约克文学作品辅导丛书

YORK NOTES ON

# BRAVE NEW WORLD

## 奇妙的新世界

Aldous Huxley

LONGMAN
LITERATURE
GUIDES

# NOTES

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## Aldous Huxley

# BRAVE NEW WORLD

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## 《约克文学作品辅导丛书》介绍

《约克文学作品辅导丛书》(York Notes) 系 Longman 集团有限公司（英国）出版。本丛书覆盖了世界各国历代文学名著，原意是辅导英国中学生准备文学课的高级会考或供英国大学生自学参考。因此，它很适合我国高校英语专业学生研读文学作品时参考。

丛书由 A. N. Jeffares 和 S. Bushrui 两位教授任总编。每册的编写者大都是研究有关作家的专家学者，他们又都有在大学讲授文学的经验，比较了解学生理解上的难点。本丛书自问世以来，始终畅销不衰，被使用者普遍认为是英美出版的同类书中质量较高的一种。

丛书每一册都按统一格式对一部作品进行介绍和分析。每一册都有下列五个部分。

① 导言。主要介绍：作者生平，作品产生的社会、历史背景，有关的文学传统或文艺思潮等。

② 内容提要。一般分为两部分：a. 全书的内容概述；b. 每章的内容提要及难词、难句注释，如方言、典故、圣经或文学作品的引语、有关社会文化习俗等。注释恰到好处，对于读懂原作很有帮助。

③ 评论。结合作品的特点，对结构、人物塑造、叙述角度、语言风格、主题思想等进行分析和评论。论述深入浅出，分析力求客观，意在挖掘作品内涵和展示其艺术性。

④ 学习提示。提出学习要点、重要引语和思考题（附参考答案或答案要点）。

⑤ 进一步研读指导。介绍该作品的最佳版本；版本中是否有重大改动；列出供进一步研读的参考书目（包括作者传记、研究有关作品的专著和评论文章等）。

总之，丛书既提供必要的背景知识，又注意启发学生思考；既重视在吃透作品的基础上进行分析，又对进一步研究提供具体指导；因此是一套理想的英语文学辅导材料。

北京师范大学外文系教授　钱　瑗

# Contents

# Part 1

# Introduction

## The life of Aldous Huxley

Aldous (Leonard) Huxley was born into an upper-middle-class English family in Surrey in 1894. After an apparently happy childhood, he was sent to Eton College in 1908, where he studied biology with the intention of becoming a medical doctor. There, one month after his arrival, he was to suffer the first great shock of his early life—the death from cancer of his mother, to whom young Aldous had been particularly close. Barely two months later, Huxley was jolted once again when an eye disease left him virtually blind. However, following surgery and mastery of Braille (the touch-alphabet used by the blind) Huxley entered Balliol College, Oxford, in 1913, to read literature. In 1916 he graduated with a first in English literature, an amazing achievement considering his handicap. Meanwhile, in 1914, Huxley suffered the third great shock of his youth when his brother Trevenen, who had helped Aldous during his blindness, committed suicide in a fit of depression.

Huxley's first book, a collection of poems entitled *The Burning Wheel*, was published in 1916. Three more volumes of verse and a collection of stories followed rapidly, but it was not until the publication in 1921 of his first novel, the satirical *Crome Yellow*, that Huxley won significant critical attention. Several more satires followed in the 1920s, during which time Huxley also wrote a considerable amount of journalism (essays, reviews, and articles for popular magazines) as well as book-length non-fiction (essays and travel books). For most of the decade Huxley lived in Italy; but by the early 1930s, when he had written *Brave New World* (published 1932), he was living in the south of France and continuing to produce fiction and essays. In 1937 Huxley moved to Los Angeles, hoping that the climate would improve his eyesight. His writing betrayed his interest in Eastern mysticism and his attempts to reconcile Eastern thought with Western science, until he died of cancer in 1963.

### Huxley's ancestry

Few writers have come to their profession with as impressive an ancestry as Aldous Huxley. Dr Leonard Huxley, his father, was an educator, a biographer of famous scientists, and the editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*—previous editors included the novelist William Makepeace

Thackeray (1811–63) and the critic Sir Leslie Stephen (1832–1904)—which published the work of such leading Victorian writers as Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and Anthony Trollope. Aldous Huxley's mother, Julia, one of the first women to graduate from the University of Oxford, was an excellent and innovative teacher and the founder of a successful girls' school. On his mother's side Huxley's great-grandfather was Dr Thomas Arnold, the most famous educator of Victorian England (he had reformed the public school system in the first part of the nineteenth century) and a clergyman who believed in infusing morality into a liberal education. Dr Arnold's son, and a grandfather of Aldous Huxley, also named Thomas, taught at a Catholic university with the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. One of Huxley's aunts of whom Aldous was especially fond was Mrs Humphry Ward, a moralistic novelist and a social reformer. But certainly the two most significant of Aldous Huxley's ancestors were his grandfather on his father's side—the scientist T. H. Huxley (1825–95)—and his great-uncle on his mother's side, the poet Matthew Arnold (1822–66). Their influence helped to shape the direction of Huxley's work. Their careers exhibited the dominant conflict Aldous Huxley would incorporate into much of his own writing, including *Brave New World*: the tension between science and art.

