge of music. As in *Brave New World,* ideas and themes dominate the style, structure, and characterization of these earlier novels.

Huxley's next novel, *Brave New World* (1932), brought him international fame. Written just before the rise of dictators Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, the novel did not incorporate the kind of dark and grim vision of totalitarianism later found in George Orwell's *1984,* which was published in 1948. Huxley later commented on this omission and reconsidered the ideas and themes of *Brave New World* in a collection of essays called *Brave New World Revisited.* (1958). He wrote other novels, short stories, and collections of essays over the years which were, for the most part, popular and critically acclaimed. Despite being nearly blind all his life, he also wrote screenplays for Hollywood, most notably an adaptations of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre.*

Always fascinated by the ideas of consciousness and sanity, in the last ten years of his life Huxley experimented with mysticism, parapsychology, and, under the supervision of a physician friend, the hallucinogenic drugs mescaline and LSD. He wrote of his drug experiences in the book *The Doors of Perception* (1954). Huxley's wife died in 1955,

and in 1956 he married author and psychotherapist Laura Archera. In 1960, Huxley was diagnosed with cancer, the same disease that killed his mother and his first wife, and for the next three years his health steadily declined. He died in Los Angeles, California, where he had been living for several years, on November 22, 1963, the same day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Huxley's ashes were buried in England in his parents' grave.

Plot Summary

Brave New World opens in the year 2495 at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, a research facility and factory that mass-produces and then socially-conditions test-tube babies. Such a factory is a fitting place to begin the story of mass-produced characters in a techno-futurist dystopia, a world society gone mad for pleasure, order, and conformity. The date is A.F. 632, A.F. - After Ford - being a notation based on the birth year (1863) of Henry Ford, the famous automobile manufacturer and assembly line innovator who is worshiped as a god in Huxley's fictional society.

Five genetic castes or classes inhabit this futurist dystopia. In descending order they are named for the first five letters of the Greek alphabet: Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons. While upper castes are bred for intellectual and managerial occupations, the lower castes, bred with less intelligence, perform manual labor. All individuals are conditioned by electric shock and hypnopaedia (sleep conditioning) to reject or desire what the State dictates. For example, infants are taught to hate flowers and books, but encouraged to seek out sex, entertainment, and new products. Most importantly, they are conditioned to be happiest with their own caste and to be glad they are not a member of any other group. For instance, while eighty Beta children sleep on their cots in the Conditioning Centre, the following hypnopaedic message issues from speakers placed beneath the children's

"Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I *don't* want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able…."

The director pushed back the switch. The voice was silent. Only its thin ghost continued to mutter from beneath the eighty pillows.

"They'll have that repeated forty or fifty times more before they wake; then again on Thursday, and again on Saturday. A hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months. After which they go on to a more advanced lesson."

The story begins in the London Hatchery's employee locker room where Lenina Crowne, a Beta worker, discusses men with another female coworker, Fanny Crowne. The subject of their conversation is Bernard Marx, an Alpha-Plus who is considered abnormally short, a defect rumored to be from an excess of alcohol added to the "blood surrogate" surrounding his developing embryo. Generally perceived as antisocial and melancholic, Bernard is unusually withdrawn and gloomy, despite the fact that social coherence and mood enhancement - especially through promiscuity and regular dosages of the drug "soma" - is State-sanctioned and encouraged. Still, despite Bernard's oddness, Lenina finds him "cute" and wants to go out with him. After all, Lenina has been going out with the Centre's research specialist, Henry Foster, for four months - unusually long in that society. In need of a change from the places they always

go - the feelies, which are like films with the sense of touch, and dance clubs with music produced from scent and color instruments - Lenina and Bernard go on holiday to the New Mexico Savage Reservation, a "natural" area populated by "sixty thousand Indians and half-breeds" living without television, books, and hot water, still giving birth to their own children, and still worshiping an assortment of Christian and pagan gods. To prevent the "savages" from escaping, the whole reservation is surrounded by an electrified fence.

Wandering around the Reservation, Lenina is horrified by the sight of mothers nursing their own infants, elderly people who actually look their age because they have not been chemically treated, and a ritual of sacrifice in which a boy is whipped, his blood scattered on writhing snakes. After witnessing this ceremony, Lenina and Bernard meet John, who, unlike them and all they know, was not born from a test tube. His mother, Linda, gave birth to him on the Reservation. On a previous visit from civilization to the Reservation years before, Linda, while pregnant with John, was abandoned by John's father, who returned to civilization after Linda disappeared and was thought to have died. Bernard realizes that John's father is none other than Bernard's archenemy, the Director of Hatching and Conditioning, the man who has tried to exile Bernard to Iceland for being a nonconformist. John's mother, Linda, has always resented the Reservation, and John, though he wants to become a part of "savage" society, is ostracized because he is white, the son of a civilized mother, and because he reads books, especially Shakespeare's works.

John's status as an outcast endears him to Bernard. John, meanwhile, is becoming infatuated with Lenina, and like Linda, he is excited about going to civilization. At Bernard's request, John and Linda go with Bernard and Lenina to, as John puts it (quoting from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*), the "brave new world" of London. Bernard wonders if John might be somewhat hasty calling London a "brave new world."

Back in London, Bernard suddenly finds himself the center of attention: he uses Linda's impregnation and abandonment, and her son, to disgrace the Director. He then introduces the exotic John (now known as "the Savage," or "Mr. Savage") to Alpha society, while Linda begins to slowly die from soma abuse. John comes to hate the drug that destroys his mother, and he becomes increasingly disenchanted with this "brave new world" 's open sexuality, promiscuity, and contempt for marriage. When John finally confesses his love to Lenina, she is overjoyed and makes overt sexual advances. Because he is appalled at the idea of sex before marriage, however, John asks Lenina to marry him. Now it is her turn to be shocked. "What a horrible idea!" she exclaims. In the aftermath of this aborted romance, John must face another crisis. He rushes to the Park Lane Hospital in time to see his mother die, and he is shocked when a class of children come in for their conditioning in death acceptance. Lenina's rejection and his mother's death finally drive John over the edge. At the hospital, he begins ranting in the hallways, and then he takes the staff's daily soma ration and dumps it out a window. The angry soma-dependent staff of 162 Deltas attack John.

Bernard's friend, Helmholtz Watson, rushes to John's defense as Bernard timidly watches. The police arrive in time to quell the disturbance, arrest the three

nonconformists, and deliver them to the office of the Controller, Mustapha Mond. The Controller tells John he must remain in civilization as an ongoing experiment. Bernard and Helmholtz, on the other hand, are to be exiled to separate islands because, says Mond, "It would upset the whole social order if men started doing things on their own."

In the last portion of the novel, John, unable to tolerate the Controller's judgment, flees to the countryside to live a life close to nature without incessant and artificial happiness, a life with a bit of truth, beauty, and even pain. But John is seen one day ritually whipping himself and becomes the center of overwhelming media attention. In a final welter of events, John succumbs to the temptation of the crowd's spontaneous orgy of violence, sex, and soma. The next day, unable to live with himself in this brave new world, John hangs himself.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

In the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (D.H.C.) is giving a tour to new students. They begin in the Fertilizing Room on the ground floor, an enormous laboratory where workers dressed in wintry white overalls and "pale corpse-colored" rubber gloves bend over instruments in the frozen, dead light. Here, eggs are extracted from human ova kept in incubators and then fertilized to produce five groups of people: Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons.

Using Bokanovsky's Process, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon eggs are forced to "bud"—divide into an average of seventy-two identical embryos. The process is one of arrested development, in which an egg's normal growth is checked with X-rays, cold, and alcohol. When the egg's growth is checked, it divides and then grows; then its growth is checked again, and so on, so that one egg results in anywhere from eight to ninety-six embryos. Bokanovsky's Process, the Director insists, is a major instrument of social stability, creating uniform men and women in standard batches.

Furthermore, they can produce at least a hundred and fifty mature eggs within two years, resulting in nearly eleven thousand brothers and sisters within two years of the same age. The Director calls over Mr. Foster, who eagerly explains that some of the tropical Centers have produced more, but he plans to beat them.

The aim of this mass production is to stabilize the population immediately. It is the year A.F. 632, and the World State's motto is "Community, Identity, Stability." Predestinators collect figures from the Fertilizers, who provide them with embryos, thus compensating for unforeseen human wastages like those resulting from natural disasters. In the Social Predestination Room, numbers of individuals of various qualities are updated and coordinated, figures calculated, and then the embryos are sent down to the Embryo Store.

The Embryo Store is in the basement of the building, where the light-sensitive embryos are protected. Here, dim figures with purple eyes, coral teeth, and symptoms of lupus test the embryos for sex, apply male hormones to some of the females to produce sterile freemartins, and finally, through a variety of environmental and mechanical techniques on the assembly line, condition the embryos for their future lives.

For example, the embryos of future rocket-plane engineers have their containers continually rotated and their circulation slackened when they're right-side up, so they'll associate being upside-down with well being. Through an alternating application of heat and cold, those destined to emigrate to the tropics and become miners and steel workers are conditioned to thrive in the heat and be horrified by the cold. For that,

explains the Director, "is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you've *got* to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their inescapable social destiny."

Lower-caste embryos, like the Epsilons, are deprived of oxygen to keep their intelligence low, since Epsilons do not need to be intelligent. The lower the caste, the lower the level of oxygen. The problem, explains the Director, is the years wasted in physical development; the Epsilon's mind is fully mature at ten, but the body is not actually fit to work until eighteen.

They stop while Mr. Foster speaks to Lenina, one of the purple-eyed nurses. After reminding Lenina to meet him on the rooftop at ten to five, Mr. Foster offers to take the students to Meter 900, where the Alpha Plus intellectual embryos are conditioned. However, the Director says they have to go up to the Nurseries now, before the children have finished their naps.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Brave New World is a *dystopia*—a speculative story in which a seemingly perfect society is revealed to have secret horrors. Authors often use dystopias to warn readers about the dangers inherent in contemporary society, including its values, goals and scientific advances. Dystopias reflect the author's idea of the potential negative outcome, if society proceeds on its present course.

Written in 1931, Huxley's vision of a society based on mass production and consumption is set 600 years in the future and describes a World State whose motto is "Community, Identity, Stability." At the time the book was written, the Great Depression had caused soaring poverty and unemployment, the effects of which were felt worldwide. Coming on the heels of a world war that impacted an entire generation, the main goals of most people were peace and economic security. On the face, Huxley's world offers both—a perfect society, or utopia, based on advances in science and technology. However, as is typical in a dystopia, Huxley forces contemporary values and achievements to an extreme.

The story opens with a student tour of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, a sterile, cold place that produces human beings on an assembly line. The explanation the Director gives the students is a device Huxley uses to familiarize readers with the world he has created.

The opening imagery of dead light, corpse-like colors, and rows of scientific equipment creates an immediate impression of a world devoid of life and feeling. Here, human beings are engineered to fit neatly into the caste (or class) scheme the World State has created, one in which individuals are expendable, even dangerous. One of the central questions this book will ask is whether the individual is more important than the community. In *Brave New World*, individuality has been sacrificed for community and stability. Identity is conditioned, and the technology of the assembly line—something that was relatively new at the time Huxley wrote the book, but is immediately

recognizable to readers today—is used to create batches of identical people who will serve the needs of the community.

The idea of thousands of human beings mass produced on an assembly line is one that typically horrifies today's readers as much as it did readers in 1931. Huxley anticipated many of the dilemmas we currently face because of both industrialization and rapid advances in science. For instance, both have the potential to vastly improve our daily lives, but at what cost? Huxley asks this important question throughout the book.

While early twentieth-century technology, and the assembly line in particular, promised to improve daily life by providing jobs and more leisure time, the reality was that it often replaced workers, or forced them to work long hours for little pay. In *Brave New World*, people have been reduced to the actual parts on the assembly line, and leisure time is spent not in the pursuit of art or knowledge but in consumption, which fuels the State.

Readers might instinctively rebel against the society Huxley has created, but the students on the tour have been conditioned, like the rest of the fictional society, to not doubt the ethics or effectiveness of the way things are done. Later in the book, Huxley will question the source of the reader's rebellion. Conditioning is one of the cornerstones on which this fictional society is based, but is also undeniably a factor in our own lives, as studies have questioned which is the greater influence—Nature or Nurture? Nature represents our biological impulses, while Nurture is the influence of our environment. In *Brave New World*, both are tightly controlled. Intelligence of lower-caste members of society is restricted by depriving embryos of oxygen, while other forms of behavioral conditioning are used in children's moral and class education. Later, Huxley will apply the idea of conditioning to everything the reader holds dear, including religion. For now, he simply introduces the idea of conditioning, which the Director says is the key to a happy, stable society—liking what you have got to do.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

The D.H.C. takes the students to the Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Rooms in the Infant Nurseries, where nurses have set out bowls of rose petals and bright books. At the Director's instruction, the nurses bring in carts with eight-month-olds on stacked shelves and dressed in the khaki of Deltas. The babies are taken out of the carts and set on the floor. They crawl to the bowls and books, squealing with pleasure. As they start to finger the rose petals and the pages of the books, the Director gives a signal, and the Head Nurse presses a lever that sets an alarm shrieking. The children start to scream, and then the nurse throws another lever, which sends an electric shock along the floor. The tone of the babies' screaming turns to one of terror, while their little bodies twitch and stiffen.

The alarms and electric current cease. The Director tells the nurses to offer the flowers and books again, but the mere sight of them sets the babies to howling. The Director explains that the children will develop what psychologists used to call an "instinctive hatred" of flowers and books.

For the students, the reasoning behind the books is obvious; you cannot have the lower castes wasting Community time reading books, which also have the potential to decondition one of their reflexes. Nevertheless, one student asks the purpose of the conditioning against flowers. The Director explains that once Deltas were conditioned to have a passion for nature, the idea being that they would go out into the country and thus consume transport. Unfortunately, a love of nature is gratuitous: it does not keep factories busy. They turned to more economically sound conditioning. Now the masses are conditioned to hate the country but love all country sports, thus compelling them to consume not only transport but also the manufactured apparatus required of sports.

The Director then tells the students the story of Reuben Rabinovich, a little boy of Polish-speaking parents who lived while "Our Ford" was still on earth. The students are embarrassed by the smutty words "parents," "mother," and "father," which the Director has to clarify for them. One night, Little Reuben's parents left the radio turned on. While the child was asleep, a London broadcast ran, and the next morning Little Reuben repeated word for word the contents of the programme, a long lecture by an old writer called George Bernard Shaw (one of the few whose works are still permitted). Afraid the child had suddenly gone mad, the parents called a doctor, who, having heard the programme the night before, readily identified it. The doctor sent a letter to the medical press, and the principle of sleep teaching, or hypnopaedia, was discovered.

This only occurred twenty-three years after Our Ford's first T-Model (as he says the word, the Director makes a sign of the T on his stomach, and the students follow suit) was put on the market. However, hypnopaedia wasn't officially used until A.F. 214, because early experiments seemed to fail. In fact, says the Director, they were on the

wrong track. The early experimenters tried to program children with facts, which they could recite but could not understand. They finally realized that you could not learn a science without knowing what the science is all about, whereas, says the Director, moral education ought never be rational.

The Director now leads them to a shuttered dormitory, where eight little boys and girls are being sleep-taught Elementary Class Consciousness. A whisper under every pillow describes the colors of the various castes and exhorts the children to be happy with the role they have been given. The Director tells the students the lesson will be repeated forty or fifty times more before they awaken, a hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months, after which they'll go on to a more advanced lesson. The Director calls hypnopaedia "the greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time." The child's mind will become these suggestions, for all his life: the Suggestions from the State.

Chapter 2 Analysis

This chapter describes in detail the conditioning that forms the foundation of the Community's stability. The early Neo-Pavlovian conditioning is based on the work done by Ivan Pavlov in the 1920s on stimulus and response. In his best-known experiment, Pavlov conditioned a dog to salivate at the sound of a bell, regardless of whether or not food was offered. In referring to Pavlov's work, Huxley likens the treatment of people, and especially children, in *Brave New World* to animals. Babies are cruelly frightened and shocked when they instinctively reach for pretty things. However, the Director sees it as a form of discipline—keeping a child from reaching for something that is potentially dangerous. In *Brave New World*, the danger is in destabilizing the community through individual preference and underconsumption.

Consumption is an important value in the book, one that reflects a concern about contemporary society. It is both a source and an inevitable outcome of industrialization and mass production, and it is here that we learn the significance of the "A.F." by which the World State marks the passage of time. Henry Ford, the inventor of the Model T and the modern assembly line, has been elevated to the status of a deity. In worshiping Ford, the people in *Brave New World* are worshiping both industrialization and consumerism.

Furthermore, all the members of the community are restricted by a totalitarian government—a government that attempts to ensure stability through absolute control. This is often accomplished with propaganda, censorship and even violence. The people in *Brave New World* are morally and socially conditioned from an early age to accept the ideas of the State, including ideas on consumption, class and sexuality.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

The Director and students proceed outside to the garden, where six or seven hundred naked children are playing in the June sunshine. They watch a game of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy, in which twenty children circle a complicated chrome steel tower that hurls a ball through one of many holes. The Director comments that it is strange to think that even in Our Ford's day, most games were played without more than a ball, a few sticks, and maybe some netting. Imagine, he says, the folly of letting people play elaborate games that did nothing to increase consumption.

A nurse emerges from some nearby shrubbery with a small howling boy. When the Director asks what is the matter, the nurse says that the boy seems reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. She has noticed it a couple of times before, and she is taking him to the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology, just to see if there is anything abnormal.

