Brave New World

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

Aldous Huxley was born into a family of noted scientists and writers. His grandfather, a biologist, was instrumental in popularizing Darwin's theory of evolution. Huxley's father was the editor of *Cornhill* magazine, while his mother was related to the English poet Matthew Arnold. Huxley was a thoughtful, imaginative child, though his family teased him for his grumbling disposition. He attended Eton and Oxford and was skilled and knowledgeable in both literature and science. Though his hopes of a medical career were dashed when an eye disease almost blinded him at 16, he soon built a career as a writer. He wrote prolifically throughout the 1920's, publishing numerous essays, sketches, caricatures, and four novels. Huxley published *Brave New World*, his most successful novel, in 1932. As war loomed in Europe, Huxley, a pacifist, moved to California, along with his wife, Maria, and their son, Matthew. His attempt to write screenplays failed, but he developed an interest in hallucinogenic drugs that led to a book about his drug experiences, *The Doors of Perception*. In 1963, the same year he died, Huxley published his last book, *Island*, which depicted a utopia in contrast to the dystopia of *Brave New World*.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in the early 1930s, the world had recently endured the terrible trauma of World War I (1914-1918). Totalitarian states had sprung up in the Soviet Union, and Fascist parties were gaining power in Europe. Not only that, but another world war seemed to be on the horizon and would break out by the end of the decade. In addition, huge strides had been made in both science and its application through technology, and the world had industrialized. Huxley uses American industrialist Henry Ford (1863-1947), the founder of the Ford Motor Company and the inventor of the assembly line technique of mass production, to symbolize industrialization and its effects on society. Mass production is a process that produces large amounts of standardized products—usually products like food, fuel, appliances, or automobiles. Huxley imagines a future in which this development is pursued to an extreme conclusion, with the production of standardized *humans*.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

In 1516, Sir Thomas More published a book called *Utopia*. Its title meant either "good place" or "no place," in Greek, and the book described an ideal society that More used in order to criticize his own society. *Utopia* was not the first book to imagine a perfect society; Plato's *Republic*, for example, does the same thing. But *Utopia* was the book that gave the genre its name, and numerous writers over the years wrote their own utopian novels. In addition, a number of writers wrote dystopian novels, in which they imagined the worst possible society, using it to criticize their current world. *Brave New World* is a dystopian novel, which extrapolated from the rise of technology, science, and totalitarianism in the 1930s to imagine a future totalitarian state in which humanity had been robbed of all free choice and were forced into happiness through the manipulation of genetics and psychology. In its focus on the evils of totalitarianism and the use of technology to support these evils, *Brave New World* most closely resembles George Orwell's *1984*, whose dystopia enforces conformity through methods like surveillance and torture. In recent years dystopian novels have exploded in popular, with young adult books like Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games* and Veronica Roth's *Divergent* being expanded into incredibly successful series and film franchises.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Brave New World
- **When Written:** 1931
- **Where Written:** France
- **When Published:** 1932
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Dystopian fiction
- **Setting:** London and New Mexico, under the fictional World State government
- **Climax:** The debate between Mustapha Mond and John
- **Antagonist:** The World State; Mustapha Mond
- **Point of View:** Third Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Lukewarm Reception. Though *Brave New World* is now considered to be one of the most important works of dystopian fiction ever written, its reception in the 1930s was much more restrained, even negative. It was dismissed by some reviewers as an unsophisticated joke and as repugnant in its account of promiscuous sexuality. Granville Hicks, an American Communist, even attacked Huxley as privileged, saying his book showed that Huxley was out of touch with actual human misery.

The Doors of Rock and Roll. As one might expect, Huxley's book about his experiences with hallucinogenic drugs, *The Doors of Perception*, was a cult classic among certain groups. One of those groups was a rock and roll band in search of a name. After Jim Morrison and his friends read Huxley's book, they had one: The Doors.

PLOT SUMMARY

The Director of the Central London Hatcheries leads a group of students on a tour of the facilities, where babies are produced and grown in bottles (birth is non-existent in the World State). The Director shows how the five castes of World State society are created, from Alphas and Betas, who lead the society, down to the physically and intellectually inferior Deltas, Gammas, and Epsilons, who do menial labor. The Director also shows how each individual is conditioned both before and after "birth" to conform to the moral rules of the World State and to enjoy his or her predetermined job. Each caste is conditioned differently, but all castes are conditioned to seek instant gratification, to be sexually promiscuous, to engage in economic consumption, and to use the drug *soma* to escape from all unpleasant experiences. The Director calls such conditioning "the secret to all happiness and virtue."

The students and the Director get a special treat when Mustapha Mond, one of the 10 World Controllers, joins the tour. He lectures the students on the World State's creation and its success in creating happiness and stability by eliminating from society all intense emotions, desires, and relationships. In the Hatchery changing rooms, Lenina Crowne, a nurse, is criticized by her friend Fanny for only dating one man, Henry Foster. Acknowledging the need to become more promiscuous, Lenina decides to also date Bernard Marx, even though he is a bit small and strange for an alpha.

Bernard, meanwhile, is outraged as he listens to Henry Foster and another man have a perfectly "normal" discussion about "having" Lenina. Later, in the elevator, Lenina accepts Bernard's invitation to accompany him to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. Bernard then visits his friend Helmholtz Watson. The two criticize the World State. Bernard is dissatisfied because he is self-conscious about being small, while Helmholtz is so exceptional at everything he does that he's begun to feel stifled.

While Lenina goes on her date with Henry, Bernard attends his biweekly Solidarity Service. After taking *soma*, the 12 attendees engage in solidarity chants, working themselves into an ecstatic frenzy as they call out to "our **Ford**" and then collapse in an orgy. Bernard is miserably aware that he is the only person who didn't find the Service fulfilling.

The Director signs a permit to allow Bernard to visit the Savage Reservation with Lenina, and as he does so, he reminisces about his own trip to the Reservation 20 years earlier: there was a storm, and his female companion disappeared. Embarrassed to have let slip such information, the Director threatens to reassign Bernard to Iceland. Bernard thinks the Director is bluffing, but just before entering the Reservation, he finds out from Helmholtz that the Director is serious.

In the Reservation, after watching some unnerving Indian rituals, Bernard and Lenina meet a young, **Shakespeare**-quoting "savage" named John, and his mother, Linda. Bernard realizes that Linda is the woman who got separated from the Director, and that John is their son. John is overwhelmed by Lenina's beauty and, when Bernard offers to take him and Linda back to London, exultant at the prospect of seeing the "brave new world" for himself. Bernard, though, plots to publicly humiliate the Director in revenge for his threat of exile. Indeed, the public scandal of having fathered a child forces the Director to resign.

John, "the Savage," is a hit in London society. But he is troubled by the World State, especially because Linda has drugged herself into a happy stupor with *soma*. As John's friend and guide, Bernard becomes popular—but when John refuses to appear at one of Bernard's parties, the guests turn on Bernard, whom they were indulging only in order to meet the Savage. John befriends Helmholtz, reading him Shakespeare while Helmholtz reads him verses that he's composed himself. Bernard is jealous of their bond.

Lenina, meanwhile, is increasingly preoccupied with thoughts of John, but she can't figure out if John likes her or not. When John finally tells her he loves her, she offers herself to him. He finds the promiscuity of World State society disgusting, however, and curses at her. While she hides in the bathroom, John gets a phone call that his mother is dying.

At the hospital, a drugged Linda thinks her son is her former Indian lover, Popé. This makes John angry, as does the presence of a bunch of Gamma children being conditioned not to fear death. Soon, Linda dies. John, devastated, blames *soma* for Linda's death, and he interferes with the distribution of *soma* rations to some Deltas in the hospital lobby. The Deltas start rioting. Helmholtz and Bernard arrive, having been warned what John was doing. Helmholtz joyfully joins the fray in John's defense, while Bernard remains frozen in indecision. After the riot is quelled, John, Helmholtz, and Bernard are taken to see Mustapha Mond.

In Mond's office, Mond and John debate World State society. John says it makes life worthless by destroying truth. Mond says that stability and happiness are more important than truth, which is dangerous. Furthermore, happiness sustains mass production, which truth and beauty cannot. The World State has also eliminated the need for God, by smoothing over suffering and abolishing the need for moral effort or virtues. John retorts that he *wants* the opportunity to suffer, and even to be unhappy.

Mond tells Helmholtz and Bernard that they'll be sent to an island—islands are where all the interesting people who don't like conforming to World State society live—but refuses to let John accompany them. John then establishes a hermitage in a rural, abandoned lighthouse, where he purifies himself through sleeplessness, self-flagellation, and other ascetic behaviors. One of his sessions is captured by a photographer, and a sensational film about him released. Soon, hundreds of sightseers show up to see the spectacle for themselves. The crowds beg him to do the "whipping stunt" again. Lenina gets out of one of the helicopters, trying to speak to him, and John rushes at her, calling her "strumpet!" and whipping both her and himself. The intensity of emotion inspires the crowd, including John, to have an orgy, in keeping with World State conditioning. The next day, horrified at what he's done, John hangs himself.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Bernard Marx – Bernard is an Alpha citizen who, by some mischance, is physically much smaller than Alphas are supposed to be. Bernard's small stature has given him an inferiority complex. As a result, he feels like an outsider to World State society. This outsider status and individuality allows Bernard both to recognize and criticize the flaws of the World State—and, as a result, other citizens suspect him for his avoidance of universally-accepted things like promiscuous sex and the *soma* drug that the rest of the population uses to numb themselves. But Bernard's inferiority complex also makes him defensive, resentful, jealous, cowardly, and boastful. Bernard dates Lenina Crowne at the beginning of the novel, taking her to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. Bernard enjoys feeling like a rebellious outsider until it costs him something—the Director threatens to send him to Iceland for being too unorthodox. In response, he gets revenge by bringing John (the Savage) back to London and exposing the Director as John's father, which causes the Director to resign from his position in shame. Bernard also enjoys the popularity he gains by association with John, but when he learns that people are just humoring him, he soon grows resentful. He envies John's friendship with his closest friend, Helmholtz; when John stages a brief rebellion in the hospital, Bernard can't decide whether to support the two, and when arrested, he makes an embarrassing plea for clemency. By the time Bernard and Helmholtz are sent to an island together by Mustapha Mond, though, Bernard appears to have been humbled.

John (the Savage) – John is born to a woman from the World State, Linda, who gets stranded in a Savage Reservation in New Mexico. His father is the Director. He spends the first 20 years of his life on the Reservation, and though the Reservation natives treat him as an outsider, he still picks up their religious and moral values (like the importance of self-denial and a belief in monogamous marriage), and develops a love of **Shakespeare**, whom he quotes frequently. John is eager to see the World State, since his mother describes it as a paradise, but once there, he thinks that World State culture is immoral, infantilizing, and degrading to humanity. He is attracted to Lenina, but he is repulsed by the promiscuous sexuality she's been conditioned to practice, and he turns on her when she tries to seduce him, repeatedly hurling the Shakespearean insult "strumpet." After Linda dies from *soma* abuse, John stages a brief rebellion in the hospital vestibule. When he's arrested, he debates Mustapha Mond at length about the importance of truth versus happiness and stability, arguing that he'd rather be unhappy and free than living under World State slavery. Accordingly, he soon moves into a remote lighthouse, where he can be alone and self-sufficient, practicing austerities like whipping himself if he becomes too cheerful or daydreams of Lenina. When the World State media and curious spectators start flocking to the lighthouse, including Lenina, he ends up sparking a massive orgy. The next day, he hangs himself in shame.

Helmholtz Watson – Helmholtz is the opposite of his close friend, Bernard: he is the perfect embodiment of an Alpha citizen. But whereas Bernard's imperfections make him an individual, Helmholtz's perfection makes him individual. Everything in life comes so easily to Helmholtz—from women, to physical prowess, to professional achievement—that he comes to believe there is more to life. In looking for ways to challenge himself, he realizes the limitations that the World State imposes on its citizens. In this sense, he is an intellectual nonconformist in spite of his physical conformity with State ideals. Unlike Bernard, who often seems to be compensating for his insecurities, Helmholtz is generous, kind, and fun-loving. An Emotional Engineer, he also begins composing his own verses and gets in trouble with the State as a result. He enthusiastically supports John's short-lived rebellion and welcomes exile to an island, where he can focus on writing.

Lenina Crowne – Lenina is a beautiful Beta woman who works as a nurse in the Hatchery. Her closest friend there is Fanny. Lenina is slightly unconventional in that she has a tendency to date only one man at a time, but otherwise she never challenges her conditioning. In fact, she's disturbed by unorthodox behaviors like avoidance of sex, crowds, or *soma*, all of which she vastly enjoys. Over the course of the novel, she dates Henry Foster and Bernard Marx, but she ultimately becomes obsessed with John because he refuses to sleep with her. She finds him at the lighthouse at the end of the story, but he attacks her with cries of "strumpet!" before she can speak to him.

Mustapha Mond – Mond is one of the 10 World Controllers of the World State. Mond was once a physicist who loved truth and science so much that he carried out secret experiments. He

was then given the choice of becoming either a World Controller or going to an island where he could continue his scientific pursuits, and Mond chose to become a World Controller. Though he has read **Shakespeare** and values truth, while debating John he holds up happiness and stability as more important than, and finally mutually exclusive of, love or truth.

