***Brave New World* has always been around us**

*Brave New World* is an ironic piece of literature and like many others it reflects upon the current society and forebodes the imminent future. It offers a different insight to *1984* as it illustrates a world caught between perfection and hell. This redefines the meaning of ‘dystopia’ being ‘an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad’, as the society illustrated in *Brave New World* could be deeply alluring for readers when they first encounter it, but under the surface, we see a darker vision of human nature and existence hence making it fearful and alarming. Therefore, I believe this is another reason which makes it a dystopian classic alongside its unprecedented challenge to the orthodox and mainstream of the public’s belief in a ‘perfect’ materialistic world. As a result, *Brave New World* gives an insight to one of the world’s most important philosophical questions: if, after you discovered the whole truth of what you are seeking for and found it a hoax, are you still prepared to sacrifice your youth, time, money, and even the rest of your life to fulfil it? From this, I wholeheartedly believe that *Brave New World* could never be out-of-date as every generation continues to face their own challenges with ours being the battle against the high-technology which in every way acts as the soma to keep us ‘fresh’ and drenched in endless joy.

To begin with, the theme of lust and taking pleasure plays an extremely important role in *Brave New World.* Like 1984 and many other conventional dystopian novels, the theme of love and lust alongside politics and control form the basis of the message that the author wanted to convey. However, what is unique about *Brave New World,* I believe, is both the spontaneous execution of love which, despite the fact that society has already either eliminated or controlled all the other parts of the ‘human nature’, is the only thing that the ‘World Controllers’ fail to completely wipe out. This, alongside the extensive depiction of a hedonistic society, engages the readers into the fundamental aspect of life: Could pure happiness created by ‘soma’ satisfy all the desires of mankind? Or in other words, could lust replace love and still have the same influence?

In the novel, people are often drowned in ‘soma-holidays’ and the pleasure created by sex, while children from a small age have learnt to have sex and play erotic games. Love and a real relationship or bonding are evaded and described as ‘abnormal’. Similar to *1984*, this is a method that dictators or tyrannical rulers use to superficially satisfy mankind’s desire by artificially substituting it with something which does not have the same quality. They do this simply because they are afraid of losing their power to the hands of real affection as they clearly know the amount of dangerous energy and powerful impetus that such emotion could create.

Relating this concept to the reality, many ancient and modern philosophers have tried to explain how lust and pure human-initiated joy could fulfil all our needs. Aristippus, who was a famous Epicurean in Ancient Greece once believed that ‘the art of life lies in taking pleasures as they pass, and the keenest pleasures are not intellectual, nor are they always moral.’ His adoption of the concept of acquiring maximised pleasure is simply to find it through the physical joy and one should not wait for it to happen but rather seek and create it at anytime.

Aristippus’s idea has later been tested out by modern philosophers and scientists using high-technology. This could be shown by the experiment and scientific research done by David Pearce, which he believes that ‘the Hedonistic Imperative outlines how genetic engineering and nanotechnology will abolish suffering in all sentient life.’ This could be seen as the first step towards a *Brave New World* with joy being ‘invented’ manly. However, rather contrary to an admonishment, Pearce is actually confident that this experimental research ‘is also instrumentally rational and ethically mandatory.’

David Pearce is a contemporary utilitarian philosopher and an expert on genetic engineering and designer drugs. He focuses on the ‘moderation of emotion’ through the stimulation of the nervous system. The reason why his suggestion is alarming is because designer drugs or prozac has a similar effect to cocaine and stimulants but are still legitimate and prescribed drugs often given to patients with mental health issues, hence making it a real life ‘soma’. Moreover, Pearce takes this concept even further as he tests for electro-stimulation which has the potential to produce infinite amount of joy by stimulating the human nervous system

