Dismantling Utopia for the Reader:
John the Savage as a Central Mediator of Utopian Discourse
Proposed in *The Tempest* and Realized in *Brave New World*

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MIRANDA

O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't!
(Act V, Scene I, 183-186)

I. Introduction

The line “O Brave New World,” exclaimed by Miranda in one of the final scenes of Shakespeare’s unusual tragicomic romance The Tempest, has established itself as one of the most recognizable phrases in Shakespearean verse, largely due to its direct use by Huxley in his novel of the same title, Brave New World. While it is easy to acknowledge the clever relationship between Miranda’s innocent exclamation (followed by her father’s snide remark “’Tis new to thee”) upon seeing men for the first time to John the Savage’s similar reaction to the Fordian society, a closer examination reveals that the relationship between Huxley’s Brave New World and Shakespeare’s The Tempest is more than this superficial allusion.¹

In creating a futuristic utopian society, in many ways novel in its imagining, Huxley has paradoxically chosen to reference one of the most time-honored works of literature. This raises the question: to what extent did Huxley intend the reader to internally reference The Tempest in their reading of Brave New World? This paper will take the position that Brave New World plays explicit homage to The Tempest, especially in regard to its creation of competing utopias as proposed in The Tempest. Notably, Brave New World picks up where The Tempest left off, realizing the two proposed utopias in the play (Gonzalo’s and Miranda’s) and enacting them to a most literal and exacting end. In this regard, Brave New World serves as an ironic continuation of The Tempest.

Specific to this argument is the key role that John the Savage serves in connecting the embodiment of these two utopias for the reader. John serves as a crucial intermediary in his transition from the Reservation, which I will argue is a representation of Miranda’s utopia of “presence” (attempted

¹ Many critics have examined this complex relationship between The Tempest and Brave New World especially Claeys, Grushow, and Meckier.
meaning, ritualization, individualization), to the Fordian Society, which I will propose is a mirror to Gonzalo’s utopia of “absence” or negation. In serving as this intermediary, John the Savage plays a role in externally exposing the flaws of both utopias to the reader in particular, despite the obliviousness of the participants in both the Reservation and Fordian utopias, in a way that could never be achieved in the context of The Tempest, where these societies are first conceived. Because The Tempest lacks this character with the knowledge and means to experience both societies, only Brave New World can offer a window for the modern reader to evaluate the desirability of the explored societies. The reader “experiences” these societies through the lens of John. In this regard, John retains the role of “outsider” to these two utopias, an experience mirrored by Caliban and Miranda. In many ways, John parallels their journeys with the key exception that he possesses the knowledge to expose logical flaws to both utopian societies that both Miranda and Caliban are blind to.

In this paper, I will argue first that Brave New World is indeed an ironic continuation of The Tempest, conceivably in a literal sense, where the Savage Reservation is an exacting embodiment of Miranda’s (and Prospero’s adopted) utopia and the Fordian Society of Mond is the realization of Gonzalo’s proposed utopia. Accompanying this argument, I will define Miranda’s utopia as a utopia of “presence” as contrasted to Gonzalo’s utopia of “absence.” Miranda’s utopia (which Prospero adopts at the end of The Tempest) is a utopia based on “love”, filled with virtue and “beauteous” goodly people, seeming to emphasize the importance of each individual’s worth (“presence”). Gonzalo’s utopia, on the other hand, de-emphasizes the individual, homogenizing society and erasing hierarchies for social stability ("absence"). In this section of this paper, I will provide evidentiary support for the parallels between these intentional utopic realizations in Brave New World.

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2 Bulgar, Thomas. “The Utopic Structure of The Tempest.” Utopian Studies. Vol.5, No.1 (1994). p. 40. In this critical work, Bulgar argues the Gonzalo utopic speech creates an imagined utopia of “negation” where political structures of time (sovereignty, hierarchies) are negated and homogeneity prevails as a means of social stabilization. Here in this paper, I have defined this utopia as “absence” primarily concerned with the absence of individualization and the lack of meaning other than collective stability attributed to societal norms. This will be revisited in Section II, B, where “absence” is a particularly important concept in the Fordian Society, a realization of this Gonzalo’s utopia.

3 With an ironic twist on the clause about sexuality, though the intent of the statement is retained in the new Fordian society (sexuality is overly expressed, but still meaningless and de-individualizing as is Gonzalo’s sweeping claim for unilateral innocence).

4 Bulgar, p. 41, in the context described in Note 1.
These arguments establish the foundation for the central focus of this paper: the intermediary role of John the Savage in *Brave New World*. I will argue that John the Savage is able to expose the “falseness” of these two utopian societies to the reader in a way that was lacking in *The Tempest*. I will draw parallels between the outsider nature of Caliban the Savage and Miranda in the two proposed utopias and John the Savage in both utopias, and then demonstrate John’s ability to surpass the knowledge of both of these characters, ultimately requiring his exit from both societies. By demonstrating John’s similarity to both characters of *The Tempest* as well as the modern reader, I will propose that the existence of John as a relatable character who spans two opposing worlds is the only way readers can evaluate a utopia as false or undesirable, a capability readers could not have in *The Tempest*.

II. Defining Utopia

In order to argue that these societies (Miranda’s and Gonzalo’s) proposed in *The Tempest* and realized in *Brave New World* are indeed utopias (and different ones, at that), we must first develop a definition for utopia in general. By More’s definition5, a utopia is a political arrangement that is established to enact a positive change from a previously flawed society. However, it should be noted that a political utopia does not mean that it has to regard “politics of a particular moment or place” or even “the sum of activity of politicians,” but rather “the behavior and organization” of the members of a society in regards to their interpersonal interactions and ideals.6 In this discussion, I will constrain my argument for a utopia to the societal structures (i.e. normative culture, hierarchical arrangements) instead of discussing leadership, legitimacy, or ruling power, which could, in itself, be a whole separate argument.

As J.H. Hexter states, the Utopian Discourse “prescribes remedies from the last most disastrous infection of man’s soul designed to inhibit if not eradicate it” and in order to do so there must be a

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5 Given the relevance to the time period and that his work, *Utopia*, was the first derivation of utopianism, this definition was deemed appropriate. There appears to be no significant contention over this definition of utopia in the literary analysis texts.

6 Firchow, p. 79. See also Jameson for a discussion of the complex development of utopian ideology from More to the present as well as Kamenka, Kumar, and Plattel.
hierarchical arrangement to follow.\textsuperscript{7} In More’s \textit{Utopia}\textsuperscript{8} this arrangement emphasizes “Wisdom in the ruler, Fortitude in the soldiers, Temperance in private individuals, and Justice for all”\textsuperscript{9}, which is a direct reference to Plato’s commonwealths as outlined in Republic and the Laws - Wisdom, Fortitude, Temperance, Justice.\textsuperscript{10} This utopian structure is built on every member staying in line, working within the limitations placed upon them by the leaders of the society, which, we shall see, is common to both utopias in \textit{Brave New World} (the Reservation and Fordian society).

