From Alphas to Epsilons

A study of eugenics and social caste in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* from a biographical perspective

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Abstract

This essay discusses the concepts of eugenics and social caste in *Brave New World* in relation to Aldous Huxley, from a biographical perspective. The essay analyzes how events and personal relationships of Aldous Huxley have influenced the depiction of the concepts social caste and eugenics in his novel *Brave New World*. Using sources which recount the travels and the personal encounters that Aldous Huxley made throughout his life, this essay makes comparisons and draws conclusions as to how these events and relationships have affected the depiction of social caste and eugenics in *Brave New World*.

Keywords: Eugenics, social caste, biographical, *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley, biographical criticism
1. Introduction

‘‘There was something called democracy. As though men were more than physio-chemically equal’’ (Huxley 41).

Aldous Huxley, born in England in 1894, was a writer and philosopher. Known for both his novels and an array of essays, Huxley was considered to be one of the prominent intellectuals of his time. His most famous piece of work however is the novel *Brave New World*. Published in 1932, *Brave New World* is a tale of a futuristic, dystopian world, located to London in the year 2540. In the introductory part of the novel, there is a brief description of the universe in which the novel takes place;

Not so far into the future, the world has become a single supranational state, ruled by a council of World Controllers. Consumerism has replaced religion, science has eliminated illness and ageing; the happiness of all is ensured by genetic engineering, brainwashing, recreational sex and tranquillizing drugs. (Huxley 1)

The novel follows a number characters in this dystopia, beginning with a class of students listening to a director, who holds an important position in the process of the ‘‘hatchery’’ (Huxley 7). This is a facility where new humans are artificially created using machines, since the conventional way of childbirth has been eradicated. The *Brave New World* society is based on a caste system. There are five castes, Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons. Each caste is assigned different tasks or jobs, which they have to perform in order to uphold the stability of the supposedly perfect society. The Alpha caste is the most powerful and influential one, while the Epsilon caste that is the least powerful, can be
compared to slaves (Huxley 26). Even before birth, the produced children are destined to belong to one of the castes, each bred and conditioned with different characteristics.

This brings up two important elements of the novel, namely social caste and eugenics, raising the question where these concepts emerged from. What motivated Huxley to implement such elements into the novel? The fascination for these concepts in connection with *Brave New World* is apparent in literary research, as there are numerous publications which deal with it, several of which I analyze in this essay. However, this research mostly focuses on the various concepts and ideas found in *Brave New World* without providing much biographical context. Therefore, this essay will attempt to address this topic. By biographical context, this essay understands the author’s own experiences and personal events that might have influenced the concepts in the novel. One study that touches upon the discussion in this essay is Brian Higdon’s *Wandering into Brave New World*, which depicts the travels and experiences of Aldous Huxley. Even though *Wandering into Brave New World* does not specifically focus on eugenics or social caste, it narrows in on the characters and makes geographical and historical comparisons between the real world and the world in *Brave New World*, thus establishing an interesting link to what is going to be discussed in this essay.

This essay will discuss the concepts of social caste and eugenics in *Brave New World* in relation to Aldous Huxley, from a biographical perspective.

In *Brave New World*, the concepts of eugenics and social caste are connected when it comes to the systematic conditioning that all new individuals are subjected to. Before birth, human embryos are provided with different amounts of oxygen depending on which social caste the individual is going to belong to. This is the first step in an individual’s life in *Brave New World* that connects the two concepts of eugenics and social caste. The methods used in eugenics will determine the social caste that the new individual is going to belong to.
This is why it is appropriate to examine the two concepts together in this essay, and further examples will be provided in the analysis section.

During his many travels, Aldous Huxley observed the different societies he encountered and their structure. It was when he ended up in Italy in 1921, that he was introduced to a totalitarian regime. In one of his letters, Huxley wrote: ‘’If you see Jim, tell him his adopted country is becoming so bloody as to be practically uninhabitable’’ when talking about his time in Italy (Taglienti 1). It was in Italy that Huxley experienced a totalitarian regime first hand, and this type of regime he would later use in *Brave New World* as a cruel and unfair dystopia. Huxley himself expressed a liking in the freer lifestyle of the United States, however, he expressed criticism towards the vast consumerism that was a part of the American life at the time, saying that the lives of Americans were basically based on consumerism, living lavish lifestyles without a thought of the consequences (Higdon 30). He later traveled to India, where he first encountered a caste system in practice, which had divided the population of India into a strict and rigid societal hierarchy derived out of heredity and race (Higdon 33). The observations that Huxley made during his travels, as well as his personal involvement with eugenics, which will be further described in the background section, certainly would become important components in the base of the *Brave New World* story (Higdon 39).

