

BRAVE NEW WORLD

BY ALDOUS HUXLEY



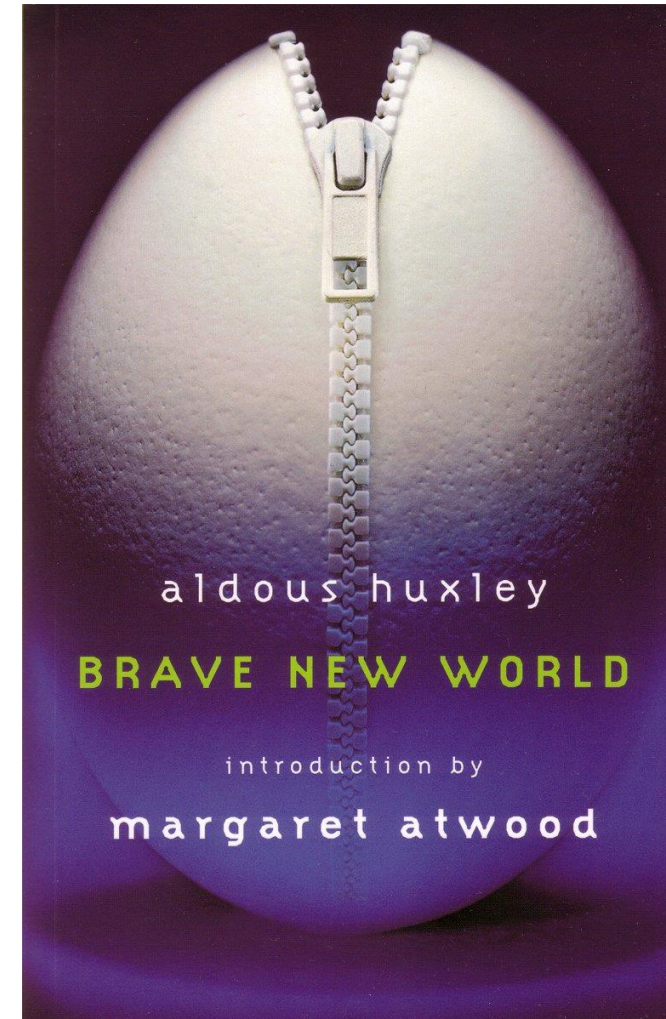
**INTRODUCTION
AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

“...most men and women will grow up to love their servitude and will never dream of revolution.”

- ALDOUS HUXLEY

FACT SHEET: *BRAVE NEW WORLD*

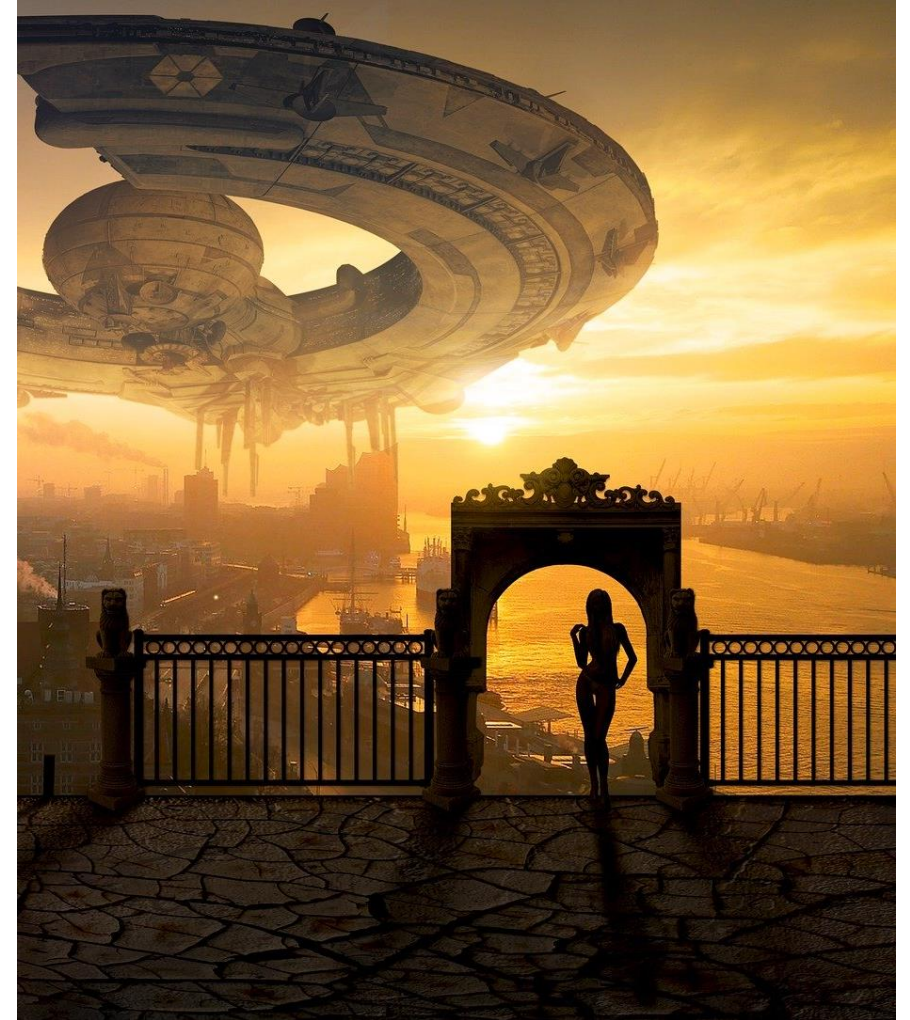
- Author: **Aldous Huxley**
- Date of publication: **1932**
- Country of origin: **England**
- Genre: speculative fiction, **dystopian novel**
- Point of view: **third-person omniscient**
- Setting: England in **the year 2540**