According to Hexter, More asserts there must exist an “elaborate complement of laws drastically limiting the scope given to individual human desires” in an attempt to “arm the government with extensive and permanent powers of coercion.”\textsuperscript{11} In this light, a utopia requires the limitation, constraint, or sacrifice of certain elements of human nature or desire in order to maintain power and a coherent societal organization with distinct culture. From More’s definition, it can be then argued that all utopias require some level of acceptance of a collective mindset (including belief in cultural norms or values espoused by the rulers) from its participants. This idea of shared beliefs that limit individual agency for the purpose of positive change in the collective will be heavily explored in the two utopias presented in \textit{The Tempest}.

While this will not be a key focus of this discussion, it is interesting to recognize that many of these practices regarding idealized elements of society have been “actually carried into practice” or even further regarded as “very practical politics,”\textsuperscript{12} making a critique of literary utopias such as those present in \textit{Brave New World} relevant social commentary for the world we live in. In this way, the role of the reader in attempting to evaluate the desirability and/or falsify the legitimacy of a literary utopia is increasingly important; in many regards, collective disgust over the Fordian Society in \textit{Brave New World} has actually

\textsuperscript{7} Hexter, p. 194
\textsuperscript{9} Chambers, 168
\textsuperscript{11} Hexter, 191. In contrast see Baker-Smith for a discussion of cultivation of desire as a mode for control in Huxley’s dystopian fiction. Also see Belsey and Horan on desire and utopia.
\textsuperscript{12} Chambers, 165. See also Fietz for Huxley’s critique of utopian and contemporary totalitarian regimes
translated into negative social pressure surrounding practices such as in vitro fertilization and “test tube”
external embryonic development in the modern world, for instance. While this paper is not concerned
with these explicit real world implications of a reader’s evaluation of a utopia presented, it does establish
the importance of determining the reader’s response. This paper argues that this formulation is through a
relatable, resistant character, who bridges the gap between a literary utopia and a utopia in which the
reader can imagine modern society really adopting.

III. Utopian embodiments from The Tempest in Brave New World

Establishing Miranda’s Utopia in The Tempest

One of the central threads of The Tempest is the development of seemingly harmonious love
between Ferdinand (a member of nobility brought to the island via the magical dictator Prospero’s
tempest), and Miranda (the naive, chaste daughter of Prospero). This affair begins upon their meeting in
Act II and continues to its denouement in Act III (with Miranda’s “do you love me?” and their subsequent
marriage). The reader experiences this love primarily through Miranda’s point of view via her excited
exclamations, which constitute her internal dialogue about Ferdinand, (“it carries a brave form! But ‘tis a
spirit”) and mild rebukes of her father when Ferdinand is stated as unworthy for Miranda (“Sir, have
pity. I’ll be his surety”// “I have no ambition to see a goodlier man”). It is through this experience of
love that Miranda (and later her father) adopt a type of utopian idealism that we will henceforth
characterize as Miranda’s utopia. I will begin here with a contextualization of Miranda and her father
Prospero and then establish this utopian idealism as a proposition for a political utopia under More’s

resistant in this context refers specifically to John’s contextualization as an “outsider” or “other” throughout the text and his attempted rejection of this role in both societies by active, resistive behavior, unlike Caliban, for instance, who passively accepts his role as outcast. It is through this resistance that the reader realizes the flaws of a utopia, i.e. the utopia is exposed as false. This identification of flaws through relatable resistance plays upon the idea often explored in dystopian literature (i.e. 1984, etc.) that a society alone could be seen as ‘normal’ until a character that diverges from the norms of that society creates the contrast necessary for a reader to realize they identify more with the character than the supposed normalcy of the society.

See Porter for a more extensive discussion on the role of desire in The Tempest.

There also exists interludes from Ferdinand declaring his love for Miranda, mostly concerning her beauty and purity, which seem to legitimize the love. However, for the purposes of this argument it is Miranda’s point of view, which the play devotes more time toward, that is most compelling in regards to the establishment of a utopia.

See The Tempest, Act I, Scene II, 412

The Tempest, Act I, Scene 2, 475-476 and 483-484
definition in the following Section C. After this classification is established, I will argue that Miranda’s utopia is continued as the Reservation in *Brave New World*, by proxy establishing the Reservation as a type of utopia\(^{19}\) as well.

### The Characterization of Miranda and Prospero in *The Tempest*

From the beginning, Miranda’s character is distinctly marked by her gentle nature, compassion ("what trouble / Was I to you!")\(^{20}\), and innocence, as described by a constant focus on her virginity, mostly via off-hand references from Prospero (for instance, the reader is told Prospero rejects Caliban based on his attempted rape of Miranda in order to preserve her purity). Miranda has been limited in her knowledge of the outside world by her father\(^ {21}\) and, as a result, is naive and accepting of her position of servitude as the “foot” to Prospero’s rule.\(^ {22}\) This naïveté is contrasted to her father’s obsessions with his books,\(^ {23}\) though, ironically, it was the obsession with these books that precluded him from paying attention to the political turmoil surrounding his position which, it could be argued, contributed to the ease of his brother’s sabotage and his ultimate ejection from society.

In that regard, both Miranda and Prospero, though considered well educated and gentile, lack a certain complexity to their character, seeming to limit them to a singular purpose (revenge for Prospero and love for Miranda). For Miranda this one dimensional characterization is seen best in her love affair and ultimate marriage to the first man she meets, Ferdinand. Upon seeing Ferdinand when he arrives from the shipwreck caused by her father, she exclaims:

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\(^{19}\) Although some readers may not see the Reservation as fitting within the traditional confines of a utopia, through Miranda’s utopian ideals and John’s entrance this society, it can be seen through the utopian lens, especially when situated as meeting More’s definition, which it does. This argument is central to a dual competing utopian society perspective on *Brave New World*.

\(^{20}\) *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene II, 151-152

\(^{21}\) MIRANDA
You have often 
Begun to tell me what I am, but stopp'd 
And left me to a bootless inquisition, 
Concluding 'Stay: not yet.' (Act I, Scene II, 33-36)

\(^{22}\) *The Tempest* Act I, Scene II, 470

\(^{23}\) PROSPERO (Act I, Scene II, 166-68)
Calling Ferdinand “divine” and later a “spirit” may seem inconsequential in today’s society, but in the times of *The Tempest* reinforced a sense of virtue and Christian doctrine that comes to be associated deeply with Miranda throughout the play as well as a disturbing hint of idolatry. Miranda’s awestruck view of Ferdinand, combined with her continued defense of his goodness to her father, reflects a thoroughly virtuous love, at least from Miranda’s perspective. Around this love, Miranda creates a worldview that emphasizes goodness, virtue, and piety, which is evidenced by her increased use of explanatory and sweeping normative speeches.

