

WOLFNOTE SUMMARY OF...

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S BRAVE NEW WORLD



Context

Huxley's book, **Brave New World**, published in 1932 is giving the world, as it was then, a warning of what the future may hold 600 years hence. He later modified this timescale, greatly shortening it, in his commentary **Brave New World Revisited**, which is not covered in this note.

The first few chapters give an introduction to this brave new world, and the plot does not start until Huxley focuses on Bernard Marx, a highly intelligent, but eccentric man, who is dissatisfied with his existence in Utopia, which has been in existence for 632 years.

In this world there is no family life – children are created for a specific role in the running of the state.

Humans are divided into 5 castes from Alpha down to Epsilon. Bernard is an Alpha+, which gives him the authority to go on holiday to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico where those who are not worth being brought into the Utopia society are kept.

He has taken Lenina Crowne on holiday and they meet John 'the savage' who was born on the Reservation. It turns out that John was given birth "not produced by the state" by the wife of Tomakin, the Director of Hatcheries who had left her in the Reservation.

Bernard obtains permission from Mustapha Mond, one of the 10 World Controllers, to bring John and his mother, Linda, back to London where he proudly parades the 'primitive' savage before his fellow citizens. Linda soon becomes ill and John feels guilty for deserting her and goes to her bedside. When she dies, John incites a riot and is arrested along with Bernard and another mutual friend, Helmholtz Watson.

Mustapha Mond is furious with the three, and tells them that they must conform to the requirements of the state.

Bernard and Helmholtz are exiled, but John must remain behind. He hates the Utopian society and eventually escapes and discovers a deserted spot outside London. However, he is unable to escape his public who now view him as a spectacle, and their prying eyes hound him, and so he takes his own life.

The Author

Aldous Leonard Huxley was born in Surrey, England in 1894.

He was grandson of Thomas Huxley who was a champion of Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution. He produced several works on this subject, *Man's Place in Nature*, *Manual of Comparative Anatomy of Vertebrate Animals*, and *Evolution and Ethics*.

He enjoyed a happy childhood brought up in a well-to-do middle class family. He was educated at Eton College where he studied to become a doctor.

His time at Eton was not a happy time, for his mother died from cancer and he suffered from an eye disease, which left him virtually blind. He received some surgery, which helped his vision, but he still needed to use Braille in order to read. He was determined to pursue his education despite this drawback, and he graduated from Balliol College, Oxford in 1916 with a 1st in English Literature.

He also lost his brother who committed suicide during a fit of depression.

His first publication was a collection of poems entitled *The Burning Wheel* in 1916. His first novel *Crome Yellow* was published in 1921 drawing critical acclaim. He was a prolific writer producing reviews, essays and articles for the popular magazines of the day.

During the 1920's he spent the bulk of his time in Italy, before moving to the South of France in the early 1930's just when *Brave New World* was published. In 1936 *Eyeless in Gaza* was published and this together with *The Doors of Perception* published in 1954 dealt with Huxley's interest in mysticism and states of consciousness. One of his finest works was *Collected Short Stories* published in 1957. His final notable work was *Island* published in 1962.

Huxley was always fascinated by the arguments he raised in *Brave New World* and he returned to the subject when he produced *Brave New World Revisited*, published in 1958. This contains his critical

commentaries concerning the Brave New World, dealing with subjects such as overpopulation, propaganda in a democratic society, the arts of selling, brainwashing and chemical persuasion, and subconscious persuasion.

He moved to Los Angeles in 1937, hoping that this would assist his health. He stayed in Los Angeles until his death from cancer in 1963. His passing was scarcely noticed as this coincided with the death of President John F. Kennedy.

Main Characters

Bernard Marx

He is an intelligent member of the Psychology Bureau of the Central London Hatchery. He is slightly deformed, arising from an accident prior to his decanting. He has a chip on his shoulder concerning the Utopian system, which he considers has made him an outcast.

John, 'the Savage'

He was born in the Savage Reservation and brought to Utopia along with his mother, by Bernard. He is in sharp contrast to the people of the Brave New World due to his goodness and honesty. He was unable to relate to the Indians on the reservation, and incapable of being indoctrinated into the Utopian world. He wished to live as a recluse, but this was not possible, and he committed suicide.

Lenina Crowne

She is a very beautiful 'pneumatic' nurse at the Hatchery. She is promiscuous and dates both Bernard and Foster. However, she does have a strange attraction to John, but their relationship is not given the opportunity to develop.

Pneumatic is applied throughout the novel to all sexually desirable females.

Mustapha Mond

Mond is the resident Controller for Western Europe, and is one of the few people who are truly enlightened. He is arguably Huxley's mouthpiece in the novel, who comes out as a lonely, but kind man, and although he is aware of the pre-Utopian world, he prefers Utopia.

Tomakin

He is the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (D.H.C.) who has delusions of grandeur and likes exerting the power that he has. However, his past catches up with him in the form of his wife, Linda and son, John, the Savage, who is brought back by Bernard, and bring about his downfall.

Linda

Linda accidentally had a child, John, by the D.H.C., who left her behind on the Savage Reservation.

Helmholtz Watson

He is a close friend of Bernard and a gifted writer of Utopian propaganda. His job is an Emotional Engineer. His rebellious views lead to his exile.