SPECULATIVE FICTION

The term speculative fiction has two competing definitions:

- A) A super-genre that includes science fiction,** fantasy, supernatural fiction, alternate histories, dystopian fiction, and even superhero fiction.
- B) A genre akin to science fiction** but focusing on the human condition and societal development rather than science and technology (i.e., imagined utopias and dystopias).



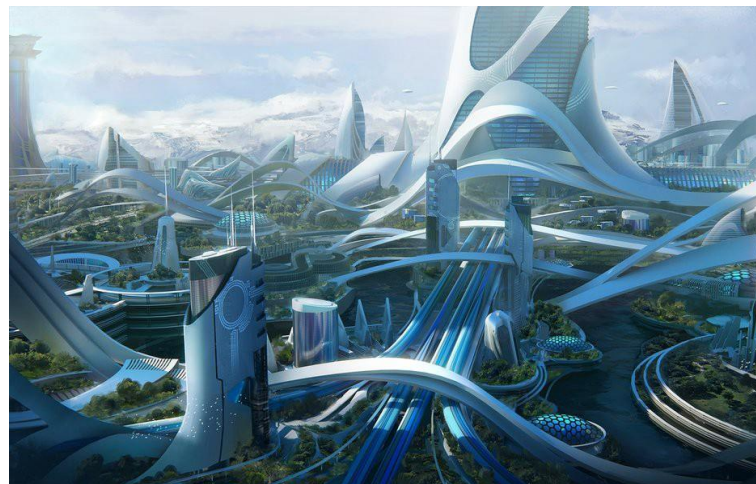
THE CONCEPT OF UTOPIA

- The perfect human society
- "Utopia," from the Greek for "no place."
- Sir Thomas More's work *Utopia* (1516)
 - More coined the term.
 - He used a fictional society to explore the problems in his own society.
- Many thinkers explored the concept before More coined the term.
- The most famous utopian writer of Huxley's time was H.G. Wells, who wrote *A Modern Utopia* in 1905.



IMAGINED UTOPIAS

- **Moral**
- **Social**
- **Political**
- **Ecological**
- **Economic**
- **Religious**
- **Technological**
- **Feminist**



IMAGINED UTOPIAS

- ***The Republic*** (~380 BCE) by Plato – the perfect Greek city-state
- ***Tao Hua Yuan*** (421 CE) by Tao Yuanming – intellectuals living in harmony with nature
- ***Al-Madina al-Fadila*** (~950 CE) by Al-Farabi – life in Medina as perfected under the rule of the prophet Mohamed
- ***New Atlantis*** (1627) by Francis Bacon – a futuristic society based on "generosity and enlightenment, dignity and splendor, piety and public spirit"
- ***Gloriana, or the Revolution of 1900*** (1890) by Lady Florence Dixie – British society perfected through feminism
- ***Walden Two*** (1948) by B. F. Skinner – a small, self-sufficient utopia based on social science

REAL ATTEMPTS AT UTOPIA

- **Palmanova, 1593** - the perfect fortress city (Venetian Republic)
- **New Lanark, 1786** - a socialist manufacturing center (Scotland)
- **Home, 1895** - nudism and anarchy (Washington State)
- **Penudo, 1933** - communal agriculture (Brazil)

“The happy colonists are vegetarians and teetotalers...who help one another to build houses and to settle on their own little estates, sell the collected fruits and share the proceeds. They can live without too much toil, and thus have leisure for study, games and hobbies.” (Caines)



UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA

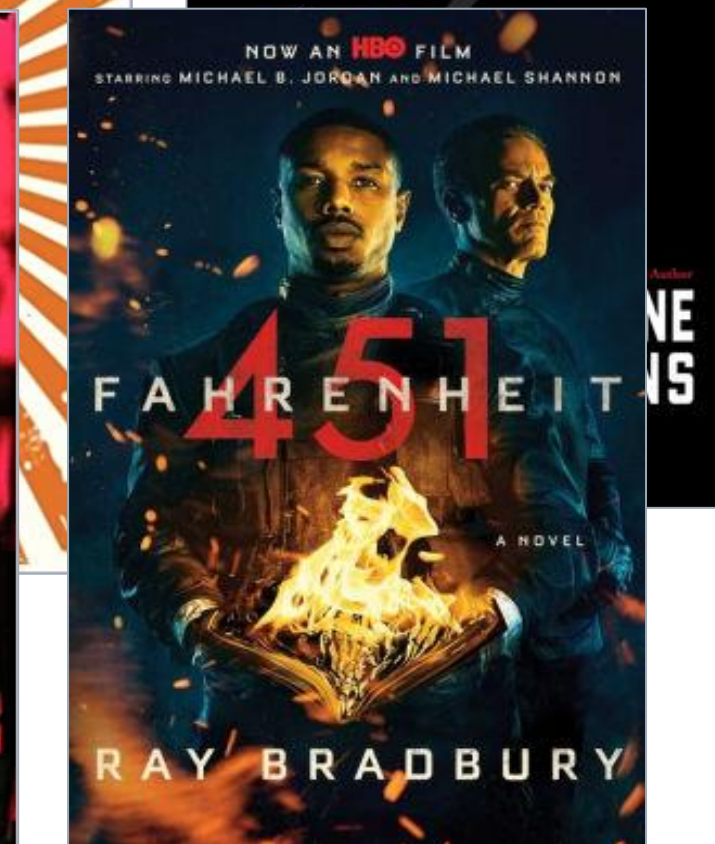
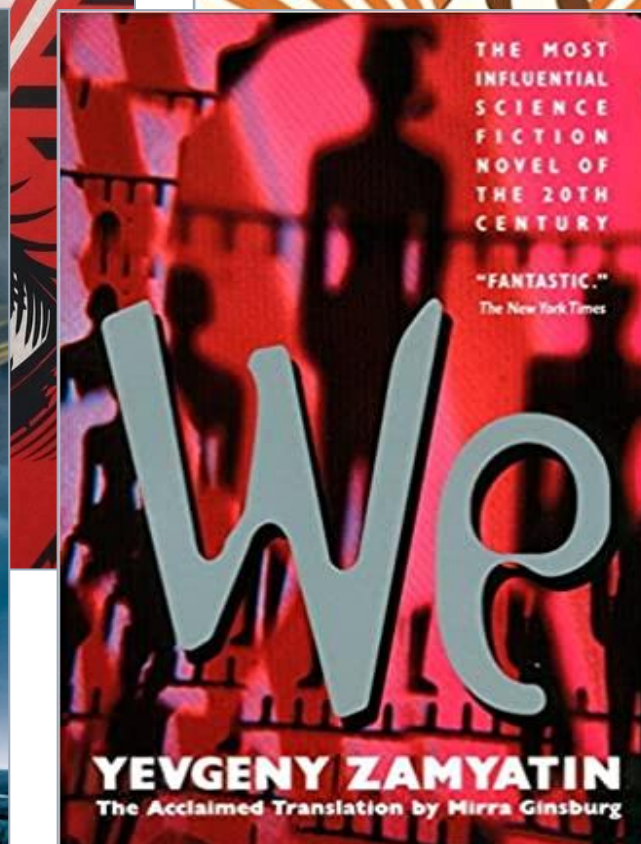
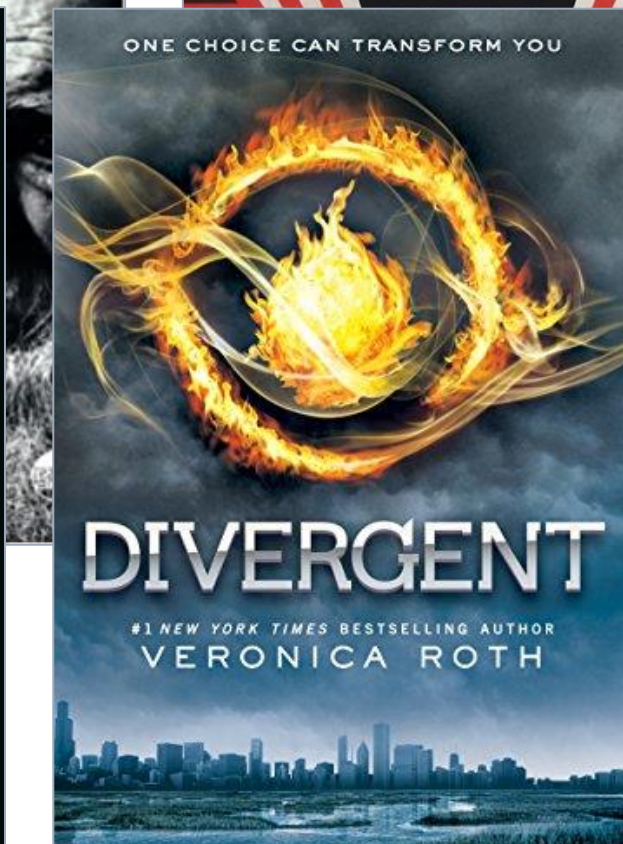
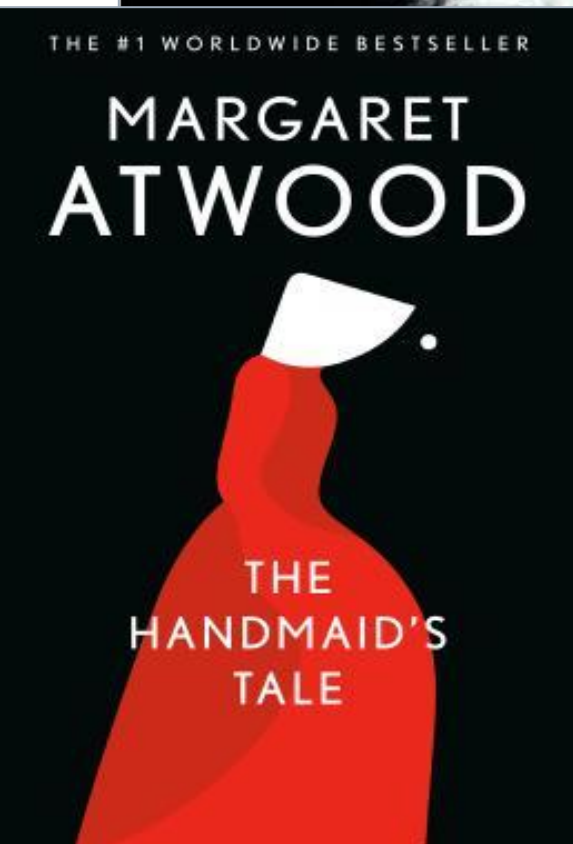
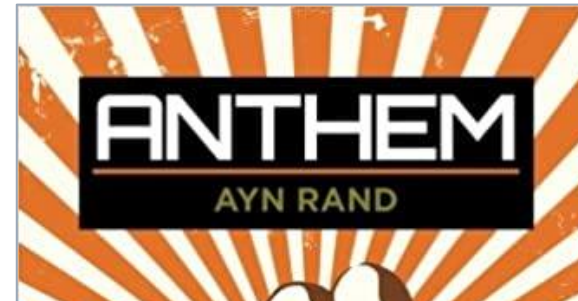
Aldous Huxley worried that optimistic visions of perfect societies were wrong-headed and even dangerous.

