

Capitalist Ideology and Race-Perception in *Brave New World*

by

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Introduction

While many literary critics have viewed Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) as a dystopian text, my paper argues against this conception. By analyzing the text through Louis Althusser's "On Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" from *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* and by applying Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception from *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) to the operations of racialization, I claim that, while on the surface criticizing the U.S. capitalist society, Huxley's book ironically perpetuates the dominant economic and racial ideologies of the time. In a deconstruction of the text, I find that Huxley not only inadvertently supports the potential positive outcomes of mass production, but also emphasizes a prejudice against the lower classes, mainly the population of people of color, common among upper- and middle-class white society. In showing how subjective reality is altered through and functions within societal beliefs, it becomes evident that Huxley, regardless of his attempt to criticize capitalist culture, is still operating within dominant ideology. Moreover, Huxley's connection to the eugenics movement of the time solidifies the fact that what seems dystopian about *Brave New World* is actually more closely tied to a utopian standpoint. Because eugenics of the 1920s and 1930s focused on the potential genetic modification of the lower classes, primarily made up of people of color, Huxley's reproduction of the positive outcomes of mass production seems intertwined with the dominant beliefs of the time that advocate for the need to control the lower classes for the benefit of the ruling class.

Ideological State Apparatuses

For Louis Althusser, in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, a society contains within it multiple Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) that all work towards the

same goal: sustaining the dominant ideology, primarily by keeping people in distinct social classes. Such ISAs include schools, media, politics, family, etc. Althusser believes ISAs are the means by which the state regulates our wants, desires, and thoughts (i.e. our unconscious) in order to maintain the status quo. ISAs work in such a subtle way that most of society cannot understand they are being controlled at all because while the control occupies every facet of human life, it works silently.

By indoctrinating the values of the dominant ideology within the behavior of each person in society into the social discourse, ISAs turn the “individual” into a “subject” without a person’s volition. The concept of an individual is based on the idea that our unconscious is free from the influence of societal thought while the concept of a subject operates on the notion that our unconscious is influenced by pressures to conform and social norms. However, if the way human beings think and speak is influenced by society, individual thoughts are altered, thus changing our “subjective reality” into one that operates within the social framework. If people become engaged in the false reality created by the ruling class, then they are not conscious of their own powerlessness. Thus, the ruling class can continue to manipulate the social and economic aspects of the population. This is why Althusser says ideology interpellates individuals as subjects (Althusser 171-172), because by operating within society, we are already always conforming to ISAs. Thus, the “individual” becomes influenced by conformity and norms defined by the ruling ideology which manipulates people to act, feel, and think like a “subject.”

Interpellation of Aldous Huxley

Capitalism and Technology in the 1920s and 1930s

Before, during, and after the writing of *Brave New World*, Huxley lived in a technologically innovative world. During the optimistic time of the Roaring Twenties, there were various social and economic movements that intended to create systems of efficiency, which would produce goods for capitalist society. One of the most significant advances of the 1920s entailed the implementation of mass production in factories, making technological access affordable to most of society. Such a change within consumerist culture led to mass broadcasting and mass marketing in media, creating another channel of control for the ruling class. Moving towards a more technologically-based world spurred on such inventions as Henry Ford's Model T car, produced on moving assembly belts – another new invention – that increased the speed of production in order to meet consumer needs, along with the rise of radio broadcasting in order to advertise the new goods. The popularity of such items like Ford's car, mixed with the newly popular radio transmitting, changed advertising to focus on all of society rather than only small sectors since mass production made items more affordable. With the rise of low-cost, highly marketed consumer goods, an Economic ISA of capitalism supporting technological innovation arose.

Technocracy in the 1920s and 1930s

Technocracy is a form of government or rule in which technology is the controlling factor in the organization of society: technology, in a capitalist economy, controls and structures society to profit both economically and socially. At least in theory, it creates a more stable environment because just about everyone has access to technology, and their desires, which are created by means of mass marketing, can then be fulfilled by mass production. The problem is that those in power, because they benefit enormously from mass production, increasingly manipulated and controlled people's

desires through mass marketing in order to serve their own goals by increasing profit margins. This manipulation of people and wealth caused Huxley to become disenchanted with technology, and in *Brave New World*, he creates one of the first modern dystopian societies in which mass production and mass marketing control both the physical being and the consciousness of human beings.

Before writing *Brave New World*, Huxley had read Henry Ford's book, *My Life and Work*, and saw Ford's principles of business and production as intertwined completely in American culture. "Ford," a figure revered by Huxley's fictional society as though he were a God, has taken society and shifted the role and value of humans from being consumers to their becoming the commodity itself. In *Brave New World*, human beings have become the mass-produced goods of the 1920s and 1930s, always replaceable and never unique. Human beings are matured as fetuses through the process of "decanting," or the mass production of Fordian people, in order to manipulate genetics so that all classes of people aid in the consumerist culture. During this process, chemicals and natural products such as alcohol and oxygen are added to or withheld from test tubes that function as wombs, creating humans ranging from Alpha Plus to Epsilon types.

In *Brave New World*, a system similar to IVF (in vitro fertilization) is used in which an egg and a sperm are combined within a test tube, but instead of being put back inside the woman's womb, the test tube is where the fetus undergoes the maturing process. Fordian society also "predestine[s] and condition[s]. [They] decant... babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future" members of the ruling class (Huxley 8). Superior sperms and eggs or inferior sperms and eggs decide what caste a Fordian human is assigned, which also determines the chemical enhancements the embryo undergoes. The superior castes are Alpha and Beta while the

inferior castes are Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon. The superior caste test tubes are not as chemically enhanced as the lower castes, which are treated with specific amounts of, for example, alcohol, in order to manipulate brain capacity, thought, and physical appearance. Such a process of human production allows the society to enforce a strict caste system that dehumanizes Fordian citizens by physically altering their minds and bodies.

“Hypnopaedia,” or sleep conditioning, is used the instant after birth to instill certain ideological beliefs into the minds of every member of Fordian society. Manipulated thoughts and actions of each caste system perpetuate consumerist culture and ensure that members of each caste cannot question their position. People learn from “hypnopaedia,” but they cannot question the inculcated information because it becomes so intricately intertwined within their sense of self that their subconscious is altered. Because Fordian society is run by technocracy, sleep conditioning includes the repetition of mass-marketed ideology in order to instill in its citizens an unrelenting acceptance of mass production. Within the hypnopaedic statement, “ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches” (Huxley 33), one can see society’s new consumer-oriented collective consciousness; its repetition manipulates Fordian citizens for the benefit of the ruling class which profits from mass production. Fordian society seems unable to enjoy outdated products of any kind because of hypnopaedic government control. Hence, even when finding sexual partners, people within the caste system have been conditioned to believe that “everyone belongs to everyone else” (Huxley 29), because, much like their love of new things, the human body itself has become a commodity. Fordian sex life is similar to the consumerist need of replacing and upgrading goods (much like in our current time iPhone users will buy the new model of phone every year it comes out even

though they already have a functioning phone). When even the human being becomes replaceable, deep human connection is impossible; each Fordian human is expected to “try on” another person, much like one would try out a new clothing style. This constant need for the new, coupled with an inability to develop deeper human connections, to Huxley, seem to put any experience requiring profound feeling in danger of becoming obsolete because the very intellectual and emotional conditions necessary for its production are being systematically eliminated.

Loss of High Art and Human Individuality

Lenina's Conditioned Experience

In *Brave New World*, once high art becomes unnecessary, human beings move further away from having creative, individual minds. Without individual, independent thought, Fordian humans cannot even appreciate something like nature. For instance, when Lenina, an upper caste Fordian and one of the main female characters, looks at the ocean, she finds herself “appalled by the rushing emptiness of the night, by the black foam-flecked water heaving beneath them” (Huxley 61). Without the ability to think for oneself, a person is unable to process the natural beauty that’s found in the sight and sound of natural phenomena. The silence and darkness of the night mixed with the splashing of waves separates a person from the human world, allowing introspection from solitude. But when forced to be alone with her mind, Lenina becomes increasingly anxious. As a Fordian citizen, she is accustomed to the constant presence of community; an average day requires that a certain number of hours are spent at work and the rest of the night is spent in a variety of social ways; attending the “feelies” (movies that can be physically felt), participating in team sports and other collaborative activities, or going on dates that always end in sexual intercourse. When she is forced away from the constant

collective experience, Lenina finds herself no longer distracted. Without the distraction of other people, she is left with her own mind. Yet, because she was conditioned to understand only communal experience rather than individual experience, she is frightened by her own thoughts. Her inability to access her own mind prevents Lenina from creative thought and she inadvertently rejects any sense of her own individuality.

