

BRAVE NEW WORLD



ALDOUS HUXLEY

1932

Brave New World

by Aldous
Huxley

What is a utopia?

- A utopia is a place or society that appears perfect in every way.
- The government is perfect, working to improve society's standards of living rather than the leaders' own.
- The social aspects of the community run perfectly.
- There is no war or disease, only peace and happiness.
- Everyone outside this utopian society looks to this place in wonder, believing it to be completely perfect in every way.

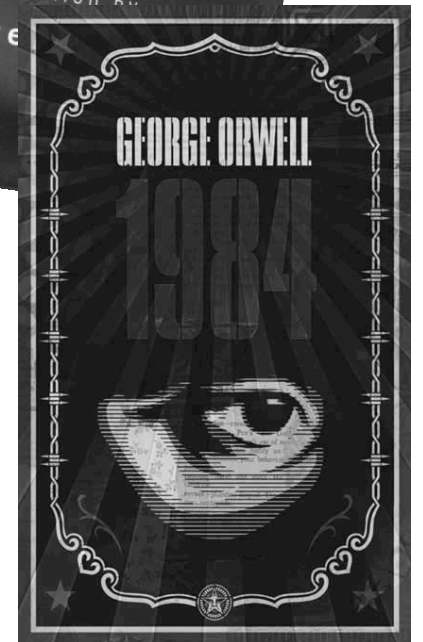
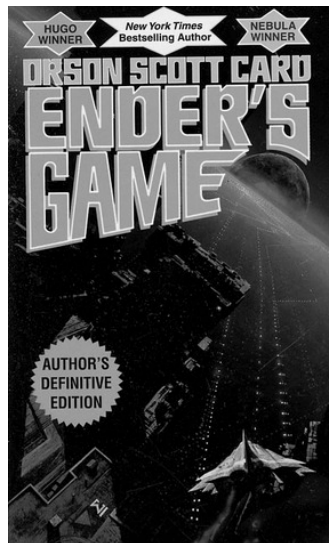
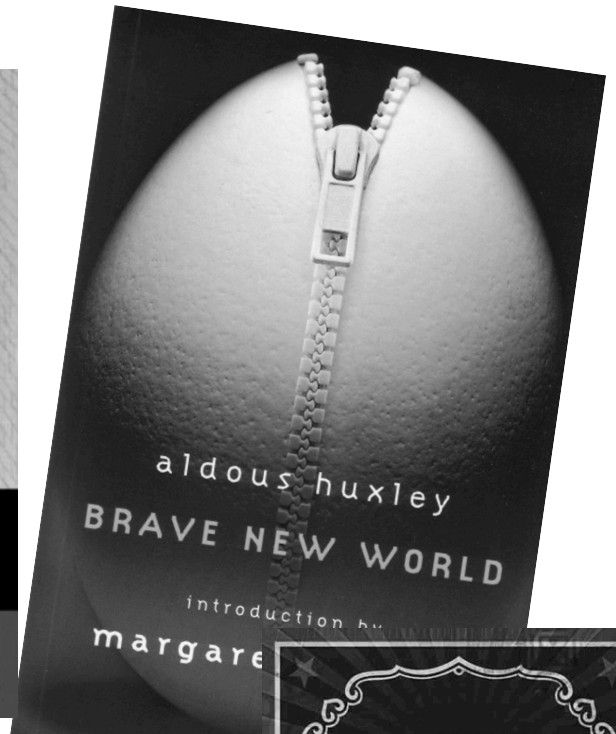
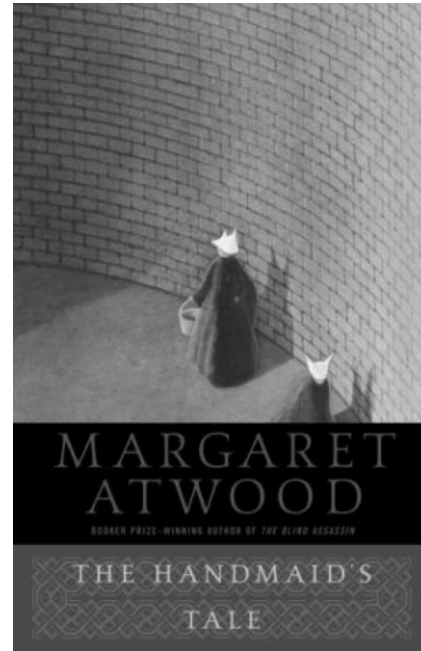
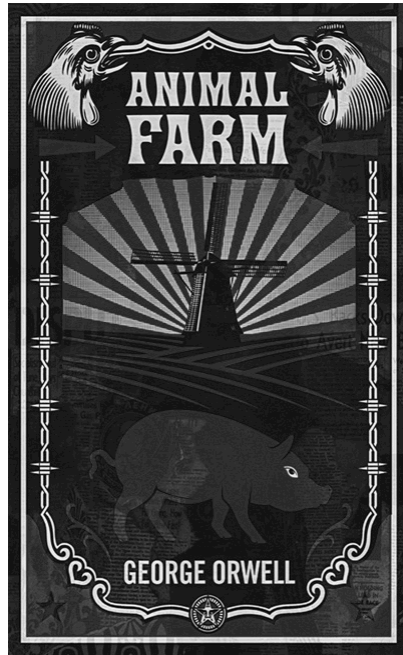
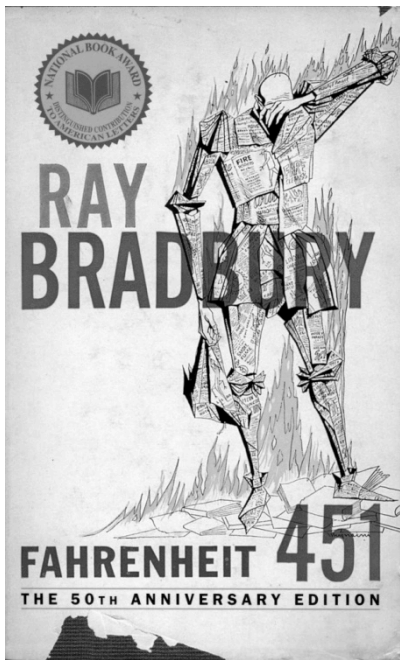