Dystopia: an imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic. (Merriam-Webster)

Dystopian novels imagine that “progress” might have terrible results. In other words, striving for utopia might result in horrific dystopia.

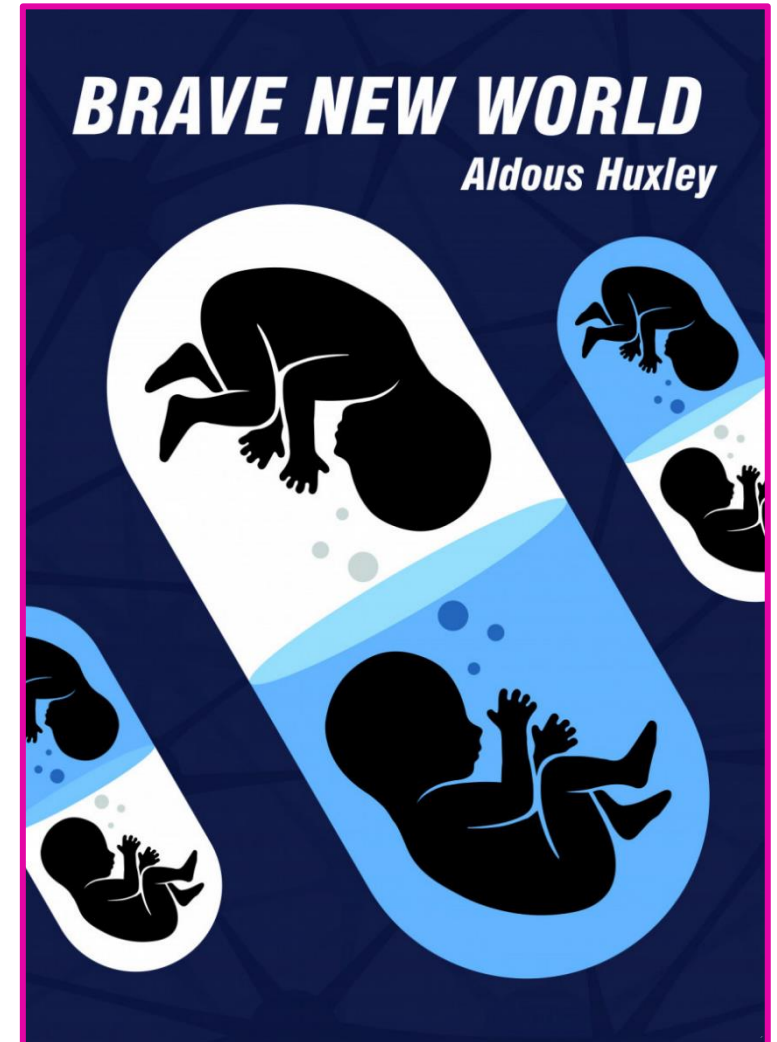


DYSTOPIAN NOVELS



WELCOME TO *BRAVE NEW WORLD*

- The year is 632 AF (2540 to you and me).
- There is no war; England and the rest of the world are unified under the control of The World State.
- You live a carefree life. Technological conveniences abound. You do not worry about physical needs, getting old, dating, family life, or personal goals.
- Your job is easy, and you enjoy it. It is what you were born to do.
- Your free time is full of titillating amusements that leave no time for depressing philosophical questions.
- Sounds pretty good, right?



THE AUTHOR: ALDOUS HUXLEY

- Born in Godalming, England in 1894
- Childhood nickname: “Ogre”
- A family of scientists and writers
- Mother died when he was 14
- Blind for almost three years as a young man
- Completed first novel at age 17
- “Incompetent” French teacher for 1 year
- Rejected from service in WWI due to poor eyesight
- Worked in a chemical plant and as a farm laborer
- First published novel at age 27
- Moved to Los Angeles in 1937
- Nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature 7 times



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Huxley worried that people were becoming too optimistic about “progress.”