Chapter 1

Summary

Utopia has existed for 632 years.

It is a world where human beings are born artificially, and family life is unknown.

All children are created, and molded by the state so that they will have a specific function when they mature.

A group of students are being given a conducted tour of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Center. Henry Foster is a keen scientist and he explains in detail the technological wonders of the Brave New World. Although he is conducting the tour, he does not pass up on the opportunity of arranging a date with Lenina Crowne, a co-worker.

Interpretation

Huxley obtains the title for this book from a statement in Shakespeare's **The Tempest** "O brave new world that has such people in it."

The people in this world are specifically designed by the state in order to carry out clearly defined roles.

At the top of the caste system we have the Alpha people who are the most intelligent. It is a pyramid system and descends down through Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta to Epsilon, the Epsilon cast being the most populous, and their lives the most mundane.

The world is divided into 10 zones, each having its own Controller. It is a police state and the planetary motto is "Community, Identity, Stability".

In this one-state world, only the English language is used.

We see here Huxley's concerns about the present world of the 1930's, and his belief that the world population will outgrow the available natural resources. He can see no way of controlling this problem without the introduction of a global police state. Only through strict birth control, and adapting children to a specific niche in society, can the human race continue to survive. The effect of this system is to reduce human beings to android-like creatures existing in a stifling world. In fact, people have ceased to become individuals in this state, and are merely cogs in a huge machine. The people live in a perpetual cycle where they work to produce products that they themselves consume at a great rate.

One of the first characters we meet is Henry Foster, who arranges a date whilst giving a conducted tour to students. In this society, specific relationships are discouraged, and so a promiscuous society has been created. We soon appreciate that the ordinary inhabitants of Utopia have little or no emotions at all.

The actual year of the story is A.F.632, which means After Ford - the industrialist Henry Ford who is an icon of this society.

There is no such thing as childbirth in the Utopian society. Babies in the Brave New World are developed like a product, and they are decanted into a membrane lining which is the abdomen of a female pig, which replaces the natural mother's womb.

Chapter 2

Summary

The students' tour leaves the hatchery and goes on to the Infant Nursery, where Tomakin, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (D.H.C.) shows how the babies are programmed. Babies are shown colored children's books and lush roses, and when they crawl towards these, they are thrown into panic by explosions and alarms, and they receive a mild electric shock. When they are again confronted with these things, they are conditioned to associate them with terrifying noises and the electric shock. This processing is normally carried out for the inferior castes.

The Director explains that at one time, the lower castes were conditioned to love nature, but this only made them leave the city in order to seek the countryside, and this had a marked effect on society's consumption, so now they are programmed to stay in the cities where they can consume more products.

They are now encouraged to participate in sports, which require elaborate equipment, thus enhancing consumption of manufactured goods. The students are also told about hypnopaedia or sleep teaching. This is used to indoctrinate the children, particularly their sub-conscious, while asleep.

Children are taught about elementary sex, the results of which will be shown in the next chapter.

Interpretation

In this chapter, we obtain an understanding of some of the key mechanisms used in order to maintain control and happiness in Utopia.

It is all about conditioning from the very first days of birth, so that each caste of child is programmed to perform their required task, and is conditioned to be happy.

We are shown how the babies are made to associate noise and shocks, with books and flowers. This is wordless conditioning and as such is crude, but this is replaced at a later stage with hypnopaedia or brainwashing, which is apparent in this day and age through advertising and the brainwashing of political prisoners. (It should be noted that in Russia in the 19th Century it was discovered that dogs could be trained through this technique, and made to do unrelated functions when given a specific stimulus e.g. dogs could be trained to feed on hearing a bell.)

The type of programming that a child receives depends on which caste it is in, this being determined genetically at conception. The type of uniform they wear identifies castes, and mixing between the castes is strictly forbidden. Within each caste there is a division into higher or lower types: A+ or A.

In Utopia the view is that if people are busy consuming, they won't have enough time to trouble the state. Clearly Huxley was concerned at the spiraling supply and demand society of the early 20th Century.

Brave New World is full of humor and wit, and we see examples of this in the dating used in Utopia – A.F. (After Ford). It is obviously a play on words - FORD instead of LORD. In Utopia the symbol of industrial progress is the letter **T** taken from Ford's most popular car. This has replaced the Christian cross in this society.

Just as the Utopian society makes fun of us, our human births and family life, so Huxley is making fun of the society in which he lives, in particular religion and politics.

Chapter 3

Summary

The students' tour continues outside where they are shown children, boys and girls, naked, participating in erotic games. They are being conditioned to accept that sex has no emotional or moral connotations and such behavior will prevent them having attachments to particular partners.

Mustapha Mond, one of the 10 Controllers of the World State, joins the group. He lectures the students concerning the evils of family life, and the advantages of social security. He also gives a brief history of Utopia from the 20th Century until today. The Controller explains that one of the main doctrines of the Brave New World is to reduce the period of time between wanting and receiving, as this slowly destroys the capability for feeling, and he says "No pains have been spared to make your lives emotionally easy and to preserve you, so far that it is possible, from having emotions at all."

Meanwhile, indoors, the strange Bernard Marx feels queasy in respect of Henry Foster's casual behavior towards Lenina Crowne. At the same time, in the women's dressing room, Lenina confides in her friend Fanny that she is excited by her monogamous relationship with Henry, she also admits that she still thinks that Bernard is attractive.

