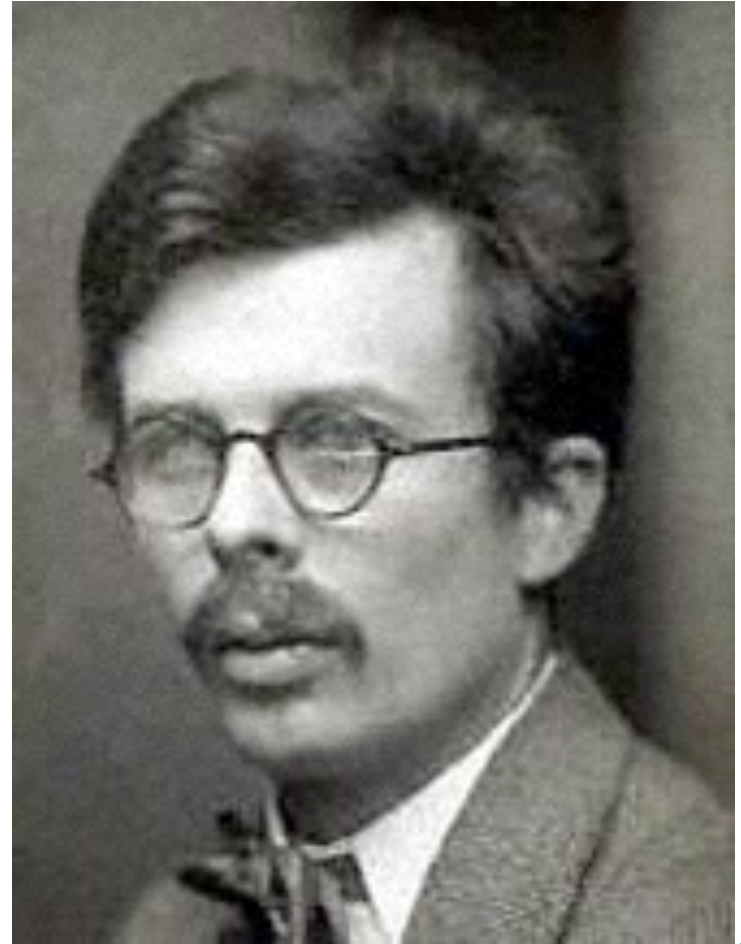


Aldous Huxley & Brave New World

*“Oh, Brave New World that has
such people in it!”*

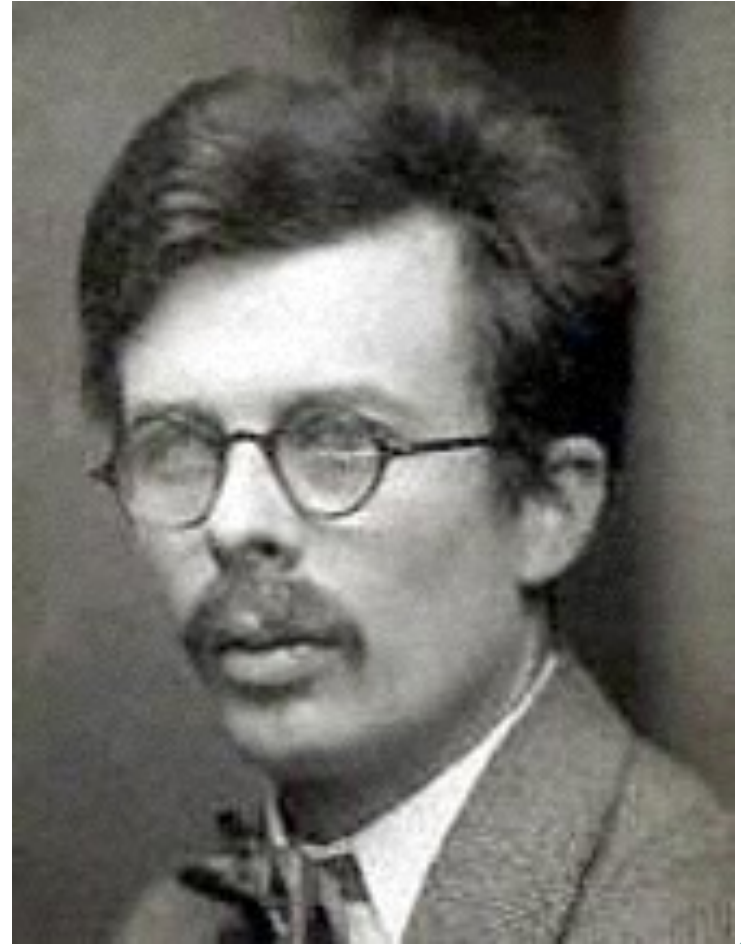
Aldous Huxley

- Born British but moved to California
- Was a journalist and a symbolist poet early in his career



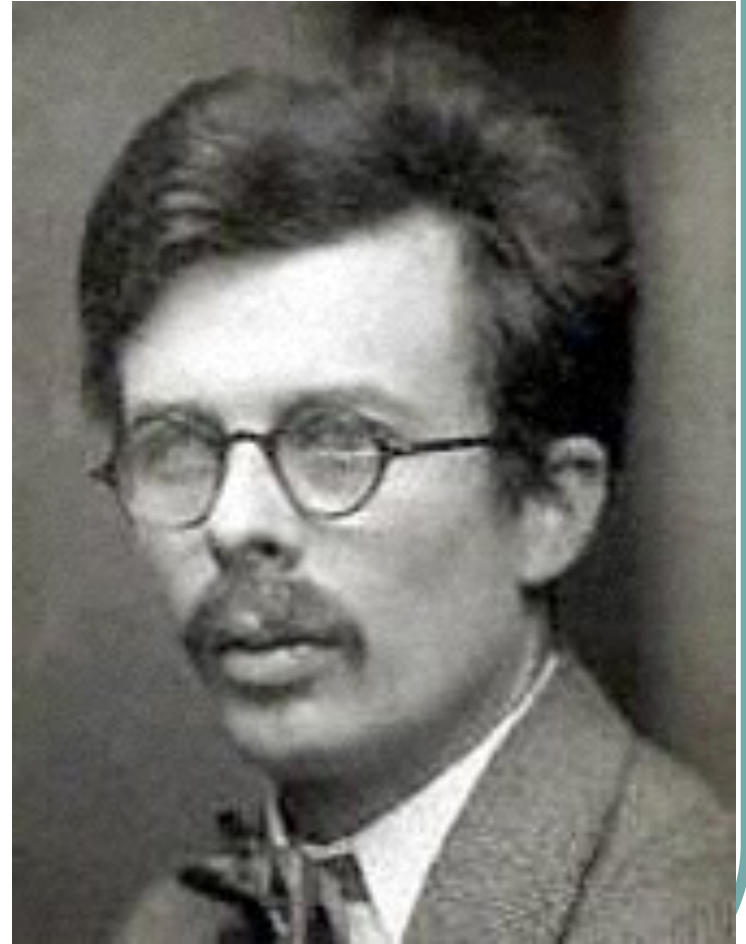
Aldous Huxley

- Wrote a pseudo-sequel—*Brave New World Revisited*, a diatribe against overpopulation and over consumption.
- Died Nov. 22, 1963—the same day JFK was assassinated.



Aldous Huxley

- Became a “prophet of doom for the cult of the amusing”—moved away from realism to make ideas the central point in his stories
- Scrutinized moral decadence of modern society’s effect on the “whole” man.



Historical Background

- Written in 1931 in four months; published in 1932- one year before Hitler rose to power with his fascist government.
- Hitler's Third Reich was a state controlled government where religion, wage, occupation, possessions, etc. were all controlled by the government.
- Benito Mussolini led a totalitarian government that fought against birth control in order to produce manpower for the war.

Central ideas

- **Totalitarianism:** The political concept that the citizen should be totally subject to an absolute state authority
- **Caste System:** division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, or race.

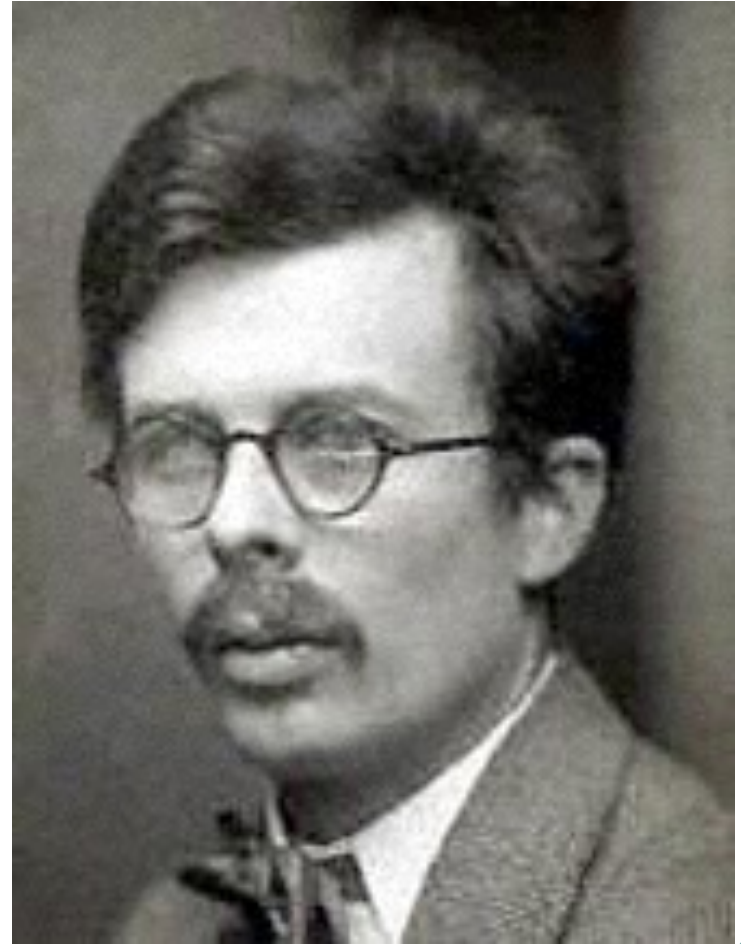
Huxley was influenced by the previously established caste system in Hinduism, which was abolished in 1949.

Story Elements

- **setting:** 2540 AD; referred to in the novel as 632 years AF ("After Ford"), meaning 632 years after production of the first Model T car
- **narrator:** Third-person omniscient
- **point of view:** Narrated in the third person from the point of view of Bernard or John, but also from the point of view of Lenina, Helmholtz Watson, and Mustapha Mond

Aldous Huxley

- *Brave New World* (1932) abandoned his view of evil as a “mildly amusing social phenomenon” and identified it with materialism and sensuality



Relevance: Science Fiction?

- This novel is more applicable today than it was in 1932: propaganda, censorship, conformity, genetic engineering, social conditioning, cloning, mindless entertainment.



Do we have a modern soma?

- In 2005, drug companies spent more than \$4 billion on what is termed direct-to-consumer advertising, according to the Government Accountability Office.
- That is about 1/7 of the amount the companies spent on research and development
- Nearly 1/3 of that TV ad money was spent for what type of medication?

Antidepressants/Sleeping aids

Propaganda/Social Conditioning

- 78 percent of MDs said patients asked them to prescribe drugs they had seen on TV
- Patients most often asked for advertised drugs for acid reflux, impotence, allergies and insomnia-the mainstay of TV ad lineups

• Source: Consumer Reports survey of doctors on direct-to-consumer advertising

Brave New World

Utopian or dystopian novel?

UTOPIA

- A fiction describing an ideal imaginary world, especially in laws, government, and social conditions.
- From Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* written in Latin in 1516 describing a perfect political state.
- Literally means “good place”

UTOPIA

- ***Mizora: World of Women* by Mary E. Bradley Lane (USA, 1881)**

Subtitled “A Prophecy”, this is the first feminist utopian novel. Lost near the North Pole, a Russian noblewoman discovers an all-women utopia at the centre of the earth, a haven of music, peace, universal education and beneficial advanced technology.

DYSTOPIA

- Literally “bad place”
- Imaginary worlds, usually in the future, that are less than ideal
- Present day tendencies are carried out to their intensely unpleasant/disastrous culminations.

DYSTOPIA



The Matrix