Inside the Centre, the four thousand electric clocks strike four and voices call over the trumpets to change shifts. Henry Foster and the Assistant Director of Predestination take the lift up to the changing rooms, conspicuously ignoring Bernard Marx from the Psychology Bureau. In the Embryo Store, Lenina Crowne walks briskly toward the door.

Outside, the students are joined by his fordship Mustapha Mond, the Resident Controller for Western Europe, and one of the Ten World Controllers. He sits down on the bench with the D.H.C. and repeats that inspired saying of Our Ford's: History is bunk.

Bernard Marx smiles contemptuously as he listens to the conversation between Henry Foster and the Assistant Predestinator in the lift. At the same time, Lenina Crowne walks into the Girls' Dressing Room, where she finds Fanny Crowne, from the Bottling Room. Although they are both Crownes, the two are not related; the surname is a result of having only ten thousand names among the two thousand million inhabitants of the planet.

Mustapha Mond asks the students to consider what it was like living with one's family. It is as impossible for the students to imagine as is the idea of "home," a word they are not familiar with. The Controller describes home as a few small, stifling rooms over inhabited by a man, woman, and rabble of children, with no air or space, an under sterilized prison of darkness, disease, and smells. Reeking with emotion and suffocating intimacies, it bred dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between members of the family group.

Lenina asks Fanny whom she's going out with tonight, astonished when Fanny says no one. Fanny tells her she has been feeling out of sorts lately, and the doctor has advised

a Pregnancy Substitute. Although the first is not required until the age of twenty-one, Fanny is doing it two years early. She shows Lenina the boxes and phials in her locker, which include ovarin, mammary gland extract and placentin.

The Controller tells the students that Our Ford (Our Freud, as he called himself whenever he spoke of psychology) was the first to point out the dangers of family life. A world full of fathers was a world full of misery; a world full of mothers was full of "every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity"; a world full of brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, was full of madness and suicide.

Fanny is astonished to hear that Lenina is still seeing Henry after four months, and what is worse, Lenina has not had anyone else in all that time. Fanny warns Lenina that she ought to be careful. Not only is it bad form to go on and on with one man, especially at Lenina's young age, but the D.H.C. would be furious if he knew.

It is no wonder, says the Controller, that the pre-moderns were miserable: "Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorses, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with the uncertainties and the poverty - they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopelessly individual isolation), how could they be stable?"

Fanny tells Lenina that there is no need to give up Henry, but to have somebody else from time to time. Lenina complains that she has not felt very keen on promiscuity lately, but Fanny says she ought to make the effort. After all, everyone belongs to everyone else. Lenina tells her she is quite right, and she will make the effort.

The Controller says that "feeling lurks in that interval of time between desire and its consummation." Arrested impulse spills over into feeling, passion, even madness. He tells the students they are fortunate; no pains have been spared to make their lives easy, and to preserve them as much as possible from having emotions at all.

Changing clothes, Henry Foster tells the Assistant Predestinator that Lenina Crowne is a splendid girl, wonderfully pneumatic, and advises him to try her. The Assistant Predestinator says he will, at the first opportunity. On the opposite side of the aisle, Bernard Marx overhears and turns pale.

Lenina admits she is beginning to get bored with nothing but Henry, and asks Fanny if she knows Bernard Marx. Fanny is horrified by the thought of Lenina going out with Bernard; even though he is an Alpha Plus, he has an unsavory reputation - he spends most of his time by himself. But Bernard has asked Lenina to go with him to see a Savage Reservation, and Lenina wants to go.

The Controller asks the students if they have ever encountered an insurmountable obstacle or been compelled to live through a long period between wanting and having something. The feeling this produces is just horrible. Then the Controller tells them their ancestors were so shortsighted that when the first reformers offered to deliver them

from these emotions, they refused. He says something called Christianity forced the women to go on being viviparous.

Bernard Marx is angry that Henry and the Assistant Predestinator are talking about Lenina like a piece of meat. At the same time, in the Girls' Dressing Room, Fanny says Bernard Marx is ugly and small; she heard somebody made a mistake when he was still in the bottle that made him come out stunted. Lenina says that's nonsense.

Henry tells the Assistant Predestinator that he's welcome to Lenina - everyone belongs to everyone else, after all - and Bernard Marx, a specialist in hypnopaedia, thinks about the sixty-two thousand four hundred repetitions that make one truth. As Lenina tells Fanny she is going to accept the invitation, Bernard thinks how much he hates the two men.

The Controller tells the students that the Caste System was proposed and rejected because of something called Democracy, but after the Nine Years' War (which began in A.F. 141), the great Economic Collapse forced a choice between World Control and Destruction. A conscription of consumption compelled every man, woman, and child to consume so much per year, in the interests of industry. Government gave up force, and ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning, and hypnopaedia took hold. An intensive propaganda campaign against viviparous reproduction and the Past was accompanied by the closing of museums, the destruction of historical monuments, and the suppression of all books published before A.F. 150.

Lenina gets dressed for her date with Henry Foster, donning around her waist a green Malthusian Belt with the regulation supply of contraceptives. Fanny compliments her on the belt, and Lenina tells her Henry gave it to her.

Christianity - the ethics and philosophy of under-consumption - was a crime against society in an age of machines, says the Controller. All crosses had their tops cut off and the thing called God was replaced with the World State and Ford's Day celebrations, Community Sings, and Solidarity Services. In the past, they also had a thing called Heaven, but they drank enormous quantities of alcohol. There were things called the soul and immortality, but people took morphia and cocaine. Finally, two thousand pharmacologists and biochemists were subsidized, and six years later developed *soma*, the perfect drug - "euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant." It has "all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects," he says. "Take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache or mythology."

Henry Foster and the Assistant Predestinator decide to bait Bernard; they tell him he looks glum and offer him some *soma*. The Assistant Predestinator quotes some hypnopeaedic wisdom: "one cubic centimeter cures ten gloomy sentiments." Bernard calls them idiots and thinks how much he hates them.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The introduction of the Controller is used to provide the historical and philosophical background of the New World. In this chapter, Huxley jumps back and forth between the scene with the Controller and the scenes in the changing rooms, creating a sharp contrast between the dry explanation of present values and the personal impact it has on the characters, whose main conflict will be between conformity and individuality, free will and slavery.

As had become evident by the end of Chapter 2, religion has been replaced by consumption, and the individual values of the family have been replaced by the values of the State. In fact, the idea of family is now associated with a selfishness that is both obscene and claustrophobic. In the New World, everyone belongs to everyone else. On the face, this is not a bad sentiment, except the World State has taken it to an extreme. In order to ensure stability, all strong emotions have been eliminated from people, including intimate bonds with one another.

One natural result is the emphasis on promiscuity. At the time *Brave New World* was written, people were demanding more sexual freedom, which came into conflict with contemporary moral and religious teaching. In the story, conditioning has created a society in which promiscuity is not only accepted, it is necessary and expected. Though many of the women in the society are sterile freemartins, unsterilized women like Lenina are conditioned to use contraceptive belts, called Malthusian Belts after the eighteenth-century Thomas Malthus, who argued for population control. Again, we see conditioning used as an explanation for the beliefs in the story. By the same token, we have to question what role conditioning has played in our own beliefs, however different.

In the Controller's mind, relationships encourage the kind of intimate bonds that provoke strong emotions and unhappiness, which he believes are incompatible with a stable society. Therefore, individual desires are sacrificed for the good of the Community. Lenina Crowne is warned by her friend Fanny about becoming too close to Henry Foster; Lenina might prefer to be less promiscuous, but such a violation of social policy can only come to a bad end. Fanny's warning foreshadows the crisis later, while Lenina's decision to accept Bernard's invitation to the Savage Reservation starts the actual plot of the story.

Bernard Marx is introduced as a character isolated by his own individuality. Unable to conform to society despite his conditioning, Bernard is snubbed by the other Alpha males. When he overhears them talking about Lenina, he is enraged by the thought of her as a piece of meat. This implies that Bernard's particular difficulty is in suppressing his own individual identity, as well as the individuality he perceives in others.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Lenina enters the crowded lift and finds Bernard Marx standing in the back. She tells him she wants to talk about their New Mexico plan, but Bernard flushes and asks if they should not talk about it somewhere else. Lenina is a little astonished, but she's also touched by her effect on him, and when the lift comes to the roof, she tells him Henry is waiting for her, but to let her know about the date.

Henry is waiting in the cockpit of his helicopter when Lenina arrives. She climbs in and they shoot into the air. Beneath them, Central London is filled with Centrifugal Bumble-puppy towers, Riemann-surface tennis courts, Escalator Fives Courts and Ealing stadium, where a Delta gymnastic display and community sing is in progress. An army of laborers is busy revitrifying the surface of the Great West Road, and Lenina remarks what hideous color khaki is, unconsciously echoing one of the hypnopaedic lessons.

On the roof of the Centre, Bernard calls to a couple of Delta-Minus attendants to bring out his machine. He is uncomfortable dealing with these members of the lower castes, because he himself is not any taller than they are, and he knows they, like everyone else, have been subtly conditioned to associate body mass with superiority. Every time he finds himself on eye level with a Gamma, Delta or Epsilon, Bernard is reminded of his defect, and the mockery he endures among his peers makes him feel like an outsider. Feeling like an outsider, he behaves like one, which only increases the prejudice against him. He bitterly envies men like Henry Foster, who take their position for granted and never have to shout at an Epsilon to get something done.

Bernard climbs into his machine and flies to a building on Fleet Street that houses the Bureau of Propaganda and the College of Emotional Engineering. On the roof, he orders the Gamma-Plus porter to ring down to Helmholtz Watson.

Helmholtz is a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering in the Department of Writing, as well as a working Emotional Engineer. He is a handsome, powerfully built man a bit too good at his job. While a physical defect has isolated Bernard, mental excess has isolated Helmholtz. Despite being enormously popular with the ladies, Helmholtz feels dissatisfied, a result of a consciousness of being set apart—an individual.

Helmholtz meets Bernard on the roof, and they fly to Bernard's apartment, where they stretch out on the sofas and talk. Lately, Helmholtz has been cutting many of his activities—and his women—and now he tells Bernard about a queer feeling he has had lately, that he has something important to say, and the power to say it, but he does not know what it is. He is troubled by the fact that no matter how piercingly he writes, there is nothing behind the phrases. Can you write something about nothing? he wonders.

Chapter 4 Analysis

In Chapter 4, we learn more about Bernard, who feels isolated because of a physical defect. He is shorter than other Alpha males, and society has conditioned people—Bernard included—associating height with superiority. Bernard's physical defect makes him different, and being different is dangerous in a society that depends on conformity to remain stable. Unfortunately, Bernard frequently overcompensates for his defect with grandiose ideas and petty behavior, which further alienates his peers.

Another character is introduced in this chapter, Helmholtz Watson, a respected writer whose abilities have also set him apart. Helmholtz has begun to question the worth of the propaganda he produces, and wishes for something more meaningful to write about. Like Bernard, Helmholtz is an Alpha Plus. Alphas, while conditioned, are engineered for leadership roles in society, and so they are given free will—the intellect and ability to make their own choices. This makes their struggle to conform more difficult. Helmholtz craves solitude, something that is necessary for thinking and writing, but strictly discouraged for the same reason, since individual thought is a threat to the State. In Helmholtz, we see the personal impact of sacrificing art and knowledge; he is aware of a greater truth beyond social stability, and he yearns for it, but he has no idea what it is.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

At eight o'clock, Lenina and Henry are finished with their evening game of Obstacle Golf. They pause in Henry's machine at eight hundred feet over the fading landscape, which reveals the various lower-caste barracks of the Golf Club and the smaller Alpha and Beta houses on the other side of the dividing wall. Further southeast are the majestic buildings of the Slough Crematorium. Henry remarks how fine it is to think that people can go on being socially useful even after death; more than a kilo and a half of phosphorus is recovered from every corpse, which is used to make plants grow. But Lenina thinks it's queer that Alphas and Betas won't make any more plants grow than Gammas and Deltas and Epsilons. Henry says everyone is physico-chemically equal, and even Epsilons perform indispensable services.

This reminds Lenina of a time when she was a child and woke up one night to hear the voices whispering under her pillow. At first, she was shocked and afraid, but eventually the soothing voice put her back to sleep. She says she supposes Epsilons don't mind being Epsilons, but she's still glad she isn't one. Henry says everyone is happy now.

They land on the roof of Henry's forty-story apartment building, and go down to the dining hall, where they eat with a large, cheerful crowd. *Soma* is served with the coffee. After dinner, they go to the Westminster Abbey Cabaret, where sexophonists wail and moan like cats under the moon. Five-stepping with four hundred other couples around Westminster Abbey, Lenina and Henry dance in the kind, beautiful world of *soma*-holiday.

Meanwhile, Bernard is late for his Solidarity Service, which he has on alternate Thursdays. He slips into the room in the Fordson Community Singery and takes a seat in the circle of chairs, an alternating arrangement of man-woman. The service begins with a Solidarity Hymn, played synthetically to drum beats and a choir of near-wind and super-string instruments. Dedicated *soma* tablets are placed in the center of the table, and a cup of strawberry ice-cream *soma* is passed from hand to hand with the phrase, "I drink to my annihilation." The members sing the First Solidarity Hymn, passing the ice cream around and around, and then the Second Solidarity Hymn, and then the Third. With each song, they invite the Greater Being to annihilate them, at which time their larger life begins.

Although the *soma* has begun to take effect, Bernard has a hard time melting with the others; he still feels isolated. He goes through the motions, and when the imminence of the Coming fills the group with excitement, each member in turn springing up to cry, "Ford!" Bernard follows suit. All at once, a great synthetic bass booms out the words announcing the approaching atonement and final consummation of solidarity, "the coming of the Twelve-in-one, the incarnation of the Greater Being." The group dances around the circle, slapping each other's bottoms as they feverishly chant the liturgical

refrain: "Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun, kiss the girls…" until the light begins to fade and grow redder, and finally the circle breaks and the members fall back on the ring of couches at the edge of the room.

Afterward, Bernard stands on the roof, miserably alone and isolated. The others look calm and rapturous, not with excitement, which would still be a type of dissatisfaction, but with the peace of consummation, with the energies at rest and in equilibrium. Bernard himself feels emptier than ever, more hopelessly himself than he's ever been in his life.

Chapter 5 Analysis

By the end of Chapter 5, it's become clear that recreation has replaced the pursuit of knowledge. Leisure time is filled with sex and *soma*—a hallucinogenic drug that provides a vacation from the unpleasant facts of reality. Instead of God and Church, people consume *soma* and celebrate the incarnation of the Community, which is represented by the twelve people attending each Solidarity Service. Here, the traditional elements of Christian services—wine, wafers, hymns, and prayers—have been replaced by *soma*, Solidarity Hymns, and frenzied dances that dissolve into communal sex.

The worship of pleasure, regulated by the State, encourages happiness derived from immediate, tactile pleasure and discourages individual thought and emotion. Yet, the familiarity of the ritual and the call for a Greater Being, regardless of its meaning or source, reflects what may be an instinctive human need to believe in a divine being, regardless of conditioning. This question arises again later in the book.

All members of Huxley's New World are divided by strict class lines, which are evident in the wall dividing the Golf Club barracks, the color-coded uniforms, the types of tasks each group performs, and the identical appearance of the lower-caste Bokanovsky groups, who were mass produced for labor. But no one questions these lines; rather, everyone accepts that they function to serve the greater good. And because of conditioning and *soma*, everyone is happy, regardless of his or her class. The fear of social uprising has been eliminated along with strong emotion. Even death fails to provoke a reaction; the body is harvested in another kind of factory, its chemical components broken down and reused for the good of the community.

The characters in *Brave New World* are not complex; they're defined by only a few qualities, many of them the result of the State's conditioning. Instead, the novel is one of conflicting ideas, which are represented by the characters that ultimately come into conflict. Lenina is vaguely aware of her own conditioning, but embraces it. Bernard, unable to conform at all, is more isolated and miserable than ever. The tension that begins building in this chapter will come to a climax when one set of ideas destroys another.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

After a while, Lenina decides Bernard is definitely odd. He has a mania for doing things in private, which in her mind means not doing anything at all. When she proposed for their first date a swim or a round of Electro-magnetic Golf, Bernard shied away, saying it was a waste of time. Lenina asked him what, then, was time for? Finally, she persuaded him to go with her to the Women's Heavyweight Wrestling Championship, where Bernard, hating the crowd, remained gloomy. She pressed on him a half-gramme *soma* raspberry sundae, but he refused it, saying he'd rather be himself and nasty than somebody else, however jolly.

Afterward, Bernard hovered the helicopter at the edge of the Channel, where a southwesterly wind had sprung up against a cloudy sky. To Lenina, the rushing emptiness was horrible, and she flicked on music, only to have Bernard turn it back off. He said he wanted to look at the sea in peace; it made him feel more himself, and not so completely a part of something else. He wondered what it would be like to be free, and not enslaved by his own conditioning. Lenina thought he was saying the most awful things, because, after all, everyone is free to have a wonderful time. Everyone is happy now. Bernard said yes, that was a statement children began getting at age five.

Bernard finally consented to go back, and to take the *soma* Lenina gave him. In his rooms later, Lenina worried she might be too plump. Bernard thought of her again as a piece of meat, and realized that was how she saw herself. Later, he told her he'd wanted the night to end differently, to try the effect of arresting his impulses. For Lenina, that was a bunch of dangerous nonsense—*never put off till tomorrow the fun you can have today*. But Bernard persisted, saying he wanted to know what passion felt like, and wondered if it was possible to be adult all the time. Lenina recited, "When the individual feels, the community reels." Bernard asked why the community shouldn't reel a bit.