However, looking it from another perspective, Pearce’s own experiment actually proves his theory to be unsustainable. Tests and surveys have shown that people simply could not accept this idea of a totally manmade joy through stimulation while rats, animals which are believed to have many similar biological characteristics with humans, would keep on pressing a pleasure button which would trigger stimulation and joy until death. Furthermore, I believe his theory is rather fundamentally wrong as he confuses the difference of the priority between lust and love, or in other words, happiness and wellbeing in terms of the role they play in our life hence relating to their position in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Overall, the theme of lust and taking pleasure is approached in a completely surprising way in *Brave New World* as instead of oppressing it which will cause inevitable anger, ‘His Forship’ cleverly leads the public onto a path which have some superficial similarities to true bondings and relationship but are completely different in essence, and the abject end result is not only shown by the death of the ‘Savage’ but also proven by research done in reality.

The theme of individualism and control is also presented as an important element in *Brave New World* which it could be depicted through Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Maslow proposed that there are five levels of human needs which are physiology, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualisation at the top. There is also an additional theory of an over self-actualisation which further highlights the spiritual gain that one would experience during the process of self-actualisation. Every level is interlinked and it is indeed true that not everyone could reach the top of the hierarchy at the end of their life but that does not makes them less human. In this sense, what determines a human is not the level you have reached by the end of your life, but rather if you have this awareness or does the world or the society provide you with this opportunity to discover the importance of love, esteem and self-actualisation. In *Brave New World*, there is simply no way for people to even ponder the question ‘who you really are?' as the entire population remains at the bottom two levels of the hierarchy while the conditioning blinds them from even having a glimpse of the concept of love and self-actualisation, as it has been substituted with lust and entrenched social structure.

The effect created by this society on individuals could be shown by the character of the three protagonists in the novel hence Bernard Marx, the ‘Savage’ John, and Helmholtz. Each of them in a way represent a part of mankind that has been destroyed or left unnoticed by this new world as they seek for the balance between individuality and collectivity; beauty and efficiency; value and stability but only to find an abyss and each character faces their own destiny.

Bernard Marx is an unconventional Alpha plus from the start of the story not only because of his physical aesthetics but also his ‘weird’ thoughts. He imagines the society being worthless as it is drenched in ‘soma-holidays’ and physical joys without thinking about the essence of its own existence. This makes him a conflicted character as he clearly has the traits of a dystopian hero, while the surname ‘Marx’ often correlates with Karl Marx, the founder of communism and a revolutionary, but at the same time the readers discover him to be one of the ‘many silenced’ who are struggling between speaking out his unconventional thoughts and the potential punishment that could be executed on him. The readers are further disappointed as Marx is later depicted as a dreamer whose dream has been shattered which he simply succumbed into the reality that he could not change and chose to immerse himself in soma-holidays and joy which he deplored at the first place. Bernard’s character also reminds the readers of Huxley himself who took a lot of drugs including LSD just before his death which is ironic and tragic as he spent his whole life trying to warn the public of the danger of such a materialism based world but at the end fell into the trap himself.

In terms of the ‘Savage’, he is a mirror of our world with love and kindness. It becomes rather clear right after his appearance that he could never fit into this world and would end up dying tragically which he did. He had this true love for his mother and Lenina rather than ephemeral, superficial feelings that pervade in the society, which is also why the first major impact that the society had on him completely shattered all his positive expectations of it. He was totally outraged when he realised Lenina was a ‘whore’, while the following up of his mother’s neglected death because of ‘soma’ further builds up this hatred inside him and made him give up the thoughts to find a ‘civilised’ person in this ‘civilised’ society. Despite this, he is, on the other hand, kind and determined to bring about positive changes but too naïve to actually do it. This is shown by the fact that he tried to throw away the ‘soma’ supplies in order to ‘free’ the Delta class who have not even realised that they are chained in such a metaphysical realm of agony. The ‘Savage’, unlike the rest, is a person rather than an automaton hence being the true victim of this world. He is like a candle signifying hope but extinguished and devoured almost immediately to the darkness which it could never light up.

