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ALDOUS HUXLEY'S *BRAVE NEW WORLD* AS A PARODY AND SATIRE
OF WELLS, FORD, FREUD AND BEHAVIOURISM
IN ADVANCED FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING (FLT)

...Huxley's plan for *Brave New World* went back several years during which he read H. G. Wells's *Men Like Gods*, Henry Ford's *My Life and Work* (1926) as well as several writings by Ivan P. Pavlov, John B. Watson (1926–1932) and Sigmund Freud (1928–1932) [see Meckier, 121, 128, 134]. All these works had two aspects in common. In the first place, they contained contemporary theories, philosophies and trends towards which Huxley developed a critical attitude. In the second place, all these books or their authors were quoted or at least alluded to in the final typescript of *Brave New World*. Thus it belongs to the tasks of literary scholarship to examine their functions in Huxley's work, which is also interesting for instructional purposes: the students may be expected to find out in what way Huxley's sources were modified, changed, transformed or provided with ironical or satirical comments. The results published in secondary sources, then, possess a didactic relevance and also entail consequences for practical procedure in class.

Men Like Gods was Wells's most optimistic utopia which Huxley originally intended to parody (see Meckier, 179). When using Ford's autobiography in the text of *Brave New World*, he made a transfer from machines to human beings, and when using Pavlov, he switched from animals to children. Freud's pleasure principle goes perfectly along with Ford's religion of consumerism, while both of them are to be supplemented by behaviourism: these theories combined are meant to produce the greatest happiness and stability in the World State.

Thus several aspects from different sources are interrelated: they coalesce and form a logical network as well as a kind of organic whole. It may be concluded, then, that Wellsian, Fordian, Freudian, Pavlovian and Watsonian influences may be traced in the text of *Brave New World*. Huxley adopts a critical attitude towards all the above sources: he opposes the current trends to interpret human behaviour in a mechanistic way, and this is the reason why he satirizes Pavlov, Watson, Ford and Freud. In addition, therefore, another genre aspect, that of parody and satire, should be part and parcel of classroom procedure.

Unit 1: Genetic Engineering

The first chapter of *Brave New World* deals with the artificial mass production of human babies in a London hatchery. Huxley's novel, like many utopias, has one particular structural element: one or several human visitors, in this case a group of students, come to see the futuristic world. As this is presented to them, they undergo a learning process, that is, the newcomers serve as a pretext to explain the nature of the utopian state. Huxley also makes use of this device in his novel *Island*, but Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* or H. G. Wells's *Men Like Gods* (see unit 5) may also be referred to as examples. Thus in these novels there are always a lot of talks, debates, discourses because their nature is inherently didactic.

There are two significant allusions in the first chapter of *Brave New World*. To begin with, Huxley speaks of "the principle of mass production at last applied to biology" (11), which for the contemporary reader is a clear reference to Henry Ford, the inventor of the first mass-produced car in America, namely the famous T-model. A few pages later the text runs: "Three tiers of racks: ground floor level, first gallery, second gallery. The spidery steelwork of gallery above gallery" (15). Huxley never calls this an elaboration of Ford's assembly line since such naming is superfluous because of the preceding reference to Ford (see Meckier, 210).

Classroom knowledge of assembly lines may be taken for granted. Yet no specific knowledge about Ford is necessary at this point; the concept as such is known from modern media, e.g., from TV. It is to be supplemented by a brainstorming about cloning or by a topical text which may come hot from the press and may refer to animal cloning (sheep, mice, rats, cows, etc.) or to human cloning (production of stem cells for therapeutic cloning, in order to possibly fight against Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or cancer). Or it may deal with the South Korean stem-cell scandal (see Horst, 38), or with so-called 'mixed' cloning (i.e., producing stem cells from animals and human beings). The students are likely to know that *in vitro* fertilization has become possible in the meantime, that test-tube babies are regarded as normal, and that the development and birth of babies outside the womb (ectogenesis) is still impossible.¹

Then the first paragraph of *Brave New World* could be read out and discussed in class in order to have the students realize that, ironically, from the very beginning the breeding of babies is associated with death (see, for example, "wintriness, corpse-coloured, dead"; 7). It is not without ironical overtones that the outcome of the novel deals with death, too, since John, who is an individual and an outsider both in the Reservation and the World State, commits suicide (see chapter 18).

Next, the different stages in the manufacturing of human babies could be traced in the text: the surgical beginning, fertilization, production of as many identical twins as possible (Bokanofskification), bottling, production of five different castes, and decanting. It will be important for the students to keep in mind that, in Huxley's global state, already during the foetal stage of human life social predestination occurs.

This could be followed by an open classroom discussion whether cloning and ectogenesis are unethical or not.

Unit 2: Pavlovian and Watsonian Influences in "Brave New World"

This unit focuses on the so-called scientific education of the children by the state. Its concept is based on an elaborate technique of learning which goes back to the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov and one of his most fervent disciples, the American John B. Watson, one of the founding fathers of behaviourism. Huxley is said to have read their works "with horror" (Meckier, 128).

Pavlov is referred to in the name "Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Room." His experiments and the concept of behaviourism, as a rule, are well known to the students from their biology lessons.² The expression 'Pavlov's dog' has become a metaphor for automatic responses in everyday language: an unconditioned reflex is transformed into a conditioned reflex. If manipulation is perfect, a learning process has taken place.

The behaviourists believed that the behaviour of human beings could be manipulated in very much the same way: what was successful with animals, was transferred to human beings by John B. Watson. As a useful primary source, one of his best-known articles, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It," could be quoted, which was published in 1913. Its first paragraph (see below) may be used as an additional text because it concisely describes Watson's position:

Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior. Introspection forms no essential part of its methods, nor is the scientific value of its data dependent upon the readiness with which they lend themselves to interpretation in terms of consciousness. The behaviorist, in his efforts to get a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizes no dividing line between man and brute. The behavior of man, with all of its refinement and complexity, forms only a part of the behaviorist's total scheme of investigation.³

According to Watson, “man is an animal different from other animals only in the types of behavior he displays,”⁴ and human behaviour as a whole may be described in terms of “stimulus and response” (Watson, 22). Since man is a human machine (see Watson, 271), personality is but the end product of our habit system (see Watson, 274). In other words, you can condition man in any way you want, and it is also possible to undo conditioning, i.e., to decondition man. According to Watson, this opens new dimensions for the educational process: in a few generations people will be much better educated because of scientific progress in this field (see Watson, 304).

And this is another passage by Watson which describes behaviourist experiments in practice:

Our first experiment with Albert had for its object the conditioning of a fear response to a white rat. We first showed by repeated tests that nothing but loud sounds and removal of support would bring out fear response in this child. Everything coming within twelve inches of him was reached for and manipulated. His reaction, however, to a loud sound was characteristic of what occurs with most children. A steel bar about one inch in diameter and three feet long, when struck with a carpenter’s hammer, produced the most marked kind of reaction.

Our laboratory notes showing the progress in establishing a conditioned emotional response are given here in full:

Eleven months, 3 days old. (1) White rat which he had played with for weeks was suddenly taken from the basket (the usual routine) and presented to Albert. He began to reach for rat with left hand. Just as his hand touched the animal the bar was struck immediately behind his head. The infant jumped violently and fell forward, burying his face in the mattress. He did not cry, however.

(2) Just as his right hand touched the rat, the bar was again struck. Again the infant jumped violently, fell forward and began to whimper.

On account of his disturbed condition no further tests were made for one week. (Watson, 159–160)

The students could be asked to describe Pavlov’s experiments with dogs or revise their knowledge in that respect as a homework task. Then they are confronted with Watson’s theoretical position quoted above (transparency / worksheet) and are asked whether they could find any relationship between this statement and the experiments described in chapter 2 of *Brave New World*. It should be easy for the learners to realize that children are conditioned against books, flowers and nature in a way that is very similar to Pavlov’s experiments: human behaviour is reduced

to stimulus-response procedure. This is a systematic strategy in the new World State, which can be seen from the fact that children are also conditioned to love expensive country sports as well as to lose any fear of death: death conditioning is already practised on eight-year-old twins (see 176f.). These are formative experiences for the children, but at the same time they never experience a feeling of protection by parents, and they do not develop a sense of their own ego.

As a supplement, the passage quoted above from *Behaviorism* could be used in which the experiments with little Albert are described. Then it is easy for the students to realize that these experiments, in essence, are identical with those described by Huxley in chapter 2: a hatred of books and flowers is brought about in the same way as Albert's fear of a white rat: the siren corresponds to the unpleasant noise produced by a carpenter's hammer. In *Brave New World* cruelty to children is even stronger than in the behaviouristic experiments since they are also exposed to bodily pain by being given electric shocks.⁵ This means that pre-natal social predestination is supplemented by a system of post-natal manipulation. At this point at the latest, the students will probably realize that the futuristic World State has got questionable values.