Despite her misgivings, Lenina still wants to go to the Savage Reservation, which is bound to be better than going back to the North Pole with Benito Hoover. And as an Alpha Plus psychologist, Bernard is one of the few people who can get permission to enter the Reservation.

Before their trip, Bernard takes the permit to the D.H.C.'s office for his signature. The sight of the permit reminds the Director of a similar trip he took to the Reservation twenty years ago. Lost in the memory, the Director, so conventional most of the time, commits a gross error by talking about the remote past. Despite his discomfort, Bernard listens, fascinated, as the Director describes taking the girl he was having at the time—a Beta-Minus—into the mountains, and then being overtaken by a storm while they slept. When the Director woke up, the girl was gone. A search later failed to find her. They assumed she'd fallen into a gully somewhere, or been eaten by a mountain lion. The Director shakes himself, says it could have happened to anyone, and of course, the

social body persists though the component cells may change. Still, he dreams of it sometimes.

Then the Director pulls himself together and, realizing his error, hastens to add that there was nothing unseemly in his relationship with the girl, nothing emotional or long-term. Furious with himself, he takes it out on Bernard. He signs the permit, but tells Bernard he's been getting disturbing reports about Bernard's behavior outside working hours. Alphas are conditioned so that they don't *have* to be infantile in their emotional behavior, but that's all the more reason to make a special effort to conform. The Director warns him that he won't risk the reputation of the Centre, and if he hears again about Bernard lapsing from a proper standard of infantile decorum, he'll transfer him to Iceland.

Bernard isn't worried about the threat; people simply aren't transferred for such things. Rather, he's elated by the idea of the threat, intoxicated by the consciousness of his own individual significance.

The journey to Santa Fe is uneventful, and Bernard and Lenina spend the night in a nice hotel with all the modern conveniences. The next morning, they present themselves to the Warden of the Reservation, who describes the sixty-thousand-volt fences surrounding the Sub-Reservations. To touch the fence is instant death, he says; there's no escape from a Savage Reservation. Lenina swallowed some *soma* when the man began droning facts, and she sits with an expression of rapt attention thinking nothing at all. Bernard suddenly remembers he's left the Eau de Cologne tap in his bathroom open and running, which is going to cost him a fortune. But the Warden keeps spewing information: there are sixty thousand Indians and half-breeds on the Reservation, absolute savages who still practice repulsive customs like marriage, Christianity, and ancestor worship. They speak extinct languages and have no communication at all with the outside world.

Finally, they manage to get away. When Bernard calls Helmholtz to run by and turn off his tap, Helmholtz tells him that the D.H.C. said in public yesterday that he's looking for a replacement for Bernard, who's being sent to Iceland. Bernard is appalled; although he's often longed for some great affliction or persecution to try him, he didn't think the Director's threat was serious. Now Bernard's courage deserts him, and Lenina persuades him to swallow four tablets of *soma*. He sleeps all the way to the Reservation.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Lenina and Bernard clearly represent conflicting ideas. Lenina, despite some personal desires to the contrary, is a product of her conditioning. She accepts the values of the State without question. Bernard, on the other hand, questions everything. In particular, he wants to feel those strong emotions that conditioning and *soma* have kept from him. Bernard recognizes his own enslavement, and he wonders what it would like to be able

to exercise free will. His ideas frighten Lenina, adding to the tension. Bernard is clearly headed toward a crisis in his conflict with society.

This crisis is foreshadowed by the warning of the Director, who represents conventional society. He—and society—won't tolerate Bernard's behavior. Bernard will have to make a choice between conforming and losing his position. The threat, however, only sparks in Bernard an elation he hasn't felt before. The idea of jeopardy produces a real reaction no amount of *soma* can reproduce. The craving for natural, strong emotion is one that not even the advanced techniques of this society can completely eradicate.

We even see this in the Director, who lapses from conventionality long enough to betray a painful memory. Although he denies the event was painful, he still has trouble sleeping. The story he tells Bernard is important for another reason: the lost woman is about to be found, and it will have repercussions for everyone.

In contrast to the outwardly perfect New World, the Savage Reservation is shown as a bleak prison, contained by deadly fences. But Lenina, having taken her *soma*, is oblivious to anything but the most superficial facts given to her by the Warden. In fact, she's bored. Bernard, on the other hand, is distracted by the idea that he left his tap running, and the amount of money it's costing him. Even Bernard can't escape the practical concerns of his life. When he learns the Director intends to make good on his threat, his courage deserts him, and Bernard resorts to *soma* rather than face the conflict. He and Lenina are shown to be as imprisoned as the savages on the Reservation.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Lenina doesn't like the Reservation at all. A foul-smelling Indian guide leads them to a pueblo marred by rubbish, dust, dogs and flies. She is astonished by an old man climbing down a nearby ladder; she's never seen someone so wrinkled or decrepit. His emaciated body horrifies her, and she asks Bernard what's wrong with him. Bernard tells her he's just old; here, people aren't kept physiologically young or preserved from diseases, like they are in Civilization, where everyone is kept at a youthful equilibrium until sixty, when they abruptly reach the end.

It's more than Lenina can stand, but she's dismayed to find she's left her *soma* tablets at the rest house, and will have to face the horrors of the Reservation unaided. Bernard only makes it worse; trying to compensate for the weakness he displayed earlier, he makes outrageous remarks, pointing at a woman with a baby sucking at her breast, and asking Lenina wouldn't she like to have one.

They climb a ladder into a narrow, dark room smelling of grease and unwashed clothes, and cross to a wide terrace overlooking the village square. Below, they hear drumbeats coming from subterranean rooms. Lenina rather likes the drumbeats, which remind her of Solidarity Services and Ford's Day celebrations. But then wildly masked people emerge through hatchways into the square and begin dancing round and round to the drumbeats. Shrieking as though they're being killed, they reach a feverish pitch, when suddenly the leader goes to a chest and begins taking out snakes, which he throws from one person to the next. A great yell goes up from the crowd, and they dance again to a different rhythm until, finally, they throw the snakes in the center of the square. An old man emerges from one hatch to throw corn meal on the snakes; a woman emerges from another to sprinkle them with water. Then, amid total silence, a boy of about eighteen, naked except for a white cotton breach-cloth, steps into the crowd, his hands crossed over his chest. As he slowly circles the crowd, a man in a coyote mask lashes him with a whip, but the boy makes no sound. Round and round he goes, being struck repeatedly.

The sight of the boy's blood is too much for Lenina; she covers her face with her hands and begs Bernard to stop them. Finally, the boy collapses and the man in the coyote mask brushes a white feather across the boy's bleeding back. He holds up the now crimson feather, letting a few drops fall before he shakes it over the snakes. The drums break out again and there's a great shout; then the dancers pick up the snakes and run off. Three old women come out of a house and carry the boy away.

Lenina is sobbing, wishing for her *soma*, when another young man steps out onto the terrace. He's dressed like an Indian, but his plaited hair is straw-colored, his eyes pale blue. He greets the two in faultless English, asking aren't they civilized, from the Other Place? Bernard is astonished. The boy is equally taken with Lenina, the first girl he's

ever seen with cheeks that aren't dark and permanently-waved auburn hair. Lenina thinks he's quite beautiful, and the boy is so overcome he turns away.

Bernard peppers him with questions, and the young man tries to explain. Linda, his mother, was a stranger to the Reservation, who had come from the Other Place long ago, before he was born, with a man who was his father. She had gone walking, fallen down a steep place and hurt her head. Some hunters from Malpais found her and brought her to the pueblo. She never saw his father Tomakin again. The boy says he must have flown back to the Other Place without her, a bad, unnatural man. And so he was born in Malpais. Bernard recognizes the story immediately. The Director's first name is Thomas.

The boy, whose name is John, takes them to his mother's little house on the outskirts of the pueblo, where Lenina is disgusted to confront a flabby and wrinkled woman who smells like the alcohol they put in the Delta and Epsilon bottles. Linda is ecstatic at their arrival and kisses Lenina all over, crying about how long she's waited to see a civilized face. With Bernard and John talking outside, Linda describes to Lenina the horrors she's been through (all without a gramme of *soma* to be had), the dirt and disease and all the backwards ideas of the savages. She says it's like living with lunatics; everything they do is mad. For instance, no one is supposed to belong to more than one person, and if you have people in the ordinary way, they think you're wicked and anti-social. And of course, there's no Malthusian Drill, so they have children all the time like dogs.

She tells Lenina how ashamed she was to discover she was pregnant, despite following the Malthusian Drill by the numbers. Out here there was no Abortion Centre, so she was forced to give birth. But John has been a great comfort to her, although she worries that the madness around them is infectious; once John tried to kill a man she used to have, and Linda could never make him understand it was what civilized people did. Although she's tried to condition him, it's difficult to answer questions like how a helicopter works or who made the world, when you're a Beta who's always worked in the Fertilizing Room.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The Savage Reservation provides a sharp contrast between the modern world of *Brave New World* and the pre-modern world, which is a reflection of Huxley's contemporary world. In including the Savage Reservation, Huxley is able to introduce a character—John—who is representative of his own contemporary world, and whose differing values will conflict sharply with the State's and create the final crisis.

The ceremony of the Savages is a mix of Native American and Christian symbols, reflecting two of the primary religions or mythologies of Huxley's contemporary world. The fevered dancing, drumbeats and the final flagellation around the circle echo the Solidarity Service meeting, while snakes are a traditional symbol of sexuality. The similarities between the two rituals, that of New World and Old, reinforces the idea that

humans may, regardless of conditioning, feel a deep, instinctive need to believe in a greater being.

However, Lenina is too distracted by the blood to attribute any particular significance to what she's seeing, even if she were capable of doing so. In the New World, people are discouraged from looking for meaning in anything, and so Lenina can only think of the pain—something so unfamiliar in her world that it horrifies her.

Linda's story of her life on the Reservation foreshadows the kinds of conflicts her son John will face when he enters the New World. It also shows what happens when someone from the New World is stripped of the devices that make life easy. No longer able to rely on the State, Linda is ill equipped for responsibility. In the New World, knowledge beyond her specific role wasn't necessary, so she has been unable to adequately prepare John for life in either world. Instead, unable to face the reality of her situation, and without *soma* to help her escape from it, Linda has turned into a drunk, neglecting John most of the time.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Outside, John describes for Bernard everything he can remember—Linda singing strange rhymes to him and lying with him in the big bed, until he was kicked out by a man who came. There were a lot of men, but one of them, Popé, came often, bringing gourds of mescal, which Linda said ought to be called *soma*, except mescal made you feel sick in the morning. One time, a group of women held Linda down and whipped her. When he tried to intervene, the women whipped him, too. Later, he tried to comfort her, but Linda called him a savage and said she wouldn't be his mother. She started to beat him, but then stopped to put her arms around him and kiss him. Some days, Linda didn't get up at all, and often there was nothing to eat but cold tortillas.

Linda told him that in the Other Place you could fly whenever you wanted and there was music that came out of a box and lots of nice games to play and delicious things to eat and drink. Everyone belonged to everyone else and everyone was happy, and never sad or angry. Everything was clean and people were never lonely.

On the reservation, John has always been lonely. The others call Linda bad names and point fingers at him. But Linda taught him to read, and this knowledge made him feel better when the others teased him. Popé brought an old book that was lying in one of the chests in the Antelope Kiva. It was called *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. John didn't understand the stories, but the words were strange and wondrous, like music.

John hated Popé having his mother, and the book helped him identify Popé as a remorseless, lecherous villain. John only half-knew what the words meant, but he was filled with hatred. One day, he came in from playing and found Popé stretched out in bed beside his mother. The magic of the words gave him orders, and he got a knife and went back in and stabbed Popé in the shoulder. But Popé grabbed his hand and, amazingly, began to laugh. He told John to go and called him brave.

When he was fifteen, the old Indian Mitsima tried to teach him how to work the clay. When he was sixteen, he watched the girl he loved marry someone else. In the Antelope Kiva, they wouldn't let John participate in the ceremonies. Boys went down and came up men, but when John tried to join, they threw stones at him. He ran to the edge of a precipice, where he looked down at the shadow of death. The blood from his cuts fell into the dead light. On his own, John discovered Time and Death and God.

Bernard admits he's also alone, which surprises John. He says that Linda told him no one was ever alone in the Other Place. But Bernard says he's different. John agrees that when one is different, one is bound to be lonely. Bernard, who has already begun to formulate a plan, asks John how he'd like to come to the Other Place. John is thrilled

with the idea. He quotes from Shakespeare: "How beauteous mankind is…O brave new world that has such people in it."

Chapter 8 Analysis

Raised in the pre-modern world of the Savage Reservation, John has nevertheless been influenced by his mother, a Beta from "Civilization." The conflicts between his mother, Linda, and the people on the Savage Reservation foreshadow the conflicts to come and have created for John both confusion and isolation as he tries to reconcile two strongly conflicting value systems.

On the Reservation, Linda and John are outsiders—different by virtue of their pale skin as well as Linda's Other World values. Linda has painted pretty pictures of the Other World, so John readily agrees to leave the Reservation. His reference to the "brave new world" is a quote from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in which Miranda, alone on an island except for her father and his slave, sees other people for the first time and is struck by their beauty. John, raised by his mother's story of a perfect world where everyone is happy, sees the Other World as a means of escaping the pain of the Reservation.

However, it's obvious that John, whose values are primarily a product of the pre-modern influences of the Reservation, won't belong in the Brave New World, either. John's most striking quality is his passion, which has led him from thoughts of suicide to rage and violence.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

After they return to the rest house, Lenina takes six half-gramme tablets of *soma*, gets in bed and leaves for lunar eternity. Bernard, on the other hand, lies awake all night, formulating the details of his plan. In the morning, he flies to Santa Fe, where he calls the World Controller's Office. After repeating his story several times, he's able to speak to Mustapha Mond himself, who finds it of sufficient scientific interest to bring the two savages back to Civilization. The necessary orders are sent to the Warden, and Bernard returns to the Reservation to receive them.

Meanwhile, John goes to the rest house. When no one answers, he's afraid Bernard and Lenina have left him. But, seeing Lenina's suitcase through the window, he picks up a rock and breaks inside. He goes through the items in the suitcase, awed by the smell of perfume and the sound of zippers. In the bedroom, he finds Lenina fast asleep. He hovers over her, wanting to touch her, quotes from *Romeo and Juliet* filtering through his head. But he can't bring himself to profane her with his hand. Then he hears a helicopter outside and rushes out to meet Bernard.

Chapter 9 Analysis

This is primarily a transitional chapter, in which Bernard secures the necessary paperwork to bring John and Linda back to Civilization, and John explores some of the products of the New World, Lenina among them. John is attracted to Lenina precisely because he sees her as different, a representation of purity and perfection like Shakespeare's Juliet.

But his pre-modern ideas about sexuality, which are complicated by Shakespearean verses for which he has no context, will clearly conflict with Lenina's conditioning, which is a product of the world he's about to enter. In fact, his desire for Lenina is only a symptom of his desire for the beauty and perfection his mother has described. Inevitably, both Lenina and the New World will fail to live up to his ideals.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

The D.H.C. has decided to make a public example of Bernard, and has asked Bernard to meet him and Henry Foster in the Fertilizing Room at the Bloomsbury Centre. The Fertilizing Room has more high-caste workers than any other in the Centre, and the Director explains to Henry that it's important to do it this way, since the greater a man's talents, the greater his power to lead others astray. Bernard may be talented, but no offense is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behavior. While murder only kills the individual, the individual can be replaced. Bernard has attacked Society itself.

Bernard enters then, and the Director calls the workers to attention. He tells them that Bernard has grossly betrayed the trust given him by his heretical views on sports and *soma*, the scandalous unorthodoxy of his sex-life, and his refusal to obey Our Ford and behave during his off-hours like an infant. He has proven to be a subverter, he continues, an enemy of Society and a conspirator against Civilization. For that reason, the Director concludes, he proposes to transfer Bernard to a Sub-Centre as far from any Centre of population as possible. He then asks Bernard if he can show any reason why this judgment shouldn't be executed.

In a loud voice, Bernard says he can. He then brings in Linda, bloated and sagging, a terrifying monster of middle-agedness. Linda smiles coquettishly at the Director and asks him if he doesn't recognizes her, his Linda. The Director's expression is one of petrified disgust, and the workers explode into laughter. Then Linda announces that he made her have a baby. Everyone falls silent and the Director pales, horrified. She calls to John, who's waiting outside the door. John comes in, kneels at the Director's feet and calls him "father." The comically smutty word causes the workers to erupt into laughter again, and the Director, wild-eyed and humiliated, rushes out of the room.

Chapter 10 Analysis

This chapter presents a brief triumph for Bernard, who uses Linda and John to fight back against the Director's attempt to make him conform. But Bernard's general cowardice and the way with which he fights back prevent him from being a hero, in any sense of the word. After this chapter, Bernard will begin to lose importance in the story, precisely because he doesn't have the courage to openly rebel.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

All of upper-caste London is wild to see the Savage who fell on his knees before the D.H.C., who promptly resigned. But no one is at all anxious to see Linda, who was decanted and so not so much a mystery. More importantly, she's sickening, having lost her youth, her complexion and her figure. The best people are determined *not* to see Linda, who'd rather not see them, either. Instead, Linda lies in bed taking one *soma*-holiday after another. The doctor tells Bernard the *soma*, in such excess, will finish her off in a month or two. When John objects, the doctor says they may be shortening her life in one sense, but they're lengthening it in another, since every *soma*-holiday is a bit of what the ancestors called eternity. Moreover, the doctor is grateful for this opportunity to study senility.