Returning outdoors again, Mond gives details regarding the Nine Years War that began in A.F.141 and ultimately created Utopia. It was a war where both sides used anthrax bombs and poisonous gasses, and the people were left with a choice of either total destruction, or world control.

When peace was achieved, this day was called **Ford's Day**. All books that were published before A.F.150 were banned.

The chapter ends with details concerning the infant nurseries where children are sleep-taught propaganda concerning the Brave New World.

Interpretation

This is quite a complex chapter in which Huxley introduces various strands of his imagination regarding Utopia.

He suggests that unless mankind changes its evolution, then there will be a future war that will eliminate civilization, as we know it. He shows that the men in authority in Utopia have rewritten history, just as Communism did in the middle of the 20th Century.

Huxley ensures that the reader is aware of Mond's importance, for although he oversees the programming of the human society, he is in touch with the way things were prior to this system. Presumably his knowledge will be passed on to his selected heir.

The students are indoctrinated with the view that all feelings and emotions are abhorrent, and Mond tells them that they should be grateful for this unloading of responsibility. The philosophy of Utopia is that once

feelings are eliminated, then suffering will disappear. Mond suggests that Christianity and Democracy for a long time prevented the birth of the perfect society that is now Utopia. The reader must, therefore, assume that there are very few people in this Brave New World that have a full consciousness, who are aware of the old traditions as well as those given to the current generation. There is a brief mention of Shakespeare in this chapter. This will become more important further into the novel.

Chapter 4

Summary

Later that day, Lenina takes Bernard up on his invitation to go on holiday to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico.

She keeps her date with Henry Foster, and they go on a helicopter trip where they enjoy a picturesque view of the city and the outskirts of London. They go to the rocket station at Charing-T (*previously Charing Cross, the cross being taboo and replaced*). The helicopter passes over playing fields and they decide to stop and have a game of obstacle golf.

Bernard Marx is depressed and alone, and he waits for his friend Helmholtz Watson. Bernard is slightly deformed due to an error that a nurse made in his decanting, and he feels resentment towards the state because of this mistake. People have had to give up a lot in order to achieve a perfect state, but he feels the state has let him down.

Watson appears and the two commiserate with each other concerning the inadequacies of their lives. Bernard recognizes that Watson is too intelligent to swallow all the propaganda that supports Utopia, and Helmholtz knows that inside, he had the power to reveal the truth about the ridiculous philosophy of Utopia. Both of them, at this stage, lack the purpose to do anything about their feelings.

Interpretation

Huxley makes a point of destroying or devaluing important sites in London, places that he obviously holds dear, but in the Brave New World all the history is lost and the citizens have no regard for its value. One example is Charing Cross. Historically it was the site in London of the last of the stone crosses erected by Edward I in 1291, marking the resting points of the funeral procession of his wife, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine. Today it is a key railway station in London. In the Brave New World, it is Charing (Fordian) – T.

Up until now, the book has really been like a lecture where the philosophy of Utopia has been explained for the reader, but the plot now begins with the unusual holiday to the Savage Reservation.

We also have an inkling that the programming does not work in every case, especially for the upper castes, for we learn that both Bernard and Helmholtz have great reservations about this so-called perfect world, but as yet lack the spirit to do anything about changing the world in which they live. At present, Bernard's rebellion exists in thought only, and he is still obedient to the state.

One of the reasons for this apathy is the widespread use of narcotics which Huxley calls 'soma'. Pharmacologists have developed 'soma', the perfect drug, which is a pleasant hallucinatory drug having no side effects, but producing a sense of drowsy well being, accompanied by pleasant illusions. Utopia uses the drug to prevent the people from thinking or feeling deeply.

In Huxley's book, **Island**, he suggests that drugs could provide spiritual understanding. Such a belief was obtained from his own experiments.

Helmholtz clearly shares the same enlightenment as Mond. He knows that the Utopian philosophy is bunkum, and what frustrates him is that he cannot see any way to change it.

Chapter 5

Summary

After their game of golf, Henry and Lenina depart in their helicopter. They pass over the crematorium where the goodness from the cremated bodies is eventually processed and returned to the soil. They remark that in death, all castes are equal, as they all end up in the same place. They dine and have coffee and soma and then they go to a nightclub, which apparently was once Westminster Abbey.

Meanwhile, Bernard goes to the Fordson Community Singery, which as at Big Henry (Ford), formerly Big Ben. A Solidarity Service is held here weekly, a substitute for religious Communion. Unfortunately, Bernard

finds no comfort in the service, which involves an erotic frenzy of the members who obtain solidarity in a mass orgy at the climax of the ceremony. This mass hysteria sickens Bernard.

Interpretation

The main aim of this chapter is to promote Huxley's sense of satire towards present day institutions. Again we see how famous London landmarks have been reduced to temples where orgies take place, and nightclubs. The revelry at the Solidarity meeting is described as "orgy-porgy", a play on words in respect of the Nursery Rhyme 'Georgy Porgy, showing how childlike the society is, but certainly not innocent.

It is interesting to learn that there is still prejudice between the castes, illustrated by Henry and Lenina's conversation concerning the crematorium.

