

Brave New World

First Harper Perennial Modern Classics Edition
Concept Analysis

Plot Summary and Organizational Patterns:

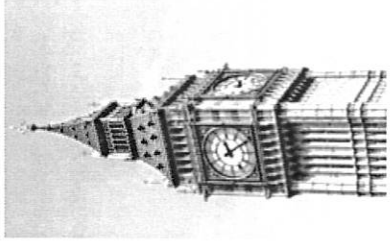
Brave New World, a novel about the future condition of the world in 2540 A.D., describes the so-called advances society makes as it does away with personal agency, accountability, and freedom. Characters have been bred into social caste system; a system that they have no ability to move from. The story takes a new turn when readers are introduced to the "savage reservation"—the only place in the world that is "uncivilized." Here families, religion, and freedom are still intact. The story climaxes when a few of the characters from the reservation come to live in the civilized world. It is their reactions that teach about the value of individuality, self control, and reality that are missing from this future world at hand.

The novel is divided into chapters, which in some places, are subsequently divided into parts. The parts tend to begin anew when either a different character or a new event begins to guide the story. This organizational strategy helps to keep the novel structured so as to show change of perspective without confusion. For the majority of the story it is clear to readers who is speaking, however in the third chapter (pages 30-56), every line contains new dialogue or information about a different situation. While it can be confusing, it is one way the author shows connection between the characters and events talked about in the section. The Controller is describing how the world came to be "stable," Lenina is talking to a friend about her sex-life, and Bernard is becoming irritated with men talking about Lenina like she is meat(. These three different situations intertwined give information about the workings of the world in this futuristic period, while showcasing characters and how their lives are effected by the ways of the new world. This part is a little difficult to follow and may require assistance in order for students to comprehend what is happening on those pages.

Issues Related to This Study of Literature-

Themes:

Individuality- Loss of individuality is one of the consequences of the "stability" of the new world civilization. Everyone does what they're



achieve stability. The resident controller for Western Europe, Mustapha Mond, explains why everyone prefers this counterfeit lifestyle: "...We have our stability to think of. We don't want to change. Every change is a menace to stability" (224-225). The people of the world have finally achieved "stability", where everyone in every class is assigned certain roles. And even if something goes wrong everyone has access to *soma*, which is a drug always available, which induces happiness (77).

An important shift in the story comes when Lenina and Bernard travel to New Mexico to visit a "savage reservation," otherwise known as an Indian reservation. This setting change is critical because they witness on the reservation how life used to be before the world obtained "stability." They meet John, the son of a former member of the new world, who they bring back to London with them. John is a foreigner to the new world and through his presence the flaws of "stability" are exposed.

Point of View:

The story is narrated in third person omniscient point of view. The narrator is unknown, but is able to view both thoughts and actions of the characters. However, the majority of the story is either from Bernard's or John's perspectives.

Irony:

Brave New World is an example of dramatic irony. The characters are all trained to believe that their lives are reality. They never realize the horror of being so controlled, or the connotations associated with the most powerful men, called incidentally, controllers. It is ironic that those they call savages, live in the natural and real world. They are horrified by this and the true "savage," John is horrified by life in outside of the reservation.

Situational irony is used when Bernard brings John to London. He originally does so to rescue him from savagery, give him a better way of life, and use him for his own promotion. Contrary to the character's expectations this decision ironically proves to be the downfall for both characters. Bernard is exiled and John eventually kills himself.

Another example of situational irony occurs when Lenina comes to seduce John. Readers know that John is infatuated with Lenina and vice

Does instant gratification bring happiness? Why or why not? Why do the controllers believe it to be a good idea? Is self-control important or valuable, why or why not? These issues not only relate to student situations, but also may help students make better choices in critical moments of future decision.

Vocabulary Issues:

There are a lot of difficult words throughout the novel. Teaching it would provide a great opportunity for a vocabulary list and quiz because the students would be able to see how the words work in context.

Teachers might also use the novel for a chance to encourage annotation. Every time the student comes across an unfamiliar word they can make a note of it and look it up.

A lot of the difficult words in the book are a result of its British author and culture. This could provide a great time to talk about dialects. While the British speak English, it is a different dialect with words foreign to Americans.

Some good words to discuss:

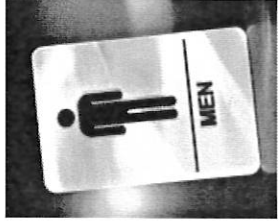
- Viviparous
- Pneumatic
- Ruminate
- Teeming
- Magnanimity
- Cajolery

Implications for Student Diversity:

Recognizing and discussing the loss of individuality in *Brave New World* would highlight, for diverse students, the power of being different. All students are diverse in some ways and this novel can help students appreciate their differences, because they get a glimpse into a world without diversity.

It would also be valuable to discuss the prejudices that the people have against "savages" as well as the prejudice the Indians have against Linda as a "civilized" person. This is a way for students of diversity to relate to the text and to share similar experiences they may have had. It also opens nicely into a discussion about acceptance and tolerance of differences.

something is amiss with this belief system. Yet, even he plays into it when he gains popularity.



The time spent on the Indian reservation does present gender issues. Linda, trained to be promiscuous in the "civilized" world, continues this lifestyle even when she enters the savage world (121-122). The women on the reservation hate her and hurt her for it. The men she sleeps with—on the other hand—face no consequence and receive no stigma(126). This reflects inequality in judgment between men and women.

Research Projects:

- 1- Considering elements of the novel, students—either grouped or individually—create a utopia of their own. What would they do if they were in control? Where would people live? Family structure? Employment? Government? Have them create a constitution for their utopia, keeping in mind the problems of the utopia in the novel and how those will be addressed in their own creations.
- 2- Students create a collage or map including pictures, written information, and symbols about what makes them an individual. Accompanying the project is a short essay about why or why not they feel individuality is important.
- 3- Assuming the school has accessible computers for students, teach them how to create a movie or podcast. Using these technologies students will gather music, words, images, and/or voiceovers and create a movie or podcast that represents the themes and tone of *Brave New World*.
- 4- Have students research Henry Ford and his contributions to the world. Why did Huxley choose him to be the "god" of the future? This project could take the form of a research paper and a creative project. In addition to writing an essay, students build models or present examples of Ford's creations i.e. Model T., assembly line etc.
- 5- Have students participate in a reader's theater. Using the semi-confusing and sporadic dialogue from the third chapter students will stay engaged in the material and have a better understanding of what is happening and who is speaking.

Enrichment Texts:

- 1- Population Census (information and/or graph): growth from 1932 to now: Gives census information that allows students to compare the population from when the book was written (1932) and the population now, to the population in *Brave New World*.