Rationale: When an author takes issue with an approach to life, he may attack it directly, clearly exposing the faults as he sees them. Such a straightforward style leaves little in doubt about his attitude. Yet, more subtle writers may disguise their attack as support; that is, they pretend to favor a position when, in fact, they are exposing the failings of the topic under discussion by presenting absurdities as virtues. With this form of writing, the reader must use caution not to misread. The works of Jonathon Swift--particularly Gulliver's Travels and "A Modest Proposal"--are prime examples of this form of literary attack.

Aldous Huxley in Brave New World depicts a future society which has abandoned the verities of our society. Huxley adroitly delineates a world which, in its quest for social stability, negates individual choice, individual freedom. Mechanized slavery of conditioned human beings is this society's goal; by using science to its own advantage, the directors of this future London efficiently create people who are chemically and psychologically conditioned to love their slavery.

"I'm glad I'm a Beta. I'm glad I'm not an Epsilon."

People in this "brave new world" are decanted clones for whom private agonies and aspirations alike have been made biologically and psychologically impossible. A common attitude prevails toward natural conception, the family, religion and all forms of emotional expression: they were facets of an earlier, primitive life which has been replaced by a scientific utopia that has "Community, Identity, Stability" as its motto.

Yes, this is what has been created by these devotees of Ford, a scientific utopia which espouses the economic theory that "Ending is better than mending;" "The more stitches the less riches," a utopia wherein intimacy has been replaced by the idea that "Everyone belongs to everyone else" and where it is remembered vaguely, that in the old world "There was a thing called the soul and a thing called immortality, and a man called Shakespeare. You've never heard of them, of course."

The reader is tempted to discard Huxley's utopia as a realm of madmen whose aim is social destruction, but according to Huxley himself, this isn't the case. "The people in Brave New World are not sane (in what may be called the absolute sense of that word); but they are not madmen, and their aim is anarchy but social stability . . . achieved by scientific means . . ." They fervently believe this stability (which by our viewpoint reduces the human being to a robot) enriches life by eliminating complexities of reality. There will be no square pegs in round holes in this society: eugenics, here, assures human standardization and this standardization is maintained by removing controversial, thought-provoking materials from the new people; therefore, the "...old fashioned books (are) hidden in a safe Controller's study. Bibles, poetry ____." Censorship, a locking up of alternate ideas, becomes a means by which a single point of view is maintained.

The reader's shock--and fear--of a world so constructed is no greater than Huxley’s. The views of the Controller are not the views of the author (confusion on this point has led to misevaluation
of Brave New World). The propaganda slogans are those of a conditioned, non-free populace. Huxley has created these characters vividly, but they do not present his message. What is his message? Does Huxley present an alternate view—one which opposes social conditioning? Yes, in the depiction of Bernard Marx and John Savage, Huxley gives us two characters who voice the failures of this scientific utopia, giving clear warnings to the reader.

Bernard Marx is different. By some chance, Bernard thinks. He is not thoroughly conditioned; something went wrong during his decantation, and he questions the perfections of his society. For one thing, he stands eight centimeters short of the standard Alpha height, making it difficult for him to get due respect from the lower castes, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons. Bernard is different enough to feel, to be ashamed about his society's love of social conditioning. He knows, unlike his peers, that he isn't free; they are none of them free. He would like to know "what would it be like if I...were free, not enslaved by my conditioning." When reminded that all people in his world are conditioned to be happy, he replies, "But wouldn't you like to be free to be happy in some other way? In your own way, for example: not in everyone else's way? Yet, rather than break away from the constraints of his world, Bernard simply takes soma, the peace-inducing drug supplied by the establishment. Here, through Bernard, Huxley speaks out for individual freedom, clearly identifying the major defect of this new world.

Because of his "heretical" views, Bernard is ruled "...an enemy of Society, a subverter...of all Order and Stability."

John Savage, a young man born on a reservation outside "civilization," is brought into the stable order of Brave New World. He had educated himself by reading the works of Shakespeare, and he was not decanted; he was born of woman and was reared by a mother (an obscene term) outside civilization. Through his eyes, the reader sees clearly the defects of the scientific Eden: natural responses are deemed vulgar and individualism is rejected in favor of uniformity.