Miranda’s worldview, however, is not translated into a proposed political utopia in *The Tempest* until the sanctification of her marriage with Ferdinand and Prospero’s later act of formalized forgiveness. Miranda’s marriage to Ferdinand is heavily ritualized in the play, as emphasized by the unique appearance of unearthly spirits, Juno, Ceres, and Iris, creating a sense of cosmic meaning with their blessing. It is when Ferdinand translates his love into the beginnings of a society outside of the relationship between husband and wife that the seed for utopianism is planted.

**FERDINAND**

Let me live here ever;  
So rare a wonder’d father and a wife  
Makes this place Paradise.  
(Act IV, Scene I, 122-124)

These utopian beginnings are consummated by Prospero’s abrupt decision to forgive those he originally sought revenge on via his tempest, including those that conspired to murder him. This represents a central shift in the work from tragedy to comedy. At the play’s conclusion, after suspense builds around of all parties meeting on the island, this act of forgiveness is almost anti-cathartic by its

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24 Interestingly as I will later discuss indirectly, Shakespeare may have used this hyper-ritualized play at virtuous love as an ironic fold to the Elizabethan preoccupation with ritualized marriages, purity, and virtue, revealing a fundamental emptiness, through Miranda’s naivety.

25 **MIRANDA**  
There’s nothing ill can dwell in such a temple.  
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,  
Good things will strive to dwell with ’t.  
(Act I, Scene II, 458–460)
lack of turmoil. I would argue this anti-catharsis is intentional; Prospero lays aside his earlier bitterness and disillusionment with society (for instance, his “tis new to thee” reaction) in favor of a “brave new world” where love dominants over explicit hierarchies and knowledge is no longer a necessary means for legitimization. In a way, he, too, adopts Miranda’s state of blind bliss, which seems to be a necessary condition to this type of love centric utopianism. He formalizes this commitment to his new proposed society by laying aside his wand and books, a symbolic gesture away from power hierarchies and knowledge, toward this higher designation of virtue, ritual, and love.

A Utopia of Presence

To make our utopian abstractions above more concrete, I posit this new society created by Miranda and Prospero is utopian by More’s definition. It contains elements (i.e. an emphasis on love, virtue, and forgiveness) that are incorporated to better the human condition from a previous societal arrangement. While this could not have been evidenced by the individual relationship of Miranda and Ferdinand alone, with Prospero’s acceptance of such a societal arrangement over his previous rule based on revenge, a utopia for positive change is established. Under More’s definition, his utopia meets the Platonic criteria, emphasizing justice through mercy and forgiveness, as demonstrated by Prospero’s pardon of Caliban, a savage servant that betrayed him.

In this utopia, there is also a clear focus on the individual, with Miranda and Ferdinand’s intimate bond serving as a foundation for a new societal rearrangement. For this utopia to exist, love, sanctity and virtue must be present in each individual and each individual must participate in the creation of intimate communities based on these principles for the stabilization of the society. In this regard, I have defined this utopia as a utopia of “presence.” We see the legitimization of the individual by its community in Prospero’s ending request of the audience to “Let your indulgence set me free.”26 Here, the audience must enact the utopian principles of love and forgiveness to validate the worth that Prospero has in the society

26 The Tempest, Epilogue, 20
by setting him free. In essence, each community member must continually validate the others through inclusive love, forgiveness and virtue in this utopian configuration.

However, while this early utopia appears successful, especially in light of the uplifting ending to *The Tempest*, in further examining its foundations, even within *The Tempest* itself, there exist inconsistencies that, upon the Miranda’s utopia realization in *Brave New World*, become apparent (especially when contextualized by John the Savage). In the following section, I will outline how Miranda’s utopia mirrors the Indian reservation and then reserve critical commentary until the introduction of John as an intermediary in Section IV.

**Miranda’s Utopia as the Reservation**

From the initial introduction to the Savage Reservation in *Brave New World*, it is clear that the utopia of the Reservation continues the ideals of Miranda’s utopia savoring intimate bonds through monogamous relationships and immediate families while also emphasizing the need for sacrifice and purification in the name of “goodness” or virtue.

“What a wonderfully intimate relationship,” he said, deliberately outrageous. “And what an intensity of feeling it must generate! I often think one may have missed something in not having had a mother . . . *(Brave New World, 74)*

Unlike the Fordian society which will be introduced later, the Savage Reservation still valorizes a family structure, where individual bonds are necessary and emphasized, similar to the familial relation of Miranda and Prospero and the virtuous love of Ferdinand and Miranda (which are the bedrock of this society). Bernard, a member of the competing utopia, the Fordian society, in the above quote, emphasizes the connections motherhood generates, the “intimate relationship” and “intensity of feeling” to Lenina - who turns in disgust at the ‘indecent’ thought of breast-feeding. The Reservation exactly enacts each of
the emphasized structures in Miranda’s utopia: ritual, sanctification, purity and intimate communities that allow some degrees of freedom to the individual.\footnote{Interestingly these degrees of freedom are mostly allowed, as shown with Prospero’s ending speech, because they are necessary to create the love or forgiveness which necessitates choice. Though I will later argue in Section III that this love and forgiveness is illusory, it is interesting how the continued use of the word “free” in both the Reservation and \textit{The Tempest} around this utopia is originally so compelling to the modern reader, to the point that the flaws indicated with this type of utopia in \textit{The Tempest} are easily overlooked (especially when the end is so happy).}

The ritualized marriage vows and blessings in \textit{The Tempest} give way to a hyper-ritualization that is built upon sacrifice in the Reservation of \textit{Brave New World}. The reader is cast into a scene of an older man being whipped in the center of a ritualistic ceremony\footnote{\textit{Brave New World}, 77} meant to please gods and “to make the rain come and the corn grow.”\footnote{\textit{Brave New World}, 78} In a sense, this scene is the ultimate realization of Prospero’s last speech, evoking the audience to participate in setting him free. Like sanctification of Miranda’s marriage, these rituals have little intrinsic meaning, but are based solely on the necessity to fill the gap between individual relationship and community bonds with some type of significance and shared value, even if this collective meaning is unjustified or empty. Religion, superstition, or magical systems are necessary to keep both the Reservation and Miranda’s utopia viable because, without these systems, the bridge from individual intimacy to community could not be sustained stably.

Ironically, it is this scene that gives way to our first introduction to John, a character whom the reader will ultimately rely on to prove the falsity of a utopia. In this first introduction however he willingly participates with the old man in order to portray his manhood and belonging to the society, making \textit{Brave New World} a real and relatable society for the reader.