Chapter 6

Summary

Lenina is irritated by Bernard's desire for privacy. She thinks he is eccentric. When she requests that they go to the busy, crowded entertainment centers, Bernard wants a quiet evening alone. She suggests that perhaps they should go to the North Pole for their holiday, but Bernard reminds her that it is an honor to be able to go to the Savage Reservation. He is one of the few Alpha +s permitted to visit the reservation.

After they have been on their date, they take soma and go to bed together, but Bernard is dissatisfied with the ease in which their relationship is consummated.

The D.H.C. tells Bernard that many years ago, he went to the Savage Reservation. He warns him about being eccentric, and there is a hint that Bernard may be exiled. The D.H.C. also goes on to say that when he visited the Savage Reservation, he lost his girlfriend in a storm. Bernard is quite flattered that he has suddenly become so important, and boasts to Helmholtz about his possible banishment.

Lenina and Bernard take the rocket for the American Savage Reservation where they will meet those that live out with the Utopian society, because they are not worth converting to the new order.

Bernard realizes that he has left his Eau de Cologne tap running, and it will cost him a fortune, so he phones Helmholtz who tells him that the D.H.C. plans to exile him to Iceland when he returns. To console himself, Bernard takes a large dose of soma.

Interpretation

At last we have a chapter that advances the plot whilst Bernard's struggle and rebellion come to a climax in his conversation with the D.H.C. He has a mixture of both fear regarding the consequences of his actions, and also flattery, in that the state feels it necessary to consider exiling him. He is frightened of being a martyr, but excited at the prospect of being considered a rebel.

The reader wonders at this stage what is in store for Bernard – whether it is good, or bad.

The reader also wonders at why the D.H.C. is so careless in losing his girlfriend in the Savage Reservation.

The reader might deduce that Huxley is perhaps a loner, for he clearly objects to people being attracted to organized entertainment, and acting like a pack of animals. He shows us that the Utopians are encouraged to take part in the same sports, which have complex rules. They are not encouraged to seek independent activities. In this Brave New World, everyone is part of a big team and independent thinking is against the doctrine of the state. Also in this society, the bulk of the citizens are expected to think and be like infants.

When Bernard and Lenina arrive at the reservation, the warden takes delight in embarrassing Lenina by using "dirty" words like "born" and "pregnancy", etc.

Chapter 7

Summary

Bernard and Lenina watch a bloodthirsty fertility ritual in the Savage Reservation. Although Bernard warned Lenina about the crude and disgusting ways of the reservation, she insisted on accompanying Bernard rather than staying in the hotel.

They meet John, whose white skin has made him an outcast amongst the Indians of the reservation. There is a strange animal magnetism between Lenina and John. He tells Lenina and Bernard that he wished the Indians would let him take part in the flagellation part of the ritual, as he would enjoy undergoing the pain. John tells them that his mother, Linda, once lived in the outside world, but was lost in a storm when she

visited with her boyfriend. Bernard realizes that this is the D.H.C.'s wife, and that John is his son. Lenina is shocked at Linda's appearance. She is the first old white person she has ever seen. Linda explains how she found it difficult to adapt from the cozy Utopian ways to the harsh world of the reservation. She explains how alarmed she was to find that she was pregnant despite the precautions she took. Since then, she has tried without success to convert the natives to a more civilized way of life.

Interpretation

Life in the reservation comes as a shock to the reader after the description in the previous chapters of the sterilized world of Utopia.

Huxley is deliberate in doing this. The Utopian society and the reservation are the two extreme ends of the spectrum, and it is left to the reader to decide which is the best one to live in. It has come as a shock to Lenina to witness the happenings in the reservation, which even in her wildest dreams she could not have visualized. She is really terrorized by the scene she witnesses and it does not help her situation that she has forgotten her supply of soma.

Huxley intends John to be a representative of noble savagery, and Linda a benchmark of Utopia as she is the only character to have lived in both worlds. It will transpire that Linda is the only character with any depth, and what Huxley has to say through her words is very important, and the reader should concentrate on her part in the novel, even though it is short. However, at this stage in the book, it is perhaps Bernard who is the focal point, as his opportune meeting with John and Linda is going to influence the rest of the plot.

Chapter 8

Summary

Bernard persuades John to tell him his life story. His life has been a mixture of happy and unhappy events, how he tried in vain to break up Linda's relationship with her lover, Pope, and also how he obtained a copy of Shakespeare's works, the only book that he ever had, and which greatly influenced his childhood and his life today. His biggest regret is that has never been accepted as a member of the Indian community.

Bernard is able to sympathize with John's loneliness - as he and Linda are both unhappy here, why don't they come back to London? John is delighted.

Interpretation

This chapter provides the basis of John's character through the narration concerning his childhood. John's conversation is punctuated with quotes from Shakespeare, which over the years has enabled him to obtain understanding of how a true society should work.

Huxley cleverly compares the theories of the Fordian society with the Indian culture that all belongs to one god. He makes the same comparison between Shakespeare's verse and the propaganda of Utopia, and finally the pagan rites of the natives are compared to the intricate devices of the Brave New World.

Chapter 9

Summary

Lenina's response to her visit to the reservation is to go into a comatose state by having a large dose of soma.