Technocracy's potential to keep people from thinking, then, makes Huxley depict a technological world that is "uncertain about what sort of role the creative individual might meaningfully play" (Waddell 38). *Brave New World* seems to claim that when society becomes dominated by mass production, there will ultimately be a loss in high art. Pain, frustration, or sadness – anything that does not pertain to the happiness of instant gratification – is necessary for both the creation of and engagement with high art. Yet, with the loss of deep human emotion through the mass-produced, collective consciousness of Fordian society, a faculty to appreciate art, which requires introspective thought, becomes impossible. Through the loss of individual thought, such intense emotions seem to no longer exist since no Fordian human cares to or even can sit and think about his or her life. And, should they retain enough emotion to actually get upset over something, "soma," a drug that alters the mind to believe it is happy, is given out freely.

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

Throughout *Brave New World*, Shakespeare's various plays are referenced as a parallel to the dehumanized "hypnopaedia." When John the Savage, a human raised in a reservation – an "uncivilized" section of the Fordian world – shares a passage from Shakespeare with Helmholtz Watson, a Fordian citizen in charge of teaching "Emotional Engineering" – a course on hypnopaedic propaganda – Helmholtz wonders at the

playwright's ability to create and feel. He cannot understand the depth at which Shakespeare wrote because he has been conditioned to believe deep emotions and individual thought are inherently wrong. In his response to *Romeo and Juliet*, describing Shakespeare as “[having] so many insane, excruciating things to get excited about. You've got to be hurt and upset; otherwise you can't think of the really good, penetrating, X-rayish phrases” (Huxley 125), Helmholtz suggests he has never felt such agony. Without the experience of events that require introspection, such as the inability to be with one's true love as in *Romeo and Juliet*, Helmholtz cannot think about or verbalize the emotions he finds in Shakespeare in relation to himself. Always instantly gratified, there is no room for him to feel or think deeply.

The only person with easy access to and the ability to comprehend high art is Mustapha Mond, the World Controller, but he only proves the danger of high art by showing that “under technocracy the fate of high art is to be something that can only be understood, but never openly revered, by a self-interested minority” (Waddell 36). Mond, then, as part of the ruling class, has authority over all the existing high art and has the power to hide it from the general population. Fordian humans, who already do not have deep human emotions, will not find examples of such experiences as those found in Shakespeare's work within society. Moreover, through his knowledge of old texts, he is able to censor new texts when such works reach too high a level of human depth. In this way, he can manipulate society by the very fact that he, along with others in the ruling class, knows the operations of the human consciousness and how the self can be controlled through those processes.

Helmholtz, as an example of that discrepancy in power, knowledge, and ability, shows the relations between the ruling class and everyone else. Even in his search for

access to deep human emotions from high art, Helmholtz cannot reach that level of understanding; he, much like the rest of Fordian society, operates through life with only the hypnopaedic lessons in mind that eradicate human individuality. Hence, without deeper and independent subjective thought, Helmholtz is unable to comprehend Shakespearean text without breaking “out in an explosion of uncontrollable laughter” (Huxley 124) due to his shock that someone could “get excited about a boy having a girl or not having her” (Huxley 125). In this scene, then, Helmholtz not only shows his lack of deeper emotions and thought as a person outside of the realm of those in power, but also exemplifies the mass-produced idea that “everyone belongs to everyone else.” However, when this hypnopaedic lesson is applied to the lower castes by Alphas and Betas, the statement takes on a different meaning. Everyone only then belongs to everyone else in the sense that each person produces something for society, even in death. When a Fordian citizen dies, society gains the needed chemical phosphorus through cremation for the production of plants. “More than a kilo and a half per adult corpse... Fine to think we can go on being socially useful even after we’re dead.” (Huxley 49). In life, lower castes only exist for the menial jobs of pulling levers or pushing buttons for the production of parts, tools, and supplies for upper caste occupation and life necessities. At no time are the Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons viewed as anything but the commodity of the upper classes, only belonging to everyone else by means of their usefulness for the whole of society. In short, Helmholtz’ inability to surpass the idea that everyone is a commodity, and the division of necessity in the ways various castes are used within society, is a representation of the relations of power in the 1920s capitalist economy where the upper class consistently takes away individual control from the lower classes.

Huxley’s Unconscious Perpetuation of the Economic ISA

While Huxley is opposed to losing the “individual,” his critique of capitalist society proves ineffectual because without this loss, the stability of the Fordian mind would be damaged. By giving access to high art only to the ruling class, and minimal access to someone like Helmholtz who, as an Alpha, has at least the ability to try to exist at a deeper level, Huxley is elucidating the dangers to the state if texts such as Shakespeare’s plays were put into the hands of the average citizen. When compared to the Economic ISA of the 1920s, it seems that Huxley was forced back into the dominant ideology of his time by having Helmholtz react in such a characteristically Fordian way to *Romeo and Juliet*. Thus, while it appears that technocracy is “something the text queries rather than celebrates” (Waddell 31), Huxley is inadvertently supporting technology and its influence on society, especially that of the lower classes.

Huxley’s criticism, while partly emergent, cannot take him outside the ISA. Although it may seem that Huxley is able to rise above the dominant ideology of his time throughout his novel, he is operating within the ISA. As a result, while part of the world he creates is horrific, another part is peaceful and stable where “people are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can’t have” (Huxley 149). In the Fordian paradigm war is a thing of the past and the economy is at a constant high, at times making *Brave New World* seem to be more like a utopia, rather than a dystopia. By organizing his fictional society so that peace is always guaranteed, Huxley appears to support technocracy, and to be enveloped by, interpellated by, the very ISA he originally sets out to critique (Waddell 32). In Althusserian terms, Huxley, like all human beings, has been interpellated as a subject of the dominant. Hence, Huxley cannot be the purely critical individual writer he seems to be on the surface of the book; he cannot stand outside of his society. Rather, he remains a product of his culture in his inadvertent

approval of the potentially positive outcomes of technocracy. By making the Fordian mass-produced world a happy, stable environment regardless of the intellectually fragile, shallow, and virtually inhuman existence of Fordian citizens, Huxley reproduces the very relations of production that his book sets out to dismantle.

Benefit of Society Through Consumerism

While Huxley adamantly criticizes the decrease in cultural growth that he sees as a necessary outcome of his dystopian technocracy, specifically in the loss of high art, he simultaneously shows a positive increase in the society's economic and social stability. And this stability is seen in one instance in the use of the "Bokanovsky process" to create many human beings simultaneously, "ninety-six identical twins," in fact, all of whom are conditioned not to question their position in society as a commodity, to "[work with] identical machines [and be] standard men and women [created]... in uniform batches" (Huxley 4). The Director of Hatcheries, the person in charge of "decanting" and education, tells us that, "the whole of a small factory [could be] staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg" (Huxley 4). Yet, these 96 sets of identical twins, while meant to satirize just how mass production will result in the loss of individuality through its means of production, actually supports the efficiency of a mass-produced, mass-marketed world. If everyone operated under the goals of consumerism by helping the economy through the making and buying of goods, the economy would prosper, and in turn, create social stability since everyone would benefit. Therefore, Huxley's attempt at criticism becomes a stance of support for the genetic engineering of society because of the very stability of Fordian society.

Moreover, in the Fordian world, everyone *is* benefitting because of each individual's compliance with a mass-produced world. During a "Solidarity Service" – a

collective group experience of absolute release – one of the participant’s reaction was described as “the calm ecstasy of achieved consummation, the peace, not of mere vacant satiety and nothingness, but of balanced life, of energies at rest and in equilibrium. A rich and living peace” (Huxley 57). During this moment of the book, people are depicted as having found true tranquility through their mass-produced consciousness. The representation of such a blissful human experience indicates that Huxley unconsciously supported the ISA he was so desperately trying to criticize. Although “[Huxley] bemoaned the fact that a more leisured age meant a more passive, increasingly standardized, more easily manipulated, and generally less cultured world” (Waddell 38), he still created a fictional environment in which the standardization of people resulted in a positive, not a negative change in society. Thus, Huxley perpetuates the benefits of technocracy through the very stability and happiness inherent in Fordian society. Mass production and mass marketing, at first depicted by Huxley as so destructive of human individuality and thought in a technocratic world, end up being represented as the only means to creating a stable world. *Brave New World* inadvertently supports the loss of human individuality through the peace, well-being, and utter bliss that Fordian society exhibits.

Unstable Individuals in Fordian Society

If a Fordian citizen stands outside of the “modernized” structure of stability, he or she is unable to operate within the collective consciousness, but Huxley’s aberrant characters only further prove his interpellation within the Economic ISA. During the conditioning of children, Fordian citizens are told that others are either superior or inferior based on their caste. It is easier to train human beings to acknowledge such a difference with a visual representation – varying physiques – of what they are being

taught; Alphas and Betas are decanted from individual sperm and eggs while the lower castes undergo the “Bokanovsky process.” Moreover, the upper castes are taller and are more physically appealing than the lower castes. “‘The lower the caste... the shorter the oxygen.’ The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy per cent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs” (Huxley 9). In other words, upper castes represent the normal model of human appearance and intelligence while lower castes are physically smaller and mentally deficient. Thus, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons, recognizing themselves as identical and having to physically look upwards in order to see someone’s face, while viewing Alphas and Betas as physically individual, unquestionably understand in that moment that they are the inferior caste. In this way, they can be controlled by their superiors and cannot fight against such domination because they have been trained to accept it as fact.

Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson

Alpha types Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson, however, are *not* at peace with their world and find life unsatisfactory. Bernard’s decanting, unlike other Alphas, was rumored to include a mix up in which alcohol was placed into his incubator, an enhancement not given to upper castes because it is meant to deplete the physical size and mental intellect of the lower castes. “For whatever the cause (and the current gossip about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate may very likely... have been true) Bernard’s physique was hardly better than the average Gamma” (Huxley 43). Because of the addition of alcohol into his system, Bernard is shorter than the average male Alpha height and is scrawnier in size.

Since the initial status of a person is determined by their physical appearance, Bernard is seen as somehow inferior to other Alphas and is treated like an outcast. “The

mockery made him feel like an outsider; and feeling an outsider he behaved like one, which increased the prejudice against him... Which in turn increased his sense of being alien and alone (Huxley 43). As an outsider, Bernard developed a disposition to act and think in a way that is separate from his caste. Unlike the collective society, he is able to access subjective thought since he does not operate within the norms of the Fordian world. "Soma," which alleviates any unhappiness for everyone else, does not work on Bernard since his pain functions on a much deeper level and creates an introspection unattainable for the average Fordian person. Thus, Bernard is predisposed, for example, to want a personal, intimate connection with whichever lover he chooses, deviating from the hypnopaedic teaching that "everyone belongs to everyone else." His sense of self is not part of the collective since the collective itself denies him the access to social norms of upper caste experience by treating him as an outcast, thus altering his relationships with other Alphas. Therefore, Bernard is flawed because he stands outside of the mass-produced world. While it may seem that Huxley is exhibiting a criticism of 1920s ideology, he is in fact perpetuating it through Bernard because only his subjective thoughts are stopping him from being happy in the Fordian world. What this implies is that if one's mind is not mass-produced and preprogrammed through mass marketing, such a person will never be at peace, suggesting that a society capable of deeper thought and emotion could not endure.

Unlike Bernard, Helmholtz is the perfect physical specimen of the Alpha caste; he is a "powerfully built man, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, massive, and yet quick in his movements, springy and agile" (Huxley 44). Helmholtz, however, is still seen as different from the rest of the Alphas because he is too successful in his professional and personal life. "That which had made Helmholtz so uncomfortably aware of being himself and all

alone was too much ability. What [Helmholtz and Bernard] shared was the knowledge that they were individuals” (Huxley 45). People within the same caste view him, because of his physical demeanor of great height and a muscular body, as positive rather than the negative outlook they have toward Bernard who is physically inferior. Yet, Helmholtz’s popularity also deconditions him by altering his subjective reality into one independent from Fordian society; his physical superiority to other male Alphas affords him even more access to wants and desires that separates his experience to that of his caste. Thus, he loses his connection with the collective and is therefore not a part of it. Moreover, because of his access to subjective freedom, Helmholtz can ask the question: “Did you ever feel... as though you had something inside you that was only waiting for you to give it a chance to come out?” (Huxley 46), implying that he is trying to have deeper human connections and emotions like those of Bernard. Yet, once again, Huxley is inadvertently supporting the Economic ISA by making Helmholtz dissatisfied with his life no matter how easy it is for him to obtain everything he could possibly need because of his physical superiority. Insofar as Helmholtz can try to appreciate deeper thought and emotion, he cannot function within Fordian society and stands outside mass-produced stability. Thus, both Bernard and Helmholtz, although different from one another, develop subjectivities that threaten world peace, happiness, and stability in a technocratic society.

Phenomenology of Perception

In the previous discussion of Ideological State Apparatuses, I analyzed Huxley’s interpellation into dominant ideology, suggesting a broad view on society. Through an Althusserian lens, I found that all people who are a part of society act within it as a subject rather than an individual. As such, *Brave New World* became a text in which the economic ideals of the 1920s and 1930s seeped into Huxley’s writing. Taking this

outcome into account, I will now delineate how the individual's experience in the world is shaped by such indoctrination. Depending on one's position in society and the time and place in which one lives, the propagation of ideology through habits of perception will be demonstrated as differentially affecting the lived experience of those perceiving and those perceived. In short, the operations of society which control and manipulate its population will be shown not only to modify how we see reality, but also to help identify various people as inherently negative objects of perception.

Phenomenological Organization of the World

Subjects of Perception: Gestalt Structure or Organization

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's main concern with perception in *Phenomenology of Perception* is that it has a gestalt structure or organization. Merleau-Ponty argues that rather than adding together parts of objects to produce a representation of the whole, in perception we take the part of an object that appears to us for the whole. When perception occurs, certain objects are exaggerated in their appearance so that we see specific details as somehow containing more value: i.e., we become more aware of certain parts or details of objects as important, containing more significance than everything else in our surroundings, which become the background – or context in which an object appears. Because human beings are the subjects of perception, in that we are enacting the process of perception, objects are always seen from our point of view. The subject differentiates the object from a background containing an array of other objects, and within this differentiation we assign value to the perceived entity.

Objects as Significant

The specifically perceived objects, however, are not intrinsically more significant than anything else we may see. If perception were a mere point by point recording of the

world, no point would be presented as more significant than any others. Without our acknowledgment of certain details over others, the world would appear to us as an unintelligible expanse of colors and shapes in which nothing is directly identifiable, similar to a splatter painting where paint is thrown randomly across a canvas in a chaotic mixing and matching of various colors. Yet, even the various forms in which we perceive a splatter is already seen through a gestalt structure. For example, a *red* streak may stand out among other *green* streaks, but there is no rule or justification that innately orders or structures the painting in such a way that red streaks would be characterized as having a specific significance while green streaks fall to the background. Because there is no definable ordering of our world, “the object is only determined as an identifiable being through an open series of possible experiences, and only exists for a subject who produces this identification” (Merleau-Ponty 220).

When identifying things in our world, objects only become intelligible among a multitude of possibilities when we learn or are taught how to differentiate among details. For instance, multiple books may be placed on top of my desk and all these books are intrinsically similar; each book contains a binding, a series of white pages, and words on those pages. Yet, while most of the books may be novels, there is a journal among them that is also bound and contains written words on white pages. All objects on my desk that have the three basic characteristics of a book can be defined as such for me, however, I can differentiate among the various novels and the one journal. The journal has the possibility of being a novel by the very structure of its appearance, but through experience in which a journal can be discerned by the hand-written words found inside rather than the typed words within a novel, I have learned to associate the value of *journal* to the object defined as a journal regardless of the fact that both the novels and

journal are books. In this way, I have produced the identification of the journal as specifically a journal by perceiving it as significant against the background of novels. Thus, learning to see is a form of practical knowledge that gives us the ability to emphasize certain details over others.

Yet, we do not simply impose random meanings onto things in the world. Because “the subject does not weld individual movements to individual stimuli, but rather acquires the power of responding with a certain type of solution to a certain form of situation” (Merleau-Ponty 143), meaning arises through interaction with the world. Hence, perception is neither in the world nor in the agent of the action, but in the relation between the two. For example, we have hands that can grasp objects, but the ability to grasp only reveals that our hands, in a world where grasping is an action that can be performed, have a specific form of significance. In turn, there are certain things in the world that are graspable, but they only reveal this form of tangibility because our ability to grasp gives such objects value. As we act out the motion of grasping, all other features of our hands and the tangible object fall away. Moreover, objects that contain no value for the activity of grasping in the surrounding environment fall to the background during this specific action. If a woman is grasping the handles of crutches while using them for support in walking after breaking a leg, only the relation between the woman who is grasping and the crutches as graspable have value in that moment. The ground that the crutches touch does not need to be perceived by the woman in order for her to walk deliberately. Rather, the ground falls to the background while the woman interacts with the sensation of being held up and moving with the crutches. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, the value of an object is determined only after obtaining knowledge of how we interact with it.