Importantly, the modern reader cannot test the utopian ideas of \textit{The Tempest} beyond their applause of Prospero, because Miranda’s utopia is only just beginning; but, they can identify with the experience of a fully embodied society - the Reservation, with John as their guide. A discussion of this experience, highlighting the flaws of Miranda’s utopia will continue in Section IV.
Part Two: Gonzalo’s Utopia

Establishing Gonzalo’s Utopia in *The Tempest*

A second, perhaps simpler utopian proposal comes from Gonzalo, a member of the shipwrecked nobility brought to the island by Prospero’s vengeful tempest. Gonzalo's characterization in the play is not crucial in establishing his proposed utopia, unlike the contextualization needed for Miranda’s utopia. In a speculative conversation to his other shipwrecked fellows, Gonzalo makes the following direct proposal for his ideal society:

**GONZALO**

I’ th’ commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things. For no traffic
Would I admit. No name of magistrate.
Letters should not be known. Riches, poverty,
And use of service – none. Contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard – none.
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil.
No occupation. All men idle, all.
And women too, but innocent and pure.
No sovereignty

(Act II, Scene I, 145-149)

Gonzalo’s utopianism is clear to see; he creates a society “by contraries” negating social status and hierarchies (“contracts, succession…. none”), economic classes, ruling legitimacy, occupation, and individuality (“all men idle, all”). Gonzalo believes positive change will come about in society by the complete equality of all people, representing a type of Platonic Justice. His negation of all power and skewed resource distribution is radical, especially situated in Shakespeare’s times. But this equalization comes at a cost, most particularly, the sacrifice of individuality. In this regard, I have defined Gonzalo’s proposed utopia as one of absent individuality; Gonzalo’s proposal homogenizes the population for the collective good of social stability. Education is no longer necessary, nor are directed careers for those that realize they have an occupation. In fact, nothing is necessary to Gonzalo other than normalization. But as we shall see when this society is embodied in *Brave New World*, each member must give into the collective thought and follow societal norms in order for this homogeneity to be lasting.

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Refer to Sieden regarding further utopian themes overtly discussed within *The Tempest*
As Gonzalo continues, after being interrupted, he goes further to say that “But nature should bring forth / Of its own kind of all foison, all abundance, / To feed my innocent people”\(^{31}\) to emphasize that nature, or at least something, would do all the handy work. All provisions would be arranged outside the level of a member’s consciousness. There would be no need to know why or how. Interestingly, in his utopian speech, Gonzalo chooses to emphasize “innocence and purity,” especially of women. The negation of everything to Gonzalo, I argue, means true purity and innocence because there is literally nothing that would be able to taint the minds of those in his utopia (in other words, this purity is defined by blissful ignorance).

**Exploring a Utopia of “Absence”**

In Gonzalo’s utopia, in light of absence of power, knowledge, and economic involvement of individuals, the crucial dividing factors of society are eliminating differences, leveling society to favor uniformity. This utopia can then be viewed as opposite and competing with Miranda’s utopia. As described in Bulger’s article, the utopia of “absence” defines “human happiness by negation” yet this cannot truly work because it “overlooks the selfish and vicious proclivities of human nature”\(^{32}\) which is specifically shown in *The Tempest* by Antonio and Sebastian as they interrupt to show their disagreements to Gonzalo’s utopian society.\(^{33}\) Through the initial reactions of those around him, the reader’s attention is directed to what Gonzalo really favors, an idealized communism (i.e. Antonio stating “The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning”\(^{34}\)) that emphasizes molding consciousness of individuals to eliminate awareness.

In analyzing this utopia in the context of *The Tempest*, I disagree with Bulger’s assessment that this utopia can be dismissed on the basis of Antonio’s snide remarks. Gonzalo’s utopia has yet to be

\(^{31}\) *The Tempest*, Act II, Scene I, 151-156  
\(^{32}\) Bulger, 40  
\(^{33}\) ANTONIO: The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning (Act II, Scene I, 158-159)  
SEBASTIAN: No marrying ’mong his subjects? (Act II, Scene I, 166)  
ANTONIO: None, man; all idle: whores and knaves. (Act, II, Scene I, 167)  
ANTONIO: Twas you we laughed at. (Act, II, Scene I, 176)  
\(^{34}\) *The Tempest*, Act II, Scene I, 158-159
explored, just as Miranda’s utopia is only in its infancy in *The Tempest*, and the reader at the end of this dialogue is caught between the daydreaming optimism of Gonzalo and the unproductive pessimism of his counterparts. It is not until *Brave New World* that this opinion about a utopia’s undesirability can be formulated by the reader and, even then, the reader’s objection to the Fordian society, turns out to not be Antonio’s claim at all, but rather a more basic horror at the lack of individual freedom.

**Gonzalo’s Utopia as the Fordian Society**

The explicit realization of Gonzalo’s Utopia takes form through the social engineering, negation of knowledge, and overall lack of individualism that is portrayed in the Fordian Society. Starting with a truly science fiction process of genetic engineering, the Society of Ford is structured in a way to create intentional social uniformity exactly as Gonzalo imagines. Their birthing process, decanting, limits any intimate familial bonds (as contrasted to both Miranda’s utopia and the Reservation) - therefore it allows for them to manipulate each member to fit their constraints, especially in regard to awareness. This process of social engineering creates a hierarchy differentiated by consciousness. Only the Alpha and Betas seem to have any realization of their role or involvement in society in general, since the other groups have been intentionally stripped of their basic agency or awareness (by literal poisoning via ethanol injections).

Each person is given a place in society, a social hierarchy that is predestined, eliminating their personal choice. This negation of choice is meant to create social stability; the process of deciding could lead them down the path of individual differentiation. The engineering allows a “leveled” society - although some are innately created to be stronger or more able than others, they are not emotionally distraught by these distinctions because of their conditioning. In this regard, Gonzalo’s utopia is realized: a stunning example of complete social homogeneity.

To further strengthen these parallels, Gonzalo emphasized an absence of education or literature.

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35 If interested, one can refer to Smethurst for further discussion on the scientific elements within the Fordian Society.
These elements are also eliminated in the Society of Ford; in fact, they are feared\textsuperscript{36}; with this choice of stability and essential uniformity of individualized knowledge, they are able to achieve “happiness”. As Mond states, “Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can’t” (155); the controllers, as did Gonzalo, chose that negation was the way of achieving perfection. And furthermore Mond goes further to say that “Anything for a quiet life... It hasn’t been very good for truth, of course. But it’s been very good for happiness.” (155) Using the principles of \textit{Rousseau’s Social Contract}\textsuperscript{37} Shklar states “the people, as Rousseau never forgot, are not very intelligent. It may know its own interests, but it needs help to defend them effectively. Without a legislator to guide them, they will never acquire the character or become aware of themselves as people.”\textsuperscript{38} With the lack of awareness of societies outside of the Fordian Society, the members are able to practice the blissful ignorance at the cost of awareness.

The only exception to Fordian Society as an embodiment of Gonzalo’s utopia is his clause for innocence and purity of the women, but I will argue this, upon further inspection, isn’t really an exception at all. In the Fordian society, sexual exploration is encouraged from a young age in the Beta and Alphas (the only groups that possess a basal level of awareness) as a way of stabilizing the emotional landscape of each individual, ever shortening the time between desire and gratification. This hyper-sexuality, it can be argued, is actually the same innocence as the purity that Gonzalo was most likely referencing. In both there is a lack of consciousness, a buy in to the collective mindset. There is no intentionality behind any sexual expression in \textit{Brave New World} other than its adherence to a social norm. In this way, it is truly innocent.

