

Scientific rationalism

Brave New World depicts a eugenic experiment that was conducted by a world government, the Fordian state. It is really a form of scientific totalitarianism and is a vision of a mechanised world. Science is an instrument for power. The Fordian state is a secular culture dominated by science and industrialisation, and supported by Fordian technology and Pavlovian conditioning. Marxist collectivism and a culture dedicated to sexual pleasure is used to stabilise society.

In Huxley's constructed world, the globe is divided into areas that are ruled over by one of ten World Controllers. When the World State was established war was eliminated. In embracing science as the way to produce citizens for the World State and maintain order within it, Huxley presents a strong rejection of nature and its rhythms. Birth, struggle, human bonding, ageing and death have been eradicated to ensure social stability. Mustapha Mond tells the reader that there can be no social stability without individual stability. The state controls humanity and nature, and this has led to dehumanisation and humanity's separation from the natural environment. This social experiment is an ectogenesis.

Huxley's ectogenesis offers solutions to society's problems such as over-population and social restlessness. Control is not direct but the World Controllers use 'the slower but infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopaedia' (p.42) and maintain that 'all men are photo-chemically equal'. (p.61)

Nature is seen as a problem that needs to be controlled and overcome. People responding to natural desires are responsible for the problem of over-population. The Director of the Hatchery says 'But our business is to stabilise the population at this moment, here and now'. (p.5)

Nature's unpredictability meant that there was an infinite variety of individual differences which contributed to social instability. In the brave new world scientists control the characteristics of people and the number of different types in each category. In the caste system people are classified according to their level of intelligence. The dominant values of the World Controller are captured in the World State motto: 'Stability, Community and Identity'. In the brave new world identity is a caste issue and this is criticised by Huxley who shows the difficulty an individual has in pursuing a peaceful existence. Humans are genetically engineered and no longer unique individuals but one of 11,000 identical brothers and sisters. They are merely a cell in the social body. In Chapter 10, the making of an individual is regarded as a mechanical process and the unique individual is not valued. 'What is an individual?' says the Director. 'We can make a new one with the greatest of ease – as many as we like.' (p.121)

Each caste is colour-coded and performs a special pre-destined socio-economic function. This was to guarantee full employment and prevent the unemployment problems that Huxley witnessed in Britain during the Depression. It also ensured adequate skilled labour for industry and social stability. A fixed social order is valued and this reflects a concern about the collapsing social order that surrounded the production of the novel, and Huxley's support for the rigid English class system.

In Huxley's representation of a social experiment in eugenics, scientists are intent on improving on nature, which could only produce 'one egg, one embryo, one adult – normality'. (p.3) Ironically, scientific methods are represented as superior to nature by enabling humanity to make 'ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress'. (p.3)

Hatchery

In the opening chapters of his novel Huxley foregrounds the issues of birth and conditioning. The setting is a big factory in the middle of London where the products are human beings. In *Brave New World* the government attempts to establish a form of soft totalitarian control through its control of the