Bernard now sees a way to bring about the downfall of the D.H.C., and requests permission from Mond to transport John and Linda back to London as they have blood ties in Utopia. Bernard is excited at having this newfound power and the ability to change things.

John sees Lenina as an object of adoration, and he creeps into her quarters while she is asleep and kneels beside her reciting Shakespeare.

Interpretation

Bernard has aroused the curiosity of Mond, who as we have learned earlier is keen to have independent views regarding the society of Utopia.

John and Linda will be useful if they return to London by giving their views on the Brave New World.

We must remember that John only knows of Utopia by what his mother has told him, and he idolizes one of these "goodly creatures" from the New World, and this is illustrated in his reciting of Shakespearean love verses. His attraction to Lenina at this stage is not sexual, but is basic, or natural.

Chapter 10

Summary

On their return to London, the D.H.C. is determined to make a public exhibition of Bernard. In front of the personnel of the Fertilizing Room the D.H.C. accuses Bernard of non-conformist behavior, and announces his transfer to a remote sub-center.

Bernard then produces Linda, and tells the entire audience that she is the wife of Tomakin. Linda screams, "You made me have a baby", and throws her arms around him. John then appears, addressing Tomakin as his father. The audience bursts into laughter and the D.H.C. makes a hurried exit.

Interpretation

We now see the first climax of the plot, which has slowly gathered pace, and we witness a complete turnaround, Tomakin the D.H.C. is disgraced, and now Bernard is the center of attention, but the reader must remember that it is Mustapha Mond who was the catalyst for this development.

Chapter 11

Summary

John the savage has become notorious in London and people are anxious to see him. Never before have they had the opportunity to see somebody from the outside world, from the reservation.

Linda decides to make up for lost time and is overdosing on soma, which will only accelerate her death. She shows total contempt for the crowd, and uses the soma as an escape.

At first John objects to her receiving the drug, but succumbs when the doctor tells him that she is experiencing ecstasy in her delirium.

Bernard becomes John's legal guardian and is given the task by Mond of showing him the wonders of Utopia. However, Bernard is irresponsible and uses John to enhance his position both socially and sexually.

Mond sees John as litmus paper, and he will supply information concerning the success of the Utopian society.

Now that Bernard is a celebrity along with John, he has forgotten his rebellious thoughts, and enjoys the sexual freedom he has with all the women that now find him attractive. The only one who is not impressed with Bernard appears to be Helmholtz Watson, who considers that he has betrayed his beliefs.

John soon becomes disillusioned with the wonders of the Brave New World. He becomes physically sick when he visits a factory where the workers are hundreds of identical twins, and he is disgusted as he watches them receive their daily soma ration.

Mond soon becomes irritated by Bernard's opinionated behavior.

Eventually John manages to shake off Bernard, and he goes out on a date with Lenina to the Feelies (*an advanced form of motion picture where you receive physical stimulation coupled with the visual imagery*).

Lenina thinks John is very handsome, but is concerned that he has not made a pass at her. John finds the film extremely disappointing and this puts him in a state of depression. Lenina is too concerned over whether he will make love to her or not. Lenina has to console herself by taking soma, as John returns to his quarters to read some Shakespeare.

Interpretation

The reader can see that Bernard has learnt nothing from the downfall of the D.H.C., for he is going down the same road. He might be able to pull the wool over the eyes of his contemporaries, but Mond is no fool and will dispose of Bernard when he has served his purpose.

Bernard treats John like a piece of property and a means for him to improve his social standing and achieve many sexual conquests.

Mond is interested to find out if John will be able to master the new lifestyle of Utopia when he still remembers the old ways. However, John's reaction to the sterile suffocating world of Utopia is rejection and disappointment.

It is clear that Mond has no consideration for those below him. The D.H.C. was quickly disposed of in favor of Bernard, but he soon will be discarded like a useless piece of machinery.

To sum up therefore, Mond's experiment is to expose the savage to the sophisticated world of Utopia, and monitor the reactions.

We cannot finish this interpretation without commenting on Huxley's spoof of Hollywood in the form of John and Lenina's visit to see a film, feelie. Its title is "Three Weeks in a Helicopter" and the subtitle is an "all supersinging, synthetic talking, colored, stereoscopic (*3-dimensional*) feelie, with synchronized scent organ accompaniment".

I think it is important to remind the reader that this was written in 1932 and Huxley shows a great insight into the future. In the 1960's motion pictures were produced where the audience was treated to scents to accompany the action of the film.

Chapter 12

Summary

The more John is exposed to Utopia, the more he fiercely defends his individuality.

He is tired of being a curiosity and he tells Bernard that he will not attend any more gatherings.

John reverts back to studying his book of Shakespeare's works and in particular he enjoys reading from 'Romeo and Juliet', and contemplating the beauty of Lenina.

Bernard goes to a scheduled meeting without his star, and he immediately upsets the assembly, and some of those there take the opportunity to resurrect Bernard's previous misdemeanors.

Lenina is further upset at John's absence, feeling it is because he did not wish to see her. She takes solace in taking some soma.

The chapter then goes on to view Mond's activities. He is censoring a biology paper, which has an argument on the purpose of life. Although the paper is outstanding, it cannot be used because it is at odds with the Brave New World philosophy.

Bernard is jealous of the friendship between John and Helmholtz, who have a common love and appreciation of poetry.