In the following section, both of these utopias will be explored in the context of John as an intermediary for the reader to assess the desirability of each of these proposed Utopias. I will argue that John serves as a relatable character through his resistance to the supposed normalcy of each utopia embodied in \textit{Brave New World} (from their origination in \textit{The Tempest}). Through this resistance, as well

\textsuperscript{36} “Mental excess could produce, for its own purposes, the voluntary blindness and deafness of deliberate solitude, the artificial impotence of asceticism” (\textit{Brave New World}, 46)


\textsuperscript{38} Shklar, 170
as the knowledge and similarity to the reader that John possesses, John realizes his incompatibility with both utopian societies, in a way that Miranda and Caliban in The Tempest could never have achieved because of the limitations on their knowledge, and the reader, through John and his ‘otherness’ (which is also the reader’s ‘otherness’), is able to recognize the flaws of both utopias and identify them as false, undesirable, or disturbing, even though the society members themselves can never make this designation. At the conclusion of this argument, I will posit that John’s suicide was an intentional mechanism for Huxley to shock the reader into this realization, even though this action may have went against John’s characterization, because John serves solely in Brave New World as a proxy for the reader and not as a standalone character.

IV. John the Savage: A Critical Intermediary for the Reader

Part One: John in the Reservation

John in the Utopia of “Presence”: The Reservation

The reader’s introduction to John comes immediately following the sacrificial whipping ritual in the Savage Reservation. The Savage Reservation is John’s birthplace and the only “home” he has ever known. However, John is an outsider in the Reservation based upon his physical appearance and his mother’s past life (a former member of the Fordian Society). His physical appearance is much paler, and because of this difference he is outcast; yet the irony is that in a society based on faith and self-sacrifice it is contradicted by their racial prejudice against John. The society mimics Indian tradition with their ritualistic dancing and whipping, “For the sake of the pueblo - to make the rain come and the corn grow. And to please Pookong and Jesus.” (78) Yet, no matter how hard John tries to be a part of the tradition - his willingness to “bear the pain without crying out” (78) - a mark of his strength and fight to be a part of something meaningful; he ultimately fails.

39 This otherness is actually, interesting, the reader also being ‘othered’ or outcast because the reader is so fundamentally similar to John, so it is through this process of othering that the reader is able to make their evaluation of the utopia.

40 “But they wouldn’t let me. They disliked me for my complexion. It’s always been like that. Always” (Brave New World, 78)
The Reservation shuns him in large part because his mother’s sexual desires defy the norms of the society. He does not find solace in his own kin because his birth mother, Linda, feels ashamed\textsuperscript{41} for having had him. The inhabitants of the Reservation value a meaningful intimate connections and monogamous marriage whereas Linda’s desires are to follow her conditioning where “everybody belongs to everyone else”. John fights for his “presence” in a utopian society that would rather he be invisible, and thus he desires to find answers. Because John is designated as an ‘other,’ unlike the other inhabitants, the seed for John’s discontent is created and the door for his quest for knowledge is opened, a capability unique to him compared to the other members of the society, which have no reason to question its utopianism.

Without a sense of belonging, John searches for meaning in the society’s ritualization. The Reservation’s ability to make John an outsider pushes against their love and “meaning” driven nature. He is unable to experience the love that is a hallmark of Miranda’s utopia and the Reservation utopia because every connection he attempts to make fails. He is stripped of his childhood because he has a mother who is incapable of nurturing him because of her inability to face reality, instead resorting to alcoholic binges\textsuperscript{42} or investing her time with her sexual partners. He is stripped of the only girl he ever truly loved\textsuperscript{43}, when she is married off to someone more suitable to the traditions experiencing heartbreak alone while his mother mocks his pain\textsuperscript{44}. He is stripped of friendships because he is exiled from the spiritual journeys and traditions other young men take at his age. He suffers the pain of being different, alone, and thus he is given the opportunity to place all his time into the works of Shakespeare when he is taught to read by his mother. Shakespeare speaks to his suffering, giving John a sense of hope that his pain is not for naught.

In this context, it is important to note that John’s designation as an ‘outsider’ in a utopia that demands intimate bonds precludes him from the foundational ideals of that utopia including love,

\textsuperscript{41} “And I was so ashamed. Just think of it: me, a Beta - having a baby: put yourself in my place.” (Brave New World, 80)

\textsuperscript{42} “What I had to suffer - and not a gramme of soma to be had. Only a drink of mescal every now and then, when Pope used to bring it. . . But it makes you feel so bad afterwards. . .Besides it always made that awful feeling of being ashamed so much worse the next day.” (80)

\textsuperscript{43} “In silence and from a long way off, but violently, desperately, hopelessly, he had loved Kiakime. And now it was finished. He was sixteen.” (Brave New World, 91). This is a pointed contrast to the connection between Miranda and Ferdinand.

\textsuperscript{44} “...all I can say is that it does seem a lot of fuss to make about so little. . .” (Brave New World, 91)
forgiveness and tolerance. Because he is unable to be accepted into either familial or intimate individual relationships, he is also excluded from a greater community structure that ties together these individual relationships, despite his participation in the rituals. Ironically it is because of this “otherness” that John is able to see past collectivist mindset and assess the legitimacy of the utopia’s basis on love. This idea will be explored in the following sections.

**John as an Outsider**

“Yes, that’s just it.” The young man nodded. “If one’s different, one’s bound to be lonely”

Because this society normally emphasizes inclusivity and individual sacrifice for the greater good of the community, the Reservation’s shunning of John is actually deeply at odds with the fundamental principles of the utopia. This internal contradiction, which could only be exposed to the reader through a relatable outsider like John, begins the process of falsifying this utopia for the reader.

John’s inability to be loved, forgiven for his differences, or in any way included in the Reservation society is because of his inability to create individual bonds, beginning with his mother, which unravels the whole chain of intimacy, leading from the individual, to the community, to love. The facade of the love, meaning, sanctity, and virtue being *intrinsic* to the society and its people is proven false. In reality, it is the society structure that dictates these principles be present and, without the same family structure, John is left without the community’s love.

In a way, the reader was initially exposed to these same flaws in *The Tempest*. In the play, the reader is lead to believe in the purity and virtue of Miranda’s love, which is essential in establishing the legitimacy of her marriage to Ferdinand. However, Miranda’s naiveté calls the true nature of this love into question. When, upon meeting new men from the shipwreck, she exclaims the classic quote:

**MIRANDA**

O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,

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45 *Brave New World*, 92
That has such people in't!
(Act V, Scene I, 183-186)

It is ironic that this quote mirrors her original declarations of love to Ferdinand, cheapening the value of her designation of Ferdinand as “goodly” when she can just as easily do the same for other men. In this light, Prospero’s “‘tis to thee” response becomes all the more relevant. It raises the question for the audience: is Ferdinand simply interchangeable with these other men who have now captivated Miranda’s attention? If so, how valuable are Miranda’s original declarations that she would never find a more pure or virtuous man than Ferdinand? Furthermore, Prospero had essentially bartered Miranda’s virginity as a political ploy to regain power, when Miranda is characterized as unique and important largely because of her chastity. If Ferdinand is true expendable and Miranda’s virginity is a commodity of exchange, the facade of individuality and meaning of bedrock intimate relationships in Miranda’s utopia and, by proxy, the Reservation is suddenly called into question. But in the context of the The Tempest these revelations are instantly obscured by Prospero’s sweeping declaration that changes the play, whereas John’s “otherness” is persistent.