Another aspect becomes the target of Huxley's irony: whereas the behaviourists' interest in experiments with human beings is purely scientific, in *Brave New World* it is dictated by the state what the children are to think and feel. Thus, on the one hand, they learn to hate books for political reasons, since they are potentially subversive. On the other hand, there are different expensive sports the children are conditioned to love: in practice, these are mostly restricted to linguistic coinages: golf becomes "Obstacle Golf" and "Electro-magnetic Golf," tennis is "Riemann-surface tennis," and squash becomes "Escalator Squash."⁶ In this way the children will be prepared for conformity of social behaviour since spending a lot of money keeps the factories busy so that mass consumption and mass production go together. This shows that the children are manipulated in the name of consumerism: their behaviourist education is done in the name of purely economic and materialistic reasons. The students will realize that conditioning is a basic tool of manipulation in the World State in order to achieve individual 'happiness' and social stability. Moreover, in the new world, the phenomenon of hypnopaedia (sleep teaching) serves the same purpose: endless repetitions of hypnopaedic slogans serve as a means of habit formation.

Finally there may be an open classroom discussion about the question whether animal experiments and the conditioning of babies are justifiable or not.

Unit 3: Further Characteristics of Huxley's World State

Chapter 3 of *Brave New World* is the most interesting in formal respect, since it takes place on four or five different levels: it is a montage of several conversations in which Bernard Marx, Fanny, Lenina Crowne, Henry Foster and Mustapha Mond are involved. At first sight, this chapter seems to be of a fragmentary nature. However, it should be feasible for the students to isolate Mond's utterances for critical discussion in class, and to put the different parts of his lecture together. The students could mark them in the text, or cut them out from a photocopy of chapter 3 and glue them together so that a coherent text is the result; this would mean that in the reception of the text a creative element is inserted. Thus a reading task for the students could be to concentrate on essential characteristic traits of Huxley's World State (homework). These could be written down in a diagram; Huxley's remarks about the Freud-Ford combination as well as about the genesis of the World State will be discussed below.

The first two chapters already introduce some essential features of Huxley's futuristic society, which like all the others could be collected as a long-term task in class (see below, 36, synthesis). By concentrating on Mond's lecture, it would be possible to enlarge on these first impressions. A list of the World State's major characteristic features as they may be traced in chapter 3 would resemble the following one.

To begin with, Mond quotes a statement by Henry Ford, which is taken from an interview with the Chicago Tribune in 1916 and which runs: "History is more or less bunk" (35). Moreover, according to Ford, "history is tradition. We don't want tradition. We live in the present." The same attitude is expressed in his autobiography: "And it often happens that a man can think better if he is not hampered by the knowledge of the past. [...] The past learning of mankind cannot be allowed to hinder our future learning."⁷ In other words, the past is regarded as a possible obstacle to progress. For Henry Ford, it is more important to look forward to the future. Yet Huxley argues that if there is no past, there is no future either, which is somewhat ironically expressed by the following hypnopædic slogan: "Was and will make me ill [...] I take a gramme and only am" (93). Thus the brave new worlders have to cling to what they have got; they are living in a permanent present.

As becomes obvious in chapter 2, there are no homes in Huxley's futuristic society since the task of education has completely been taken over by the state: education is adapted to economic and political purposes. The abolition of families, of family relationships, and of emotional ties is also part of this particular procedure. This possibility may already be found in Freud, who sees a connection between the abolition of the family and allowing people complete sexual freedom: "By allowing complete freedom of sexual life and thus abolishing the family [...] we cannot [...] easily foresee what new paths the development of civilization could take."⁸

According to Mond, there is now solidarity of all members of society. Because there was no stability among the pre-moderns, individual and social stability is proclaimed as a real achievement of the new world: stability is not only one of the three elements of the World State's motto, but it is also "the primal and the ultimate need" (43).

Another characteristic feature of the World State is the immediate gratification of desires. Mustapha Mond points out that "you're so conditioned that you can't help doing what you ought to do" (205). In other words, people get what they want, and what they cannot get they do not want. One of the few norms the brave new worlders have to follow is the conscription of consumption, which goes back to Henry Ford and which is the necessary corollary of mass production and such a key factor that under-consumption is classified as a crime against society itself. This can also be seen from Bernard's heretical views: the D.H.C., accusing him of not obeying the teachings of "Our Ford," calls him "a subverter [...] of all Order and Stability, a conspirator against Civilization itself" (130).

In Huxley's global state, equality of men is reduced to physico-chemical equality (see 46), which is realized after death only: people are transformed into fertilizers by cremating their corpses, and their ashes are recycled (see 68). Thus people are mass-produced, manipulated, controlled and finally recycled (see Meckier, 123). In addition, attending the so-called solidarity services is obligatory, since they are a means of encouraging group solidarity. And the drug *soma* is present everywhere: it is a means of escaping frustration and of ensuring stability: it is the ultimate solution to all problems. The last two aspects will be dealt with in two separate units (see units 6 + 9).

Unit 4: The Rise and Development of the New World State as Dystopia

Discussing Huxley's utopian World State presupposes a good textual knowledge. For the next two units it is indispensable to focus on the second part of Mond's lecture (see chapter 3), which may be supple-

mented by a description of two experiments which took place earlier in the World State (see chapter 16; for these, a student's report may be advisable). The major aim of this unit is to elaborate a survey about the rise and the development of the new World State as it took several steps for this society to take on its present shape in A.F. 632.

According to Mustapha Mond, one part of the Nine Years' War, which lasted from A.F. 141 till 150, was the great Economic Collapse (see 46f), which may be understood as an allusion to the Great Depression in 1928. After that, he argues, there only existed the choice between world control and destruction. Huxley's global state, then, arose as a consequence of a war which took place about one hundred years after Ford's death. According to Mond, world control was necessitated by men's self-preservation instinct, by their common wish to survive. In this situation world control was established in order to prevent the extermination of mankind.

Later on, the British Museum Massacre occurred, but then people realized that force had to be replaced by the "infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopaedia" as post-natal influences (49). There also occurred a closing of museums and a suppression of books (see 50).⁹

In Huxley's society, there have to be lower castes in order to do the necessary menial work. On the one hand, every caste member has to be satisfied with his or her own group, but on the other hand, they also have to accept the necessity of other groups. As Lenina remembers from one of her hypnopaedic lessons: "Everyone works for everyone else. We can't do without anyone. Even Epsilons are useful. We couldn't do without Epsilons" (68). So Gammas and Epsilons are predestined by social conditioning to be happy with their lots.

As a supplement, two passages from chapter 16 may be discussed in which two experiments are described: first, the so-called Cyprus Experiment in A.F. 473 (see 193f), in which only Alphas lived together. In that experiment, life was dominated by intrigue and a competitive spirit which entailed that finally 19,000 out of 22,000 Alphas had been killed.

Second, the so-called Ireland Experiment, which took place "more than 150 years ago," showed that four hours of daily work only was not desirable (194f): people were unhappy because of too many leisure-time activities, which were enforced by administrative pressure. Thus a hierarchical society came into being in which there was no room for equality (see above). Besides, the balance between work and leisure-time activities was necessary in order to guarantee the stability of the utopian state: every

minute of everyone's life is organized so that no unexpected event may befall them.¹⁰

This amount of information will suffice for a comparison with H. G. Wells's view of a futuristic society which he developed in his utopia *Men Like Gods*.

Unit 5: "Brave New World" as a Parody of H. G. Wells

The teacher confronts the students with the following statement in order to inform them about Huxley's motivation for writing *Brave New World*:

The reading of *Men Like Gods* evoked in me an almost pathological reaction in the direction of cynical anti-idealism. So much so that, before I finished the book, I had resolved to write a derisive parody of this most optimistic of Wells's Utopias. But when I addressed myself to the problem of creating a negative Nowhere, a Utopia in reverse, I found the subject so fascinatingly pregnant with so many kinds of literary and psychological possibilities that I forgot *Men Like Gods* and addressed myself in all seriousness to the task of writing the book that was later to be known as *Brave New World*.¹¹

It is true that Wells's novel is not quoted directly in *Brave New World*. However, Herbert G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw (he is alluded to on page 26) have been immortalized by Huxley as Dr Shaw and Dr Wells; since both of them never obtained a doctor's degree these are two examples of ironic promotion (see Meckier, 223). In *Brave New World*, Dr Wells has got the insignificant job of prescribing pregnancy substitutes (see chapter 3). Since, due to ectogenesis, their practical importance is reduced to nothing, Dr Wells becomes a ridiculous figure in Huxley's novel of ideas. But it is also true that H. G. Wells for his part accused Huxley of treason to science and defeatist pessimism (see Baker, 11), and he maintained:

"There are those who cling with an obstinate willfulness to the persuasion that a unified world must be a uniform and stagnating world—nothing will dissuade them (see for example Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*)."¹²

In spite of such criticism, Huxley and Wells remained life-long friends.

