

Brave new world- style and technique analysis



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Karl Marx once said, “ The production of too many useful things results in too many useless people”. Aldous Huxley’s novel Brave New World depicts a utopia that has come to completely rely on technology to run their world. This advanced and civilized world has made living thoughtless. Citizens look to Henry Ford as a deity and the years are based off the making of the Model T. Children are produced on an assembly line and are chemically balanced to fit a specific social class in society. There are five classes in the brave new world: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon.

To dehumanize citizens even further they take a drug, called soma, to relieve any pain, emotional or physical, in their lives. Through Huxley’s style, technique, and structure he accurately portrays a brainless society in which humanity has been replaced with constant technological advances. Huxley uses many techniques in his novel to help support his theme of humanity being superseded by technology. One of the most important techniques is irony. There are examples of it throughout the whole novel. Huxley also uses point of view, illusions, and allusions to display his theme.

He uses these literary techniques to support his theme and to keep the novel focussed on the message he wants to portray to the readers. Therefore, Huxley deliberately uses techniques to solidify his main theme. One of the techniques Huxley uses in Brave New World is point of view. Huxley uses third person omniscient as the point of view to ensure the narration supports his theme. In addition, it allows the setting to shift without changing the outcome of the novel. This technique is shown when Huxley switches back and forth from the Savage Reservation to the brave new world.

If Bernard Marx, an “ Alpha Plus”(Huxley, 14) in the brave new world, were to narrate this part in the novel, it would be focussed on self pity, and his unhappiness. Furthermore, it would no longer be deliberately focussed and thematically based on the replacement of humanity in the society.

Additionally it would not give the impression of a thoughtless place in which no citizens have control. Thus, Huxley intentionally uses the technique of third person omniscient to ensure his novel remains unified and delivers his prediction. The utilization of irony is a key literary technique Huxley uses in his writing.

Irony is defined as “ the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning”(Houghton). Huxley uses irony to illustrate that the brave new world is a satirical utopia, otherwise known as a dystopia. For instance, Lenina Crowne, a beta, is the main female in Brave New World and states that, “ Everybody’s happy nowadays” (Huxley, 79). This is ironic because when children are 8 months old, they are sent to “ Conditioning Rooms”(15) where they have their “ reflexes unalterably conditioned”(17) to be content with their class, and social situation.

Therefore, no-one legitimately knows what true happiness is, and they are deprived of it because of a technological ‘ treatment’ done to them as children. This makes Lenina’s statement an example of irony for the audience can key into how this futuristic utopia is not something to be desired. Huxley also uses irony in Brave New World to illustrate the true persona of characters. For instance, John represents humanity, but he is from the Savage Reservation. Unlike the citizens of the World State, he

comprehends the meaning of love, and happiness but, is still referred to as one of the “ savages”(89).

This shows how Huxley deliberately chose irony to illustrate the brave the world truly is a dystopia. He compares John, someone who had previously been untouched by technology, to “ civilized”(218) people who lost their sense of humanity somewhere in the technological advances of their society. He shows this comparison when Lenina Crowne throws herself at John and he “ retreated in terror... trying to scare away some intruding and dangerous animal”(170). This shows Huxley’s use of irony, as the civilized person wants to fulfill an instinctual, animal-like desire, and the savage strives for fulfillment of higher human needs and emotions.

The contrast depicts humanity being degraded in society, which is Huxley’s main theme. The irony with John being the savage continues to the end of Brave New World. In the last paragraph, John hangs himself because he cannot handle living in a thoughtless and savage world. John is the son of the Director, and his mother Linda, is the Director’s long lost love. John meets Bernard Marx when he and Lenina Crowne go to the Savage Reservation. When Bernard realizes who they are, he brings them back to the brave new world.

At first, they are excited to be in a new place, until they quickly realize the society is not what they expect. Humanity is not part of the society’s ideals, and John cannot comprehend the thoughtlessness exhibited in the society. Ironically, the savages have a better sense of humanity than the civilized people of the brave new world. There are many other points in the novel

after John comes to the World State where irony is used. Huxley uses irony to establish that parents and parental love are nonexistent in the new society.

This is exhibited when John calls the Director “ Father” and everyone laughs, and “ six more test-tubes of spermatozoa were upset”(132). This is ironic because the savage is mocked for not being made in a test-tube, and as the civilized people are “ hysterical”(132) they alter the genetics of six spermatozoa, modifying future citizens who will also be rejected. Also, irony is used by Huxley to further the fact that love is not unconditional in the new society, and that attachments to others is not socially acceptable.

