

# **Aldous Huxley: When to Be Brave and New Is not Enough**

**Khawla Dwikat<sup>1</sup> and Prof. Samira al-Khawaldeh<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>The University of Jordan  
Email: [khawladwikat@yahoo.com](mailto:khawladwikat@yahoo.com)

<sup>2</sup>The University of Jordan  
Email: [s.khawaldeh@ju.edu.jo](mailto:s.khawaldeh@ju.edu.jo)

**Corresponding Author:**

**Prof. Samira al-Khawaldeh**

P.O.Box 961651

Sports City, Amman, 111 96

Jordan

Email: [s.khawaldeh@gmail.com](mailto:s.khawaldeh@gmail.com) / [s.khawaldeh@ju.edu.jo](mailto:s.khawaldeh@ju.edu.jo)

**Published:** 31 October 2020

**Copyright** © Dwikat et al.

## Abstract

As a modernist self-exiled intellectual, Huxley composes dystopian Sci-Fi *Brave New World* (1932), a novel that sketches in a Juvenalian mode a gruesome portrait of the future to satirize the present of modern Western civilization. Written during a period of unparalleled instability in the Western world, the novel comes as a prophecy of a future where man's final purpose of life becomes irrelevant; where violence, power, science, progress and technology are forces that rule, manipulate and distract the human race; the race that has already lost touch with its "perennial self" and the unitive knowledge of the "Divine Ground of all being". This article aims at reading Huxley's novel via the lens of his philosophical writings mainly, *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945), and to present Huxley as the intellectual who advocates the necessity of bridging the gap between science and religio-philosophy.

**Keywords:** Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Perennial philosophy, religio-philosophy, satirical Sci-Fi, criticism of science

## Introduction

Aldous Huxley (1894-19630) occupies the unique position of not only as a literary author but also that of the scientist, socio-cultural critic, satirist as well as a Perennial philosopher. Having lived a life of self-exile, first in Italy, then in the United States of America, Huxley seems to have given himself the chance to be detached from his familiar environment so as to see things from a distance and perhaps from a different perspective. In his most famous novel *Brave New World* (1932) Huxley applies satire in the sense Northrop Frye (1957) designates: "[S]atire is militant irony: its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured" (p. 223). He employs satire to prophecy the ultimate physical and spiritual destruction that awaits humanity as a consequence to the blind worship of power, progress, and science. The novel translates his anxieties regarding humanity's ultimate pursuit of such temptations and its total lack of any awareness of its soul and spiritual needs.

## What makes a world "brave and new"?

*Brave New World* takes place at the imaginary Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre in the year 632 A.F. (after Henry Ford, father of mass-production and consumerism in the real world, as well as the worshiped god in Huxley's *Brave New World*). The novel starts at a new moment in history that has nothing to do with any preceding history, philosophy or religion. It begins at a moment on a calendar based on the birth and death of Henry Ford whose famous statement is "History is more or less bunk" (Sawyer, 2015, p. 80). Hence, the novel pictures a whole new mass-produced world that is moving inside an unprecedented enhanced factory where ninety-six human beings are manufactured from one specific fertilized egg and habituated to their planned future lives. A decanted race and a world society, which consists of five biologically manipulated genetic castes, the "Alphas", the "Betas", the "Gammas", the "Deltas" and the "Epsilons", who are all Bokanovskily fashioned, "physio-chemically equal" and assigned to their proper place in the social and economic hierarchy. They have been moving "through the caste system as a fish through water" (Huxley, 1932, pp. 56-61). From the moment of their decanting up until their death, they are contrived, mobilized and subjected to mind control and brainwashing through hypnopedia, electric shocks, sexual promiscuity, mandatory contraceptives, sterilization,

euthanasia, in addition to the systematic dosages of the drug *soma*. A system of eugenics is fantastically functioning “to standardize the human product and so to facilitate the task of the managers” (Huxley, 1932, p. xiv). Ten World Controllers are running the Brave World to maintain its stability and the conformity of its custom-tailored populace.

In this Brave World, nothing is running naturally; everything is systematical, accurately planned, and totally mechanical; there is no room left for human sentiments. It is a world society manufactured by science and technology where the State is commanding and controlling all individual practices and private experiencing as well as directing them into politically monitored societal junctures. When it comes to social events and religious “orgy- porgies”, the Worlders are also orchestrated to glorify and thank “Lord Ford” as well as to traverse the realm of utter pleasure and contentment through the aid of psychedelics like *soma*. All possible anxieties are alleviated, and all private activities are regularly reported as well as aired on the Brave World “Hourly Radio”.