Linda – Linda is a Beta-minus woman who accompanied the Director on a date to the Savage Reservation, accidentally got separated from him, and later gave birth to a child, John. She was so embarrassed at becoming pregnant and giving birth that she didn't try to leave the Reservation and spent 20 years there. Her World State belief in promiscuous sex and drug-taking make her and John outcasts in the Reservation. Once she returns to the World State with Bernard's help, she drugs herself into a permanent *soma*-stupor until she dies.

The Director (Thomas) – The Director is a pedantic, charmless, pretentious, and thoroughly conventional Alpha male who runs the Central London Hatchery. He takes exception to Bernard's unconventional behavior and prepares to punish Bernard. However, Bernard discovers and reveals that the Director abandoned Linda in the Reservation and unknowingly fathered a child: John. This revelation ruins the director, and protects Bernard.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Fanny Crowne – Lenina's friend and coworker at the Hatchery. Fanny is even more conventional than Lenina, and essentially speaks, acts, and thinks exactly as she was conditioned to.

Henry Foster – One of Lenina's lovers. He is a supremely conventional Alpha male, and an employee at the Hatchery.

Benito Hoover – An affable though rather hairy former lover of Lenina's.

The Arch-Community-Songster – The World State version of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He is offended at Bernard's party when John refuses to make an appearance.

Popé – One of Linda's lovers in the Reservation. He brings her drugs and gives John a book of **Shakespeare**.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

DYSTOPIA AND TOTALITARIANISM

Brave New World envisions a future totalitarian society in which individual liberty has been usurped by an all-powerful state. But while other dystopian novels envision totalitarian measures being carried out through tactics like surveillance and torture, *Brave New World*, in contrast, argues that the most powerful totalitarian state would be one that doesn't suppress and frighten its citizens, but instead manages to convince its citizens to *love* their slavery.

As the Director of London's Central Hatchery explains to a student tour group, "That is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their inescapable social destiny." In keeping with its name, then, the Hatchery produces and both chemically and psychologically conditions humans to enjoy the roles predestined for them. But even as the Director touts "happiness," it's clear that such a condition is *enforced*; people's destinies are "inescapable," and the State's chief concern is to make people believe their destinies are what they really want. Totalitarianism is exemplified by the hive-like atmosphere of the London hatchery: "Buzz, buzz! the hive was humming, busily, joyfully. Blithe was the singing of the young girls over their test-tubes, the Predestinators whistled as they worked, and in the Decanting Room what glorious jokes were cracked above the empty bottles!" This description both dehumanizes the Hatchery workers (they're more like insects, behaving instinctively, than like variable human beings) and demonstrates the chilling effectiveness of conditioning; the workers aren't robotic cogs, but joyful, singing, joking people, with at least the outward appearance of personality. This veneer of personality, if anything, makes the World State more unsettling than the environment of a more outwardly coercive dystopia.

In order to maintain a brainwashed, compliant society, the authority figures of the World State ruthlessly punish people who display any sign of nonconformity. Into this environment steps the grim-faced Director, preparing to publicly reprimand Bernard for his unorthodox behaviors: "Consider the matter dispassionately, Mr. Foster, and you will see that no offence is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behavior. Murder kills only the individual—and, after all, what is an individual? [...] We can make a new one with the greatest ease—as many as we like. Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life of a mere individual; it strikes at Society itself." The cost of conditioning citizens stands out sharply against the guise of utopia that the leaders of the State try to uphold. When a personality emerges that threatens "orthodoxy," it must be eliminated. Still, the Director knows that by publicly reprimanding and exiling Bernard, he won't frighten the Hatchery workers—he will actually reinforce their happy complacency by expelling the disconcerting anomaly.

This method of enforcing conformity is so effective that those who do not fall in line are pushed to the edge of society or, in some cases, eliminated entirely. This ostracization of those who are different is how the Savage becomes a societal curiosity—and casualty—in the end. Society cannot make room for a figure like the Savage or comprehend him, because he refuses to be happy on Society's terms. In fact, he chooses solitude, emotion, self-denial, and suffering instead of shallow happiness, conformity, and mindless indulgence. So when fleets of helicopters descend on his remote hermitage, their reaction to the Savage is predictable, a logical extension of the World State mindset. They see his self-flagellation as a mere entertainment "stunt," and when they witness the pain he inflicts on Lenina and himself, they respond as they've been conditioned to do, with an "orgy-porgy" Solidarity dance. In other words, the Savage's suffering must be neutralized by being absorbed into the pleasure-obsessed, conformist mindset the State has so painstakingly created. In the novel, totalitarianism wins, and the only hope offered is that, somewhere, perhaps there are more "anomalies" like Bernard, Helmholtz, or the Savage who might survive.

TECHNOLOGY AND CONTROL

Brave New World raises the terrifying prospect that advances in the sciences of biology and psychology could be transformed by a totalitarian government into technologies that will change the way that human beings think and act. Once this happens, the novel suggests, the totalitarian government will cease to allow the pursuit of actual science, and the truth that science reveals will be restricted and controlled. Huxley argues that the more human beings harness technology to guarantee human happiness, the more they will end up enslaved by technology, to the neglect of higher human aspirations.

World State technology is undoubtedly effective in creating complacent citizens. During a student tour, the Director of the London Hatchery explains the process of hypnopaedia, when recordings asserting World State morality are played for sleeping children to subconsciously absorb: "'Till at last the child's mind *is* these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions *is* the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are *our* suggestions!' The Director almost shouted in his triumph." Such a process is chilling, because the whispered suggestions actually give shape to a developing child's thought processes and his or her perception of the world.

Yet, at the same time, such technological control is inherently reductive. That is, the use of conditioning like hypnopaedia falsely suggests that a human being can be reduced to the ethical maxims he or she is force-fed. While such conditioning is undeniably effective for keeping the World State running, the presence of figures like Bernard and Helmholtz—both of whom resist aspects of their conditioning and long for something more than what the World State says is permissible—shows that it's not foolproof. There is more to humanity that the mind's ability to "judge and desire and decide," and World State technology is unable to control that "something more" as effectively as it forms children's likes and dislikes.

Because technology is limited in this way, the World State must control its advancement. When Mustapha Mond explains to the Savage that even technological and scientific advances are suppressed for social reasons, he says, "Every change is a menace to stability. That's another reason why we're so chary of applying new inventions. Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy." In other words, technological changes risk undoing the World State's carefully conditioned stability and making people recognize and resist their enslavement. He goes on to explain that, "We can't allow science to undo its own good work. That's why we so carefully limit the scope of its researches—that's why I almost got to an island. We don't allow it to deal with any but the most immediate problems of the moment." Mond doesn't question the value of science; he used to be an avid researcher himself. Because he knows science's potential, though, he makes sure its ambitions remain limited, so that the World State's achievement of stability can stand unchallenged.

In "Our **Ford**'s" time, Mond muses, "they seemed to have imagined that [science] could be allowed to go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. [...] Mass production demanded the shift [from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness]. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't." Mond's reminiscence on 20th-century technological progress is one of the most prophetic notes in the novel. Huxley suggests that his readers should not assume that such progress can last forever, especially when it is allowed to usurp concerns about aspects of the human experience besides shallow happiness, like truth and beauty. The more human beings use technology to secure convenient happiness, the further enslaved they will become by it.

THE COST OF HAPPINESS

If someone were given the choice between getting what they wanted and not getting what they wanted, they'd probably choose the first option every time. This satisfaction of desire, the person would believe, would make them happy. In order to maintain its stability, the World State in *Brave New World* ensures that all its citizens get exactly what they want all the time. This universal "happiness" is achieved in three ways. First, psychological conditioning is used to ensure that each citizen is not only suited to their job and role, but actually prefers that role to

anything else. Second, through the promotion of promiscuous sex as virtuous and the elimination of families or any long-term relationship, the government ensures that no one will ever face intense and unreciprocated emotional or sexual desire. And third, whatever sadness slips through the cracks can be brushed away by using *soma*, a drug with no side-effects that gives the user a pleasant high and makes all worries dissolve away. All three methods are successful: in the World State, almost everybody really does seem to be happy all the time. But through Bernard, Helmholtz, the Savage, and even Mustapha Mond, *Brave New World* poses the question: at what cost does this happiness come? What gets lost when every one of an individual's desires is immediately met? The novel's answer is that the satisfaction of every desire creates a superficial and infantile happiness that creates stability by eliminating deep thought, new ideas, and strong passions. Without these things, humanity loses the possibility of the more significant fulfillments provided by the pursuit of truth in art and science, or the pursuit of love and understanding with another person. *Brave New World* thus argues that guaranteed happiness and stability are fool's gold, making adults into infants who do not care about truth or progress.

When Mustapha Mond gives students a facility tour, he portrays the distant past as a repugnant place where people were entangled in stifling relationships and constant suffering. The pre-modern world "didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the temptations and the lonely remorse, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with all the uncertainties and the poverty—they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly [...] how could they be stable?" This sums up the way citizens have been conditioned to think about the meaning of life: the feelings brought about by close human bonds and struggles have no redeeming value. When stability is equated with happiness, anything that undermines stability—many of the very things that had once been seen as enriching and character-forming—must be rejected as harmful.

This idealization of comfort and stability as society's highest virtues effectively trickles down to the rest of the population, leaving them completely unequipped to think critically or even conceive of taking risks for the sake of their own freedom. On their date, Bernard tries talking about happiness with Lenina: "[W]hat would it be like if [...] I were free—not enslaved by my conditioning [...] Yes, 'Everybody's happy nowadays.' We begin giving the children that at five. But wouldn't you like to be free to be happy in some other way, Lenina? In your own way, for example; not in everybody else's way." But perfectly conditioned Lenina is distressed by Bernard's words and his strange fondness for activities like viewing the sea in solitude, and she lacks the capacity to make sense of his ponderings. This conversation illustrates the disconnect between someone who questions the World State definition of happiness and someone who's never considered anything else. To someone like Lenina, who clings to an infantile happiness, the freedom to "be happy in some other way" is merely frightening nonsense.

When unhappiness is excluded from life, things like deep connection, grief, and remorse are absent, too. When his mother, Linda, dies, the Savage's outcry at her bedside scandalizes the nurse: "Should she [...] try to bring him back to a sense of decency? Remind him of where he was? Of what fatal mischief he might do to these poor innocents? Undoing all their wholesome death-conditioning with this disgusting outcry—as though death were something terrible, as though any one mattered as much as all that!" The idea that death *is* terrible, and that individual human lives have value, would unsettle the children's conditioning by opening the possibility of deep relationships, which are inevitably complicated and unstable. Not having been conditioned, the Savage threatens the World State view of human life with his uninhibited grief.

One of the ironies of *Brave New World* is that the Savage, the figure that Society objectifies as uncivilized because of his lack of conditioning, is actually more advanced than they are. The Savage's frequent tears, his **Shakespearean** outbursts, and finally his self-imposed exile from Society show him to be completely different from everyone else. These differences are rooted in his strong emotions about the world around him and his personal desire for goodness—things that inevitably entail a willingness to bear *un*happiness if it means being free. The World State conception of stability and happiness are totally at odds with these characteristics, and the Savage's tragic death suggests that there is no place for a free-thinking individual in such a world.

INDUSTRIALISM AND CONSUMPTION

Brave New World criticizes the industrial economic systems of the era in which it was written by imagining those systems pushed to their logical extremes. The industrial revolution that began in the second half of the 19th century and sped up through the 20th allowed for the production of massive quantities of new goods. But there's no value in producing new goods that no one wants, so the willingness of the masses to consume these new goods was crucial to economic growth and prosperity. It became an economic imperative, then, that people always want new things, because if people were satisfied with what they had, they wouldn't consume enough to keep the wheels of industrial society turning. Consequently, the World State in *Brave New World* has made consumption one of its centerpieces. All World State citizens are conditioned to consume. Hypnopaedic teachings condition them to throw out worn clothes instead of mending them, to prefer complicated sports with lots of mechanical parts to simple games, and to refrain from any activity, like reading, that doesn't involve the payment of money

for goods. By portraying the World State economy in this way, Huxley argues that, according to the logic of industrialism, people end up serving their economy, rather than the other way around.

Industrialism and consumption are built into the very structure of the World State—in fact, it is literally how people are made. The novel opens with an elaborate narrative of how human beings are mass-produced: By the time Bokanovsky's Process is applied, a single fertilized egg "was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos—a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature." The Director goes on to exult, "'Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!' [...] The principle of mass production at last applied to biology." Quite literally, citizens are produced in order to keep the machinery of the World State economy humming.

Once lots of human beings have been produced, the problem becomes how to make them serve the economy in their everyday lives. "The problem was to find an economically sounder reason for consuming transport than a mere affection for primroses and landscapes. [...] 'We condition the masses to hate the country,' concluded the Director. 'But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport.'" Elaborate steps are taken to circumvent what's "natural," to such a degree that those who prefer simpler pastimes are looked upon with suspicion. "Mere affection" and enjoyment of natural things do nothing to stimulate the economy. So it's necessary to go to great lengths to make people like and pursue things that will sustain the economy instead.

Under this system, human beings become pawns of consumerism and industry—people exist to serve the economy, rather than vice versa. The Director, watching a group of children play Centrifugal Bumble-puppy, says "strange to think that even in Our **Ford's** day most games were played without more apparatus than a ball or two [...] Imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption." The Director's bafflement shows that, under State conditioning, people are far removed from simple pleasures; enjoyment is no longer seen as an end in itself, but something that must be manipulated to serve "higher," economic ends in order to be justified. Later, the Savage, an outsider to this industrialized society, talks with Mustapha Mond about consumerism. Mond readily admits that "Mass production demanded the shift [from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness]. Universal happiness keeps the wheels [of industry] steadily turning; truth and beauty can't." By conditioning people to seek happiness in the consumption of goods, the State ensures its own economic survival.

