

# An Interpretation on the Social Form of *Brave New World* from the Perspective of Foucault's Discipline Theory

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**Abstract:** The social state depicted in Huxley's *Brave New World* is something about which we need to be vigilant in the 21st century, and it also inspires us to question what truly constitutes a beautiful society. Given the significant relevance of the book *Brave New World* to hegemonism and cultural output in the 21st century, this thesis aims to discuss the portrayal of the World State in the 26th century as depicted in *Brave New World* from three perspectives: docile bodies, the means of correct training, and panopticism by applying Foucault's discipline theory. This thesis reveals that the seemingly beautiful and satisfying world is actually an empty and oppressive society, emphasizing the importance of self-awareness awakening.

**Keywords:** *Brave New World*; Foucault; Discipline Theory; Panopticism.

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## 1. Introduction

Given the significant relevance of the book *Brave New World* to hegemony and cultural output in the 21st century, this thesis aims to discuss the portrayal of the World State in the 26th century as depicted in *Brave New World* from three perspectives: docile bodies, the means of correct training, and panopticism by applying Foucault's discipline theory.

In examining docile bodies, we will explore how individuals in the World State are conditioned to conform to societal norms and expectations through various forms of social control. This includes analyzing how technology and propaganda is used to manipulate behavior and suppress individuality.

The means of correct training will be a focal point of our discussion as we delve into the methods employed by the World State to mold citizens into compliant members of society. This will involve an examination of standardized institutions such as schools, and the normalizing judgment adopted by Lord Mustapha Mond that serves to reinforce obedience and conformity.

Finally, our analysis will delve into panopticism within the context of *Brave New World*. We will explore how surveillance and monitoring contribute to maintaining social order and preventing dissent within the World State, including concepts such as self-regulation and internalized control mechanisms that create a pervasive atmosphere of compliance.

Previous studies within the field of political science have predominantly focused on totalitarian theory. By applying Foucault's discipline theory to these three perspectives, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of power dynamics within *Brave New World*'s dystopian society while shedding light on its implications for contemporary culture.

### 1.1. Research Background

The highly debated topics such as class, disease, life, and death continue to captivate human society today. Despite the numerous benefits brought by scientific and technological advancements, humanity's relentless pursuit of an ideal

society remains unquenched. *Brave New World* vividly portrays a World State where technology reigns supreme and individuality becomes obsolete. In this disciplinary society, there is no need for citizens to engage in warfare or exploit resources from other nations since all countries have already merged into one harmonious society. The fear of aging does not plague its inhabitants; instead, the elderly are able to maintain youthful vigor until their final moments.

Pain is eradicated from their lives because they lack familial bonds and emotional attachments. Financial constraints do not burden them with the pressure of survival; instead, they revel in unparalleled happiness and convenience that elude our contemporary society. However, unlike the independent and free-spirited individuals found in our present world, every citizen within the World State serves as a disposable cog in the machinery of disciplinary control — mass-produced like mere tools designed for specific purposes.

### 1.2. Research Significance

Firstly, this paper integrates Foucault's discipline theory with *Brave New World*, offering a modern perspective for the academic community to interpret *Brave New World* and achieve a more comprehensive and profound understanding of Foucault's discipline theory.

Secondly, by scrutinizing and examining the disciplinary society depicted in *Brave New World* and merging it with *Foucault's Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, this paper prompts individuals to recognize that disciplinary social politics entails eradicating human uniqueness and transforming human civilization, ultimately depriving individuals of their subjective agency as independent and free beings.

This paper aims to emphasize the significance of life's value and its inherent distinctiveness, while urging vigilance against ideological manipulation by ruling classes seeking control over people in order to prevent individuals from being molded into mere components that actively erode self-awareness and the meaning of life through the exertion of formidable power.

### 1.3. Literature Review

Dystopia, which is the opposite of “Utopia,” is contrary to the beautiful imagination of an ideal society in previous “Utopian” literary works but describes the future as a nightmarish, sordid, and ugly world. Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, written in the early 20th century, is touted as part of a dystopian trilogy.

In terms of the domestic research situation, domestic critics have a more comprehensive perspective on this novel. Research perspectives include critical theory of technological alienation, feminist theory, mode of spatial construction and narrative function, Western ethics, technocracy and totalitarianism, expression mode of literary creation, etc. Shi Xiaohong and Kang Dege (2023) interpret in detail, from the perspective of Marcuse’s critical theory of technological alienation, the external representations and internal causes of the “one-dimensional society” and “one-dimensional individual” caused by the alienation of reproductive technology and media technology in the novel’s brave new world. They also analyze the failed attempts of individuals to transcend the concept of one-dimension and their necessity in order to explain the one-dimensional world in which humans are reduced to a single form and humanity disappears under the alienation of technology.

Zhou Susu and Zhang Chi (2019) point out that the female roles described in *Brave New World* lack attributes of female self-awareness, which strengthens the binary opposition between men and women in dystopian society. This becomes another potent case of overthrowing the Utopian construction, in addition to totalitarianism and technocracy in the novel. Ma Yuansheng (2018) discusses that in dystopian literary works, space has gone beyond the function of a mere “scene”, as characters and events are intensely revolved around space. The world that the author wants to show must also be reflected by the construction of space. Zhou Xiaochuan (2017) starts with discussing Western happiness from emotional and rational ethics perspectives, then compares and analyzes two special forms of “Utopian” happiness theme found in three classic dystopian novels. Finally, Zhou explains the paradox and realistic reflection of achieving happiness in dystopian novels.

In addition, many scholars have compared the novel with other “Utopian” novels or science fiction. Li Zeng and Liu Yingjie (2010) express the view that the dystopian prophecy is merely the appearance of the existence of the novel through close reading of the text and in-depth examination of the writer’s concept of creation and life. Huxley’s purpose is to satirize scientism and totalitarianism and their repercussions for society, in order to criticize today’s society and reflect on the meaning of life. Li Feng (2016) systematically analyzes social types and power mechanisms in three works from perspectives of Taylorism, Fordism, and managerial society, aiming to uncover their profound political and cultural connotations. Zhao Yiwei (2015) examines control of science and technology over human beings mentioned in *Brave New World*, pointing out that true meaning of science and technology control is actually control of totalitarianism over human beings. Division of castes in creation of inhabitants of World State manifests totalitarianism, which includes control not only over human class but also race and gender.

Some scholars also begin their expression from the perspective of literary creation. Chen Ying (2016) points out that *Brave New World* compares future life with reality as a means of expressing its theme. Additionally, Huxley

extensively employs irony in the creation of *Brave New World*.

Western scholars have studied the warning function of *Brave New World* to modern society from the perspectives of eugenics, bioethics, and totalitarianism. Joanne Woiak’s research mainly focuses on analyzing Huxley’s concept of eugenics. He delves into a more in-depth analysis of the themes and implications of Huxley’s eugenics manifesto. The interpretation of Huxley’s *Brave New World* can be seen as an exploration of the ethical considerations surrounding the application and validity of scientific knowledge, presenting a relatively optimistic perspective. Oppressive methods such as coercive genetic manipulation are deemed necessary and tolerated in order to achieve the desired goal of social and economic stability. Joanne Woiak (2007) notes that *Brave New World* presents a complex critique of how scientific knowledge arises from, and in turn serves, the social, political, and economic agendas of those in power. Author Maren Linett (2019) synthesizes concepts regarding aging and life narratives put forth by philosophers and bioethicists such as Ezekiel Emanuel, Gilbert Meilaender, and Alasdair MacIntyre in order to analyze the novel’s portrayal of a society devoid of elderly individuals. The novel also underscores the significant political, moral, and emotional ramifications associated with the elimination of older members within a society where artistic expression, truth, and existential significance are sacrificed for the pursuit of pleasure and diversion while citizens are conditioned not to question the values upheld by those in power. Dennis Ray Morgan (2018) characterizes the post-normal era as a milieu in which an inverted totalitarian state is emerging, resembling a dystopian society depicted in the novels *Brave New World* and *1984*. Inverted totalitarianism is demonstrated to be a byproduct of technological society, the American empire, and corporate politics, with Panopticon increasingly taking on a globalized nature. The first step in combating this emerging totalitarianism is to acknowledge its existence and challenge its established assumptions regarding the meaning of life and the pursuit of happiness.

