

Brave new world  
utopia or dystopia  
philosophy essay



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Brave New World is both, utopia and dystopia. The author Aldous Huxley intended to depict an imagined new world after Ford, an industrial era, where all people would be happy and extremely satisfied or as content as the ideal society would let them be. Yet, to determine utopia and dystopia in Brave New World, we have to look at the new world from our own time and from the time before Ford, seen through the eyes of John the Savage, our predecessor. The world we observe herein reflects a futuristic world, a world that is to come, and a happy world we can imagine with an amount of disbelief. People of our world, the world which is happier than the savages' world, still not as happy as the Ford's world, will have to consider all the facts that make the new world look happy and brave. The notion of a brave world will inevitably lead to the question of what makes the new world brave. Freedom to do only what pleases us or freedom to identify only with our single-minded community, whose happiness is controlled, makes us submissive to the rules, intrinsic and learnt rules, for we wish to enjoy our lives despite all odds. The ideas are as brave as the community that fosters them keeps them alive and effective. BNW has the power to control and please its citizens, because they indulge to their hedonistic consumer orientated feelings, blessed by their God – Ford.

Therefore it is necessary to confront the values and ideas people share at the time before Ford and after Ford. Is the BNW a good or a bad world? How utopian is it and how dystopian is it? Is this world, which Huxley satirically depicted, is it a real utopia or its bad version, an unimaginably and disgustingly surreal dystopia?

## **BNW as utopia**

This novel is presenting many brave ideas placed in future. The community depicted in the novel, being futuristic, appears as a utopian society. There are a couple of elements that present its utopian side. They are: a highly reproductive, healthy, wealthy and stable community. These are provided by the government who ensures planning and controlling everything that is in people's interest. Government takes good care of their citizens. Citizens live and work closely together, they are agreeable on everything and there is no conflict. Reasons control emotions in a society whose member should all feel happy with what they are and what they have.

Being a utopian novel, BNW tells a story about being ultimately happy in a world that does not incite emotions or causes pain. Genetically "improved" people live an undisturbed happy and healthy life in a society that provides for their constant well being. They are very intelligent Alphas and Betas, and less intelligent Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons, but all of them are happy with what they are and how they live. A stable caste system "solved by standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons. Millions of identical twins. The principle of mass production at last applied to biology (Huxley, 2002: 8).

Love in this community is deprived of feelings or its disturbing emotional conditions, or to say – love does not exist. It cannot hurt, as it usually hurts. There is no pain or regret. Sex is considered as recreation and there is no immorality in orgies. It is simply a pleasure that people should do often and with all the other beautiful members of the community. All members of the community have whatever they need: drinks, food, sex, soma (drugs). A

reproductive goal is painless delivery of new people to the world, controlled  
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properly for the sake of the health, prosperity and stability of the society. Women do not have to deliver babies. They do not have to go through the pain.

Everybody loves everybody. It is phenomenal to have so much love anywhere people go. Ford justifies promiscuity with biological animal reasons. People intercourse with everyone and ladies are so fittingly pneumatic, just like Ford vehicles are.

Babies are “ raised” in bottles that are “ to be predestined in detail” (Huxley, 2002: 9) through the Bokanovsky process as it is “ one of the major instruments of social stability!”( Huxley, 2002: 7). There, in the bottles, they are prepared for what they are going to be when they come out and grow up in the society where everyone knows their place, they know about things they are predestined for and diseases they will be cured against. People are not afraid of death, because it is a natural course of things.

All the aforementioned conveniences provide members of the happy BNW community with their unique identity of a happy nation. They are free members of their community in the way that they are free to extremely enjoy life in the line with the rules of their happy community. They have been taught that understanding of the world since the bottle time, and afterwards – through hypnopaedic incantation for the sake of stability, lulled by their thoughtful proverbs like Lenina’s favorite “ a gramme is better than a damn.” The director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre educates that “ two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar

lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder” (Huxley, 2002: 17).

As for art, people do not make it. Their life is so colorful, stable and happy that no inner state of mind should be expressed more effectively than consuming goods and reaching satisfaction, which pleases human bodily and spiritual needs.

Talking about science, there is nothing that should be invented as the society living in wealth, and everyone have their lives at ease. The community is well advanced and further advancements could only misbalance the casts’ needs, and it is unnecessary because everyone has his own predestined role in the stable society that is already prosperous.