Helmholtz is intrigued with John's reading of Shakespeare. This book is banned. (*See earlier chapter*).

Interpretation

At this stage, the plot reaches the height of complexity, such as it is.

Several strands of the story take a leap forward.

The reader appreciates that Bernard's usefulness to Mond is coming to an end, with John's rebellion.

Bernard's period of popularity has also come to an end, and he will drift out of the storyline.

Again there is further reference to Shakespeare as John's conversations are dotted with quotations from the bard.

We are also seeing a deeper picture of Mond. Most of the people in Utopia can be described as two-dimensional, but as we have said before, Mond is a rare, enlightened leader, who is anxious to obtain an independent view as to how successful his society is.

Although an intelligent figure, Mond is also a lonely leader, and we get a feeling of this in his words, "What fun it would be if one didn't have to think about happiness."

Chapter 13

Summary

Henry Foster bumps into Lenina Crowne and he wonders if she is in good health. If not, she perhaps needs a pregnancy substitute. She tells him to mind his own business. She is concerned that John has not tried to have sex with her, and her friend Fanny gives no support spouting off about the ills of monogamy.

John's feelings for Lenina are purely romantic. Lenina decides to take matters into her own hands and she goes to see John. He tells her that he loves her, and she takes this as a cue for them to have sex, and she whips her clothes off before John has a chance to react. He is instantly repelled by her lust, and flashes a

Shakespearean quote at her, "Was this most goodly book made to write whore upon?" and he threatens her with physical violence.

However, just then he receives a summons to go to the hospital where his mother is very ill.

Interpretation

John's dialogue in this chapter is rich in Shakespearean quotes. Up until now, these have been mainly from Romeo and Juliet, but when Lenina tries to seduce John, he quotes from Othello's epithet for Desdemona, "impudent strumpet" yet of course Othello is tragically mistaken about his innocent wife's infidelity, just as John has misconstrued Lenina's behavior. The way she acts has been imprinted on her, but she does have some feeling for John, feelings that she has felt for nobody else.

Huxley clearly views the words of Shakespeare as John's conscience, and whenever John has a dilemma, he falls back on Shakespearean quotes. Huxley's use of Shakespeare indicates one of the main themes of Brave New World, he considers Shakespeare to be the greatest writer in the English language, but in Utopia his works are banned because they undermine the system, and this is the price to be paid in order to have stability.

It is interesting to note that Mustapha Mond is one of the very few allowed to read Shakespeare.

Some scholars consider this chapter to be the key part of the whole novel, and the entire credibility of the story depends on the reader's reaction to it. Students should, therefore, study it in depth.

Chapter 14

Summary

At the Hospital for the Dying, John is at Linda's bedside in the galloping Senility Ward. He is told that his mother will not recover, and she is deep in a soma trance, and she calls on her Indian lover, Pope.

John shakes her and just before she dies, she recognizes him. Her last expression is one of terror.

John feels guilty for having brought her back to Utopia, and feels that he has killed her.

Interpretation

In the Brave New World, people keep their youth by artificial means until they reach the age of 60 when they age and die, rapidly.

Huxley gives an amusing description of the hospital and the Utopian attitude to death. Whilst John is visiting, children who are being conditioned watch his mother and disturb John, and their reaction to death is rather callous.

John views the whole situation as completely inhuman.

Perhaps Huxley is expressing a view on euthanasia.

Chapter 15

Summary

When John enters the lobby of the hospital, workers who are signing off for the day are queuing to receive their ration of soma. They are mainly Bokanovsky twins.

John is reminded of Miranda's words from 'The Tempest' "O brave new world".

Stricken with grief and disappointment concerning Utopia, he decides to see if he can encourage these workers to rebel.

He tries to encourage them to give up using soma, and starts hurling the drug out of the window. This only produces a riot, as the Delta slaves do not wish freedom. They attack him and the riot is broken up by the state Police who use Synthetic Anti-Riot Speech No. 2 (Medium strength) and the release of a cloud of soma vapor.

Interpretation

Bokanovsky twins are produced through a process where a human egg has its normal development halted, whereupon it starts to bud producing multiple identical eggs.

Huxley describes ways in which peace is preserved in Utopia, and shows that there are contingency plans for riots.

John is surprised that he is not able to incite rebellion against the Brave New World. In fact the masses' reaction is to protect their beloved slavery.

The doctor advises John that his mother will be with Ford in Flivver, a play on words of God in Heaven. Ford is, of course, established as the Brave New World analogue for God. Again, John uses Shakespeare when addressing the Delta slaves using Mark Antony's famous speech in Julius Caesar beginning, "Friends, Romans, countrymen." It is interesting that Huxley sees the control in the Brave New World through drugs, as opposed to violence.

In George Orwell's '1984', control was obtained through fear and violence.

Chapter 16

Summary

His Fordship, the great Mustapha Mond, summons John, Bernard and Helmholtz for a hearing.

John makes plain his distaste of Utopia, and Mond accepts his point of view.

Mond has heard John's quotations from Shakespeare, and illustrates that he is acquainted with the works of Shakespeare, much to John's surprise.

John asks why he doesn't allow the people to read Shakespeare, but Mond responds that they would not understand it. He further explains that the people have happiness and stability, but the sacrifice they have all had to make is the loss of great art.