Thus *Brave New World* was originally planned as a parody, which in the following is understood as a work created to mock, to comment on, or to poke fun at an original work. A parody exists when one imitates a serious piece of literature for a humorous or satirical effect, which shows that, as a rule, the genre concepts of parody and satire are closely intertwined (as to the use of satire in *Brave New World*, see units 11 and 12). Now the

students may be confronted in class with the following kernel passage and some quotations all taken from Wells's *Men Like Gods* (worksheet):¹⁵

A growing number of people were coming to understand that amidst the powerful and easily released forces that science and organization had brought within reach of man, the old conception of social life in the state, as a limited and legalized struggle of men and women to get the better of one another, was becoming too dangerous to endure, just as the increased dreadfulness of modern weapons was making the separate sovereignty of nations too dangerous to endure. There had to be new ideas and new conventions of human association if history was not to end in disaster and collapse.

All societies were based on the limitation by laws and taboos and treaties of the primordial fierce combativeness of the ancestral man-ape; that ancient spirit of self-assertion had now to undergo new restrictions commensurate with the new powers and dangers of the race. The idea of competition to possess, as the ruling idea of intercourse, was, like some ill-controlled furnace, threatening to consume the machine it had formerly driven. The idea of creative service had to replace it. To that idea the human mind and will had to be turned if social life was to be saved. Propositions that had seemed, in former ages, to be inspired and exalted idealism began now to be recognized not simply as sober psychological truth but as practical and urgently necessary truth. (72)

Quotations:

(1) [The way out of the Age of Confusion was dominated] by curiosity, the play impulse, prolonged and expanded in adult life into an insatiable appetite for knowledge and an habitual creative urgency (266).

(2) Everyone was doing work that fitted natural aptitudes and appealed to the imagination of the worker. (267)

(3) Almost all those who were not engaged in the affairs of food and architecture, health, education and the correlation of activities, were busied on creative work; they were continually exploring the world without or the world within, through scientific research and artistic creation. (170)

An alternative would be to have a team of two or three students read chapter 5, §§ 5–6 (72–80) for gist and to have them summarize the major Wellsian ideas. The passage suggested for additional reading consists of the text quoted above and some of the following pages. The students' summary might resemble this one:

Wells deals with how the crucial change comes about in Utopia: the doctrine of universal service is very much like a new religion. Yet there is no sudden revolution in Utopia, but it takes a million martyrs before it

finally becomes a universal scientific state. The present state of that society is based on the education and promotion of individual talents. In Utopia there is no parliament, no politics, no business competition, no private wealth, neither police nor prisons. As one Utopian puts it: “*Our education is our government*” (MLG, 80).

In an open-classroom discussion, the students could compare this concept with *Brave New World* and use a diagram in order to illustrate some essential characteristic features of Utopia. The results of the Wells-Huxley comparison could be similar to these (see also diagram below):

Wells’s starting point is very similar to Huxley’s. He starts from a fundamental natural flaw of man: his combativeness, his primitive aggressiveness; see the allusion to wars by the mention of dreadful weapons (see also Baker, 33). This is followed by the statement that the conception of social life in the state, as a limited and legalized struggle of men and women to get the better of one another, was “becoming too dangerous to endure” (see the text quoted above). Therefore, at the end of the “Age of Confusion,” a few intelligent people come to the conclusion that life cannot go on in the same way: for the “competitive instinct,” they substitute “creative service” (72). And now Wells conceives a peaceful development, which is in sharp contrast with Huxley’s.

A change of mind of this intellectual élite leads to a change of attitude of many people, and eventually to a change of human behaviour. A long evolution completely improves the situation for mankind: human egotism is replaced by a sense of social responsibility, and everybody is working for the benefit of society. However, it took many centuries to reach the paradise-like state in Utopia (see 264), which is much better developed than our planet: as compared with Utopia, the earth is retarded in time (see 51).

Once the idea of creative service has become influential, the social life of men becomes completely different. Men are now dominated by an insatiable thirst for knowledge; there is a lot of creativity and scientific research. And there is a serious belief in infinite progress, in the perfectibility of man and a perennial growth of human possibilities.

Thus Wells conceives a utopian world which is almost an ideal one and which is based on mutual confidence: a utopia which is steadily becoming more perfect. Conversely, in *Brave New World* the principle of control is very powerful: there is avoidance of overpopulation by artificial insemination, there is also social predestination as well as manipulation; in other words, there is control in every respect in order to guarantee stability. This also implies a permanent reduction of human potentialities (no indi-

viduality); man is adapted to technology, there is no progress for society, and the arts (creativity) have ceased to exist.

Brave New World

Men like Gods

natural aggressiveness of men (wars, destruction)

Founding one World State	Establishing creative service
prohibition of books, closing down of museums; no further progress of science	insatiable thirst for knowledge; scientific research
totalitarian control: artificial insemination, social predestination, education by the state (conditioning / sleep teaching)	population control; otherwise: self-education and mutual confidence, personal liberty
hierarchy / caste society; [after death only: physico-chemical equality]	equality of citizens
solidarity of groups / castes	individuality
social stability / 'happiness'	social harmony / 'real' happiness
men like slaves / robots	men like Gods
no progress	progress unlimited
ten World Controllers	no government but education
dystopian vision	utopian vision

Discussion: It might be interesting for the students to discuss whether (and if so, why) they think Wells's portrayal of a harmonious world is too optimistic or too idealized. They may also discuss to what extent they think Utopia is likely to become reality. This may imply the question whether the students believe that all men may be equal or that some kind of hierarchy is necessary in order to establish control of others.

Conclusion: Wells's optimistic assessment of human potential lies at the heart of Huxley's antagonism to the Wellsian form of this genre (see Baker, 32). The belief in the possibility of "unconscious cooperation by a common impulse" doubtless irritated Huxley (see Baker, 33). Obviously he does not share the belief that science will entail progress to a paradise-like life; therefore his response to Wells is an ironic one. In *Brave New World* the belief in infinite progress is classified as outdated (see 197): the

brave new worlders hang on to what they have achieved, and there is no escape from it.

It is part of Huxley's literary intention to hold Wells's vision up to ridicule. And it has to be remembered that what was originally planned as a parody, became something more serious, a warning concerning the future, a cautionary tale, a warning against technological progress which may mass-produce people and adapt them to its needs. Between 27 May and 24 August 1931 Huxley transformed *Brave New World* from a burlesque of "the Wellsian Utopia" into a modern "satirical novel" of ideas about the future in general (see Meckier, 180).

Unit 6: Ford as New God in Brave New World (Chapter 5)

In the history of technology, Henry Ford's influence can hardly be over-estimated: he is the father of the assembly line, which was invented to produce automobiles in large numbers.¹⁴ In his autobiography *My Life and Work*, Ford develops his vision of a mass-produced car which, because of its reasonable price, is meant to be accessible to every American citizen: for Ford mass production and mass consumption belong together. Huxley read Ford's life story in 1926; for the brave new worlders it has become a kind of Bible substitute (see chapter 16). In *Brave New World* it is directly quoted only once (see 189), yet there are more than 110 references to Ford, Fordism and things Fordian in the text (see Meckier, 209), more than to Shakespeare and more than to any other author. Anyway, Henry Ford has become the foundation father of the brave new world.

His famous T-model was first produced in 1908, which marks the beginning of a new chronology in Huxley's World State. The production of this car became a unique success story, and Henry Ford himself may be seen as an embodiment of the American Dream. Although his autobiography was written with the help of Samuel Crowther, it was presented from Ford's own perspective: there is a first-person narrator who invites the reader to take over his perspective and to sympathize with his achievement. However, there are also negative consequences of mass production for the workers which are rarely mentioned and more often only hinted at in the text: the classic picture of Henry Ford who stands for technological progress and who passes as an apostle of efficiency is certainly one-sided (see unit 11).

In *Brave New World* Ford, ironically, has been promoted to be the new God. There is a lot of textual evidence for this thesis, for example from the following statement murmured by the D.H.C.: "Ford's in his Flivver [sic!] [...]. All's well with the world" (43), the word "flivver" denoting a

small, inexpensive car. This statement has to be understood as an allusion to the poem *Pippa Passes* by the English poet Robert Browning, in which he wrote: "God's in His Heaven / All's right with the world."¹⁵ Ford's doctrine of mass consumption has become something like a pseudo-religion, whose influence can easily be traced in the new civilization: "Thank God" is changed to "Thank Ford" (84), the World Controller becomes "his fordship"; the cross as a sign of Christianity is mutilated into a "T"; 'Charing Cross' becomes "Charing-T" in "Charing-T Tower" (56); the statement "while Our Ford was still on earth" (25) likens the industrialist's career to Christ's. In short, the more the brave new world proclaims Fordism and glorifies Ford's name, the more ridiculous his grossly inflated importance becomes (see Meckier, 209). The function of Ford and Fordism in *Brave New World* would be an attractive subject for a students' presentation.