Bernard is flooded with requests to see the Savage. Important people come to his parties, and Bernard finds he can have any women he wants, whenever he wants them. The success goes to his head, and Bernard suddenly feels reconciled to the world around him. When he confides to Helmholtz about the six girls he had last week, Helmholtz listens in a silence so disapproving Bernard is offended and determines never to speak to Helmholtz again.

Bernard, bolstered by his new importance, begins pointing out some of the flaws he sees in society. Because of the Savage, he's politely listened to, though his guests shake their heads behind his back and say he'll come to a bad end—there won't be another Savage to help him out a second time.

But the mere politeness makes Bernard feel gigantic, and he sends reports to Mustapha Mond, agreeing with some of the Savage's ideas—specifically that infantility is too easy, or not expensive enough. The Controller is at first outraged and then laughs; the idea of Bernard lecturing him about the social order is too grotesque. He decides he ought to teach Bernard a lesson, but not at the moment.

Meanwhile, Bernard takes John on a tour of civilized life, showing him a factory for helicopter lighting-sets operated by identical Gammas and Deltas, and the Eton School, where John observes students laughing at a geography film showing savages confessing their sins to Jesus and whipping themselves. He asks the Provost why they're laughing, but the Provost himself is laughing and says it's because it's just so extraordinarily funny. Bernard uses the opportunity to make a date with Miss Keate, the Head Mistress.

Although Lenina has received her share of fame, she feels a little like she's getting something under false pretenses, since everyone assumes she's had the Savage. When she tells people she hasn't, they don't believe her, and even Lenina can't figure out why she hasn't. She likes John, more and more, and every so often she catches him

looking at her in the way a man does when he likes a woman. But John won't touch her. Tonight, though, Bernard has an unexpected engagement and has asked her to take John to the feelies—her opportunity, she thinks.

At the feelies, Lenina and John watch a story about a Negro who, having fallen on his head, becomes obsessed with a Beta. He kidnaps her, keeping her hovering in the sky in a wildly anti-social three-week tryst, until she's rescued by three handsome young Alphas. During the story, Lenina shows John how to use the metal knobs on his chair to feel all the sensations the story characters feel. John is alarmed and disgusted by the sensation of kissing and the distorted lips of all the viewers participating in the public spectacle. He tells Lenina afterward that it was horrible and base and, looking down at her, he's obscurely terrified Lenina will cease to be something he's unworthy of. When the taxi copter lands at Lenina's apartment, John abruptly leaves her. Lenina is so disappointed she takes three half-gramme *soma* tablets to help her sleep.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Bernard experiences a brief period of social acceptance, his only real desire. Bernard's views may differ from those of the State, but he's too afraid of isolation to voice them without the relative safety he perceives in his new status. The fact that the Controller and everyone else recognize this makes it clear that Bernard's success will be short-lived. However, through Bernard, we understand what it feels like to be different—the State has not completely eliminated the square pegs from the round holes. The only question that remains is what's done with them.

John is obviously a fish out of water in the New World. He's also a public spectacle. No longer called by name, he's referred to as "the Savage," an attempt by the conditioned masses to classify him as they classify themselves. While John tries to assimilate what he sees and make some sense of it, the others, who have never been taught to make meaning, simply view him as a new form of entertainment. In this sense, the people of the New World remain throughout their lives as simple as children. This is intentional—infantilism is the standard, again taking to an extreme the common adult desire to return to childhood.

By contrast, no one wants to see Linda, who, as a corrupted product of the New World, represents a kind of nightmare-vision, an ugly reflection of everyone else. The people's inability to look at her is an inability to confront their own humanity without the aid of technology, the World State and *soma*. Ironically, Linda is still a perfect representative of her society. Despite all the hardships she's suffered as a result of her differing values on the Reservation, she has clung to her conditioning, and now she's grateful to be able to finally retreat into a permanent *soma*-holiday.

The tension caused by the conflict between Lenina's conditioning for promiscuity and John's opposing sexual values is rising. John is not only monogamous—a value taught on the Reservation—but he's also influenced by the Shakespearean plays he treasures. These have resulted in a strict code of behavior that directly opposes the New World's

values. John is disgusted by the feely, and desperately tries to retain his idea of Lenina as a symbol of purity.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Bernard has invited the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury, along with the Head Mistress of Eton, for a special party to meet the Savage, but John refuses to come out of his room. No amount of begging or wheedling persuades him to come out; instead, he flings Zuni curses through the closed door. Bernard has to tell his guests the Savage won't be appearing. The guests are furious. They accuse Bernard of playing a joke on them and begin talking about him, loudly and within earshot. Suddenly, Bernard is again a wretched little man who had alcohol poured in his bottle by mistake. Henry Foster tells the Arch-Community-Songster that the D.H.C. had been on the verge of transferring Bernard to Iceland.

Lenina is miserable, imagining that John won't appear because he doesn't like her. She suffers the same dreadful emptiness and nausea that precedes a Violent Passion Surrogate treatment. When the Arch-Community-Songster tells her to come with him, she goes, but she pauses outside the helicopter to look at the moon. Later, as the Arch-Community-Songster begins undressing her, she says she'd better take a couple of grams of *soma*.

Bernard is completely dejected and retreats into *soma* at night. During the day, the contrast between the intoxication of success and being his old self again makes him more miserable than ever. John comments to him that he's much more like the person he'd been at the Reservation, but Bernard tells him it's because he's unhappy. John says he'd rather be unhappy than have the fake happiness Bernard was having here.

Bernard blames John, knowing it's unfair, but powerless to take revenge on the people who actually snubbed him. So he sets about exacting small forms of vengeance on John, and on Helmholtz, who formed an immediate bond with John that's closer than Bernard ever enjoyed. Helmholtz, being a man of character, immediately forgave Bernard for his behavior, which made Bernard as resentful as he was grateful. Recently, Helmholtz admitted that he's been in some trouble of his own: in one of his lectures, he used some rhymes on solitude and the well-conditioned students promptly turned him in to the Principal. Now Helmholtz is a marked man.

Nevertheless, Helmholtz frequently visits John, who reads to him from his Shakespeare book. Helmholtz listens to the verses with excitement, until Bernard interrupts with caustic remarks. This is Bernard's revenge—shattering a favorite passage, defiling the words, saying a particular verse is just a Solidarity Service hymn. But it's Helmholtz who ultimately commits the worst offense. One day, as John reads from *Romeo and Juliet*, Helmhotz erupts into uncontrollable laughter. The idea of a mother and father, obscenities, both of them, forcing a girl to have someone she doesn't want, and the idiotic girl not telling them she was having someone she preferred, is absurd. And

bodies lying dead, un-cremated, wasting phosphorus, is too much for Helmholtz. The tears stream down his face and John, furious, locks the book away.

A little while later, Helmhotz apologizes. He says he supposes people need ridiculous, mad situations, and old Shakespeare was such a marvelous propaganda technician precisely because he had so many insane things to get excited about. But who's going to get excited about a boy having or not having a girl? Helmholtz thinks they need some other kind of madness, if only he knew where to find it.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Chapter 12 completes Bernard's inevitable downfall. Rather than resisting society with courage, he took revenge on it using John and Linda, innocent victims, and John, whose illusions have been destroyed, resists. Ironically, John echoes what Bernard earlier told Lenina when he says he'd rather be unhappy than have fake happiness. Bernard is now too miserable to care.

Helmholtz's forgiveness only drives home to Bernard that his problem, rather than being a physical defect, is a lack of character. Helmholtz, on the other hand, isn't afraid to rebel, and he does so knowing he'll be punished. He understands the power of words, and it is through these words that he and John are able to form a true bond. However, Helmholtz can't help his own conditioning, which prevents him from finding any real meaning in Shakespeare's works, and thus the madness in his present situation.

Lenina, unable to have John and not understanding why, feels the unfamiliar pangs of misery. In Huxley's world of instant gratification, the ability to have everything one wants fails to prepare Lenina for the violent emotions of *not* having.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Henry notices Lenina's growing sadness and suggests a Pregnancy Substitute or Violent Passion Surrogate treatment. Lenina tells him to shut up. She'd laugh if she weren't on the verge of crying—she has enough violent passion on her own. Later, in the Changing Room, Fanny tells Lenina that if she won't try someone else, she should just go to John and have him, period. Don't take no for an answer, she says.

Lenina follows Fanny's advice. Bolstered by a half-gramme of *soma*, Lenina goes to the apartment and confronts John. She asks him if he doesn't like her, and John says he loves her, but that he wants to do something to show he's worthy of her. Lenina doesn't understand, and grows more and more exasperated as John rattles on about the traditional methods of a man showing his worth—like bringing home the skin of a mountain lion. Lenina is horrified when he starts talking about marriage, and asks him to tell her simply whether or not he likes her. When he says he does, she kisses him. But the kiss reminds John of the feely they saw and the disgusting moans of the viewers. He's horrified and tries to disengage himself, but Lenina persists. Then she strips off her clothes. John retreats in terror, but she follows, pressing herself against him. Now enraged, John calls her a whore. He grabs her wrists and roughly thrusts her away. He shakes her by the shoulders, calls her a strumpet and tells her to get out before he kills her.

Lenina runs into the bathroom. Outside, she hears him muttering and pacing, repeating "impudent strumpet" over and over again. She asks for her clothes, which he tosses through the vent over the door. Lenina wonders how she's going to get out, when she hears the phone ring. She listens as John responds to the caller; someone is ill. He quickly hangs up and leaves the apartment. Once he's gone, Lenina darts out the door and runs.

Chapter 13 Analysis

In this chapter, Lenina's conditioning collides finally with John's idealism, sparking fury and violence. Lenina, a product of her society, has failed to live up to John's idealistic notions of perfection and purity, just as the New World has. John feels that Lenina has not only defiled herself but him, as well. Her promiscuity and John's perception of it drive home the point that a world in which everything is shared and everyone is the same is one that degrades individual significance. In John's mind, Lenina has been reduced to Bernard's earlier perception of her as a piece of meat.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

John finds his mother in the last bed on Ward 81 of the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying. She's staring incomprehensibly at the television box at the foot of the bed, drifting in and out of sleep. The nurse, who's amazed John should cast such importance on a single person, leaves him to sit at the side of the bed. There, John remembers all the moments of his childhood—Linda singing to him, her strange and childish rhymes and her stories of the beautiful and wondrous Other Place, so far from the actual reality of Civilization.

His thoughts are interrupted by the intrusion of a bunch of eight-year-old twins dressed in khaki. They swarm around the bed, horrified and fascinated by the flabby, bloated woman in the bed. They point and make fun until John seizes the nearest one by the collar and boxes him on the ears. The child runs away howling.

The nurse hurries to the bed, demanding to know what John's done to the child. John wants to know what the little brats are doing here—it's disgraceful. Indignantly, she tells him they're being death-conditioned, and she won't have any more of his interference. If he can't behave appropriately, she'll send him away.

Although the nurse has rounded up the children for a game, John has trouble reclaiming his thoughts. Linda opens her eyes, smiles and cries, "Popé!" and John asks imploringly if she doesn't know him. But Linda continues to say Popé's name, transforming John's grief to rage. He catches her by the shoulder and tells her he's John. She recognizes him, but has placed him in the context of her imaginary world on the Reservation, the *soma*-paradise she's been inhabiting. Confused, she tells him everyone belongs to everyone else, and then her voice suddenly dies and she gasps for air. Her face turns blue, her expression transforms to one of terror and John runs for the nurse.

By the time they get back to the bed, Linda is dead. John falls to his knees and sobs. The nurse watches the scandalous exhibition and wonders if she should remind John that he's destroying the twins' death-conditioning, as though death were something terrible, as though anyone matters that much! Finally, she hurries back and distracts the twins with chocolate éclairs.

Meanwhile, John is repeating "God" in remorse and grief. He starts violently when a khaki twin—one of five to have suddenly appeared—asks him what that is. The twins are each holding the stump of a chocolate éclair, which one now points at Linda while asking if she's dead. John pushes him away and walks out.

Chapter 14 Analysis

John is filled with grief as he relives moments with his dying mother. But these normal emotions are unacceptable in a world that has eliminated familial bonds and reduced death to an anonymous and pleasant event. The swarming sameness of the twins who defile the mystery of death enrages him. Their casual questions and messy chocolate, accompanied by the warnings of the nurse against displaying grief, reduce his mother to simply another body without identity or significance. John's own memories are erased by the distraction, and he's unable to recapture them, or reclaim his own identity. In Linda's *soma*-filled final moments, John is again unwanted and alone, and his grief turns to rage.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

John shoves his way through the crowd of Deltas coming off shift and waiting for their daily ration of *soma*. As he looks around, he's overwhelmed by the sea of sameness—all one hundred and sixty-two people with just two faces and voices—two identical Bokanovsky groups, one male, one female. He thinks of them as maggots swarming around, like the ones that swarmed over Linda. "How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world…." The words now mock him.

Then a loud voice announces the *soma* distribution and the Deltas line up. Enslaved, thinks John. Linda was enslaved, and she died. Others should live in freedom, he thinks, and the world will be made beautiful. It's suddenly clear what he has to do. He rushes through the crowd and begs the shocked Deltas not to take the *soma*. It's poison, he tells them. Unable to calm him, the Deputy Sub-Bursar calls Helmholtz.

Helmholtz and Bernard arrive as the Savage is shouting at the Deltas. Exasperated by their sullen stupidity, he's calling them babies, asking if they like mewling and puking. Then he grabs up the chest containing the *soma* pillboxes and starts throwing the boxes out the window. Bernard tells Helmholtz he's mad, but Helmholtz laughs exultantly and presses into the crowd. The Deltas are surrounding the Savage, and he and Helmholtz are punching at them, all the while throwing the pills out the window. Bernard is paralyzed by indecision, afraid of being killed no matter what he does.

Then the police arrive, and Bernard throws himself at them, crying, "Help, help!" They push him out of the way and spray the crowd with *soma* vapor, a few using water pistols filled with anesthetic. Bernard yells at them to hurry; in response, one of the policemen shoots him with the water pistol. Bernard collapses on the floor.

A Synthetic Music Box starts playing Anti-Riot Speech Number Two (Medium Strength). A calm and soothing voice, the Voice of Reason, the Voice of Good Feeling, exhorts everyone to be happy and peaceful. Two minutes later, the voice and *soma* have taken effect. The Deltas are hugging and kissing, and a fresh supply of pillboxes is brought in from the Bursary. They take their pills and move out.

The Sergeant asks John if he's come quietly, and he agrees, as does Helmholtz. Bernard has started to make for the door, but is stopped by another policeman. Although he says he can't imagine why they'd want him, he does have to admit he's a friend of the Savage.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Everywhere John looks, the New World is filled with sameness. Nothing has any significance, and no one is allowed to feel. John realizes that Linda, like everyone else,

has been enslaved by a life of ease. The *soma* pills are both a symbol and a cause of this slavery, and John tosses them out the window. But the simple-minded Deltas are too much a product of their society to understand his call for freedom. Recognizing the futility in his actions, John grows increasingly frustrated and violent until the police come and restore order with *soma* vapor and the near-hypnopaedic anti-riot tape.

Again, Bernard proves a coward, unable to commit to rebellion or conformity, while Helmholtz dives into the fray to help John.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

The three are taken to the World Controller's office. Mustapha Mond enters and shakes hands with all three of them, but it's John he addresses. He says he understands John doesn't like civilization. John, taken off-guard by the good-humored intelligence of the Controller's face, replies truthfully. He doesn't.

John admits there are some nice things about civilization, and is surprised when Mustapha Mond quotes Shakespeare. The Controller admits he's one of the few who knows about the books; since he makes the rules, he can break them with impunity.

John asks why the books are prohibited, and Mond says they haven't any use for old things here, especially when they're beautiful. Beauty is attractive, and they want people to be attracted by new things. Besides, they couldn't understand stories like *Othello* and *Romeo Juliet*. John asks why they couldn't write new stories like *Othello* that the people could understand, and Helmholtz adds that's exactly what he'd like to write. But the Controller says if they did that, the story wouldn't be *Othello* at all. To write something the people could comprehend, the story couldn't possibly be anything like the old ones.

He says the modern world isn't like Othello's world. It's stable now, and people are happy. They get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off and safe, and they're never ill or afraid of death. They're ignorant of passion and old age, and aren't plagued with parents, children or lovers to feel strongly about. They're so conditioned they can't help behaving as they ought. And if anything does go wrong, there's always *soma*. The Controller laughs. *Soma*, which the Savage chucked out the window in the name of liberty!

He tells John he can't expect Deltas to understand what liberty is, much less *Othello*. John protests, saying *Othello* is good, and the Controller agrees it is, but that's the price you pay for stability. They sacrificed art and science so everyone could be happy all the time and society would be stable. Art, instead of having meaning, provides agreeable sensations. Science is limited to exclude the pursuit of Truth, which is incompatible with happiness. Happiness, he says, actually looks pretty squalid compared to the spectacular display when people over-compensate for misery: wars, the fight against misfortune, passion, doubt. Happiness is never grand.