It's relatively easy to get citizens to buy in to such a life. Mond explains that after the Nine Years' War, "People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. [...] One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for." World State citizens have accepted the price that their "happiness" must be enjoyed on World State terms. While they're conditioned not to be aware of it, their happiness serves the industrialized State—it doesn't truly serve them.

INDIVIDUALITY

All of World State society can be described as an effort to eliminate the individual from society. That doesn't mean the elimination of all people—it means the conditioning of those people so that they don't really think of themselves as individuals. Individualism, which encompasses an awareness of one's own opinions and abilities, the joys of personal relationship, and the accompanying sorrows of loneliness and isolation, is suppressed as aggressively as possible by the World State in order to maintain stability. But these safeguards aren't enough for all the citizens of the World State, and they become aware of their individuality, which suggests that human individuality is irrepressible. But through the various triumphs and downfalls of his characters, Huxley argues that even when individuality resists external pressures, it won't thrive in a society that views individuals as dispensable and dangerous.

Both the Director and Mustapha Mond admit that human individuality is dispensable within their system. The difference is that Mond sees the reality and even the value of individuality, but willingly sacrifices it for the sake of an orderly State. When the Director reprimands Bernard for unorthodoxy, he does so on the grounds that individuality undermines State stability: "We can make a new [individual] with the greatest ease [...] Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life of a mere individual; it strikes at Society itself." Yet perhaps more sinister is Mond's admission that, while he had the option of being sent to an island where he could pursue "unorthodox" science to his heart's content, he ultimately preferred to be made a World Controller, in charge of determining the happiness of society at large. He recognizes that individuality is a real, valuable thing, yet he prefers suppressing people's individuality (while having the privilege to privately indulge his own by reading **Shakespeare**) in order to keep people comfortable, happy, and complacent. While both men see individuality as a threat to be controlled, neither denies the existence of the individual as such.

Both Bernard and his friend Helmholtz are examples of citizens wrestling with their awareness of their individuality. The difference between the two is that, for Bernard, individuality is something rather forced upon him by his un-Alpha-like physical traits, and he responds to these by resisting aspects of the World State's consumerist and hedonistic culture. Helmholtz, meanwhile, is truly superior in his abilities and realizes that the

constraints of Society won't let him fully exercise those abilities: "A mental excess had produced in Helmholtz Watson effects very similar to those which, in Bernard Marx, were the result of a physical defect [...] That which had made Helmholtz so uncomfortably aware of being himself and all alone was too much ability. What the two men shared was the knowledge that they were individuals." Despite his prowess at Escalator Squash, his hundreds of lovers, and his social standing, Helmholtz "was interested in something else. But in what?" Helmholtz makes a useful contrast with Bernard, because Helmholtz is such a standout example of "excellence" by World State standards. By those standards, Helmholtz should be a model of happiness, but instead, he's restless with the realization that his success might actually be a form of mediocrity. Exploring his potential for more involves acknowledging his individuality, and the inability of the State to facilitate that individuality.

Bernard, on the other hand, accepts his individuality uneasily; he experiences it as something that sets him uncomfortably at odds with his society, and when he has the chance to toss it aside for the sake of acceptance, he does so. After his association with John wins him popularity, "Success went fizzily to Bernard's head, and in the process completely reconciled him [...] to a world which, up till then, he had found very unsatisfactory. In so far as it recognized him as important, the order of things was good." He continues to "parade a carping unorthodoxy" as long as people pay at least superficial attention to him, but it's mostly a show. In other words, Bernard is happy to be an individual as long as it doesn't cost him anything. When Mustapha Mond threatens to send him to Iceland for his unorthodoxy, he quickly dissolves into cowardly groveling, showing that, despite his criticisms, he really *does* want to remain within the outward safety Society provides.

The Savage (John) is the ultimate outsider in the novel. Even in his accidental upbringing on the Savage Reservation, he never truly belonged—excluded from native rituals and secretly studying Shakespeare. When he visits the "brave new world," he belongs even less, because his deep yearnings, his knowledge, and his sense of morality find no sympathy among those who outwardly look more like him. In the end, though, even his outsider status doesn't survive—when he tries to live in solitude, people are drawn to the spectacle of his individuality, and he finally succumbs to a mob mentality himself. Huxley thus suggests that individuality can't flourish in a world that targets it as a threat to its own existence.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

FORD

While the World State doesn't have a conventional religion, it does have a symbolic and revered father figure: Henry T. Ford. Thus, Huxley's use of "Ford" as a kind of deity throughout *Brave New World* (characters instinctively refer to "Our Ford," "fordliness," and other such variations on the name) argues that Ford's 20th-century technological advances shaped a future in which mass production would be applied to human society. Ford is the perfect "god" for World State society because, in developing his Ford Motor Company, he invented mass production by means of the assembly line and the specialization of workers, each of whom has one single, specific job. The World State takes Ford's ideas about mass production and the assembly line and applies them to biologically to human beings. World State citizens, therefore, deify Ford as a vaguely remembered, distant historical figure who literally created the world as they know it.

SHAKESPEARE

In *Brave New World*, Shakespeare represents two things. First, he symbolizes the art that has been rejected and destroyed by the World State in the interest of maintaining stability. Second, the powerful emotion, passion, love, and beauty on display in Shakespeare's plays stand for all the noble aspects of humanity that have been sacrificed by the World State in its effort to make sure its citizens are always happy and therefore productive. The character who quotes Shakespeare most is John (the Savage), who is given a copy of Shakespeare's plays while living on the Savage Reservation; his speech and outlook are accordingly shaped by the language and emotional passion found in Shakespeare. Hence, "brave new world," a phrase taken from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, becomes John's awestruck, albeit increasingly disillusioned, epithet for the World State as well as the title of Huxley's novel. Mustapha Mond has also read and enjoyed Shakespeare, but believes that such beautiful, old literature is useless and even destructive for happy, stable citizens, so he suppresses it.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Harper Perennial edition of *Brave New World* published in 2006.

Chapter 1 Quotes

Community, Identity, Stability.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

The novel opens on the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, a grey building of "only thirty-four stories" in which human babies are "hatched." On the front of the building is the motto of the World State, the government that rules over the entire globe: "Community, Identity, Stability." The fact that the World State has a motto at all highlights that the government operates according to a forceful preexisting ideology, rather than democratically governing according to the wishes of the people. Each of the words in the motto are strikingly positive, and together appear to describe the ideal society. Yet, as will soon be revealed, the World State's claim to be a utopia masks a deeply dystopian reality.

In the context of the novel, "Community" points to the fact that the needs of the group totally supplant individual freedom and agency. "Identity" has a twisted meaning, as it refers not to a personal, individual sense of identity, but rather the "identity" assigned to each citizen of the world state in the form of the role assigned to them by the government and their classification into castes. Finally, in the world of the novel, "Stability" has been taken to such an extreme that all the variety and dynamism of life has been eroded. Without conflict or difficulty, people live in a pacified, passive state, and stability thus takes on distinctly negative connotations.

❝ "And that...is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny."

Related Characters: The Director (Thomas) (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 16

Explanation and Analysis

The Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre has explained how babies are created; he has told the students on the tour that Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons are "hatched" by forcing fertilized eggs to divide into many pairs of identical wins. He then describes how the different fetuses are chemically manipulated in order to encourage them to enjoy the lifestyle they will be assigned to, claiming that this is because "the secret of happiness and virtue [is] liking what you've got to do." Like much World State ideology, on the surface this statement seems persuasive. Common sense suggests that enjoying life is indeed the secret of happiness, and that happy, satisfied people are more likely to be virtuous.

However, in the context of the Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, the Director's words take on a seriously sinister tone. As he has demonstrated to the students, the government preconditions people to enjoy their lives as a method of control. Although this may result in happy citizens, their happiness comes at the expense of freedom––a fact confirmed by the Director's comment about their "unescapable social destiny." This detail in turn calls into question what the Director means by "virtue," which seems to be another way of describing a repressed and controlled society rather than true morality.

Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 27

Explanation and Analysis

Having shown the tour group where babies are hatched, the Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre moves on to the Infant Nurseries, where young children are conditioned according to their caste. One method of indoctrination is hypnopaedia, or sleep-teaching, in which recordings are played for the sleeping children as a means of subconsciously brainwashing them. In this passage, the Director reveals a room of sleeping Betas, and the quote is of a recorded voice placed under their pillows that is conditioning the Betas to love their future role. The speaker's words highlight the delicate balance of inspiring the children to feel proud and satisfied with their status as Betas while internalizing the overall caste hierarchy as natural and correct.

As this passage reveals, this balance is achieved by a

combination of positive and negative messages. The children are encouraged to think of the lower classes as "stupid," yet be grateful that the expectations for how hard they work will exactly match their capabilities as Betas. The fact that citizens all wear the color of their caste shows how the caste system, although artificially created, is enforced as a fundamental and unalterable fact of society. It also conveys how individual identity is subsumed under the classification of people into classes.

"Till at last the child's mind *is* these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions *is* the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are *our* suggestions... Suggestions from the State."

Related Characters: The Director (Thomas) (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 28

Explanation and Analysis

The Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre has taken the group of students around various parts of the Infant Nurseries, and shown them a room of Beta children being conditioned via hypnopaedia: a voice that plays as the children sleep and encourages them to feel proud that they are Betas, and to have admiration for the Alphas and disdain for the Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons.

In this quote, the Director refers to these messages as "suggestions," and notes that all citizens continue to receive them into adulthood. The use of the word "suggestions" is misleading, as is the Director's claim that citizens use their minds to "judge," "desire," and "decide." Although these assertions may be technically true, the State's control over people's thoughts and wishes is so extensive that they no longer truly have any agency. The government here is not merely making suggestions that its citizens will later vote on—it is making suggestions in a way that shapes its citizens' minds so that they will never stray from the government's role for them.

Chapter 3 Quotes

"You all remember, I suppose, that beautiful and inspired saying of Our Ford's: History is bunk."

Related Characters: Mustapha Mond (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

The Director has taken the tour group to the Hatcheries garden, where naked children are playing sex games. The group is shocked by the sudden appearance of Mustapha Mond, the Resident Controller of Western Europe. Here, Mond has commented on the fact that, historically, children did not engage in sexual behavior until they were 20, calling this state of affairs "terrible." He then invokes a well-known saying of Henry Ford: "History is bunk." Mond's disdainful attitude toward history reflects a widespread dismissiveness to all fields of knowledge, including science and literature. Whereas we might think of these fields as important and useful ways of determining how to live, in the world of the novel, the ideology of the World State is the only valued system of knowledge, because any other system of knowledge might cause people to think individually and, in so doing, impact the stability of the state.

Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

The Elementary Class Consciousness lesson at the Hatcheries has ended, but the recorded voice continues to repeat hypnopaedic "suggestions" that encourage these children to grow up with the belief that limitless greed and consumption are better than moderation or frugality. These maxims are phrased in a whimsical, memorable fashion akin to children's nursery rhymes, and as such are reminiscent of the government propaganda used in World Wars I and II, which blended commercial advertising and patriotism in its messaging. However, while the messages disseminated by the World State echo the style of wartime propaganda, they convey the opposite message: while the wartime propaganda was designed to encourage people to limit wastefulness, the hypnopaedic suggestions of the World State make clear that the duty of citizenship involves

throwing away possessions instead of fixing them, in order to enable further consumption and continue to drive the economy.

Note that the phrase "Ending is better than mending" is eerily similar to the famous "Make Do and Mend" campaign of WWII, although they of course contain contradictory sentiments. This similarity is striking, considering the Make Do and Mend campaign was not launched until 1943, and *Brave New World* was written in 1932. Furthermore, in the economic boom of the decades following WWII, the surge in commercial advertising and consumption did indeed create a culture in which the "Make Do and Mend" mindset was replaced by a drive to purchase more and more products. The message that "Ending is better than mending" is thus one of several examples of Huxley's remarkable ability to anticipate the future.

Chapter 5 Quotes

"Ford, we are twelve; oh make us one,
Like drops within the Social River;
Oh, make us now together run
As swiftly as thy shining Flivver.
Come, Greater Being, Social Friend,
Annihilating Twelve-in-One!
We long to die, for when we end,
Our larger life has but begun.
Feel how the Greater Being comes!
Rejoice and, in rejoicings, die!
Melt in the music of the drums!
For I am you and you are I.
Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun,
Kiss the girls and make them One.
Boys at One with girls at peace;
Orgy-porgy gives release."

Related Characters: Bernard Marx

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 81-84

Explanation and Analysis

Bernard has gone to his Solidarity Meeting, an event in which the members of a 12-person "solidarity group" drink *soma* and chant "Solidarity Hymns" designed to make them forget their individual identities and feel close to the "Greater Being" and, ultimately, participate in a group orgy.

The words of the Solidarity Hymn convey the manner in which the loss of individuality, described in terms of individual death, are elevated in the World State to a moral and spiritual imperative. The hymn mixes the styles of religious music, folklore, commercial advertising, and nursery-rhyme—for example, by pairing the phrases "Like drops within the Social River" and "As swiftly as thy shining Flivver" ("Flivver" was a slang nickname for a Ford Model T car).

The blending of these different styles is bizarre and disorienting, suggesting there is something distinctly unnatural and perverse about the culture of the world depicted in the novel. By training its citizens to worship Henry Ford and ritualistically indulge in drugs and group sex, the World State has purposely caused them to lose touch with the aspects of life that are truly meaningful: both love and loneliness, success and struggle, etc. Instead, the adult citizens are like children: focused only on instant gratification, with every desire, spiritual or physical, met by *soma* or easy, meaningless sex.