Ford's influence may also be traced in the so-called solidarity services, an example of which is described from Bernard Marx's point of view (see chapter 5, 2). There are twelve participants in it who invoke Ford as a Greater Being and drink from a cup filled with strawberry ice cream and *soma*. Again, the allusions to the Lord's Supper of Christianity are obvious, yet now worship is reduced to physical pleasure. Each participant drinks to his own "annihilation" (75): thus in *Brave New World* a religious rite is not only designed to stifle any traces of individuality, but also to prepare for group sex which ends up in an orgy and is meant to foster group identification (see Meckier, 233): "I am you and you are I" (76). By way of contrast, in religious services all over the world, the idea of union with God and a community of believers is indispensable. Besides, the solidarity service is not only devoid of any kind of spirituality, but it is also closely associated with death (see the third line of the Second Solidarity Hymn: "We long to die," 75). This means that it is part of Huxley's satirical technique to describe life in terms of inanimate things and of associations with the end of human life.

Moreover, there is a circular procession of the dancers stamping their feet to the rhythm and beating it out with their hands: twelve pairs of hands are beating as one, all of which is supposed to announce the arrival of the Greater Being, which sings orgy-porgy (see 77-78). This alludes to a well-known nursery rhyme, which, accompanied by a feverish tattoo of the tom-toms, is presented in a different form, however. Whereas in the original form one reads: "Georgie-Porgy kisses the girls and runs away," in the solidarity service the text runs: "Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun, / Kiss the Girls and make them One. / Boys at One with girls at peace / Orgy-

porgy gives release” (78). This is meant to give a release from tension, i.e., produce a state of ‘happiness,’ where girls and boys are in unison, bound together by a strong feeling of “oneness,” insinuated by the pairs’ circular movement and perhaps also by the ring of couches arranged around the dance floor. The recital of a corrupted nursery rhyme is a successful climax for this kind of pseudo-religious service: it is sheer irony. At the same time, the reader will realize that the rhythm used is the same as that which occurs during the religious service in the Reservation (see Lenina’s observation, 101), and “orgy-porgy” is also repeated in the last chapter when a curious crowd watches the sight of the Savage whipping himself (see 222). This again shows that the community services ultimately lead to a mob-like behaviour: in this respect the futuristic World State is still on a primitivistic level because people are fascinated by cruelty and sensational spectacles.

It should be kept in mind that, for Bernard Marx, the moral engineering in the Solidarity Service does not work at all; rather than make him feel part of the Greater Being, it enhances his feeling of isolation (see 79). It is another ironical aspect that, at the end of the service, Bernard Marx does not feel a sense of belonging: he is unable to fuse his separate being into a group identity (see Firchow, 225–226), though he knows better than to admit his sense of isolation openly. As will be shown later, he is an outsider in every respect.

*Unit 7: Patterns of Variety in the World State: Bernard and Lenina
(Chapters 6 and 7)*

By now the students should be familiar with all essential features of Huxley’s futuristic World State: people are artificially produced, raised, controlled and meant to consume (whether it is sports, the feelies or the solidarity services). However, if this system of manipulation worked perfectly, if all characters were identical twins only, the novel *Brave New World* would be determined by uniformity and probably very boring to read. Therefore it does not come as a surprise that Huxley uses several strategies in order to introduce variety in spite of a well-nigh perfect system of conditioning. And this is why any imperfections, any deviations from the norms or any remaining problems in the new world call for particular attention. In other words, the dissidents are the most interesting characters in the novel. After all, they represent deviations from the standard norms: to some degree, their conditionings turn out to be failures.

To begin with, there are Alphas and Betas who cooperate at work, but it is the Alphas only who have got a chance of questioning the effects of conditioning. Besides, there are strict barriers between the Alphas and Betas on the one hand and the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons on the other hand because the latter, as real clones, are unable to think; they are finding satisfaction in their own groups, which means that, in Freudian terms, a narcissistic identification takes place (see Meckier, 140).

Characterizations from the futuristic and the uncivilized world also serve to introduce variety into the novel. Some attention has to be given to John who has never been a victim of brave new world conditioning even though he has been educated by a conditioned mother, namely Linda, who is a Beta minus. Moreover, it is interesting to analyse what social interaction in the World State is like or supposed to be, what social principles are proclaimed and what influence is exerted by the drug *soma*. This will be an attractive subject for several teaching units.

First of all, in civilized London, there are five castes, more than that, there are higher and lower castes. Apart from work, there are clear dividing lines between them: in the golf club, for example, there are barracks for the lower classes and small houses for the Alphas and Betas (see 67). There are even some differences between Alphas and Betas: since Alphas are the most intelligent people, they have the greatest chance of defying conditioning. Besides, there are practically no female Alphas in *Brave New World*. Although the reader learns that upper caste girls are educated in Eton (see 141), the major female characters, like Linda or Lenina, are Betas at best. As examples of male Alphas, Mustapha Mond, the D.H.C., Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson may be cited. Alphas give orders to the lower castes, whereas Alphas and Betas work together. In the lower castes conditioning is more or less perfect, they seem to be perfect clones: they only exist to do menial work and to consume.

For an analysis of an Alpha-Beta relationship, attention may focus on Bernard and Lenina (see chapters 6 and 7). With Bernard conditioning has been unsuccessful; Henry Foster compares him to one of those rhinoceroses which “don’t respond properly to conditioning” (81). As a consequence, Bernard dislikes crowds as he would prefer to be alone with Lenina (see 81): he wants to be more of himself (see 82) and to be free (see 83). His desire to be more of an individual and less of “a cell in the social body” (83) is something that terrifies Lenina (see Firchow, 228).

But Bernard goes further than that: he tries to oppose his “enslavement by conditioning” (83), and comes to the conclusion that Alphas are “adults intellectually and during working hours” and “infants where

feeling and desire are concerned” (85). In chapter 7, Bernard gives the following ironic comment on breast-feeding in Malpais: “What a wonderfully intimate relationship [...] and what an intensity of feeling it must generate!” (99), which is meant as sheer mockery of World State doctrines and possibly also as a personal provocation for Lenina: sometimes he seems to derive pleasure from frightening her.

Bernard, then, is critical of fundamental laws of society; he defies some of them. He is aware of the effects of conditioning as well as of the fact that he is treated like a slave and not allowed to grow up. As one critic puts it: “Brave new worlders remain emotional infants their entire lives; they are conditioned to manifest only easily sated desires—desires for sex, food, and entertainment” (Vibbert, 138). Ironically enough, later on both the D.H.C. (see 130) and World Controller Mustapha Mond (see 193) confirm Bernard’s view by comparing the brave new worlders’ behaviour to that of babes in a bottle.

After returning from his holiday, Bernard is accused by the D.H.C. of having unorthodox ideas on sports, *soma* and sexuality (see 130)—which is classified as a conspiracy against civilization itself: it is more serious than murdering an individual for whom a new one can easily be made (see 129).

Lenina, on the other hand, clings to sleep-taught wisdom: she cannot or does not want to understand Bernard. She wants to avoid the questions he would like to discuss. Getting nervous as well as feeling confused, she is anxious to keep her incomprehension intact: “I don’t know what you mean [...] I don’t understand anything” (83; see also 85). These examples show that at least in intellectual respect, there is a strong incompatibility between Lenina and Bernard.

Classroom procedure can be organized in different ways. After an extensive reading of chapter 6 (homework task), the students could be asked to find the main characteristic features of the Reservation (Malpais). After an extensive reading of chapter 7, some essential aspects of John’s and Linda’s lives among the Indians could be derived from the text. As an alternative, the students could be asked to collect what they remember from their first reading or make contributions from what they may have written down in their reading logs.

Another possibility would be to use the last paragraph of page 92 (chapter 6) as a kernel passage on which many characteristics of Malpais are listed: marriage, families, child-bearing, natural births (viviparous), education by the parents (breast-feeding), no conditioning; squalor, infectious diseases, monstrous superstitions, etc. This should be sufficient

textual evidence to refute the thesis that life in the reservation resembles life during Ford's time.¹⁶ Whereas the civilized society in A.F. 632 is, from a technological point of view, is extremely advanced (people travel by helicopter, rocket, and monorail tram), the Reservation is still in a very primitive state: it is far from having reached the standards of a Fordian industrialized society.

Generally speaking, the reader learns about this kind of life from Linda's point of view: she cannot escape all these unpleasant impressions because she has forgotten her *soma* (see 99 and 103). There is only one thing which Lenina likes about the Reservation: the sound of the drums reminds her of the synthetic music made at the Solidarity Services (see 100f).

To conclude: it will be sufficient for the students to realize that, obviously, life in the Reservation is not ideal either. Huxley does not mean to present an attractive counterpart to civilized London, and the readers have to realize that they cannot simply agree with one of the two societies, i.e., that their own utopian state must look different.