2. Theoretical framework
2.1 Biographical criticism

Biographical criticism examines the relationship between an author’s life and his or her works of literature (Guerin 51). The first great biographical critic in history was Samuel Johnson, who wrote *Lives of the Poets*. This work provided accounts of author’s lives and their literary achievements (Griffith 195). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, biographical criticism became increasingly popular, and the theory is practiced to this day (Griffith 195).

Biographical criticism has been used in several well-known essays regarding the relationship between different author’s lives and their literary works. Some examples of these essays include Edgar Johnson’s *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph*, Juliet Barker’s *The Brontës*, and Arthur Mizener’s *The Far Side of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Griffith 195). Douglass Bush, an author of historical criticism, stresses the importance of the author’s life when examining their literary work, as disregarding the author in this equation might lead to ‘’misreadings and misunderstandings’’ (Griffith 195). Despite Bush’s argument, there are theorists that do not share this opinion. According to author Jackson Benson, literary theorists have in recent decades sought to make the study of literature more scientific and impersonal (Benson 108). What Benson means by the word impersonal is that theorists have tried to erase the relationship between the author and the text, claiming that only the text is relevant for analysis (Benson 108). Contrary to this claim, Benson is of the opinion that recognizing the author as a unique individual is essential when trying to comprehend an author’s writings (Benson 108). On the topic of practicing biographical criticism, Jackson Benson claims the following: ‘’It is the job, then, of the biographical critic to draw connections, to bring words into experience - a messy and risky endeavor - to search for the experience the author has intended to communicate and to relate it
to both the experience and imagination of the reader’’ (Benson 112). An example of biographical criticism in practice could be examining the travels of Ernest Hemingway in Paris and other cities, as places that he frequented are depicted in his literary works (Benson 111). According to this view, it is the writer, the person behind the text, that gives the text its meaning (Benson 109). Some theorists have even gone so far as to say that interpretations of literary works are valid solely on the base of the life and the intentions of the author (Griffith 196).

Although it is exaggerated to claim that the biographical aspect of literary criticism is the only relevant aspect when examining literary works, biographical information often points to meaning in literary works, as well as clarifies unexplained elements that can’t be interpreted solely using the literary text itself (Griffith 196). An individual’s life and the events that surrounds it in relation to the individual’s literary works makes for a rich comparison and a relevant viewpoint of analysis, according to Griffith (198).

2.2 Eugenics

The eugenics movement sought to speed up the process of natural selection through the use of selective breeding and led to the enactment of numerous laws requiring the sterilization of “genetically inferior” individuals and limiting the immigration of supposedly defective groups (Martinez 1).

The eugenics movement has its roots as far back as the theories of evolution by Charles Darwin, which completely changed the way humans looked at human conditions (Martinez 2). It was during this era that all sciences could be legitimimized by measuring and
quantifying, something that Francis Galton, an aristocrat and statistician, tried to use to determine everything having to do with human behavior (Martinez 2). Galton, who would eventually coin the term ‘eugenics’, believed that human talent was something that was inherited. Part of his theory was the idea that healthcare and social aid would strengthen the positions of ‘weak’ individuals, and therefore he suggested that human breeding should avoid ‘poor elements’ when trying to produce offspring, suggesting that individuals with ‘positive eugenics’ should refrain from mating with someone with ‘weak eugenics’ (Martinez 2). Galton’s framework further developed the concept of natural selection.

Galton’s first disciple was a social theorist by the name of Karl Pearson, who later became a professor of eugenics. Pearson believed that eugenics could help prevent genetic deterioration in society, as well as ensure that intelligent rulers could improve their offspring genetically (Martinez 3). There were several other researchers and theorists on eugenics in Great Britain during this period, one notably being Thomas Henry Huxley, who is none other than Aldous Huxley’s grandfather (Martinez 4).

Eugenics has been used in different forms around the world. Eugenics was first used in the beginning of the 20th century, where many intellectuals in different fields were interested in progress and improvements of the human race (Martinez 9). There was a sense of enthusiasm towards the idea of ‘social vaccination’, which meant that forced sterilization was performed on ‘defective’ members of society. This system was implemented in several countries including Sweden, where the Social Democrats implemented legislation which lead to the sterilization of about sixty thousand people from the year 1935 until 1976 (Martinez 11). Eugenics was later adapted into the ideology of Nazi Germany, where the negative connotations of eugenics really reached its peak (Martinez 12). Eugenics was used in Hitler’s Germany for ‘euthanasia or “mercy killing,” experimentation, and ultimately genocide was
used in the name of racial hygiene (Martinez 13). The Germans went so far as to set up ‘eugenics courts’ that handled cases of involuntary sterilization (Martinez 13).