As for the Bokanovsky groups, they're the foundation on which everything is built. They're happy with their undemanding eight-hour shift work, and happy with their *soma* recreation. They have everything they need. Once, he says, they tried shortening the workdays to four hours, since they have the technology to make work more efficient. But the workers were no happier; they just had more time to take *soma*.

As for populating the world with Alphas, as John now suggests, the Controller tells them about an experiment in A.F. 473, in which they populated the entire island of Cypress with nothing but Alphas. Alphas can be completely socialized, as long as you have them do Alpha work. Within the constraints of Epsilon work, they'd go mad, and the experiment proved it. The Alphas on Cypress were given supplies to get started and left to manage their own affairs, but laws were ignored, orders disobeyed, and people doing low-grade work intrigued to get the better positions, while those in the better positions intrigued to keep them. Soon, civil war broke out, and after nineteen of the twenty-two thousand were killed, they petitioned the World Controllers to take over the government, which they did. The optimum population, the Controller says, is modeled on an iceberg, with eight-ninths below the water.

There are many inventions that might make modern life even easier, more efficient, says the Controller, but they can never be used, because truth is a menace and science is dangerous. Once, people believed Knowledge was the highest good, but mass production demanded a shift of emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Universal happiness keeps the wheels turning when truth and beauty can't. And of course, when the masses seized political power, it was happiness rather than truth and beauty they wanted—the ability to live comfortably, peaceably, and securely.

The Controller admits that once he was a pretty good physicist, and he, like they, undertook some unorthodox theories that nearly got him what Bernard and Helmholtz will get. The announcement galvanizes Bernard, who begs the controller not to send him to an island, until the Controller finally has to call a security team to vaporize him with *soma*. With Bernard removed from the room and put to bed, the Controller continues.

He says if Bernard had any sense, he'd realize being sent to an island is a reward, rather than a punishment. There, he'll be able to live and work with people like him—individuals—in a word, everyone who's anyone. Mustapha Mond sighs and tells Helmholtz he almost envies him. He says he was given a choice between being sent to an island, where he could have got on with his pure science, or going to the Controllers' Council, where he might one day succeed to an actual Controllership. He chose the latter. Although happiness is a hard master, especially when it's other people's happiness, duty is duty, and you can't consult your own preferences. That was how he paid for his crimes against society—by choosing to serve happiness.

Finally, the Controller asks where Helmholtz would like to go, since there's a large choice of islands. Helmholtz chooses something relatively uncomfortable—windy and stormy—which might inspire his writing. The Controller says he very much likes the idea, though he officially disapproves of it. All the same, he grants the wish, proposing the Falkland Islands.

Chapter 16 Analysis

The Controller's explanation of society provides a rational counterpoint to John's pre-modern values. The contrast between the Controller's description of the pre-modern world, carried over from Chapter 3, and the modern one is all the more horrifying for the thread of truth it contains. The pre-modern world he describes is one of hypocrisy, selfishness and violence. It's a world that demanded comfort and stability and accepted the easy solutions it was offered, even at the price of emotional and intellectual freedom.

The Controller, far from being the unfeeling dictator one might expect, is a free-thinker himself, who was forced to choose between the pursuit of truth and the good of society. This represents a powerful question in the novel, which only the reader can answer for himself: which is the greater good? Free will, knowledge and emotion are necessarily accompanied by struggle. To eliminate the struggle is to eliminate the higher ideals and settle for a comfortable conformity.

The fact that the World State has pursued other options, all of which have failed, warns that it is the people comprising society—rather than a few individuals—who determine the outcomes. People must either accept misery as a part of being human, or sacrifice emotion and individuality in favor of creating a happiness that is nevertheless artificial.

In the end, the World State persists, precisely because it is the choice of the majority. It doesn't execute nonconformists; in fact, the punishment is really a reward. Freethinkers are given a comfortable place to live among others like them, where they're free to pursue their own ideals without compromising the stability of society.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Alone with the Controller, the Savage says they've paid a high price for happiness—art and science. He asks if there's anything else. The Controller says there's religion, of course. He crosses the room and withdraws some books from his safe. He reads, "You can only be independent of God while you've got youth and prosperity; independence won't take you safely to the end." And, "The religious sentiment will compensate us for all our losses." Now there's always youth and prosperity; there are no losses. Instead of God, they have *soma*. He tells John to call it the fault of civilization; God isn't compatible with machinery, medicine and universal happiness. You have to choose.

They debate over whether a belief in God is intrinsic, John thinking of the sky and moon and mesa back at the Reservation, and the Controller saying that a belief in God is conditioned. All the same, says the Controller, it's natural to believe in God when you're alone and thinking of dying, but no one is ever alone anymore, and dying isn't frightening. John protests that God is the reason for everything noble and heroic, but the Controller says civilization has no need for nobility or heroism. Conditions have got to be thoroughly unstable before any opportunity for heroism arises. In a properly organized society, there are no divided allegiances, no temptations to be resisted, no objects of love to be fought for or defended. And what you have to do is on the whole so pleasant that you don't mind doing it. If you do, by some misfortune, there's *soma* to give you a holiday from the facts. Anybody can be virtuous now.

John still can't fathom it. He says that what they need is something with tears for a change. There's something to be said for living dangerously, and the Controller agrees there is. That's why they have compulsory Violent Passion Surrogate treatments once a month—they flood the system with adrenaline to reproduce the complete physiological effects of fear and rage. All the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona without the inconveniences.

John says he likes the inconveniences. He doesn't want comfort. He wants God, poetry, real danger, freedom, goodness and sin. The Controller points out that he's claiming the right to be unhappy. John agrees. He claims the right to be unhappy, and all the rights the Controller suggests—to age, have diseases, have too little to eat, and to generally be tortured by pain of every kind. Mustapha Mond shrugs and says he's welcome to them.

Chapter 17 Analysis

While John thinks human beings have an instinctive need to believe in a divine being, the Controller says God is only a counterpoint to misery. Without misery, people have no need for religion, which is simply another social and moral structure imposed by

conditioning. This question is never resolved—again, it's left up to the reader to decide the answer. But John remains resolute about his own beliefs. In claiming his right to misery and happiness, he claims the right to his humanity.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Bernard and Helmholtz find John throwing up in the bathroom. When he comes out, they ask if he ate something disagreeable. John says yes, he ate Civilization. It poisoned him; he was defiled, and then he ate his own wickedness. But he drank some mustard and water and now he's purified.

They tell him they've come to say goodbye; they're off tomorrow morning. Bernard tells him how ashamed he is for everything that happened, but John presses his hand, and the three sit together silently, happy for the sadness, a symptom of their love. Then John says the Controller wouldn't let him go with them, because he wants to go on with the experiment. But he plans to go away tomorrow, to someplace where he can be alone.

John moves into an old lighthouse on a hill between Puttenham and Elstead. He has a grand view marred only by skyscrapers in the distance, and in the valley below is a small village with a poultry farm and a Vitamin-D factory. Beyond these are the woods. Looking out through the glass windows, John has a sense of looking out on the incarnation of a divine being. He wonders who he is, to be living in the presence of God, and he whips himself, prays to Jesus and Pookong and the Zuni Awonawilona, determining to live as rough an existence as possible. He's been given some money, which he uses on short-term supplies and seeds for a garden, and he makes a bow and arrows for hunting.

He takes such pleasure in crafting the bow and arrows that he immediately feels sorry for forgetting Linda, and his own unkindness toward her, and the loathsome twins. He has sworn to remember, and he picks up his whip and starts whipping himself. At this time, some Delta-Minus land workers come across him and pause in dismay. Soon after, the reporters follow, trying to get him to comment on Civilization. John curses at them in Zuni, growing progressively more violent. But a filmmaker named Darwin Bonaparte has staked out the woods near the lighthouse, and is able to take footage of the Savage, which he turns into a film. Twelve days later, the lighthouse is swarmed by helicopters filled with people descending like locusts. They throw John almonds and sex-hormone gum as if he's an ape, and chant for the whip—they want to see the whipping stunt.

Then the door of another helicopter opens and out step Lenina and Henry Foster. John is immediately seized by a violent, fury, and runs at the tentatively smiling and crying Lenina with his whip. As Henry ducks behind the helicopter, John beats Lenina and then himself. There's a whoop of delighted excitement—pain seems to be a fascinating horror. The crowd, conditioned to follow examples, begin miming the Savage's gestures with the whip, striking at each other in a frenzy. As John yells, "Kill it," the crowd starts singing "Orgy-porgy," beating one another in six-eight time.

After midnight, John is stupefied by *soma* and exhausted by a frenzy of sensuality. He doesn't awaken until the sun is high and he looks up at the light and suddenly remembers everything. He covers his eyes and cries to God. That evening, the first arrivals of the swarm find him hanging in the lighthouse.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The sadness the three men feel on parting is a symptom of the growing awareness of their own humanity. As such, it makes them happy. John, alone in his lighthouse, tries to repent for his behavior with his mother and his baser urges. He also tries to return to a simple life, but Civilization isn't done experimenting on him; John is a casualty of the constantly churning wheels of progress.

Far from eating Civilization, it eats him, and John is inevitably destroyed. Unable to rid himself of the worst of human emotions without the artificial means Civilization provides, and tormented in a world he can't understand or escape, he opts to kill himself, thus preserving his freedom of choice and his individuality.

Characters

Controller

See Mustapha Mond

Fanny Crowne

Like her coworker, Lenina Crowne, Fanny is a nineteen-year-old Beta. Though she shares Lenina's last name and is genetically related to her, she is just a friend. Family connections have no meaning in civilization. Her character is never really developed, serving only as a foil to contrast society's values—which she accepts completely— with Lenina's unconventional behavior.

Lenina Crowne

Lenina Crowne is, like Linda, a Beta. Young and beautiful, she has auburn hair and blue eyes; however, she also has a discolored appearance, reminiscent of lupus. This is due to the strange light conditions at the Embryo Store of the Hatchery, where she is employed. Lenina is a shallow person, completely accepting the values of her society without question. However, part of her longs to form a lasting relationship with one man, a desire that is considered ugly and dirty in a society that believes promiscuity is healthy. For this reason, while she is attracted to Henry Foster, she chooses to date Bernard Marx, too. Bernard is a little unusual because he is discontented, and she finds this attractive in spite of herself and in spite of the warnings from her friend Fanny to stay away from him. When she meets John the Savage, she feels tremendous sexual attraction to him, but she has been taught to look down upon love, passion, and commitment. Unable to escape her conditioning, she fears his attraction to her.

Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning

The Director loves to hear himself talk, and, therefore, greatly enjoys giving guided tours of the Hatchery to visiting students, as he does at the beginning of the book. Like many intelligent Alphas, the Director secretly used to wonder about life outside of the society over which he has so much control. We find that he once took a trip with a young woman named Linda to the New Mexico Indian reservation to see how the "primitive" people lived. Once there, Linda, who was carrying his child, disappeared. He assumed she was dead and returned without her. The Director tells this story to Bernard, but quickly realizes his revelation is unseemly for a man of his great reputation and returns to acting professionally, even gruffly, with Bernard.

When Linda's baby, John the Savage, comes to London as an adult, he faces the Director and calls him Father. Everyone reacts as if it were an obscene joke. The

Director is horrified and humiliated at the public revelation that he fathered a child, just like a primitive person. His reputation is irreparably ruined.

Henry Foster

Henry Foster is a fair-haired, blue-eyed, ruddy complected scientist in the London Hatchery and a model citizen. He is efficient, pleasant, and cooperative, working hard at his job and spending his leisure time engaging in mindless, if harmless, activities, such as watching feelies (movies), playing new forms of golf, and having casual sex. Lenina Crowne has been dating him exclusively for four months, a practice that raises eyebrows because romantic commitments are frowned upon. Henry does not realize that Lenina has been faithful to him and would be upset if he knew because, as Fanny points out to Lenina, he is "the perfect gentleman." He expects nice girls to sleep around just as he does. Huxley uses the character of Henry Foster to explain how the Hatchery functions and how average citizens are supposed to behave.

Benito Hoover

Huxley took the name Hoover from U.S. President Herbert Hoover, and Benito from the Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. A friend and colleague of Henry Foster, Benito is one of many men who would like to have sex with Lenina Crowne. He is disapproving of Bernard Marx until Bernard introduces the Savage around. Then, like many other people, Benito fawns over Bernard, bringing him gifts.

John the Savage

John the Savage is the central character in *Brave New World* through whom Huxley compares the primitive and civilized societies of the future. He is the son of the Director and Linda, and was born and raised on an Indian reservation in New Mexico after an accident stranded Linda there (the Director had mistakenly assumed she was dead and returned to civilization without her). John, now twenty, tall, and handsome, was raised in the Indian culture. He has a utopian view of civilization that is based on his mother Linda's tales, and he has a vast knowledge of Shakespeare because he learned to read using the only book available to him: *Shakespeare's Complete Works.* Shakespeare greatly influences John the Savage's perception of the world around him and what it means to be human.

Sometimes called just "the Savage," John represents the idea of the Noble Savage: that a person raised in a primitive world, away from western civilization, has a purity of heart that civilized people lack (although Huxley does not portray the primitive world as a paradise). John the Savage cannot understand why civilized people think that having been born to and raised by your parents is an abomination, or why they do not feel sorrow when confronted with death. He very much loves his mother, and cannot understand why his father rejects him. After several discussions with Mustapha Mond,

he quickly realizes that because his values are completely different from other people's, no place exists for him within civilization.

Linda

A Beta-minus, Linda had worked contentedly in the Fertilizing Room until an incident that occurred twenty years earlier while on a date with the Director. They had visited the New Mexico Indian reservation, where she fell, injuring her head. When she regained consciousness the Director was gone. Pregnant with his child, she was taken in by the Indians, but she never really fit into their world because she had been conditioned to live in civilization. For example, Linda continued to be sexually promiscuous, having sex with the other women's mates, because that was the way a proper girl behaved where she came from—the "Other Place," as she called it.

Linda was very embarrassed to give birth to her son, John, and tried to teach him that civilization was superior to life on the reservation. However, she could not explain why it was superior. Because she had not been conditioned to understand the reasons behind the way things worked in the Other Place, she never lost the values she had been conditioned to accept.

When Linda meets Bernard and Lenina she is anxious but thrilled to return to civilization, but she cannot emotionally handle the return. The embarrassment of being a mother, of being old and fat and no longer physically beautiful, is too much for her, so she chooses to drug herself with soma, eventually dying from an overdose. Her inability to handle the contrast between the primitive world and the civilized one foreshadows her son John's final decision to commit suicide.

Bernard Marx

Like other members of civilization, Bernard Marx is named after a person whose ideas greatly influenced the society in *Brave New World:* Karl Marx. Bernard Marx, an Alpha, is a very intelligent man and a specialist in sleep-teaching. However, he is discontented with society and does not completely accept its values—he hates the casual attitude toward sex, dislikes sports, and prefers to be alone. Some people think Bernard was improperly conditioned—that the chemistry of the womblike bottle he lived in as a fetus was somehow altered. They point to the fact that Bernard is eight centimeters shorter and considerably thinner than the typical Alpha as evidence that a physical reason exists for his emotional differences. This physical inadequacy makes Bernard self-conscious, and he is particularly uncomfortable around lower-class people, since they remind him that he physically resembles his inferiors.

Bernard is a selfish person, trying to bend the rules of society for his own needs and using other people to boost his own fortune. He vacillates between boasting and self-pity, which annoys his friend Helmholtz Watson. When Bernard discovers the Savage, he realizes that by bringing him back to society he will be able to get revenge against the Director, who has been threatening him with exile to Iceland. The Director's

reputation will be ruined when it is revealed he is a father. Bernard also realizes that the Savage will be the key to his acceptance into society, a sort of plaything that everyone will want to see.

Indeed, Bernard brings the Savage home, and suddenly everyone wants to meet and spend time with him and the Savage. Bernard tells himself that people like him because of his discovery, unaware that behind their backs they are gossiping about him, saying that anyone so odd and so self-absorbed is bound to come to a bad end. He relishes his new popularity with women and gets angry at John for not cooperating with his attempts to show him off; he believes John is ruining his chances of finally being accepted. Bernard's popularity is predictably short-lived, and in the end he is indeed exiled to Iceland, which makes him very unhappy.

Mitsima

Mitsima is the Indian elder who teaches John the Savage the ways of the Indian people.

Mustafa Mond

Mustapha Mond is the Controller of world society and an intellectual who secretly indulges his own passion for knowledge, literature, and history, all of which are denied to ordinary citizens in order to keep people from questioning the structure and values of the society that has been created for them. Of medium height and with black hair, a hooked nose, large red lips, and piercing dark eyes, Mustapha Mond has a name that is a play on the words "Must staff a mond." ("Mond" is derived from the French word "monde," which means world.) He is a friendly and happy fellow, faithful to his job and his vision of a utopian society. He enjoys discussing Shakespeare with John the Savage, and treats him like a favorite pupil. Formerly a scientist, as a young man he was given the choice of becoming a controller or an exiled dissident, so he chose the former. As the Controller, he has free will, but he denies it to others. Mond understands the frustrations of Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson, who have trouble accepting all of the restrictions of their carefully controlled lives. In the end, however, Mustapha Mond's loyalty is to the society rather than to individuals, so he banishes Marx, Watson, and the Savage to isolated areas where they cannot influence others.

Pope

Pope is an Indian man with whom Linda forms a bond, sleeping with him regularly despite her feeling that she ought to be promiscuous. Pope is amused by John's jealousy and hatred toward him. He introduces Linda to *mescal,* an alcoholic drink made by the Indians, which Linda thinks is a sorry substitute for soma because it gives her a hangover.