Understanding Through Habituation

Merleau-Ponty's theory of practical knowledge, as described above, occurs through the forming of habits, which modifies the basic structure of vision to find certain details more significant than others. "Habit expresses the power we have of dilating our being in the world, or of altering our existence through incorporating new instruments" (Merleau-Ponty 145). For example, if a man has developed a limp and is required to use a cane for support, he must incorporate the cane, as an object outside of himself, into his body so that it operates as an extension. Because the cane bolsters the damaged leg, the man in need of it, through repeated use, learns of the cane's graspability through his interaction with it. In other words, the separation of the man's hand that grasps and the cane that is grasped blends into an indistinguishable form. Hence, sense and vision modify the lens in which we perceive things in the world by applying personal action onto our visible surroundings. As a result, what shows up or appears to us only does so through a framework of understanding where "to understand is to experience the accord between what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the realization" (Merleau-Ponty 146). Understanding, then, is the moment we interact with the world so that our bodies and objects in the world simultaneously create meaning for one another. In turn, such a framework of knowledge indicates that "the [perceived object] can never be separated from someone who perceives it; nor can it ever actually be in itself because its articulations are the very ones of our existence" (Merleau-Ponty 334). By this Merleau-Ponty means that the object which appears to someone is only existing for that person and in that specific way because of his or her experience of living in the world. The lived experience of using a cane is then only acquired through the repeated actions of pressing down onto it with every step taken. The physical sensation of the cane and body

simultaneously moving together imprints the person experiencing his or her weight on the cane so that the action becomes natural, no longer a new feeling or experience, but a habit. In short, we are taught to see through physical sensations established by our interaction with the world, and when that interaction is repeated the perception of similar experiences becomes intertwined with the original interaction, modifying the basic structure of vision.

Human Experience Through Perception

Organization of The Present Moment Through Past Experiences

Habitual actions are called forth by and directed at objects that we have seen before or have dealt with; any object someone sees must already be organized into a specific structure based on past experiences that one recognizes as familiar. Merleau-Ponty believes the sensation of perception is like “an immanent sense bursting forth from a constellation of givens” (Merleau-Ponty 23) and precedes the call to memory. As a result, an already-experienced moment must be recalled in order to structure an object as visible, but only after the familiar sensation occurs. The body, in giving things in the world form, compares past experiences with the present in order to choose which prior interaction is relevant to a current object, but we enact this process unconsciously so that we are never aware of the comparison in the act of perception. By comparing past experiences to the one occurring in the present, our bodies, already taught to differentiate among details, allow the world to appear as intelligible through sight and sensation. “To remember” one’s experience, with an object like the cane is “to plunge into the horizon of the past and gradually to unfold tightly packed perspectives until the experiences that it summarizes are as if lived anew” (Merleau-Ponty 23). Lived experience is then a conscious ongoing, but does not involve explicit actions in which a person controls the

comparison made between the present and the past. “Explicit memory contains single recollections or information that can be reported and described; it may also be called a *knowing that*” (Fuchs 11). Rather than “knowing that,” we find ourselves motivated by objects through contexts that we have engaged in prior to the present moment so that, unconsciously, we give value to certain structures over others. “The visual thing” or the physical entity “which remains for us the same throughout a series of experiences is... that which is met with or taken up by our gaze or by our movement” (Merleau-Ponty 331), so that when a person perceives an object in its particular form, that object is only manifested as such through the direct interaction of the person viewing it.

Implicit and Procedural Memory

After the initial understanding of an object, the recollection of this knowledge is an involuntary process that occurs with no justification in relation to the value given to the object. “Repeated situations or actions have [then] merged in [the] implicit memory... which means [habits] have become superimposed on each other and can no longer be retrieved as single past events” (Fuchs 11). In perception, recollection is an implicit memory in which a repeated sensation comprised of multiple experiences has blended into one moment, becoming a complete or whole interaction with the world. Thus, recalling an experience resembles watching a video on a screen that, while being in front of us, is located at a distance away from us. The learned sensation, then, when replayed to us, feels as though it is lived through once again, only less directly and vividly than the original interaction. “Procedural memory” – an interaction with the world created through habituation that is now ingrained as natural – “unburdens our attentions from an abundance of details, thus facilitating our everyday performances. It works in the background without being noticed, remembered, or reflected upon” (Fuchs 12). In short,

sensations and the body that feels become neutral instruments for processing and organizing the world which, when gaining knowledge through repeated actions, create a comprehension that allows us to see visible structures. As a result, “bodily learning means forgetting what we have learned or done explicitly, and letting it sink into implicitly unconscious knowing” (Fuchs 13) so that human beings are not consciously aware of perception; we see the world as already intelligible to us.

Racist Ideology and Perception in *Brave New World*

Racialization Through Socio-Historical Contexts

According to Merleau-Ponty, vision is always intertwined with the subject’s reality through the process of habituation in implicit and procedural memory. Nonetheless, because part of human experience relies on our personal interaction with a human structured society, our perception is already shaped by the specific time and place we are born in and in which we continue to exist. To race-phenomenologists such as Alia Al-Saji, Frantz Fanon, and George Yancy, habits must then be informed by a socio-historical context that modifies human perception to adhere to dominant social beliefs or ideologies. Here, recall Althusser’s claim that to exist within society is to always already experience the world through dominant ideological beliefs. Based on the operations of Ideological State Apparatuses already discussed, my use of Al-Saji, Fanon, and Yancy moves the ways in which society controls human beings a step further than a general analysis of indoctrination into ideology and its implications for people existing within society. By arguing that ideology also informs the ways in which we perceive the world, I will claim that Huxley, as someone already existing within society and adhering to societal beliefs, experiences the world through a prejudiced perspective.

By following the phenomenological tradition, philosophy concerned with race can apply Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception to the ways in which dominant racist beliefs structure the white perspective. For the following philosophers, in the case of capitalist society where the socio-historical context is one of racial and class hierarchies, perception becomes intertwined with race differentiation. When operating within a racist framework of knowledge, people who are privileged in a society based on social hierarchy may perceive a certain group of people, such as people of color, as inherently different or *other*, albeit containing no such intrinsic value. As such, people of color are perceived as the significant object seen against our surroundings, but this very identification arises through racist social norms that structure the significance as not a neutral, but negative perception.

If one compares Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of *object* perception to the phenomenology of *race*-perception, it becomes evident that racialization is in fact a form of objectification, in which the person of color becomes the *thing* – not person – perceived. “For Merleau-Ponty, vision is not a mere neutral recording of the visible... we learn to see. This means that vision not only *makes* visible, it does so *differentially* according to sedimented habits of seeing” (Al-Saji 138). Because race-perception – as a form of racialization – identifies the person of color as an *object* rather than a *subject*, a negative perception arises in which the association of the Black body as separate from a white background exists as a sign of inferiority rather than neutral difference. In short, racist ideology, which is *taught* within society, is a sedimented code that appears “natural.” While for Merleau-Ponty the object is “a pole of repulsion. We do not see ourselves in it, and this is precisely what makes it a thing... We go straight to the thing, and only secondarily do we notice the limits of our knowledge and of ourselves as

knowing” (Merleau-Ponty 338), for a white-oriented society this specific form of perception is extended toward people of color. Ultimately, the person of color is seen as the perceived object, differentiated by what he or she is *not*, like that of other material things that arise through the chaos of our surroundings, but in a way that negates such people from human experience. And, in the following sections, I show how Huxley’s perspective as a white, upper class man can account for the racialization of lower classes both implicit and explicit in his account of Fordian lower castes and the ways in which they are perceived by Fordian upper castes.

Race-Perception

Races reflect a biological foundation similar to species differentiation in which diverse racial groups are constructed so that only those members of specific races supposedly share physical and mental characteristics with one another. Difference among bodies and minds are then “made into opposition and hierarchy, so that identities appear to be mutually exclusive and in-themselves terms (Al-Saji 136). Generated racial groups identify and categorize certain people as inherently different from other people through the modifying of human perception by the structure of social hierarchy, defining one social group as always in opposition to another social group. But what seems characteristic of certain races is in fact constructed by ideology and is a production, not a natural state of being. “Racialization, hence, relies on the naturalization of projected and oppositional difference to the perceived body” (Al-Saji 136-137). When certain social constructs become dominant through the naturalization of codes, or repeated associations with images to the extent that specific perceived objects ultimately contain what seems like a “common” identification, racialization of a social group in relation to another represents what seems to be an inherent trait of *otherness*. However, racialization, or an

“othering” perception, is *not* always inherent within the operations of human perception or explicitly felt when it occurs for the person seeing the world in terms of race. So, although vision is a habitual process, “not all vision is objectifying or, more specifically, racializing (i.e., vision is not inevitably racist, but contextually and historically so)” (Al-Saji 138). In other words, the structuring of society, which arises from certain past events and the ways people interact with their histories does not always, but can create a racializing context.

People of Color in the U.S.

Viewing people of color as inferior or “other” is a habitual way of seeing and contains assumptions that are not always consciously recognized by the person defining the world within a white-oriented context. Through “sedimentation and habituation” – or the accumulation of values and beliefs over time to the extent that we become accustomed to social norms – “the constitutive operations of vision remain tacit or unconscious; its intentionality works in us without our reflective awareness” by the very naturalization of learned perspectives (Al-Saji 138). Thus, socially dominant codes, as commonly used, taught, and structured values and beliefs in a historically racist culture, tend to seem natural rather than constructed. The problem with “naturalized” codes is that in seeing, for example, a stop light, we immediately know that red means stop, yellow means slow down, and green means go, yet the colors only have such a value within the context of a stop light. If one saw red, yellow, and green colors elsewhere, the same association of the colors with the meanings of stop, slow down, and go would not pertain to the situation. As such, because the colors within the image of the stop light are contextually-based naturalized codes of meaning, when we see the red of a stop light, we associate the image with the word “stop.” Hence, it is “the product not of nature but of

convention” (Hall 132), which requires the support of codes in order to become that image we associate with the real thing.

Yet, in the United States, with an extended history of slavery, the neutral understanding of codes is modified through race construction into a negative perception of the Black individual. And just as the colors on a stop light cannot be recognized as anything but the coded meanings, “racialized bodies are not only seen as naturally inferior, they *cannot be seen otherwise* [because] the mechanism of othering, which undergirds this vision, sustains itself by means of the very perceptions, representations, and affects it produces” (Al-Saji 138-139). In other words, the specific type of vision or seeing associated with race-perception arises specifically through racialized representations which separate the white perceiver from the person of color by always already identifying him or her as an “other.” Thus, people of color, while *not* physically or intellectually inferior to white people, are automatically assumed to be in their given identity as “other” when existing in a racially constructed social hierarchy. “‘Race’-perception [then] operates through a double exclusion or invisibility” (Al-Saji 139) where the one who is racialized becomes separate from those identifying him or her. Moreover, such a separation requires both the white perceiver to define the perceived (racialized person) as existing in relation to white society within the very means of “othering,” and the person of color to accept this distinction by acknowledging double consciousness in which he or she is a subject in Black society, but becomes an object in white society.

Huxley’s Interpellation into Racialized Ideology

Because of his family ties to Darwinian biology, evolutionary science, and eugenics as a science rather than as a means of white supremacist control, Huxley seems unbiased in his creation of the Fordian caste system. “He had been born in 1894 into a

scientific family – Aldous’s grandfather was T.H Huxley (‘Darwin’s Bulldog’) and his younger brother was the evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley” (Woiak 106). Considering his connection to evolutionary beliefs such as “survival of the fittest” and “natural selection,” it is not surprising that Huxley supported what was believed to be the possibility of genetic improvement of human beings. However, to advocate for the eugenics movement in hopes that “each state could expect... to be strengthened” (Congdon 85) does not mean Huxley was inherently racist in his beliefs. What connects him to racialization and interpellation into racist ideology is his essay, “A Note on Eugenics” (1927) where he makes both explicit and implicit claims that echo the racial hierarchy inherent in capitalist society. Within this essay, when read alongside *Brave New World*, it becomes evident that Huxley’s socio-historical context both informs and modifies his perception of people of color as inherently inferior to himself as a white man and intellectual. In this way, his discussion of eugenics in the novel is shown as entirely intertwined with the racist ideology of the 1920s and 1930s.

A Note on Eugenics

Because of his strong belief in Darwinian evolution, which provides evidence for the racial hierarchy found in our society for those that believe people of color are inherently inferior, and the social hierarchy of upper class (white collar) and lower class (blue collar) workers found in capitalist culture, it is probable that Huxley is interpellated by racist ideology that operates within the social hierarchy inherent within capitalism. Moreover, “his contempt for the masses [lower classes] and assumption that societies will always have innately inferior and superior groups” (Woiak 118-119) suggests that Huxley inadvertently perpetuated the societal race-perception of the 1920s and 1930s that is intertwined with the eugenics movement. For example, when John the Savage questions

lower caste work for being repetitive and mind numbing, Mustapha Mond, as the World Controller, explains that these Fordian humans actually enjoy the menial labor required of them by the state. Lower castes “like it. It’s light, it’s childishly simple. No strain on the mind or the muscles. Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labour, and then the *soma* ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies” (Huxley 152), which echoes Huxley’s statement that “states function as smoothly as they do, because the greater part of the population is not very intelligent, dreads responsibility, and desires nothing better than to be told what to do” (A Note on Eugenics 284).” In depicting lower castes as content with the minimal requirements assigned to them by the ruling class, Huxley reveals his true opinions about the lower classes in the real world. Moreover, for Huxley, “provided the rulers do not interfere with [the lower classes’] material comforts and its cherished beliefs, it is perfectly happy to let itself be ruled” (A Note on Eugenics 284), which is an idea represented by the lower castes’ happiness acquired from *soma* and other after work activities. What this portrays is Huxley’s belief that lower classes are complacent when controlled by the ruling class. However, when considering that most of the population within the lower classes are people of color who are already placed into an inferior identity, Huxley’s seemingly objective claim about the lower classes as inherently complacent begins to depict the racist ideology that people of color must be ruled. As such, when realizing that the lower castes are in fact depicted as people of color in *Brave New World*, Huxley becomes an example of a white person perceiving through race-perception and is thus interpellated into racist ideology.

Fertility of Non-white People

Reading *Brave New World* alongside “A Note on Eugenics” reveals, through multiple of Huxley’s claims, that he is both biased and prejudiced in his belief in

eugenics. For instance, Huxley believes “physically and mentally defective individuals are now preserved in greater quantities than at any other period... They are also permitted to multiply their kind. There is evidence to show that they are more than ordinarily fertile” (A Note on Eugenics 281). While at first this seems to depict an inclination towards discriminatory beliefs about disabled people, it is more likely that Huxley is referring to people of color as the “defective individuals.” Within the first five pages of *Brave New World*, when Henry Ford, an Alpha, is explaining the “decanting” process to the young Alphas touring the decanting center, he makes it a point to compare the quantity differences of “bokanovskified” humans from white sperm and eggs to the sperm and eggs of people of color. In this scene, Huxley is “expound[ing] standard arguments about the ‘differential fertility’ of the professional classes *versus* the unskilled laborers and unemployed” (Woiak 118-119), who are associated with people of color in the 1920s and 1930s in the real world. In discussing decanting, Ford argues: “Singapore has often produced over sixteen thousand five hundred [“bokanovskified” humans]; and Mombasa has actually touched the seventeen thousand mark. But then they have unfair advantages. You should see the way a negro ovary responds to pituitary” (Huxley 5). The Alpha character’s statement echoes Huxley’s argument about defective people and the statement’s connection to people of color. While Huxley does not explicitly identify the defective people, based on the emphasis of higher reproductive rates in Fordian people of color it appears that his beliefs are directly tied to the racial hierarchy. What this shows is the high probability that regardless of differentiating among types of workers, Huxley cannot escape a racist position by the very fact that his focus was on eradicating the “inferior” groups, which consisted primarily of people of color in the lower classes and the Fordian lower castes.

Yet, in *Brave New World*, part of the “dystopian” aspect of the novel is the very fact that the same people produce many more humans than white people because England, Ford’s own country and the main location of the story, has never surpassed fifteen thousand people from one “bokanovskified” egg. As such, Huxley is showing his eugenic fear that “the white races will be at the mercy of the colored races” (A Note on Eugenics 282) because of the general size of the population. He also believes that “when the masses of the colored races are as well trained and highly industrialized as our own, we shall have little or nothing on our side to outweigh their numbers” (A Note on Eugenics 282). What Huxley’s statement implies is that the “bokanovskified” Fordian people, as making up the entirety of the lower castes, are only a benefit to the state when controlled both through their decanting and the hypnopaedia that follows. His fear of people of color then is established directly in *Brave New World* by the fact that lower castes as people of color are *not* well trained and industrialized but intellectually subdued and physically weakened. For Huxley, people of color will take away authority and control from white society, thus putting white people in danger. Hence, he not only believes that society will further deteriorate if the state does not step in to scientifically alter human beings, but also expresses a fear of non-white people. So, “even if [Huxley] is read as lampooning eugenics, he still reinforces the racist ideology that skin colour is connected to a supposedly natural genetic hierarchy” (Congdon 91). Such an assumption stems from the belief that people of color come from an “inferior” race and is epitomized in *Brave New World* by the structuring of social classes into “white” Alphas and Betas versus “black” Deltas, Gammas, and Epsilons. Thus, Huxley is not referring to disabled people in “A Note on Eugenics,” but to specifically people of color and the ways in which he, as a eugenics supporter, must control them.

Enforced Lower Caste Complacency

All of Fordian society is provided with “soma,” a mind-altering drug that suppresses any feelings of discomfort such as pain, sadness, fear, anxiety, etc. However, throughout the entirety of the text, higher castes are in full control of how much soma they wish to take and seem to have access to any amount of the drug whereas lower castes are not given freedom in their use. In fact, lower castes are given only a pre-determined amount of soma at the end of each work day as a reward for completing the required menial labor of pushing buttons and working on the conveyer belt lines. With their drug use strictly controlled by the state, lower castes are arguably put into a position of submission and complacency when conditioned to expect soma at the end of the day. Huxley’s “POV assumed a white hegemony peppered with savage, servile, complacent non-whites” (Rhines 96-97). By rewarding “good behavior” like the completion of a job with a substance that alters one’s mindset into one of peace, happiness, and stability, upper castes can further control the lower castes’ behavior and in doing so may ease the discomfort of Alphas and Betas when approaching a sedated and malleable lower caste member. Hence, when John the Savage asks the various lower caste members in line for their daily soma allowance, “But do you like being slaves?... Do you like being babies?... Don’t you want to be free?” (Huxley 144-145), these Fordian people cannot comprehend his questioning because not only have they been mentally conditioned through hypnopaedia (sleep conditioning) to accept a state of servitude, but they have also been given daily “treats” like one may give a dog in training in order to continue the established behavior of complacency.

Coded Messages in Brave New World

Through hypnopaedia, Alphas are conditioned to believe that they are superior to the lower castes based on the hierarchy of color, almost mirroring the effects of habituation and sedimentation required of racist social norms. The Alphas, who wear grey – a *shade* that can be said to represent whiteness – extend control over Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons who wear green, khaki, and black – all *colors* already established as belonging to the inferior portion of society. These same Alphas, through their initial conditioning or establishing of habits, later create the hypnopaedic statements used in the manipulation of the Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons. Because Alphas learn to perceive the lower castes through the repetition of hierarchical lessons and then repeat what they have learned through interactions with the world, the framework in which hypnopaedia operates seems to resemble Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception. While the conditioning of the lower castes is more explicit and intentional in *Brave New World* than in the real world, it functions in the same way as codes. Based on Stuart Hall's principles of encoding – the production of a message or system of coded meanings – and decoding – the comprehension and interpretation of the message or translation of the code – in *Culture, Media, Language*, it seems likely that Huxley, raised to believe in eugenics and living as a dominant white man in a racist world, encoded dominant racist beliefs into his text. Encoding is the giving of meaning to an event and creating it into a story for the audience to receive; encoding gives meaning to an event through a system of codes or rules that allows us to experience the event. Decoding is when a person is able to process or translate the code in order to understand the message. When we interpret an event that was communicated, we are interpreting it through various social, economic, and political lenses, which allow us to comprehend the moment in a socio-historical context.

By repeating various ideological statements and social practices within 1920s and 1930s society over an extended period of time, perception becomes modified to be taken over by dominant views. Much like the process of becoming accustomed to walking with a cane, human beings acquire the beliefs of dominant society through habit, which ultimately sediments ideology into every day thought. Huxley, then, may be expressing a race-perception from his time regardless of his attempt to critique the structure of capitalist society, which requires a social hierarchy. Because the upper castes are those who create the ideology which is taught, a parallel may be made between the structuring and organizing of social norms in white-oriented society to the underlying color-oriented framework required and perpetuated by the Fordian caste system. Moreover, when the phenomenological view of perception is extended towards the racialization that occurs in race-perception, it becomes evident that upper Fordian castes' interaction with lower castes is tied to racist beliefs. "Without exception Huxley places" those who 1920s and 1930s American society saw as people of color "among the lower castes and frequently links them to physical deformity" (Greenberg 113). Therefore, when Huxley has the Director of Hatcheries take young Alphas on a tour of the "Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre" (Huxley 1), and emphasizes that "an Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as an Epsilon heredity" (Huxley 9), he is perpetuating the habituated perspective common among the race construction of white society. In making the lower castes function much like the people of color of the early 20th century within the lower classes who operated the technology used in mass production, Huxley inadvertently imposes the dominant white gaze onto the reader.

Double Consciousness and The White Gaze in *Brave New World*

Double Consciousness in People of Color

W.E.B Du Bois, in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), discusses his experience in the United States as a person of color in the early 20th century. He argues that Black Americans have a double consciousness in which “blackness,” or significance as an “other,” arises through another person’s recognition of the Black body as different from the white person – referred to by Al-Saji as race-perception. Prior to the differentiation perceived and articulated by another, Du Bois argues that he did not identify himself as Black, describing the *given* identity as “being a problem... a shadow [sweeping] across [him]” (Du Bois 1-2). Rather, he vividly recalls the exact moment that his “otherness” came to life as a material thing. In grade school, Du Bois and all of his classmates (primarily white children) were exchanging cards indiscriminately. Yet, when he attempted to give a card to a new white student who was not yet accustomed to Du Bois and most likely only knew of people of color from her parents, she, rather than accepting or refusing his card, chose not to acknowledge him whatsoever. In her dismissal of Du Bois, the new student reduced him to an irrelevant presence within her surroundings, much like the desk in the corner of a classroom or an abandoned pen on the floor. Only in this form of refusal did Du Bois recognize himself as an essence separate from the white world; he *became* and did not innately know himself as an “other,” a being isolated from dominant society. Moreover, because he was taught of his “otherness” by someone besides his subjective self, a double consciousnesses arose for Du Bois that he described as “a peculiar sensation, [a] sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others... One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings” (Du Bois 2). From the perspective of white society, Du Bois was defined and marked by his skin color which was thought to encompass all of his

identity. But he did not give or create a Black identity to himself, rather he acknowledged his state of being as an African American.

For Du Bois, people of color in the United States exist within a fragmented identity in which, on the one hand, they are a part of the country's society as citizens, but on the other hand, they are specifically Black and are already always at a distance from white society. These identifications, having no correlation within the perspective of white society, make it impossible to be both American *and* Black. The person of color, in the United States, lives in "a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world" (Du Bois 2). As a result of losing a self-consciousness that would allow a person to possess a self-defined identity, the person of color begins to see him or herself solely through the perspective of non-acknowledgement shown by white society. In this sense, the separation between white and Black, wherein white society is the dominant, creates an inherently negative situation in which people of color are placed but do not innately exist. Therefore, for Du Bois, to be Black in the United States is to exist within an inferior, fragmented identity.

The White Gaze as a Form of Perception

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon defines the white gaze – a term which extends and defines the refusal of acknowledgment felt by Du Bois – as the articulation of how people of color are perceived when initially seen by a white person as specifically "other" or inferior. For Fanon, "in the white world, the man of color encounters difficulties in elaborating his body schema. The image of one's body is solely negating. It's an image in the third person" (Fanon 90). In other words, the double consciousness characteristic of living as a Black body in white-dominated society is to watch oneself be defined by other people while simultaneously knowing the constructed

identity is not one's own. In this way, to exist as a Black body becomes an experience in the third person.

Fanon recalls riding next to a white mother and son on a train to elucidate how the white gaze functions subtly within everyday life and how it affects his experience of himself in the third person. The son was surprised by Fanon's appearance as a Black man, most likely having never seen a person of color, and commented on it through the innocent position a child takes when inquiring about things in the world he or she has no knowledge about. When the child says "Look, a Negro! *Maman*, a Negro!" (Fanon 93), the emphasis on Fanon's appearance becomes similar to a child continuously asking "Why?" in relation to almost anything that occurs in the world. So, when he points out Fanon among his surroundings, the son is simply noticing a neutral difference between himself and the person who does not look like him; the child does not yet have a structured framework to reference when experiencing his or her reality and so looks elsewhere for an answer. However, the mother, having lived in the world, was taught a specific framework in which a racially oriented lens seems to guide her perception.

How we see the world is altered by the time and place in which we live. By experiencing the world through the dominant view of a certain period in human existence, we are always applying a historically situated, biased perspective to our reality that determines what we see as a result of what we have been taught. While racism is not inherent to all white people, the dominant ideology may and often does interpellate white society into a racist position already created through centuries of prejudice. The mother, as a white woman, is more likely to have a racial prejudice against people of color because she grew up within a naturalized set of race-related hierarchies. The mother, in telling her son to not "pay attention to [Fanon]" (Fanon 93) and turning to Fanon to

explain her child's initial response by saying "[the child] doesn't realize you're just as civilized as we are" (Fanon 93), articulates an instilled view in which Fanon, as a person of color, needs *justification* for being Black and not white. In other words, Fanon cannot just be "civilized" like white people assume themselves to be; rather, his existence in the world as a moral human being must be explained by the white gaze and is not inherently part of him.

Although the young son does not yet hold the same perspective as his mother, when she vocalizes the race-related divide that taught her, for example, something along the lines of "Black is to inferior as white is to superior," she is repeating dominant society's ideology. In this way, the mother teaches her son that the Black body correlates to a type of inferiority supposedly inherent to the person of color, thus interpellating the child into a socially racist belief system, altering his perception of Fanon. Moreover, in responding to her son with a racist assumption, the mother teaches him that people of color do not just *appear* different, but are *intrinsically* "other" to white people and white society. Therefore, in defining the person of color by his or her physical features, the white gaze constructs an identity for that person based on "blackness," which encompasses not only a person's skin color, but his or her entire state of being as an individual subject. Yet, by *giving* an identity rather than accepting a self-made identity, white society takes away the person of color's subject-existence, moving him or her into the realm of objects.

Huxley's Unconscious Reproduction of Race-Perception

A comparison can be made between people of color in 1920s and 1930s capitalist society, associated with the lower classes, and lower Fordian castes; neither views themselves as specifically non-white and only acknowledge their "otherness" when

experiencing race-perception or the white gaze. Color is associated with lower castes in *Brave New World*, and while creating stability in one sense, it creates social hierarchy and inequality in another, although more explicitly than in our own society. Depending on the caste one is placed in, hypnopaedia – the furthering of the mental imbalance created in decanting or genetic engineering – teaches that the shade or color a person wears determines whether they are superior or inferior, influencing a Fordian human’s reality and behavior. “All conditioning [then] aims at... making people [accept] their unescapable social destiny” (Huxley 10) by indoctrinating them into a world structurally organized by a framework similar to racialization. For example, like the mother who justifies Fanon’s existence as a Black man, Lenina acts within the same mind set when saying “queer that Alphas and Betas won’t make any more plants grow than those nasty little Gammas and Deltas and Epsilons” (Huxley 49). In both cases, the person of privilege, in this case a white woman and an upper caste female, is applying her perspective of people of color and lower castes onto the type of person she was taught to associate with inferiority. Moreover, the expectation that lower castes will not produce more goods than the upper castes represents the idea that people of color in the real world cannot be as “civilized” as white society. Yet, the “inferior” people in fact do accomplish the same acts as “superior” people because people of color and lower castes are not innately subordinate, but are rather only assumed to be through habituated ideology.

One may argue that the genetic engineering of lower castes does make Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons innately inferior to Alphas and Betas, however, to believe that lower castes are objectively inferior is to accept Fordian ideology that perpetuates the belief that upper castes are superior. Much like one may ask in the real world of why white people are entitled to deciding who is objectively better or worse, the same question may be

asked of upper caste members. If everyone in the Fordian society is in a position that is both necessary and of equal importance for the stability and peace of the world, then one social class cannot be inferior or superior regardless of heredity and conditioning. Moreover, because desires, wants, and thoughts both in the real world and in the Fordian world are controlled and manipulated by dominant ideology, in neither case can the defining of who is superior and who is inferior be objective. Regardless of the physical and mental engineering of lower castes as inferior, the very fact that they are already identified as subordinate to the upper castes before their birth suggests that much like in our own society where people of color are born into an inferior position, the hierarchy is created through a subjective belief created by the ruling class and indoctrinated into societal claims. Moreover, such ideology is built on unwarranted beliefs of race inequality, which is produced and perpetuated by dominant society, but not in reality a fact of life. Thus, by viewing the color of skin or color of clothing as an indicator of a person's intellect and manner, the white mother and Lenina assume superiority over the lower classes, which is not inherently there but constructed through societal ideology. By applying the "otherness" associated with people of color in the world to the caste differentiation made in Fordian society, *Brave New World* seems to depict an unconscious reproduction of dominant society's race-perception.

Fragmentation of the Lower Castes

Because *Brave New World* shows Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons as complete, albeit inferior people, it seems that Huxley has taken the double consciousness experienced by people of color and found ways to eliminate it from lower-caste existence through a eugenic fashion. Similarly to people of color, lower castes are assumed to take on characteristics associated with inferiority, however, the genetic engineering and

conditioning found in Fordian society makes that assumption into a very real existence for lower caste members. Because of the use of decanting as a form of eugenics, the upper castes not only associate the inferiority of lower castes with their birth and conditioning, but also physically and mentally alter the lower castes to literally exist as inferior. In this way, the lower castes take on an inferior identity as they cannot and do not exist in any other form. As an Alpha character explains, “[Epsilons] don’t know what it’s like being anything else. We’d mind, of course. But then we’ve been differently conditioned. Besides, we start with a different heredity” (Huxley 49). Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons are physically deformed, intellectually stunted, and conditioned to not question their position in society so that the fragmentation felt by people of color in the real world is entirely eradicated in the Fordian world. Yet, recall that the racialized person of color cannot be seen as anything other than inferior but still has a subjective identity. The difference here, then, is the genetic engineering of lower castes to fit into the assumed stereotypes associated with race-perception. Hence, while people of color are not actually inferior to white people and can develop a subjective sense of identity, lower castes in the Fordian world are genetically modified into an inferior existence so that they may not have a separate identity from the one that is given. As such, there exists no double consciousness in *Brave New World* for lower caste members, rather only a collective consciousness is allowed thereby eradicating any form of resistance to racialization seen in the real world from becoming a reality in Huxley’s text.

The dehumanizing that corresponds to all actions taken within racist perception, however, is apparent even within the “complete” image of the lower castes. For example, when lower castes are described as “noseless black brachycephalic Deltas,” or “heat-conditioned Epsilon Senegalese,” or “Gamma-Plus dwarfs” (Huxley 107), it is evident

that only through the very means of altering the lower castes to fit into the image of what upper castes define as inferiority, can upper castes perceive them as existing in an inferior form and can lower castes accept their own social position. Similarly, white society in the world cannot see people of color as anything but inferior because it has constructed an inescapable *object* identity for them, which is always one of inferiority. Thus, perception for the Alpha and the white person is intertwined with the social constructs of race – physically manifested by eugenics in *Brave New World* – in which racist ideology indoctrinates white society into believing in and perpetuating a social hierarchy based on skin color. In this way, white people cannot escape a supremacist view of the person of color and force non-white people to accept the discontinuity between their given and subjective identity through every day interaction.

Experiencing the White Gaze

George Yancy, in “White Gazes: What It Feels Like to Be an Essence,” also offers a personal experience as an example of how the white gaze operates. He goes further than Fanon, however, by explicitly connecting the constructed identity placed onto him by the white gaze to the fear felt by white society when in the presence of people of color. For Yancy, “the Black body’s moral turpitude,” or the belief that all people of color are inherently evil, “is deemed a state of affairs that whites claim to know independently of their own white racist constructions of the Black body” regardless of the fact that a person of color’s morals are directly associated with his or her skin color (Yancy 51). Yet, at the same time, “the Black body is assigned the status of that which is always already fixed,” created by and subsequently identified “through the white imaginary,” which defines the Black body for the person of color (Yancy 51). In other words, because of white society’s race-perception, white people already always assume

people of color as having negative attributes by their very association of the Black body to immoral behavior. Hence, when Fanon experiences the world as described above, “the white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting [him. He is] *fixed*. Once their microtomes are sharpened, the Whites objectively cut sections of [his] reality” (Fanon 95) so that he becomes a Black body rather than a human individual. Yancy, also existing as a person of color in white society, experiences a similar fragmentation in his subjective reality that divides his personal identity from that of his body.