*Unit 8: Patterns of Variety in the World State: John and Lenina
(Chapters 11 and 13)*

Conditioning is a very influential technique in *Brave New World* since it fulfils a very important function regarding individual and social stability. It is true in the five castes there are different degrees of efficiency so that there are considerable discrepancies between Alphas and Epsilons, for example. However, the differences become still greater when people from different socio-cultural backgrounds meet and talk to each other. The encounter between Lenina and John may be used as a perfect example. Whereas Lenina is a well-conditioned Beta, John has little been taught about conditioning by his mother. In a figurative sense, he may be said to be 'conditioned' by Shakespeare's works; in a technical sense he is unconditioned, of course.

Two kernel passages from chapters 11 and 13 (group work) may be chosen in order to analyse the encounter between John and Lenina.

(1) Going to the feelies (see chapter 11, 147–150):

When John first caught sight of Lenina in the reservation, he admired her perfect body; Lenina also felt attracted to him possibly because he is an exotic human being in civilized London. Together they watch a film at the feelies (accompanied by the scent organ), to which they react in a completely different way. For Lenina it is an example of perfect entertainment, the kind of entertainment she has been conditioned to consume. For his

part, John dislikes the film: he thinks it to be too “horrible” and “ignoble” (149), that is, it is offensive to his sensibility and his moral notions derived from Shakespeare’s works. After “the film, Lenina would like to have sex with John, yet he prefers to retire to his own room.

(2) The conflict between John and Lenina (see chapter 13, 167–170):

Since John is very well familiar with Shakespeare’s plays, and since he transfers his ideals and values from literature to life, he has romantic notions about marriage, honour, and death. Lenina likes John very much and thinks that John also likes her. The tragi-comical aspect is that they think they feel attracted to each other but have quite different ideas of a male-female relationship. As far as Lenina is concerned, one has to remember that the brave new world is promiscuous. In this society, due to conditioning, sexual contacts are never characterized by any kind of emotional depth or mutual affection, and they cannot be supposed to be more than short episodes: thus they lack human warmth, passion, intensity and duration. While she is speaking to John in terms of a hypnopaedic slogan (“Hug me till you drug me, honey,” 169), John calls her a whore and threatens to kill her. When he uses violence, she locks herself in the bathroom (see 170).

John and Lenina’s conflicting views on a male-female relationship result from their different backgrounds. Lenina cannot understand John’s behaviour as she is only interested in the immediate gratification of sexual desire, which shows once again that she blindly follows the World State’s official doctrines. John, for his part, being uninformed about the principle of sexual permissiveness, cannot understand any female brave new worlder as he is only interested in traditional values like virtue and heroic action. The conflict between John and Lenina, then, is due to the fact that their backgrounds are completely different and that their attitudes towards life are incompatible; as a consequence, there occurs a clash between unconditioned and conditioned behaviour. Thus their contact is completely based on misunderstanding, confusion and incomprehension. John was an outsider in the Reservation, and he will remain an outsider, too, in the brave new world.

Unit 9: Soma as a Retreat Into Happiness

The use of *soma* is again and again mentioned in the text of *Brave New World*; in order to build up classroom knowledge a collage of quotations may be helpful (to be collected by a team of students and to be written on a worksheet).

In his lecture in chapter 3, Mustapha Mond mentions that *soma* was discovered in A.F. 184 (see 51). In civilized London *soma*, which is a Sanskrit word designating a plant whose juice introduced trance, refers to a drug without side effects; yet Linda dies from overdosing. This drug is not only frequently applied, but it also becomes part and parcel of the World State's ideology. Possibly the following passage by Sigmund Freud may have been of importance to Huxley:

The crudest, but also the most effective among these methods of influence is the chemical one—intoxication. I do not think that anyone completely understands its mechanism, but it is a fact that there are foreign substances which, when present in the blood or tissues, directly cause us pleasurable sensations; and they also so alter the conditions governing our sensibility that we become incapable of receiving unpleasurable impulses. The two effects not only occur simultaneously, but seem to be intimately bound with each other. [...] Besides this, our normal mental life exhibits oscillations between a comparatively easy liberation of pleasure and a comparatively difficult one, parallel with which there goes a diminished or an increased receptivity to unpleasure. It is greatly to be regretted that this toxic side of mental processes has so far escaped scientific examination. The service rendered by intoxicating media in the struggle for happiness and in keeping misery at a distance is so highly prized as a benefit that individuals and peoples alike have given them an established place in the economics of their libido. We owe to such media not merely the immediate yield of pleasure, but also a greatly desired degree of independence from the external world. For one knows that, with the help of this 'drowner of cares,' one can at any time withdraw from the pressure of reality and find refuge in a world of one's own with better conditions of sensibility. (Freud, 27–28)

It is obvious that such a "drowner of cares" resembles Huxley's idea of *soma* very much. Yet apart from such a general function, Huxley has developed a concept which is much more complex. Numerous hypno-paedic slogans condition the brave new worlders to rely on *soma*, such as:

A gramme in time saves nine. (82)

One cubic centimeter cures ten gloomy sentiments. (52 and 82)

A gramme is (always) better than a damn. (52 and 82)

Was and will make me ill. I take a gramme and only am. (93)

One may suspect that many of them have been invented by Helmholtz Watson and his College for Emotional Engineering, because it is his task to analyse the effects of words on people.

For its consumers, *soma* means that whenever they feel frustrated, there is a chemical solution in order to escape from unpleasure and to retreat

into their own world: “There’s always *soma* to give you a holiday from the facts,” as Mustapha Mond points out (205). By taking *soma* people feel bottled (i.e., shielded) from the outside world. This can be seen from an episode dealing with Lenina and Henry Foster who, during their leisure time, take *soma* for pleasure: in a music hall they listen to a popular song “Bottle of mine, it’s you I’ve always wanted / Bottle of mine, why was I ever decanted” (71). A little later the text runs: “Bottled they crossed the street; bottled they took a lift up to Henry’s room” (72). *Soma* (which is kept in phials; see 58) allows people to temporarily retreat to their earliest life experience, that is, to feel shielded from reality like in bottles before decanting. This feeling is said to resemble that in a mother’s womb, yet even during this stage, as has already been shown in unit 1, it is associated with death. It is a crucial aspect of Huxley’s satire that the drug which is said to be the solution to all personal problems is linked up to the end of human life.

Later in the novel, *soma* turns up again when Mond and John discuss the value of religion, and *soma* is ascribed a personal and social function (see chapter 17). In this context Mond claims that *soma* is “Christianity without tears” (205). Thus it is said to play a pseudo-religious role, that is, to abolish suffering. Moreover, according to Mond, “there is always *soma* to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering” (205). From this he concludes that “you can carry at least half your morality about in a bottle” (205). One has to point out that this is a morality which is not due to individual effort. However, this implies that *soma* abolishes every kind of frustration and therefore also helps to control human aggressiveness.

The question of how to deal with natural aggressiveness in society which, according to Freud, is “the greatest impediment to civilization” (Freud, 81) and which somehow has to be curbed in the interest of social harmony, is not discussed anywhere else in the novel. Probably this is just solved by breeding, designation into one of the five castes, conditioning, caste solidarity, etc., so that it is no longer necessary for civilization to set limits to it (see unit 12). And if these measures are not perfectly successful, *soma* is always available as a most efficient means of contributing to the personal ‘happiness’ of the people as well as to the stability of the World State as a whole: it is an efficient tool of social and public control. However, stability also means that nothing of importance happens, which implies that it is impossible for people to undergo a development: for them there is neither growth nor maturation, which means their lives are senseless.

For the last time in the novel, *soma* is mentioned when John wants to bring freedom to the menial Delta hospital staff by trying to stop a *soma* distribution to them (see 185–186). This resembles a tragicomical scene when he speaks to the moronic Deltas in a language which is characterized by his knowledge of Shakespeare's works. However, even if he used everyday language, they would be too stupid to understand, for their conditioning has been perfect. Since they feel threatened and since they want their daily dosage of *soma* as a reward for their work, he causes an uproar and is arrested by the police. As in the case of John and Lenina, there again is incomprehension on both sides. John is arrested while Helmholtz Watson tries to help him and Bernard Marx stands undecided. Finally, the latter two are arrested as well, which paves the way for the climactic debate with World Controller Mustapha Mond.

Unit 10: Squash Champion Helmholtz Watson, an Alternative to the Brave New Worlders?

Individuals are something very particular in the new world; there are only two individuals in this society, namely Bernard and Helmholtz, who are friends and outsiders (see 61f). Bernard Marx has got an inferiority complex because of his small size, which in utopia is associated with insignificance (he is afraid of being considered a fool). Anyway, Bernard and Helmholtz are trying out new patterns of behaviour in spite of societal control (see, for example, chapter 4, 2). To some degree at least, these two characters are failures of conditioning: they may be studied as mouthpieces of unorthodox ideas and as dissidents from official doctrines. It is true that Bernard is the protagonist in the first three chapters, but then he is gradually demoted to a pathetic and rather lamentable figure. Even his first and last names may be regarded as a joke by the satirical novelist since Bernard Marx stands “eight centimetres short of the standard Alpha height” (61), yet he is named after two intellectual giants. His Christian name derives from the French physiologist Claude Bernard (1813–1878), who has become known as the father of experimental medicine, while his family name, of course, alludes to the famous nineteenth-century German sociologist Karl Marx, credited with the foundation of Communism (see Meckier, 187).

