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[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Brave New World, by acclaimed author Aldous Huxley, is not so much a novel about individuals as it is about a society as a whole. It is a story of a dystopia, of a cold scientific world order and the people who inhabit it. Against this harsh setting, Huxley experiments with various ideas and philosophies, using an eclectic cast of characters to move his ideas from the printed page to the reader by placing them in a human, or semi-human, context. In many ways, Brave New World is almost a story of survival – not survival as opposed to the natural world, but survival of the human race, of individuals trying to live in a world where the individual spirit is considered nonexistent. In this context, the people who inhabit Brave New World jump off of the page, each offering his or her own testimony to the inherent bizarreness of the scientifically-crafted lifestyles of this  brave new world.  Bernard Marx is perhaps the most compelling character throughout the first part of the book, his last name ironically being that of the founder of Communism. By the standards of the  Brave New World,  Marx is a dysfunctional person, his conditioning having obvious flaws. He suffers from a sort of inferiority complex, due to his small height – physically, he resembles a person of the lower class more than an  alpha.  While Bernard is not a  protagonist  in the traditional sense of the term, he proves to be a good viewpoint character, because his motivations are clearly human. For example, just as the Director has finished discussing how the World State has eliminated  lovesickness,  Bernard is shown to be himself lovesick, jealous, and angry. But, ultimately, his motivations are materialistic, not idealistic – he wants for things that he cannot have. After a trip to a New Mexico Indian

Reservation and his subsequent discovery of John the savage, ? he begins to abuse his newfound popularity and fame by taking part in all of the aspects of the World State which he had previously criticized, showing that he is a devout critic whose secret motive is to become what he criticizes – jealousy at its best. This success, however, collapses when the savage refuses to take part in Bernard s attempts to remain popular. Ultimately, Marx proves to be an interesting and sympathetic character, but not one that the reader can easily respect. The most admirable figure of Brave New World, however, is John The Savage, ? who makes his first appearance roughly halfway through the book. The only character to have been raised in isolation from the World State, John s initial entrance comes during a brutal Native American ritual, showing that he is a very primitive man in comparison with the other characters of the story. Bernard and Lenina view this ritual as repulsive, while John expresses his frustrations at having been banned from participating, marking the cultural divide between the World State characters and the savage. ? John, then, becomes the ultimate outsider, rejected by both the civilized and primitive worlds. In his isolation, John immerses himself in Shakespeare, a 900-year-old author utterly forgotten by the World State, thus further pushing the savage ? away from the societal norms around him. This interest in Shakespeare s works provides John with the ability to verbalize his complex feelings and emotions, and gives him a framework on which to base his later criticisms of the World State values. When he confronts Mustapha Mond, the World Controller of Western Europe, it is Shakespeare that gives John a style of speaking that is capable of competing with the clever rhetoric

of the controller. At the same time, his naive, infantile perception of the brave new world with such people in it leads to a conflict between his own values and reality, eventually causing him to kill himself in one of the story's most touching scenes. Lenina Crowne serves as a relay between John's complex thoughts and the more "civilized" society of the World State. A worker in the London Hatchery and Conditioning Center, where human embryos are created, she becomes the main love interest of many of the story's characters, the two most important of which are Bernard Marx and John. She tends to be different from other women of the World State, by doing such things as dating only one man at a time, being attracted to Bernard the misfit, and, eventually, developing an explosive passion for John "the savage." Ultimately, however, she fails to understand Bernard's apathy or John's Shakespearean system of values, and thus falls back into the ignorance that characterizes most of the World State. Brave New World's antagonist would actually be the brave new world itself, although there are a variety of representatives of the World State who carry out the oligarchy's bidding. The most prominent leader is Mustapha Mond, The Resident World Controller of Western Europe and one of only ten World Controllers. Once an underground scientist, Mond was given the choice of going into exile for performing illicit experiments or training to become one of the World Controllers – he delights in censoring scientific discoveries and exiling people with unorthodox views because of this. Interestingly enough, the word "mond" means "world," making a clever allusion to the limitlessness of Mustapha Mond's power. Early in the book, he

serves to articulate the history of the World State and its philosophies, and later he debates with John, demonstrating the fundamental differences between World State values and Shakespearean values. Aside from being a vehicle for rhetoric, however, Mond is a very complex character, balancing his totalitarian job with readings of Shakespeare and even The Bible. His goals for humanity are stability and happiness, to the exclusion of emotions and human relations. Brave New World, as a whole, is a novel based around ideas and concepts more than characters, but the characters themselves prove to be convincing vehicles for the ideas that Huxley tries to set forth. Each character represents a different side of the debate, from John's traditional English values to Mond's radical view of stability. In many ways, Brave New World should be read as a warning of taking ideas to radical levels, but it is also a fantastic way to gain insight into opposing philosophies, because Huxley makes no actual moral judgment as to who is right and who is wrong – rather, he lets the characters speak for themselves. It is this detached view of the characters that ultimately provide the book with its distinct charm.