T. H. Huxley, Aldous's paternal grandfather, began his career as a medical doctor and widely-acclaimed biologist. After achieving fame in the middle of the nineteenth century as 'Darwin's Bulldog' for defending the theory of evolution published in *The Origin of Species* (1859) against the clergy's biblically-based views, Huxley began to focus more and more on popularising science with the masses, and, as a corollary, with the direction modern education ought to take. While not denying a need for the humanities (he learned French, German, Italian, and Greek on his own, and believed that the ability to write well was indispensable for the scientist), Huxley argued that science should be given prominence in education: he wanted, he said, a 'scientific education'.

Huxley debated this position publicly with Matthew Arnold, his great-uncle. Arnold, who had largely stopped writing poetry by the mid-1850s to concentrate on literary criticism and the study of society, asserted that each culture is ultimately evaluated chiefly on its position in the humanities, its contribution to 'the best that is known and thought in the world'. Consequently, he held that the humanities should be given primacy over the sciences in a wise educational system.

Although *Brave New World* was written half a century after the Huxley-Arnold debate, this clash of ideas is significant to Aldous Huxley's novel (and, indeed, to Huxley's work in general) in several respects. Firstly, the collision between art and science, which can be extended to include a collision between reason and imagination and between matter and spirit, generates the central tension that Bernard

Marx, Helmholtz Watson, and John Savage experience in *Brave New World* between over-regulation of the individual and the need for spiritual fulfilment. As Mustapha Mond, one of the World State's ten controllers, realises, science and art can both be liberating forces if allowed free play – but they can also be forces of control: science by determining the genetic constitution of humanity, and art by formulating socially-desirable rules into memorable aphorisms that people take to be truths and then act upon. Secondly, the intense belief in the value of education shared by T. H. Huxley and Matthew Arnold is shown also by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*. Used wrongly, as it is in sleep-teaching, education warps individuals into thoughtless tools of the social body; used properly, it can lead to the spiritual illuminations the Savage is blessed with through his reading of Shakespeare. Thirdly, the debate format, carried out by means of public lectures – in which, for example, Arnold's 'Literature and Science' (1883) answered T. H. Huxley's 'Science and Culture' (1880) – provides Aldous Huxley with a literary vehicle to which he returns again and again. In *Brave New World*, the debate-lecture technique is most prominent in the confrontation between Mond and the Savage toward the end of the novel. Moreover, this device leads to consideration of *Brave New World* as a 'novel of ideas' (discussed in Part 3).

## The cultural milieu

Although *Brave New World* is set six hundred years after its date of publication, Huxley, like most writers of utopias (see Part 3), is actually commenting on contemporary social conditions and behaviour. Hence some understanding of the 1920s, the decade that Huxley is to a large extent criticising in *Brave New World*, should help to illuminate Huxley's social satire.

Writing in London in 1920, Ezra Pound summed up the intellectual despair and disillusionment that would become a major force of the decade that has come to be known as the 'Roaring Twenties': Western culture is an 'old bitch gone in the teeth', a 'blotched civilisation'. At the foundation of this pessimism lay the shadow of the First World War (1914–18) – a futile, savage, senseless war fought, essentially, for the grossest of possible motives, money. This war shattered the long-established social structure of Europe; brought to an abrupt halt a century of relative peace, since no major wars had been fought since the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815; was the first 'modern' war in that it was the first to employ awesome mechanical weapons, such as tanks and aeroplanes; destroyed the later-Victorian faith that science – which developed the terrible weapons of the First World War – could usher in an age of ever-progressive human improvement. Thus, by the 1920s, the

'Jazz Age', the 'Big Party', many people were left with a sense that they were living in a moral vacuum, that old values and beliefs had been rendered impotent without being replaced by new, vital ones. In *Crome Yellow*, published three years after the First World War was concluded, one character comments on the 'horrors' that 'are taking place in every corner of the world. People are being crushed, slashed, disembowelled, mangled; their dead bodies rot and their eyes decay with the rest. Screams of pain and fear go pulsing through . . .' Yet even such horrors as these are taken 'all for granted. Since the war we wonder at nothing.'