John Savage is treated as a freak; citizens of Huxley's new society flock to parties where John—with his natural responses—is used as entertainment. John amuses and shocks the citizens when he refuses to be impressed by the speed of the Green Bombay Rocket saying, "Ariel could put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes." Shortly after his arrival in London, John commits the unforgivable crime of saying that he doesn't like society, quoting lines from Shakespeare to explain his disdain. The Controller, who has dared to read Shakespeare, explains that the plays are out of date; Shakespeare made tragedies out of society's instability. This new society has total stability; hence, no one can appreciate Shakespeare. The Controller has also read the Bible. He tells John that it, too, has been ruled "old" and the God it presents has been replaced by the new God who manifests himself in absence. John questions how one is noble without a God. The answer is that this "civilization has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism. These are symptoms of political inefficiency. In a proper society like ours, nobody has any opportunity for being noble or heroic. If there is no instability, there's no need for a God. People who are conditioned are stable."

Both Bernard and John are threats to a stable society. Bernard is exiled by the Controller, and John flees of his own accord. Bernard is quickly forgotten by society, but the curious pursue John to his hermitage, making him and his primitive way of life objects of jeers, laughter,
photographs. Suicide releases John from the new civilization. John was different; he was natural; he was critical; he was an individual. Like the reader, John could not exist in the world depicted in *Brave New World*. This is Huxley's point.

Huxley does not advocate the way of life he has drawn. He fears it. He warns us that uncontrolled knowledge, separated from the verities of human life, can lead us to a fate second in its horror only to total annihilation. In a society where diverse opinions are exchanged for a single mode of thought, where books and art expressing a variety of philosophies are locked away, where human distinctions are made genetically impossible, it is the Calibans and monsters of Shakespeare's world that flourish, not the brave new people of a brave new world. This is Huxley's message.

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**Summary**: Huxley imagines a prophetic world of the future in which many of the inclinations of today's science and ethics have come to fruition. The story opens in the CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY where all babies are produced "invitreo." The system is foolproof, truly the "best" of all possible worlds for all genetic problems and deformities have also been eliminated by the state. Families have also been eliminated as obsolete—and have become immoral as well as unnecessary. Sex is encouraged as therapeutic and as necessary as eating. All anxieties and guilts have been erased. Happiness reigns supreme. If anyone should show any signs of falling short of bliss, the government supplies SOMA, a euphoria-engendering drug. Peace and perfection exist everywhere, well, almost everywhere. The plot revolves around those few "accidental humans" who still challenge the perfect happiness in this "brave new world."

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**Merit:**

1. **Literary**

This modern classical novel includes all of the qualities of literary excellence that merit use in the senior classroom. The issues are contemporary and the characters are drawn with great originality and insight. Whereas many students have some difficulty committing themselves to story lines and characters drawn from the post, *Brave New World* challenges thinking drawn from contemporary problems and issues. Students will find concerns like euthanasia, cloning, artificial insemination, peace at any price, genetic engineering, the sexual revolution, pornography, drugs approached with great freshness and originality. The theme of *Brave New World* is something like: this is the world our time is creating; is it the world we want?

2. **Psychological**

Students become totally involved in *Brave New World*. Many students who have never really read an assigned novel devour this one. Each time I teach it, students confide that they "have not used Spark Notes on this one," or "this is the first novel I have ever read that I have not wanted to put down." It is extremely important that young adults, soon to be voters in our political
system, reason their way through the great issues of our time. With the Savage and Bernard, readers come to understand that the world they think they want may not be so wonderful after all.

3. Pedagogical

More than any other novel I know of, Brave New World shows students that the milieu in which they live does not just happen. Ideas are the precursors of political and ethical systems. What students can come to see is that they have a stake in those ideas. Because they live in a democracy, their opinions do count. Many times young people are inclined to dismiss what is traditional in favor of what seems to be new, liberal, or daring. Within Huxley’s careful scenario, readers are asked to make all final decisions for themselves. Because so many high school students have already read 1984, this novel also serves as an interesting point of reference. By comparing the two predictions about the future, students can come to some personal measure of where we are heading in the era of their own lifetimes.

Benefit to students: As indicated above, most careful readers of Brave New World come to what may be their first realization of their own historical milieu. Because the novel is so compelling, students will:

1. Do more than merely recall the names of the characters and the detail of the plot. They will experience an identity with the issues.
2. Students will re-examine their own attitudes towards issues like drugs, genetic engineering, peace at any price, pornography, sexual freedom.
3. Students will be forced to draw their own conclusions and make their own decision.
4. Students will be given the opportunity to explore their own attitudes both in discussions and in writing.

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Brief description of proposed classroom activities generated by text: This will be the core text used in the Ethics of the Technological Process unit at the end of the school year. Students will, at the same time, be preparing for their AP English Language and Composition exams, and this novel will provide high-level passages for rhetorical analysis. We will then segue to studying the text through the lens of literary criticism as a bridge to the next course students will take: AP English Literature and Composition.