Thomas

See Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning

Tomakin

See Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning

Helmholtz Watson

Watson (named by Huxley after John B. Watson, the founder of the Behaviorist School of psychology) is an Alpha-plus, a highly intellectual writer and lecturer. He is a powerfully built, broad shouldered man with dark curly hair. Although he is a typical handsome Alpha male, he is, like his friend Bernard Marx, a little different from his peers. Watson is just a bit smarter than he is supposed to be, a fact he has only recently discovered.

Watson has a distinguished career as an emotional engineer and writer, penning snappy slogans and simplistic rhymes designed to promote the values of society and pacify people. However, he is frustrated by the limitations of his writing and believes that something more meaningful to write must exist. Because of this unconventional desire, he feels a little like an outsider. He befriends Bernard Marx because he sees in him a similar sense of not belonging, of dissatisfaction, but he is disturbed by Bernard's self-pitying and boastful behavior. Watson is brilliant, but when the Savage introduces him to Shakespeare's works, he can't completely understand the plays because he is so limited by his conditioning. Watson accepts his exile to the isolated Falkland Islands, hoping that being around other outsiders and living in uncomfortable conditions will inspire his writing.

Themes

Free Will versus Enslavement

Only the Controllers of society, the ten elite rulers, have freedom of choice. Everyone else has been conditioned from the time they were embryos to accept unquestioningly all the values and beliefs of the carefully ordered society. Upper-class Alphas are allowed a little freedom because their higher intellect makes it harder for them to completely accept the rules of society. For example, they are occasionally allowed to travel to the Indian reservation to see how outsiders live. It is hoped that exposure to an "inferior" and "primitive" society will finally squelch any doubts about their own society's superiority.

Beyond this, however, no room exists in "civilized" society for free will, creativity, imagination, or diversity, all of which can lead to conflict, war, and destruction. Therefore, dissidents who want these freedoms are exiled to remote corners of the earth. Anyone who feels upset for any reason quickly ingests a dose of the tranquilizer "soma." John the Savage believes that the price to be paid for harmony in this society is too great. He sees the people as enslaved, addicted to drugs, and weakened and dehumanized by their inability to handle delayed gratification or pain of any sort. He exercises his freedom of choice by killing himself rather than becoming a part of such a world.

Class Conflict

As a result of conditioning, class conflict has been eliminated in Huxley's future world. The Controllers have decided there should be five social classes, from the superior, highly intelligent, and physically attractive Alphas□who have the most desirable and intellectually demanding jobs□to the inferior, mentally deficient, and physically unattractive Epsilons, who do the least desirable, menial jobs. Huxley makes the Alphas tall and fair and the Epsilons dark-skinned, reflecting the common prejudices at the time the novel was written. All people are genetically bred and conditioned from birth to be best adapted to the lives they will lead and to accept the class system wholeheartedly. Members of different classes not only look physically different but wear distinctive colors to make sure that no one can be mistaken for a member of a different group. Here, Huxley points out the shallowness in our own society: members of different social classes dress differently in order to be associated with their own class. Only John the Savage can see people as they really are because he has not been conditioned to accept unquestioningly the rigid class structure. Thus, when he sees a dark-skinned person of a lower caste, he is reminded of Othello, a Shakespearean character who was both dark-skinned and admirable. John does not think to judge a person by his appearance. Because Huxley was from a distinguished, educated, upper-class British family, he was very aware of the hypocrisies of the privileged classes. The Controller and Director represent the arrogant hypocrisy of the ruling class.

Sex

The inhabitants of Huxley's future world have very unusual attitudes toward sex by the standards of contemporary society. Promiscuity is considered healthy and superior to committed, monogamous relationships. Even small children are encouraged to engage in erotic play. The Controllers realize that strong loyalties created by committed relationships can cause conflicts between people, upsetting productivity and harmony. Since the needs of society are far more important than the needs of the individual, the Controllers strongly believe that sacrificing human attachments—even the attachment between children and their parents—is a small price to pay for social harmony. Women use contraception to avoid pregnancy, and if they do get pregnant accidentally, they hurry to the abortion center, a place Linda recalls with great fondness. She regrets bitterly having had to give birth in what she feels was a "dirty" affair.

People in Huxley's day were becoming more accepting of casual sex than previous generations, and they had much greater access to birth control. However, as Huxley shows, even with the best technology to prevent pregnancy, people can only maintain their loose sexual mores by sacrificing intimacy and commitment.

Science and Technology

Science and technology provide the means for controlling the lives of the citizens in *Brave New World.* First, cloning is used to create many of human beings from the same fertilized egg. The genetically similar eggs are placed in bottles, where the growing embryos and fetuses are exposed to external stimulation and chemical alteration to condition them for their lives after being "decanted" or "hatched."

Babies and children are subject to cruel conditioning. They are exposed to flowers, representing the beauty of nature, and given electric shocks to make them averse to nature. They are brought to the crematorium, where they play and are given treats so that they will associate death with pleasantness and therefore not object when society determines it is time for them to die. Also, hypnopaedia, or sleep teaching, is used to indoctrinate children. All of these extreme methods of conditioning could conceivably work.

Adults use "soma," a tranquilizer, to deaden feelings of pain or passion. Frivolous gadgets and hi-tech entertainment provide distractions, preventing the childlike citizens from engaging in rich emotional and intellectual lives or from experiencing challenges that might lead to emotional and intellectual growth. Indeed, the Controller feels that technology's purpose is to make the distance between the feeling of desire and the gratification of that desire so short that citizens are continually content and not tempted to spend their time thinking and questioning.

Since books are taboo and knowledge restricted only to the powerful elite minority, the citizens are unaware that technology has been used to limit their lives. In fact, in writing this novel of ideas Huxley aims to make contemporary citizens question the ethics of

using technology for social purposes and to realize the dangers of misuse of technology by totalitarian governments.

Knowledge and Ignorance

To control the citizens, the Controllers make sure people are taught only what they need to know to function within society and no more. Knowledge is dangerous. Books are strictly forbidden. Art and culture, which stimulate the intellect, emotions, and spirit, are reduced to pale imitations of the real thing. Existing music is synthetic and characterized by absurd popular songs that celebrate the values of society. Movies appeal to the lowest common denominator. Citizens are conditioned to believe that wanting to be alone is strange. They seek shallow relationships with each other, minus intimacy and commitment, rather than spending time alone thinking. If they did spend time in contemplation, they might, like Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson, start questioning the meaning of their lives and the function of the society.

Only the Controller has access to the great literature and culture of the past. He enjoys discussing Shakespeare with John the Savage. Huxley, by making his primitive character have only Shakespeare's works on which to base his perceptions, shows the power of such great literature: that it can capture an enormous range of human experience, to which the citizens of the brave new world are completely oblivious. In the end, however, the people who accidentally attain knowledge have only two choices if they are to survive: they can become oppressors or outcasts.

Style

Point of View

Huxley tells the story of *Brave New World* in a third-person, omniscient (all-knowing) voice. The narrative is chronological for the most part, jumping backward in time only to reveal some history, as when the Director explains to Bernard Marx what happened when he visited the Indian reservation, or when John and Linda recall their lives on the reservation before meeting Bernard and Lenina. The first six chapters have very little action and are instead devoted to explaining how this society functions. This is accomplished by having the reader overhear the tour that the Director, and later the Controller, lead through the "hatchery," or human birth factory, lecturing to some students.

Once familiarized with this future world, the reader learns more about the characters through their dialogue and interaction. For example, Bernard and Lenina's conversation on their date shows how deeply conditioned Lenina is to her way of life and how difficult it is for Bernard to meet society's expectations of how he should feel and behave. Throughout the rest of the book, Huxley continues to reveal the way the society functions, but instead of having the reader overhear lectures, he portrays seemingly ordinary events, showing how they unfold in this very different society. When Huxley finally presents the arguments for and against the compromises the society makes in order to achieve harmony, he does this in the form of a dialogue between Mustapha Mond and John the Savage. The book ends with a sober and powerful description of John's vain struggle to carve out a life for himself as a hermit. This is contrasted with the humorous, satirical tone of much of the book, making it especially moving.

Setting

Set in London, England, six hundred years in Huxley's future, *Brave New World* portrays a totalitarian society where freedom, diversity, and conflict have been replaced by efficiency, progress, and harmony. The contrast between our world and that of the inhabitants of Huxley's futuristic society is made especially clear when Huxley introduces us to the Indian reservation in New Mexico, where the "primitive" culture of the natives has been maintained. Huxley chose London as his main setting because it was his home, but he implies, by mentioning the ten world controllers, that the entire world operates the same way that the society in London does.

Irony and Satire

Brave New World is also considered a novel of ideas, otherwise known as an apologue: because the ideas in the book are what is most important, the characterization and plot are secondary to the concepts Huxley presents. In order to portray the absurdity of the future society's values as well as our contemporary society's values, he uses satire

(holding up human folly to ridicule), parody (a humorous twist on a recognizable style of an author or work), and irony (words meaning something very different from what they literally mean, or what the characters think they mean). Ordinary scenes the reader can recognize, such as church services and dates, incorporate behavior, internal thoughts, and dialogue that reveal the twisted and absurd values of the citizens of the future. Because the roots of many of the practices seen in this futuristic society can be found in contemporary ideas, the reader is led to question the values of contemporary society. For example, people today are taught to value progress and efficiency. However, when taken to the absurd extreme of babies being hatched in bottles for maximum efficiency, the reader realizes that not all progress and efficiency is good. Huxley even satirizes sentimentality by having the citizens of the future sing sentimental songs about "dear old mom," only they sing a version in which they fondly recall their "dear old bottle," the one in which they grew as fetuses. Being sentimental about one's origin in a test tube will strike many readers as funny, as well as ironic.

Allusion

Throughout the book, evidence of Huxley's vast knowledge of science, technology, literature, and music can be found. He makes frequent allusions to Shakespeare, mostly through the character of John, who quotes the bard whenever he needs to express a strong human emotion. Indeed, the title itself is from Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* in which the sheltered Miranda first encounters some men and declares, "How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world / That has such people in't!" Huxley also makes many allusions to powerful, influential people of his day, naming characters, buildings, and religions after them. For example, Henry Ford (1863-1947) is as a god; his name is used in interjections (Oh my Ford!), in calculating the year (A.F., or After Ford, instead of A.D., which stands for "anno domini"□in the year of our Lord). Even the Christian cross has been altered to resemble the T from the old Model T car built by Ford.

The character of the Savage is reminiscent of the Noble Savage□the concept that primitive people are more innocent and pure of heart than civilized people. However, Huxley is careful not to portray him as heroic or his primitive culture as ideal. The reader sympathizes with him because he is the person who most represents current values.

One of the more subtle influences on the story, however, is Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the founder of modern psychoanalysis. The Savage is a prime example of someone who suffers from what Freud termed the Oedipus complex, a powerful desire to connect with one's mother. At one point, when he sees his mother with her lover, he identifies with Hamlet, who also had an Oedipal complex, an over attachment to his mother that prevented him from accepting her as sexually independent of him. Freud believed that childhood experiences shape adult perceptions, feelings, and behaviors, and the characters in the novel are all clearly compelled to feel and act according to the lessons they learned as children, even when faced with evidence that their behavior results in personal suffering.

Historical Context

When Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in 1931 it was at the beginning of a worldwide depression. The American stock market crash of 1929 had closed banks, wiped out many people's savings, and caused unemployment rates to soar. To make matters worse, American farmers were suffering from some of the worst droughts in history, leading to widespread poverty and migration out of the farming belt. People longed for the kind of economic security that Huxley gives to the citizens of his fictional world.

The effects of the crash were beginning to be felt worldwide, including in England, where Huxley lived. However much economic issues were on his mind, Huxley was also very much aware of the social and scientific changes that had begun to sweep the world in the beginning of the century, and particularly through the 1920s. Technology was rapidly replacing many workers, but politicians promised that progress would solve the unemployment and economic problems. Instead, workers were forced to take whatever jobs were available. More often than not, unskilled or semi-skilled laborers worked long hours without overtime pay, under unsafe conditions, and without benefits such as health insurance or pensions. Unlike the inhabitants of the brave new world, they had no job guarantees and no security. Furthermore, they often had little time for leisure and little money to spend on entertainment or on material luxuries.

In order to increase consumer demand for the products being produced, manufacturers turned to advertising in order to convince people they ought to spend their money buying products and services. Also, Henry Ford, who invented the modern factory assembly line, was now able to efficiently mass produce cars. For the first time, car parts were interchangeable and easily obtained, and Ford deliberately kept the price of his Model T low enough so that his workers could afford them. In order to pay for the new automobiles, many people who did not have enough cash needed to stretch out payments over time, and thus buying on credit became acceptable. Soon, people were buying other items on credit, fueling the economy by engaging in overspending and taking on debt.

All of these economic upheavals affected Huxley's vision of the future. First, he saw Ford's production and management techniques as revolutionary, and chose to make Ford not just a hero to the characters in his novels but an actual god. Huxley also saw that technology could eventually give workers enormous amounts of leisure time. The result could be more time spent creating art and solving social problems, but Huxley's Controllers, perceiving those activities as threatening to the order they've created, decide to provide foolish distractions to preoccupy their workers. These future workers do their duty and buy more and more material goods to keep the economy rolling, even to the point of throwing away clothes rather than mending them.

In Huxley's day, people's values and ideas were changing rapidly. The 1920s generation of youth rejected the more puritanical Victorian values of their parents' generation. Men and women flirted with modern ideas, such as communism, and questioned the rigid attitudes about social class. Some embraced the idea of free love (sex outside of

marriage or commitment), as advocated by people like author Gertrude Stein (1874-1946). Others were talking publicly about sex, or using contraceptives, which were being popularized by Margaret Sanger (1883-1966), the American leader of the birth-control movement. Women began to smoke in public, cut their hair into short, boyish bobs, and wear much shorter, looser skirts. These new sexual attitudes are taken to an extreme in *Brave New World.*

Scientists were also beginning to explore the possibilities of human engineering. Russian scientist Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) showed that one can create a conditioned response in animals. For example, he rang a bell whenever he fed a group of dogs, and over time Pavlov's dogs began to salivate at the sound of a bell, even when no food was presented to them. Pavlov's fellow scientist, John B. Watson (1878-1958), founded the Behaviorist School of psychology: he believed that human beings could be reduced to a network of stimuli and responses, which could then be controlled by whoever experimented on them. In the 1930s, German Nobel Prize winner Hans Spemann (1869-1941) developed the controversial science of experimental embryology, manipulating the experience of a human fetus in the womb in order to influence it. The eugenics movement□which was an attempt to limit the childbearing of lower-class, ethnic citizens □was popular in the 1920s as well.

Meanwhile, the fad of hypnopaedia, or sleep teaching, was popular in the 1920s and 1930s. People hoped to teach themselves passively by listening to instructional tapes while they were sleeping. Although the electroencephalograph, a device invented in 1929 that measures brain waves, would prove that people have a limited ability to learn information while asleep, it also proved that hypnopaedia can influence emotions and beliefs. Meanwhile, the ideas of Viennese physician Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the father of modern psychoanalysis, were also becoming popular. He believed, among other things, that most psychological problems stem from early childhood experiences. Huxley incorporated all of these technological and psychological discoveries into his novel, having the Controllers misuse this information about controlling human behavior to oppress their citizens.

Brave New World was written just before dictators such as Adolf Hitler in Germany, Benito Mussolini in Italy, Joseph Stalin in Russia, and Mao Tse-tung in China created totalitarian states in countries that were troubled by economic and political problems. These leaders often used extreme tactics to control their citizens, from propaganda and censorship to mass murder. Huxley could not have predicted what was on the horizon. The grim totalitarian state that would come about would be incorporated into author George Orwell's futuristic anti-utopian novel *1984* (1948) and strongly influenced by Huxley's *Brave New World.* When *Brave New World* was published in 1932 it sold well in England and modestly in the United States, but it eventually brought Huxley international fame on both sides of the Atlantic. It was clear to critics that Huxley had written a novel of ideas, in which the characters and plot were not as well-developed as the book's themes, which bring up many important concepts, from freedom to class structure. Huxley used humor and satire to point out the excesses and shallowness of contemporary culture.

Today, *Brave New World* is considered an archetypical dystopian novel portraying a seemingly utopian world that is, upon closer inspection, a horror. Critics generally agree that while Huxley was not a particularly innovative writer, his ideas were provocative and fresh and his writing eloquent. He was appreciated for both his analysis of post-World War I English life and, on a larger scale, his promotion of humanistic values through literature.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Hochman, who teaches at Portland Community College, provides an overview of the unique setting Huxley constructed for his novel and how the work is an argument for individualism.

Aldous Huxley's most enduring and prophetic work, *Brave New World* (1932), describes a future world in the year 2495, a society combining intensified aspects of industrial communism and capitalism into a horrifying new world order. Huxley's title, taken from Shakespeare's play *The Tempest,* is therefore ironic: This fictional dystopia is neither brave nor new. Instead, it is so controlled and safe that there is neither need nor opportunity for bravery. As for being "new," its unrelenting drives toward management and development, and its obsessions with predictable order and consumption, are as old as the Industrial Revolution. Coupling horror with irony, *Brave New World,* a masterpiece of modern fiction, is a stinging critique of twentieth- century industrial society.