Many people, therefore, felt that under such distressing circumstances, the only reasonable course of action was to try to see and do as much as possible before the fabric of society gave way entirely. Such a mode of life, understandably, yielded hedonism and cynicism. 'Conspicuous consumption'—the public display of unnecessary and excessive but trivial spending—was one hedonistic way that those who could afford it might relieve spiritual emptiness. So was sexual promiscuity. Another method for confronting the unsettling times was to assume a mocking, cynical tone. If nothing is worthwhile or sacred after all, then no significant action can be taken, and thinking about how bad things are is by definition an exercise in futility – better to enjoy ourselves while we can; such was the outlook of many of the young.

The hedonistic and cynical elements of futuristic London in *Brave New World*, then, can be seen as commentaries on the decade that Huxley had just lived through (and which, indeed, he satirised in several novels written during these ten years). Therefore, when we are informed early in *Brave New World* that an appreciation of nature is socially undesirable because it does nothing to keep the financial cogs of industry spinning, and that games requiring expensive equipment that is to be thrown away when damaged rather than to be repaired ('Ending is better than mending') are therefore preferable, we are meant to apply the implied cultural criticism to Huxley's own society. The same is true of the novel's sexual theme: the implied criticism of the socially-sanctioned promiscuity of AF 632 London is meant to be applied to contemporary Britain. The cynicism displayed by Mond, who contends that 'civilisation has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism', is likewise intended to reflect the empty values of Huxley's own day.

## A note on the text

*Brave New World* was first published by Chatto & Windus, London, 1932. The standard edition is that published by Chatto & Windus in 1970 as part of the Collected Edition of Huxley's work. Page references in these Notes are to the inexpensive, readily-available Panther paperback edition: *Brave New World*, Granada, London, 1977.

# Part 2

# Summaries
*of* BRAVE NEW WORLD

## A general summary

After the fantastical futuristic setting of the novel is presented in the first several chapters, the action begins as Bernard Marx, a highly intelligent but awkward and eccentric man who is dissatisfied with life, takes Lenina Crowne for a holiday to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. They bring back to London with them John Savage, who was born at the Reservation, and his mother, Linda, a former worker in the Brave New World who by mischance has had to spend the past several years at the Reservation. Bernard proudly parades the primitive Savage before the curious eyes of the overly-civilised Londoners until the Savage protests. Meanwhile, Linda has been put in hospital and is dying. The Savage rushes to her side, feeling guilty for having abandoned her. Linda dies; on his way out of the hospital the Savage incites a riot and is arrested, along with Bernard and Helmholtz Watson, a mutual friend and, like Bernard, an eccentric. Mustapha Mond, the controller in charge of London, lectures the three men on the need for individual conformity and social stability, then exiles Bernard and Helmholtz. The Savage, however, escapes. For a brief time he is happy living alone in the English countryside. But curiosity-seekers eventually find him, ruin his peace, and tempt him into participation in a furious orgy. Ashamed, the Savage hangs himself.

## Detailed summaries

### Foreword

Written fifteen years after *Brave New World*, the Foreword offers the following insights in retrospect:

(1) Between the extremes of the technologically-dominated London of AF632 and the primitivism of the Savage Reservation lay the possibility of using science in the context of a spiritually-centred community (a possibility Huxley would explore later, in his last novel, *Island* (1967)) (pp.7–8).
(2) The novel should not have neglected to incorporate nuclear energy into the Brave New World; but this oversight does not effect the main drive or meaning of the story (pp.9–10).

(3) Man must look within (to the human spirit) rather than without (to technology) to improve the world (p.10).
(4) He must decentralise political power before statism overwhelms the individual (pp.11–12).
(5) Should a new totalitarian state emerge, it will probably resemble the Brave New World in that it will govern not by force, but – through skilful use of propaganda – by convincing its population to love its own servitude (pp.12–14).
(6) 'All things considered, it looks as though Utopia were far closer to us than anyone, only fifteen years ago, could have imagined' (p.14).