Mond goes on to concede that instability and unhappiness can be more exciting, but that those at the bottom of the pyramid, the Gammas, Deltas etc., do not have the ability to understand high art. For the whole system to work, it must have a stable base. An experiment was carried out where the island of Cyprus was decolorized with Alphas only, and the result was chaos.

Mond describes Utopia like a cookery book – they have found the recipes that work and they cannot afford to interfere with the ingredients.

John will be retained for experiment, but as for Bernard and Helmholtz, they will be exiled. Bernard grovels before Mond, pleading to be kept, to no avail.

Mond turns to Helmholtz indicating that if he does not give up his ideals, then he has to accept exile. Helmholtz is philosophical about being exiled.

Interpretation

Huxley uses Mustapha Mond as the narrator of his views, and he puts forward the argument justifying the Utopian system.

In the end, everyone has to make sacrifices, and in order to live with these sacrifices drugs are used to dull the senses. Even the man at the top, Mond, has to make sacrifices, the loss of his own freedom and individuality, and for him, the sacrifice is more painful because he does have some understanding of what has been lost, but he is alone with his sacrifice because he has to portray orthodoxy to those below him. He is able to confide in those present, for they will be exiled.

Helmholtz realizes this – Bernard does not. Because Mond has opened his soul to those present, they have to be exiled.

In a real Utopian world, everyone would be educated to the highest level, but in practice this cannot happen due to overpopulation and want. There is also apathy present in humankind as well. In order to overcome these problems, the Brave New World controls population, removes human indifference by genetic engineering, and war is abolished.

Huxley gives us a warning that we must control these elements in order to avoid this Brave New World happening.

So far as the plot of the book is concerned, Bernard is exiled and leaves the story together with Helmholtz.

There is probably still one question in the reader's mind. What is Mond's motivation?

Chapter 17

Summary

John remains with Mond and says that the sacrifices of art and science are too big a price to pay for contentment.

Mond goes on to say that they have also sacrificed God. John knows little about religion and is only really familiar with the Indian's superstition.

Mond says that the citizens of the Brave New World have no need for God. They are always content and secure so they don't need consolation or forgiveness from anybody.

Religion is all about self-denial, chastity, and nobility. These things are not present in this society. They have a different form of Christianity – one without tears.

John grows defiant and will have nothing to do with this artificial Utopia. He wishes to keep the right to be unhappy.

John goes on to say that he has the right to old age, disease, poverty, fear and pain. He claims them all.

Mond responds, "You're welcome."

Interpretation

We now reach full understanding of the philosophy behind Huxley's Brave New World. In Utopia there is no need for art, science and religion. These three represent man's spiritual endeavors. There is no spirit in the Brave New World. There is no soul. These three elements mark man's superiority over the beasts. The Utopian society has taken away all that is human, and what are left are just biological units working together in a vicious circle of production and consumption.

This is the warning that Huxley is giving to mankind.

John's argument is that there cannot be true pleasure and fulfillment without sacrifice and hard work.

Huxley was also criticizing his contemporaries in the Western world, which were becoming too materialistic and consuming far more than they needed. He was opposed to the ideology that the gross natural product must keep increasing.

We have seen that Bernard and Helmholtz are lost. So is John. He felt that he could always return to the reservation after his visit to Utopia. He naively thought that he could turn back. This will not be possible.

Chapter 18

Summary

John tells Helmholtz and Bernard before they are exiled that he had pleaded with Mond to go into exile as well, but he refused. Mond wishes to try and convert John to Utopian ways.

Bernard and Helmholtz are exiled, and John runs away from London and finds an abandoned lighthouse in the countryside. There he tries to purify himself from the poison he has consumed in the city. He likes the isolation and decides to live off the land.

However, his hiding place is soon discovered, and the press and radio hound him.

John's life is viewed at a distance, and a Feelie film is made of him, which arouses the curiosity of the public at large. They surround his retreat and even Lenina arrives in a helicopter. She still has feelings for John, but he again misinterprets these and beats her with a whip. The crowd begins an orgy-porgy and John joins in, partaking of soma and sex. When he awakes from his coma, he realizes what he has done and hangs himself.

Interpretation

This last chapter is really to tie-up the loose ends of the plot, the reader having found the final pieces of the jigsaw that is the Brave New World in the previous two chapters.

The question any reader has to ask is whether John is believable or not.

He is described as the noble savage, but it is not clear exactly what he symbolizes. In a strange way he is a cross between a Red Indian and an English Literature teacher, specializing in Shakespeare.

Questions for study and suggestions for answers

Q: What is the meaning of satire, and what does Huxley aim to achieve by using it in Brave New World?

Ideas: Basically, satire comes in a wide variety of forms, but here we are looking at literary ridicule.

Huxley pokes fun at institutions, places and people that we hold dear.

In Brave New World, the satire has two main thrusts, firstly, directed at the evil of materialism and, secondly, science.

Huxley warns that when a society continues to expand too fast, the people become wasteful, consuming what they don't need. Their wants outstrip their needs, and inevitably a vicious circle demonstrated in Utopia arises.