2.3 Social caste

Social caste divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics: The first being the separation of marriage and contact, whether direct or indirect (food). The second characteristic is the division of labour, where each group has, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which their members can depart only within certain limits. The last one is hierarchy, which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another. (Higdon 45)

The concept of caste and the caste system, the system that is most apparent in India, was reinforced and used as a source of power and authority by the British colonizers in the country, according to Sharma Kanhaya. Kanhaya argues that the caste system works as a built in system of social stratification, which can be described as a class system without any possibility of moving between the levels of the societal hierarchy (Kanhaya 246). When the caste system is brought up, it is most likely the Indian caste system that comes to mind, but caste systems have existed in many cultures.

In countries where Islam is the prominent religion, systems of social stratification that are similar to a caste system have existed. This can be seen in countries such as Pakistan, Algeria and Yemen (Burton-Page 52). Much like in the case of the Indian caste system, the Islamic system has been a topic of discussion for a long time, and a hope for
change in how the system works and operates has been virtually impossible because of religious and traditional reasons (Lindholm 61). The Islam based caste system does not compare to the Indian caste system in terms of fortification and general acceptance. It is too deeply rooted in Indian traditions and beliefs, which has made the system ‘‘untouchable’’ (Sikand 1). In the case of Islam, instances of societal hierarchy were not prevalent in the Qur’an, it was once the religion spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula that certain small groups of Muslims developed a complex, sharply hierarchical social system (Sikand 2). In more established Islamic societies, the fixtity of the societal ladder was more allowing, and so men and women from different levels of socioeconomic standing were able to marry each other without issue (Sikand 3). The caste system in India remains to this day, which has marginalized and oppressed generations of Indian people (Sikand 1).

Social caste has been portrayed in many works of Indian literature, but H.G Wells’ *A Modern Utopia* also contains the concept of social caste, a fictionalized account which Huxley was familiar with. However, contrary to Huxley who experienced the Indian caste system first hand, Wells' work was not based on personal experience (Higdon 37). Before writing *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley asked himself; ‘‘what characteristics of a society are essential to convince citizens that it is a utopia?’’, and he concluded that *Brave New World* should contain some form of fixed societal structure (Higdon 37).

3 **Background**

During the time that Aldous Huxley published *Brave New World*, there was a ‘‘heightened rhetoric surrounding eugenics and population control’’, even though the theory was relatively new at the time (Congdon 85). During its height of popularity, specifically the years leading up to World War 2, eugenics had a big influence on both popular and scientific discussions, which lead to the start of the eugenics movement (Congdon 85).
Eugenics was seen by sympathizers as a tool to scientifically shape the ideal society, and this scientific planning was to create a stronger relationship between the individual and the state (Congdon 85). Huxley himself was in his literary work influenced by technological advancements happening during this period, especially the novel *Daedalus*, written by J.B.S Haldane, who was a friend of the family. In his novel, Haldane expresses his views on how ‘’rapidly growing influences of science’’ is going to affect future societies (Congdon 86). The influence that this novel had on Huxley’s *Brave New World* is apparent, and some of the ideas presented in *Daedalus* are featured in Brave New World. An example of this would be the idea of ‘’ectogenisis’’. Coined by Haldane, ectogenisis is the process where human embryos would be nourished outside of the womb in incubators, which is clearly featured in the Hatcheries (Congdon 86). This idea was not a simple account of fiction from the side of Huxley, since he did express that ‘’there was plenty of time for the nightmare to be a reality’’ when talking about the totalitarian society that exists in *Brave New World* (Ramesh 33). This was not the only influence that was going to shape the idea of the *Brave New World* universe. The novel has several references and ideas taken from other literary works from the period, the ideas of *Daedalus* later inspired works such as *The Scientific Outlook*, which is also argued to be one of *Brave New World’s* sources of inspiration (Congdon 87).

It is also worth taking into account the influence that Huxley received during his upbringing and from his direct family. As mentioned above, T.H Huxley, Aldous Huxley’s grandfather, was a part of the eugenic movement and the researchers that were influenced by Darwinism and the development in biology and science. Jokingly referred to as ‘’Darwin’s Bulldog’’, T.H Huxley sparked a great interest in science and religion in the young Aldous, as well as an interest in eugenics (Congdon 87). Aldous’s brother, Julian, who was a biologist, was an advocate for eugenics and described himself as a ‘’positive eugenicist’’, and
campaigned for forced sterilization (Congdon 87-88). Julian worked for the British Eugenics Society, which would later change its name to the Galton Institute. Here he worked alongside prominent figures such as John Maynard Keyes, Arthur Neville Chamberlain, and Karl Pearson, a famous British eugenicist (Baker 22). Because of his research in eugenics and somewhat radical views on genetics and advancements in the human race, as well as his connection to the Huxley family, examples and comparisons of Pearson’s are used in this essay when analyzing the eugenically focused part of this essay. The philosophy and opinions of Aldous’s brother is considered to be another source of inspiration for the novel, and examples of this can be found, among other works, in Julian Huxley’s *Man in the Modern World*:

The lowest strata, allegedly less well-endowed genetically, are reproducing relatively too fast. Therefore birth-control methods must be taught them; they must not have too easy access to relief or hospital treatment lest the removal of the last check on natural selection should make it too easy for children to be produced or to survive; long unemployment should be a ground for sterilization, or at least relief should be contingent upon no further children being brought into the world; and so on. That is to say, much of our eugenic programme will be curative and remedial merely, instead of preventive and constructive. (Julian Huxley 66)

It is clear that these kinds of ideas helped create the *Brave New World* dystopian universe, and with family members advocating such radical ideologies, it is not hard to imagine that some of the novel’s concepts were firsthand accounts taken from Huxley’s discussions with his brother. While they would disagree at certain points, Huxley shared many of the views that his brother had, It was especially during the time when *Brave New World* was published that Huxley expressed a positive view on sterilization (Congdon 89). His
interest in eugenics was described to be more than a ‘‘brief flirtation’’, and his support of the theory was no secret (Woiak 106). Now, this might sound contradictory with regard to the fact that Aldous Huxley wrote *Brave New World* as a nightmarish utopia, however, his portrayal of ‘‘children in bottles’’ as he describes it, was a reality that he never wanted to see, even if he was a supporter of eugenics to some extent (Higdon 24). Elements that have shaped the *Brave New World* are extensive, but one concept that permeates the way the fictionalized society operates is eugenics, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly (Ramesh 38). What is meant by this is the fact that in *Brave New World* the stance on science and society as a whole is so different from what modern society finds ethically and morally right (Ramesh 38).

As previously mentioned, Aldous Huxley’s travels eventually took him to India, and this visit would prove to be inspirational when writing the novel (Higdon 29). When Huxley arrived in India in 1925, the country was at a crucial point in history. Gandhi’s non-violence resistance program had gained momentum, as the Indian Congress Party was gaining more and more power (Higdon 30). Huxley found himself in a country that spoke over 1600 languages, and where the maharajahs and rajahs used over a third of the state’s yearly revenue for personal expenses and where, under British orders in 1919, only a few years before Huxley’s visit, demonstrators were fired upon by Gurkha and Baluchi armed forces in the Amritsar garden square, which left 379 demonstrators dead and over 1500 injured (Higdon 30). After visiting the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, Huxley ended up in the garden square, where he concluded; ‘‘A bad place for a crowd to be caught and fired on with machine guns’’ (Higdon 32). While Huxley himself did not fully understand what made him go on this adventure through India, he may have found inspiration for a new novel, seeing as the ‘‘creative vision he brought to the British social and intellectual scene had somewhat faded’’ (Higdon 2). Another reason to travel for a while is also expressed by Huxley himself in a letter to his brother Julian; ‘‘What I should like now more than anything is a year or two
of quiet devoted simply to seeing places and things and people: to living in fact’’ (Letters 202). As mentioned above, it was in India that Huxley first encountered the phenomenon of the caste system, which he expressed negative opinions of. When returning from his journey, Aldous Huxley began working on the novel that would eventually become Brave New World. After the ‘‘grumpy dystopia’’ was finished (Huxley 1), Huxley expressed his relief in a letter to his brother Julian;

My only excuse is that I have been harried with work – which I have at last, thank heaven, got rid of – a comic, or at least satirical, novel about the Future, showing the appallingness (at any rate by our feeling of such quite possible biological inventions as the production of children in bottles (with consequent abolition of the family and all the Freudian ‘complexes’...), the prolongation of youth, the devising of some harmless but effective substitute for alcohol, cocaine, opium etc. – and also the effects of such sociological reforms as Pavlovian conditioning of all children from birth and before birth, universal peace, security and stability. It has been a job writing the book and I’m glad it’s done. (Higdon 24)

4 Analysis

The analysis is divided into different sections, all discussing different aspects that when read as a whole, give an understanding of what the purpose of this text is. The purpose of the first section is to give a relevant biographical context between the author and the concepts of the novel which involve the central theoretical concepts of this text, namely eugenics and social caste.
4.1 Eugenics and conditioning in *Brave New World*

In the opening chapters of *Brave New World*, the reader is introduced to how breeding is conducted in the hatcheries, where there are many examples of how the process of creating new human individuals connects to the concept of eugenics. The conventional family and the act of childbirth are no longer facts of life in the *Brave New World* universe. Natural childbirth has been replaced with artificial breeding in incubators, and the reason for this is to shape new humans into the role they will fill and the caste they are going to belong to (Ramesh 37). There is a very clear stance against the traditional concept of family expressed by several characters in the novel, and one can conclude that the teachings of eugenics has affected the mindset of characters that have significant power in the novel, such as the Director and Mustapha Mond.