Huxley's observations about capitalist and communist societies show that what are usually thought of as vastly different systems also have some similarities. James Sexton calls the common denominator "an uncritical veneration of rationalization." The common denominator might also be characterized as the drive to ensure the industrialization of society by forms of propaganda and force, either frequent and obvious (as with the former Soviet Union) or more infrequent and subtle (such as in the United States and Europe). For proof that Huxley was commenting on modern societies, the reader need look no farther than the names of the characters residing in his futuristic London. There is Bernard Marx (named after Karl Marx, 1818-1883, the philosopher and economist whose theories were adopted by communist societies), Sarojini Engels (named after Friedrich Engels, 1820-1895, Marx's colleague and supporter), Lenina Crowne (named after V. I. Lenin, 1870- 1924, the leader of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and Premier from 1918-24), and Polly Trotsky (named after Leon Trotsky, 1879-1940, the Russian revolutionary and writer).

The most damning critique of Western industrialism is indicated by the "God" worshipped in this future world-society: American car manufacturer and assembly line innovator, Henry Ford (1863-1947). In Huxley's dystopia, not only does calendar time begin with Ford's birth (the novel takes place in "A.F. 632"□A.F. stands for "After Ford"), but industry board rooms are sanctuaries for worshipping the Lord, Ford. Even a former religious locale, Stoke Poges (a famous English Christian cemetery), is made over into a golf course, and the Christian-named London square and district, Charing Cross, is renamed "Charing T." The letter "T" (referring to Ford's popular automobile, the "Model T"), is mounted, like a decapitated crucifix, on public buildings and necklaces. Because Ford was a man and the Model T was a car named by a letter in the alphabet (whose small letter resembles a crucifix), one might infer that salvation can only be had in this world, not the next. And the way to this non-eternal salvation is found through the production and consumption of products made in factories not so unlike those once

producing Ford's Model T, the first successfully mass-produced car from an assembly line.

One special product that is mass-produced on assembly lines in A.F. 632 is the human being. To insure that there are enough-but not too many workers and consumers, human life is carefully controlled from conception to death by two methods: outright control of the numbers and types of babies born and subconscious conditioning of people's thoughts. Factories with conveyor belts containing bottled embryos of the five preordained castes are inoculated against all future disease, treated with hormones and proteins, and placed in different environments to influence their growth. In this way, embryos are fashioned to have different levels of intelligence and different physical attributes, depending on the caste for which they have been selected. The factory, The Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, makes viviparous reproduction (live birth from parents) obsolete. Huxley develops here the impersonal generation of children he began in his first novel, *Crome Yellow* (1921). Children are therefore bred to work and associate only with people in their caste; they can never be corrupted by parents who might pass on views that are counter to the ethics of production and consumption.

Once "hatched" or "decanted," infants are conditioned by hypnopaedia (repeated messages played during sleep) and negative stimulus (electric shock) to, for instance, hate nature. The reason for this desirable hatred of nature is simple: an appreciation of nature takes people away from their duties of production and consumption; citizens are therefore made to believe that they can live in a natural environment only if they are wearing special clothing. Continuously conditioned by repeated messages to be happy with their own caste and world, people are distracted from possible thoughts of rebellion by participating in sports, watching entertaining shows that also serve as subtle propaganda, enjoying casual and frequent sex, and by using the drug "soma," a kind of mood-stabilizer regularly handed out free-of-charge in the workplace. Soma is named after a hallucinogenic drink used in Hindu sacrificial ceremonies.

However, there is one last impediment which must be overcome: old age. Because aging would interrupt work (production) and play (consumption) the five castes are kept young through chemical treatments, making them fully capable of producing and consuming until they die. London hospitals in A.F. 632 are only necessary for the dying, and no one grieves for the dying because they are conditioned not to and because lack of familial bonds makes people only friends at best. The maxim "ending is better than mending" applies to all products, including people, in this disposable society.

The total scientific control of the human organism might lead some readers to think that *Brave New World* is a denouncement of science. This is unlikely, since Huxley came from a family of eminent scientists and, before becoming blind, he wanted to be a doctor. As Keith May commented, "The chief illusion which *Brave New World* shatters has less to do with an unthinking faith in scientific progress than with the assumption that truth, beauty, and happiness are reconcilable goods on the plane of ordinary, unregenerate human activity." One might also say, however, that truth and beauty have no place in A.F. 632, but must be, as Mustapha Mond says near the end of the book,

hidden or eradicated. The trinity of truth, beauty, and happiness has been replaced by the holy pair, stability and happiness, necessary elements of production and consumption.

From birth to death, the life Huxley describes in *Brave New World* is a fully engineered existence in which both people and their environment are remade to society's specifications. George Woodcock states that "it seemed evident to him [Huxley] that any human attempt to impose an ideal order on Nature or on men would be perverted by man's limitations. So for all his love of order in geometry and architecture and music, he distrusted it in political or social planning." Jerome Meckier characterizes over-engineering and mania for order as an excess of rationality: In *Brave New World* "the rational is raised to an irrational power until, for example, the goal of sanitation reform in the nineteenth century, namely cleanliness, replaces godliness." In A.F. 632 there are no schools or libraries because it is believed that thinking and learning lead to the instability and unhappiness of individuals and society and interrupt society's greatest goods: consumption and production. Furthermore, there is no mention of money, wealth, or financial institutions. One might cautiously infer from these absences that differences of education and economic class have been replaced by biological castes, a system far more effective at insuring stability, the ideal atmosphere for practices of production and consumption. For contrasts to *Brave New World,* the reader should consult Huxley's last novel, *Island* (1962). Whereas the earlier novel creates a future dystopia, the latter describes a contemporary utopia. Both worlds have much in common: children are not the property of their parents, sex is open and shameless, peace and order reign, and drugs are accepted. What separates Brave New Dystopia from Island Utopia are the methods by which these ideals are accomplished. In *Island* children freely circulate among a village community of loving adults; sex is neither forced nor encouraged but simply accepted as normal; peace and order are not enforced, but result from the way children are raised; and a particular drug is used occasionally to pry open what artist and poet William Blake (1757-1827) called the "doors of perception" (the sense organs), which also happens to be the name of a nonfiction work by Huxley published in 1954.

In the end, *Brave New World* is an argument for individualism, but not the kind scornfully referred to by Marxists and socialists as "bourgeois individualism" (bourgeois is a French word referring to middle-class property owners, or those who want to be free of government regulations on wealth). Huxley, as is shown more clearly in *Island,* is against any society that encourages the bourgeois individual, a person who accrues wealth at the expense of workers, customers, and the community. Instead, he is interested in an economically free social individual, one who is free to be alone, one who can write, read, think, say, work, play, and otherwise do whatever he or she wants. Such an individual is the polar opposite of the characters in *Brave New World* in which it is said, "When the individual feels, the community reels." For further evidence of Huxleyan individualism, the reader should also consult the nonfiction essays of *Brave New World Revisited* (1958) and the fascinating account of Huxley's experience with the drug peyote in *The Doors of Perception* (1954).

Huxley's lasting contribution to English literature is probably best characterized as the "novel of ideas" as defined by the fictional Philip Quarles in Huxley's fourth novel, *Point*

Counter Point (1928): "The character of each personage must be implied, as far as possible, in the ideas of which he is the mouthpiece. In so far as theories are rationalizations of sentiments, instincts, dispositions of the soul, this is feasible." Frederick Hoffman says that while this might seem a monstrous way to construct a novel, "Ideas, as they are used in Huxley, possess *dramatic* qualities. Dominating as they very often do the full sweep of his novels, they appropriate the fortunes and careers which ordinarily belong to persons." *Brave New World* is living evidence that the novel of ideas can become a classic, applicable to its own time as well as today.

Source: Jhan Hochman, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1999.

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Beckham argues against censoring Brave New World, *claiming that the satire provides an insightful reflection of our human behavior and societal values.*

It is obvious why someone who believes in censorship might choose to object to *Brave New World.* This world is a world of sexual promiscuity, a world with a drug culture in the most literal sense of that expression, a world in which the traditional family□in fact, any family at all□has been vilified and rendered taboo, a world in which religion has been reduced to orgiastic rituals of physical expression. It is a world in which art panders to the sensations of mass communications and a world in which the positive values of Western democracy have been ossified into a rigid caste system, in which the members of each caste are mass produced to the specifications of assembly line uniformity.

Readers who have strict standards of sexual behavior, who believe in chaste courtships and monogamous, lifetime marriages confront in this novel a society in which sexual promiscuity is a virtue and in which the sole function of sexuality is pleasure, not reproduction. Since reproduction is achieved by an elaborate biogenetic mass production assembly line, the citizens of *Brave New World* do not need normal human sexual activity to propagate the species. In fact, such activity is discouraged by the state so that the carefully monitored population controls are not disrupted. Women are required to wear "Malthusian Belts"□convenient caches of birth control devices□in order to forego pregnancies. The sole function of sex in this society is pleasure, and the sole function of pleasure is to guarantee the happiness of *Brave New World* and thus assure a stable, controllable population. State encouraged promiscuity assures that loyalty to one's lover or family will not undermine one's loyalty to the state. Thus, "Everyone belongs to everyone else," and the highest compliment a man can offer a woman is that she is "very pneumatic"□a euphemism suggesting that her movements during sexual intercourse are especially pleasurable. Unlike Orwell, who in the novel *1984* placed severe taboos on sexual activity, since as private and personal act it might permit or encourage rebellion against the state, Huxley prophesizes that in the future the state will use sex as a means of population control on the basis of the psychological truism that men and women condition themselves to avoid pain and to seek pleasure.

Lest the pleasure of frequent and promiscuous sexual activity not be sufficient to distract the population and dissuade them from rebellion, Huxley foresees a culture in which widespread and addictive use of drugs offers a second means of assuring a frictionless society. "A Soma in time saves nine,"□a hypnopaedic slogan drilled into the heads of Brave New Worldians from nursery days on□ conveys the message that individuals are to protect themselves from normal pain by frequent doses of this widely available and socially acceptable narcotic.

One of the most important uses for Soma is to insulate people from the effects of rapid aging which afflict *Brave New World* inhabitants after an artificially induced period of extended youth. In this "perfect" society□the future as heaven□most of the human

qualities of life have been altered and adapted so that they are devoid of crisis and pain. Just as the inhabitants of this world age only during a brief period shortly before death and just as the drug which eases them through this period has no unpleasant side effects, so they are insulated against the normal stresses and tensions of family life. They have no parents to contend with since in Huxley's inspired anticipation of the consequences of biogenetic engineering, they are conceived through artificial insemination, carried in assembly line placentas made of sow's peritoneum, and decanted rather than born. *Brave New World* inhabitants spend their nursery years in state-run institutions where they are conditioned for future life.

Those normal mortals who recall the pain of adolescence would be spared such in *Brave New World;* there is no adolescence. As adults, the inhabitants enjoy youth and vitality until near the time of their deaths. People never have to contend with the stress of accommodating themselves to the authority of parents, nor do they know the stress, pain, heartache□nor the joy□of nurturing and raising children.

The birth and childhood of *Brave New World* inhabitants is greatly reduced from the human world in which we daily live. After perusing the early chapters of this novel, the sensitive reader becomes aware that reduction is one of its recurrent themes, and that this reduction usually involves those attributes of life which make us most human. The purpose behind these reductions is to make all existence subservient to the state. Such subservience requires that even such basic institutions of human civilization as religion and art be sapped of their vital force.

With lives so devoid of pain and so concentrated in the physical and the immediate present, the Worldians have little need for the comfort or solace of religion. If religion is that aspect of man's culture which speaks to the spirit, then Worldians have an absence of spirit of which they are unaware. The reduction of religion is symbolized in the icon which replaces the cross as the dominant religious image□a T. The worship of a supernatural savior has been supplanted by worship of a lord of the assembly line, Henry Ford, and the sign of Our Ford is taken from the model name of one of his early cars. The four arms of the cross have been reduced to the three arms of the T.

Religion lends continuity to civilization, and so does art. Each is an important constituent of the emotional component of human life. But, like religion, art in *Brave New World* has been reduced to trafficking in sensation□slight, transitory, physical responses as opposed to the profound, sustained, psychological responses of emotion. The "Feelies"□ *Brave New World's* multi-sensory version of the movies□well illustrates this pandering to sensation; rather than celebrating the ideas and emotions of human life, the "Feelies" are designed to give its participants a sensory overload of neural stimulation□the sight and feel of bare flesh on a bearskin rug, for example.

Thus art and religion are controlled by the state and subordinated to the support of the state, but the nature of that state is quite different from what a contemporary reader might expect. In the 1990s, citizens of Western Democracies see their form of government as the best form yet developed by man. As Huxley projects this important facet of human life into the future, he foresees neither Western Democracy nor its

historical competitor, Eastern Communism, as the most likely political system. Instead of either he sees a five-tiered caste system occasioned through the perfection of biogenetic engineering and other modern devices of social control. Every man is created biologically equal to all others in his caste. The leisured classes are conditioned to consume, and the working classes are conditioned to manufacture what those other classes consume. Society functions almost as simply as the physical law of equal and opposite reactions.

If Huxley had perversely set out to oversimplify and reduce the most important philosophical and scientific ideas of modern times to a facile society representing a serious projection of what the world will surely become, then one might at least understand the objections of those who seek to censor the book. Neither Marx nor the founders of Western Democracy prevail. The Worldians seem to extrapolate from some of the world's great religions □Islam, Christianity, Judaism□such belief as is useful for their purpose. Freud's insights into family relationships are read only in their negative connotations, and these connotations then become the basis for social organization. Darwin's discoveries about adaptation and heredity are seen not as patterns for understanding how nature works but rather as patterns for manipulating nature to nefarious ends. The history of modern technology culminates in a culture where man eases his way through life on drugs, is free of painful involvement with other human beings, and is sustained by the state's manipulation of mass consumption and mass communication.

But Huxley does not offer *Brave New World* as an ideal. Neither does he render it as an idle fantasy portraying what life might be like in the future. *Brave New World* is a satire, and the pleasurable perfection of society in A.F. 689 is measured against the norm of Twentieth Century society in general and against the norm of a particular primitive society still currently extant. Brave New World has its critics both from within and without. The critic from within is Bernard Marx. Because of some abnormality in his birthing process, he is not a perfect Alpha specimen, which suggests that human imperfection and mechanical malfunction have not been completely eliminated in this brave new world. The critic from without is John Savage. As the child of Linda from the dominant culture and the adopted son of a Native American on a reservation in the American Southwest, he is a halfbreed belonging to neither the progressive nor the traditional societies in the book.

Marx introduces some of the universal human norms in the book. He is in the society, but not of it. He is physically smaller than other members of his caste□the dominant Alphas□and this physical distinction seems to generate in him envy and alienation, which are uncommon in the society. He rebels against his superior, and when he finds Linda and her son on the reservation and discovers her past association with his superior, he brings them back to the "World" in order to humiliate his boss. Though he has a professional, psychological interest in the two, he is so flattered by the attention he receives because of his connection with the famous pair that he begins to pander to the society of which he has previously been so harshly critical. Marx is important in a technical sense because it is from his point of view that we see the activities of the society□activities which he both participates in and criticizes.

John, or the savage, articulates the values of both a minority culture, the Native Americans and of the culture of the past. To the degree to which he has assimilated the culture of the Native Americans, he is a child of nature communicant with the earth, sky, wind and water. He is free of the artificial and urban environment in which Bernard spends his life. Though his mother is from the dominant society, John is born outside that society and thus escapes its state-supported brainwashing nurture and its prescriptions against artifacts of earlier times. His education he obtains from the *Bible* and Shakespeare□two of the most important cultural forces in modern Western civilization. It is by the norms of this literature that he executes his criticism of this "Brave New World."

Bernard and John convey to the reader the dilemma of modern life which Huxley expresses in the novel. Through their knowledge humans gain greater and greater control over their environment. As they gain control and are better able to manage their own destiny, they also greatly increase the danger of losing their humanity□the sum total of those facets of life by which people define and know themselves. This point is literally and symbolically illustrated through the tragic conclusion of the novel. John falls victim to that most human of human emotions□love. Yet he cannot reconcile his love for Lenina Crown in a satisfactory way. John cannot accept her as "pneumatic," as "belonging to everybody else," after the fashion of his mother's culture. Nor can he remold her into the image of the beloved he holds from the Biblical and Shakespearean cultural guides he learned in his childhood. John is caught out of time. He cannot go back to his old culture, nor can he assimilate the new. His only option in a world where he has become a freak to be gawked at is suicide. As his body swings from the rope gyrating toward all points of the compass, Huxley suggests that we too may be creating a world in which ironically there is no place for human life and for human emotion.

One of the objectors to this novel comments on its pessimism and tragedy as reasons why it should not be taught. Such an objection overlooks the tone of the book. As satire, the book's purpose is to examine the failings of human behavior in order to encourage reform. Such examinations are painful when we recognize our faults through them. But pain and growth and regeneration are part of the human condition and prove that Huxley's prophesy has not yet come true. And certainly if we try to prevent people□especially young people □from being exposed to the tragic, we would have to eliminate much world literature which has been universally proclaimed great.

Source: Richard H. Beckham, "Huxley's Brave New World as Social Irritant: Ban It or Buy It?" in *Censored Books: Critical Viewpoints,* edited by Nicholas J. Karolides, Lee Burress, and John M. Kean, Scarecrow, 1993, pp. 136-41.

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Firchow discusses how Huxley faced a distinct challenge in developing unique and interesting characters in a world where uniformity is strictly enforced.