Lastly, Helmholtz is a very different character but also a combination of both of them. He is an admired figure being relatively good looking with a title and authority: he is more or less a depiction of a successful man under such a system. He has no reason to go against the social regulations but he did and purely for beauty and truth. In my opinion, he represents the rising middle class under a totalitarian rule which again justifies Maslow’s hierarchy as people who are fulfilled with physiology, safety, and esteem begin to step into the phase of self-actualisation and spiritual inspiration. To my understanding, self-actualisation is the most influential and powerful phase to mankind, which is similar to stimulants in a way, it could drive people into such a state of mind that they will care for nothing but this spiritual enlightenment. This could be shown by Helmholtz who abandoned all his fame and reputations for just going to one of those remote islands where he believed he would be undisturbed and able to pursue his dream freely. Similar examples in real life or other literatures include Mr.Strickland in *The Moon and Sixpence*, a personification of Paul Gauguin, or Diogenes, a philosopher from the Ancient Greece who proposed the idea of materialism and too many possessions being a distraction.

Overall, like many other dystopian heroes, Marx, John, and Helmholtz fail to escape the control of the ‘World Controllers’, but despite this, they have gained their individualism and a period of true friendship through the seeking of love. Just before Bernard and Helmholtz were ‘sent off’ to the islands, they went to see the ‘Savage’ for the final time, and ‘there was a silence. In spite of their sadness — because of it, even; for their sadness was the symptom of their love for one another — the three young men were happy.’ This quotation is not only startling because the use of the word ‘love’ which had been replaced by ‘like’ or ‘lust’ throughout the novel, but also the recognition of the inevitable causal link between sadness and love. It also redefines ‘love’ illustrating it as energy bursting out just like a confluence of shared emotions and experiences which all rush out at that instant evocative moment filled with compassion and profound happiness that would be felt by everyone, and this is what the society of *Brave New World* is truly afraid of and could not control if it ever it became common practice. As a result, the theme of individualism and control is depicted with reference to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

The birth of *Brave New World* clearly reflects the contemporary tumultuous world but also forebodes the foreseeable future. *Brave New World* was published in 1932 when Mussolini had already become a dictator in Italy, while in the following year Hitler claimed the chancellorship of Germany and combined it with the role of President in 1934 to make him a dictator. An oligarchy was soon established around him which lead to the end of the Weimar Republic and WWI. Huxley’s book was not very popular among the public at the time as Chamberlain was still appeasing Germany to try to sustain a peace-time international relationship, while people at that time were baffled by this political ‘parody’. It became evermore difficult to hold one’s political opinion as a general tendency towards extremism grew in Europe and America after the hit of the Great Depression causing economic growth to slowdown dramatically if not reverse completely leading to the rise of communism and fascism. However, now we can look back from the 21st century, we can clearly behold some similarities between this master piece of dystopian literature and the rise of Nazism.

The first similarity is the urgency for an increase in population. In *Brave New World*, something very straightforward from the very start is the mass production of babies. In order to produce individuals quicker and in a more ‘pleasant’ way, babies are not born but rather decanted. They are created by allowing fertilisation to happen in machines with one ovary yielding ‘over fifteen thousand adult individuals’ in exceptional cases, while the highest record in the ‘Central London Hatchery and conditioning centre’ is ‘sixteen thousand and twelve’. This perfectly matched up with the Nazi regime *Lebensborn* for breeding a so-called ‘master race’: a race which contains only of the so-called ‘Aryans’. *Lebensborn* literally means the ‘fountain of life’. It was a registered programme initiated by Nazi SS running from 1935 to 1945 to increase the birth rate of ‘Aryan’ children who are classified as ‘racially pure’ and ‘healthy’ with racially ‘pure’ women who are chosen to breed with selected SS officers. There was anonymity in the programme as both sides were not allowed to tell each other their identities, while the paternal side could have sexual intercourses as frequently as possible with different women to ensure the ‘yield’. After a child was born, presumably he would be herded to a SS base thereby becoming a future soldier, and if the child was a girl, she would become the property of the state. In total, there were about 20,000 children who were born through this programme with many later being killed in WWII, while for the younger children, they were adopted after the war but their stigma remained with them forever. Although the production of 20,000 children could still have no match with 15,000 children from one single ovary, the concept remains the same: children are produced for the stability or the welfare of the nation with a relationship being joyful but without real affection apart from the loyalty to ‘His Fordship’ or Führer.