This is ironic because in the Savage Reservation, that is what society is based around, relationships. This irony is shown when Linda becomes ill and instead of trying to cure her, she is separated from society and is left to die with other diseased people. There, civilized children are “ death-conditioned”(178) so they are unaffected by death, and that it is not a big deal. This sickens John because he loves Linda and cannot imagine life without her. This is ironic because it shows that the savages are more affectionate and loving than the civilized people of the World-State.

In the last part of the novel, irony shows up again when Huxley thickens the plot with John’s suicide. John kills himself because after entering the brave new world, there is no sense of humanity to be found. This disheartens him and leads him to run away into the wilderness, where he stays in an “ old lighthouse”(215). The civilized people search until they find him, “ like turkey buzzards settling on a corpse”(219). The “ reporters”(219) and “ sightseers”(227) would then pester him constantly, leading him to be

suicidal. Huxley deliberately does this to depict how inhumane the civilized people truly are.

Thus, irony is shown when John, the character representing humanity itself, hangs himself due to the lack of humanity in the dystopian brave new world. Therefore, Huxley uses irony throughout his whole novel, to intentionally make the readers dislike the euphoric utopia he creates. He does so to show how rapid technological growth within a society will cause it to lack humanity. Moreover, the progress the brave new world makes humanity regress. The more they push technological advances on their society, the further they lose their sense of humanity.

Thus, Huxley uses irony effectively to help support his overall theme, and to ensure that it is obvious to the readers what his theme is. Along with irony and point of view, Huxley uses allusion to help portray a lifeless, and ignorant world. One allusion in Brave New World is the drug Soma. The Greek root of the word soma means body, more so, the “ body distinguished from the mind”(Saunders). In the society Huxley creates in his novel, this is what soma does, it detaches the mind from the body, alleviating residents’ emotions and physical and social and pains.

Furthermore, they take it to detach themselves from reality to feel, “ jolly” (Huxley, 79). This justifies that happiness in the novel is a euphoric illusion; the citizens do not comprehend what true happiness is or know that it even exists. This illusion of happiness shows how technology can replace humanity and be used to control a society at large by brainwashing the citizens into a meaningless and ignorant happiness. This technique is a major

component in Huxley's novel, and is used to support his theme throughout the whole novel.

Huxley uses "Ford"(105) as a deity in Brave New World, and this is also an allusion to a man in history. Henry Ford was the inventor of the assembly line, the Model-T, and many other influential items in the technological world. This allusion shows us how instead of worshiping a God who teaches us to 'love our neighbour as ourselves', people now worship a man who started the technological advances in our world. For instance, Huxley chose Ford because of his invention of the assembly line. This is prominent because humans are now "decanted"(4) from an assembly line instead of conceived by a mother.

This exhibits how Huxley intentionally chose Ford to base a technologically dependent society without humanity. Huxley also deliberately chose Ford because of his invention of the "first Model-T"(44). This car was a breakthrough for the vehicle industry and led to all the cars we have today. The Model-T was made in 1908, and that is the year the calendar is based off in the brave new world. The novel is set in the year 632 A. F. (After Ford), and believe that "historical facts are unpleasant"(19) and "history is bunk"(28). The people's mindset is in the present and future, as they disregard the past.

This shows how people have lost humanity and are now focussed on making life easier and easier. The allusion of Ford in the novel, gets the readers focussing on the connections the novel has to reality. This shows the contrast Huxley was working towards depicting; how different a world

completely reliant on technology is from one that still has a grasp on its humanity. Illusion is another technique used in Huxley's Brave New World. He uses it in the depiction of age in the brave new world. In the new society, people do not appear to age, but their bodies still do.

Huxley's intention with this is to show contrast between the World-State and the Savage Reservation. When Lenina and Bernard visit the Reservation, Lenina sees an old man and asks " what [is] the matter"(95) is. Bernard then explains that in the new world they " keep their internal secretions artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium"(95). This means they do not appear to age in the World State, but when their bodies reach a certain age they still die like the savages. So, in the brave new world, age is therefore an illusion because it is a false truth.

People appear young, but really are old. Huxley does this intentionally to show how the new society thinks " its terrible"(95) to follow natural human life. Thus, Huxley uses illusion to display his theme of technology replacing humanity, through the World-State not accepting the natural cycle of life. Huxley displays his theme of humanity being replaced by technology through the way he presents characters in Brave New World. In the novel, Bernard Marx is an outcast in society who is said to have " alcohol[...]put into[...]his blood surrogate"(52) and did not " respond properly to conditioning" (76).