List of the TEKS the proposed text supports:

(1) Reading/Vocabulary Development. Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:

(A) determine the meaning of grade-level technical academic English words in multiple content areas (e.g., science, mathematics, social studies, the arts) derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes;
(B) analyze textual context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to draw conclusions about the nuance in word meanings;

(C) infer word meaning through the identification and analysis of analogies and other word relationships;

(D) recognize and use knowledge of cognates in different languages and of word origins to determine the meaning of words; and

(E) use general and specialized dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries, histories of language, books of quotations, and other related references (printed or electronic) as needed.

(2) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:

(A) analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on the human condition;

(B) relate the characters and text structures of mythic, traditional, and classical literature to 20th and 21st century American novels, plays, or films; and

(C) relate the main ideas found in a literary work to primary source documents from its historical and cultural setting.

(7) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the meaning of classical, mythological, and biblical allusions in words, phrases, passages, and literary works.

(8) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Culture and History. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how the style, tone, and diction of a text advance the author's purpose and perspective or stance.

(10) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Persuasive Text. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about persuasive text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis. Students are expected to:

(A) evaluate how the author's purpose and stated or perceived audience affect the tone of persuasive texts; and
(B) analyze historical and contemporary political debates for such logical fallacies as non-sequiturs, circular logic, and hasty generalizations.

(13) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to:

(A) plan a first draft by selecting the correct genre for conveying the intended meaning to multiple audiences, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea;

(B) structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way (e.g., using outlines, note taking, graphic organizers, lists) and develop drafts in timed and open-ended situations that include transitions and rhetorical devices to convey meaning;

(C) revise drafts to clarify meaning and achieve specific rhetorical purposes, consistency of tone, and logical organization by rearranging the words, sentences, and paragraphs to employ tropes (e.g., metaphors, similes, analogies, hyperbole, understatement, rhetorical questions, irony), schemes (e.g., parallelism, antithesis, inverted word order, repetition, reversed structures), and by adding transitional words and phrases;

(D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; and

(E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

(16) Writing/Persuasive Texts. Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. Students are expected to write an argumentative essay (e.g., evaluative essays, proposals) to the appropriate audience that includes:

(A) a clear thesis or position based on logical reasons supported by precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and/or expressions of commonly accepted beliefs;

(B) accurate and honest representation of divergent views (i.e., in the author's own words and not out of context);

(C) an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context;

(D) information on the complete range of relevant perspectives;

(E) demonstrated consideration of the validity and reliability of all primary and secondary sources used; and
(F) language attentively crafted to move a disinterested or opposed audience, using specific rhetorical devices to back up assertions (e.g., appeals to logic, emotions, ethical beliefs).

(24) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:

(A) listen responsively to a speaker by framing inquiries that reflect an understanding of the content and by identifying the positions taken and the evidence in support of those positions; and

(B) evaluate the clarity and coherence of a speaker's message and critique the impact of a speaker's diction and syntax on an audience.

(25) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to give a formal presentation that exhibits a logical structure, smooth transitions, accurate evidence, well-chosen details, and rhetorical devices, and that employs eye contact, speaking rate (e.g., pauses for effect), volume, enunciation, purposeful gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.

(26) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate productively in teams, offering ideas or judgments that are purposeful in moving the team towards goals, asking relevant and insightful questions, tolerating a range of positions and ambiguity in decision-making, and evaluating the work of the group based on agreed-upon criteria.

Clarifications of any potentially controversial segments and why the text remains a suitable choice, despite being potentially controversial: Because the novel is a biting, satirical critique of where Huxley prophesied the culture of early twentieth century would eventually de-evolve, the work does mention specific passages with sexual references throughout, including: the “Feelies” films that mimic titillating film of today, the “orgy-porgies” where the mass of culture comes together as one in solidarity, and Lenina’s seductive wiles as she begins a relationship with John the Savage.

Any culture aesthete should be aware of the novel’s (brazen) criticism of culture’s preoccupation with sex, drugs, entertainment, and the like. As previously mentioned, because the novel is a satire, many readers fail to realize that Huxley does anything but praise such behavior; rather, nearly every instance of this novel is a vision of how perverse Huxley saw society to be in potentiality—and in a future possibility, actuality. Brave New World is perhaps the most significantly moral book I know. But the reader must deduce reality for himself. Students can be prepared for the frank depictions beforehand. With sound discussions and a chance for the sharing of ideas, most students will come to healthy, well-thought, personal conclusions about their own code of ethics.
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**Similar Works:**

*1984*, George Orwell

*Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury