
The Brave New World's Dystopia And Assimilation

In the year 632AF (the year 2540AD, 632 years after Ford) the world has finally eliminated many inconveniences including war, famine, dissent, disease, depression and jealousy. This conquest, however, came at a cost: cultural assimilation, consumerism, and mediocrity. In his novel Brave New World, Aldous Huxley describes a dystopia where amazing scientific progress has created a culture that cannot live with the values and governments accepted today. "Community, Identity, Stability" is the motto of the governing World State. In this time, unquestioned political authority controls culture through the manipulation of available technologies.

Science plays a commanding role in Huxley's World-State, as the people are conditioned to believe, "science is everything." Factories produce everything, from babies to drugs, making science a dehumanizing force. Technology is used to facilitate everything, even to create, control, and end every life. The novel addresses the effects of advances in technology on society. Huxley's dystopia illustrates the dangers of technology, more obviously in his New World than he could in his own, particularly the abuse of sciences like biology and psychology and scientific processes like assembly lines and education, to achieve the ideal.

Wielding science, the all-powerful political forces of this age control every aspect of life as they strive for "Community, Identity, Stability." While everything that has been achieved by the year that Brave New World takes place owes its origin to science, science itself has been paradoxically relegated along with culture, and religion. The alphas, enjoying their unchallenged power, desire lasting stability. They recognize that this requires they rule a society of identical individuals. While the citizens are conditioned to retain the illusion that they are free and individual, the administrative alphas are aware that humanity is divided into five castes, the lower three classes being made up of sets of 96 clones. The people of the New World do not realize they are conforming because their choices, seemingly governed by their free will, are actually the same reactions every member of the conditioned class is programmed to have. Life is made simple and everyone is apparently free of negative emotions. Sex and drugs define the culture, but the people are "controlled." Acting in the interest of sustaining their civilization, the alphas sacrifice true freedom for stability.

Religion is used as a regulation in our society as it defines our morals and values. In the New World, however, the alphas have no need for a social control over their docile citizens. Religion is consequently nonexistent. On a personal level, the people in Huxley's dystopia had no need for a belief system that attempts to explain their world and values relationships. As Mond attempts to explain, "Religious sentiment will compensate us for all our losses. But there aren't

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any losses for us to compensate; religious sentiment is superfluous [...] what need do we have of [...] consolation when we have soma? [...] our civilization has chosen machinery, medicine and happiness" (233). The drug soma was later referred to as "Christianity without tears" (238). In the civilization without struggle, discontent, unhappiness, and failure, there is no need for religion.

There are many ways Huxley's novel suggests that his engineered society neglects individual dignity. In a society that idolizes and utilizes science, it becomes the means to sacrifice an individual's life without their consent. The Bokanovsky Process dictates what type of human each embryo will be and in the cases of the lower castes, the Process inhibits beings' potential in life (6). In this way, every person is "conditioned" to fit society's needs. Prior to decanting, biological or physiological conditioning consists of adding chemicals or spinning the bottles to prepare the embryos for the levels of strength, intelligence, and aptitude required for given jobs. After they are "decanted" from the bottles, people are psychologically conditioned in their sleep. At every stage of life the society has a dynamic role in brainwashing people to make up the ideal society.

Huxley's work is often deemed prophetic, as comparisons are drawn between the world of today and his nightmarish culture of the future. Prozac and Zoloft are today's soma, relieving people who cannot be happy in our society. The technologies of cloning, genetic engineering, virtual reality, and psycho-engineering, although in their infancy, unnervingly foreshadow a time that could have the sciences that were only fiction to Huxley as common practice. Even our government's foundations surprisingly parallel Huxley's society's single-minded pursuit of happiness. Our Declaration of Independence states that this is an inalienable right, of the same importance as the right to life and liberty. What is heartening is that readers are still revolted by Huxley's society that lacks morals freedom and religion.

It is possible that with the continuing convergence of science, technology, and religion, that some day one institution will lead them all. As is true in Brave New World, scientific development is leading all forms of progress: governments adjust to regulate what is necessary of new discoveries and options, and it is the older traditions such as religion that suffer from the advances. At one point, Pope Pius IX decreed in his Syllabus of Errors that every form developing of technology was evil, even gas lamps, the use of which apparently enticed people to stay out at night and engage in questionable activities. The point during this development at which science requires interference to prevent our world from turning into Huxley's is not clear today. Science was already made an issue of international political concern by the controversies over cloning. It inspired the first nearly global consensus in its ban, an aspect that suggest that it might take a world government, hopefully less involved than Huxley's, to successfully regulate science that has the potential to be destructive.

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