NOTES AND GLOSSARY:

**epigraph:** 'Utopias appear to be a good deal more realisable than was previously thought. And we are today faced with an alarming question of a different nature: How to avoid their complete realisation? Utopias are realisable. Life moves towards utopias. And perhaps a new century is beginning, a century when intellectuals and the cultured class will dream of ways of avoiding utopias and of returning to a non-utopic society, less "perfect" and more free.' (Translated from the French by Keith Busby.) A Russian religious philosopher, Berdiaeff (1874–1948) believed in combining a transcendent mystical vision with social improvement, a combination that increasingly appealed to Huxley and that he made central to his last novel, *Island* (1962). Having been exiled from Russia in 1927, Berdiaeff was living in Paris when he wrote *Freedom and the Spirit* (1927), from which the above quotation is taken

**Foreword:** written in 1946 for the Collected Edition volume of *Brave New World*, which was published in 1950

***Penitente:*** *(Latin)* repentant

**Pyrrhonic:** a follower of the thought of Pyrrhon (or Pyrrho) (*c.*360–*c.*272 BC), a Greek philosopher who held that, because man can know nothing with absolute certainty, it is wisest to suspend judgement and be indifferent to circumstances

**aesthete:** a lover of beauty for its own sake

**fable** a narrative, usually brief, with a clear moral that is usually stated at the end

**Pantheon:** a temple to the gods built in Rome in AD 2

**ossuary:** a vault containing bones of the dead

***'Si monumentum requiris circumspice':*** *(Latin)* 'if you would seek his monument, look around you'; written by the son of the architect Christopher Wren (1632–1723) and inscribed above the interior of the North Door of St Paul's Cathedral, London, which Wren built. Huxley's satiric point here is that a mindless use of higher education has produced military weapons of great destructive power

**Reservation:** the Savage Reservation in *Brave New World.* Such a reservation is a tract of land set aside—'reserved'—by the United States government for use by the Indians, whose own land the government periodically confiscated during the nineteenth century as the country expanded westward; Huxley comments satirically on this practice in the novel

**Henry-Georgian:** a reference to Henry George (1839–97), an idealistic social reformer whose *Progress and Poverty* (1879) greatly influenced later nineteenth-century radical thought

**Kroptkinesque:** referring to the Russian Peter Kroptkin (1842–1921), an idealistic revolutionist

**Sabbath:** the seventh and last day of the week, used here in the secular sense to refer to a period of rest from the labour of the preceding six days

**Tao:** the 'road', or 'way', to truth in Chinese philosophy

**Logos:** the word incarnate in Jesus Christ

**Brahmin:** a member of the highest Hindu caste, the priestly caste

**High Utilitarianism:** utilitarianism, an essentially nineteenth-century social programme defining goodness as that which brings the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people; Huxley's addition of the adjective 'High' suggests a spiritual application of this philosophy

**nuclear fission:** the splitting of atoms to release a tremendous amount of energy that can be used peaceably, to generate electricity, but also destructively, to produce atomic bombs

**Robert Nichols:** British poet and playwright (1893–1944)

**Marquis de Sade:** Count Donatien Alphonse François de Sade (1740–1814), a French novelist whose works described 'sadism'—a term, named after de Sade, for the experience of sexual pleasure by the infliction of pain or stress on another creature

**Robespierre:** Maximilien de Robespierre (1758–94), an extremist leader of the Jacobin Club, which vowed to carry out the goals of the French Revolution at all costs, regardless of consequences and without compromises

**Babeuf:** François Babeuf (1760–97), French revolutionary and journalist, whose *Conspiracy of Equals* (1796) called for universal equality of income

**Thirty Years' War:** a religious conflict (1618–48) begun between Catholics and Protestants, that expanded to include most of Europe in a political power struggle—at great cost to civilians, who were often mercilessly pillaged by soldiers

**the fifth Marquess of Lansdowne:** Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice (1845–1927), who expressed the idea of ending the First World War through negotiation with Germany (as opposed to through armed conflict) in a letter dated 29 November 1917, eventually printed in the *Daily Telegraph*

**Bolshevism:** the programme of the radical element of the 'Bolsheviks'—the Russian Social Democratic Party, led by Lenin (1870–1924), which controlled the government following the Russian Revolution (1917)

**Fascism:** an extremely authoritarian, anti-socialistic form of government, developed in Italy in the 1920s, that spread elsewhere in Europe, most notably to Spain and Germany

**Hitler:** Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), the German dictator whose Nazi Party murdered millions of Jews in the late 1930s and during the Second World War (1939–45)

**Hiroshima:** the Japanese city on which the first atomic bomb was dropped, on 6 August 1945

**Magdeburg:** a city in eastern Germany destroyed and pillaged in 1631, during the Thirty Years War (see above)

**Procrustes:** in Greek mythology, a character who forced guests to fit the bed he provided for them by stretching or cutting off the guests' legs

**totalitarian:** a dictatorial form of government in which all opposition is outlawed and the state has complete control over all facets of human life

**statism:** a political system characterised by a strong central government