International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities
Vol. 11, No. 1, 2026, pp. 216-223
http://ijssh.ielas.org
ISSN: 2545-420X

MANUFACTURING HAPPINESS: SOCIAL STABILITY AND THE LOSS OF INDIVIDUALITY IN ALDOUS HUXLEY'S '*BRAVE NEW WORLD*'

Mirhat Aliu
PhD Candidate, International Balkan University (IBU)
Makedonsko-Kosovska Brigada 9, No. 29, Čair, 1000 Skopje, North Macedonia
E-mail: aliu.mirhat@hotmail.com

Received: 2026-10-27 Accepted: 2026-11-20 Published online: 2026-11-24

Abstract

This research investigates the relationships among manufactured happiness, social stability, and the loss of individuality in Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel Brave New World (1932). Given that a technologically advanced society is governed by strict social organization and psychological conditioning, the novel itself portrays a world in which happiness is deliberately produced and maintained as a means of ensuring collective stability. Therefore, this study investigates how the world state employs scientific intervention, artificial conditioning, consumerism, and the widespread use of the drug soma to regulate human behaviour and eliminate dissatisfaction. Therefore, particular attention is given to the ways in which these mechanisms shape individual identity, restrict independent thought, and discourage emotional attachments that might challenge the established social order. Through a qualitative literary analysis of the novel, the paper examines the paradox underlying the world state's social structure. Even though its citizens experience apparent comfort and contentment, their happiness is achieved through the systematic limitations of personal freedom and individuality. Furthermore, the analysis also considers John the Savage as a central figure whose experiences and rejection of the world state's values expose the limitations of a society built upon artificial satisfaction. The paper also argues that Huxley presents manufactured happiness as an effective instrument of social control, suggesting that a society cannot achieve genuine human fulfillment when stability is maintained at the expense of individual identity, emotional depth, and intellectual freedom.

Keywords: Aldous Huxley, Brave New World, Manufactured Happiness, Social Stability, Individuality, Social Conditioning, Dystopian Literature.

I. Introduction

First, it is worth pointing out that dystopian literature is a genre that frequently explores the consequences of societies in which political authority, technological development, and social organization become instruments for controlling human behaviour. Among the most influential literary works addressing these concerns is Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), a novel published in the 20th century that presents a technologically advanced society in which individuals' lives are carefully organized according to the principles of collective stability and social efficiency. Through its depiction of the world state, Huxley raises important questions about the relationships

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license

International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities
Vol. 11, No. 1, 2026, pp. 216-223
http://ijssh.ielas.org
ISSN: 2545-420X

among happiness, freedom, and the individual's position within a highly controlled social system. In the novel, the concept of happiness is not regarded as a personal achievement or an emotional experience that is developed through individual circumstances; instead, it is deliberately manufactured through biological engineering, psychological conditioning, consumer culture, and chemical stimulation. From the moment of birth, individuals are assigned specific social roles and are conditioned to accept the values as well as the expectations that are established by the state. In this context, it is crucial to acknowledge that the widespread use of soma further reinforces this system by offering an immediate escape from unpleasant emotions, conflict, and dissatisfaction. Citizens are thus nudged toward contentment with the roles they were given, and the structures behind those roles are left unquestioned (Huxley, 1932).

This phenomenon emerges because citizens are conditioned to embrace ideals related to community, stability, and identity, perceiving them as essential to their happiness and sense of fulfillment. Nevertheless, in this way, social conformity is presented not as a limitation of individual freedom but as a necessary condition for maintaining social harmony and personal contentment. One of the central contradictions in Huxley's fictional society is that social stability is achieved through the gradual elimination of characteristics traditionally associated with human individuality. Personal relationships, independent judgment, emotional attachment and intellectual curiosity all give way to the interests of the collective. The result looks orderly and harmonious, yet it leaves open what a happiness that depends on restricted freedom is actually worth. Huxley treats stability as more than a political aim; it works as a means of flattening individual differences and discouraging independent thought. This paper therefore asks how manufactured happiness operates as a form of social control in *Brave New World*, and what it costs individual identity and freedom. The analysis is a qualitative reading of the novel that focuses on social conditioning, the drug *soma*, the maintenance of collective stability and the figure of John the Savage. The argument is that Huxley exposes the limits of a society that puts artificial satisfaction and conformity ahead of individuality, emotional complexity and independent thought, and that the novel questions whether collective happiness and stability amount to real human progress.

II. Theoretical Framework: Dystopia, Control and the Individual

Dystopian fiction imagines societies where the drive for order, efficiency and collective well-being ends up curtailing individual freedom. Rather than presenting an ideal social structure, dystopian narratives expose the hidden consequences related to systems that promise security as well as happiness while limiting personal autonomy. In the *Brave New World*, Huxley developed this perspective through a society in which scientific progress and social organization are used to establish complete control over human life (Heise-von der Lippe, 2017). An important theoretical perspective for understanding this

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license

system is Michel Foucault's concept of disciplinary power. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) explains how modern institutions regulate individuals through mechanisms of discipline, observation, and normalization. Huxley's world runs on its own mechanisms, but the idea of disciplinary power still helps explain how citizens come to accept the social roles assigned to them. As Rosenhan (2016) observes, education, conditioning, drugs, and entertainment collectively contribute to maintaining the authority of the world state and preserving its established social order.

The question of individuality is equally important to the novel's critical dimension. Fromm (1941) examines the relationship between freedom, individual responsibility, and the tendency of individuals to escape the difficulties associated with independent existence. This perspective offers a useful way to interpret a society in which citizens are encouraged to abandon independent judgment in favour of security, conformity, and immediate satisfaction. In Huxley's fictional world, the elimination of uncertainty and emotional discomfort becomes closely connected to the suppression of individual identity. Thus, these theoretical perspectives offer the basis for investigating manufactured happiness as a mechanism of social control. Therefore, by combining the concepts of dystopian, disciplinary power, and individuality, this study explores how the world state transforms happiness into a means of preserving conformity and preventing resistance. Nevertheless, the central concern is not simply whether citizens are happy but also whether happiness retains any genuine meaning when individual freedom and personal choice are systematically restricted.

III. Manufacturing of Happiness: Soma and Social Conditioning

One of the most important mechanisms through which the world state maintains social stability is the use of the so-called *soma*, a drug that provides citizens with immediate relief from unpleasant emotions and psychological discomfort. Therefore, in Huxley's society, soma represents more than a means of temporary pleasure, which functions as an instrument of social regulation that prevents individuals from confronting dissatisfaction, anxiety, and personal conflict. When citizens experience negative emotions, they are encouraged to escape reality through the consumption of this substance rather than reflecting on the causes of their unhappiness (Huxley, 1932). The importance of the soma lies in its ability to maintain an artificial sense of contentment without requiring any fundamental improvement in individuals' lives. Furthermore, instead of addressing social dissatisfaction or even allowing citizens to question their circumstances, the world state offers chemical relief as an immediate solution. In this way, so-called emotional discomfort might otherwise encourage critical thinking or resistance by transforming into something that can be easily suppressed.

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license

International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities
Vol. 11, No. 1, 2026, pp. 216-223
http://ijssh.ielas.org
ISSN: 2545-420X

As Newman (1992) argues in his exploration of Huxley's treatment of behaviourism, the novel raises concerns related to the use of behavioural and psychological techniques that shape human conduct. Through the widespread use of soma, Huxley illustrates how the concept of happiness can become a mechanism of control when individuals are discouraged from different experiences and understandings related to the full range of human emotions. The apparent satisfaction of the population therefore conceals a deeper absence of emotional independence. Instead of learning to face difficulty or pain, citizens come to rely on artificial fixes, and that reliance keeps them accepting the existing order.

V. Psychological Conditioning and the Elimination of Independent Thought

In addition, psychological conditioning plays a crucial role in maintaining the stability of the world state because, from the earliest stages of life, individuals in this novel are exposed to systematic processes designed to shape their attitudes, preferences, and social behaviour. Thus, through these practices, citizens learn to accept their predetermined positions within the social hierarchy and to identify their personal satisfaction with the needs of the collective system (Huxley, 1932). One particularly significant technique is hypnopaedia, or better, sleep teaching, through which repeated messages are used to establish social beliefs and behavioural expectations. Instead of encouraging independent judgment, this method reinforces conformity by presenting the values of the world state as unquestionable truths. In this context, Rosenhan (2016) explains that Huxley's representation of education and conditioning reveals how the state uses psychological and educational mechanisms to preserve its authority and maintain social uniformity.

Therefore, the effectiveness of this system lies in the fact that individuals gradually internalize the principle imposed upon them, which means that they do not necessarily experience their social limitations as restrictions because their desires and expectations have already been shaped by the system. Consequently, independent thinking becomes unnecessary and potentially disruptive to the established order. Huxley presents conditioning as a particularly effective form of control because it produces citizens who willingly participate in maintaining the very system that limits their freedom. Through soma and psychological conditioning, the world state has established a society in which happiness is carefully regulated and where individual satisfaction is systematically discouraged. These mechanisms strongly demonstrate that the apparent harmony of Huxley's dystopian world depends not on genuine human fulfillment but on the elimination of the emotional and intellectual conditions necessary for individual freedom.

V. Social Stability and the Suppression of Individuality

The social organization of the world state in the novel *Brave New World* is based on a rigid caste system that determines individuals' positions, abilities, and responsibilities

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license

before they are born. For example, in the novel, we are introduced to society, which is divided into five main groups, such as Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons, each of which is genetically engineered and psychologically conditioned to perform specific social functions or tasks and accept its assigned role within the established hierarchy (Huxley, 1932). Therefore, this system demonstrates how individuality is sacrificed for the sake of social efficiency and uniformity, as individuals are denied the opportunity to develop their abilities or better to pursue personal ambitions beyond the limits that are established by the state. Sardar (2024) reads the caste structure in a similar way, arguing that it reinforces graded inequality and weakens individual reasoning by getting citizens to identify with the positions assigned to them.

The world state also keeps deep personal relationships and emotional attachments in check. Traditional family, marriage and lasting romantic commitment are treated as threats to the collective order. Citizens are expected to keep relationships temporary and to accept that everyone belongs to everyone else, which amounts to a rejection of exclusive emotional bonds and personal commitment (Huxley, 1932). Sexual freedom seems to be encouraged, but genuine intimacy and individual attachment are not, since they can produce loyalties and desires that compete with collective expectations. Atkinson (2015) observes that Huxley's society reaches an artificial stability by suppressing personal individuality and freedom. By controlling both where people stand socially and what they feel, the world state limits the growth of independent identities and turns human relationships into regulated activity. What Huxley shows, in the end, is a society whose apparent harmony rests on curbing personal ambition, independent thought, meaningful relationships and emotional freedom, so that individuality shrinks to a predetermined social function.

VI. John the Savage and Mustapha Mond: Freedom Against Stability

John the Savage poses a basic challenge to the values of the world state. He grew up outside its system of conditioning, and that upbringing lets him form a different understanding of human relationships, morality, love and personal freedom. His familiarity with Shakespeare gives him a language for experiences and emotions that World State citizens have been conditioned to avoid. Unlike them, he values emotional attachment, personal choice and the freedom to experience both happiness and suffering (Huxley, 1932). His arrival at first fascinates the citizens, but his expectations soon prove incompatible with a society built on artificial pleasure, superficial relationships and the removal of individual desires. As Farag (2016) observes, the contrast between John's understanding of freedom and the restricted existence of individuals within the world represents a central aspect of Huxley's novel.

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license

International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities
Vol. 11, No. 1, 2026, pp. 216-223
http://ijssh.ielas.org
ISSN: 2545-420X

This conflict becomes particularly evident in John's confrontation with the character of Mustapha Mond, one of the world state's leading controllers, whose defence of collective happiness reveals the ideological opposition between individual freedom and social stability. Furthermore, while John defends emotional authenticity, personal independence, and the right to experience suffering or pain, Mond argues that stability as a concept requires the restriction of experiences that may produce dissatisfaction or threaten the established social order (Huxley, 1932). His position demonstrates that the world state maintains its stability not only through technological advancement and social organization but also through the deliberate sacrifice of artistic freedom, religious belief, personal independence, and meaningful emotional relationships. As Diken (2011) argues, Huxley's novel raises significant questions related to a society in which happiness becomes an unquestioned ideal while individual freedom is progressively marginalized. The disagreement between the two reaches its symbolic peak when John claims the right to be unhappy rather than accept a life built entirely on artificial comfort. In doing so he challenges the World State's assumption that eliminating suffering is the highest human achievement. Ward (1989) examines the paradox of a society that tries to abolish suffering and pain while undermining the very conditions that make human fulfillment meaningful. John's tragic fate reinforces Huxley's central argument: a society organized around collective stability and artificial happiness may deliver order and comfort, yet it cannot guarantee genuine fulfillment once individual freedom, emotional complexity and personal independence have been given up.

VII. Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis of Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* reveals that manufactured happiness functions as one of the most important instruments through which the world state maintains social stability as well as political control. Therefore, rather than representing genuine human well-being, happiness in society is deliberately constructed through scientific conditioning, consumerism, and the widespread use of the soma. Thus, these mechanisms prevent individuals from experiencing dissatisfaction, questioning established values, or even developing forms of identity that might challenge the existing social order. As Rosenhan (2016) suggested, education and conditioning in Huxley's fictional society serve broader mechanisms of social control, ensuring that individuals internalize the values that are imposed upon them, and this interpretation highlights the relationship between happiness and power. The world state presents social stability as the highest collective objective, but achieving this stability requires the restriction of intellectual freedom, emotional independence, and personal choice. Diken (2011) provides a relevant perspective on this issue by exploring happiness as a political and ethical ideal in Huxley's novel. In the world state, happiness is a standard handed to individuals, not something that grows out of their own needs and choices. Citizens are expected to accept their assigned roles rather than question the conditions that define

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license

their lives. The suppression of individuality is particularly evident in the organization of the caste system and the elimination of traditional personal relationships because individuals are conditioned to accept their social positions, whereas emotional attachments and lasting relationships are discouraged because they may create loyalties that compete with the authority of the state. In this respect, Huxley illustrates how the pursuit of collective stability can undermine the fundamental elements of individual identity.

Similarly, Atkinson (2015) discusses the relationships among government, personal freedom, and the renunciation of individuality in Huxley's dystopian vision. Another important issue to be mentioned is the conflict between John the Savage and Mustapha Mond, which brings these contradictions into sharper focus. Therefore, while Mond defends the world state as a society that has eliminated suffering and uncertainty, John insists on the importance of freedom, emotional experience, and the right to make individual choices. Their confrontation exposes the central paradox of the novel: a society may achieve apparent happiness and stability but remain profoundly restrictive if these conditions depend on the suppression of human individuality. Through John's rejection of artificial satisfaction, Huxley asks whether comfort without freedom can really count as happiness. The novel is, at bottom, a critical investigation of a society in which happiness is manufactured to preserve social order. Huxley shows that scientific progress and social organization, used without regard for individual autonomy, can turn into tools of conformity and control. Soma, conditioning, consumerism, the caste system and the other mechanisms discussed here together create an environment where personal freedom and independent thought are given up for stability, and the society's own motto, "Community, Identity, Stability" (Huxley, 1932), sums this up. The novel suggests that genuine fulfillment is impossible without the freedom to think independently, to criticize, to feel complex emotions, to form meaningful relationships and to make personal choices. Through the world state and John's resistance to it, Huxley warned against valuing artificial happiness above human individuality. The novel therefore remains a significant dystopian critique of societies that pursue stability and comfort at the cost of freedom, identity and the complexity of human experience.

References

Atkinson, C. L. (2015). A shepherd for the naïve: Images of future government in Huxley, Bradbury, and Forster. *SAGE Open*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015603107

Diken, B. (2011). Huxley's Brave New World—and ours. *Journal for Cultural Research*, *15*(2), 153–172. https://doi.org/10.1080/14797585.2011.574056

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license

Farag, A. A. A. (2016). Enslavement and freedom in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. *International Journal of English and Literature*, *7*(4), 57–61. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEL2015.0779

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Fromm, E. (1941). *Escape from freedom*. New York, NY: Farrar & Rinehart.

Heise-von der Lippe, A. (2017). Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (1932). In C. Reinfandt (Ed.), *Handbook of the English novel of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries* (pp. 213–231). Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110369489-011

Huxley, A. (1932). *Brave New World*. London, England: Chatto & Windus.

Newman, B. (1992). Brave New World revisited revisited: Huxley's evolving view of behaviorism. *The Behavior Analyst*, *15*(1), 61–69. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03392586

Rosenhan, C. (2016). That learning were such a filthy thing: Literacy, education and social control in Huxley's Brave New World. In J. Greenberg & N. Waddell (Eds.), *Brave New World: Contexts and legacies* (pp. 51–68). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-44541-4_4

Sardar, S. (2024). Understanding the caste system and its maintenance: Brave New World's World State and Ambedkar's stratified Hindu society in Annihilation of Caste. *Humanistic Management Journal*, *9*(1), 115–120. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41463-024-00170-2

Ward, A. (1989). God, suffering and the anti-utopian character of Brave New World. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *1*(1–2), 162–173. https://doi.org/10.5840/jis198911/212

© 2026 The Authors.
Published by The Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies, Tetovo - North Macedonia.
This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons license