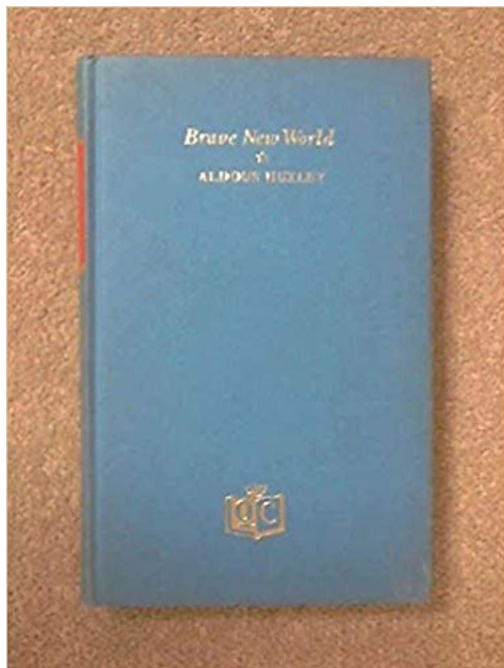


Brave New World (Queen's Classics) *by* Aldous Huxley



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Reviews of the **Brave New World (Queen's Classics)** *by* Aldous Huxley

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Before there was 'The Matrix' and 'Bladerunner', before there was even '1984', there was 'Brave New World'. It is astonishing that Aldous Huxley wrote this tale of technological dystopia in 1932. The social elements from the story are similar to those in Orwell and Kafka and others, namely a society of obedient sheep run by the state and benevolent dictators through brainwashing and groupthink. But what's striking about the novel is how it so astutely anticipates a society taken over by benevolent technocrats rather than politicians, a scenario that appears increasingly likely in the age of AI and genetic engineering. Huxley came from an illustrious scientific family with social connections. His grandfather was Thomas Henry Huxley, Darwin's close friend, publicist and "bulldog", whose famous smackdown of Bishop Samuel Wilberforce has been relished by rationalists fighting against religious faith ever since. His brother was Julian Huxley, a famous biologist who among other accomplishments wrote a marvelous tome on everything that was then known about biology with H. G. Wells. Steeped in scientific as well as social discourse, possessing a deep knowledge of medical and other scientific research, Aldous was in an ideal position to write a far-reaching novel.

This he duly did. The basic premise of the novel sounds eerily prescient. Sometime in the near future, society has been regimented into a caste system where people are genetically engineered by the state in large state-run reproductive farms. Anticipating 'The Handmaid's Tale', only a select few women and men are capable of providing fertile eggs and sperm for this careful social engineering. The higher castes are strong, intelligent and charismatic. The lower castes are turgid, obedient and physically weak. They don't begrudge those from the upper castes because their genetic engineering has largely removed their propensity toward jealousy and violence. Most notably, because reproduction is now the responsibility of the state, there is no longer a concept of a family, of a father or mother. There is knowledge of these concepts, but it's regarded as archaic history from a past era and is met with revulsion.

How is this population kept under control? Not shockingly at all, through sex, drugs and rock and roll. Promiscuity is encouraged from childhood onwards and is simply a way of life, and everyone sleeps with everyone else, again without feeling jealousy or resentment (it was this depiction of promiscuity that led the book to be banned in India in the 60s). They flood their bodies with a drug called soma whenever they feel any kind of negative emotion welling up inside and party like there's no end. They are brainwashed into believing the virtues of these and other interventions by the state through subliminal messages played when they are sleeping; such unconscious brainwashing goes all the way back to their birth. People do die, but out of sight, and when they are still looking young and attractive. Death is little more than a nuisance, a slight distraction from youth, beauty and fun.

Like Neo from 'The Matrix', one particular citizen of this society named Bernard Marx starts feeling that there is more to the world than would be apparent from this state of induced bliss. On a tryst with a particularly attractive member of his caste in an Indian reservation in New Mexico, he comes across a man referred to as the savage. The savage is the product of an illegitimate encounter (back when there were parents) between a member of a lower caste and the Director of Hatcheries who oversees all the controlled reproduction. He has grown up without any of the enlightened instruments of the New World, but his mother has kept a copy of Shakespeare with her so he knows all of Shakespeare by heart and frequently quotes it. Marx brings the savage back to his society. The rest of the book describes the savage's reaction to this supposed utopia and its ultimately tragic consequences. Ultimately he concludes that it's better to have free will and feel occasionally unhappy, resentful and angry than live in a society where free will is squelched and the population is kept bathed in an induced state of artificial happiness.

The vision of technological control in the novel is sweeping and frighteningly prescient. There is the brainwashing and complacent submission to the status quo that everyone undergoes which is similar to the messages provided in modern times by TV, social media and the 24-hour news cycle. There are the chemical and genetic interventions made by the state right in the embryonic stage to make sure that the embryos grow up with desired physical or mental advantages or deficiencies. These kinds of interventions are the exact kind feared by those wary of CRISPR and other genetic editing technologies. Finally, keeping the population preoccupied, entertained and away from critical thinking through sex and promiscuity is a particularly potent form of societal control that has been appreciated well by Victoria's Secret, and that will not end with developments in virtual reality.

In some sense, Huxley completely anticipates the social problems engendered by the technological takeover of human jobs by robots and AI. Once human beings are left with nothing to do, how does the state ensure that they are prevented from becoming bored and restless and causing all kinds of trouble? In his book "Homo Deus", Yuval Harari asks the same questions and concludes that a technocratic society will come up with distractions like virtual reality video games, new psychoactive drugs and novel forms of sexual entertainment that will keep the vast majority of unemployed from becoming bored and potentially hostile. I do not know whether Harari read Huxley, but I do feel more frightened by Huxley than by Harari. One reason I feel more frightened is because of what he leaves out; the book was published in 1932, so it omits any discussion of nuclear weapons which were invented ten years later. The combination of nuclear weapons with limitless societal control through technology makes for a particularly combustible mix.

The biggest prediction of Huxley's dystopia, and one distinctly different from that made by Orwell or Kafka, is that instead of a socialist state, people's minds are much more likely to be controlled in the near future by the leaders of technology companies like Google and Facebook who have formed an unholy nexus with the government. With their social media alerts and Fitbits and maps, the tech companies are increasingly telling us how to live our lives and distracting us from free thinking. Instead of communist regimes like the Soviet Union forcibly trampling on individual choice and liberty, we are already gently but willingly ceding our choices, privacy and liberties to machines and algorithms developed by these companies. And just like the state in Huxley and Orwell's works, the leaders of these corporations will tell us why it's in our best interests to let technology control our lives and freedom, when all the while it would really be in their best interests to tell us this. Our capitulation to their inventions will look helpful and voluntary and will feel pleasurable and even noble, but it will be no less complete than the capitulation of every individual in "Brave New World" or "1984". The only question is, will there be any savages left among us to tell us how foolishly we are behaving?

Bliss

Do NOT bother with the Kindle version. Specifically the one with the picture of the eggs and blood. There IS a kindle version that is the correct text (with the title in red banner) listed for \$10+. But the eggs and blood version is completely different, simplified, dumbed down version of the physical book. The paperback format as pictured on the product page is what I have for my physical copy and they are vastly different. I read the kindle version while at work on my computer during slow periods and then came home and attempted to read the book version where I left off, only to find that chapters didn't line up, there were entire pages of conversation missing towards the end of the book between Mustapha Mond and John, the Savage. ENTIRE. PAGES. Very upsetting to learn this. It shouldn't be on the same product page listed as a kindle version. It's a completely different version.

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"It is rather alarming to find that only twenty-seven years [after writing Brave New World] quite a number of those forecasts have already come true, and come true with vengeance...Some of them were foreseen, and I think some of them I didn't have the imagination to foresee, but I think there is a whole armory at the disposal of potential dictators at the moment."
- Aldous Huxley [1958]

Known for being one of the most influential dystopian authors of all time, Aldous Huxley, who was a jack of all trades, created his magnum opus, Brave New World in 1931, which was published a year later. Nigh nine decades later, many of his ominous and scholarly insights are manifesting right before our eyes. For these reasons, Brave New World should be read through rather carefully, for it serves as a severe warning not only about what might be coming, but what is already here.

This particular fusion of Brave New World and Brave New World Revisited by Aldous Huxley truly is as fascinating as it is disturbing in scope. The former offers his vision of what a dystopian world might be like, while the latter offers a trenchant examination of Brave New World.

While some may call some of Huxley's ideas 'prophetic' in a sense, it's more of a logical deduction given the available information that there was at a time. If one has a reasonable amount of quality information, one surely would be able to postulate a reasonable result given humanity's penchant for falling for propaganda in droves historically. After all, most nations historically don't operate under true freedom. What's more, many 'modern' nations already implement many of the disturbing trends written about in this sobering, if intense account of could have happened, although in fiction, which is now turning into reality.

Brave New World has been compared to Orwell's 1984 due to the engineered control grid - each of which carries different methods - and with good reason. Whilst 1984 is ruled with an iron fist, Brave New World is ruled with a velvet one. Endless arguments have ensued in many circles as to which one we are gravitating towards, and it's definitely intriguing although distressing contemplating such facts.

Huxley does an outstanding job of painting a disturbing portrait within his fictional realm. The individuals within his society - who are essentially drones - have fallen over themselves for the 'good of all' - for the collective. The book is littered with countless examples of this.

The individual, who is the foundation of society, is thrown aside, by the wayside.

In respect to this troublesome and pernicious pervasive issue, which is seen more and more nowadays, Huxley noted the following words:

"Brave New World presents a fanciful and somewhat ribald picture of a society, in which the attempt to recreate human beings in the likeness of terminates has been pushed almost to the limits of the possible. That we are being propelled in the direction of Brave New World is obvious. But not less obvious is the fact that we can, if we so desire, refuse to co-operate with the blind forces that are compelling us. As Mr. William Whyte has shown in his remarkable book, The Organization Man, a new Social Ethic is replacing our traditional ethical system - the system in which the individual is primary. The key words in this Social Ethic are "adjustment," "adaptation," "socially oriented behavior," "belongingness," "acquisition of social skills," "team work," "group living," "group loyalty," "group dynamics," "group thinking," "group creativity." Its basic assumption is that the social whole has greater worth and significant than its individual parts, that inborn biological differences should be sacrificed to cultural uniformity, that the rights of the collective take precedence over what the eighteenth century called the Rights of Man." [1]
Furthermore, as Huxley notes, the:

"...ideal man is the man who displays "dynamic conformity" (delicious phrase!) and an intense loyalty to the group, an unflagging desire to subordinate himself, to belong." [2]

Talk about a conformity crisis! That's exactly where society is torpedoed as we speak. And it all starts in youth, through the public schooling system.

This conformity crisis in public schooling has been spoken about at length by John Taylor Gatto in his books, Dumbing Us Down, A Different Kind Of Teacher and Weapons Of Mass Instruction.

In Dumbing Us Down - The Hidden Curriculum Of Compulsory Schooling, Gatto mentions the following explosive remarks:

"Mass education cannot work to produce a fair society because its daily practice is practice in rigged competition, suppression and intimidation. The schools we've allowed to develop can't work to teach nonmaterial values, the values which give meaning to everyone's life, rich or poor, because the structure of schooling is held together by a Byzantine tapestry of reward and threat, of carrots and sticks. Official favor, grades, and other trinkets of subordination have no connection with education; they are the paraphernalia of servitude, not of freedom." [3]

"Schools are intended to produce, through the application of formulas, formulaic human beings whose behavior can be predicted and controlled." [4]

"...schools and schooling are increasingly irrelevant to the great enterprises of the planet. No one believes anymore that scientists are trained in science classes or politicians in civics classes or poets in English classes. The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders." [5]

Gatto minces no words. If you wish to see what is happening, right from the start via the public indoctrination system, READ John Taylor Gatto's work. It is HIGHLY recommended.

Returning to Huxley, the latter part of Brave New World & Brave New World Revisited also features Huxley's letter to Orwell. Additionally, and arguably more importantly, the second book, Brave New World Revisited is absolutely mind bending.

Brave New World Revisited includes intriguing information at length that supplements droves of added substance for the reader to familiarize themselves with some of the deeper niches of everything Brave New World stands for. One could view it as a few different essays on many of the most disturbing components and trends, featured in Brave New World, which society is currently following.

Topics which are discussed include conformity, the collectivization of society, the attack on individuals, brainwashing, propaganda, social engineering, distractions within society, chemical persuasion, possible solutions and much more. Brave New World Revisited encompasses nigh 100 pages of additional information that should be essentially mandatory in education.

It would be interesting to see what Huxley would have thought about the precision condition that is currently taking place on a mass scale in society today. There are so many angles to this, that one could write many essays and analyze it in a myriad of ways. Many have, and rightly so.

With the recipes featured in Orwell and Huxley's books, the system seems to be changing day by day, and not for the better. Propaganda, entrainment technology, social engineering, overmedication of the population, and more, are all being used to maliciously mold society to become not only uniform, but obedient to boot.

Incisive individuals who value freedom and have inquiring minds should not only make this part of their library, but should prepare for what's already here and much of what's coming soon.

Couple Brave New World with 1984, and you have the recipe of what the world is beginning to look like, which is a merger of those two ideals. And that's a very, very disturbing proposition.

Be warned.

Sources:

[1] Aldous Huxley, Brave New World & Brave New World Revisited, p. 257.

[2] Ibid., p. 257.

[3] John Taylor Gatto, Dumbing Us Down - The Hidden Curriculum Of Compulsory Schooling, pg. 69.

[4] Ibid., p. 23.

[5] Ibid., p. 21.

If You are interested in the subject, the Book Reviews below follow as highly suggested reading:

1984 by George Orwell
Dumbing Us Down by John Taylor Gatto
A Different Kind Of Teacher by John Taylor Gatto
Weapons Of Mass Instruction by John Taylor Gatto
Rotten To The (Common) Core: Public Schooling, Standardized Tests & The Surveillance State by Dr. Joseph P. Farrell
The Tavickstock Institute: Social Engineering The Masses by Daniel Estulin
Technocracy Rising: The Trojan Horse Of Global Transformation by Patrick M. Wood
Propaganda by Edward Bernays

Kindest Regards,
-Zy Marquez
TheBreakaway.wordpress.com

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