

Aldous Huxley

Biography

He was the son of the writer Leonard Huxley and his first wife, Julia Arnold, and grandson of the famous biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, a great supporter of Darwinian theories. Julia died in 1908, when Aldous was little more than an adolescent; the same month also died his sister Roberta.

In addition to a degree in literature, he received in Oxford, in 1917, one in Biology. Huxley was a humanist and pacifist, but he was also interested in spiritual subjects such as parapsychology and philosophical mysticism. It was also known to support and make use of hallucinogens.

The Doors of perception

In his short book he states that perception is linked to a social conformation, always the man tries to flee with the use of substances such as alcohol or tobacco. In his case he makes use of mescaline (by peyote cactus, a psychedelic drug that has hallucinogenic effects), having a deeper perception and closer to reality.

Brave New World

The novel describes a society whose watchword is "Community, Identity, Stability". People is unaware of the reason for their current situation, only coordinators know how this society was born. It is based on the principles of mass production, also applied to human reproduction. Human are divided into castes, created through a controlled delay of the development of embryos, in order to influence their future physically and intellectually. Everyone is lead to love his social location and as a remedy for any unhappiness there is a drug called soma, that guarantees further control of the population.

John, son of two citizens of the New World, is the a result of a failure of contraception, birth in the reserve, where the mother got during a trip. He grows in the reserve according to the lifestyle of Native Americans.

His mother taught him to read and he is very influenced by the works of Shakespeare, collected in a finite volume in the reserve and somehow escaped the destruction of books made centuries ago in the New World. The people are happy, but the "wild" John feels this happiness as artificial and sterile.

The New World can be considered a utopian ideal: humanity is free from worries, healthy, technologically advanced, free from poverty and war, permanently happy. The irony however is that this ideal is achieved by sacrificing the things that generally consider important for the human being: family, love, cultural diversity, art, religion, literature, philosophy and science. In this sense now of the New World is a dystopia, a utopia that is ironic or negative.

Curiosities

Aldous Huxley wrote the original screenplay for Disney's animated *Alice in Wonderland*, and a production of *Point Counter Point* (1968), of *Eyeless in Gaza* (1971) and of *Ape and Essence* (1966). He was one of the screenwriters for *Pride and Prejudice* (1940), co-authored the screenplay for *Jane Eyre* (1944) with John Houseman, and worked on the screenplay of *Madame Curie* (1943).

Ken Russell directed the film *The Devils* (1971), starring Vanessa Redgrave, adapted from Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun*, and a 1990 made-for-television film adaptation of *Brave New World* was directed by Burt Brinckeroff.

Brave New World is a 1998 made-for-TV movie, directed by Leslie Libman. Other versions had already been produced: a radio broadcast in 1956; a TV movie in 1980; others followed: a stage for the Solent Peoples Theatre in 2003 and *Schöne Neue Welt*, a Musical for the GRIPS Theater Berlin, Germany in 2006.

He wrote the screenplay for *A Woman's Vengeance* (1948) adapted from story *The Gioconda Smile* and reproduced in the following years.

In 2002 Rogue Azcuaga directed *Stardust* from the homonymous novel.