Upon thorough analysis, it is evident that since the publication of *Brave New World*, there has been comprehensive and in-depth research focused on this book both domestically and internationally. However, within the field of political science, previous studies have predominantly centered around totalitarian theory. In contrast, this paper primarily delves into Foucault’s discipline theory to examine the disciplinary society depicted in *Brave New World*. In Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, the World State, situated in London, functions as a disciplinary society where inhabitants experience perpetual happiness and minimal suffering at the cost of complete eradication of literature and art. The population is stratified into five distinct social classes from birth; even during the incubation process each adheres to a specific code of social conduct or discipline. Failure to conform to one’s designated class may result in exile to a remote and uncivilized island. In contrast to the “World State” lies the “savage reservation” where Savage John was raised, resembling our contemporary society with its social stratification but still offering ample opportunities for individual agency.

This dissertation emphasizes the importance of maintaining critical awareness as an autonomous thinker in order to resist the ideological manipulation employed by ruling elites for societal control. It aims to draw attention to underlying societal issues, promote a full realization of

human worth, and foster the creation of a more harmonious society that celebrates humanity's brilliance.

#### 1.4. Research Methodology

Close reading of the text: *Brave New World*, a renowned dystopian novel, has been the subject of extensive interpretation by scholars. However, in my initial approach to this work, I refrained from consulting previous interpretations and instead engaged with the text directly through my own limited life experiences. Subsequently, after gaining a comprehensive understanding of the text, I refined my specific analytical perspective through extensive literature review and analysis.

Literature review: After an extensive review of the literature, I have developed a keen interest in political and philosophical theories. Due to the complexity of much of Foucault's work, I have chosen to focus on *Discipline and Punish* as it is more accessible for my current undergraduate study. Ultimately, my thesis aims to analyze *Brave New World* through the lens of Foucault's discipline theory.

#### 1.5. Thesis Layout

This paper is structured into six chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the research background, significance, domestic and foreign research status, methodology, and thesis layout. The second chapter offers a concise introduction to Foucault's discipline theory and a detailed exposition of the three theories essential to this article. The third chapter primarily delves into "docile bodies" to elucidate how citizens conform to the requirements of their respective social classes at a physiological level within the World State. The fourth chapter primarily delves into the methods of discipline employed, encompassing the standardized institutions with schools as the model and the standardized judgment adopted by the rulers. This serves to unveil how the citizens of the World State are indoctrinated with a distorted truth that runs counter to humanity, as well as the repercussions of public opinion when individuals deviate from societal order. The fifth chapter predominantly examines the constraints imposed on both citizens and masters within the World State through a lens of Panopticism. The sixth chapter provides a synthesis of key findings and limitations encountered in this dissertation, along with prospects for future research endeavors.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter delves into a comprehensive analysis of Michel Foucault's discipline theory, exploring its impact and relevance in today's society. It also examines his influential work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* in depth, shedding light on the historical context and theoretical framework behind it. Furthermore, this chapter explores the three means of discipline illustrated in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, drawing parallels with Foucault's theories to provide a well-rounded understanding of the concept of discipline in literature.

### 2.1. Background of Foucault's Discipline Theory

Michel Foucault's ideas have played a significant role in the evolution of French philosophy and have exerted a profound influence on the development of contemporary sociology. "Foucault's micro-power theory and thoughts on

the interaction between micro power, knowledge, rationality, discourse, and space show a brand-new framework of social theory with its unique perspective and method, becoming a kind of political analysis of scientific knowledge" (Tian Xiaomin, 2016: 21). The micro-power theory is elaborated in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison* (hereinafter referred to as *Discipline and Punish*).

This thesis will focus on summarizing Foucault's discipline theory from *Discipline and Punish*, and then analyzing the disciplinary society in *Brave New World*. In his 1975 work *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault employs his concept of "political anatomy" to expound upon the evolution of the punishment system from the Middle Ages to the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the emergence of disciplinary power. Since the late 18th century, there has been a shift in the focus of punishment from "taking the body as the main object of punishment" to "imposing punishment on the individual soul". The aim is not to uphold humanity for offenders or demonstrate leniency by authorities but rather establish a more rational distribution of power through effective and enduring punishment for social individuals.