One of the chief problems Huxley had with *Brave New World,* according to Donald Watt [in *Journal English and Germanic Philology,* July, 1978], was with the characters. On the evidence of the revisions, Watt concludes that Huxley seems first to have thought of making Bernard Marx the rebellious hero of the novel but then changed his mind and deliberately played him down into a kind of anti-hero. After rejecting the possibility of a heroic Bernard, Huxley next seems to have turned to the Savage as an alternative. According to Watt, there are in the typescript several indications, later revised or omitted, of the Savage's putting up or at least planning to put up violent resistance to the new world state, perhaps even of leading a kind of revolution against it. But in the process of rewriting the novel, Huxley also abandoned this idea in favor of having no hero at all, or of having only the vague adumbration of a hero in Helmholtz Watson.

Watt's analysis of the revisions in *Brave New World* is very helpful and interesting; he shows convincingly, I think, that Huxley was unable to make up his mind until very late in the composition of the novel just what direction he wanted the story and the leading male characters to take. From this uncertainty, however, I do not think it necessary to leap to the further conclusion that Huxley had difficulty in creating these characters themselves. Huxley's supposedly inadequate ability to create living characters, the result of his not being a "congenital novelist," is a question that often arises in discussions of his fiction, and in connection with longer and more traditionally novelistic novels like *Point Counter Point* or *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) appropriately so. But *Brave New World* is anything but a traditional novel in this sense. It is not a novel of character but a relatively short satirical tale, a "fable," much like Voltaire's *Candide.* One hardly demands fully developed and "round" characters of *Candide,* nor should one of *Brave New World.*

This is all the more the case because the very nature of the new world state precludes the existence of fully developed characters. Juliets and Anna Kareninas, or Hamlets and Prince Vronskys, are by definition impossibilities in the new world state. To ask for them is to ask for a different world, the very world whose absence Huxley's novel so savagely laments. Character, after all, is shaped by suffering, and the new world state has abolished suffering in favor of a continuous, soma-stupefied, infantile "happiness." In such an environment it is difficult to have characters who grow and develop and are "alive."

Despite all this, it is surprising and noteworthy how vivid and even varied Huxley's characters are. With all their uniformly standardized conditioning, Alphas and Betas turn out to be by no means alike: the ambitious "go-getter" Henry Foster is different from his easy-going friend Benito Hoover; the unconventional and more "pneumatic" Lenina Crowne from the moralistic and rather less pneumatic Fanny Crowne; the resentful and

ugly Bernard Marx from the handsome and intelligent Helmholtz Watson. Huxley, in fact, seems to work consistently and consciously in terms of contrastive/ complementary pairs to suggest various possibilities of response to similar situations. So, too, Helmholtz and the Savage are another pair, as are the Savage and Mond, Mond and the DHC, Bernard and Henry Foster. The most fully developed instance of this pairing or doubling technique is the trip that Bernard and Lenina make to the Indian reservation, a trip that duplicates the one made some years earlier by the DHC and a "particularly pneumatic" Beta-Minus named Linda. Like the DHC, Bernard also leaves Lenina, another pneumatic Beta, (briefly) behind while returning to civilization, and during this interval she, too, is lusted after by a savage, much as Pope and the other Indians lust after Linda. Even the novel as a whole reveals a similar sort of doubling structure, with the new world state on the one hand and the Indian reservation on the other.

Within limits, the characters, even some of the minor and superficial characters like Henry Foster, are capable of revealing other and deeper facets of their personality. Returning with Lenina from the Stoke Poges Obstacle Golf Course, Henry Foster's helicopter suddenly shoots upward on a column of hot air rising from the Slough Crematorium. Lenina is delighted at this brief switchback, but "Henry's tone was almost, for a moment, melancholy. 'Do you know what that switchback was?' he said. 'It was some human being finally and definitely disappearing. Going up in a squirt of hot gas. It would be curious to know who it was□a man or a woman, an Alpha or an Epsilon.□" Henry quickly jolts himself out of this atypical mood and reverts to his normally obnoxious cheerfulness, but for an instant at least there was a glimpse of a real human being.

Much more than Henry, Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson are capable of complexity of response. The latter especially and partly through his contact with the Savage grows increasingly aware of himself as a separate human entity and of his dissatisfaction with the kind of life he had led hitherto. As an Emotional Engineer and contriver of slogans, Helmholtz has been very successful, as he also has been in the capacities of lover and sportsman; but he despises this success and seeks for a satisfaction for which he has no name and which he can only dimly conceive. He comes closest to expressing it in the poem that eventually leads to his exile, the poem in which an ideal and absent woman becomes more real to him□in the manner of Mallarmé's flower that is absent from all bouquets □than any woman he has ever actually met.

In the end Helmholtz agrees to being sent into frigid exile in the Falkland Islands. The reason he chooses such a place rather than possible alternatives like Samoa or the Marquesas is because there he will not only have solitude but also a harsh climate in which to suffer and to gain new and very different experiences. His aim, however, is not, as some critics have suggested, to seek mystic experience; he simply wants to learn how to write better poetry. "I should like a thoroughly bad climate," he tells Mustapha Mond. "I believe one would write better if the climate were bad. If there were a lot of wind and storms for example.□" This hardly represents a search for mysticism and God; in this novel only the Savage, and he in only a very qualified way, can be described as seeking after such ends. Helmholtz merely wants more and better words.□

The same is true of Bernard Marx. Despite the apparent fact that Huxley once had more exalted intentions for him, Bernard belongs very much to the familiar Huxleyan category of the anti-hero, best exemplified perhaps by Theodore Gumbril, Jr., the so-called Complete Man of *Antic Hay* (1923). Like Gumbril, Bernard is able to envision and even seek after a love that is not merely sexual, but, like Gumbril again, his search is half-hearted. He is willing to settle for less because it is so much easier than trying to strive for more. Bernard is weak and cowardly and vain, much more so than Gumbril, and this makes him an unsympathetic character in a way that Gumbril is not. Nevertheless Bernard is undoubtedly capable of seeing the better, even if in the end he follows the worse.

Bernard is certainly a more fully developed character than Helmholtz; he is, in fact, with the exception of the Savage, the character about whom we know most in the entire novel. Just why this should be so is a question worth asking, just as it is worth asking why Bernard is the first of the novel's three malcontents to be brought to our attention.

Bernard's importance resides, I think, in his incapacity. The stability of the new world state can be threatened, it is clear, from above and from below. In the case of Helmholtz the threat is from above, from a surfeit of capacity; in Bernard's case it is from below, from a lack of sufficient capacity. This is not simply to say that Bernard is more stupid than Helmholtz, which he probably is, but rather that because of his physical inferiority he has developed a compulsive need to assert his superiority. It is this incapacity which, paradoxically, seems to make Bernard the more dangerous threat, for it compels him to rise to a position of power in his society; he wants to be accepted by his society, but only on his own terms, terms that are not acceptable in the long run if stability is to be maintained. Helmholtz, on the other hand, is a loner who really wants to have nothing to do with the society at all, and in this sense he represents much less of a threat. The Savage, on the other hand, though most violent and uncompromising in his hatred of and desire to destroy the new world state, is really no threat at all, for he originates from outside the society and is a kind of *lusus naturae.* There is never likely to be another Savage, but it is very probable that there will be or that there are more Bernards and Helmholtzes.

Both Bernard and Helmholtz are fairly complex characters. What is surprising, however, is that the same is true of Lenina Crowne. She seems at first to be nothing more than a pretty and addlebrained young woman without any emotional depth whatever. And at first it is true that this is all she is; but she changes in the course of the novel into something quite different. She changes because she falls in love.

The great irony of Lenina's falling in love is that she does not realize what it is that has happened to her; like Helmholtz she has no name for the new feeling and hence no way of conceiving or understanding what it is. She can only think of love in the physiological ways in which she has been conditioned to think of it; but her feeling is different.

So subtle is Huxley's portrayal of the change in Lenina that, as far as I know, no critic has ever commented on it. Yet Lenina is clearly predisposed from the very beginning to a love relationship that is not sanctioned by her society. As we learn from her

conversation with Fanny, Lenina has been going with Henry Foster for four months without having had another man, and this in defiance of what she knows to be the properly promiscuous code of sexual behavior. When Fanny takes her up on this point of unconventionality, Lenina reacts almost truculently and replies that she "jolly well [does not] see why there should have been" anyone other than Henry. Her inability to see this error in her sexual ways is what predisposes her for the much greater and more intense feeling that she develops for the Savage.

The stages of her growing love for the Savage and her increasing mystification at what is happening within herself are handled with a brilliantly comic touch. There is the scene following Lenina's and the Savage's return from the feelies when the Savage sends her off in the taxicopter just as she is getting ready to seduce him. There is the touching moment when Lenina, who had once been terrified of pausing with Bernard to look at the sea and the moon over the Channel, now lingers "for a moment to look at the moon," before being summoned by an irritated and uncomprehending Arch- Songster. There is Lenina's increasing impatience with the obtuseness of Henry Foster and his blundering solicitousness. There are the fond murmurings to herself of the Savage's name. There is the conference with Fanny as to what she should do about the Savage's strange coldness toward her. There is her blunt rejection of Fanny's advice to seek consolation with one of the millions of other men. There is the wonderful scene in which she seeks out the Savage alone in his apartment, discovers to her amazement that he loves her, sheds her clothing, and receives, to her even greater amazement, insults, blows, and a threat to kill. There is the final terrible scene at the lighthouse when Lenina steps out of the helicopter, looks at the Savage with "an uncertain, imploring, almost abject smile," and then "pressed both hands to her left side [i.e., to her heart], and on that peach-bright, doll-beautiful face of hers appeared a strangely incongruous expression of yearning distress. Her blue eyes seemed to grow larger, brighter; and suddenly two tears rolled down her cheeks." Again the Savage attacks her, this time with his whip, maddened by desire, by remorse, and by the horde of obscenely curious sightseers. In the end, however, desire triumphs and the Savage and Lenina consummate their love in an orgy-porgian climax. When the Savage awakens to the memory of what has happened, he knows he cannot live with such defilement. For him the end is swift and tragic. For Lenina, however, there is no end; her tragedy□and for all the comedy and irony in which her love for the Savage is immersed, the word *tragedy* is not entirely inappropriate□her tragedy is that she has felt an emotion that she can never express or communicate or realize again.

The characters of *Brave New World,* it is safe to conclude, are not merely made of cardboard and *papier-mâché.* That they are nonetheless not full and complete human beings is quite true; but for all the technology and conditioning and impulses toward uniformity, there is still something profoundly human about them. As Lenina's development in the novel indicates, it is possible, as it were, to scratch the plasticized "doll-like" surface of a citizen□at least of an Alpha or Beta citizen□of the new world state and draw actual blood. In this sense and to this degree, Huxley's vision of the perfectly planned future is not without hope; for all the genetic engineering and conditioning, basic humanity remains much the same as it always was. Its imperfections and its needs, even under such greatly altered conditions, inevitably reappear. And it is

for this reason, I think, that Huxley's vision is so extraordinarily powerful and compelling; because in the people he portrays we can still somehow recognize ourselves.

Source: Peter Edgerly Firchow, in his *End of Utopia: A Study of Aldous Huxley's Brave New World,* Bucknell University Press, 1984, 154 p.

Adaptations

Brave New World was adapted as a made-for-television movie in 1980, directed by Burt Brinckerhoff, and starring Kristoffer Tabori as John Savage, Bud Cort as Bernard Marx, and Marcia Strassman as Lenina Crowne.

Topics for Further Study

Research Henry Ford's development of the modern assembly line for producing Model T automobiles. Compare his ideas about efficient manufacturing and factory management to the Controller's philosophy of creating humans in factories.

Compare and contrast the values of the Indians on the Zuni reservation with those of the Londoners in Huxley's novel.

Discuss Huxley's views of class as revealed in *Brave New World,* and compare his fictional class system with those of real-life societies, such as Victorian England and modern India.

Research the scientific process of cloning plants and animals and compare your findings with Huxley's description of the "Bokanovsky Process"; discuss the social implications of cloning.

Compare and Contrast

1920s: Scientist Ivan Pavlov conducts behavioral experiments and shows that one can create a conditioned response in animals. John B. Watson, establishes the Behaviorist School of thought: he believes that human beings can be reduced to a network of stimuli and responses, which can be controlled by the experimenter.

1930s: German Nobel Prize winner Hans Spemann develops the controversial science of experimental embryology, manipulating the experience of a human fetus in the womb in order to influence it.

Huxley's London 731 A.D.: All humans are cloned from a small number of fertilized eggs, incubated in artificial wombs (bottles), and conditioned as embryos and fetuses for their future lives.

Today: In 1978, the first human baby conceived *in vitro* (in a test tube) is born. In 1997, a sheep is cloned for the first time, raising the possibility of cloning humans.

1920s: Totalitarian rulers Joseph Stalin in Russia and Benito Mussolini in Italy come to power.

1931: Totalitarian rulers Francisco Franco (Spain) and Adolf Hitler (Germany) are a few years away from power. In China, communist dictator Mao Tse-tung is fighting for dominance but will not win power until the late 1940s.

Huxley's London 731 A.D.: The world is a totalitarian state ruled by the Controllers, who use technology, brainwashing, and pre-birth conditioning rather than violence and intimidation to control their citizens.

What Do I Read Next?

1984 (1948) George Orwell's dystopian novel, was written after *Brave New World* and after the rise and fall of Hitler and Stalin. It paints a far more grim, violent, and oppressive picture of the future. Unlike Huxley, who wrote his novel before television began to appear in American homes, Orwell incorporates into his futuristic vision a role for television, an invention whose influence and possibilities, good and bad, were just beginning to be imagined at the time the book was written.

Brave New World Revisited (1958) is a collection of essays Aldous Huxley published to expand upon the trends explored in *Brave New World.* In it, Huxley talks about the social and scientific developments since writing the book, and he reveals what he would change in the book if he were to rewrite it. Most significantly, he says in retrospective he wishes he would have incorporated some of the grimmer aspects of totalitarianism, which revealed themselves in the 1930s, and would have given the Savage more than just two choices, sanity or insanity. He would have allowed the Savage some sort of compromise, a way to live within a flawed society.

Point Counter Point (1928) is a novel Huxley wrote before *Brave New World,* and it is considered one of his finest. The complex narrative structure imitates the rhythms, harmonies, and dissonance in music (counterpoint is a musical term referring to a contrasting melody structure). The main character, Philip Quarles, wants to write novels like the one he is in, which incorporate musical ideas. Other characters, his wife and friends, have very different experiences, dreams, and perceptions, and are mouthpieces for Huxley's many ideas.

This Perfect Day (1970) by Ira Levin is another futuristic novel about a totalitarian society with very different values from that of contemporary society. As in *Brave New World,* citizens dull their pain and fears through drugs and are genetically very similar. Those who have some genetic differences have a greater tendency to be dissatisfied with the pacified society, which is controlled by a huge computer that dispenses mood-altering drugs.

The Handmaid's Tale (1985) by Margaret Atwood is the story of a woman named Offred who lives in the Republic of Gilead, an oppressive society of the future in which women's roles are severely limited. Gilead is, in fact, America in the future after right-wing extremists have taken over and virtually enslaved women in service to men.

Further Study

Robert S. Baker, *The Dark Historic Page: Social Satire and Historicism in the Novels of Aldous Huxley, 1921-1939,* University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.

Baker discusses Huxley's aversion to "historical thought."

Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography,* Knopf, 1974.

Bedford's biography is based on published works, documentaries, and personal accounts.

Milton Birnbaum, *Aldous Huxley's Quest for Values,* University of Tennessee Press, 1971.

This is an exploration of Huxley's ability to articulate the pulse of twentieth century thought.

Peter Bowering, *Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels,* Oxford University Press, 1969.

Bowering examines nine of Huxley's eleven novels.

Lawrence Brander, *Aldous Huxley: A Critical Study,* Bucknell University Press, 1970.

Brander's study is of Huxley's novels, essays, short stories, and travelogues.

Thomas D. Clareson, "The Classic: Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World'," in *Extrapolation,* Vol. 3, no. 1, December, 1961, pp. 33-40.

An analysis of *Brave New World,* praising the universalism of Huxley's vision and ideas, by an American educator and critic. Clareson is also considered an authority on the genre of science fiction.

Peter Firchow, *Aldous Huxley: Satirist and Novelist,* University of Minnesota Press, 1972.

Firchow's focus is satire in Huxley's essays and novels.

Sisirkamar Ghose, *Aldous Huxley: A Cynical Salvationist,* Asia Publishing, 1962.

Ghose studies Huxley's times, religious world-view, and his novels.

Alexander Henderson, *Aldous Huxley,* Russell and Russell, 1964.

This is a study of Huxley's life, four novels, criticism, poetry, and travel books.

Julian Huxley, editor, *Aldous Huxley: 1894-1963,* Harper & Row, 1965.

This is a book of tributes to Huxley made by friends, family, and admirers after his death.

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Frederick J. Hoffman, "Aldous Huxley and the Novel of Ideas," in *Aldous Huxley: A Collection of Critical Essays,* edited by Robert E. Kuehn, Prentice Hall, 1974, pp. 8-17.

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Guinevera A. Nance, *Aldous Huxley,* Continuum, 1988.

James Sexton, "*Brave New World* and the Rationalization of Industry," in *Critical Essays on Aldous Huxley,* edited by

Jerome Meckier, G.K. Hall, 1996, pp. 88-102.

Grover Smith, editor, *Letters of Aldous Huxley,* Chatto & Windus, 1969.

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George Woodcock, *Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Study of Aldous Huxley,* Faber & Faber, 1972.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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