Chapter 6 Quotes

"A gramme in time saves nine."

Related Characters: Lenina Crowne (speaker), Bernard Marx

Related Themes:

Page Number: 89

Explanation and Analysis

Lenina has reflected on how strange she finds Bernard Marx; he doesn't enjoy activities such as electro-magnetic golf, preferring simple pursuits such as going for a walk. They travel to Amsterdam for a women's wrestling tournament, and in between matches go to an ice cream *soma* bar with "dozens" of Lenina's friends. Lenina tries to persuade Bernard to eat a *soma*-infused raspberry sundae by telling him "A gramme in time saves nine," but he refuses. Lenina's advice is an adaptation of the adage "A stitch in time saves nine," meaning that if you solve a problem straight away, it will be easier than if you put it off until later.

Lenina's version of the adage suggests that taking *soma* is a good solution to life's problems; however, in reality, it is the opposite. Taking soma doesn't change or solve anything––instead, it just makes people forget their troubles, thus putting off problem-solving indefinitely. This attitude reflects the widespread addiction to immediate

satisfaction to which all the characters in the novel are conditioned. Even Lenina's use of this phrase itself represents a kind of short-circuited thinking. Unlike Bernard, who reflects on issues using logic, Lenina simply regurgitates clichés she has learned during hypnopaedia. This explains why she finds Bernard odd, yet is not able to comprehend the reason behind his unconventional behavior.

Chapter 8 Quotes

"O brave new world," he repeated. "O brave new world that has such people in it. Let's start at once."

Related Characters: John (the Savage) (speaker), Lenina Crowne, Bernard Marx

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 139

Explanation and Analysis

Bernard and Lenina have travelled to the Savage Reservation, where they have witnessed a man being whipped, and met John, a white man dressed as a "savage." John has told Bernard what he can remember of his life story, and Bernard promises to take John and his mother, Linda, back with him to the World State. When Bernard tells John he is not married to Lenina, John joyfully exclaims, "O brave new world that has such people in it," a line from Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*. Because he has been raised on the Savage Reservation, John's only knowledge of the outside world comes through the works of Shakespeare, and it is fitting that he quotes from *The Tempest*, a play that explores the themes of exploration, colonization, and civilization.

John's love for Lenina and excitement at his initial impressions of the World State highlight the superficial appeal of the society depicted in the novel. However, as Bernard points out when he responds that John should wait to see the "brave new world" before he gets too excited, beneath this superficial appeal lies a dystopian reality. Indeed, it will take the perspective of John––an outsider––to expose the "brave new world" for what it really is.

Chapter 10 Quotes

"The greater a man's talents, the greater his power to lead astray. It is better that one should suffer than that many should be corrupted. Consider the matter dispassionately, Mr. Foster, and you will see that no offence is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behavior. Murder kills only the individual—and, after all, what is an individual?"

Related Characters: The Director (Thomas) (speaker), Henry Foster, Bernard Marx

Related Themes:

Page Number: 148

Explanation and Analysis

Bernard has taken Linda and John back to the World State, having received permission from Mustapha Mond on the basis that bringing them would be of scientific value. Unbeknownst to Bernard, however, the Director of the Hatchery has decided to exile him to Iceland, and in this passage the Director confides this plan to Henry Foster. The Director reasons that an intelligent, unsatisfied man like Bernard poses a threat to society, and that this easily justifies making an example of him to ward others away from deviance. The Director claims that there is "no offence so heinous as unorthodoxy of behavior," and that even murder is relatively defensible. Such reasoning, while strange and alarming to conventional wisdom, makes sense in a world in which there is no value placed on individual human life.

Indeed, individuality is not merely undervalued by the World State, but crushed at every opportunity. While framing this rejection of individuality in the context of the "greater good" can make it seem like a positive, noble goal, the Director's words highlight the dark side of such ideology. When individual identity and unconventional behavior are seen as worthless and even dangerous, it becomes easy to justify even crimes as severe as murder. Furthermore, the Director's speech emphasizes the delicate balance of the caste system and its corresponding control over people's talent and intelligence. While smart, hard-working Alphas serve a useful role in society, the Director indicates that their "talents" must be tightly restricted in order to prevent them becoming aware of their own repression and rebelling.

Chapter 12 Quotes

"Why was [Shakespeare] such a marvellous propaganda technician? Because he had so many insane, excruciating things to get excited about. You've got to be hurt and upset; otherwise you can't think of the really good, penetrating X-rayish phrases."

Related Characters: Helmholtz Watson (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 185

Explanation and Analysis

Bernard has unsuccessfully tried to throw a party to show off John the Savage, but John refused to leave his room and appear at the event. Meanwhile, Helmholtz's students have reported him to the government for writing a poem about being alone. In this passage, during the party, John and Helmholtz discuss Shakespeare; at first, Helmholtz is unable to get over how ridiculous he finds *Romeo and Juliet*, but then undergoes a moment of realization during which his evaluation of the play changes. While it seems strange to Helmholtz for anyone to be as "hurt and upset" as the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*, he begins to trace the connection between these painful feelings and the existence of great works of art. Indeed, he realizes, if people remain in a state of constant satisfaction and emotional satiety, they cannot create anything of real value.

Note that even as Helmholtz arrives at this subversive realization, he cannot help but frame it in terms particular to his conditioned mindset; Shakespeare is not a playwright but a "propaganda technician," and his writing is not insightful but "X-rayish." Huxley once again explores the boundary of just how far human thought can be controlled, and to what extent people are able to remain critical of the world into which they are born.

Chapter 13 Quotes

"Put your arms around me...Hug me till you drug me, honey...Kiss me till I'm in a coma. Hug me honey, snuggly..."

Related Characters: Lenina Crowne (speaker), John (the Savage)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 193

Explanation and Analysis

Lenina has fallen deeper and deeper in love with John the Savage, a fact that makes her friends suspicious, as it is antithetical to World State conditioning to have such strong feelings and to love only one person. At his house, the Savage confesses he loves Lenina, who is thrilled; however, when he proposes marriage, Lenina dismisses this as absurd and simply removes her clothes while singing seductively to him. The words of Lenina's song highlight the connection that the World State has created between sexual desire and the desire for the annihilation of individual identity. Intimacy is depicted as a kind of drug ("hug me till you drug me"), and Lenina seems to crave sex as a way of losing her sense of self and slipping out of consciousness.

The lyrics of the song are reminiscent of the style popular in the 1930s, when *Brave New World* was written. During this era, the still relatively new genre of vocal jazz combined romantic ballads, sexual innuendo, and childlike nonsense words to create songs about love, desire, and intimacy. Although the words of Lenina's song seem fairly innocent by today's standards, remember that singing explicitly about sex was still quite new when Huxley was writing, and thus would have been far more striking to readers at the time.

Chapter 15 Quotes

"Free, free!" the Savage shouted, and with one hand continued to throw the *soma* into the area while, with the other, he punched the indistinguishable faces of his assailants. "Free!" And suddenly there was Helmholtz at his side–"Good old Helmholtz!"—also punching—"Men at last!"—and in the interval also throwing the poison out by handfuls through the open window. "Yes, men! men!" and there was no more poison left. He picked up the cash-box and showed them its black emptiness. "You're free!"

Howling, the Deltas charged with a redoubled fury.

Related Characters: Helmholtz Watson, John (the Savage) (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 213

Explanation and Analysis

John the Savage's mother, Linda, has died, and the Savage is distraught. At the hospital where he had come to see his mother, the Savage has encountered Delta twins being given *soma*. Convinced that *soma* caused his mother's death (his mother, on returning from the reservation, did drug

herself into a constant stupor), the Savage shouts at the Deltas not to take the *soma*, and throws the drug out of the window. This causes a riot, and when Helmholtz arrives, he and the Savage fight off the enraged Deltas, all while gleefully exclaiming that they are finally "free" and "men at last." Once again, the Savage's actions call into question the perceived binary between civilized and uncivilized behavior. While physically attacking others at random would conventionally be considered a wild, animalistic act, in this case it makes the Savage and Helmholtz "men."

This passage suggests that what truly makes a person human is the possession of free will and individual identity. Although Helmholtz and the Savage are engaging in a riot, at least they are doing so through their own agency, rebelling against the conditioning and expectations of the World State. Similarly, they claim that discarding the *soma* makes the Deltas "free," meaning free from the paralyzing grip of addiction. However, as the Delta's "redoubled fury" shows, the World State's conditioning is so powerful that not all people embrace this "freedom" with the same enthusiasm as Helmholtz and the Savage.

Chapter 16 Quotes

"The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get... And if anything should go wrong, there's soma."

Related Characters: Mustapha Mond (speaker), John (the Savage)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 220

Explanation and Analysis

Following the riot at the hospital, Helmholtz, Bernard, and John the Savage have been arrested and brought to Mustapha Mond's study. Mond has asked John if he likes civilization; John says he doesn't, and this sparks a lengthy discussion between the two men about the nature of the world. In this passage, Mond speaks approvingly of the instant-gratification, contentment, and stability of the society created by the World State. Note that everything Mond says in this passage is objectively true: preconditioned to love their lives, the citizens of the World State are indeed happy, and the world is stable. However, the events of the novel call into question the cost of this happiness and stability. It's clear that happiness does not retain the same value if it is artificially produced, not freely chosen, and never contrasted with negative emotions.

You've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art.

Related Characters: Mustapha Mond (speaker), John (the Savage)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 220

Explanation and Analysis

During his conversation with John the Savage, Mustapha Mond has revealed that he is one of the few people in the World State who has read Shakespeare. Mond has laughed at John for expecting the Deltas to "understand" Shakespeare's play *Othello*; when John insists that Shakespeare is better than the "feelies," Mond concedes that this is true, but that sacrificing high art is the price that must be paid for general happiness. This opinion directly contrasts John's own, which is that experiencing the depth of human emotion is worth risking unhappiness. This exchange also makes explicit one of the major themes of the novel: that there is a direct connection between freedom, suffering, and "high art." While Mond does not deny this connection, he believes that high art is less important than happiness and stability, and thus reasons that it is preferable to live in a world without it.

"Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the over-compensations for misery. And, of course, stability isn't nearly so spectacular as instability. And being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt. Happiness is never grand."

Related Characters: Mustapha Mond (speaker), John (the Savage)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 221

Explanation and Analysis

Having listened to Mustapha Mond explain that the World State has sacrificed high art for the sake of happiness and stability, John concludes that this seems "horrible" to him. Mond responds that this makes sense, as "actual happiness" and stability are less superficially appealing than suffering, temptation, and passion. He characterizes these strong emotions––and the individual freedom and agency that creates them––as glamorous, with the implication that this glamor is misleading. Mond's logic in this passage is surprising, as in many ways it is the World State that appears to have the greater glamor, "picturesqueness," and superficial appeal. After all, the World State is filled with beautiful people, spectacular technology, and infinite entertainment.

This apparent paradox could be interpreted in multiple ways. Perhaps Mond is simply reversing criticism of the World State as a rhetorical strategy––by arguing that the World State creates "actual happiness" as opposed to superficial charm, he defeats the objection that the World State is a false utopia. On the other hand, there might actually be some truth in Mond's words. As he points out, it is easy to romanticize the struggle created by "a good fight against misfortune"; however, many would argue that the actual experience of misfortune cannot ever be seen as a good thing. And the World State, while having sacrificed individuals, has also eliminated such things as war, poverty, illness, and the untold misery those things create.

Chapter 17 Quotes

❝ "There's always *soma* to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now, you swallow two or three half-gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your morality about in a bottle. Christianity without tears—that's what *soma* is."

Related Characters: Mustapha Mond (speaker), John (the Savage)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 238

Explanation and Analysis

John has asked Mustapha Mond if anything else in addition to science and "high art" has been sacrificed in order to create stability and happiness. Mond has responded that religion has also been sacrificed, as there is no place for religion in "civilization." Under Mond's interpretation, religion used to be important because it helped people find solace, forgiveness, and connection to others; however, citizens of the World State feel all of these things anyway due to their conditioning and through the use of the drug *soma*. Indeed, in this passage Mond draws a direct parallel between religion and *soma*, arguing that they have the same function. This reflects the famous statement by Karl Marx that "religion is the opiate of the masses."

Mond's nonchalant dismissal of religion suggests that his understanding of the role of religion is rather narrow. While it is true that practices such as group sex and taking *soma* encourage feelings of peace and solidarity, many would argue that these emotions lose meaning when they are produced artificially. Indeed, throughout the novel the interpersonal connections between citizens of the World State are shown to be superficial and hollow. Although the World State creates mass happiness and stability, these do not seem to be a legitimate replacement for religious or moral virtue. Interestingly, this tension echoes a longstanding debate within religious communities themselves over whether faith and morality are only meaningful if they are freely chosen.

❝ "In fact," said Mustapha Mond, "you're claiming the right to be unhappy."

"All right then," said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be unhappy."

Related Characters: John (the Savage), Mustapha Mond (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 240

Explanation and Analysis

Mustapha Mond has conceded that it is necessary for people to occasionally experience negative emotions and explained that this is why the World State forces citizens to undergo Violent Passion Surrogate, or V.P.S., once per month. He argues that this is a way to reap the benefits of "fear and rage...without any of the inconveniences." John responds that he *wants* the inconveniences, and Mond concludes that John is "claiming the right to be unhappy." This exchange contains the key philosophical question

raised by the novel. For John, the "right to be unhappy" gives life meaning; while the citizens of the World State are happy, to John it is far better to be unhappy, as long as one retains one's individual identity and freedom.