“...between World War I and World War II, the height of an era of technological optimism in the West.” (Lohnes)

- **DEVELOPMENTS IN PSYCHOLOGY**
- **TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY**
- **GENETICS AND EUGENICS**
- **ENTERTAINMENT / MEDIA**
- **SOCIAL CHANGE**
- **GOVERNMENT AND WORLD ORDER**
- **SHATTERED OPTIMISM**



DEVELOPMENTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

1879 – The world's first psychology lab opens in Germany.

1897 – Ivan Pavlov publishes his work on the classical conditioning of dogs.

1901 – Sigmund Freud publishes *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*.

1927 - Alois Saliger invents the Psycho-Phone for sleep learning.

1928 – John B. Watson publishes *Psychological Care of Infant and Child*.



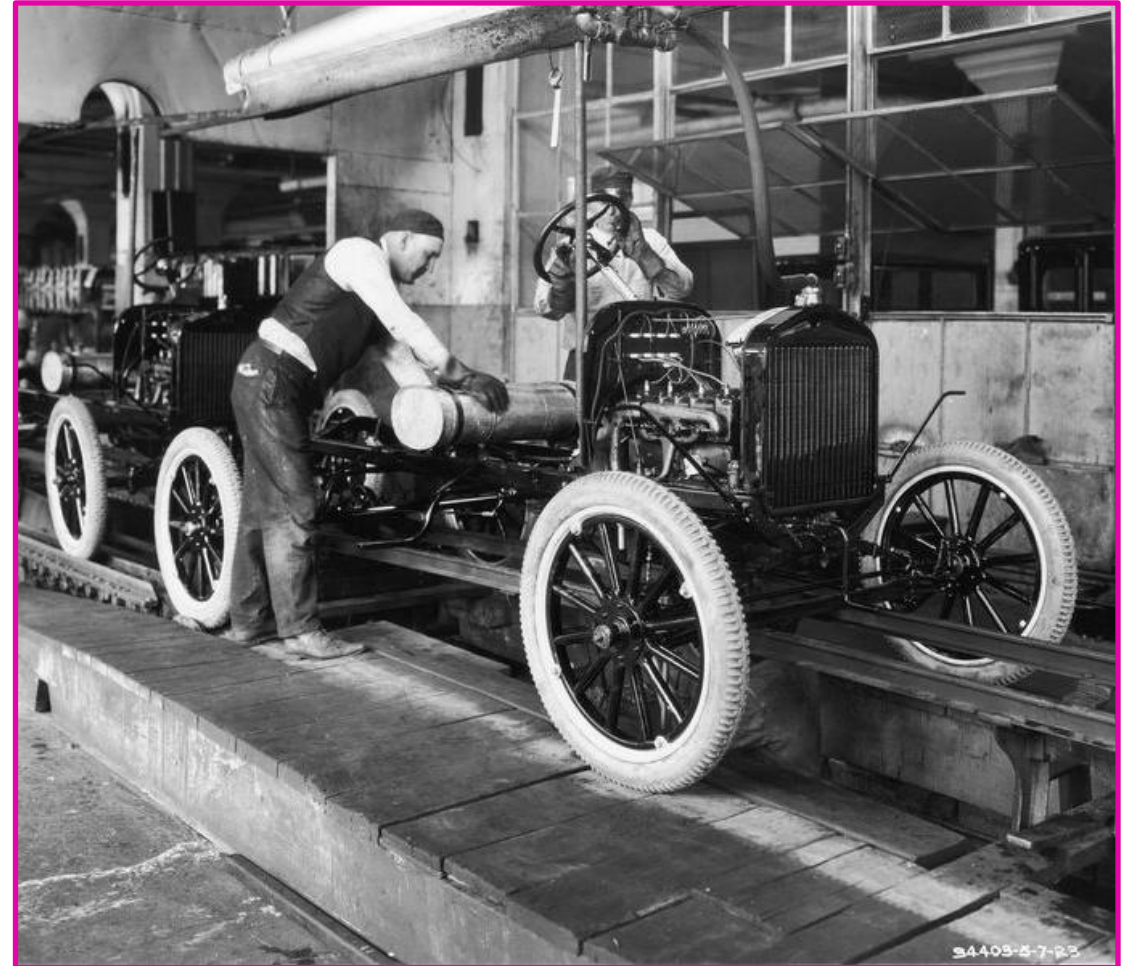
TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY

Prior to the Great Depression, “The Roaring 20s” marked an increase in the standard of living and **consumerism**.

This was largely the result of technological advancement and the rise of **assembly line manufacturing**.

On trend:

- Zippers (controversial)
- Chewing gum
- The autogiro (early helicopter)
- Ford automobiles