Depending on the caste the unborn individual is going to belong to, different methods of breeding and conditioning are used. A very cruel method of altering the future intelligence of the unborn human is explained by Mr. Foster, an employee of the hatchery;

> Reducing the number of revolutions per minute, Mr. Foster explained. The surrogate goes round slower; therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals; therefore gives the embryo less oxygen. Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par. (Huxley 14)

Depending on the caste the person is going to belong to, the embryo receives different levels of oxygen. The Alpha caste, which is the caste that is destined for important and influential roles in society, receives high levels of oxygen during infancy, while the Epsilon caste, which is one of the lower castes that is shaped for labor and mundane tasks, receives low levels of oxygen (Huxley 14). This is not the only method used to shape the
characteristics of the different castes. The experiments conducted after childbirth also play an important part in the process. In the second chapter of the novel, the Director demonstrates one of these experiments to his students (Huxley 18). A group of infants belonging to one of the lower castes, the Delta caste, are subjected to a very cruel method of conditioning, where the babies get electric shocks when they touch books or flowers (Huxley 20). Thus, the Delta caste, being a labor caste, is raised to feel a distinct fear towards literature and botany, because there is ‘‘the risk of their reading something which might undesirably decondition one of their reflexes’’, which could possibly distract them from their supposed purpose (Huxley 20). The Director says; ‘‘a love of nature keeps no factories busy’’ to explain why the Deltas are conditioned to fear flowers and botany (Huxley 21).

During his time in India, Aldous Huxley visited the Bose Institute laboratories in Calcutta, where he spent several hours exploring the facilities (Higdon 38). It was here that Huxley met Chandra Bose, who was one of the prominent scientists in India at the time. Huxley’s visit to the laboratory would later become the inspiration for the hatchery and the experiments that were conducted there. It should be pointed out here that these experiments were not at all similar to the experiments being conducted at the Bose Institute, however, the environment and activities at the laboratory inspired Huxley (Higdon 39). Chandra Bose’s research included the use of radio wave and microwave optics, as well as investigating the boundaries between living and nonliving beings. Bose’s experiments on plants and botany greatly impressed Huxley, and in a letter to his brother Julian, Huxley expressed fascination for the laboratory environment.

We saw all the experiments in full blast – the heart beats of plants, a graph, and so forth. Really astonishing. I had been skeptical – such is the force of ancient prejudice – I thought there must be something fishy about the results. But when you see the plants making records of their own sensations – well, you’ve got to
believe. And I suppose one’s also got to believe Bose’s earlier results on the fatigue of metals and the effects of drugs on them. (Higdon 39)

Further connecting this laboratory to the hatchery, Bose demonstrated several experiments on plants to Huxley. These experiments included subjecting plants to drugs, electric shock and physical abuse. Huxley watched as Bose injected plants with cobra venom, ether and morphine, as well as stabbing them, sometimes resulting in the death of the plants (Higdon 40). The data that Bose collected from these experiments lead him to the conclusion that the sap in the plants behaved similarly to the circulation of blood in animals when subjected to harm. Huxley, while fascinated, called it ‘’a visit to the slaughterhouse, converted to vegetarianism’’ (Higdon 40).

In *Brave New World*, a method of ‘’intellectual education’’ is also used to shape the different castes roles in the form of sleep-teaching. While the children are sleeping, a voice from a speaker constantly repeats random facts that the child is supposed to recite once they wake up the next morning. The experiment was not successful however, and was later abandoned by the Director (Huxley 24).

The children are also subjected to a form of mantra coming from a speaker while they sleep; the purpose of this is to subconsciously create a love for one’s own caste as well as learning to dislike the other castes. This is an example of group think, where one only congregates with other people belonging to one’s own group, and being conditioned to believe one individual is better than another. The paragraph depicts a room of sleeping children belonging to the Beta caste, and a voice repeating this message;

Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they are so frightfully clever. I’m really awfully glad I’m Beta, because I don’t work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are
They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don’t want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. (Huxley 25)

The Director calls this method “the greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time” (Huxley 26). When speculating about what kind of experiences influenced the hatchery and the experiments happening there, Aldous Huxley’s visit to the Bose Laboratory is certainly a prominent one.

4.2 The Director

The Director, also known as the DHC, plays an important part in the novel. He is the one in charge of the hatcheries and the experiments that are conducted to conform and shape the infants and the children accordingly to their future role in society. He is very much fascinated with everything that the process entails, and his attitude towards this system is filled with optimism and glee. His attitude towards the concept of eugenics is very enthusiastic, and his whole world revolves around it, often using his catchphrase “charming” when describing the processes to his students (Huxley 16). Being aware of his characteristics, one might describe him as a perfect product of the teachings of social Darwinism and eugenics. He is in this way similar to prominent researchers in the eugenics field during the height of its popularity, since the Director is fully convinced of the effectiveness of this system. Previously mentioned Karl Pearson who was arguably even more immersed in the teachings of eugenics than Galton was, says:

The starting point of Darwin's theory of evolution is precisely the existence of those differences between individual members of a race or species which morphologists for the most part rightly neglect. The first condition necessary, in order that any process of Natural Selection may begin among a race, or species,
is the existence of differences among its members; and the first step in an
enquiry into the possible effect of a selective process upon any character of a
race must be an estimate of the frequency with which individuals, exhibiting any
given degree of abnormality with respect to that, character, occur. (Pearson, 424)

What Pearson is describing here is also very much a part of the task that the
Director has been handed, namely an elimination of abnormalities that sometimes are
displayed by the children that are a part of the Director’s hatchery. In chapter three of the
novel, the Director encounters a child that is not cooperating with the way the children are
supposed to play with each other, and the Director’s solution to this is to send the boy to the
Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. The reason for this is to investigate if ‘‘anything’s at
all abnormal’’ according to the Director (Huxley 28).

Another aspect of the Director that carries similarities to Pearson’s work and
beliefs is a characteristic they both share, namely a complete devotion to science and the
methods that they believed could be adapted on humans. To start off, Pearson was considered
to be one of the founders of modern statistical science, and a national eugenist (Darcy 1058).
Pearson believed and wanted ‘‘the scientific method to become part of shared wisdom and a
shared ethic, so that science could help to rebuild that sense of cultural unity’’, and being a
nationalist, he had concerns about where the development of the British people was going
(Darcy 1058). Pearson stated that ‘‘the student of national eugenics desires in every way to
improve and strengthen his own nation. He would do this by intra-national selection for
parentage, and by the admission wherever and whenever possible of superior brains and
muscles into his own country’’ (Darcy 1059). Much like the Director, Pearson strived for
improvements in ‘‘his people’’, being the English people, by using strictly scientific methods,
and believed that science was the key to the advancements in human beings (Darcy 1059).
Furthermore, Karl Pearson did not wish to use his scientific methods to improve people from other cultures or nationalities (Darcy 1059). Connecting this to The Director, there is an instance in *Brave New World* where The Director is discussing what kinds of advancements that other countries in the World State have made. The Director is much like Pearson concerned only with the improvements that his country and his hatchery have made, when Mr. Foster proclaims; ‘‘Singapore has often produced over sixteen thousand five hundred (talking about the amount of embryos in one ‘‘batch’’) and Mombasa has actually touched the seventeen thousand mark’’ (Huxley 10). To this statement, The Director replies; ‘‘But then they have unfair advantages. You should see the way a negro ovary responds to pituitary!’’ (Huxley 10). To assure The Director that the London based hatchery is not falling behind other countries, he professes; ‘‘I’m working on a wonderful Delta-Minus ovary at the moment. Only just eighteen months old. Over twelve thousand seven hundred children already, either decanted or in embryo. And still going strong. We’ll beat them yet’’ (Huxley 10). These news excites The Director, and he exclaims; ‘‘That’s the spirit I like!’’ (Huxley 10). Much like The Director carrying prejudice against other ethnic groups and races, Karl Pearson did over the course of his research in eugenics believe that there were differences between different races that were more than physical traits (Darcy 1060). While Pearson worked closely with biologist Francis Galton at the Galton Laboratory, they had the intent of studying human genetics, particularly eugenics.

Pearson and another researcher, Moul, carried out studies and experiments on hundreds of Polish and Russian schoolchildren. These experiments included testing the children’s intelligence, health and cleanliness (Darcy 1060). After the experiments were concluded, Pearson and Moul wrote reports concluding the results. As when the Director talks about the ‘‘negro’’, here is where Pearson’s prejudice and racism shine through. The results concluded that; ‘‘Taken on the average, and regarding both sexes, this alien Jewish
population is somewhat inferior physically and mentally to the native population’’ (Darcy 1060). There are indeed similarities between Karl Pearson and The Director, and considering that Huxley was aware of Karl Pearson’s existence and the personal connections that he shared with him, it is possible that Pearson might have been an inspirational source for the Director, or at the very least, a person with similar beliefs and scientific methods.

4.3 The social castes

The caste system in *Brave New World* consists of five castes, the Alpha caste, which is the ‘‘best’’ caste to belong to, and then Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons, the lowest caste (Huxley 26-29). The Alphas and the Betas are the castes that receive the most humane treatment during the prenatal stages; the reason for this is to prepare the individuals for important and challenging tasks in the future (Huxley 14).