However, Huxley's aim is to achieve more than plain ridicule. His words make the reader sit up and note that he is warning mankind that science will control man, instead of vice versa. This is evident in the fact that in Utopia man is no longer the product of the sexual intimacy of a couple, but is the product of science. Humans are designed to carry out a specific function in the whole mechanism of society. Man evolved because of adaptability and diversity. These have been taken away in Brave New World, and he exists in a cocoon.

There are specific satirical plays on words, here are some examples: instead of A.D., in the year of our Lord, we have A.F., After Ford; instead of Our Lord, it is Our Ford; instead of referring to people as His Lordship, it is His Fordship; instead of the cross, the symbol is a T taken from Henry Ford's Model T car; instead of God is in His Heaven, it is Ford is in his Flivver (*a flivver is a cheap automobile*); Brave New World's substitute for Sunday is Ford's Day; instead of Charing Cross, we have Charing T (*a Fordian T replacing the Christian Cross*); instead of St. Paul's Cathedral, we have Fordson Community Singery; Big Ben is now Big Henry. There are others in this novel. Do you know what they are?

Q: Huxley clearly loved Shakespeare and was well read in the full works of the bard. Give instances where it is evident in this work.

Ideas: The title Brave New World is taken from Miranda's speech in The Tempest "O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world that has such people in it!"

John quotes this three times in the novel, initially when he sees Lenina, but later when he sees what Utopia is really like he puts a different connotation on the words. When referring to Lenina, John usually quotes from Romeo and Juliet and Troilus and Cressida. Just as John goes completely over the top about Lenina's beauty, so has Troilus an exaggerated feeling for Cressida, and John says quoting from the play, Lenina "her gait" (*her manner of walking*) "handlest in their discourse" and further quoting from Romeo and Juliet, "on the white wonder vestal, chaste, virginal" – Lenina was anything but virginal.

John uses quotes from Shakespeare to articulate his own feelings and views on a wide variety of subjects. Most are tragic statements taken from the tragedies of Shakespeare. When we first meet John, he is frustrated at not being able to take part in the Indian fertility rite and participating in the flagellation. When he sees the bloodstain on the ground, he quotes from Macbeth when Lady Macbeth says, "damned spot".

When he goes to the Feelies with Lenina, he quotes from Othello when one of the characters reminds him of the "Blackamoor".

Later when Lenina tries to force the pace of the relationship and she strips off revealing her breasts, John quotes from Timon of Athens, "for those milk paps", and also quotes from Othello (*See Chapter 13's Interpretation*).

When John loses his temper and becomes violent, he rants quoting from King Lear commenting on the sexual nature of women, "down from the waist they are centaurs" (*beasts*), "but to the girdle do the gods inherit" (*women resemble the gods only in that portion of their bodies above the sexual organs*).

Finally, in his conversation with Mond, he is able to show the extent of his repertoire, as Mond too is familiar with the works of Shakespeare. John is so disillusioned with what he has seen that he confines his quotes to the tragedies King Lear and Hamlet - "to sleep, perchance to dream", Hamlet's famous soliloquy on death, and then "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy", a direct snipe at Mond.

John's dialogue is littered with quotations from Shakespeare.

Q: Expand the science fiction theme of Brave New World.

Ideas: Huxley is looking into the future, 600 plus from the 1930's. He had at one time considered being a doctor; so much of the science fiction is concerned with the medical field.

In Utopia, they are engaging in genetic engineering, which is possible now to a limited extent. There is no doubt that what Huxley had envisaged is possible. We can use genetic engineering to remove inherent flaws, and what Huxley imagined to be possible in 600 years is more likely to be 100 years.

The psychology part of Huxley's vision is less clear. Much of this deals with thought training and learning. However, it is one thing to train an animal to do a reactive task, it is another to teach or indoctrinate a human whilst asleep. Whether this will ever be possible, one can only speculate.

So, we have Huxley's hypothesis involving test-tube babies, feelies, sleep teaching, drug dependent society, euthanasia and the surrender of freewill, the latter being the most controversial.

Q: Brave New World contains much of its own language. What would you consider placing in a glossary?

Ideas:

Bokanovsky process - a process where the human egg has its normal development halted, which causes the egg to bud, producing multiple identical eggs

Bottling - a system for putting the artificial embryos into a sow's peritoneum so that it can mature

Caste - the five castes of Utopia are Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon

Chemical persuasion - in order to control the will of the people, chemical stimulants and/or tranquillisers are used in order to make the people receptive to suggestion

Decanting - the name given to the removal of embryos from the bottles in which they have matured

Erotic play - children's playtime usually involves the exploration of each other's naked bodies

Feelies - complicated motion pictures where the audience sit on special seats and hold two knobs and they can thus feel the action whilst watching it on the screen

Ford - the Utopian idol or god

Freemartin - the name given to the majority of Utopian women who have been sterilised

Hypnopaedia - teaching during sleep

Orgy-porgy - solidarity within the community is obtained through communal indiscriminate sexual orgies

Pneumatic - those Utopian women that are particularly attractive

Pregnancy substitute - a medical procedure where Utopian women receive the psychological benefits of childbirth without undergoing it

Savage Reservation - those that are not worthy of converting to the Utopian ideal are confined in the reservation

Soma - this drug has become the religion of all people in Utopia. It pacifies and dulls the senses and is the main ingredient of the social stability of Utopia

T-model - this has replaced the Christian cross

Add any words or phrases you think may be useful