In the same way that Miranda’s marriage and Prospero’s emotional final speech seem beautiful and compelling, the magic religious teachings and ceremonies in the Reservation seem at first to be truthful and genuine. However, when rocked by the introduction of an outsider, notably Linda from the Fordian society, the first principles of this utopian idealism unravel for the reader through John’s experiences. Because Linda cannot fit into the utopia, neither can John because they are bonded by “love”, and this structural relationship compromises John’s ability to access the founding principles of the utopia. In any attempt at utopia, structure always dominates over the consistency of the founding principles, outside of stability. We see this when John experiences a reversal of the Reservation’s principles of love and virtue because his ties to the system are not intact.

Interestingly, John is similar to Caliban who is rejected from Miranda’s utopia. He desires the intimate bonds with others, just as Caliban (in a perverse mirror to John’s situation) desired Miranda. However, their savageness and “othering” as exemplified by Caliban’s designation as a “monster” and
association with his mother’s regime. Likewise, John’s exclusion because of his difference in skin tone and association with his mother’s actions makes them incompatible with a society based on structural stability via intimate “legitimized” bonds. Caliban could never be Miranda’s political or social equal, so he wasn’t worthy of her virginity (though later Prospero dispenses of Miranda’s virginity easily for his own political gain). Similarly, John will never be worthy of his community’s rituals because he is associated with his mother who is deemed an affront to society. The difference between Caliban and John, however, is that John is able to resist the Reservation society through knowledge whereas Caliban is not able to access an additional vehicle of social mobility.

In both these utopias, there is more operating than simply a commitment to love and forgiveness. Importantly, the Reservation never fails as a utopia for its actual inhabitants just as Miranda is blissfully unaware of any flaws in her utopia- but, it fails for John. This is an important distinction because John’s trajectory is meant to expose the reader to flaws in utopian idealism and discourse but not meant (or likely even capable of) destabilizing the utopia itself, which is remarkably robust. These utopias are in themselves very stable, especially the Fordian society which will be presented shortly. The reader, through John, is not meant to question the stability of the utopia but rather its commitment to its founding principles and its desirability for adoption in modern day. In this regard, John provides a touchstone for the reader.

**Resisting the Utopia of “Presence”**

With no real companionship, John instead devotes his time to knowing. With all the questions regarding his purpose and the reasoning behind his “otherness,” when given the works of Shakespeare, he essentially devotes all of his time to reading. John describes this occasion with his mother Linda as follows, “Soon he could read all the words quite well. Even the longest. But what did they mean. He asked Linda; but even when she could answer it didn’t seem to make it very clear. And generally she couldn’t answer at all.” (87) By teaching John reading Linda gives him the capacity to finally understand his suffering. With the language of Shakespeare, John develops a way to “pay attention to things” and to
“give definition” to his memories by “translating experiences into symbols” thus converting them into “craving or abhorrence of hatred of love” and further into “principles of feeling and conduct”\(^\text{46}\). But, in the same realm, language also gives him an understanding of rage; it allows him to have a voice for all of the pain the Reservation has caused him.

The strange words rolled through his mind; rumbled like talking thunder; like drums at the summer dances, if drums could have spoken; like the men singing the Corn Song, beautiful, beautiful, so that you cried; like old Mitsima saying magic over his feathers... but better than Mitsima’s magic, because it meant more, it talked to him; talked wonderfully and only half-understably, and terrible beautiful magic, about Linda…(88)

As emphasized *Brave New World Revisited*, “Language has made possible man’s progress from animality to civilization. But language has also inspired the sustained folly and that systematic, that genuinely diabolic wickedness which are no less characteristic of human behavior than the language-inspired virtues of systematic forethought and sustained angelic benevolence” (130). The cultivation of language gives him a chance to release the stored pain within him, and through this release brings the knowledge that he is not alone. Others have suffered before him, and others will suffer after his death, just not in the Reservation where individual consciousness, despite a focus on individual relationships, is sorely limited.

The important concept of this knowledge about community that John acquires through Shakespeare, however, is that John is now part of a community with the reader and their society, not with this utopia, where John remains at odds. As we will later explore, John searches to find this community that he finds in Shakespeare’s works throughout his journey in *Brave New World*, but he cannot, forcing him to exit both those societies, indirectly in favor for the reader’s (as he leaves the literary world).

For the first time, John is able to overcome his suffering; he is able to find strength and meaning in Shakespeare’s words. But, because he has these tools of understanding meaning, he no longer desires to participate in the sacrifices of his community; he no longer is mystified by the magic of Mitsima, and has essentially completed the process of falsifying this utopia, making it undesirable to continue in because of its internal inconsistencies. Still, he is mystified by this knowledge; he craves to give voice to

\(^{46}\) *Brave New World Revisited*, 130
his feelings and to deeply understand his suffering through other’s experiences (within Shakespeare’s plays). It seems then that despite his being located in the “Savage Reservation” that he is no savage at all but rather “a cultivated man” 47

Exiting the Reservation and Miranda’s Utopia

Now that John is equipped by Shakespeare, he soon realized that the rituals of the Reservation - much like the instant love Miranda shows Ferdinand - are empty. A society based upon rituals with no search for truth is a community blindly searching for purpose. Ironically if this is Miranda’s utopia actualized, the search for connection is lost if there is no understanding as to why there needs to be strong familial love or community bond. It is ironic even that the only model of “familial love” the Reservation gives to John is Oedipal in the sense that there is the constant “jealousies, resentment, and aggression” as John is forced to “battle for possession of Linda” with his father-substitute Pope.48

John ultimately shows the flaws in utopian ideals of The Reservation because without knowledge there is no true meaning. Miranda did not understand why she loved Ferdinand, but rather he was simply the first man she encountered. She never searched for the meaning in the entire encounter, and this ignorance allowed her to live a life of bliss within the limited world of the play. With knowledge of options, comes the ability to choose. Equipped with the language of Shakespeare and the limited knowledge Linda has given him, John is aware that there are societies outside of the Reservation. The possibility that this society could accept him and encourage his quest for knowledge and meaning, perpetuates his choice to leave and attempt to find a real utopia in the Fordian Society. In the end, John decides to escape his past and enter the Fordian society ironically using Miranda’s voice to emphasize his

47 “In fact, the Savage is no savage at all. Through his extraordinary familiarity with the works of Shakespeare, which he has virtually internalized, the Savage has become a cultivated man” (Firchow, 90). This is placed in comparison with Caliban learning language only to use it to curse his master. (Act I, Scene 2, 363-365)
48 Miller, 23
excitement to explore this new society, “O brave new world that has such people in it.”

**Part Two: John in the Fordian Society**

**John in the Society of “Absence”: The Fordian Society**

Although John initially wants to be a part of a society more mindful and aware than the Reservation, what he does not understand is that with awareness comes limitations. It is fitting then that he used Miranda’s speech to prompt his entrance into the society, because it accurately mirrors the level of naiveté present in both cases. In the Society of Ford (as with Gonzalo’s utopian ideals) sacrifice is made in terms of knowledge and awareness to make the society more efficient in terms of social stability. However, both are never truly aware because they lack the capacity to understand why they are living within that society. The members lack the capacity to question their existence within the societal structure.

John resists these utopian ideals because he has the capacity for mindfulness; he does question his existence and the purpose of these societies. He cannot naively follow like Miranda; he desires to revolt. He cannot accept nothingness like Gonzalo; he wants more. As previously emphasized, John uses Shakespeare as a voice for both his pain and his desires. This cultivation of language is a tool that places him above those in the Society of Ford, because he is aware of emotions, he is aware of feeling. While each member blindly stumbles to feelies and take soma to continue life in an ignorant stupor, he embraces his emotions and quest for meaning. He desires freedom from the constraints placed upon him. But, this education for freedom places him as an “other” once more, because all of the Fordian castes believe that they are free because they haven’t been told otherwise.

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49 *Brave New World*, 94
50 "A society in which moral choices ceased to be made would be a society permeated by sluggishness and indolence, and possessed of a vegetable quality; it would be return to an Edenic state, and as such would be no mere return, but a regression." ("The Anti-Utopia of the Twentieth Century", Kateb, 164)
51 “An education for freedom (and for the love and intelligence which are at once conditions and the results of freedom) must be, among other things, an education in the proper uses of language” (*Brave New World Revisited*, 131)
John’s Dissonance and his Upbringing

John’s dissonance with his new utopia is revealed as soon as he enters the confines of the Fordian society, so, in this regard, his incompatibility with the Fordian society is even more quickly realized than his alienation on the Reservation. With the knowledge he already has of the society through Linda’s stories, he assimilates easily, but it is how he interacts with the society’s techniques of control that set him apart; he does not desire to take part in soma trips or go to “feelies”. He is above the level of consciousness needed to accept these stabilizing mechanisms without question. When he sees all of the castes walk by in their specific uniforms he repeats Miranda’s speech once more, but this time with malice. He is aware of the horrible notion of clone-like uniformity - the society is striped of free thought and individualism, which John has come to value in his ‘otherness’. Importantly, however, only the reader and John can experience this horror because only John can exist in both utopias and experience their extremes. John has more knowledge through his past experiences and learning from Shakespeare. Education is thought to pass over into “conditioning” and thereby become something altogether different.

As someone out of uniform and caste, John is seen as “savage.” The entirety of the Fordian Society even call his home the “Savage Reservation” thus deeming him John the Savage for the remainder of the novel. Again, one can draw the parallel to Caliban through John, except that now John mirrors Caliban when he attempts to claim Stephano as his new leader. John has turned from a horrible situation where he was ousted, just as Caliban was under Prospero’s rule, to a new situation which he initially greets with optimism. However, Caliban realizes his lack of education makes him a “fool” in attempting to overthrow Prospero whereas John, equipped with his Shakespeare, is ironically buffered from realizing his incompatibility with this society at first. When John begins to resist the Fordian culture, however, he does so with conviction in a way in which the reader finds as legitimate and relatable (i.e. his

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52 McQuail further discusses the idea of alienation within *Brave New World* through the lens of theorists such as Marx and Freud.
53 *Brave New World*, 107
54 Kateb, *Utopia*, 142
55 *The Tempest*, Act II, Scene II, 29
anger over soma, his rejection of Lenina, et cetera), whereas Caliban ultimately gives in upon his failed resistance, declaring his folly upon Prospero’s forgiveness, which seems false and weak to the reader. John can overcome this utopia for the reader, then, in a way Caliban cannot. Where Caliban may have fit in well with an instant gratification culture, John desires justification, the true sense of Platonic Wisdom and Justice, from this supposed utopia, which alludes him as he also falsifies this utopia for the reader.

John’s otherness is most noticeable during his sexual interactions with Lenina, the most pointed example of how John exposes the undesirability of this utopia for the reader. Intimacy is a source of trauma for him, and thus he is unable to pass within a society predominantly based on sexual freedoms. His past forces him to shun the concepts of polygamous relationships, because of his mother. He fights for meaningful intimacy and worthiness, in a way divergent from the ritualized but ultimately false bonds of the Reservation - another concept that is lost in translation.

Even his cultivation of language separates him, as knowledge and literature are both banned. The major concept of John’s dissonance is his inability to be molded to, and his resistance against, conditioning. He is the rebel and thus he exposes the reader to flaws of the Fordian utopia by showing that mindfulness, the ability to be aware, gives way to the realization that this society is not actually stable unless every person is fully controlled. Without John, it can be argued that the Fordian society could be seen as normal, in the way that all literary societies can be viewed as normal when the reader suspends logic for envelopment in a literary world. With John, however, the reader relates immediately to his struggles because of shared perception, knowledge, and values, and John’s ‘otherness’ from each society becomes the reader’s own. John’s unique awareness in the Fordian society places him outside of the structure of the utopia, thus, again, unable to access its founding principles of equality because of this inability to fit the political structure. This is mirrored in his inability to make bonds in the Reservation which prevents him from accessing love.

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56 “There would seem to be no limits on the ability to make people what you want them to be. Not merely is it frightening that people could be made into lesser beings, easy to manipulate and govern; the very fact that people could be said to be made into something - actually, made into almost anything at all, good or bad - is frightening by itself” (Kateh, Utopia, 143)
John’s Incompatibility with the Fordian Society

From the initial meeting, John’s interactions with Lenina emphasize his true desire to create an intimate connection with her. In the Society of Ford he was able to fit in based on his physical appearance but interestingly because of his otherness (the understanding that he was “new” to the society), more women desired him. Since he was desired by many, and seen as a commodity, Lenina takes an interest in John. However, the interest does not have the same meaning. Lenina craves John as she would crave a soma-induced vacation. She is expected to desire him only sexually through the societal conditioning that “everybody belongs to everyone else”- she does not want to settle down with him. In contrast, John would like to be worthy of her love; he attempts to show his love through bringing her gifts - a custom he had learned in the Reservation.\(^{57}\) The gesture emphasizes devotion to Lenina in a way the reader can understand, yet it fails to actually establish a connection because Lenina has no understanding of what John desires because of her conditioning. As Gonzalo’s speech suggests, she is completely immune to other desires, stripped of her individuality for the sake of social stability and complete instant gratification. In this way, John cannot transverse the gap between the two utopias and, again, falsifies the Fordian Society for the reader.\(^{58}\)

This inability to bridge the connection between his capacity for love and Lenina’s lack of love uncovers a side of John that is uncontrollable - it is truly savage, literally outside of the norms for either utopia. By having the capacity for emotions through knowledge, John not only has the capacity for curiosity, love, and excitement but also the capacity for suffering, pain, and trauma. When John is unable to control a situation - whether it be his traumatic childhood due to his mother's infidelity or Lenina’s misinterpretation of love for lust - he turns to aggression. In this way, John further identifies with the reader and distances himself from both utopias.