What is a dystopia?

- A dystopia is the opposite of a utopia.
- It defines a place or society which is in complete chaos.
- The citizens are all suffering and are miserable – or, like in the movie “The Matrix,” they don’t know that they are suffering or that their lives are a lie.
- Often times in novels what appears to be a utopian society at first is *actually* revealed to be a dystopian society.
- The citizens are often revealed to live in terror, or are under complete control by the government, unaware of the corruption and lies.



Some Famous and Important Dystopian Novels



Why read Brave New World?

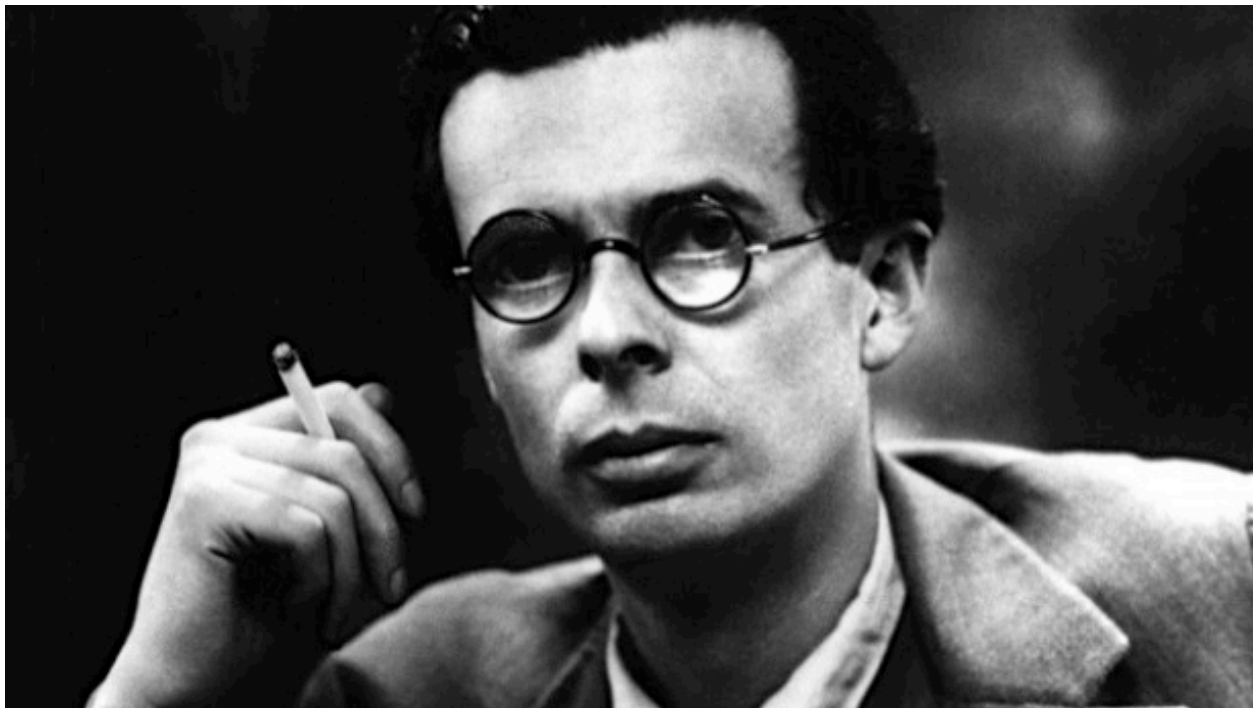
- Brave New World has become one of the most frequently censored books in literary history.
- It was #52 of the 100 most banned books of 1990-2001 and one of the 10 most frequently challenged books of 2010 for themes of sexuality, drugs, and suicide.
- Censors have long sought to prevent students from reading the book, but Brave New World is both one of the finest science fiction books and one of the most brilliant works of social satire ever written.
- The scariest thing about it is how much **humanity seems to be moving closer** to Huxley's vision of the future.
- Part of what makes this book so controversial is the very thing that makes it so timeless – **human beings want to believe that technology has the power to cure all**, but Huxley shows the dangers all too well.

About the Author – Aldous Huxley

- Aldous Huxley was born on July 28, 1894, in Surrey, England.
 - His grandfather was Thomas Henry Huxley, a famous biologist who helped to develop the **theory of evolution**.
 - His mother was related to famous **novelists, poets, and educators**.
 - Because of his family background, Huxley was very well prepared to write a science fiction novel like Brave New World.
- His mother died of cancer when he was 14 years old.
 - Huxley later wrote that his mother's death gave him a sense of "the **transience** of human happiness."
 - **Transience** means that things can change quickly.

About the Author – Aldous Huxley

- He wanted to become a doctor, but when he was 16 years old, **an illness left him almost completely blind.**
 - He attended Oxford University and graduated with honors.
 - He died on the same day that JFK was assassinated (November 22, 1963).



The Writing of Brave New World

- In 1926, Huxley made his first visit to the United States.
 - It is likely that some of the things he saw there became part of the inspiration for his book.
- He wrote Brave New World in four months during 1931.
- After it was published, it was widely criticized.



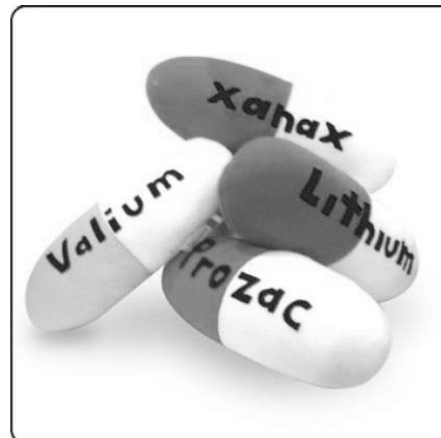
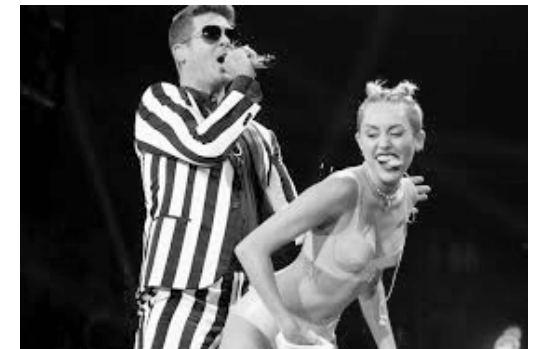
Criticism of Brave New World

- H.G. Wells (author of War of the Worlds): “...Aldous Huxley has no right to **betray the future** as he did in that book.”
- George Orwell (author of 1984): “...[this book] **probably casts no light on the future...**”
- Gerald Bullett (essayist): “...as prophecy **it is merely fantastic***...” [a fantasy]
- Wyndham Lewis (author): “...an unforgiveable offense to progress.”

Could Brave New World predict the future?

Features of our current society:

- Advances in technology and the internet
- TV, cell phones, and video games
- Consumerism is surpassing religious traditions (Christmas is extremely commercialized; stores now push shopping for Easter GIFTS as well as candy!)
- Promiscuity is no longer shocking
- Cloning, stem-cell research and genetic engineering
- Overly-prescribed and overly-used medications such as anti-depressants and sleeping pills



What this book might make you wonder...

- Is it better to be free than to be happy?
- Is society more important than individuals?
- Can children be taught effectively to think in only one certain way?
- Can young people be taught so well that they never question their teachings later?
- Is stability more important than freedom?
- Can alterations made by advanced science to mankind be made permanent at the DNA-level?
- Can mankind be conditioned by science?
- Should individual people be limited/controlled for the greater good of society? If so, how much control should the government have?
- How much does advertising influence our desires and choices?
- Is having what you want all the time – exactly when you want it – really a healthy thing?
- What makes adults different from babies?