It is safe to assume that in the latter part of the novel Helmholtz Watson, who is “a perfect specimen of an Alpha-Plus male” (Firchow, 221), a member of the top caste of the new civilization, becomes the protagonist. In this case, his names turn out to be appropriate. While his surname acknowledges the World State's debt to the behaviourist John B.

Watson, some of whose experiments are alluded to in chapter 2 (see above), his first name derives from the German physicist Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894), who formulated the law of the conservation of energy: whenever energy disappears from one part of the system, it reappears elsewhere. Similarly, the World State discourages reading and the worship of nature only in order to encourage its citizens to enjoy public transport and consumption (see chapter 2). In the same way, Helmholtz Watson loses interest in moral engineering and becomes a nonconformist who redirects his energies in order to reflect about himself (see Meckier, 196).

Helmholtz Watson is introduced into the novel by his conversation with Bernard Marx: he is a squash champion, a notorious womanizer (see 64), and in place of group solidarity he chooses solitude: his poem on this theme provides evidence to this fact (see Meckier, 114). When he quotes this work in one of his lectures, he is immediately reported to his superiors by his students, who realize that, because of its anti-social message, such a heretic poem may become dangerous to the stability of the system (see 157f). Solitude is a taboo subject in the brave new world, which can be seen from the hypnopaedic slogan that everybody belongs to everybody else (see 40). Consequently, Helmholtz, who is not dominated by the pleasure principle, is unhappy and in search of something: he undergoes a crisis of identity (see Meckier, 137). This interpretation may be derived from a passage in chapter 12 (see 157, line 17 to 159, line 6).

A talk between Helmholtz and John may be chosen as another kernel passage for critical attention in class (see chapter 12: 159, line 7 to 161: “Helmholtz and the Savage took to one another at once”). Thus again, chapter 12 may be used for close reading.

Helmholtz Watson is more understanding than Bernard. He feels that there should be something beyond the platitudes of emotional engineering. He is interested in Shakespeare and true poetry. He listens to John’s reciting Shakespeare, yet this comes to an abrupt end when the Savage quotes some lines from *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the parents forbid their daughter to get married to Romeo, that is, to one particular man. First of all, the word ‘parents’ is taboo in the new world, and, second, accustomed to sexual permissiveness, Helmholtz cannot understand Juliet’s sorrow and despair and wonders why she does not just choose a different man. Obviously his incomprehension of the emotional basis of Shakespeare’s play is considerable. When Watson cannot control his laughter any longer, John, of course, takes offence. This scene also shows Watson’s limited understanding: for him Shakespeare is just a

“marvellous propaganda technician” (161), which implies that even an Alpha is conditioned almost perfectly. Just as in the case of Lenina and John, the gulf between the two different cultures cannot be bridged. Again there is incomprehension on both sides. This is a passage suitable for silent work in class; however, all the above-quoted kernel scenes about Helmholtz Watson may be used either for written or for oral work.

The question may now be raised whether Helmholtz may function as an alternative to the brave new worlders, as one who may represent a sane way out of an insane new world: he is an absolute anomaly, the only person in the Fordian society that tries to develop and to realize personal interests. So, on the one hand, it is an easy solution to lock him away in order not to let him become a menace to stability. On the other hand, according to Mond, Bernard’s and Helmholtz’s punishment is really a reward (see 196): their exile is a very attractive place, for they are going to meet people who “have got too self-consciously individual to fit into community life [...], who have got independent ideas of their own” (196). This might open a chance for de-conditioning, which, according to behaviourist John B. Watson, is just as well possible as conditioning: given the appropriate stimuli, the process will work both ways. Individuality, Huxley seems to say, is favourable to the further development of mankind. Helmholtz becomes a dissenter whose behaviour shows a possible way out of the brave new world’s dilemma. But, to my mind, this cannot mean that he is a hero or a real role model who is easy to identify with. His intellectual limitations are too explicitly expressed in the text as well. A discussion of this question may be a helpful contribution towards an evaluation of Helmholtz Watson by the students.

Unit 11: Brave New World as a Satire of Ford’s Autobiography

It has been shown that *Brave New World* was initiated as a parody of H. G. Wells, but that in the course of writing Huxley changed his original intention and developed his concept of a negative future world, i.e., of a dystopia. This implies many satirical attacks on Henry Ford.

In recently published teaching modules the concept of satire is practically ignored. Although a satire is usually meant to be funny, the purpose of this literary genre is not primarily humour in itself but rather an attack on something of which the author strongly disapproves. A very common, almost defining feature of satire is its strong vein of irony and sarcasm: these are frequently used in satirical speech and writing. The essential point, however, is that “satire is militant irony.”¹⁷ This kind of irony often professes to approve the very things the satirist actually wishes to attack.

Huxely read Ford's autobiography *My Life and Work* (1922) in 1926; however, his fascination for that author was short-lived, and later in 1932, it was replaced by contempt (see Meckier, 121). Ford himself never argues in terms of money-making: he himself repeatedly points out that he wants to be of service to mankind. Rather than pursuing selfish interests he claims to act in the name of the social good: "All that the Ford industries have done—all that I have done—is to endeavour to evidence by works that service comes before profit and that the sort of business which makes the world better for its presence is a noble profession" (Ford, 181).

Yet this is one side of the coin only. There are some passages in Ford's work where interesting insights may be derived from between the lines: there are critical overtones, and there are also certain admissions made by the author himself. The following text is meant to illustrate that mass production brings along several problems of its own:

We expect the men to do what they are told. The organization is so highly specialized and one part is so dependent upon another that we could not for a moment consider allowing men to have their own way. Without the most rigid discipline we would have the utmost confusion. I think it should not be otherwise in industry. The men are there to get the greatest possible amount of work done and to receive the highest possible pay. If each man were permitted to act in his own way, production would suffer and therefore pay would suffer. Any one who does not like to work in our way may always leave. The company's conduct toward the man is meant to be exact and impartial. It is naturally to the interest both of the foremen and of the department heads that the releases from their departments should be few. The workman has a full chance to tell his story if he has been unjustly treated—he has full recourse. Of course, it is inevitable that injustices occur. Men are not always fair with their fellow workmen. Defective human nature obstructs our good intentions now and then. The foreman does not always get the idea, or misapplies it—but the company's intentions are as I have stated, and we use every means to have them understood.

It is necessary to be most insistent in the matter of absences. A man may not come or go as he pleases; he may always apply for leave to the foreman, but if he leaves without notice, then, on his return, the reasons for his absence are carefully investigated and are sometimes referred to the Medical Department. If his reasons are good, he is permitted to resume work. If they are not good he may be discharged. [...]

There is not much personal contact—the men do their work and go home—a factory is not a drawing room. [...] We have so many departments that the place is almost a world in itself—every kind of man can find a place somewhere in it. Take fighting between men. Men will fight, and usually fighting is a

cause for discharge on the spot. We find that does not help the fighters—it merely gets them out of our sight. So the foremen have become rather ingenious in devising punishments that will not take anything away from the man's family and which require no time at all to administer. (Ford, 78f)

This passage clearly shows that for Ford work did not only mean specialization, discipline, and dull routine, but also pressure and possibly dismissal from the job. Some scholars are even more critical of Henry Ford. It has been pointed out that the auto-maker became known as a kind of “speed-up King,” which implied brutality towards his workers. Frequently they suffered from the so-called “Ford stomach”—a syndrome of extreme nervousness and exhaustion (see Baker, 84), which, according to modern psychological theory, might be classified as a burn-out. One critic is of the opinion that as a consequence of the assembly-line production, Ford's workers were turned into robots.¹⁸

Huxley's satirical attack on Ford can be seen in the very first chapter: human beings are mass-produced like machines. Ford's technique for the production of cars is transferred to *Brave New World*. Thus the production of babies is organized in a similar way: subdivision of work, rigid succession, discipline during work, increase of efficiency and standardization, for instance by raising the number of identical twins produced from one fertilized egg in order to improve Bokanofskification.

Huxley was shocked by this kind of mass production. He did not only anticipate artificial insemination, but he conceived Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons as clones who serve one particular purpose: from the moment of decanting until their deaths, they are predestined to conform to a consumer culture. In other words, people are adapted to commercial ends, they are designed to conform to market demands.¹⁹ They are useful slaves who are drilled into menial jobs as well as into mindless leisure-time activities and rewarded by their daily doses of *soma*. This concept reduces people's existence to absurdity. Mass production is described as a threat to human beings: they are de-individualized and dehumanized, they become machines. People's identity is sacrificed to economic principles. Huxley's conception of the mass production of bottle babies includes their genetic engineering, then their breeding implies social predestination, and their raising becomes manipulation by the state. Henry Ford himself has to admit that the continuance of a great productive organization “becomes greater and more important than the individuals” (Ford, 177).