All genetic castes are programmed to be content with their assigned position, pleased with being members of their own manufactured caste and at ease with the fact that they are mechanically designed to die abruptly and gently at the age of sixty where no public hassle or mourning over the dead is permissible. Death appears to be calculated, bureaucratic, and void of poignancy. Besides, in order to maintain both the stability of the society and the conformity of the five castes, the World Controllers grasp the necessity of maintaining the ideal number for the Brave New World population via considerate control of births and deaths. They deprived nature from its natural function in matters of life and death. Procreation and State’s population are maintained to be under the absolute monitoring and jurisdiction of the State Controllers and their fellow eugenics and specialists to ensure the State’s permanency and durability. The minds of the State Controllers are voiced by Huxley (1958) in his *Brave New World Revisited* as he speaks of the Brave World Controllers’ fears of overpopulation which might lead “to economic insecurity and social unrest... unrest and insecurity lead to more control by central governments and an increase of their power...this increased power will probably be exercised in a dictatorial fashion” (p. 11).

Along with maintaining the ideal number of population other precautions have been enacted to maintain not only the physical but also the psychological stability of the Brave New Worlders. Such as banning philosophical, literary and religious books and keeping them “locked up in the safe” (Huxley, 1932, p. 192). The State Controllers forbid the inhabitants from reading books because they know that books might generate consciousness of threatening concepts such as, liberty, nobility, individuality, chastity, family, and humanity. Critics assert that in this novel, Huxley depicts a society where sexual permissiveness, technological development, selective breeding and the debasement of popular culture are carried to the limit, creating a world of insipid, conformist mediocrity” (Batra, 2008, pp. 18-19). The five castes are physically and psychologically acclimatized to despise nature as well; for nature and books are two factors that could guide them through to discover something beyond their material existence such as their “perennial self”; or could trigger a flame that might lead them to discover their “Divine Reality”. Accordingly, Pavlovian conditioning techniques are employed by the Controllers as means for governing the citizens psychologically after manipulating them biologically. Starting from the moment when the embryos are clutched from the incubators, psychological experiments are conducted for creating inside the hatched babies instinctive animosity toward books and flowers, knowledge and nature.

In the Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Room and in the Social Predestination Room human behaviors are controlled through a stimulus-response procedure. The core drive behind enacting

such procedure is to stimulate fear and distress inside the Worlders' mind and soul. The Controllers believe both books and nature might instigate instability and "instability means the end of civilization" (Huxley, 1932, p. 194). They recognize the fact that "Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing" (Huxley, 1945, p. vii). This knowledge is what must be biotechnologically observed and mechanically induced in order to maintain the State's well-being.

While composing this narrative, Huxley has been following the steps of the eighteenth-century writers where he uses Juvenalian and sometimes Horatian satires to comment on the unimaginable horrors of the war as well as to mock the misuse of science and technology by world powers who are "greedy for profit and glory...conservative [nationalistic radicals] determined at all costs to keep their world intact, as a going concern" (Huxley, 1932, p. xi). Harold Bloom (2004) sees the novel as "a vision of T. S. Eliot's Waste Land, of a world without authentic belief and spiritual values" (p. 8).

### **When science collaborates with tyranny**

Huxley has been worried that those conservative nationalistic power hunters "could dominate people by social, educational, pharmaceutical arrangements...iron them into a kind of uniformity, if [they] were able to manipulate their genetic background...if [they] had a government sufficiently unscrupulous [they] could do these things without any doubt" (qtd in Bedford, 2002, p. 245). However, like many of the eighteenth-century intellectuals such as Johnathan Swift in his *Gulliver's Travels*, Huxley believes that it is not science *per se* what distracts and isolates the human being but it is in fact the obvious detachment between modern man and both his "perennial self" and the "Divine Ground". Huxley (1945) defines Perennial Philosophy as:

[T]he metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being the thing is immemorial and universal. (p.1)

Karl Jasper (1950), writes of this kind of religio-philosophy in his *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy* and calls it "Philosophical faith, the faith of the thinking man," which "has always this distinguishing feature: it is allied with knowledge. It wants to know what is knowable, and to be conscious of its own premises" (p. 17). Jasper believes that philosophy represents the human strife to comprehend eternal truth, which is perennial in the sense that it is "always the same, the one and the whole truth (p. 150). His views coincide with those of Huxley as he starts with criticism of contemporary civilization:

To-day there is a de facto nihilism in numerous forms. Men have appeared, who seem to have abandoned all inwardness, for whom nothing seems to have any value, who stagger through a world of accident from moment to moment, who die with indifference and kill with indifference - but who seem to live in intoxicating quantitative conceptions, in bind interchangeable fanaticisms, driven by elemental, irrational, overpowering and yet quickly passing emotions, and ultimately by instinctual urge for the pleasure of the moment. (Jasper, 1950, pp.135-4)