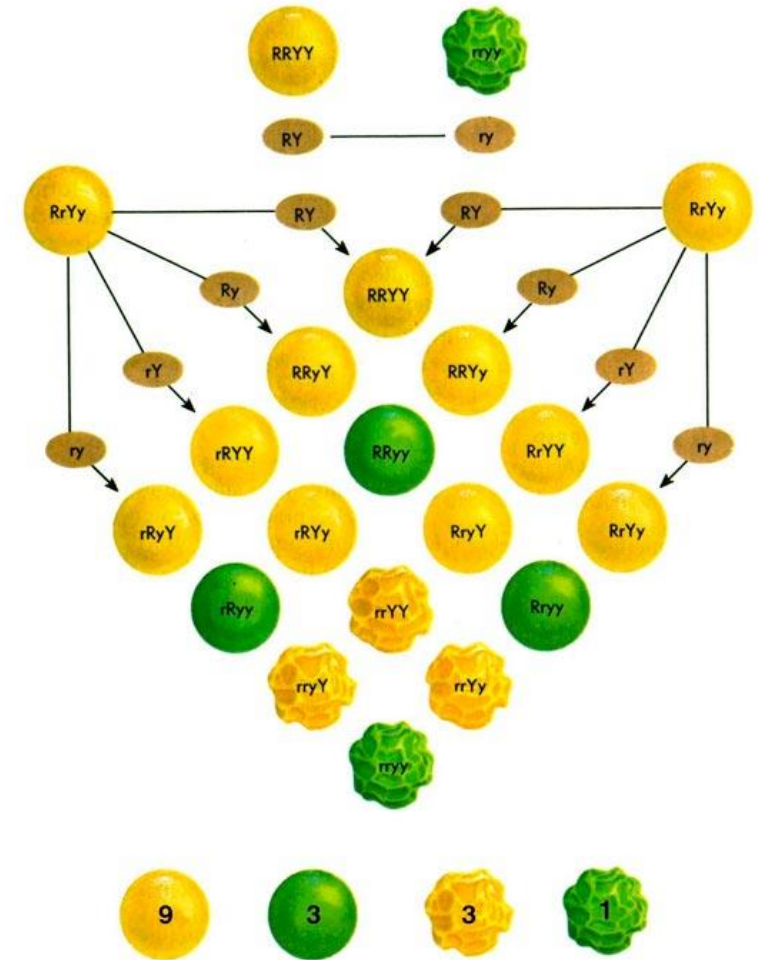


GENETICS AND EUGENICS

1900 - Gregor Mendel's scientific studies of genetic inheritance (from 1865) are rediscovered and replicated.

1921 – The American Eugenics Society (founded) (Eugenics is the disturbing proposition to “improve” the human population through selective breeding.)

1928 - Frederick Griffith discovers **genetic transformation** (dead bacteria can transfer genetic material to "transform" living bacteria).



ENTERTAINMENT / MEDIA

The public gains increased access to new media leading to booms in advertising and professional sports.

1920 - KDKA Pittsburg begins commercial **broadcast radio**.

1927 – Warner Bros. releases the first **sound-synchronized (talkie) motion picture** (*The Jazz Singer*).

1928 - WRGB (then W2XB) becomes the world's first **television** station.



SOCIAL CHANGE

The 1920s and 30s saw pivotal changes in Western society.

- **The Jazz Age / The Roaring 20s**
- **Feminism**
- **Sexual revolution**
- **Prohibition**
- **Consumerism**
- **Urbanization**
- **Harlem Renaissance**



GOVERNMENT AND WORLD ORDER

- The devastation of WWI and the creation of **The League of Nations** (1919–1946)
- The Russian Revolution (1917) and the rise of **Communism** (“Workers of the world, unite!”)
- **Fascism** takes hold

1922 - Benito Mussolini and the National Fascist Party (PNF) take control of Italy.

1929 - The Great Depression spurs the growth of the National Socialist German Workers' Party.



SHATTERED OPTIMISM

The Great Depression (1929–1939)

The prosperity and optimism of “The Roaring 20s” came to a screeching halt.

Loss, unemployment, starvation, and instability led many to ask fundamental questions about society, economics, and government.



CRITICISM OF *BNW*

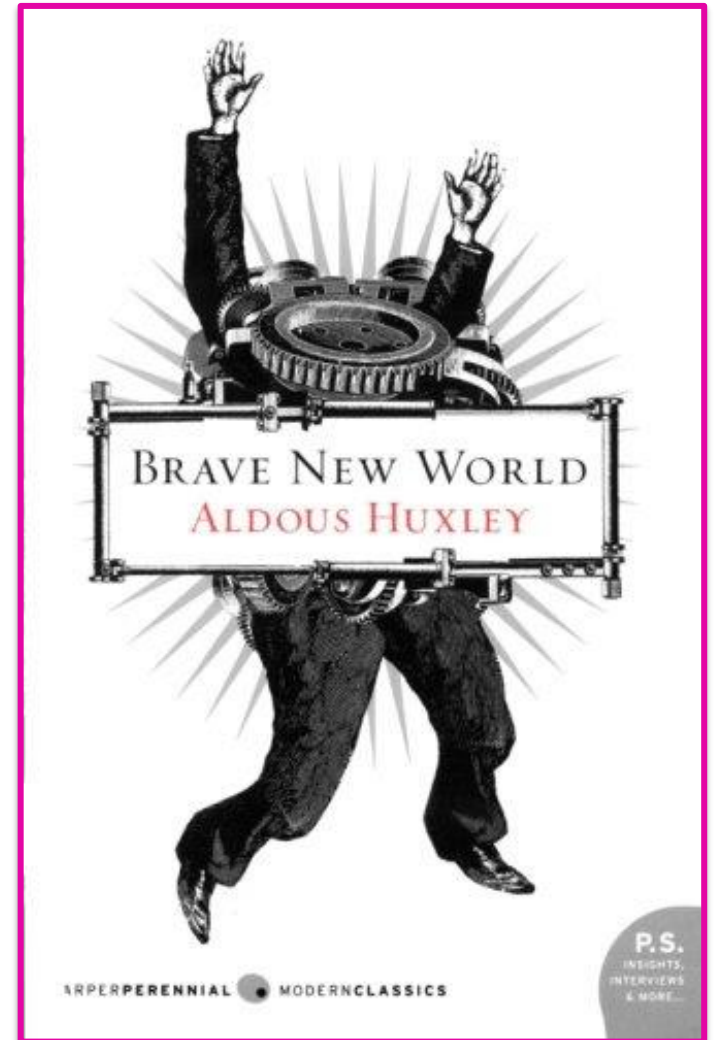
The implications and themes of *Brave New World* offended many readers. Some organizations and institutions banned the novel.

