Brave New World

IB Language A: Literature HL
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Background Information and Historical References

- *BNW* written in 1931 and published in 1932

- Rise of post-WWI totalitarian leaders (Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini) had begun in 1920s and was continuing during this time period.

- The U.S. stock exchange crash in 1929 had worsened already tenuous economic and political conditions within Europe.
Background Information and Historical References

- Post-WWI Germany was suffering from punitive provisions that had been imposed by the Treaty of Versailles.
- Inflation had wiped out most of Germany’s middle class in the mid-1920s.
- The U.S. stock market crash in 1929 caused the collapse of Germany’s economy (no more U.S. bank loans), resulting in widespread unemployment and political chaos.
- Hitler was named German Chancellor in 1933.
Background Information and Historical References

• Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, 1917

• Communists, led by Vladimir Lenin, rose up against the Russian monarchy, killed the royal family, seized power.

• Bolsheviks suppressed dissension against their regime.
Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* (1848): predicted uprising by workers, where all people would control the means of production without any supervision by a “ruling class.” A proletariat, or worker state, would result.
Background Information and Historical References

- Henry Ford: incorporated assembly line into automobile manufacturing; assembly line then took off for other industries
- Sigmund Freud: psychoanalysis gained popularity after the atrocities of WWI
- Rise in use of media to disseminate propaganda
Background Information and Historical References

- Conditioning (Ivan Pavlov) and Behaviorism (John Watson) gain in popularity

- Thomas R. Malthus’ Principle of Population: unless controlled, world’s population would exceed necessary supplies for survival
Biographical Information on Aldous Huxley

- Huxley was born in 1894 and grew up in London. His family was well-known for its scientific and intellectual pursuits. Huxley’s mother died from cancer when he was 14. Huxley nearly lost his eyesight because of an illness during his teenage years.

- Huxley wrote poetry, essays, and lesser-acclaimed novels before received international fame from *BNW*.

- In the 1950s, Huxley experimented with mysticism and hallucinogenic drugs, which he wrote about in *The Doors of Perception* (1954).

- Huxley died in Los Angeles on November 22, 1963 (the same day JFK was assassinated).
Importance of Names in BNW

• Bernard Marx: Claude Bernard (French physiologist) and Karl Marx (philosopher, revolutionary, author of *The Communist Manifesto*, which inspired Vladimir Lenin). Karl Marx believed that through class struggle, communism - the belief in a classless, equal society - would replace capitalism and the inherent inequalities it produces.
Importance of Names in *BNW*

- **Mustapha Mond**: named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (established democracy in Turkey after WWI) and Sir Alfred Mond (Germany-Jewish industrialist and politician in early 20th c.).

- **Henry Foster**: Henry Ford and William Foster (popular trade union leader; U.S. Communist Party General Secretary).
Importance of Names in BNW

- **Helmholtz Watson**: Hermann von Helmholtz (19th c. scientist/opthalmologist) and John B. Watson (founder of the school of behaviorism)

- **Lenina Crowne**: Vladimir Lenin (leader of Russian revolution; first head of Soviet Union; established authoritarian state; led “Red Terror”). “Crowne” is a reference to the British monarchy, generally.
Importance of Names in BNW

- Benito Hoover: Benito Mussolini (fascist Italian dictator from 1922-1943; known for militarism, nationalism, oppressive censorship, wide-spread use of propaganda) and Herbert Hoover (POTUS from 1929-1933; blamed for U.S. stock market crash in 1929).