Based on his historical research, Foucault introduces the concept of "discipline" as a fundamental pattern in disciplinary society. Disciplinary powers manipulate and enhance the diverse forces within society through carefully calculated control by those in authority. The power of individuals within society is strengthened from an economic perspective rooted in utilitarianism but weakened from a political standpoint characterized by resistance.

### 2.2. Three Means of Discipline

In order to ensure the enduring efficacy of disciplinary power, Foucault identifies three methods of discipline training: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination. Due to space constraints in this dissertation, further elaboration on these specific aspects will be provided in the subsequent passage. The disciplinary system permeates social individuals through institutions such as military camps and educational facilities, instilling a sense of shame that fosters strict adherence to discipline and compliance with prescribed norms.

After providing a comprehensive overview of the disciplinary system, Foucault develops the social concept of the "Panopticon". Initially proposed by Bentham, a proponent of prison reform in Britain, the Panopticon is an architectural model for prisons. The design principle involves a central watchtower with panoramic windows that allow constant surveillance of prisoners in surrounding cells. Due to their individual and adjacent confinement, inmates are only subject to scrutiny by their supervisors and are unable to communicate with one another. The state of "conscious and permanent visibility (Foucault, 2020: 201)" ensures that power works automatically. Based on the above, Bentham proposes the principle that power should be visible (that is, the prisoner knows they are being watched from the central watchtower), but not verifiable (the prisoner cannot know exactly when or how).

In addition to its surveillance function, the panopticon also serves as a laboratory where the ruling class can conduct experiments, modify individuals' behavior, and enforce discipline. The panopticon is designed to enable continuous monitoring of internal operations, with all subordinate employees within the panoramic building subject to dynamic supervision, including the general manager himself. In

*Discipline and Punish*, Foucault regards the model of “Panopticon” as a “generalizable model of functioning (Foucault, 2020: 205)” and applies it to his “discipline” theory. The implementation of “discipline” has led to the formation of a disciplinary society. In a disciplinary society, the previously enclosed disciplines, a sort of social “quarantine” gradually extends into “an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of ‘panopticism’ (Foucault, 2020: 216)”. The discipline of power thus permeates other methods, “extending them and above all making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements. It assures an infinitesimal distribution of the power relations” (Foucault, 2020: 216).

In the conclusion of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault introduces the concept of the “prison system”. The concept of “prison” has evolved from a single place where prisoners are held to a universalized and abstract disciplinary institution. Following the publication of *Discipline and Punish*, there has been an expansion in scholarly research on the pervasive power dynamics within society.

### 3. Docile Bodies in the World State

Antonio Gramsci, a prominent Marxist theorist of the 20th century, believes that “the real power of a social system is not the violence of the ruling class or the coercive power of its state apparatus, but the acceptance by the governed of the rulers’ world view” (Chen Fu, 2016: 19). In *Brave New World*, the governed or the citizens of the World State, which is the focal point of an ideal society established by rulers in A.F.632, are considered as “docile bodies” within a disciplinary system. Foucault (2020: 146) points out that “A body is docile if it may be subjected to use and transformation and improvement. The celebrated automata were not only a way to illustrate an organism; they were also political puppets, small-scale models of power”. This chapter utilizes prominent figures from two superior classes in the World State as examples to analyze the concept of “docile bodies” within this societal structure.

#### 3.1. Alpha-Plus Class Embodied by Bernard

Bernard, the male protagonist of the novel, embodies the concept of “docile bodies” within the Alpha-Plus class. He harbors a deep aversion to his physical appearance: not only does he fall short by eight centimeters from the alpha standard, but he also exhibits signs of emaciation. In the World State, citizens are conditioned to link their physical attributes with social standing to some degree, thereby perpetuating Bernard’s feelings of inferiority and even anxiety when interacting with individuals from both his own class and lower classes.

Bernard often has to endure taunts about his height, especially when pursuing romantic relationships, which further fuels his profound disgust towards a society that hails “everyone belongs to everyone else” as gospel. Replete with longing for a physique like Henry Foster’s (the epitome of Alpha-Plus class), enabling him revel in unfettered existence within hierarchical and disciplinary society of the World State. After bringing the savage John, who is born and raised in the New Mexican Reservation, to the World State, Bernard is treated as an influential man by society at least on the surface. The upper-class people of the World State hope to get to know this savage who is antipathetic to the new ideology of the World State through Bernard’s introduction, which makes Bernard’s ego begin to inflate and his behavior become more

frivolous.

When Bernard fails to fulfill his initial commitment, certain women with whom he is involved in intimate relationships blurt out scathing remarks about Bernard’s physique in indignation and exasperation, saying, “had by a wretched little man who had alcohol poured into his bottle by mistake — by a creature with a Gamma-Minus physique” (Huxley, 1994: 151).

#### 3.2. Beta-Plus Class Embodied by Lenina

Lenina, the female protagonist of the novel, embodies the concept of “docile bodies” within the Beta-Plus class. As an immaculate woman, Lenina possesses a radiant complexion, a voluptuous figure, captivating charm, and a melodious voice. Consequently, she has consistently been objectified by men in the World State, including John the savage upon his arrival. However, her status within this disciplinary society does not afford her agency to break free from being relegated to “the second sex’s attachment to the first sex”.

Li Renlei and Yang Xueyun (2021: 54) argue that the concept of the “second sex” pertains to women, who are positioned as “the other” in relation to the “first sex” — men. Beauvoir (2011: 62) characterizes women in *The Second Sex* as follows: “her grasp on the world is narrower than man’s; and she is more closely subjugated to the species”. In the World State, men attain the highest social status as “Alpha-Plus”, while women are relegated to the status of “Beta-Plus”, which reflects the situation that women in the World State have been instilled with the concept of being weaker than men from the beginning of decanting from bottles.

In *Brave New World*, Lenina persistently interrogates Bernard about his assessment of her physique, eagerly anticipating a response that aligns with her expectations. However, her triumphant countenance abruptly gives way to despondency when Bernard’s reply falls short. As Lenina incessantly broaches the subject of physical appearance, Bernard’s demeanor towards her undergoes a transformation from initial indignation (“discussing her like so much meat”) to indifference (“she doesn’t mind being a piece of meat”). The underlying rationale for the validation of women’s inherent value through the assessment and endorsement by men represents the most overt and unequivocal demonstration of compliant females in the World State.

As Foucault (2020: 138) points out in *Discipline and Punish*, “that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination”. In her interactions with the opposite sex, Lenina consistently assumes the role of a soothing and reassuring presence: employing gentle intonation, cautious phrasing, and regurgitating standardized thoughts that have been deeply ingrained into her mind through intensive hypnopaedia in the World State. “She repeated and smiled, for all the puzzled anxiety in her eyes, with what was meant to be an inviting and voluptuous cajolery” (Huxley, 2007: 79). The more Lenina’s specific behaviors align with the standards of the World State, the more fervently she exhibits physical obedience and susceptibility to domination by the ruling class. Consequently, when coerced by the Arch-Community-Songster, a member of the ruling class, in a gentle yet undeniable manner, Lenina is compelled to comply without hesitation. Huxley, author of *Brave New World*, satirically refers to this demand from the Arch-Community-Songster as an act of “honor”.

In the ostensibly tranquil and idyllic new world that

preaches the doctrine of “Everyone is indispensable, even Epsilon is useful”, the ruling elite, under the governance of Lord Mustapha Mond, designates formerly nimble individuals as symbols of social hierarchy, accentuating their role and contribution to society while stifling their capacity for independent thought and extinguishing their vibrant vitality. When one’s docile body fails to meet society’s established standards, both the spiritual and corporeal existence of an individual are annihilated.

## 4. Means of Correct Training Used in the World State

Foucault (2020: 170) argues that discipline functions as a “calculated, but permanent economy”. The disciplinary institution acts as the mechanism for societal discipline and instills disciplinary norms in compliant individuals. To maintain the exercise of disciplinary power, Foucault identifies three methods of “discipline” training — hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination. Due to space limitations, this chapter will only focus on hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment within disciplinary institutions.

### 4.1. Schools as Standardized Institutions

Foucault (1972: 227) points out that “every educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it”. Cui Lu (2019: 16) contends that in light of technological advancements, the future concept of a school transcends its traditional definition. It represents not just any institution but rather a vision and blueprint for school development, leveraging available technology and resources to guide its evolution. Thus, in A.F.632 (the 26th century A.D.), the concept of “school” is not limited to a single and physical place for imparting knowledge.

There are two interpretations for this phenomenon. Firstly, the esteemed figures in the new world are not renowned philosophers or scientists, but rather diligent craftsmen. Considering the potential hazards associated with historical and scientific knowledge to individuals, schools simply impart essential survival skills in the World State, such as Elementary Class Consciousness. Secondly, in contrast to contemporary society, the World State incorporates hypnopaedia in nurturing centers and conducts death conditioning at hospitals for individuals approaching the end of their lives.

This comprehensive educational system spans from childhood to adolescence, shaping individuals’ perspectives and values. As individuals reach physical maturity or functionality, they will perceive their prior education as invaluable guidance. The subsequent analysis will examine how schools function as training institutions that regulate and standardize citizens within the World State, with a focus on the Hospital for the Dying as a prime example.

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education as invaluable guidance. The subsequent analysis will examine how schools function as training institutions that regulate and standardize citizens within the World State, with a focus on the Hospital for the Dying as a prime example.

When John, a wild inhabitant of the New Mexican Reservation, pays a visit to Upper School Eton in the World State, the esteemed Head Mistress Miss Keate remarks, “Death conditioning begins at eighteen months. Every tot spends two mornings a week in a Hospital for the Dying. ... They learn to take dying as a matter of course” (Huxley, 1994: 142). During her trip to the reservation, Linda, originally classified as a Beta-Plus in the World State, unfortunately loses track of her beloved Tomakin who later ascends to become the director of the central London hatchery and conditioning center. Ultimately rescued by local Indians on this very reservation, she gives birth to John.

On the contrary, citizens in the World State lack the notion of “mother” and “viviparous”. Since they originate from “eggs” and are nurtured in “bottles”, the concept of “raising children” no longer evokes warmth and sweetness, but rather repulsion and obscenity. Due to their artificially controlled metabolism, the condition of elderly individuals in critical states contradicts that of modern society, “All these moribund sexagenarians had the appearance of childish girls. At forty-four, Linda seemed, by contrast, a monster of flaccid and distorted senility” (Huxley, 1994: 177). When those undergoing death education become intrigued and start gossiping about Linda’s impending demise, John’s initial reluctance towards his mother’s life termination transforms into a certain degree of exasperation towards these intrusive and mischievous youngsters.

When Linda, the savage John’s mother, passes away in the hospital for the dying, John is unable to contain his grief and tears flow freely beside her hospital bed. This display of raw emotion only serves to ignite a fiery anger within the Head Nurse, who becomes deeply concerned about potential regression in “healthy” death conditioning, “the whole Group might be put back six or seven months in its conditioning” (Huxley, 1994: 182). However, despite this disruptive interlude, the nurse eventually regains control over the situation and it does not deter those youngsters from embracing death with as much positivity as they should.

Thus, it becomes evident that schools, as standardized institutions wielding disciplinary power, impart values that are utterly distorted and even counter to humanitarian principles.

### 4.2. Normalizing Judgment Adopted by Lord Mustapha Mond

The majority of citizens in the World State conduct themselves with utmost decorum in their respective professions, even Epsilons, who occupy the lowest rung of society. Within this utopian society, the prevailing norm entails diligent work, indulgence in soma, participation in sensory games, and immersion in feelies. Recognizing that an excess of leisure time may breed a sense of emptiness among citizens, Lord Mustapha Mond deliberately orchestrates a “seven and a half hour” workday. Inevitably confronted with worrisome aspects of life, citizens turn to soma-induced blissful holidays as their refuge. Henceforth when Bernard dares to voice unconventional and eccentric musings on the meaning of existence itself, Lenina persuades him to ingest soma without hesitation for “One cubic centimeter cures ten gloomy sentiments” (Huxley, 1994: 46).

In addition, citizens in the World State partake in elementary sexual games from childhood. In contemporary society, intercourse typically takes place only when both partners have reached physical maturity. However, in the World State, the focus on intercourse surpasses that of love itself; even within an intimate relationship, engaging exclusively in sexual activities is considered a dreadfully forbidden act. Conversely, the resolute and unwavering attitude towards love exhibited by the savage John is remarkable. John vividly describes the anguish he feels upon discovering that his beloved Indian girl has been married to a young man of her own race. Such profound emotions are notably absent within a society where self-interest prevails.

When an individual becomes a symbol of social status, the disillusionment stemming from the inability to achieve a prestigious career is replaced by transient moments of sensual gratification. Moreover, in the London-centric World State, the concept of “marriage” is non-existent, leading to a lack of enduring emotional bonds. Xu Jing (2020: 35) states that Karl Marx declares that sociality is the essential attribute of man that distinguishes humans from animals. The World State, which promotes this “new” ideology, has regressed to a primitive state in terms of gender relations: as early as the 17th century, Britain had already given rise to a concept of “fleet-style” marriage that called for freedom of love. Zhang Xunshi (2016: 164) contends that theoretically speaking, so long as both men and women are able to make their own choices, they can enter into a “fleet-style” marital relationship independent of external societal factors such as authorities, parents or religious institutions.

In the prevailing social milieu, Bernard’s conduct has a detrimental impact on societal dynamics: his approach towards courtship emphasizes the autonomy of women and eschews superficial objectification; he counsels Lenina to exercise prudence in pursuing her desires and avoid hasty intimate encounters; most notably, he articulates an unconventional aspiration to transcend societal norms. As an exemplary alpha member, Bernard is not only entitled to the privileges conferred by society but also obligated to uphold its established conventions. However, when Director Tomakin publicly denounces Bernard as a subversive force undermining social stability, public sentiment turns against him among his peers.

Foucault (2020: 178) points out, “....., from light physical punishment to minor deprivations and petty humiliations. It was a question both of making the slightest departures from correct behaviour subject to punishment, and of giving a punitive function to the apparently indifferent elements of the disciplinary apparatus”. Bernard’s ultimate punishment involves exile to Iceland, a realm where the inhabitants embrace the most idiosyncratic and unconventional beliefs known to humanity, making their existence wholly incompatible within the confines of the disciplinary society of the World State.

## 5. Citizens and Masters of the World State under Panopticism

Panopticism constitutes the very essence and nucleus of Foucault’s discipline theory. Foucault astutely observes that modern society resembles a circular penitentiary with all-encompassing vistas. The World State depicted in *Brave New World*, set in A.F.632 (26th century AD), serves as an exemplar of this “panoramic” prison. In this new world, the

relationship between a citizen of the World State and their overseer mirrors that between a prisoner and their surveillant within a panopticon. From the moment their destiny is predetermined at the hatchery and conditioning center until their final breaths, citizens of the World State exist under ceaseless scrutiny. Lord Mustapha Mond, the incumbent ruler of the ruling class, positions himself as the central observer and employs various disciplinary means to thoroughly permeate every citizen’s psyche with notions such as “Community, Identity, and Stability,” thus more effectively manipulating them while upholding social order. Beneath this cultural gaze, each citizen resides in an illusionary state of tranquility and contentment, dutifully fulfilling their assigned tasks according to established rules and regulations. This chapter delves into an analysis of Lenina and Lord Mustapha Mond as representative examples to explore how both citizens and masters navigate life under panopticism.

### 5.1. World Citizens Embodied by Lenina

In World State, the whole society is divided into five social classes, namely Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon. Alpha is the highest social class, followed by Beta, and Epsilon is the lowest, “where the Alphas and Betas remained until definitely bottled; while the Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bokanovsky’s Process” (Huxley, 1994: 3).

The depiction of the dialogue between Lenina and her friend Fanny regarding sexual partners in *Brave New World* serves as a tangible illustration of this phenomenon. As a Beta-Plus, Lenina possesses aesthetically pleasing facial features and a well-proportioned figure, rendering her the object of desire for numerous outstanding Alpha males. Upon disclosing that she is still involved with Henry Foster, her friend Fanny, known for her gentle and compassionate nature, displays a pained and disapproving countenance due to the Director’s strong opposition to intense or enduring relationships. After urging Lenina to adopt a more lenient attitude towards futility, Fanny can only calmly and resolutely persuade Lenina to embrace her responsibilities and espouse the World State’s proverb of “Everyone belongs to everyone else”.