While walking down a street, Yancy begins to hear the “clicking” sounds of car doors locking in anticipation of his passing them. As he walks, white people within Yancy’s surroundings react to his presence in fear of his blackness, or “otherness.” Such a fear is produced and recalled through the perpetuation of racist ideology wherein the person of color becomes a Black body. Because the white gaze “is a *structured* way of ‘seeing,’ which is mediated by certain racist norms and values” the person of color is interpellated “as that which is epistemologically and ontologically ‘given’” (Yancy 51); i.e., the person of color exists through his or her relation to white people as someone who is non-white and is thus knowable and defined as specifically Black in its negative connotation. “For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (Fanon 90), and by always existing in comparison to white society, people of color cannot escape racialization; white society systematically associates racial norms with people of color, identifying them as inherently immoral bodies. Thus, when the white people lock their cars, every click represents a negative characteristic assigned to Yancy: “*Click* (thug). *Click* (criminal). *Click* (thief). *Click* (sullied). *Click* (hypersexual). *Click* (savage)” (Yancy 48-49). Yet, simultaneously, in performing the action of locking one’s car for safety, white people enact their identity so that every click

is associated with their whiteness: “*Click* (prey). *Click* (innocent). *Click* (pure). *Click* (morally respectable). *Click* (better than). *Click* (civilized)” (Yancy 49). White people do not then have to identify themselves as inherently “white” because they already exist as “civilized” while people of color are forced into a position that identifies them as “other” or “uncivilized” by those surrounding them. In this way, the person of color is negated from human experience and placed into non-white existence. Because of this negation into uncivilized or immoral existence, white society responds within the realm of fear, justifying the need to control people of color.

The constructed separation of white and not white then leads to a fragmentation similar to the double consciousness previously discussed. For Yancy, “the *clicking* sounds begin to fragment [his] existence, cut away at [his] integrity, depicting [him] in the form of an essence, a solid type, in ways that dehumanize [him]” (Yancy 48). The moment Yancy approaches a white person as a Black man, his presence becomes a threat, arising through the very “othering” enacted by the white gaze. By fragmenting his existence as a *subject* from his skin color, race-perception objectifies Yancy, separating him from white society and ultimately removing and distancing him as an object. “The *click* [then] ensures [white people’s] safety, effectively resignifying their white bodies as in need of protection vis-à-vis the site of danger, doom, and blackness” (Yancy 48). By confirming Yancy as a “dark savage” (Yancy 48), the white people he encounters seal his identity within their own context, thus establishing an identity for him while ignoring the identity he gives himself. In other words, Yancy exists in the world as *first* Black, or “other,” without the consideration of his personal identity as a human being so that he is always defined in his relation to the objectified “blackness,” creating a fragmented identity in which his subjectivity and his existence as a Black object oppose one another.

Thus, the white defined identity, created by race-perception, makes it impossible for the person of color to separate existence as a subject from the objectified essence associated with race.

Fear of the “Other” in Fordian Society

New Mexico Savage Reservation

Within *Brave New World* there still exists a portion of civilization which was not altered by modern society and is referenced by the title of “savage reservation.” While there seem to be many of these places in the Fordian world, Huxley centers his novel around the New Mexico reservation that Bernard and Lenina travel to on vacation. First, only upper caste members may visit such places and must gain permission from Mustapha Mond in order to do so. Second, the people who go there not only find the civilization within the parameters of the reservation primitive, but are actually at times even horrified and fearful in their interactions with the non-Fordian people. Much like the negative descriptions of lower caste members, savages are referred to as “beastly savages” (Huxley 83), “black, like a mask of obsidian” (Huxley 73), and as having “dark brown bodies with white lines (‘like asphalt tennis courts’)... their faces inhuman” with paint (Huxley 72). Moreover, even when viewing the long held traditional rituals of the savages, Lenina only finds their music and singing comforting because “it reminds [her] of a lower-caste Community Sing” (Huxley 75), in which “the orgiastic behavior is clearly coded as regressive and ‘black’” (Greenberg 115). And yet, even in this one moment of calm, throughout Lenina’s stay at the reservation she is constantly yearning for her soma. She only stops when John the Savage, the only other white man on the reservation besides Bernard, appears; she relaxes at the sight of his lighter complexion even though he is technically uncivilized. Supposedly, the “uncivilized” people are

“perfectly tame; savages won’t do you any harm. They’ve got enough experience of gas bombs to know that they mustn’t play any tricks” (Huxley 71). Here, the pilot who flew Lenina and Bernard into the “savage” territory is attempting to alleviate any fear they may feel about the “savages.” However, the fear Fordian humans feel when visiting the reservation is unwarranted when one considers that, although the “savages” are associated with uncivilized behavior, they do in fact have a society and adhere to certain cultural rules. Furthermore, the supposedly “immoral” and un-Fordian behavior of “savages” has no evidence as existing within inherent characteristics since John the Savage, as a person raised on a reservation, is seen automatically as civilized because of his skin color, echoing the structure of the white gaze.

To a Fordian human, seeing the savage reservation as uncivilized occurs because of the savages’ lack of decanting and hypnopaedia; the lack of total control in societies that are non-Fordian represents dangerous freedom to the Fordian world. Yet, “savages,” who follow their own rules and regulations, are not entirely free. For example, they do follow what resembles Native American ritual and Christian belief. In one of the first experiences Lenina and Bernard have on the reservation, the “savages” are performing a sacrificial ritual in which a young man gets whipped as many times as he can handle, and what this shows to the Fordian humans is “uncivilized” behavior. But the ritual is done so that the young boy may become a man and is purely voluntary as one can see when John the Savage responds to not experiencing the ritual with “*I ought to have been there... Why wouldn’t they let me be the sacrifice?*” (Huxley 78). Moreover, the “savages,” unlike Fordian humans, have a sense of commitment and obligation to their romantic relationships. “Savage” culture abides by Christian beliefs of sexuality, requiring that man and woman must be married to have sexual intercourse and frowns upon the

promiscuity of the Fordian world. Bernard and Lenina, conditioned to believe their bodies are commodities do not understand this form of relationship, however, it is not inherently “uncivilized” behavior. The partnership between husband and wife is only “uncivilized” to Fordian people because it does not exist within Fordian ideology. Thus, because Fordian people see the “savages” as uncivilized, they believe control through violent means such as gas bombs is required. Fordian society can then be said to represent white society in the real world that extends its power over nations, cultures, and communities consisting primarily of people of color. Such real-world groups of people are controlled by white society through the enforcement of “civilized” beliefs and violent methods such as slavery, war, segregation, social hierarchy, etc. much like the savage reservation, while not worthy of being civilized to Fordian society, is still “tamed” enough for visitation. Moreover, the lower castes representing controlled people of color and the “savages” representing free people of color implies that in Fordian society, such fear of the “uncivilized” has been eradicated through genetic engineering and conditioning while in the reservation it still exists. Although both sets of people are invariably seen as inferior, where upper caste (or white) society has not extended its complete control, there exists the fear of the “other.”

Racism in The Feelies

While in our society race-perception is intertwined with the fear of the “other,” in *Brave New World*, Fordian society seems to epitomize various ways in which the portion of society that racializes may eradicate the unease, nervousness, and fear associated with coming in contact with a lower-class member as seen in Yancy’s example of “clicking.” In the one scene where a Fordian person of color is given the same amount of agency as an upper caste citizen, Huxley portrays his freedom as not only creating a severe and

threatening situation, but also one that perpetuates racist thought. When John the Savage experiences the “feelies” for the first time, the film shown consists of five characters; one female “Beta blonde,” “three handsome young Alphas,” and “a gigantic negro” (Huxley 113). While the plot of the film may be simple, it is riddled with racist stereotypes of the early 20th century, the most obvious being the Black male rapist and the white female victim, or damsel in distress. Huxley’s “race paradigm, which presents Blacks with no agency – except for a deranged sexual ravaging of a white woman in a liberal society where sex is freely and openly available” (Rhines 98), seems to represent his interpellation into dominant society. The person of color portrayed here is shown to take advantage of the female Beta through sexual assault in a society that advocates for sexual freedom and promiscuity. So why would Huxley create a scene in which a Black man rapes a white woman when sexual violence of any kind would be highly unlikely in a society that preaches the slogan “everyone belongs to everyone else”? The scenario is explained through the idea that the Black man was out of his right state of mind and needed to be sent back to a conditioning center for reconditioning. But what this depicts is that people of color must be actively controlled and “cleansed” so that they can behave properly in society. Thus, this scenario implies that Huxley is confusing his world with *Brave New World* by directly bringing in a fear from his culture and situating it in a space where it would not logically exist. Readers accept the scenario of a Black rapist because it is experientially true, and thus learned from the socio-historical habituation required of perception.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *Brave New World* represents capitalist ideology of the 1920s and 1930s wherein the Economic ISA and race-perception of the real-world has already been

indoctrinated into Huxley's existence within society. While the text seems to predict a dystopian outcome to a technologically-based society, it actually presents a world more similar to a hierarchical utopia. In *Brave New World*, Huxley's interpellation into ideology surrounding technocracy, mass production, and mass marketing, as well as his upbringing in a socio-historical context of social and racial hierarchy, show a dystopian world only on the surface of the text. Analyzing the text through an Althusserian and phenomenological lens has shown that the conception of "dystopia" falls apart when brought up against the overwhelming evidence of Huxley as a subject, not an individual, within his society.

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