

# Brave new world and 1984

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Although many similarities exist between Aldous Huxley's *A Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984*, the works books though they deal with similar topics, are more dissimilar than alike. *A Brave New World* is a novel about the struggle of Bernard Marx, who rejects the tenants of his society when he discovers that he is not truly happy. *1984* is the story of Winston who finds forbidden love within the hypocrisy of his society. In both cases, the main character is in quiet rebellion against his government which is eventually found to be in vain.

Huxley wrote *A Brave New World* in the third person so that the reader could be allotted a more comprehensive view of the activities he presents. His characters are shallow and cartoon-like (Astrachan) in order to better reflect the society in which they are entrapped. In this society traditional notions of love and what ideally should come out of it have long been disregarded and are now despised, " Mother, monogamy, romance. High spurts the fountain; fierce and foamy the wild jet.

The urge has but a single outlet. " (Huxley 41) The comparison to a wild jet is intended to demonstrate the inherent dangers in these activities. Many of the *Brave New World's* social norms are intended to 'save' its citizens from anything unpleasant through depriving them of the opportunity to miss anything overly pleasant. Soma, the magical ultimate drug is what keeps the population from revolting. What you need is a gramme of soma... All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects. " The drug is at the forefront of their daily lives providing freedom Superczynski 2 from life's every ill.

“ The word comes from the Sanskrit language of ancient India. It means both an intoxicating drink used in the old Vedic religious rituals there and the plant from whose juice the drink was made- a plant whose true identity we don't know. (Astrachan) The drug is used as a form of recreation, like sex, and its use is encouraged at any opportunity, especially when great emotions begin to arise. They are conditioned to accept this to calm and pacify them should they begin to feel anything too intensely. The conditioning also provides them with their place and prevents them from participating in social activities which they needn't take part in. (Smith)

Class consciousness which Americans are so reluctant to acknowledge is taught through hypnop? ia (the repetition of phrases during sleep akin to post hypnotic suggestion) for all social classes: These names are letters in the Greek alphabet, familiar to Huxley's original English readers because in English schools they are used as grades- like our As, Bs, etc. - with Alpha plus the best and Epsilon minus the worst. In Brave New World, each names a class or caste. Alphas and Betas remain individuals; only Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons are bokanovskified. (Astrachan) The conditioning is begun at an extremely young age and is by modern real-world standards cruel, AThe screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone.

There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. ” (Huxley 20) The children's “ Pavlovian” conditioning with electric shocks is later compared to the wax seals which used to grace the seams of letters (Astrachan), “ Not so much like drops of water, though water, it is true, can wear holes in the hardest

granite; rather, drops of liquid sealing-wax, drops that adhere, incrust, incorporate themselves with what they fall on, till finally the rock is all one scarlet blob.

The entire society is conditioned to shrink away from intense emotion, engage in casual sex, and take their pacifying Soma. In 1984, a first-person book partly narrated by the main character's internal dialogue, the great party leader is "Big Brother," a fictional character who is somewhat more imposing than "Ford," of Huxley's book, named after the industrialist Henry Ford (Astrachan).

The main character Superczynski 3 Winston fears Big Brother and is much more aware of his situation than any of the characters in A Brave New World who are constantly pacified by soma. In A Brave New World history is ignored completely whereas in 1984 it is literally rewritten in order to suit the present. The role of science in both books is extensive and complicated. 1984's telescreens cannot be turned off, as A Brave New World has "feelies," an advancement on "talkies" which added sound, "feelies" add tactile senses to a movie as well.

Science and human progress is not acknowledged in A Brave New World (Smith) excepting when it increases consumption, whereas it is twisted with ironic titles in 1984, "They were homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided: the Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts; the Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war; the Ministry of Love,

which maintained law and order; and the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs.

Their names in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty. ”

(Orwell 8) The God (Ford) of A Brave New World encourages production and consumption of shallow objects to complement the shallow minds of its citizens. 1984 was written as a warning against the results of having a totalitarian state. Winston bears the blunt of his mistakes, the crime of individuality and dissent. A Brave New World is as much a satire on the reality of today (the reality of Huxley’s day) as it is a novel about the future.

Neil Postman ...warned Awhen a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is defined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby talk, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; cultural death is a clear possibility. (Kruk) Huxley seems to feel that society is progressing toward a materialistic and superficial end, in which all things of real value, including the relationships which make people human, will be quashed.

The two works vary greatly, A Brave New World is the Huxley’s expression of fear that mankind will create a utopia by way of foregoing all that makes life worthwhile. Orwell’s work rings more sharply of secret police paranoia. Indeed, Winston is taken to room 101, while Superczynski 4 Bernard is merely transferred to an uncomfortable location. The hypocrisy is much more evident within A Brave New World as well, owing to the controller’s having had a son.

Both books forewarn of a day when humankind might fall slave to its own concept of how others should act. The two books ask not whether societies with stability, pacification, and uniformity can be created, but whether or not they are worth creating. It is so often that one wants something and in wanting romanticizes it, thus bringing disappointment when the end is finally obtained. They serve as a reminder that it is necessary to have pain to compare with joy, defeat to compare with victory, and problems in order to have solutions.