The initial episode marking his savage emotions occurs when he loses the battle for his mother’s

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57 The Savage suddenly scrambled to his feet. “That’s why,” he said speaking with averted face, “I wanted to do something first . . . I mean, to show I was worthy of you. Not that I could ever really be that. But at any rate to show I wasn’t absolutely unworthy. I wanted to do something.” (Brave New World, 128)

58 Again, the members of this utopia are unrelatable to the reader. They are deemed false or undesirable, thus making their society disturbing, compared to John and the underlying principles of the utopia (equality, leisure, gratification) are undermined in the reader’s mind because they have no meaning when awareness is dispensed with.
affection to Pope. He suffers from the feeling of isolation; he suffers from his lack of childhood, and he desires to be nurtured and cared for. With a lack of affection, John turns to aggression. With no medium through which to express his emotions, and no one to help him understand his feelings, he desires to instead eliminate the problem. His savage feelings turn to a plot of murder; by killing Pope he would be able to regain Linda’s attention. His inner Caliban is revealed, instead of using the language learned to intelligently describe and understand his feelings, he instead chooses to use them to curse his mother’s relations. This savage reaction is further revealed when Lenina presents herself to him, desiring the quick gratification of everyone in the Fordian society. Yet, instead of acting desiring to conquer her as Caliban desires Miranda, he instead wants to be rid of her. Surprisingly, however, it is these ‘savage’ reactions of aggression that make John most human, the most relatable, and the most able to expose the flaws of these utopias through the complement of his extreme emotions to extreme situations. These utopias are never changed for many of the characters in them, with the exception of a few who also embody John’s alienation. However, by John reacting in a way that the reader can reasonably identify with - the fury, frustration, sadness and loneliness- John becomes real and the societies he exists are, by extension, real and can be evaluated.

V. John’s Exit from Society

Although John is able to resist both the Reservation and the Fordian Society because of his knowledge, emotions, and capacity to voice his understanding through cultivated language - he still is not free. Without a place in either society, he is still imprisoned in his otherness. As Huxley states in Brave New World Revisited, “It is perfectly possible for a man to be out prison, and yet not free - to be under no physical constraint and yet to be a psychological captive, compelled to think, feel and act as the

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59 His heart seemed to have disappeared and left a hole. He was empty. Empty, and cold, and rather sick, and giddy. He leaned against the wall to steady himself. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous. . .Like drums, like the men singing for the corn, like magic, the words repeated and repeated themselves in his head. From being cold he was suddenly hot. His cheeks burnt with the rush of blood, and the room swam and darkened before his eyes. He ground his teeth. “I’ll kill him, I’ll kill him, I’ll kill him,” he kept saying. And suddenly there were more words. (Brave New World, 89)

60 As stated by Firchow: “When the intruder finally does appear it is in the guise of a Savage, and the reader is already thoroughly familiar with the new world. The intruder’s function, therefore, is very different: to shock us into an awareness of the monstrosity of a world that is many ways the mirror image of our own, and that, become of this similarity, we may be in danger of accepting.” (Firchow, 80)
representatives of the national State, or of some private interests within the nation want him to think, feel
and act.” (135) John is in a prison between knowing enough to resist both utopias but not knowing what
to do with this knowledge.

Without a place to go, John is psychologically distraught; he does not understand his purpose in
staying if he does not have a meaning in either place. John’s choice to leave the Reservation was to find
something beyond the empty ritualized sacrifice and unstructured routine but all that he finds in the
Fordian Society is more emptiness under the guise of structured social hierarchy and lack of intimate
connection. So, if John were to stay in the Fordian Society he would be as Kaleb states in his chapter
Rejection of Utopian Ends: Against Conditioned Virtue, “going through certain motions, not performing
acts at all” and even further stripping his desire for “conscious awareness of the principle by which one
acts and of the reasons for which one acts”. 61 His life would be empty and meaningless being constrained
in either society, so his only choice left is permanent escape from both.

By resisting utopias, John illuminates the failures of both societies essentially uncovering the
falseness of both utopias. This resistance dismantles the fourth wall for the reader since he/she identifies
so strongly with John; if John, a capable character striving for full knowledge and mindfulness, cannot
reasonably function within either a utopia of “absence’ or one of “presence” then both utopias ultimately
do not complete their purposes are thus undesirable and no longer tenable to either John in the literary
context or the reader in real life. Each utopia must adhere to the notion of ideal elements to promote
collective purpose, and as this is not the case, as exemplified through John’s (and the reader’s by proxy)
“otherness”, John’s existence within them would only bestow further suffering. John ultimately
recognizes that the only choice he has, beyond these two societies that were supposed to promote ideal
conditions for humanity, is death62. In the end, John attempts to purify himself through self-harm, an act
mimicking the ritual he was born into knowing in the Reservation, and when that purification fails, for the

61 Kaleb, Utopia, 164
62 “It is this unchanging, eternally stable condition of utopias that makes them at once so attractive and so terrible. Utopia satisfies
simultaneously our longing for a perfect place and for stasis, and horrifies us because we realize that the ideal approximation of rest and stability
is death” (Firchow, 84)
final disillusionment from both Miranda’s and Gonzalo’s utopias, John commits the ultimate sacrifice - suicide.

A question often asked about the end of *Brave New World* is whether John should have tried to exist in either society, or at least found a group of outsiders similar to himself, a proposition that the intellectual Bernard chooses to accept in his exile. As my final argument, I will propose this is the subtle but beautiful intentionality in which Huxley choose to interweave *Brave New World* with *The Tempest*. Whereas at the end of the *The Tempest*, the reader is abruptly uplifted by Prospero’s call for forgiveness, which may ring false, but is none-the-less a happy ending, in *Brave New World* the reader is horrified by John’s suicide, genuinely saddened by the loss because the modern reader likely sees himself in John. John, like the reader, experiences the full range of human emotions, unlike his counterparts throughout the novel; John likely, because of this, was strong enough to carve out his own survival, somewhere, even if the utopias *Brave New World* embodied were false, in the end. However, John was more than just a character- he was the reader too, and in the end, the horror of John’s suicide represented the horror of each utopia. John rejects both false utopias figuratively moving from his now untenable literary world outward toward the reader. Like John himself, his act of suicide was more than mortal act: it was a political commentary to the reader, likely one of the most powerful of the 20th century.
VI. Works Cited

**Primary Texts**


**Critical Theory**