[A]fter ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents re-examined; how, if any of the eggs remained unfertilized, it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; how the fertilized ova went back to the incubators; 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 7)

The purpose of Bokanovsky’s Process is to clone embryos in order to create several identical humans, similar to identical twins (Huxley 8). The Director says; ‘‘from eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult’’ (Huxley 7). This process is used on the lower castes, since their work tasks mainly include monotonous factory-like jobs. The Alphas can be described as
the ‘’bosses’’, they are in the highest layer of the social castes, they are intellectually superior to the other castes, and they are the ones in charge of the factories (Huxley 27). The Beta caste is similar to the Alpha caste, however, their positions require less intelligence and thinking. At the middle of the spectrum is the Gamma caste, who are individuals with moderate levels of professional skill. They are often experts of repetitive tasks or low risk professionals. The Delta and Epsilon castes are genetically mass produced. The common characteristics of these castes are a lack of individuality and a lack of intelligence. The Delta caste is mostly used in menial and monotonous tasks. The lowest standing caste, Epsilon, is often referred to as people with a low level of intelligence, and they are used for undesirable and unwelcome jobs like sewage and foundry work (Huxley 28).

As stated previously, the different castes also wear different colors of clothing, and according to Brian Higdon, the different colors are of significance when connecting the caste system in *Brave New World* to historical, real world examples of using colors to distinguish different groups (Higdon 54). The different colors may remind the reader of colors experienced in the military or the business world, as well as how workers in the Soviet Union were dressed in different colors (Higdon 54).

This is the foundation of the caste system in *Brave New World*, which as a whole is portrayed in the novel as the key to social stability. It is of course in a spectator's eyes a cruel and unjust way of controlling the population and keeping the freedom of the individual to a bare minimum. Similar observations were made by Aldous Huxley while he traveled to India, and his concerns regarding the functionality of the society. Huxley saw cows walking freely in the city of Srinagar, they were underfed and starved, and were made to work until they died from exhaustion (Higdon 9). According to Higdon, there is a clear connection between the way social caste is depicted in *Brave New World* and the caste system of India, one of the reasons being that Huxley specifically labels the different social groups in
Brave New World as castes (Higdon 10). When describing the people of India, Huxley stated: “Minings and counter-minings, prodigious treacheries, monstrous panderings and prostitutions. But then, the majority of human actions are not meant to be looked at with the eye of reason” (Higdon 9). Huxley did not fully grasp and understand the system of which India operated during the time, and he also had trouble understanding Hinduism as a religion, however, he considered Gandhi to be more charismatic than most politicians (Higdon 13). The caste system, which Huxley considered to be flawed and unjust, would later be expressed in Brave New World in a form of critical, almost satirical way on his views on the caste system in India. In Brave New World, the caste system is a vital part of the World State, seeing as it provides a highly specialized work force to carry out the tasks handed to them without question. The conditioning they have been subjected to is of course important to keep them happy and satisfied with the caste they have been placed in. A similar tactic is used in India’s caste system, where tradition and religious beliefs are used to uphold the caste system to prevent it from being questioned (Higdon 10).

When leaving India, Huxley did not have any mixed feelings. He had seen what the caste system and the British colonialism had done to India, which had only left a negative impression on him. Huxley describes his time in India: “For India is depressing as no other country I have ever known. One breathes in it, not air, but dust and hopelessness. The present is unsatisfactory, the future is dubious and menacing” (Higdon 34). Huxley would later express his opinions on the caste system very bluntly in one of his letters, claiming that the Indian people were “poor imbeciles” who needed “a good supply of Nietzschean missions” (Higdon 52). In Brave New World, the members of the different castes are taught to love their own caste, and one is taught to be happy to belong to one’s own caste. This can once again be connected to Huxley’s time in India, as in one of Huxley’s later works, Jesting Pilate, Huxley
states this about the Indian people; ‘’[…] they’re used to this sort of life. They don’t mind, because they know no better. They’re really quite happy’’ (Jesting 32).

4.4 Mustapha Mond

‘’And that, that is the secret of happiness and virtue - liking what you’ve got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their inescapable social destiny’’ (Huxley 16).

