

An analysis of aldous huxley's brave new world

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



In the science fiction novel *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley shows a “revolution of revolutions” resulting from technological advances. He does so by portraying a future BNW society that is supposedly perfect in every way. Everyone is happy. Everything exists in perfect order. Huxley, however, focuses on warning the reader about problems that may develop in the future such as promiscuity, lack of intimacy, etc. This future is indeed a “revolution of revolutions” in that societal norms go through a radical change into completely innovative, but sometimes corrupt, forms. This revolution is a direct result of a “Nine Years War:” a war so devastating that it nearly extinguishes life on earth. Near the end of this period, humanity as a whole grows tired of war and destruction, and therefore decides to search for answers through other means. The answer is found in advanced technology. Attributing their new foundation to the industrial enterpriser, Henry Ford, the BNW society begins to take shape. Its motto becomes “community, identity, stability,” and anything that promotes social disorder is quickly eliminated. This element precludes individuality and will later incite conflict. Everyone thinks the same, acts the same, and generally lives the same in their respective class orders. This is made possible through developmental conditioning. From the moment of conception, a human is subjected to technological conditioning that continues throughout their lifetime. All their thoughts and actions are conditioned to a set pattern. Two techniques of instituting this are those of Pavlov and Skinner. The BNW society takes advantages of their findings to modify the behavior of all people through various stimuli, response systems, rewards and punishments. One example is the electric shock treatment of babies, training them to dislike and avoid

flowers. As adults, they will then avoid nature and contact, therefore, with lower class people. Another ongoing process is the use of Sigmund Freud's hypnopaedia method. This "sleep teaching" conditions people to think a certain way for the rest of their lives. They become brainwashed. The most prominent tool in attaining this revolution is genetic engineering. During embryonic development, people are "manufactured with distinct characteristics to maintain the stability of society." In essence, a person's social class and intellectual capacity is predetermined at birth. Their likes and dislikes are already programmed. Individual thought and freedom, as a result, are nonexistent. The main focus is conformity and stability. Everyone gets what they want, which is also programmed, and everyone is happy. If the opposite ever happens to occur, "there's always soma." This drug dependency is the ultimate source of instant gratification and connotes a "quick fix mentality." It indulges the senses, instills happiness, and therefore promotes stability. John the Savage, however, detests all aspects of this revolution. Having been brought up on the Reservation, he is not brainwashed by BNW conditioning. On the contrary, he does possess individuality, free choice, and an imagination. He recognizes these precious gifts of life and is astonished when he encounters civilization. John also realizes that "if one's different, one's bound to be lonely." This is the way he feels after a while in the city. He cannot stand the lack of meaningful relationships, the lack of individuality of thought, and constant need for instant gratification. Ultimately, this forces him to move into the lighthouse to seek seclusion. John subsequently begins to punish himself, apparently trying to purge his soul of the BNW society. He tries to become an individual

again, familiarizing with nature and his spiritual side. However, his location is later discovered and he realizes that he cannot escape the brave, new world. This epiphany causes him to commit suicide in the end. The sad part of this final act of desperation is that it has no effect on the BNW citizens. They continue to live their lives the way they had been. These people are too brainwashed to even fathom what message John the Savage had tried to impart. This event and others signal Huxley's warnings about a change toward the BNW society. Aside from the conspicuous demand for conformity and stability, the new World State centers on materialism as well. BNW citizens focus on objects and their perfection. In their minds, "flaws impede happiness" and things of the past hold no value. Huxley also emphasizes the dependence on soma. This instant gratification is merely taking the easy way out of things. Whether it is pain, anger or frustration, soma is the answer to BNW citizens. Soma, moreover, leads to happiness and happiness leads back to the central goal of stability. If people are happy and get what they want, there is no social chaos or threat to society. In the BNW society, there is also a degradation of values. Intimacy is nonexistent and in its place is polygamy. People treat sexuality like a common pastime and derive no feeling from it other than pleasure. Family is another nonexistent concept. People miss out on valuable experiences, moral lessons, and certain emotions they would have if they were in a family. As a result, they do not develop spiritually. On the contrary, they are more self-centered and see another's death, for instance, as insignificant. Yet the most disturbing element in the revolution is the lack of individuality. There is no freedom of thought or expression of ideas, and this causes things like art and literature to be banned.

Surprisingly, many of the elements of Brave New World are present in today's world. Materialism, for one, is present everywhere. It can always be seen in advertisements, commercials, and magazines among other places. Some people tend to think that the more things you have, the happier you are in life. Drug abuse, secondly, occurs in today's society as well. Although it is not as widely depended on as in the Brave New World, drug abuse still persists and is present almost everywhere. The most noticeable similarity, however, is the presence of genetics. In today's world, the science of genetics is growing as more procedures are being done to modify human life and development. If progress keeps up, people may be able to do what is done in Brave New World. Overall, Aldous Huxley shows the reader how the BNW's "revolution of revolutions" does not benefit humankind in the end. Although perfection is almost reached scientifically, BNW citizens take a step back intellectually. Furthermore, the "ends do not justify the means" in that individuality and free will are compromised in the process. In general, Huxley's Brave New World shows us what not to evolve into.