Huxley too satirizes modern man who is scientifically oriented and decanted in a world of totalitarianism, consumerism; distracted by dogmatic atheism which denies the existence of a

“Divine Ground” and negates man’s ultimate end which is the unitive knowledge of what he terms as the “Pure Light of the Void”. Huxley does not repudiate the necessity of science; but he aims to show that science comes to be of value when it serves humanity to reach a better state not when it governs and dehumanizes the human. Progressive sciences must be used like “the Sabbath they had been made for man, not (as at present and still more so in the *Brave New World*) as though man were to be adapted and enslaved to them” (Huxley, 1932, p. ix). In the preface to his *Brave New World*, Huxley voices his concerns regarding the religious condition of modern Western civilization particularly in its similarity to the *Brave New World*, where totalitarianism has replaced “Utilitarianism” and where religion, spirituality and humanity have been altered by that fake dream of future utopia, hailed nationalism, and ultimate happiness. He believes that:

Religion would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of man’s Final End, the unitive knowledge of the immanent Tao or Logos, the transcendent Godhead or Brahman. And the prevailing philosophy of life would be a kind of Higher Utilitarianism, in which the Greatest Happiness principle would be secondary to the Final End principle. (Huxley, 1932, p. ix)

In this novel, Huxley follows a logical and a systematic sociocultural criticism of modern Western civilization; a criticism that is incontrovertibly ethical and philosophical in nature. His verdict on totalitarian modern Western civilization has been cacophonously outspoken to satirize not only the body politics but also the whole structure of society, that has been physically, psychologically, educationally, faithfully, as well as mentally subjugated to that ineluctable servitude. His fiction launches warning alarms against the atrocities caused by the blind trust in progressive science and its technological creations which have been planned to manipulate and conquer not only the human individual but also human nature itself as well as to erode all connections to mysticity or spirituality.

Huxley (1932) states that the ultimate purpose behind writing his trilogy has been to shock humanity into awareness to question the current prevailing human condition, to observe how societies are developing and to prognosticate where humanity might be heading. His satire and anxieties have been echoed within the lines of his forward to *Brave New World* accentuating that:

The theme of *Brave New World* is not the advancement of science as such; it is the advancement of science as it affects human individuals. The triumphs of physics, chemistry and engineering are tacitly taken for granted. The only scientific advances to be specifically described are those involving the application to human beings of the result of future research in biology, physiology and psychology. (x)

Progresses achieved via the unregulated use of sciences such as biology, chemistry, pharmacology, physiology, ecology and psychology have been accompanied by calamitous repercussions upon nature, society and humanity in general. *Brave New World* addresses diverse issues which have been revisited in Huxley’s other works such as *Ape and Essence* and appear to be partly handled in his *Island*; issues such as, the current ethical and moral decadence, the inception of new gods or in the Huxleyan phraseology “Molochs”, the alteration of religion with various dogmatic “pseudo-religions” or “higher idolatries”, the misuse of science and technology, over industrialization, human standardization, commodification, and overpopulation; along with, bellicose nationalism and militarism. Both *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence* (1948) divulge the horrendous sociopolitical, cultural, economic and religious consequences of different theories and political ideologies that have been prevalent during modern times, such as Darwin’s theory of evolution,

Freud's theory of the human psyche, Nietzsche's Existentialism, Marx's dialectical materialism, and even Fordism, Fascism, and Nazism, all of which Huxley has been critical and satirical. Both narratives exhibit how the abuse of science and technological inventions by unscrupulous world powers can generate a mindless conforming society devoid of humanity, liberty and spirituality.

The trilogy prophecies a future where science and technology are programmed to deprive humanity from any sense or rational thinking about what they are undergoing or living. It shows how people pretermite their original state of being as humans and idolize their enslavement; that, in fact, calls into existence a "supra-national totalitarianism" (Huxley, 1932, p. xv). The trilogy depicts three different societies. In *Brave New World* as well as *Ape and Essence*, enormous aspects of scientific studies have been militarized for the sake of building a system of centralized industry and concentrating economic powers in the hands of a ruling minority. Thus, this ruling minority matures into sovereign world powers and fosters new "Molochs" who establish their own "pseudo-religions" that have been transformed into dogmas which have been neither resistible nor negated; for "[t]hey are recommended by men of science as an up-to-date substitute for genuine religion and by many professional religious teachers are equated with the worship of God" (Huxley, 1945, p. 250).

### **Getting engaged with history**

It is important to observe how Huxley's narrative recounts a cluster of historical, socio-political, cultural and economic vicissitudes in contemporary Western societies. During the time, a worldwide politic and economic depression with ensuing social and religious distress had fueled support for authoritarian regimes principally that of Fascism and Nazism. Chancellor Adolf Hitler's and Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini's monocracies gained foothold of power where pure violence was their sole road to consolidate their power. Joseph Stalin's great purges during the Soviet Union led to great horrors and proved to be atrocious flounders. Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia were also a great menace not only to the socio-political and economic welfare but also to the religious liberty and well-being of Western contemporary societies. Huxley's *Brave New World* appears to epitomize most of these world events.

The narrative plunges the reader into a techno-hedonist society where some of the aforementioned political figures appear to be incognito named like Bernard Marx, Polly Trotsky, Benito Hoover and Lenina Crowne. We can associate them respectively with Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, Benito Mussolini, Herbert Hoover and Vladimir Lenin. The novel prophecies the upsurge of "scientific dictatorships" as well as future political ideologies such as those of Hitler, Lenin, and Mao which metamorphose into dogmas headed by egoistical tyrants who stage themselves to their nations and to the whole world as omnipresent undefeated gods. The narrative prophecies how such world powers could be capable of engaging fierce wars against conventional sociopolitical, cultural, religious, and even biological and natural norms to consolidate their dogmas that surface as new promising religions or "pseudo-religions". Captivatingly, by the end of the twentieth century Huxley's worries and prophecies have been confirmed.

In fact, it is significant to read *Brave New World* while keeping in mind the sociopolitical context accompanying its publication since this context is entrenched within the fabrics of the narrative. Few years before the publication of *Brave New World*, the National Fascist Party leader Benito Mussolini succeeded into power. Italy transformed into "a police state" under the guise of socialism. Mussolini was concerned with changing the existing Italian society into a kind of perfect

technically run society. At the time, he established a totalitarian despotic regime, enacting a chain of Fascist laws targeted to license more power into the hands of his government including “launching a program of Fascist indoctrination of youth beginning in elementary school” (Iodice, 2018, p. 11), promoting and propagating patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, and other propagandas as well as orchestrating all past and current theoretical, scientific, and technological studies and discoveries for the welfare of the established regime. As Huxley indicates in *Ends and Means* (1937), “the dictator’s subjects are systematically educated to be good citizens of the Fascist state” (p. 33). Under the tent of Fascism, freedom of expression is prohibited, democracy is buried and replaced by Fascist despotism, “patriotism [is replaced by] the uncontrollable monster of blind nationalism” (Iodice, 2018, p. 25), peace is substituted by warfare, media and the press are controlled, censored and utilized to cultivate the Fascist sovereignty and to diffuse its dogmatic ideologies way through the fabrics of the Italian society.

*Brave New World* also represents the totalitarian regimes’ common vision of a future Utopia that could be brought to life via a collaborative work between scientists, biologists, eugenicists, and political authorities with a under the motto “the fecundity of a people determined the power and greatness of a nation (Quine, 2012, p. 110)”. As Maria Sophia Quine elucidates in her 2012 article “Racial ‘Sterility’ and ‘HyperFecundity’ in Fascist Italy” that:

These twin objectives [proliferating the quantity and ameliorating the quality of the Italian race] came to fruition in the new scientific and political paradigm known to contemporaries as ‘biological politics’ and to scholars today as ‘biopolitics’. Fascism attempted to utilize the full force of the new ‘biopower’ of reproductive and biogenetic medicine and science in order to realize the aims of its biopolitical agenda for racial betterment through fertility increase. (p. 1)

Huxley satirizes such notions and dedicates one of his essays entitled “Eugenics” to assert that “if the eugenicists are in too much of an enthusiastic hurry to improve the race, they will only succeed in destroying it” (qtd in Murray, 2009, p. 207). However, Mussolini’s authoritarian regime authenticated a unique formula championing “bio-progressivism” and “tech-progressivism” that work through scientific manipulation of biotechnology for the sake of pioneering both a brave new state and a new world power that are economically and socio-politically unlike any other state. Huxley (1937) mockingly comments that “as a matter of historical fact, scientific progressiveness has never been divorced from aggressiveness” (p. 21); nonetheless, “thanks to technological progress, Big Brother can now be almost as omnipresent as God” (Huxley, 1958, p.38).

It has been evident that the Italian fascist dictatorship has unleashed a chain of xenophobic policies and chauvinistic activities that have affected the entire world where ethnology, anthropology, physiology, biochemical technologies came to be the matrix of its apparition of a pure, prolific, supreme race (Quine, 2012, p. 97). The image of Benito Mussolini and the atrocities committed in the name of his despotic regime are present in the background of the *Brave World*. Most of the techniques and scientific procedures that have been depicted and extensively described by Huxley in his *Brave New World* came to be practiced in a large scale by Mussolini and other current political demagogues. Mussolini as well as his utmost ally Adolf Hitler have been depending not only on the efforts of the Eugenics Society; but also, they have been exploiting all fields of applied sciences such as psychology and neurology “for inducing people to love their servitude” (Huxley, 1962, p. 4). They have been trying to make use of all policies accessible in order “to standardize the population, to iron out inconvenient human differences, to create, to say,

mass produced models of human beings arranged in some sort of scientific caste system” (Huxley, 1962, p. 2). They speak of social democracy and human liberty, but they pursue the path of supremacy and self-interest. Both have hired all means possible among them come all religious, public and private institutions that have been targeted to infiltrate Fascist and Nazis orthodoxies into the minds and spirits of the targeted nation. As Iodice mentions in his 2018 article “Lessons from History: The Startling Rise to Power of Benito Mussolini” that, “[t]he Doctrine of Fascism became the bible of tyrants and the mechanism of an authoritarian regime” (p. 12).

Alongside abusing science and technology, both regimes have been deploying religion as a cape under which their orthodoxies could be camouflaged since both dictatorships have been conscious of the effect religion could leave upon people’s minds and spirits. Both scientific and political dictatorships occupy a great space in Huxley’s sociopolitical and cultural criticism, his satirical voice has been condemning Hitler’s and Mussolini’s policies. He describes Hitler as “the greatest demagogue in history” whose aim:

was first to move the masses and then, having pried them loose from their traditional loyalties and moralities, to impose upon them (with the hypnotized consent of the majority) a new authoritarian order of his own devising... Hitler has a deep respect for the Catholic church and the Jesuit order; not because of the ‘machinery’ they have elaborated and controlled, their hierarchical system, their extremely clever tactic, their knowledge of human nature and their wise use of human weaknesses in ruling over believers. Ecclesiasticism without Christianity, the discipline of a monastic rule, not for God’s sake or in order to achieve personal salvation, but for the greater glory and power of the demagogue turned Leader. (Huxley, 1958, p. 40)

Huxley dedicates a large space in his philosophy and literature to express his dissatisfaction with contemporary Christianity in particular and in Western determinism in general. He clarifies how rival demagogues specifically Hitler master the art of manipulating and exploiting the masses. they know how to play on the unspoken fears and anxieties of their addressees in order to manipulate them mentally and psychologically. In fact, Hitler’s dictatorship differs from all its antecedents in history in the way his despotism was the first dictatorship in the present period of modern technical development, a dictatorship which made complete use of all technical means for the domination of its own country. Through technical devices like the radio and the loudspeakers, eighty million people were deprived of independent thought. (Huxley, 1958, p. 37)

Hitler understands very well that religious institutions have a great influence over the masses where the church representatives own “extremely clever tactic, their knowledge of human nature and their wise use of human weaknesses in ruling over believers.” This enabled them to use the language of theology “to intensify the nationalistic sentiments” (Huxley, 1937, p. 26), and to hail nationalism as the new religion in Germany and other parts of the world.

Hitler, who was influenced by his greatest ally Mussolini, understood that propaganda must be presented in black and-white terms, as one-sided, dogmatic assertions repeated over and over. He applied an effective tactic that Huxley named later in his article “Substitutes for Liberation”- that appeared in his collection of *Huxley and God: Essays on Religious Experience* - as “herd poisoning” or “crowd intoxication” (Huxley, 1992, p. 134). Herd poisoning is a tactic targeted to strip individuals away from any sense of individuality, “responsibility, intelligence and morality” through subjecting the individual to the “frantic, animal mindlessness” of the crowd. Through “herd intoxication” which is considered as something legitimate and even highly desirable, the leaders of



church and state have actively used this stratagem for the furtherance of their own ends. As “Herded into mobs”, the masses demonstrate no capacity for rational thought, free will or free choice in the lights of ethical or moral principles; they are reduced “to a condition of infra-personal and antisocial irresponsibility. Drugged by the mysterious poison which every excited crowd secretes, they fall into a state of heightened suggestibility [... to] believe any nonsense and obey any command” (Huxley, 1992, p. 134). According to Huxley (1992), “Herd poisoning” functions just as any zestful “extraverted drug” (p. 41) where the leader addresses the masses directly to inject their minds with enthusiastic rhetorical registers, to gain their consensus and to stimulate that sense of nationalism. In his orations, Hitler - who really understood human weakness - tended to speak with “a rhythmic flow of carefully pronounced words that seemed like flaming arrows fired at his audience. It would be his iconic style of oratory that he would use to hypnotize and frighten the masses (Iodice, 2018, p. 6)”.

As Huxley (March 20, 1962) mentions in his lecture at Berkeley Language Center titled “The Ultimate Revolution” that Hitler has mastered the Pavlovian technique; he knew that; conditioning installed in a state of stress or fatigue goes much deeper than conditioning installed at other times. This was why all his big speeches were organized at night. He speaks on this quite frankly ... he says this was done solely because people are tired at night and therefore much less capable of resisting persuasion than they would be during the day. (Huxley, 1962, p. 5)

In the prophetic narratives of *Brave New World* as well as *Ape and Essence*, “crowd-delirium” or “crowd intoxication” prospers far beyond the point it has actually reached under the dictatorships of Mussolini and Hitler. The inhabitants of both fictional worlds appear to be far more obsequious and far more deindividualized than their real counterparts. Moreover, both nations, the Brave New Worlders and the Lose Angelenos in *Ape and Essence* had been genetically homogenized and postnatally standardized to accept their servitude and to conform to their being mere automata. This social planning and systematic conditioning of the nations had been already running on under the Communist and Capitalist dictatorships in modern times even before the publication of both novels; however, it has been magnified and satirized in the realms of both narratives.

All the atrocities committed against other nations in the first half of the twentieth century were justified by Darwin’s concepts of the “Struggle for Existence” as well as the “Survival of the fittest”. Since the Italians and the Germans were adjudging themselves as superior to any other existing races, both were exclusivists and resilient advocates of their right and privilege to rule other “inferior” nations. Consequently, Huxley’s artifacts expressed an unswerving attack on Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection. *Brave New World* is saturated with Huxley’s accelerating anti-Darwinism. He argues that Social Darwinism, which is a Eurocentric, racist and nationalistic form of Darwinism, gave birth to unconceivable horrors, ethical crises, and intolerable acts of mass violence, the worst of these being the genocide committed by the Nazi regime during WWII in the name of “improving the race” and the atrocities committed by Mussolini against other nations under the guise of Darwin’s “struggle for existence”. In *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence*, Huxley addresses many of the current sociopolitical, economic, ecological, scientific, and technological issues long before they manifested themselves in real life such as sectarian wars, overpopulation, over standardization, euthanasia, sterilization, and commodification. Furthermore, in his philosophical books *Ends and Means* and *Science, Liberty and Peace*, Huxley expresses his worries concerning the way dogmatic principles of Nazism and Fascism have replaced moral,

ethical and religious values of contemporary Western societies. He speaks of their propagandas that proved to be highly effective in distorting the masses' consciousness and morality in no time. With the help of the pseudo-science of eugenics and Darwin's theory of evolution, those demagogues have been able to implement their plans of "racial hygiene".

### **The diminishing ethical and spiritual factors**

Both novels speak of the advances in medical science, biotechnology, and pharmacology during the early decades of the twentieth century which have led to a considerable progression in prolonging life, reducing sufferings, curing sickness and restoring health. Such advances have been perceived optimistically by many as "ethical, caring and humane [...] However, as much as there are dedicated and humane medical professionals during the course of history, there have also been numerous instances where members of such noble profession put their scalpel and skills at the service of evil people" (Harees, 2012, p. 300). Under the influence of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, such progress has brought to the forefront issues related to the genetic quality and quantity of human life as well as fortified debates with respect to euthanasia and to forced and voluntary sterilization.

Euthanasia and sterilization have been a world-wide contested issue particularly in contemporary Western societies where anti/pro-euthanasia as well as anti/pro-sterilization movements manifested themselves in a socio-political dispute between those who are justifying and propagating and those who are denying and defying the right to practice both policies. In fact, it comes to be difficult to have one sole definition of "Euthanasia". According to *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, "Euthanasia" is a word derived from the Greek words *eu* and *thanatos*, simply means a "gentle and easy death" (p. 862). Whereas in the Belgian Euthanasia Act 2002, "Euthanasia" is defined as the "administration of lethal drugs at the explicit request of the patient with the explicit intention of shortening the patient's life". Yet, within the medical context and according to Dr. John Keown (2004), a professor of Christian Ethics in the Kennedy Institute of Ethics and the author of *Euthanasia, Ethics and Public Policy. An Argument Against Legalization*, "Euthanasia" connotes the intentional and deliberate termination of a patient's life by doctors depending on their faith and confidence that:

death would benefit the patient, that the patient would be better off dead, typically because the patient is suffering gravely from a terminal or incapacitating illness or because the patient's condition is thought to be an 'indignity'. Without this third feature, there would be nothing to distinguish euthanasia from cold-blooded murder for selfish motives. (p. 11)

However, under Hitler's Third Reich, euthanasia meant something completely different in theory and practice where countless lives have been eliminated by racial measures. In fact, Hitler was "the first politician with truly wide influence who has recognized that the central mission of all politics is race hygiene" and who enthusiastically supported and funded the German Eugenic Society procedures to have full control over reproduction and heredity. He aspired to consolidate the German "national body" by obliterating biologically threatening genes from the population (Conroy, 2019, p. 149). Following their dictator's aspiration, the Germans accepted "Euthanasia" as "mercy killing" of children with disabilities; which encouraged the first political enactment of "Children's Euthanasia Programme" that was activated on September 1, 1939 by Hitler who legally authorized an organization headed by Dr. Karl Brandt and Philip Bouhler to implement this

program. The organization was disguised under the name, the “Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Serious Hereditary and Congenitally Based Illnesses” (Benedict et al, 2009, p. 3). As Harees (20012) states that the Nazi regime’s

assessors based their decision to kill the children based on a mere form, without even seeing the children. Countless horror stories relating to children with deformities and disabilities emerged from Aplerbeck Hospital, to which such children were referred to for treatment. Later on, it came to a situation where even the staff (not medical) independently selected the children they wanted to kill. (p. 301)

The first application of eugenic racial hygiene in Nazi Germany comes at first through compulsory sterilization of “thousands of adults and children who had disorders and conditions believed to be hereditary [...] Hitler’s absolute power allowed him to decree a policy of removing from society those individuals who were deemed to be inferior because of disability, race, ethnicity, or character traits (Benedict et al, 2009, p. 2) . Furthermore, he stands against all opponent of the work of the Nazis Eugenics Society and succeeds in silencing minor communities who support individual civil rights. Accordingly, all religious and socio-cultural institutes along with the media and the press have been entirely monitored and controlled since any opposition would not confirm to the current orchestrated dogmatic policies.

Huxley is keen on pointing out and satirizing the current obsession with manufacturing a supreme pure race through the practice of euthanasia and forced sterilization. His criticism has been ferociously directed toward the abuse of medical science and biotechnology by world powers. In both narratives the practice of euthanasia is portrayed as legal and socially accepted. For example, in *Brave New World*, Huxley shows the reader how biotechnology and genetic engineering have been working effectively to ensure the production of a supreme race that is happy and satisfied. Thus, if an inadvertent mistake betides to the running system, biological engineers are authorized to interfere to eliminate diseases, pains, or sufferings.

The transformation of euthanasia from theory into practice has been questioned universally by both Eastern and Western intellectuals, philosophers, moralists, and theologians. Arguments protesting euthanasia appeal directly to ethical and moral principles forbidding this policy, while arguments favoring euthanasia appeal to the alleviation of human pain and suffering and to the “prolongation of life and to the destinies of humanity”. The work of the Eugenics Society has been broadly accepted throughout Europe and the United States since it “promised development of a healthy master race by the elimination of hereditary disorders through selective reproduction” (Benedict et al, 2009, p. 2). Huxley (1958) has been against the whole idea of terminating the life of children who are born with hereditary defects. He states in his *Brave New World Revisited* that “Meanwhile we find ourselves confronted by a most disturbing moral problem. We know that the pursuit of good ends does not justify the employment of bad means” (p. 15). Furthermore, in all the historic formulation of the Perennial Philosophy, it is fundamental that human soul is divine in nature and that life which is a gift from the “Divine Ground” cannot be terminated except by its Creator. Therefore, since the “Divine Ground” of all being has given the soul, only the “Divine Ground” may take it away; to commit suicide or to terminate human soul is therefore to act against the “Divine Ground” purposes for human life, and to violate the meaning of human life.

Reading *Brave New World* side by side with *The Perennial Philosophy* might not be an easy task, since *The Perennial Philosophy* has been published thirteen years after the publication of

*Brave New World*. According to Harold Bloom, Huxley regrets the limited choices he gave to his hero John the Savage; it was either this artificial sort of programmed existence or the “barbaric” life in the primitive reservation. He wrote the book, Huxley explains, when he was “an amused, skeptical aesthete rather than the transcendental visionary he had since become” (Bloom, 2003, p. 7). However, most of the sociopolitical, economic, religious as well as spiritual crises unveiled in *Brave New World* have been revisited within current and past theological and philosophical context in *The Perennial Philosophy* in a further spiritual contemplative manner. As Dana Sawyer (2002) concisely pens it down in her book, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*, “*Brave New World* had been Huxley’s satirical description of the disease affecting humanity; *The Perennial Philosophy*—more than ten years in the making—was his view of an antidote” (p. 126). Focusing on chapter XXVII of *The Perennial Philosophy*, which is entitled “Contemplation, Action and Social Utility”, we can read Huxley’s (1945) commentary on contemporary Western civilization in its novelized form as present in *Brave New World*. In this chapter, Huxley states that:

In all the historic formulation of the Perennial Philosophy, it is axiomatic that the end of human life is contemplation, or the direct and intuitive awareness of God; that action is the means to that end; that a society is good to the extent that it renders contemplation possible for its members; and that the existence of at least a minority of contemplatives is necessary for the well-being of any society. In the popular philosophy of our own time it goes without saying that the end of human life is action; that contemplation (above all in its lower forms of discursive thought) is the means to that end; that a society is good to the extent that the actions of its members make for progress in technology and organization (a progress which is assumed to be causally related to ethical and cultural advance); and that a minority of contemplatives is perfectly useless and perhaps even harmful to the community which tolerates it. (p. 294)

It is evident that in the Brave New totalitarian World, the whole society is swaying with the tide; the World Controllers are working to make contemplation—which is according to Huxley essential for the well-being of any society as well as for the cultural and ethical advancement of humanity—not accessible for the Brave Worlders who from their side surrender to their physical and spiritual enslavement. In the Brave New World which is a dictator-controlled society, contemplation, individual thinking, social utility, and human liberty are identified as jeopardies to the state’s stability and the inhabitants’ total conformity. Huxley comments on the state of the modern man who is simply manipulated by the World Powers and enslaved by “varieties of higher idolatry”. The modern man begins to lose himself, his individuality and his humanity and to transform into an acquiescent robot who regards whomever and whatever above him as a supreme god. He accepts his enslavement and his servitude without thinking or objecting.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, *Brave New World* speaks of modern civilization in a harsh Juvenalian tone; yet, as Bloom (2003) observes, even “cyberpunk science fiction” has nothing to match Huxley’s attack on the ills of the modern world through his fictitious “outrageous inventions” (p. 7). The alternative, to Huxley, is a scientifically and technologically enlightened future civilization that does not deny the necessity of the spiritual aspect in human existence, and does not turn to worship the wrong god. Contemporary civilization has replaced God with “Molochs” and former religious traditions with

pleasure-centered pseudo-religions such as Fordism, Freudianism, Darwinism, Pavlovianism, Behaviorism, in addition to Consumerism, Progress and Nationalism. In this world, science and technology are mobilized by the Brave New World Controllers to empower the existence of their new-fashioned gods or, in the Huxleyan phraseology, their new glorified “Molochs”. Science and biotechnology have been militarized to move harmoniously in support of the state’s “higher Idolatries” whether technological, moral, or political. And if one agrees with Bloom (2003) that Huxley’s “sexual prophecies have been largely fulfilled” (p. 7), one may also think, not only those, but some of his other political and biotechnical prophecies as well.

### Works Cited

- [1] Batra, Shakti. (2008). *Brave New World: A Critical Study*. Surjeet Publications.
- [2] Bedford, Sybille. (2002). *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*. London: Ivan R. Dee.
- [3] Benedict, Susan, Shields, Linda, & O’Donnell, Alison J., (2009). “Children’s ‘Euthanasia’ in Nazi Germany”. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing Volume 24* (6), pp. 506-516.
- [4] Bloom, Harold. (2004). *Bloom’s Guides: Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House.
- [5] Conroy, Mary Schaeffer. (2019). *Collaboration with Germany by Georgians in France during World War II*. Latvia: Lap Lambert Academic.
- [6] Frye, Northrop. (1957). *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton and Oxford Princeton University Press.
- [7] Harees, Lukman. ( 2012). *The Mirage of Dignity on the Highways of Human ‘Progress’*. London: Authorhouse.
- [8] Huxley, Aldous. (1932). *Brave New World*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- [9] ---. (2012). *Ends and Means*. London: Routledge (originally published in 1937).
- [10] ---. (1945). *The Perennial Philosophy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- [11] ---. (1948). *Ape and Essence*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- [12] ---. (1958). *Brave New World Revisited*. New York: Harper and Row.
- [13] ---. (2003). *Huxley and God: Essays on Religious Experience*. London: Crossroad General Interest.

[14] Iodice, Emilio F. (2018). “Lessons from History: The Startling Rise to Power of Benito Mussolini”. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership, Volume 11* (2), Article 3.

[15] Jaspers, Karl. (1950). *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

[16] Keown, John. (2004). *Euthanasia, Ethics and Public Policy: An Argument Against Legalisation*. Cambridge UP.

[17] Murray, Nicholas. (2009). *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual*. London: Hachette Liver.

[18] Quine, Maria Sophia. (2012). “Racial ‘Sterility’ and ‘HyperFecundity’ in Fascist Italy”. *Fascism I* (2), pp. 92-144.

[19] Sawyer, Dana. (2015). *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*. Trillium, USA: Trillium Press.