“...an unforgiveable offense to progress.”
-Wyndham Lewis

“...Aldous Huxley has no right to betray the future as he did in that book.” -H.G. Wells

“...probably casts no light on the future...”
-George Orwell

“...as prophecy it is merely fantastic...”
-Gerald Bullett



BRAVE NEW WORLD

BY ALDOUS HUXLEY



UNIT OVERVIEW

***BNW* UNIT: READING SCHEDULE**

READING	CHAPTERS	DUE BY
1	1-3	
2	4-6	
3	7-10	
4	11-14	
5	15-18	

MAIN CHARACTERS

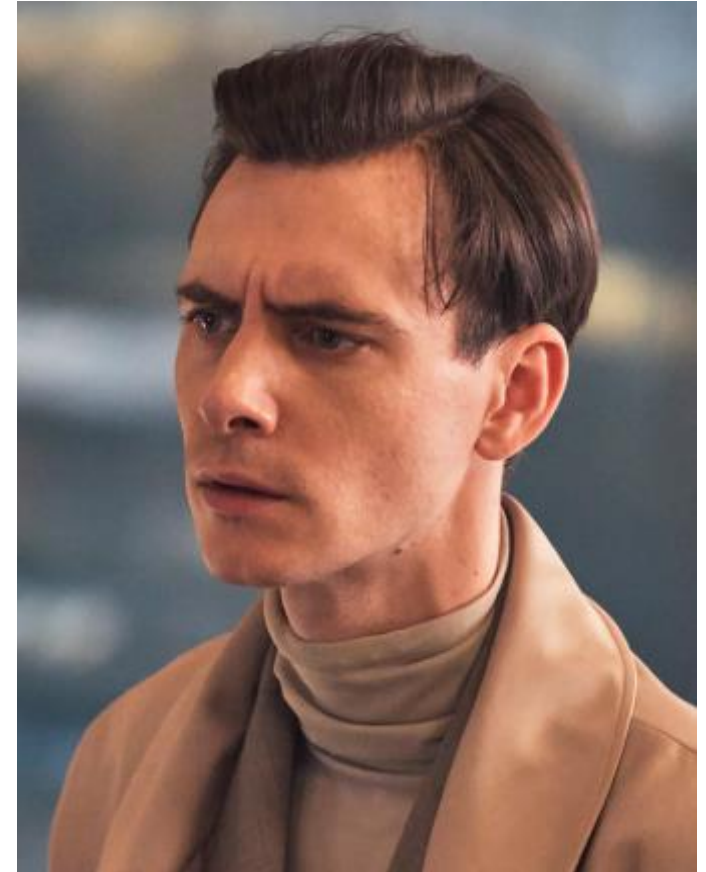
Bernard Marx: A competent conditioning (brainwashing) expert who struggles to fit in.

Lenina Crowne: An attractive and charismatic young woman. Lenina is a perfect citizen of London society in *almost* every way.

Helmholtz Watson: An overachiever who feels emptiness in his life despite his success.

John “The Savage”: An outsider from a different culture who moves into the society as an adult.

Mustapha Mond: the Controller; one of the masterminds behind the society.



Brave New World (2020) promotional photo
by Steve Schofield / Peacock

AS YOU READ, WATCH FOR...

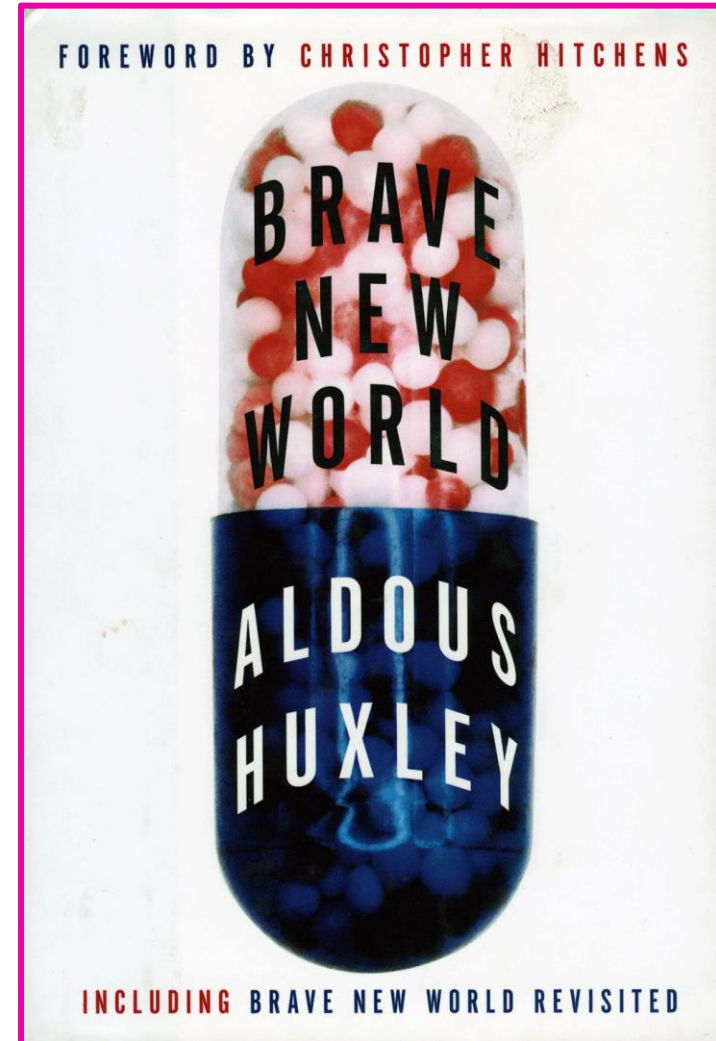
- Propaganda
- Caste systems
- Famous names
- Jesus and Bible Stories
- Allusions to Shakespeare
- Symbolic objects
(Have you been paying attention to the *Brave New World* book covers?)