The conversation regarding sexual partners unfolds within the confines of a secluded women’s locker room, conspicuously absent of the male Director’s presence. However, Lenina’s confidante Fanny accentuates the Director’s sentiments. This subtle detail reveals how diverse behavioral norms rooted in the culture of “Everyone belongs to everyone else” have permeated and infiltrated the consciousness of every citizen in the World State. Even Lenina, positioned at society’s pinnacle attainable by women, is unable to transgress these norms. This exemplifies the tangible manifestation of disciplinary power imposed upon individuals within society, based on the principles of “Panopticism”, which instills apprehension or even dread towards being scrutinized. Furthermore, such unease and trepidation will compel individuals to conform more closely with established social standards. As Foucault says, “in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers” (Foucault, 2020: 201).

### 5.2. Masters Embodied by Lord Mustapha Mond

The powerful function of “Panopticism” in perpetually “search, examine and classify individuals” not only places

pressure on the citizens of five social hierarchies but also encompasses the current ruler of the World State, Lord Mustapha Mond. *Brave New World* does not allocate much space to depict the Dominator; however, each time he emerges, he must adeptly assuage citizens' emotions, thereby implying that he is subject to supervision and scrutiny from the lower class. This can be discerned through the attitudes and behaviors exhibited by the lower class towards Lord Mustapha Mond: the Director ardently introduces him to students with great enthusiasm; students listen attentively during lectures while diligently transcribing notes in anticipation of acquiring authoritative insights from their Master; confusion and bewilderment fill the Director's countenance upon learning that history which is regarded as dangerous might be permitted for study by their esteemed Master.

The Master, as the vigilant overseer of the World State, meticulously establishes and modifies all standards. Therefore, it is essential that his words and actions align with these standards; otherwise, their efficacy and significance would be compromised. In the discourse with the Savage John, readers catch a glimpse of the Master's state of mind. Lord Mustapha Mond possesses an acute awareness of his duty to transcend personal inclinations and aversions in order to fulfill his role as a superior Alpha. Prior to assuming rulership, he resolves to relinquish his original pursuit of physical truth and instead dedicate himself to the noble cause of bliss and harmony for the citizens of the World State. As articulated by Foucault (2020: 204), echoing sentiments akin to those expressed by Panopticon's proprietor, "By every tie I could devise, my own fate had been bound up by me with theirs" (Foucault, 2020: 204).

Therefore, Panopticism 'was destined to spread throughout the social body; its vocation was to become a generalized function' (Foucault, 2020: 207).

## 6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the significance and limitations of this thesis are deliberated upon while proffering recommendations for further exploration.

### 6.1. Major Findings

This thesis critically examines Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* through the theoretical lens of Foucault's discipline theory, revealing the underlying hollowness and oppression within the seemingly idyllic and contented society. By adopting Foucault's discipline theory as its theoretical framework, this study enriches the analysis of *Brave New World* from a Foucauldian perspective, providing a comprehensive exploration of how both the rulers and citizens of the World State are subjected to disciplinary power that renders them incapable of resistance.

In examining the methods of indoctrination employed by those in power within the World State, this thesis primarily focuses on analyzing their control measures from an ideological perspective. Furthermore, this thesis not only delves into the rulers' disciplinary practices towards different social classes and genders within the World State but also contributes to research on school education from a fresh standpoint.

The new world depicted in *Brave New World* is a realm characterized by pervasive oppression, which completely strips its inhabitants of any inclination towards pain or discomfort. Within this panoptic society, individuals can only

suppress their desire to rebel as they are compelled to love themselves and conform to societal norms out of fear of expulsion. The social order portrayed in *Brave New World* serves as a poignant reminder for us in the 21st century to remain vigilant and prompts us to critically examine the true essence of a utopian society.

## 6.2. Limitations and Prospects for Further Study

However, there are still some limitations in the research process. Firstly, due to my limited expertise during my undergraduate study, there may be certain deviations when analyzing specific contexts. Secondly, as an enlightening scientific novel, I may not have the same level of precision in researching the technology mentioned in *Brave New World* as professional scholars. Therefore, while writing this thesis, more emphasis has been placed on ideological control to enhance future research on *Brave New World* from scientific and technological perspectives. Lastly, this dissertation applies Foucault's discipline theory to analyze the text; however, due to space constraints within this thesis, more nuanced theories have not been extensively covered. I hope that I can utilize Foucault's discipline theory more comprehensively and accurately in future endeavors.

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