Mustapha Mond is a world controller in *Brave New World*, a leader of government whose job is to do what is best for the World State. The reader is introduced to Mond when he unexpectedly appears at an ongoing experiment that involves children playing sexual games with each other (Huxley 30). His presence is met with adoration and awe, and the Director salutes him as The Resident Controller for Western Europe. Much like the Director, Mond is a firm believer in the caste system and conditioning. In his mind, these systems are necessary to uphold the stability of the World State. In a conversation that Mustapha Mond has with a savage, one gets a further insight into his beliefs in the World State and the caste system. The savage questions the caste system, asking Mond; ‘’ why you had them at all — seeing that you can get whatever you want out of those bottles. Why don't you make everybody an Alpha Double Plus while you're about it?” (Huxley 189). Mustapha Mond laughs at this question and gives an answer that captures the essence of his beliefs;

Because we have no wish to have our throats cut. We believe in happiness and stability. A society of Alphas couldn't fail to be unstable and miserable. Imagine a factory staffed by Alphas — that is to say by separate and unrelated individuals of good heredity and conditioned so as to be capable (within limits) of making a free choice and assuming responsibilities. Imagine it! (Huxley 189).
This conversation goes on for the majority of the sixteenth chapter, it is a long discussion between the savage and Mustapha Mond, where the savage to some extent can be described as the voice of reason, while Mond acts as a spokesperson for the World State’s philosophy.

During his conversation with the students at the hatchery, Mond also expresses his views on the nuclear family that he considers to be ‘stupidity’, since he is a believer in the artificial creation of children. ‘Our ancestors were so stupid and short-sighted that when the first reformers came along and offered to deliver them from those horrible emotions, they wouldn’t have anything to do with them’ (Huxley 45). Mustapha Mond is an avid reader of Henry Ford, the famous automobile manufacturer who in *Brave New World* has become almost a god (Huxley xvii). Aldous Huxley himself also closely read the works of Henry Ford, and for example *My Life and Work* from 1922 contained material that would later be described as one of the inspirations for the *Brave New World* caste system (Huxley 17). Looking closer at the hatchery and the way it operates, one can conclude that it does in some way mimic the assembly line that made the Ford factories famous. An example of this can be found when The Director is giving his students the guided tour;

Each bottle could be placed on one of fifteen racks, each rack, though you couldn’t see it, was a conveyor traveling at the rate of thirty-three and a third centimeters an hour. Two hundred and sixty-seven days at eight meters a day. Two thousand one hundred and thirty-six meters in all. One circuit of the cellar at ground level, one on the first gallery, half on the second, and on the two hundred and sixty-seventh morning, daylight in the Decanting Room. Independent existence – so called. (Huxley 10)
This is yet another example of the hatchery in *Brave New World*, and this argument that it can be related to Ford's methods is further strengthened by the fact that Ford is a real person in *Brave New World*, and one could also speculate that Mustapha Mond let the hatchery be designed after reading one of Henry Ford’s novels.

### 5 Conclusion

The features that have been the focus of this essay, namely eugenics and social caste, have both been investigated. It is in the opening parts of the novel that eugenics and conditioning play a part, however, there are a lot of examples from these opening sections that have been vital when investigating eugenics in this essay. The hatchery plays a big part when analyzing eugenics in the novel, seeing as it is the center of operations for breeding human beings into fitting predetermined roles in society. The systematic conditionings that the children were subjected to, as well as the conscious shortage of oxygen that the fetuses are subjected to, are all parts that are important to give a basic understanding of how eugenics is depicted in the novel. To shine a light on the biographical aspect of this essay, David Higdon’s *Wandering into Brave New World* proved to be of great significance when conducting research for the analytic section of this essay. Higdon’s book gives insight into what experiences might have given Aldous Huxley inspiration for the concepts in *Brave New World*. Huxley’s travels to India and his visits to Bose Laboratory provide important biographical details for the analysis.

When moving on to the characters from the novel that are relevant for this essay, characters that have strong connections to eugenics and social caste, rather than characters that are important in the novel's plot are discusses. The Director fits this purpose, since he is in control of the hatchery and the conditioning experiments. To put this character into a biographical context, Karl Pearson, being a prominent researcher in the field of eugenics, was
used. The reason Pearson was used is partly because of his rather radical views on the eugenics field, and partly because there is a connection between Pearson and the author Aldous Huxley in that Huxley’s brother Julian, was a researcher in eugenics field at the same times as Pearson, and they were both members of the Galton Institute, a learned society researching eugenics, of which Julian Huxley eventually became the president. Now this is not to say that Huxley specifically has stated that Pearson was an inspiration for a character like The Director for example, but the essay makes the connection since Pearson is a person of biographical significance in connection with Aldous Huxley, and there are similarities between The Director and Karl Pearson. Furthermore, Huxley’s travels to India where he experienced the caste system is connected to the caste system in the novel, and with a mostly biographical angle on the information presented in this section of the analysis, several connections were made.

To conclude, it is safe to assume that travelling and witnessing different cultures, as well as his personal environment and family connections provided inspiration for Aldous Huxley in his literary work. Several biographical connections can be made when analyzing the concepts of eugenics and social caste in *Brave New World*, and a number of examples of what has influenced Huxley when it comes to the depiction of these two concepts are found when Huxley’s personal experiences and travels are investigated.
6 Works cited