COMMUNITY
IDENTITY
STABILITY

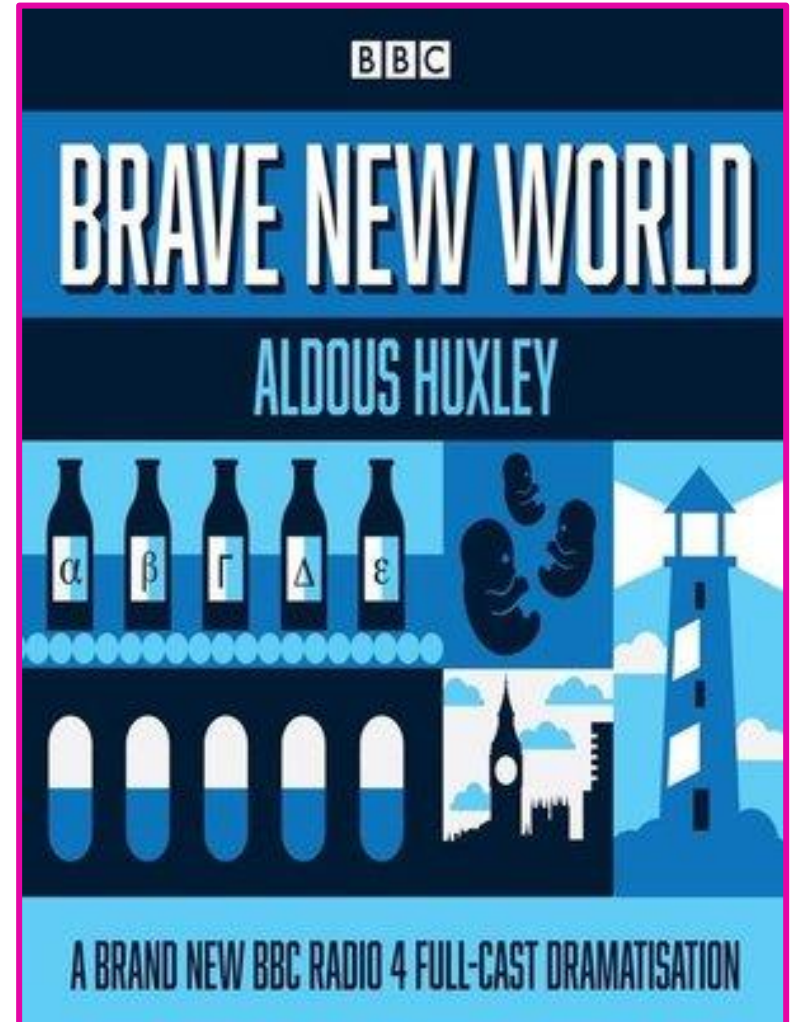
KEY THEME SUBJECTS

- Stability vs. freedom
- Truth vs. happiness
- Passion vs. tranquility
- Science / technology
- Consumerism
- Individuality
- Sexuality



UNIT GOALS

- Explore the idea of **utopia**.
- Consider Huxley's **speculations**.
- Trace **theme development** focusing on elements like characterization, plot structure, and symbolism.
- Reach conclusions on how Huxley uses **allusions** (source materials).
- Analyze the author's style by examining **textual evidence**.



CONNECTIONS TO LIFE TODAY

As you read, think about our lives today. Think about...

- **Reliance on technology**
- **Consumerism**
- **Promiscuity / sexuality**
- **Genetic engineering**
- **Drugs**
- **Power** (and who has it)



FINAL TASK PREVIEW

At the end of the unit, you will write a literary analysis essay on **theme development**.

Want to give yourself a sneaky advantage?
Choose your **theme subject** in advance and jot down key page numbers as you read.



- Individuality
- Love / romance
- Passion
- Freedom / liberty
- Scientific and technological advancement
- Stability
- Consumerism
- Truth / knowledge
- Happiness / fun

*“There's only one
corner of the universe
you can be certain of
improving, and that's
your own self.”*

- ALDOUS HUXLEY

Copyright 2020
TeachNovels.com
