Brave New World
Complete Literature Guide

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Standards Focus: Subgenres of Literature—Satire

Many students are familiar with the different genres, or categories, of literature—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, autobiography, biography, plays, newspaper, folk tales—to name a few. However, there are often many subgenres of literature within these genres. For example, under the broad genre of plays, there are the subgenres of comedy, tragedy and history. Under the genre of mystery, there are the subgenres of thriller, detective, historical, romantic, and suspense.

*Brave New World* falls under the genre of fiction (or science fiction) and the subgenre of satire. Satire is a piece of work that tries to expose, attack and/or ridicule the foolishness, wrongdoings, or strange behavior of society. Satire is often humorous, using exaggeration, irony, sarcasm and parody to catch the attention of the reader and promote changes in behavior. Modern satire can be seen on television shows such as *Saturday Night Live*, *The Simpsons*, or in political cartoons in newspapers and magazines.

*Brave New World* is a satire of the political and social values of the early 1920s and 30s. In Great Britain, the Industrial Revolution occurred between 1750 and the 1900s, with an influx of workers moving from farming and agriculture to big city factories. Innovations such as the steam engine, cotton gin, Morse Code, dynamite, electricity and the telegraph were invented during this time. In 1903 the Ford Model T, the first mass-produced automobile, was produced by Henry Ford. It was a time of great advancement and change, which often brought feelings of instability and vulnerability to the people of the time.

Many philosophers, artists, authors and politicians questioned the need for these rapid changes and wondered: are they really beneficial? Many were certain that machines were taking over the world, and that human beings would one day become useless and obsolete. In *Brave New World*, Huxley certainly challenges these scientific and technological changes and questions whether they represent progress or the obliteration of the world as we know it.

**Directions:** In the first column is a fictional process or entity made up by Huxley, along with an explanation. In the second column, compare these inventions to something that exists in our world today. Then, in the third column, explain the similarities. In the last column, answer the following questions: 1) Knowing what we know today, what might have been Huxley’s reasons for including these in his novel? 2) What social or political statements could Huxley be making about human beings and society? An example has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fictional Example and Explanation</th>
<th>Real (Modern) Similarity</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Huxley’s Reasons/Statements/Message</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> Bokanovsky’s Process/Bokanovsky Twins--process of creating numerous human beings (up to 96) from one egg</td>
<td>cloning</td>
<td>duplicating a single gene or segment of DNA to create an identical cell (Dolly the sheep)</td>
<td>Huxley didn’t realize it, but this was a real possibility—and in the 20th Century we have achieved it. Huxley may have been warning of the loss of individuality and identity for the sake of science.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) hypnopaedia: sleep teaching</td>
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<td>2) Malthusian belt: contraceptive belt</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3) soma: legal drug with no side effects or social stigma</td>
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<td>4) Social Conditioning: teaching people to appreciate and fully accept their position in life</td>
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