Although Mustapha Mond's contrasting view is shown to be somewhat appealing and persuasive, this is undermined by Mond's powerful and unique position within society. As a former scientist who has had access to "high art" such as Shakespeare, Mond is able to retain his individual identity and exercise rational thought and choice, all while maintaining power and authority over the masses. While Mond is confident that life under the World State is preferable for everyone, the agitation and dissatisfaction shown by characters such as Bernard and Helmholtz suggests that Mond is perhaps mistaken. The example of John indicates that, given the choice, it seems that most (unconditioned) people would choose "the right to be unhappy" over being controlled and conditioned into happiness.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

In the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, a dreary, 34-story building, the Director of Hatcheries leads new students on a tour of the facilities. They pass beneath the motto of the World State—Community, Identity, Stability—and into the Fertilizing Room, which has a bleak, frozen atmosphere.

Immediately, the novel introduces a grim and coldly antiseptic futuristic setting. The World State's motto will be noteworthy as much for what it omits—like freedom—as for what it includes.

The students meekly follow along and scribble notes as the Director explains the fertilization process. Surgically removed human ovaries (voluntarily extracted) produce ova for artificial insemination. The resulting embryos receive different treatment depending on their destinies: to become a higher caste Alpha or Beta, or a lower caste Gamma, Delta, or Epsilon. Alphas and Betas are allowed to develop naturally. Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons, however, are put through the Bokanovsky Process, which causes an egg to divide into as many as 96 identical twins.

It is revealed that the Hatchery manufactures human beings. Not only that, it predetermines what human beings will be like in advance—their characteristics and social standing. Lower-caste humans are mass-produced. Ideals of freedom and self-determination are not priorities in this society, to say the least.

The Bokanovsky Process is mass production applied to biology. Combined with Podsnap's Technique, which hastens the maturation of eggs in an ovary, the Bokanovsky Process allows the average ovary to produce around 11,000 brothers and sisters. The Director tells the students that this process is "one of the major instruments of social stability."

The mass production of human beings, creating over 10,000 "twins" from the same ovary, destroys the possibility of any sense of individuality. In the World State, creating artificial communities by assigning identities is done for the sake of stability, and this is viewed as a positive development.

The Director introduces a young employee named Henry Foster, who happily tells the students that the record for offspring produced by a single ovary in this factory is 16,012. Foster leads the group into the Bottling Room, where the embryos are put into artificial wombs made of bottles filled with blood-surrogate.

Foster's cheerfulness and pride in the Hatchery's achievement is jarring, because he seems completely accepting of the mass production of human beings and the erasure of individuality that goes along with this system.

In "wombs" such as this, Gamma, Deltas, and Epsilons are given alcohol treatment and limited oxygen to stunt physical and mental development. Fetuses of all castes are conditioned to prefer certain climates or environments so that they will like their pre-determined jobs, and 70 percent of female fetuses are sterilized. These sterilized females are referred to as "freemartins."

Future World State citizens have not only been predetermined to fulfill certain roles, they have also been preconditioned to enjoy those roles regardless of how fundamentally unnatural they are. Females' reproductive capacity is also strictly controlled by the State long before they are born, further highlighting the dehumanization of the World State's population.

As the group continues their tour, Henry Foster explains regretfully that the London Hatchery has so far failed to reach the ideal compromise between physical, social, and sexual maturity (for example, creating a six-year-old Epsilon who is already equipped to work). However, they have achieved what the Director calls "the secret of happiness and virtue," ensuring that people enjoy their preconditioned destiny.

The idea of a fully matured six-year-old is startling. Such an idea illustrates how much this society views human beings—especially lower-caste ones—as cogs in an industrial system, not as individuals with inherent value. Happiness is understood not as something each person determines for oneself, but as a person's acceptance of what has been decided for them.

The group meets a pretty young nurse named Lenina Crowne as she is inoculating future tropical workers against diseases. Foster tells Lenina to meet him on the roof later that afternoon, as usual. Then the Director hurries the group upstairs to watch some interesting conditioning in the nurseries.

It is implied that Lenina and Foster are romantically involved. As will become increasingly clear in the story, sexual promiscuity is an open and approved feature of World State society, which would have been much more shocking in 1930s America than it is today.

CHAPTER 2

In the nurseries, the group finds nurses setting out big bowls filled with roses. The Director instructs them to set out brightly colored children's books, also. Soon a group of eight-month-old Delta babies is wheeled into the nursery. Once the babies have happily crawled toward the bright objects, a lever is pressed, and explosions and shrill alarms go off. After that, a second lever is pressed, and the babies receive a mild electric shock from the floor. When the terrified babies are offered the appealing objects again, they refuse them.

This scene shows that, whatever the World State cannot accomplish biologically, it accomplishes psychologically—in this case, through a shocking example of Pavlovian conditioning, in which negative stimuli are paired with something desirable, causing the babies to reject the desirable thing.

The Director explains that Deltas are conditioned to hate nature and books, but to love complicated outdoor sports, so that they will consume (purchase) transportation and sporting goods.

World State citizens are conditioned to desire things that advance the interests of the State—not their own. The individual is not important. Happiness is less important that ensuring that people continue to consume goods, thus preserving industrialism and strengthening the State.

Next, the Director explains the origins of hypnopaedia (sleep-teaching). In the days when "Our **Ford**" was still alive, a Polish boy, Reuben, went to sleep one night while the radio was broadcasting in English. He woke up the next morning able to recite exactly what had been playing on the radio, even though he didn't understand it. This discovery occurred just 23 years after the first sale of a Ford Model-T car. The Director makes the sign of a T across his chest when he says "Our Ford."

The Director's description of a scientific discovery is punctuated by a religious reverence for Henry Ford (hence the reverent "T" gesture that references the Ford Model-T). Ford is the "god" of World State society because he invented the production line that emphasized speed and specialization over the individual worker—a fitting deity for a society that mass-produces humans for the sake of further production and consumption.

The Director explains that hypnopaedia was found to be ineffective for instilling scientific information, because it is just rote memorization. However, it is perfect for moral education, which the Director characterizes as inherently non-rational.

There is something sinister in the Director's statement about moral education. He suggests that moral training can occur separately from one's reasoning ability—that humans can be shaped at the World State's will.

The Director leads the students into a dormitory of napping Betas. From speakers under every pillow, the same voice whispers an Elementary Class Consciousness lesson. The voice says it is good to be a Beta. Alphas have to work too hard, and the lower three castes are stupid and wear ugly colors. The message repeats, over and over, day after day, until the Betas believe it instinctively.

The government used the scientific discovery of hypnopaedia to produce a technology that helps them condition their citizens to enjoy the life that has been predetermined for them. The Beta children's minds—like those of everyone else in the World State—are being formed by the suggestions of the State.

CHAPTER 3

Outside in a picturesque garden, hundreds of naked boys and girls play. The group watches some children playing a complicated game called Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy. With wonder, the Director recalls that, in **Ford**'s day, games were played with minimal equipment, like balls and sticks, and didn't increase consumption.

The superficial beauty of the garden and the children's innocence contrast with the State's manipulation. In this case, the children's play is being controlled in order to increase consumption.

The Director points out a "charming" boy and girl of about seven or eight, who are playing a rudimentary sex game. Another little boy is taken to see a psychologist when he resists such "play." The Director mentions the distant past, when it was considered immoral for children to engage in erotic play, and when sexual activity was generally limited to adulthood. Upon hearing this, the students are aghast.

From an early age, the children are being taught to believe that promiscuity, which helps keep the World State productive and stable, is normal. Although the reader will likely recognize this sexualization of children as extremely disturbing, in the eyes of the World State, any child who resists sexual play is considered to be psychologically troubled or abnormal.

Suddenly, a man on the outskirts of the group speaks up, repeating that such old-fashioned policies were terrible. The Director eagerly introduces "his **fordship**," Mustapha Mond, one of the State's 10 World Controllers.

Mond's emphatic words indicate that World State citizens think of their practices as rational and good, a reversal of the backwardness of the distant past. State leaders are honored with a title associating them with Ford, further emphasizing this society's reverence for industrialization.

The students are awed that Mustapha Mond is speaking to them. The Director becomes nervous when Mond indicates that he's going to speak to them about history, but Mond wryly promises not to corrupt the students. He tells them about the old days, when people had "viviparous" (birth-giving) mothers who nursed them (a thought that makes the students shudder with disgust), and families lived together in squalid, cramped homes. Our **Ford**—or, rather, "Our Freud"—had pointed out the dangers of the family and the narrowness of monogamous romance. These things undermine all-important stability, which the World State system creates by eliminating the need for complicated emotions.

The World State arose from a conscious choice to give up all the best things about humanity in order to be rid of the worst things. The result is a dystopian world in which "natural" things like childbirth, families, and the emotions of romance are regarded as obscene and unnatural. *The previous world existed in a far distant past, as indicated by the confusion of "Ford" and "Freud," as if these two very different men were the same person. Additionally, this conflation of the two further blurs the line between industrial production (the work of Ford) and sexual reproduction (on which many of Freud's theories were focused). It's clear that the World State's most important value is stability—even at the cost of avoiding deep feelings and thus dehumanizing its population.*

Meanwhile, the day shift has ended. In the changing room, Lenina Crowne talks with her friend, Fanny, about their respective plans for the evening. Fanny has a locker full of intravenal drugs—Pregnancy Substitute—since she's been feeling out of sorts lately. Lenina has been "having" Henry Foster for about four months now. Fanny scolds her for not dating other men—it's bad form, she says. Lenina agrees that she ought to make the effort to be a little more promiscuous, so she decides to accept Bernard Marx's offer to go on vacation together, although she agrees that Bernard—who's rumored not to like conventional sports—is a bit odd.

Switching back and forth between the lecture in the garden and the scenes in the changing rooms allows a sense of immersion in World State society. The shift to the changing rooms from the garden also allows a glimpse of conditioning in action. Both women take for granted that promiscuity is not only natural, but moral. Fanny takes a cocktail of drugs, simulating a natural state, in order to cope with mild unhappiness, which again showcases the population's prioritization of stability and numbness over genuine emotions.

On their way to the changing rooms, Henry Foster and the Assistant Director of Predestination are also discussing their plans for the night, while pointedly ignoring Bernard Marx. When Bernard hears the two men talking about "having" Lenina Crowne, he is furious, hating the way they describe Lenina as if she's a piece of meat. The others notice Bernard's glum expression and offer him some *soma*, which he angrily refuses.

Bernard is the first example of a true individual in the World State. Jarringly, after Mond's lecture and the women's conventionality, he disagrees with World State "morality." In fact, he actively resists it—a hint of what's to come later. Like Fanny, the other men assume that unhappiness should be remedied chemically. This introduces the presence of soma *in the story, a drug that the World State's population depends upon to numb themselves into a state of simulated happiness.*

CHAPTER 4

Lenina gets into an elevator to go to the roof. She spots Bernard standing behind her former lover Benito Hoover. She accepts Bernard's invitation to go to the Savage Reservation together, but Bernard, uncomfortable, asks if they can talk about this in private. Lenina finds this request odd, as if she's said something indecent. The Epsilon elevator operator joyfully says, "Roof!" and opens the door. Lenina runs off for her date with Henry Foster.

Bernard finds it uncomfortable to discuss an intimate date in public, further demonstrating his nonconformity with the World State's conventional morality (or lack thereof). Lenina can't understand his reactions because of her psychological conditioning to accept the State's standards without question. Such conditioning is echoed by the Epsilon's childlike delight in his simple job.

Benito Hoover comes up to Bernard and remarks how pretty Lenina is. He offers the gloomy Bernard some *soma*. Bernard walks off in a huff. Benito wonders if it's true that alcohol was accidentally put into Bernard's blood-surrogate. Bernard is smaller than most Alphas and has always felt self-conscious and inferior as a result—something that reinforces his sense of being an outsider. He even envies conventional men, like Benito and Henry Foster, who move comfortably within the caste system.

Benito is also just living according to his conditioning. Bernard isn't, and in a society where everyone is the same, Bernard's differences stand out all the more sharply. His consciousness of being small has made him more aware of himself and thus helped to reinforce a lifelong sense of being different from everyone else—but in a society that rejects individuality, this is not a comfortable way to live.

Bernard flies to the College of Emotional Engineering to visit his friend Helmholtz Watson. Watson is the ideal Alpha-Plus: physically strong, desirable, and almost *too* outstanding at his job as an Emotional Engineer. It's his outstanding ability that makes Watson aware of himself as an individual. He's become aware that he's different from everyone around him, and that he wants something more than sports, sex, and State-mandated activities.

Like Bernard, Helmholtz is an individual. Helmholtz is mentally superior, and so he is bored with the life allotted to him by the State. The lack of challenge and boredom make him aware of himself, much as Bernard's small size, and the perception of derision from others, make Bernard aware of himself.

Helmholtz and Bernard discuss the dilemma of their individuality (though Bernard stifles his jealousy of Helmholtz's success with women). Helmholtz says that though he's good at writing propaganda, he has the feeling that he could write something more piercing, more powerful. Bernard motions for silence. He thinks someone is listening at the door, but when Helmholtz checks, nobody is there. Helmholtz wishes Bernard had a little more self-respect.

Bernard's individuality was forced upon him by his small size, while Helmholtz came to his through his own initiative and desire. In a sense, Bernard is an individual because of his loneliness and sadness, while Helmholtz is an individual because he senses his own self-worth.