World Controller Mustapha Mond tries to defend Ford's achievement: “Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift.

Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning” (197). Mass production, in Huxley’s eyes, then, ushered in a materialistic development, a decline of civilization, a loss of truth and beauty, all of which took place at the expense of humanity. Thus mass production came to dominate the life of the brave new worlders, and consequently Ford becomes the perfect exponent of what Huxley considers “Wellsian Progress,” the doctrine that man can live by technology alone. The connection between Ford and Wells has been understood as an “antihuman conspiracy” (Meckier, 124). This is also the reason why *Brave New World* grew increasingly anti-Fordian (see Meckier, 165), which also meant that Huxley increasingly Americanized his novel since he was of the opinion that America’s future had to be equated with the future of the whole world (see Meckier, 242).

Besides, it becomes obvious that the World State’s motto has to be seen in an ironic light; for example, community is nothing but a community of castes. Identity is to be equated with uniformity or sameness: in chapter 1 the workers are described as “standard men and women; in uniform batches” (11) [see Meckier, 125]. Later on, John remembers the “long rows of identical midgets at the assembling tables” and the “human maggots swarming round Linda’s bed of death” (192).

In order to achieve stability, the Controllers have established three principles:

a) the conscription of consumption (consumerism), which refers to the many numbing leisure-time distractions, including the feelies, so as to keep people amused, which is perhaps the major law in the brave new world;

b) sexual permissiveness (i.e., unrestricted copulation or promiscuity) which is obligatory, but which is sex without human emotions, and sex which is supposed to bind all members of society together although caste barriers continue existing and sexuality has no longer any function for the survival of the species;

c) participation in community services to increase group solidarity and to annihilate the individual so that all are happy in the roles assigned to them. However, even stability as the ultimate aim in civilization has negative connotations. If it means absence of conflicts, it is also equivalent to lifeless stagnation, which may also imply a regression of society. It is more serious, however, that it also means stagnation for the citizens of the global future society: there is no personal development, no maturation for them. If there is no past and no future, there is only a changeless present.

As to classroom procedure, the teacher may use the above text by Henry Ford as additional material; for further reading, chapters 7, 8 or 18 from his autobiography may be recommended (team work and students' reports). An attractive task would consist in comparisons of Ford's and Huxley's notions of assembly lines as well as of Ford's achievement and his portrayal by Huxley.

Unit 12: "Brave New World" as a Satire of Freudian Concepts

As a rule, Sigmund Freud's psychological writings, which were naturally written in German, were quickly translated into the English language so that they became accessible to Aldous Huxley. As possible sources for *Brave New World* one may quote: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), *The Ego and the Id* (1923), and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). Huxley read Freud between 1928 and 1932 and he was never intoxicated by him (see Meckier, 134). In an interview he stated: "The trouble with Freudian psychology is that it is based exclusively on a study of the sick. Freud never met a healthy human being—only patients and other psychoanalysts" (Wickes/Frazer, 65).

In the text of *Brave New World*, there is a combination of Ford and Freud: "Our Ford—or Our Freud as, for some inscrutable reason, he chose to call himself whenever he spoke of psychological matters" (39). While "Our Ford," for example, is said to have loved infants (see 85), one has to remember, on the one hand, that ironically children are given a so-called scientific education including electric shocks, and on the other hand, that adults—at least as far as feeling and desire are concerned—remain infants during all of their lives. Therefore the reader may expect with good reason that Huxley satirized some of Freud's ideas as well: as a matter of fact, he included Freud in his satirical performance.

Some Freudian concepts like the Oedipus complex (see John Savage) or inferiority complex (see Bernard Marx) have become a part of everyday language. When Mond, in the climactic debate with John Savage, uses the technical term "over-compensations" (192) and the collocation "embryonic fixations" (193), he shows that he knows the latest psychological jargon (see Meckier, 132). Actually, Freud's influence can be traced all over the text of *Brave New World*, which results from the fact that Huxley's futuristic society is founded on the pleasure principle: there is no leisure from pleasure—sex, sports, feelies, community songs serve as a kind of occupational therapy, which shows the high significance of free-time activities in Huxley's consumer society. They are deliberately used as instruments of policy in order to keep people amused and to prevent

them from thinking about their destinies. Moreover, as Freud points out, pleasure always means a tendency towards stability because everybody wants to be happy.²⁰

In Huxley's depiction of Freud, there are other satirical aspects involved. It is a well-known fact that Freud reduces every human problem to childhood traumas in homes and families. In his lecture (see chapter 3), Mond points out that families are responsible for fixations, neuroses, complexes—"for every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity" (39). For Huxley, this is clearly an overstatement, an unjustified and, indeed, unjustifiable generalization: such things may happen in some families, yet the complete abolition of the family in order to make emotional ties between parents and children impossible is a gross exaggeration, a caricature of Freud's standpoint. Besides, children in the World State cannot experience any feeling of protection by parents and they cannot develop a moral sense either. Thus the doctrine that (apart from existing caste barriers, of course) "everyone belongs to everyone else" (40) is somehow grotesque: it implies that personal ties are replaced by social feelings, and it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to see on what identifications they are supposed to rest or what they are supposed to originate in. Consequently, this procedure may be understood as a part of Huxley's satirical technique. For him, Freud's theory of "the appalling dangers of family life" (39) is both one-sided and mechanistic: it is based upon an oversimplification of human nature (see Vibbert, 133).

It is also pointed out early in the novel that children are given lessons in elementary sex. Teaching children sex games (see 32) may be considered as an idea derived from Freud, who always argued that it is natural for very young children to have sexual feelings (for example with regard to their mothers in the rise of the Oedipus complex). Any child in the global state who is reluctant to join in the usual erotic play is examined by a psychologist so as to find out whether there is anything abnormal (see 32). Thus lessons in erotic play may be said to serve as a preparation for promiscuity. The immediate gratification of all desires (including the sexual urge) is also represented as a contribution to people's happiness (see 44f). It has been shown above that in order to make people's lives emotionally easy, children are also conditioned to lose any fear of death. In contrast to other dystopias, the brave new world, then, does not use such a fear as a tool to prevent or stifle opposition to the state.

In addition, the above-mentioned symbiosis of Ford and Freud means that consumerism and the pleasure principle represent two sides of the same coin. The brave new world may be called a world of infantile

consumers. It is for a life of consumption that people are manufactured, raised, conditioned, to work and then to do expensive free-time distractions so that everybody is happy. As Mond puts it: “Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labour, and then the *soma* ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies. What more can they ask for?” (194) The brave new world, then, is a commercialized society which is virtually without any meaningful ideals and values. Mass consumption and numbing superficial amusements: these are Ford’s and Freud’s twin gods which Huxley intends to satirize. John B. Watson’s behaviourism is in complete agreement with the two of them so as to shut out any possible apprehension of an unconditioned reality.²¹

Classroom procedure in this unit is not easy to organize since the necessary concepts for analysis are scattered all over different works by Sigmund Freud. Perhaps some technical terms like inferiority complex, fixation, frustration, etc. will be familiar to the course members so that they may be able to trace them in the text of *Brave New World*. As major aspects of text analysis I would suggest the function of elementary sex lessons, the abolition of families and emotional ties as well as the connection between mass consumption and the pleasure principle. Perhaps an expert group may do an internet research in order to find the necessary information and report back to the class.

Unit 13: Huxley’s Disbelief in Progress

Many of Huxley’s contemporaries strongly believed in scientific progress. In the following, some quotations from the sources read by Huxley will be listed.

In his comprehensive monograph, John B. Watson writes about the future of behaviourism:

For the universe will change if you bring up your children—in behavioristic freedom—a freedom which we cannot even picture in words, so little do we know of it. Will not these children in turn, with their better ways of living and thinking, replace us as society and in turn bring up their children in a still more scientific way, until the world finally becomes a place fit for human habitation? (Watson, 303–304)

The first sentences of Henry Ford’s *My Life and Work* run:

We have only started on our development of our country—we have not as yet, with all our talk of wonderful progress, done more than scratch the surface. The progress has been wonderful enough—but when we compare what we have done with what

there is to do, then our past accomplishments are as nothing.
(Ford, 7)

And he comes to the conclusion:

The spirit of true service will create for us. We have only each of us to do our parts sincerely. Everything is possible [...]; faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen. (Ford, 187)

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud wrote: “Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase man’s likeness to God still more” (Freud, 44–45).

The following emphatic statement is made by one of the Utopians in *Men Like Gods*:

“Before us lies knowledge, endlessly, and we may take and take, and as we take, grow. [...] We grow in power, we grow in courage. We renew our youth [...]. Some day, some day, here and everywhere Life [...] will awaken indeed, one and whole, and marvellous, like a child awakened to conscious life. We shall be there then, all that matters of us [...]. And it will be no more than a beginning, no more than a beginning.” (MLG, 303f)

It is concerning this emphatic statement that Huxley confessed: “To utterances of this kind, I have, from earliest childhood, been acutely allergic” (Huxley, “Utopias,” 1).

For Huxley, mass production introduced into technology meant a shock. This is what created or at least contributed to his disbelief in progress, and this is also why he criticized Ford and why he included Wells, Watson and Freud in his satirization. Huxley protests against Ford’s and Wells’s belief in infinite progress (see 197), and he rejects Watson’s rigid formalistic reasoning in terms of stimulus and response. In a similar way, for Huxley, Freudian theories start from a mechanistic bias (see Meckier, 141). The psychologist’s theories about the rise of aggressiveness and complexes (caused either during childhood or by war) are oversimplified misconceptions in Huxley’s eyes. Thus it may be concluded that *Brave New World* is a satirical synthesis of current topical trends. Huxley’s disbelief in progress could hardly be expressed more effectively.

It is true that in his dystopia science has been responsible for the present state of affairs in the global world, but now, as he has Mond point out, more science has become “a public danger”: therefore it has to be controlled as it cannot be allowed “to undo its own good work” (197). At most it may increase the number of identical twins produced out of one egg, that is, there is progress in terms of quantity only, yet actual

scientific discovery is an impossibility in the brave new world (see Vibbert, 148).

Henry Ford argues that “nothing could be more splendid than a world in which everybody has all that he wants” (Ford, 106). In Huxley’s global world everybody has everything he wants, but in it life is not splendid since there are regulations everywhere. Life in the brave new world is as strictly standardized as work in a Fordian factory. Basically, each brave new worlder—just like the embryos in the London hatchery—“goes through life inside a bottle” (193). Thus, the essence of life in the brave new world is control. Ironically, there is nobody to control the Controllers.

Civilization, then, has become a sterile world in which so-called happiness is nothing but a mass delusion which is determined by the absence of suffering. In *Brave New World* life in general is determined by absences: it is unmarred by wars, hunger, poverty, old age, diseases, or unpredictable risks, etc., but there is also no free will, no sense of guilt, no moral responsibility, no art, no literature. In the introductory paragraph of *Brave New World Revisited* (1958), Huxley himself describes this inhuman life as

the completely organized society, the scientific caste system, the abolition of free will by methodical conditioning, the servitude made acceptable by regular doses of chemically induced happiness, the orthodoxies drummed in by nightly courses of sleep-teaching.²²

Brave New World presents a fearsome vision of the world’s future. However, the greatest fear expressed in Huxley’s dystopia is that technology will someday overcome mankind, and that using it for human breeding could be fatal for the human race (see Dunaway, 162). In other words, in *Brave New World* humanity has won its comfort but lost its soul (see Dunaway, 173).

As to classroom procedure, the teacher may confront the students with the textual evidence on progress (Ford, Wells, Watson, Freud; worksheet / transparency). There may be a formal debate of two parties: one tries to justify the theories quoted, the other defends Huxley’s point of view.

***Brave New World* : Synthesis**

With the help of gene technology, mass production of human babies: artificial insemination, breeding embryos in bottles, cloning, social

<p>predestination (five castes), decanting rather than natural births;</p> <p>scientific (behaviourist) education by the state: conditioning and hypno-paedia (sleep teaching); for example: to hate books (potentially subversive); to love expensive freetime activities: preparation for mass consumption and avoidance of displeasure such as to become unafraid of death; to learn sex games as a preparation for sexual liberty;</p>
<p>overcoming fixations, neuroses, complexes by the abolition of families with their exclusive attachments; this serves as a premise for promiscuity and so-called 'happiness' which is based on the pleasure principle; solitude is a taboo word; everybody works for and belongs to everybody else; everybody is proclaimed to be a cell in the social body; nevertheless caste barriers go on existing; there is no equality in <i>Brave New World</i> ;</p>
<p>making Henry Ford the new God; attending solidarity services to annihilate the self and to strengthen group solidarity; true religious feelings replaced by pseudo-religion;</p>
<p>using <i>soma</i>, a chemical drug without side effects, which makes possible an escape (a holiday) from reality at any time; appropriate to control anger, to curb aggressions; functions as a morality substitute;</p>
<p>mass production means a shift from truth and beauty to comfort and 'happiness'; 'happiness' means absence of suffering, of conflicts, of wars, of unpredictable risks; it is a mass delusion; science becomes dangerous: therefore control is necessary; complete stagnation rather than progress; people are prevented from developing personally, they have no sense of guilt, no free will, no morality; metaphorically speaking, they live in bottles, those for the upper classes being larger than those for the lower classes; peoples' lives are standardized, sterile, inhuman; human existence reduced to absurdity; mankind has won its comfort but lost its soul.</p>
<p>Conclusion: human embryos are bred outside the womb (ectogenesis); babies are raised by the state; people are kept busy by light work and expensive freetime distractions; adapted to consumption, finally recycled for fertilization: physico-chemical equality is achieved after death only. Technology / mass production used for human breeding: fearsome vision / fatal outcome.</p>

¹ In spite of ectogenesis, there is no gender equality in *Brave New World*; see, however, Marge Piercy's utopian novel *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), in

which babies are described as being born by machines, which is regarded as a decisive contribution to women's emancipation.

² Pavlov's experiments have been described and nicely illustrated by Bernhard J. Müller, "*Brave New World*": *Interpretationshilfen* (Berlin: Cornelsen, 2008), 99–100. However, the author does not use any form of documentation (neither footnotes nor bibliographical hints) so that his argumentation as a whole is not verifiable.

³ John B. Watson, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It," *Psychological Review*, 20 (1913), 158–177; here 158.

⁴ John B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (Chicago, 1930), v; hereafter, Watson.

⁵ As an additional text in class, one might use an excerpt from Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), in which the protagonist McMurphy gets electric shock treatment in order to destroy his personality; see part 4, section 3.

⁶ See Grzegorz Moroz, "From Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy to Free Climbing: Representations of Sport in *Brave New World*, *Eyeless in Gaza* and *Island*," in: *Aldous Huxley, Man of Letters: Thinker, Critic and Artist*, ed. Bernfried Nugel, Uwe Rasch and Gerhard Wagner (Berlin, 2007), 169. "Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy" is another example of a game for children requiring different elaborate apparatuses; see Rau, 31; see also Jerome Meckier, "Golf in *Brave New World*," in: *Perennial Satirist*, 239; hereafter, Meckier, "Golf."

⁷ See Henry Ford, *My Life and Work* (Milton Keynes, 2008), 167. Hereafter, Ford.

⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (first English translation: 1930) [reissue edition, New York, 1989], 71–72. Hereafter, Freud.

⁹ See the practice of censorship by Mustapha Mond (see 154f); see also Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, where books are systematically destroyed, or Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, where people are neither allowed to read nor to write.

¹⁰ See Samantha Vibbert, "The Influence of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* on Huxley's *Brave New World*," *Aldous Huxley Annual*, 5 (2005), 139. Hereafter, Vibbert.

¹¹ Aldous Huxley, "Utopias, Positive and Negative: Edited with an Afterword by James Sexton," *Aldous Huxley Annual*, 1 (2001), 1; hereafter, Huxley, "Utopias." The following shorter quotation could be used as an alternative: "Wells's *Men Like Gods* annoyed me to the point of planning a parody, but when I started writing I found the idea of a negative utopia so interesting that I forgot about Wells and launched into *Brave New World*" (quoted in Robert S. Baker, "*Brave New World*": *History, Science and Dystopia* [Boston, 1990], 25; hereafter, Baker).

¹² Quoted in David Dunaway, "Huxley and Cloning," *Aldous Huxley Annual*, 2 (2002), 167. Hereafter, Dunaway.

¹³ H. G. Wells, *Men Like Gods: A Novel* (New York, 1923). Hereafter, *MLG*.

¹⁴ An excerpt from Henry Ford's autobiography, which, however, does not problematize the author's perspective, may be found in Arnold, 57–58.

¹⁵ This quotation may also be found in Rau's edition of *Brave New World*, see 43, line 31; "flivver" recurs in a curse on page 185: "'Ford in Flivver!'" he [Helmholtz] swore."

¹⁶ See Luz/Prischtt, 8; see also Rüdiger Hermes, "*Brave New World*": *Inhalt, Hintergrund, Interpretation* (München, 2006), 5.

¹⁷ Northrop Frye, *An Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ, 1957), 223.

¹⁸ See A. A. Mutalik-Desai, "Escape from the Brave New World?" in: *Perennial Satirist*, 269.

¹⁹ See June Deery, "*Brave New World*, the Sequel: Huxley and Contemporary Film," in: *Perennial Satirist*, 194–195.

²⁰ See Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (first English translation, 1922; New York and London, 1961), 5.

²¹ See Peter E. Firchow, "Huxley's Western and Eastern Utopias," *Aldous Huxley Annual*, 1 (2001), 166.

²² *Brave New World Revisited* (London, 1959), 11.