This is the excuse others have for him being odd compared to the themselves, and for him questioning humanity and seeking a greater meaning to life. There are two things shown in this: the new world is not perfect, and there is still hope for humanity. First, the fact that Huxley chose

Bernard Marx, an alpha plus, to show imperfection is quite deliberate. He does this to show that the new world, although they are striving for perfection, still have not obtained it. It is also ironic, as one malfunction in their system resulted in a person that displays humanity.

In addition, even though the government tries to condition citizens to their liking, they cannot always stop the citizens from having compassion and yearning for more in life. Huxley intentionally does this to support that technology is replacing humanity, but to also give a sense of hope to the readers. As well as techniques, Huxley's structure is very prominent in the development of his theme in Brave New World. He uses various structural methods to portray humanity being superseded by technology. One method is setting shifts.

Huxley intentionally switches between the new society and the Savage Reservation to make the audience vividly compare the two. These switches show how sterile and lifeless the new society is, compared to the savage's way of life. The savages still live off the land, grow "old" (95), marry, have children, and know what happiness is. In comparison to the civilized people who fly everywhere, have no emotional attachments and take soma to relieve any inconveniences. In contrasting these two very deliberately different worlds, Huxley shows how the utopia the new world is thought to be is in reality a dystopia.

He shifts the setting of the novel to show how removing true emotions and values from society will be harmful to humanity. Also, Huxley furthers the impression of an unwanted way of life produced in the World State to

support his theme of technology replacing humanity. In addition to setting shifts, the order Huxley presents the settings in Brave New World is important. He begins the novel with the new society showing readers how “dead”(1) the brave new world truly is. Then, Huxley uses flashbacks to introduce the Savage Reservation, to show that humanity still exists outside of the technologically controlled nation.

Again Huxley goes back to the new society before switching completely to the reservation. Lastly, he switches back to the new world. These switches are deliberate and make readers sympathize John as he has to come back to the new world, thinking it is a utopia. It also helps Huxley contrast the two worlds and moreover, strongly presents the new world as a dystopia.

Therefore, the order Huxley presents his settings in depicts the lifeless world even further and makes the readers yearn for the reservation instead of the new society.

Another structure Huxley uses to illustrate his theme is the use of flashbacks. In the middle of the novel, before Bernard’s journey to the Savage Reservation, the Director and Bernard have a meeting in which the Director has flashbacks. His flashbacks are of the time he spent on the reservation himself. Huxley does this to contrast of the two worlds, and to give readers a glimpse of it before Bernard and Lenina’s vacation there. Also, Huxley does this to show readers how reminiscing became an “uncomfortable”(82) subject, as “ history is bunk”(29).

This idea of the past not being discussed helps Huxley portray his theme that true humanity will become rare if we let technology dominate society.

Therefore, Huxley's structure contrasts the reservation and the new society in the novel. This adds to the theme of technology superseding humanity, and shows how progress is actually regression. Thus, structure is a major component in Huxley's *Brave New World*, and helps his theme be more discernible for the readers. Huxley's style, along with technique and structure, helps to present his theme in *Brave New World*.

The style helps focus the readers on ironies within the text, the description of important places, and most of all, to intentionally manipulate the text to depict his theme skillfully. Some stylistic techniques Huxley uses are diction, syntax, literary techniques and patterns. It is style in all its parts that Huxley uses to his advantage to portray his theme. In *Brave New World*, the style in the first paragraph depicts a bleak world to the readers. Huxley uses both syntax and diction to show this. The paragraph contains no verbs and is strictly descriptive.

This is a deliberate technique used to portray the brave new world as a sterile, unwelcoming place that is filled with technology. It enables the readers to conclude the new world is not a utopia from the beginning of the novel. The topic of the paragraph is the World-State's agenda, "Community, Identity, Stability"(5), showing how the world portrayed to the readers is no longer focussed on individuality and love, but on "everyone belongs to everyone else"(40). This starts the novel off showing how lifeless the new society is and giving readers an indication of themes he will develop throughout the novel.