CHAPTER 5

On their date, after Obstacle Golf, Lenina and Henry fly past the Crematorium and discuss how nice it is that the elements in dead human bodies are recycled. At Henry's building, they eat in the dining hall and have *soma* with their coffee. Then they go dancing at a cabaret, where they're bombarded with an intensive multi-sensory experience of well-being and take more *soma*. They go up to Henry's room. Lenina goes through her Malthusian Drill (contraception precautions) before they "have" one another.

Lenina and Henry's date is a vivid illustration of conditioning at work. Every aspect of their date is in compliance with the State: they consume goods, converse matter-of-factly about death, take soma *to keeps themselves happy, and engage in public entertainment to be force-fed euphoria. They also make sure not to conceive children, thereby avoiding any emotional entanglements or responsibilities that would disrupt their productivity to the State.*

Bernard goes to his biweekly Solidarity Service. He's late and sits in the first empty chair he sees. Only later does he realize he's sat next to Morgana Rothschild, who has a unibrow. Bernard wishes he were sitting next to the more attractive Fifi and Joanna. Altogether, 12 men and women sit in alternating places around a table, waiting for the Service to begin.

Like most individuals, Bernard is frequently preoccupied with his thoughts. In contrast, the others at the Solidarity Service barely appear to think of themselves at all, accepting life at face value. In other words, they're happy—at least on the State's terms.

The group's leader starts the Service by making the sign of the T. Everyone takes *soma* and begins to chant solidarity chants—like "I drink to my annihilation"—designed to melt 12 distinct identities into a single being. The chants do their work. The people call out in ecstasy to the coming "Great Being," **Ford**. Only Bernard hears nothing, faking his excitement. Loudspeakers start to chant "orgy-porgy," and the Service climaxes with an orgy, with people collapsing onto the surrounding ring of couches.

The Solidarity Service is designed to further eliminate individuality. It turns a group of individuals into a kind of mob, and at the same time ensures that no one goes without sexual satisfaction for too long. The deification of Henry Ford (symbolized by the religious gesture of the "T") also underscores society's consumerist foundation, and the erotic nature of the ritual shows how sexual release is used to channel people's energies into serving the State instead of satisfying individual desire.

As they part ways after the Service, the other participants are rapturous and satisfied. Bernard lies and says that he, too, found the gathering wonderful, but meanwhile, he's acutely conscious of his separateness from the rest. He is miserable and feels that he is to blame for his inability to conform.

For Bernard, already an individual, the experience of watching others lose their meager individuality only makes him feel more painfully alone. There isn't a place for him in this society.

CHAPTER 6

Lenina thinks about how strange Bernard is. For instance, he prefers talking in private to playing Electro-magnetic golf. She recalls one night when they attended a women's wrestling match in Amsterdam. Bernard was gloomy, but he refused to take any *soma*, saying he wanted to be himself. Flying back from Amsterdam, he shut off the music, hovered over the wild ocean, and wished he were free of his conditioning. Lenina, shocked by his behavior and distressed by the silence and remoteness, repeated the hypnopaedic saying, "Everyone is happy nowadays," and begged him to take some *soma*.

Bernard and Lenina's date gives a clear example of Bernard's individuality versus Lenina's full-strength conditioning. Bernard doesn't avoid unpleasant emotions, and he is comfortable with thinking and observing nature. By contrast, Lenina finds these activities incomprehensible, even troubling. She falls back on her conditioning and hypnopaedic sayings to protect herself from even considering what Bernard is saying.

In the end, Lenina and Bernard ended their date by going back to his apartment and sleeping together. But Bernard regretted having slept together on their first date, to Lenina's confusion, and he reflected mournfully that the World State is full of emotional children who want instant gratification. Lenina couldn't understand why Bernard would think such infantilization is bad, since, after all, it's fun.

As an individual, Bernard despises his slavery. As a conditioned World State citizen, Lenina loves her slavery. Lenina's capacity for deeper emotions has never been given a chance to develop; conditioning ensures that she only desires superficial enjoyment. Bernard, however, longs for something more.

A few days later, Bernard asks the Director to sign the permit needed to visit the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. The Director reminisces about his own vacation on the reservation, nearly 20 years earlier. During his trip, a storm separated him from his female companion, who disappeared. The Director realizes he's just let slip a terrible secret to Bernard. To hide his embarrassment, he chastises Bernard's recent non-infantile behavior, and says that if it continues, Bernard will be reassigned to Iceland. With grim pleasure, Bernard thinks that now he's truly an outsider, standing up against society.

Hypocritically, the Director spouts the conditioned morality of the World State while threatening to punish Bernard, which masks the Director's own deviations from that morality. (The Director's story about New Mexico will be significant later in the story.) Bernard, meanwhile, is pleased by his threatened exile, because it makes him feel like an individual, even an important one, perhaps for the first time.

Bernard and Lenina travel to the Reservation in New Mexico, staying first in a luxurious Santa Fe hotel. When the Reservation warden begins their tour, he explains that the Reservation is surrounded by an electric fence so no one can escape. Also, children are still born there, marriage still occurs, old religions and extinct languages survive, and no conditioning takes place.

The first night of their trip contrasts in every way with the "outdated" conditions Bernard and Lenina are about to encounter on the Reservation. The Reservation is considered to be completely uncivilized, but for surprising reasons, i.e., people still get married, bear natural children, and don't undergo conditioning by the State.

Just before they enter, Bernard calls Helmholtz, and to his horror and astonishment, he learns that the Director actually *is* planning to transfer him to Iceland. Now Bernard realizes he only enjoyed facing the Director's threat because he didn't think it would be carried out. Lenina convinces him to take *soma*. Though he'd resisted earlier, he finally relents, and soon his worries melt away. The helicopter delivers them to a rest-house in the valley of Malpais.

Bernard comes to an uncomfortable realization about his own cowardice. Most World State members never face such realizations, because they seldom think critically about anything, and if they do, they just take soma *to escape reality. This time, Bernard indulges in a rare escape from his thoughts, just as he and Lenina are about to enter an atmosphere that's relatively free from World State influence.*

CHAPTER 7

Lenina is shocked by the poverty and lack of modern conveniences in the Reservation. The pueblo is dirty, with dogs prowling through rubbish-filled streets, and there are old people everywhere. Out of *soma*, both she and Bernard have to absorb these spectacles unaided.

The World State infuses people with young blood throughout their lives, keeping them in a youthful, healthy state until they die around the age of 60—so the sight of aged people is an understandable shock. Suffering and loss, of course, would lead to sadness—one of many complex emotions that do not serve the State.

Their Indian guide leads Bernard and Lenina onto a terrace. At first, the loud ritual drumming and even the harsh singing soothes Lenina, reminding her of "orgy-porgy" at Solidarity Services. But soon she's unnerved by masked dancers circling the terrace with writhing snakes, and after that, a young man emerges from the crowd and is ritually whipped until he collapses.

The ritual dance includes extremes of suffering and emotion that Lenina, long accustomed to masking unpleasant emotions with soma, *can't comprehend. Such emotions have no value to the State—in fact, they're completely unproductive—but here, on the conditioning-free Reservation, they have high value for the community's identity and cohesion.*

After the dance, Bernard and Lenina meet a pale-skinned, blue-eyed young man in Indian dress. He says in peculiar (**Shakespearean**) English that he wishes he were the one who had been whipped—for the sake of the pueblo community, he could have borne it better, yielding more blood. When Lenina speaks to him, the man stops short. He has never seen a white woman before, and he thinks she's beautiful.

The young man, in contrast to a World State citizen but in perfect keeping with his "uncivilized" environment, wants to feel powerful emotion. Shakespeare, with his plays that capture all the range of human experience and passion, is a perfect symbol for such a wish.

The young man explains to Bernard and Lenina that his mother, Linda, came from the Other Place long ago, with "Tomakin," the man who was his father. His mother had fallen and gotten injured, whereupon some Malpais hunters had taken her to the pueblo. Later, the young man was born there. He leads Bernard and Lenina to his little house on the outskirts of the pueblo and introduces them to his mother, a very fat, blond, visibly aged squaw. Lenina is repulsed by the woman's wrinkled, sagging appearance, her unwashed stench, and her tearful greeting. Bernard, meanwhile, is excited, realizing that "Tomakin" is the Director, Thomas.

Linda is everything that a World State woman shouldn't be: old, unhygienic, and unrestrainedly emotional. In addition, she is a mother, in itself obscene to the State. All of this very disconcerting to Lenina. Bernard sees a chance for revenge, a very individual, "human" desire that would be foreign to most members of the World State. For both of them, this unexpected encounter provides an opportunity to see unconditioned human life up close.

Linda continues to weep, telling Lenina how much she's missed her former life in civilization, where she worked in the Fertilizing Room as a Beta: the lack of *soma* (she drinks *mescal* and uses *peyotl* instead, which aren't nearly as effective); being forced to bear a child (there are no Abortion Centres here); and seeing the Indians' "revolting" practices of getting monogamously married and having lots of children. Nevertheless, her son John has been a comfort to her, though she fears the Indians' "mad" practices have rubbed off on him, even though he's often been ostracized for looking different.

Linda is an incongruous picture of a World State citizen who's isolated from the so-called comforts of civilization—the ability to easily mask negative feelings, avoid childbearing, etc. Likewise, John is a misfit in the Indian community, but because he's grown up here, some of their beliefs and practices—"unnatural" from the State's perspective—have shaped his character and outlook.

CHAPTER 8

Outside Linda's house, Bernard and John talk. Bernard is struggling to make sense of John's life on the Reservation. John recalls events in his life in a series of flashbacks: An Indian named Popé gives his mother a drug called *mescal* and then they sleep together. Indian women attack Linda for sleeping with their men, and Linda can't understand what they mean when they say the men are *theirs*. His mother tells him stories of the glorious Other Place outside the reservation. Linda teaches him to read, using a manual from her work in the Hatcheries. Popé brings him a book, *The Complete Works of* **William Shakespeare**, and John becomes obsessed with the magic of the words. Inspired by Hamlet, he tries to stab Popé, but Popé laughs off the mere scratch. A girl John loved from afar marries an Indian brave. John is forced to stay out of a ceremony to induct boys into adulthood.

The series of flashbacks that John remembers (it's unclear if he recounts all of these to Bernard) shows John in various states of isolation, yearning, sadness, or other extreme emotions. This personal history is what formed John as an individual. The entire World State, by contrast, is designed to ensure its citizens never have such a personal history: instead of loss or sadness that might interfere with their usefulness to the State, World State citizens always get exactly what they want. So their life is always constant and pleasant—no strong memory will interfere with their conditioning.

John concludes his series of flashbacks by telling Bernard that he has been "Alone, always alone." Bernard finds himself confiding in return that he, too, has always been alone. John tells Bernard about putting himself through trials, such as fasting or standing with arms outstretched for hours on end, in part because he was unhappy. Bernard's conditioning makes him feel squeamish about any such suffering, so he changes the subject.

As a fellow misfit in his own society, Bernard can sympathize with John's outsider experience—both are "alone" because they are different from those around them—but only to a point. John copes with his isolation through suffering, but even Bernard feels repelled by such overpowering emotions, especially those brought about through self-inflicted suffering.

Bernard asks John if he would like to return to London with him, while secretly strategizing to embarrass the Director, whom he's realized must be John's father. He says he will take Linda with them, too, knowing she will inspire such disgust that the Director will be even more embarrassed. At this news, John exultantly quotes **Shakespeare**'s *The Tempest*: "O brave new world that has such people in it." Bernard suggests that maybe John had better wait until he sees what the new world is like.

One of the liabilities of individuals, which the World State seeks to guard against, is that those who don't conform will sometimes do selfish things—like using others for their own purposes, as Bernard plots to do here with John and Linda. In a similar vein, it's worth noting that John quotes Shakespeare for one of the first of many times in the book, in a burst of passionate emotion that the World State has largely succeeded in suppressing.

CHAPTER 9

Back at the rest-house, Lenina takes six half-gramme *soma* tablets, which will knock her out for the next 18 hours. Meanwhile, Bernard comes up with a plan. The next morning, he flies to Santa Fe, contacts the World Controller's office, and before long speaks to Mustapha Mond himself. Mond immediately dispatches special orders for Bernard to bring back two individuals of scientific interest to the World State.

Overwhelmed by the events she's witnessed on the Reservation, Lenina, like a well-conditioned World Stater, chooses oblivion over facing those emotions. But Bernard, like the individual he is, begins putting his plan of personal revenge into motion—his own way of responding to the strangeness he's seen.

Back at Malpais, John briefly weeps when he thinks that Bernard and Lenina have left without him. Eventually, though, he peeks inside the rest-house and sees Lenina's things sitting there. He steps inside and gingerly goes through Lenina's suitcase, savoring the sight, smell, and feel of her clothing fabrics and cosmetic powders. Then he finds her sleeping in the adjacent bedroom and is once again moved to tears, this time by the sight of her innocence. He also quotes *Romeo and Juliet* to himself, inspired by her beauty. Though he longs to touch her and even to unzip her pajamas, he doesn't dare. Soon he hears a helicopter's buzz and guiltily rushes outside to meet Bernard.

In contrast to those of an oblivion-seeking World State citizen, John's emotions are always close to the surface, and he doesn't hesitate to indulge and express them. Here, moved by passion and by Shakespeare, he falls further in love with Lenina. He is tormented, on one hand, by his sexual desire, and on the other hand, by his guilt over that desire and his love of honor. Angst like John's is what the World State was built to eliminate. This sets up the main conflict of Brave New World*: will John give up or continue to hold onto his pain and angst?*

CHAPTER 10

Back in London, the Hatchery is abuzz with work, as eggs are fertilized, embryos' destinies are decided, infants are fed, napping children hear hypnopaedic teaching, and older children engage in erotic play. All the workers are cheerful. The Director, however, looks grim.

The cheerful "buzzing" of the Hatchery both portrays it as a mass-producing "hive" and highlights the success of World State conditioning—the workers are loving what they do. The Director's grave appearance, however, portends something darker by contrast.

The Director tells Henry Foster that Bernard is meeting him in this room shortly, because there are so many high-caste workers present. Bernard's intellect, he explains, brings moral responsibilities, and his unorthodox behavior risks corrupting others, so it must be stopped. He adds that, while the State can create more human beings, unorthodoxy threatens the State itself.

The Director wants to make a public example of Bernard. His explanation to Foster of Bernard's transgressions is a chilling demonstration of the World State mentality: the individual is disposable, even dangerous, while Society must be preserved at any cost.

When a nervous Bernard arrives, the Director announces to the assembled workers that Bernard has betrayed and imperiled Society with his heretical views about sports, *soma*, and sex—he subverts civilization itself. He will now dismiss Bernard with dishonor, sending him to the most remote Sub-Centre possible, in Iceland, where he can't continue corrupting others with his "unfordly" example. He asks if Bernard has anything to say for himself. To his surprise, Bernard says yes.

Bernard is a heretic in the view of the World State because he resists all those activities that the State sanctions in order to keep people blandly happy and thus compliant. His individuality is "unfordly" because it subverts the industrialized, mass-production mindset of the State, where the good of Society far outweighs that of the replaceable person.

Bernard summons Linda into the room, and the perpetually youthful workers are horrified by her sagging, middle-aged appearance. Linda embraces the humiliated Director, and soon the room's laughter turns to embarrassed silence as Linda tells him that he's the father of her son. John enters and falls to his knees in front of the Director, saying, "My father!" The room erupts with laughter again at this "smutty" word. Soon the Director covers his ears and flees the room.

Bernard's revenge is complete. The Director is humiliated because he did not conform to the conditioning and World State morality he has just been reprimanding Bernard for resisting—in fact, his transgressions have been more egregious by far (fatherhood is viewed as obscenely disgusting). John, meanwhile, is overwhelmed with emotion to meet a father who looks upon him as a stain on his reputation.

CHAPTER 11

The Director, humiliated, quickly resigns his position. Meanwhile, all of upper-caste London is eager to see John, whom they begin calling the Savage. Because Linda is old, ugly, and a mother, no one is interested in seeing her. Linda doesn't care, though, and happily drugs herself into a stupor with *soma*—her major motivation for returning to civilization. A doctor warns Bernard and John that the constant *soma* use will lead to Linda's death within a couple of months but says that since she's of no value to the State, it doesn't really matter.

World State culture is celebrity-obsessed and shallow, objectifying John as nothing more than a curiosity. Linda, after surviving so much sadness and unpleasantness on the Reservation, wants only to escape reality—showing how quickly and willingly she reverts to her World State conditioning. Because Linda is of no use to the World State's focus on production and consumption, the State is happy to let her die.

Because of his association with the Savage, Bernard finds himself not just treated normally, but popular and sought-after for the first time in his life. Bernard takes full advantage of this situation, sleeping with as many women as he can. When he boasts of this to Helmholtz, however, Helmholtz is saddened. Bernard thinks his friend is jealous, but Helmholtz perceives that behind Bernard's back, people still don't really respect him.

When he ceases to feel inferior, Bernard begins to enjoy the World State for the first time, indulging in the culture of easy sex he recently despised. In other words, his sudden popularity gives him a big head, revealing the hypocrisy that easily corrupts even a nonconforming personality. World State culture is itself superficial, still uninterested in Bernard's individuality.

The Savage is given a tour of civilized World State society, but he's largely unimpressed, persisting in talking about an entity called "the Soul." When Bernard writes a report to Mustapha Mond about this, he mentions agreeing with the Savage that "civilized infantility" is too easy. This "lecture" angers Mond, but he decides it's not yet time to teach Bernard a lesson.

John isn't very keen on what he's seeing of the "brave new world," as he easily sees through its emptiness. Bernard agrees with John that infantilizing people by keeping them vacantly happy is not a sound basis for a society. Mond won't forget that Bernard has let slip this note of nonconformity.

One day, while touring a factory staffed by lower-caste workers, the Savage, repeating "O brave new world," breaks away, retching. Bernard continues to report to Mond, expressing perplexity that John visits Linda in the midst of her permanent *soma* holiday, an impulse he sees as unnatural. Bernard and John visit Eton, where upper-class children are drilled in contraceptive use and laugh uproariously at a film about Indian religious rituals. He also learns that World State children never read **Shakespeare** and that they're conditioned to accept death as something unremarkable and painless.

John's tour of the World State begins to convince him he's entered a nightmare, not a paradise. While he's grown up experiencing suffering and strong emotions, children here are conditioned and trained to avoid or mock such things. Meanwhile, Bernard sees John's instinctive attachment to his mother as distasteful and unnatural, since mothers have no place in the World State—they don't even exist in civilization.

In the Hatchery changing room, Lenina tells Fanny that she's enjoying the benefits of association with Bernard's fame. However, everyone keeps asking her what it's like to make love to the Savage, and she doesn't know. She likes John, but she's confused about his feelings for her.

John's confusion about how to deal with women—his simultaneous desire and guilt—means that Lenina also must deal with unfulfilled desire and sexual confusion. This is novel for her, since strong personal feelings haven't played much of a role in her promiscuous sex life.

Lenina and the Savage go on a date to watch a popular "feely," accompanied by a synchronized scent-organ. The feely is about a woman being kidnapped by an accidentally de-conditioned man; it's filled with gratuitous sex scenes, but it ends "decorously," with the woman becoming the lover of all three of her rescuers. Lenina is titillated by the film, but John is appalled by it, and she doesn't understand why. To her shock, instead of returning to her apartment with her, John bids Lenina a restrained goodnight and goes home. John reads **Shakespeare**'s *Othello* to calm himself, and Lenina takes *soma* to console herself.

The feelies are immersive movies that stimulate all the viewer's senses and also provide a sexual outlet in order to keep people satisfied and content. In keeping with World State morality, this feely concludes with promiscuity, to make up for the plot's "shocking" monogamous passion. In this case, however, the feely stirs up unresolved feelings for both Lenina—who increasingly desires John—and John, who desires Lenina but finds gratuitous sex immoral. They both cope with the unsettling evening by resorting to their preferred modes of comfort.

CHAPTER 12

At a party Bernard throws so that people can meet the Savage, John refuses to leave his room, preferring to shout insults through the door in Zuni. When it's clear that the Savage won't appear, the guests grow angry at Bernard, whom they were only humoring for the sake of seeing the Savage. The Arch-Community-Songster, an important guest, warns Bernard to "mend his ways." Lenina, who's also shown up to the party, is confused by the rush of emotions she feels when she hears that John isn't coming. She ends up leaving with the Songster, while a weeping Bernard takes *soma* and John reads **Shakespeare**.

Bernard discovers that, in his individuality, he'll never truly fit in to World State society; the superficial acceptance was only due to the Savage. Lenina's self-perception is likewise shaken—her strong feelings and unfulfilled desires are new and unsettling. She copes by joining in meaningless sex, while Bernard uncharacteristically indulges in soma.

Mustapha Mond reads an ingenious academic paper on biology and decides that it mustn't be published because it's potentially subversive; the author might need to be exiled. The problem with the author's argument is that he seeks a purpose higher than happiness, which Mond knows could decondition higher-caste minds.

Even as John's presence disrupts society, Mond continues to control and regulate it. Mond is fully aware that making happiness society's highest goal is the key to a conformist society, and that if people are prompted to question this goal, World State society could begin to unravel.

The next day, Bernard is back to his old self: nervous, alone, and melancholy. The Savage likes this version of Bernard better, because it's more similar to his disposition when visiting Malpais. Bernard nurses resentment against the Savage even though he genuinely likes him and knows it's unfair to blame Society's fickleness on him. He also meekly accepts Helmholtz's forgiveness for Bernard's neglect of his old friend. Helmholtz, too, has run into conflict with Society because he dared to compose some original rhymes.

Bernard returns to his real friends, though he resents his loss of societal prominence and the necessity of humbling himself. For opposite reasons, Helmholtz and Bernard continue to conflict with World State Society: Bernard because he's forced to, Helmholtz because he is consciously pushing against the rules of conformity.

Despite impending trouble, Helmholtz seems genuinely happy that he's found something to write about. He and the Savage soon become good friends, sparking Bernard's jealousy. When Helmholtz recites his rhymes to the Savage, the Savage reads him lines of **Shakespeare** in return, and Helmholtz is filled with new emotion. Bernard mocks the verses as "orgy-porgy," and later even Helmholtz laughs helplessly at *Romeo and Juliet*'s references to mothers, fathers, and unfulfilled passion.

Helmholtz and the Savage begin to bond over the emotions that fuel genuine art—leaving Bernard, once again, an outsider. Helmholtz is beginning to understand that when powerful emotions are eliminated by constant "happiness," some of humanity's greatest accomplishments are rendered impossible. However, even he is so conditioned that certain elements of Shakespeare are incomprehensible to him, appearing merely comical.

CHAPTER 13

Henry Foster invites Lenina to a feely, but she refuses him, feeling irritable, sad, and preoccupied with John. She's so distracted she even fails to properly inoculate an embryo at work, leading to that human's death 22 years later. In the changing room, Fanny is baffled by Lenina's emotions, finally advising her to just go and "take" John, no matter how he feels about it.

Where once Lenina would have readily agreed to a date with Henry, now she can't dismiss him fast enough. Her mistake with the embryo is an example of exactly what the World State seeks to avoid—strong emotions compromising productivity. Unable to comprehend Lenina's dilemma, Fanny can only view things in World State terms: if you want something, take it. Make yourself happy.

The Savage, having expected Helmholtz, is stunned when Lenina shows up at his apartment. He finally falls to his knees before her, praising her beauty and trying to explain that he'd wanted to do something noble in order to prove himself worthy of her. Lenina is irritated, just trying to kiss him, while he rambles incoherently about lions and vacuum cleaners, groping for a metaphor to describe how much he's willing to do for her.

In the World State, where everyone is conditioned to be happy and always get what they want, the ideas of virtue and nobility have no meaning. That's why Lenina is baffled and annoyed by the Savage's desire to demonstrate his worthiness before declaring his love. His awkward rambling amusingly illustrates the degree of disconnect between them.

The Savage finally declares his love for Lenina, explaining to her that in Malpais, people get married. Lenina is delighted by his declaration, but shocked and horrified by the mention of marriage. But it doesn't stop her from embracing John, and they kiss. When she begins undressing, though, answering his **Shakespeare** quotes with a pop song called, "Hug me till you drug me," he retreats against the wall.

In the World State, love and commitment have been divorced from mere happiness, so John's mention of marriage doesn't make sense to Lenina. The chasm between their views is further brought out by the bizarre exchange of lyrics, as well as the physical distance between them.

The Savage suddenly shouts at Lenina, calling her "Whore!" and "Impudent strumpet!" He pushes her away forcefully, and Lenina grows frightened, hiding in the bathroom and examining the wound from the slap with which John propelled her there. He paces up and down the room, reciting **Shakespeare**. He gives Lenina her clothes through the vent over the door, but before Lenina can make up her mind to flee the apartment, the Savage receives a phone call and himself leaves in a panic.

The Savage distances himself from Lenina with quotes from Othello ("Impudent strumpet!") and uses Shakespeare to bolster his self-control. At this point, the novel refers to John almost exclusively as "the Savage"—ironic, since it's now clear that John has self-restraint and mature emotions, while the citizens of the World State are conditioned not to exhibit these characteristics.

CHAPTER 14

John rushes into the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying, where Linda is staying. The nurse matter-of-factly says there's no hope of recovery, as Linda is in a Galloping Senility ward. She explains that the hospital tries to create the most pleasurable atmosphere possible for dying patients. When John says that Linda is his mother, the nurse blushes.

The nurse is conditioned to speak about death as if it's nothing, yet the word "mother" fills her with embarrassment—once again showing the inverted values of the World State.

Linda is so drugged on *soma* she barely notices John. As John weeps at his mother's bedside, the nurse leads a large group of chattering, eight-year-old Bokanovsky twins into the room. They stare at Linda in morbid fascination and make nasty comments about her ugliness. John, furious, pushes them away. The nurse reprimands John for disrupting the children's death-conditioning.

The undignified interruption by the children at Linda's deathbed exemplifies how, in World State society, the needs of the community outweigh the rights or cares of the individual. John is viewed as the troublemaker for being excessively touchy about his mother's dignity while the critical work of conditioning is taking place.

John returns his attention to Linda, who, in her stupor, believes he's Popé. This is too much for John: he shakes his mother, who stops breathing, and, with a look of terror, dies. John, blaming himself, falls to his knees and begins to sob. To stop this display of sadness from harming the children's conditioning, the frazzled nurse gives all the children chocolate éclairs, while warning John in a low voice to behave decently.

Only stability is sacred in World State society. Conditioning makes World State citizens avoid intense emotions and connections for stability's sake, meaning that the nurse has probably never witnessed a deathbed scene like this before, and her first concern is naturally for the children, not the dying and bereaved. Meanwhile, for all her years of conditioning, Linda's fear in the face of death suggests that even conditioning can't efface a terror of the unknown.

Sobbing, John repeats, "God, God, God..." Chocolate-smeared twins stare at him in wonderment, then nonchalantly ask if Linda is dead. John pushes the children aside and leaves the hospital.

The "God" to whom John appeals doesn't exist in the World State, and the Bokanovsky twins don't recognize the word—it's much stranger to them than Linda's corpse, demonstrating the power of conditioning even at this early stage. In his grief, John is truly alone in society.

CHAPTER 15

In the vestibule of the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying, 160 Delta staff are assembled for their *soma* ration. His mind on Linda's death, John shoulders his way among the crowd. When he notices the twins, John feels disgusted. He repeats "O brave new world!" as if it is a command. Suddenly, thinking of Linda's death in slavery, he wants others to live in freedom. He pushes his way to the distribution table and shouts that the Deltas shouldn't take *soma*—it's poison.

John is threatening the very bedrock of World State society. Soma *is what ensures happiness and thereby gives the State its power over its people. Fresh from witnessing the logical end of State control in his mother's pitiful death, John wants to save the Deltas from a slavery they've been conditioned to love.*

Bernard and Helmholtz receive a phone call telling them what the Savage is doing. They rush to the hospital. In the vestibule, John is shouting at the uncomprehending crowd, asking them if they enjoy being slaves. As Bernard and Helmholtz arrive, the Savage begins throwing handfuls of *soma* bottles out the window. As the Deltas begin to riot, Helmholtz is suddenly exultant, shouting "Men at last!" and joining the fray in John's defense. Bernard, however, is frozen in indecision, not sure if he should help his friends or save his own skin.

Helmholtz's cry, "Men at last!" shows his realization that by conditioning emotions and guaranteeing happiness, his culture has made infants of him and his fellow citizens. Now he stands up for what he believes, takes responsibility for himself, and acts like an adult. Tellingly, Bernard acts far more hesitantly, showing that his individualism is based more on his sense of difference and ostracism than on positive convictions like Helmholtz's.

To Bernard's relief, police in gasmasks soon arrive and begin pumping *soma* vapor into the air and shooting water pistols. Meanwhile, the Voice of Reason and Good Feeling begins speaking from a Synthetic Music Box. Tenderly, the recorded Voice implores the crowd, "Why aren't you all being happy and good together?" Even the police get tears in their eyes. Within two minutes, the Deltas are hugging, and *soma* tablets are once more being distributed. Helmholtz, the Savage, and Bernard are taken into custody by the police.

That soma *is sprayed into the air to quiet mobs further illustrates the drug's primary purpose of sedating masses and stabilizing society. And the recorded Voice, reminiscent of the hypnopaedic voice on which State citizens are raised, takes an ostensibly persuasive approach, while really triggering the conditioned desire to act communally instead of as individuals.*

CHAPTER 16

Bernard, the Savage, and Helmholtz are brought into Mustapha Mond's study. Helmholtz is in good spirits, while the Savage browses through one of **Ford**'s books, and Bernard looks frightened and unhappy. Mond comes in and shakes hands with them all, addressing John. When John admits that he doesn't much like civilization, Mond unexpectedly quotes **Shakespeare**. He explains that as the one who makes the laws, he's allowed to break them, hence having read Shakespeare. Old things, he goes on—especially *beautiful* old things—are banned because they're not useful, and there's no good in attracting people to such things.

Interestingly, Mond doesn't deny the losses that are a necessary part of gaining stability. He freely admits that beautiful works of art, like Shakespeare, and even basic understanding of profound human emotions are entirely eliminated in a stable state. Nonetheless, it's clear that Mond, at least, thinks that the gain of happiness and stability outweighs the loss of freedom.

Mond further explains that, today, nobody could understand a tragedy like **Shakespeare**'s *Othello*, because the world is stable—people get what they want, they never want what they *can't* get, and so they're happy. They don't fear death, they're ignorant of suffering, and they have no emotional entanglements. And, of course, there's always *soma*.

Mond elaborates that great art is unintelligible to people who've never suffered and have never lacked for what they've wanted. To him, stability—being able to control people by forcing them to be happy with the superficialities of life—is worth the price of experiencing deeper emotions.

When John objects to the Bokanovsky twins and caste system, Mond tells of an experiment in which the World State filled the island of Cyprus only with Alphas. Predictably, none of the Alphas wanted to do the menial work, and before long, the island descended into civil war. The survivors asked the World Controllers to take over again. Mond says that conditioning and the caste system make people happy with what they do. People don't even want leisure—leisure only increases the chance to think, resulting in misery and increased *soma* consumption.

Mond's argument is that he's giving people what they want. They want happiness. They enjoy soma*—if they have free time, they just use more of it. While John believes that the World State citizens have been conditioned to love their slavery, Mond argues that if people love slavery, then it isn't really slavery.*

Mond explains that they've even stifled technological and scientific progress in order to keep people from excessive leisure, and hence to maintain stability. He admits that, in his youth, he was nearly exiled for conducting unauthorized science. At the mention of exile, Bernard starts groveling tearfully, begging not to be sent to Iceland. Mond orders that Bernard be carried out and tranquilized with *soma*.

Mond's history as a physicist means he personally understands the truth and beauty that are sacrificed to stability and happiness. If anything, this makes his knowing suppression of science even more monstrous. Bernard, for his part, continues to reveal himself as a coward.

With Bernard out of the way, Mond points out that being exiled to an island is, for an individual, more of a reward than a punishment—after all, an exile gets to live among other interesting, unorthodox people. When Helmholtz asks why Mond doesn't live on an island himself, Mond explains that he prefers the work of ensuring stability and happiness to the pursuit of truth. Science is interesting, but it's also dangerous.

Mond has much in common with Helmholtz and the Savage. What sets him apart is that he values stability, and securing the superficial happiness stability requires, to the inherent risks of pursuing truth and beauty. In this, he differs sharply from Helmholtz and especially from the Savage.

In **Ford**'s day, Mond muses, people valued knowledge above all and seemed to believe that scientific progress was unstoppable. Ford himself initiated a shift, "from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness." This shift was demanded by mass production. Happiness sustains mass production; truth and beauty cannot. Following the trauma of the Nine Years' War, people craved stability and were all too willing to sacrifice truth and beauty to get it. Mond then asks Helmholtz about his island preference—Helmholtz requests one with a bad climate, more suitable for writing—and then goes to check on Bernard.

Mond's reflections perhaps come closest to mirroring Huxley's thoughts about the relationships among truth, beauty, technology, and society. They're a commentary on early 20th-century values: shifts in industrialization necessitated a corresponding shift fro3m preferring truth to craving happiness, of getting what one wants (that is, consumption). The Nine Years' War also recalls the fatigue in the aftermath of the First World War and the compromises people made by, for example, preferring the stability of fascistic governments to greater freedom.

CHAPTER 17

The Savage, alone with Mond, asks if anything else, besides art and science, has to be sacrificed to happiness. Mond answers that religion does, and he shows the Savage some old, forbidden books about God, including the Bible. Mond reads from a passage written by Cardinal Newman, which argues that people move toward religion as they age, because the distractions of youth fall away. In the World State, youthful distractions are kept coming until the end of people's lives, ensuring that society has no need for God. It's not that Mond doesn't believe there's a God; he just believes that civilization must choose between happiness and God.

John Henry Newman was an important Roman Catholic cardinal and theologian in the 19th century. But his ideas about humanity's natural religious impulses have been rendered obsolete by the World State, which eliminates old age by ensuring that the "distractions of youth" never cease.

Mond goes on to argue that people are conditioned to believe in God, and that by organizing society such that people are never alone and that indulgent vices are risk-free, the World State has eliminated the need for God. In fact, there's never a need for a person to endure anything unpleasant, like self-denial or chastity. That's because chastity goes hand-in-hand with passion, and passion leads to instability. What's more, the World State doesn't need virtues like nobility or heroism; it allows no opportunities (like war or temptation) for the exercise of such virtues. He even describes *soma* as "Christianity without tears"—the drug smooths over discord and suffering, without requiring any moral effort on the user's part.

Both opportunities for suffering and virtue are only made possible within a society that's subject to instability. Mond believes that stability is more important than any ennobling human virtues. This outlook is his justification for totalitarianism.

The Savage insists that the "tears" are necessary, and that there is value in living dangerously. Mond concurs that artificial passion is good for health, but that it can be applied chemically, without inconveniences. The Savage replies that he *wants* the inconveniences—he wants God, poetry, freedom, goodness, sin. In short, Mond responds, the Savage is asking for the right to be unhappy and to suffer. The Savage agrees. Mond just shrugs and says he's welcome to it.

Mond and John disagree about the relationship between the individual and society. Mond believes society is preeminent, and that the individual can be molded and shaped to best serve society. This is, essentially, the concept of mass production applied to all human society. John, however, believes the individual is preeminent and has rights that society must not transgress. These rights necessarily expose people to unhappiness and pain as well as joy and beauty. To him, freedom is worth that price.

CHAPTER 18

Helmholtz and Bernard, on the way to their island exile, stop by the Savage's apartment to say goodbye to him. Bernard apologizes for his behavior yesterday and says that Helmholtz has been very good to him. The three men feel fond of one another, and happy. The Savage explains that he asked Mond if he could accompany his friends to the island, but since Mond refused, he is leaving, too, in search of a place where he can be alone.

The three friends, reconciled, share an affectionate farewell. Bernard appears to be somewhat chastened, after his cowardly groveling, and calmly accepts his fate. The Savage's fate will be quite different, however. As an outsider both to the World State and to the community of his upbringing, he is the novel's ultimate individual and will take his final stand as such.

Later, the Savage establishes a hermitage in an old lighthouse in a rural part of England. Here he commits himself to sleepless nights and painful physical exertions, longing to purify himself and to be good. He brings a few supplies, determined to grow a garden and become self-sufficient. When, while whittling a bow and arrow, he catches himself singing happily—an offense to the memory of his perceived unkindness to Linda—he whips himself. When a truck full of Deltas drives by, they watch in wonder as the Savage bleeds, vomits, and starts hitting himself again.

While the Savage's extreme self-discipline is difficult to understand, it's consistent with his earlier insistence to Mustapha Mond that, in order to have goodness, beauty, and all the rest, one must also be willing to endure inconvenience, suffering, and unhappiness. Indeed, for a man determined to resist a totalitarian government that forces its citizens to be happy, perhaps unhappiness is the only freedom.

Tipped off by the Delta witnesses, reporters soon descend on the Savage's hermitage. When a radio reporter tries to interview the Savage about his ascetic practices, the Savage rewards him with Zuni curses and a fierce kick. But this doesn't deter a wave of additional journalists and helicopters. The Savage manages to keep them at bay with his bow and arrow.

World State citizens are attracted to John's bizarre lifestyle. To them, it's a mere curiosity without any inherent meaning. For John, the World State's intrusion is an offense to hard-won freedom.

At one point, resting, John has a vivid, arousing daydream of Lenina. He rushes from the lighthouse and flings himself into the juniper bushes, trying to think of Linda's death instead, but he can't get Lenina out of his mind. He starts whipping himself frantically, unconsciously wishing he were flogging Lenina herself. Unbeknownst to him, Darwin Bonaparte, a feely photographer, is watching and recording this. Twelve days later, a feely called *The Savage of Surrey* is released across Europe, causing a sensation.

John strives to purify himself from his sexual desires, but he harbors anger and disgust toward Lenina—and what she stands for as a promiscuous, pleasure-seeking World State citizen—as well. His efforts don't remain private, however. Citizens of the World State relentlessly pursue the satisfaction of their desires, in this case their sordid curiosity about this incomprehensible savage.

One day, as the Savage is digging in his garden, a stream of hundreds of helicopters roars overhead. When the Savage asks what the crowds want with him, they start chanting, demanding to see "the whipping stunt." Soon, one helicopter lands within a few feet of the Savage, and a young woman gets out. She looks distressed and imploring, trying to speak to the Savage. However, he rushes at her, calling her "strumpet" and whipping both her and himself. Fascinated, the crowds, conditioned to act in unity, begin an "orgy-porgy" dance.

The World State citizens have no capacity to understand the depth of John's emotions, much less his motivations; to their incomprehension, the self-flagellation can be no more than a "stunt." The woman who gets out of the helicopter is implied to be Lenina, and her unexpected appearance unleashes John's rage at his own fleshly desires and at Lenina's (and presumably the State's encouragement thereof). World State citizens, unable to make sense of such pain and anguish otherwise, have been trained to release emotion in just one way: Solidarity Service orgies.

The next morning, the Savage awakes and remembers everything. That evening, more helicopters arrive in search of the Savage. When people look inside the lighthouse, they see John's feet through an archway: he has hung himself.

For John, participating in the orgy means submitting to the slavery of happiness. He's lost his battle with the World State, and with his own sin, so he kills himself. Another individual has been sacrificed to World State stability.

HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Kestler, Justin. "*Brave New World*." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 22 Jul 2013. Web. 21 Apr 2020.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Kestler, Justin. "*Brave New World*." LitCharts LLC, July 22, 2013. Retrieved April 21, 2020. https://www.litcharts.com/lit/brave-new-world.

To cite any of the quotes from *Brave New World* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

MLA

Huxley, Aldous. Brave New World. Harper Perennial. 2006.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Huxley, Aldous. Brave New World. New York: Harper Perennial. 2006.