How utopian indeed! Huxley observed in “ foreword of his novel written in 1946 with the time he set in the novel six hundred years in the future, although it seems to him that we are hardly one hundred years far from the horror” (KoljeviÄŒ, 2002: 137). His opinion leads us to the notion of dystopia, as the author concludes it to be a horrifying reality in which people shall live in one day in the alienated world enriched with technologies.

## **BNW as dystopia**

By converting into dystopia, the happy society becomes a place ruled under totalitarian conditions in our own eyes. Initially, John the Savage grasps the new word because he thinks it is a world with brave ideas, but later on he recognizes the world to be sinful. Being different entails one’s expatriation from the happy society. One has the freedom to choose between thinking differently and being a follower. Huxley questions the world that solved all of <https://assignbuster.com/brave-new-world-utopia-or-dystopia-philosophy-essay/>

its problems where “ children are made in labs...grown up in the spirit of three main social paroles: community, identity, stability. These paroles are imprinted in their minds when they were sleeping and once they became adults they would keep repeating them as supreme wisdoms and morality”(Kovačević, 1984: 268). Attempts to distort the unquestioned identity of the community will lead to social isolation. Freedom to think differently dies with dystopia. Island is the perfect place for the different member of the community. Some members are not reliable members of the society, their appearance, skills and performance are not as they are meant to be, some of the members want to conduct scientific researches, and science is found as a disturbing element for the community. Such people who are like Bernard and Helmholtz need to accept the regime or to be expatriated if disobeyed. To cure the “ disagreement” sickness that leads into instability, people better take soma. People are meant to obey as they were learnt to, as their creators predestined them. Creators decant “ babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future ...future World controllers” (Huxley, 2002: 109).

BNW is really a disgusting society, which gives one all hedonistic pleasure he/she can think of, against Bible and morality. No feelings exist there, people are not free to make their own choice, their physical existence is abuse of their “ blood and flesh” without any pain for “ pain’s a delusion” (Huxley, 2002: 108). Women are “ decent” Alpha Leninas, highly respected whores; all people enjoy promiscuity. Svetozar Koljević cites June Deery that “ women in the society are seen and regard themselves as “ meat” and, as in our society, meat which must be lean, not fat” (Koljević, 2002: 136).

As sexually immorality caused decay of Rome, so it could have the same implications on BNW.

The brave new world is just a technically advanced world, a new world that was foreseen by Ford, the master of mass production. Ford is the God, the master of a technologically perfected world of commodities and consumers, the one who “ looks down” at his consumers, who blindly follow their consumer instincts and beliefs. Identity of the consumers comes with their religion in Ford and massive consumption and comforting with their sins. The followers have no freedom to feel, think over or react to all the immoralities.

Unlike utopia, dystopia in BNW is threatening to everything that is “ normal”. In such a stable community, people have to give up on the things they have always known and felt normal. The unsettling feeling about universal happiness appears when people think about giving up on normal values like home, family, freedom and other traditional value. It is not a real happiness. Happiness comes from vices: orgies (Bernard says that “ Orgy-porgy...is just a Solidarity Service hymn” (Huxley, 2002: 122), promiscuity (“...but every one belongs to every one else” (Huxley, 2002: 18), drugs that makes us love everyone more deeply and “ if anything should go wrong, there’s soma” (Huxley, 2002: 155). The curse of unquestioned stability is an element that suppresses the element of freedom. It suppresses the emotions about being special or different. People should fear emotions, because they are the sign of weakness and an inappropriate reaction. Life is not valued, as every life can be replaced by thousands of other lives. Unnaturally, people should take death with ease. Dying is nice as they are taught so. They learn to take dying as a matter of natural course “.... like any other physiological process”  
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(Huxley, 2002: 109). Even when they die, their body is burnt and the ash is used for pragmatic needs.

As for art, it is considered as an expression of feelings or attitudes that must be controlled. One should not express them, as they threaten stability of a totalitarian society. Those should not influence other people, and this resembles Middle Ages state of art, not a futuristic era.

Science is a threat to stability, as it brings changes and inventions. Mond lectures the Savage in that “...every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy. Yes, even science.” (Huxley, 2002: 154). This really sounds dystopian, because the futuristic times anticipate novelties. Science shapes history with its inventions.

## Summary

The paroles of community, identity and stability are axis of the new society Huxley presented through the mirror of utopia and dystopia. Those are two sides of the same coin: the question of how the world will look like with all the technology advancements, enlarged mass production and an increasing hedonistic consumer’s society. It tackles with people’s perception of the well engineered future and their attitude about how they want the world to be.

In modern terms, it touches the notion of influence of social and commercial propaganda merged with the power of large-scale technology and industry creators of the present world order.