The second similarity is sexual openness. In addition to the loyalty to the leaders, both sides further limited any heresies or freedom of thinking by paralysing the public with sexual openness. In *Brave New World,* children as young as five or six years old are coerced to play erotic games while anyone who refuses will be deemed as abnormal. This becomes worse from adolescence as sex is treated like an emotionless daily routine which carries on into adulthood. For Nazi Germany, although it endorsed the conservation of many Germanic traditions and cultures, it did not limit and, in a way, supported debauchery as long as the ‘blood’ was kept pure among the ‘Aryans’. This also worsened towards the end of the war with the imperative needs of manpower and an almost anarchic situation with sex often being traded like goods.

The third similarity is racism and hostility which exists as a daily threat. *Brave New World* has used deliberately racist terms to refer to Africans and Native Americans who appeared in the book all to be at the bottom of the social hierarchy who interminably does all the most menial works and could never have a chance to enhance their social status. Furthermore, when the ‘Savage’, Bernard and Helmholtz were called to ‘His Fordship’s’ office to discuss about their own disposal, the Controller ‘offered’ them the chance to go off to an island to seek for the truth and beauty which they were complaining for, but later added that ‘It’s lucky that there are such a lot of islands in the world. I don’t know what we should do without them. Put you all in the lethal chamber, I suppose.’ This clearly implies that the consequence for these three men is not going to be the peaceful, undisturbed heaven that they imagined but rather quite the opposite - a place similar to the holocaust. After Hitler became the chancellor in 1933, first the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 then the Kristallnacht in 1938 and finally the ‘final solution of Jews’ drafted at the Wannsee conference, the Jewish people were again forced into exile because of a racial ideology. At the start, the public was told that their Jewish friends had been relocated to the far East which was the new gained territory. In order to prove this, the government did allow vague communication which distracted from people’s interest about them, hence being a good chance for the Nazis to move them into established ghettos and concentration camps mainly located in Poland to execute mass murders in these ‘lethal chambers’ which millions of people never came out of it.

Overall, despite the fact that *Brave New World* was finished before the actual emergence of Nazi Germany, it bears resemblances in terms of governmental control, reproduction regime and discrimination hence being a real life personification of it. This undoubtedly becomes a vivid admonishment of the fight against totalitarianism as Nazi Germany was once a legitimate country with a robust government and wholesome constitution, but no one had ever thought that they were planning to exterminate the ‘lower race’ as to establish death camps and massacring millions.

In summary, I believe *Brave New World* portrays an extremely well-planned and seemingly wholesome system since it never coerced the people to remain under their control but rather the opposite, and still they manage to hold firm onto power. They did this by creating the illusion that the power was actually in the people’s hands through the encouragement of excessive drugs and sex, and the ignorance of truth and beauty. Its slogan, ‘Community, Identity, Stability’ clearly means something else than it literally seems to convey, or in other words, it could be read as ‘Subordination, Class, Hypnotism.’ Everything is dedicated to the functioning of the ‘civilised’ world rather than for the purpose of human life, which challenges us as an individual to find the correct balance between individualism and collectivism, alongside the role that sex and drugs should play in our daily life. The relationship between the society decided and Nazi Germany is very shocking as we think about all these crimes done by one of the most ‘civilised’ countries today and look at it as a failed attempt of an establishment of a dystopian world, A Brave New World. But if it had arrived then, how could we be so sure that it will not arrive again in the foreseeable future, or even at this very moment?