BRAVE NEW WORLD



ALDOUS HUXLEY

Brave New World

Historical &
Technological
Background
Information

Events That Inspired the Story

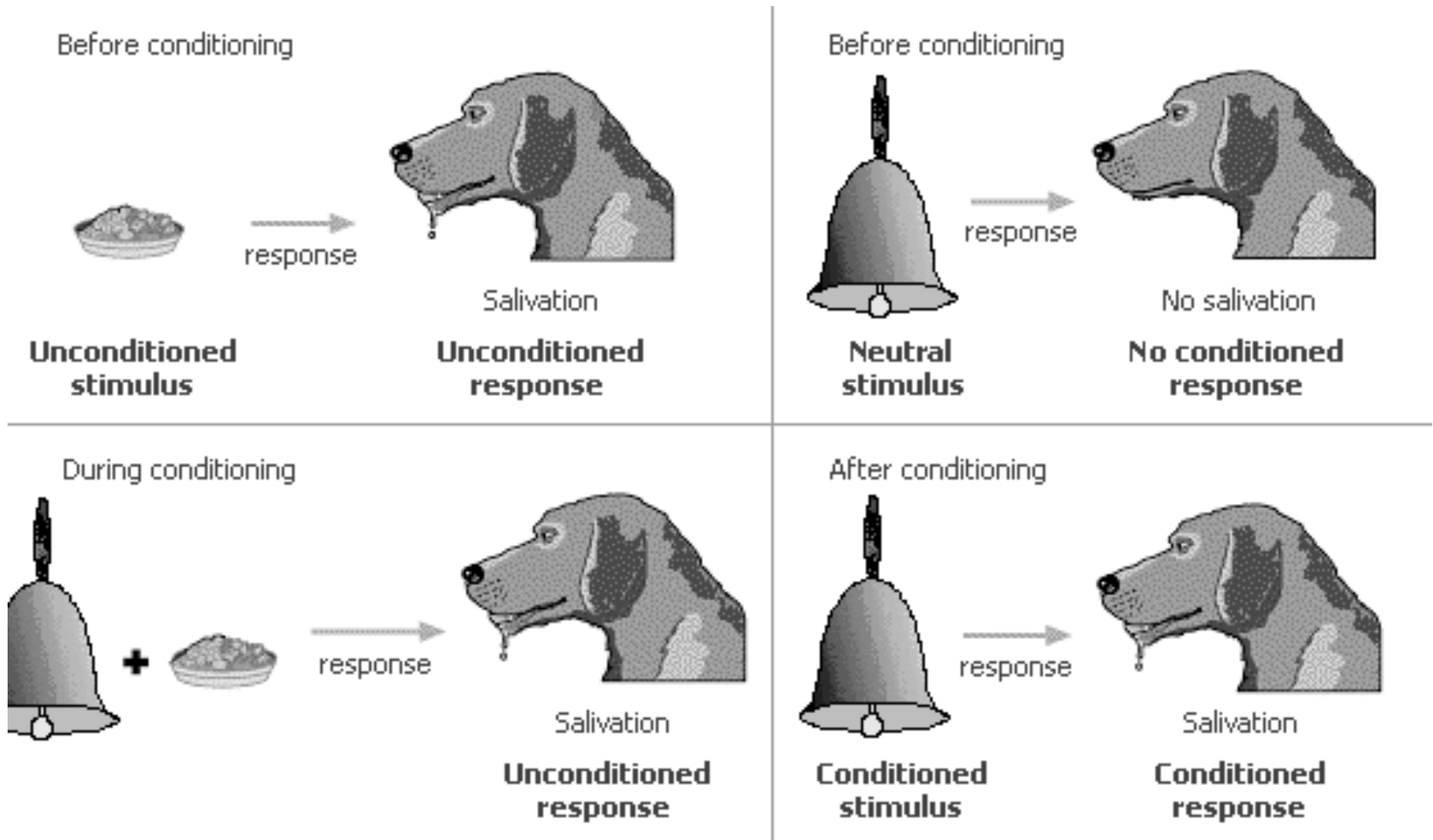
- **1879:** The first psychological laboratory opens in Germany.
- **1886:** Sigmund Freud argued that **awareness of the unconscious mind** is essential to understanding conscious thought and behavior.
- **1900:** Gregor Mendel's scientific studies of genetic inheritance are rediscovered. Interest in **eugenics** grows.

The Eugenics Movement

- **Eugenics:** a highly-controversial social philosophy that argued that the human race could be improved through the promotion of higher reproduction of people with desired traits and reduced reproduction of people with less-desired or undesired traits
- This philosophy led to the persecution and extermination of Jews and other groups labeled “less desirable” by the Nazis during World War II in their quest to develop an Aryan “master race.”

Classical Conditioning

- Developed by Pavlov (the “Pavlov’s dog” experiment)

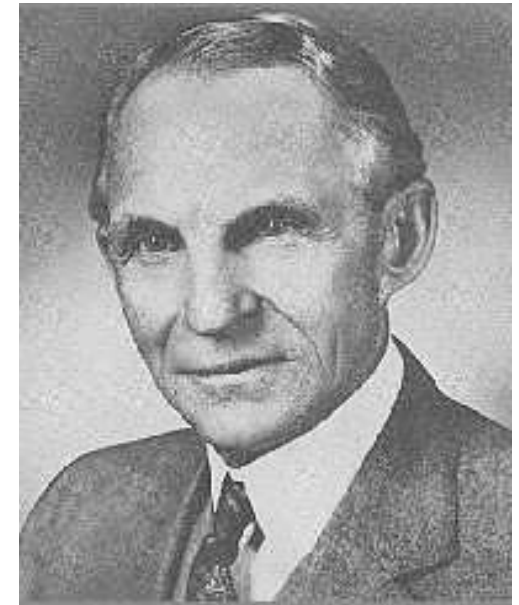


Events That Inspired the Story

- **1900-1920s:** Introduction of chewing gum, radio, movies, and advertising – The author includes these types of technologies in Brave New World.
- **1908:** The first Model T car is produced.
 - Henry Ford's development of "assembly line" factories make cars easier to build and more affordable for the average family.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcgff0Jt9UM>

Henry Ford

- Henry Ford has God- or hero-like status in the story.
 - He is **NOT** a character; he has been dead for hundreds of years by the time the story takes place.
- The **setting** of the novel is 2540 AD.
 - This is referred to in the novel as 632 years AF (“After Ford”), meaning 632 years after production of the first Model T car.



Epigraph

a quotation placed at the beginning of a literary work to suggest a theme

“O wonder!
How many goodly creatures
are there here!
How beauteous mankind is!
O, brave new world
That has such people in’t!”

- Spoken by Miranda in Shakespeare’s play “The Tempest” -

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If Brave New World is a **dystopian** novel, do you think you will be impressed by the *goodness* of the society the author shows us? Will the world of the book really be *beautiful*?

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ALDOUS HUXLEY

1932 (1948)

Brave New World

Chapter One

Setting: The World State, 632 AF

the **time** and **place** the story occurs

- The World State is the government that controls everything in this future world.
- It is called the “World State” because there are no individual countries anymore; the whole world is just one country controlled by one central government.
- The year the novel takes place is 2540 AD.
 - In the novel, this is referred to as 632 years AF (“After Ford”), meaning 632 years after production of the first Model T car.

“Community, Identity, Stability”

- This is the World State's motto.
- **Community** is the first word because the good of the community is more important than anything else.
- **Identity** is important because you are allowed to be an individual within the community guidelines.
- **Stability** is what makes you happy in this Brave New World. Everything is stable (predictable and peaceful) so the people do not have to worry about anything.



Characters: The D.H.C.

- **Job Title:** The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (also called the D.H.C.)
- **Caste:** Alpha
- In first few chapters, the D.H.C. takes students on a tour of the Hatchery and Conditioning Center.
 - This is also how the *reader* gets introduced to the society and learns how people are “born” and raised in it. The reader is basically on the tour, too.

Why is Henry Ford so important?

- In this future world, babies are produced, conditioned, and educated in an “assembly-line” way.
 - This assembly line method of creating and teaching humans determines every human being’s destiny.
 - Every child is a “test tube baby”. Sperm and egg are joined in a laboratory setting, and then the fetuses are grown in bottles (chemistry glass).
 - Women do not become pregnant and give birth.
 - In fact, the idea of a “mother” or “parents” is actually *disgusting* to the people in this world!

It's Disturbing on Purpose

“Reading Brave New World elicits the same disturbing feelings in the reader which the society [the book] depicts has vanquished.”

- The author created a futuristic world where the **characters** can avoid feeling pain or unpleasant feelings due to advances in science and technology.
 - The interesting thing about this situation is that the world that the author created is very likely to create reactions of disgust or unpleasantness for the **reader!**
 - The characters can avoid unpleasantness, but the reader probably can't.

Why so much control?

- The World State government decided that things that are considered normal in our society (mothers, fathers, home, etc.) were a danger to world peace because they get in the way of government control.
 - The leaders thought that if people were controlled and directed **completely** from birth, they would have no reason to rebel, start wars, etc.
 - **Would you sacrifice your freedom if it meant that there would be no more war, terrorism, violence, hate, etc.?**
Something must have happened to this society that was so terrible that it made them willing to do that (or maybe they didn't have a choice...).