Huxley's style is very prominent, even in the last paragraph. The paragraph is a description of John's death, and is also a metaphor. Huxley uses a metaphor to show the lack of direction in a society without humanity. Slowly, very slowly, like two unhurried compass needles, the feet turned towards the right; north, north-east, east, south-east, south-south-west; then paused, and after a few seconds, turned as unhurriedly back towards the left. South-south-west, south-south-east, east... (229) Huxley's choice of a compass, bluntly shows how technology is what killed humanity.

The compass was deliberately chosen to show how society will lose its direction if technology is allowed to be the mindlessly guide societie. Therefore, Huxley's syntax and diction choices in the first and last paragraphs establish theme prominently and help readers understand his point of view more fully. Diction choice is also a major part of Huxley's style. He uses insightful diction to establish a dystopia and to show how technology is superseding humanity in Brave New World. Huxley uses made up words such as "hypnopaedia"(20), and deliberate words such as soma to create certain ideas in the new society.

For instance, he uses hypnopaedia as something that seems good until readers understand its usage in the world. Also, Huxley chose a soft world like soma, to describe the drug citizens use in the "brave new world" to control emotions, again so that it appeals to readers. This appeal also changes when the realization that soma is also taking away the humanity in society. Therefore, Huxley deliberately chooses words to add irony and depth to his novel. Diction choice in Huxley's novel also supports his theme.

By choosing soma, a word that means mind apart from the body, it shows how technology has replaced humanity. The brave new world uses a drug, to separate their bodies from their mind. Moreover, they use soma to detach themselves from reality. Unlike in the Savage Reservation, where they do not have such a thing, and are very much in touch with their humanity. Thus, Huxley intentionally chose soma to represent the loss of humanity in the brave new world. Huxley's style is also seen in the pattern of hypnopaedia in his novel. Hypnopaedia is what World-State uses to condition its citizens from birth.

It is short phrases that are played to citizens while they are sleeping, to start the process of indoctrination through the use of propaganda as soon as possible. They are used to 'hypnotize' citizens or "condition" them to be content with their lives in the brave new world. More importantly, Huxley uses these phrases to depict how thoughtless and monotonous society has become. He does this even further by comparing hypnopaedia to Shakespeare's literature. This contrast supports the monotonous society Huxley creates in Brave New World.

Near the ending of the novel this contrast is shown when the Savage and Mustapha Mond, a World Controller have a friendly confrontation. John uses Shakespeare to represent humanity. It is what he knows and thinks society is supposed to look like. However, when he realizes it is not like Shakespeare, he starts to become suicidal. In chapters 16 and 17 of the novel, him and Mustapha Mond have their 'showdown' of their contrasting world views. Mustapha Mond describes the new society and John counters him with

Shakespeare. In this novel, Huxley uses Shakespeare as another voice of humanity.

This pattern also shows syntax is used within Brave New World. Huxley's uses syntax to compare the new world to the savage world. In "hypnopaedia"(20), the phrases are short and simple and are constantly repeated in the new society. An example of this is "a gramme is always better than a damn"(77). This saying means that it is better to be high in the new world than to care enough about something to be upset. This phrase is heard more than once throughout the novel showing pattern, and syntax. The phrases depict the thoughtless world very easily and help readers sympathize with John when he reads Shakespeare.

Huxley's choice in Shakespeare as a contrast to the hypnopaedia is another example of syntax. He uses quotes from "Othello"(210), The Tempest and even mentions Romeo and Juliet. The flowing and intellectual syntax that is in John's dialogue when speaking of Shakespeare contrasts that of the "hypnopaedia". It shows how much they actually have lost. Rather than the rich, complex thoughts and language of Shakespeare, they have been reduced to simple slogans and propaganda. Thus, Huxley uses syntax to depict how the brave new world is really a dystopia.

He does this by displaying "the price [citizens] have to pay for stability"(194) in their technologically dependent world. Thus, Huxley's style enables him to further the reader's understanding of how much technology has replaced in the new society. His use of diction, syntax and patterns all help keep the novel unified and focussed on one theme. Huxley's style is

very important and cannot be overlooked when analyzing the novel's theme. Huxley's style, techniques and structure accurately portrays a lifeless society in which humanity has been superseded by technology.

Civilized people take soma to control emotions, to the point that have no sense of true happiness or love. The world has become monotonous with its lack of individuality, as " everyone belongs to everyone else"(40).

Furthermore, the society is regressing from too many technological advances, making the brave new world lose its humanity. Huxley therefore shows readers that technology replacing humanity is not something to aspire to, and that the society today could become this, if it does let technological advancement become its priority.