



Mustapha Mond

A new society has been created in Britain and a new race is produced in test tubes in the scientific laboratory 'Hatching and Conditioning Centre'. In the following passage, a touring group of 'Hatchery and Conditioning' students are addressed by the Resident Controller for Western Europe, Mustapha Mond.

Aldous Huxley
Brave New World
(1932)

Chapter 3

Outside, in the garden, it was playtime. Naked¹ in the warm June sunshine, six or seven hundred little boys and girls were running with shrill yells over the lawns, or playing ball games, or squatting² silently in twos and threes among the flowering shrubs³. The roses were in bloom⁴, two nightingales soliloquized in the boskage⁵, a cuckoo was just going out of tune among the lime trees. The air was drowsy⁶ with the murmur of bees and helicopters.

The Director and his students stood for a short time watching a game of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy. Twenty children were grouped in a circle round a chrome steel⁷ tower. A ball thrown up so as to land on the platform at the top of the tower rolled down⁸ into the interior, fell on a rapidly revolving disk⁹, was hurled¹⁰ through one or other of the numerous apertures pierced¹¹ in the cylindrical casing¹², and had to be caught.

'Strange,' mused¹³ the Director, as they turned away, 'strange to think that even in Our Ford's day most games were played without more apparatus than a ball or two and a few sticks and perhaps a bit of netting. Imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption¹⁴. It's madness. Nowadays the Controllers won't approve of any new game unless it can be shown that it requires at least as much apparatus as the most complicated of existing games.' He interrupted himself.

'That's a charming little group,' he said, pointing.

In a little grassy bay between tall clumps¹⁵ of Mediterranean heather¹⁶, two children, a little boy of about seven and a little girl who might have been a year older, were playing, very gravely and with all the focussed attention of scientists intent on a labour of discovery, a rudimentary sexual game.

'Charming, charming!' the D.H.C.¹⁷ repeated sentimentally.

'Charming,' the boys politely agreed. But their smile was rather patronizing¹⁸. They had put aside similar childish amusements too recently to be able to watch them now without a touch of contempt¹⁹. Charming? but it was just a pair of kids fooling about²⁰; that was all. Just kids.

'I always think,' the Director was continuing in the same rather maudlin²¹ tone, when he was interrupted by a loud boo-hooing²².

From a neighbouring shrubbery²³ emerged a nurse, leading by the hand a small boy, who howled as he went. An anxious-looking little girl trotted²⁴ at her heels.

'What's the matter?' asked the Director.

The nurse shrugged her shoulders²⁵. 'Nothing much,' she answered. 'It's just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I'd noticed it once or twice before. And now again today. He started yelling just now ...'

'Honestly,' put in the anxious-looking little girl, 'I didn't mean to hurt him or anything. Honestly.'

'Of course you didn't, dear,' said the nurse reassuringly. 'And so,' she went on, turning back to the Director, 'I'm taking him in to see the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything's at all abnormal.'

'Quite right,' said the Director. 'Take him in. You stay here, little girl,' he added, as the nurse moved away with her still howling charge. 'What's your name?'

'Polly Trotsky.'

'And a very good name too,' said the Director. 'Run away now and see if you can find some other little boy to play with.'

The child scampered off²⁶ into the bushes and was lost to sight.

- 1 Naked. Nudi.
- 2 squatting. Accovacciandosi.
- 3 shrubs. Arbusti.
- 4 in bloom. In fiore.
- 5 boskage. Boschetto.
- 6 drowsy. Sonnolenta.
- 7 chrome steel. Acciaio al cromo.
- 8 rolled down. Rotolava giù.
- 9 revolving disk. Disco rotante.
- 10 hurled. Lanciata.
- 11 pierced. Praticate.
- 12 casing. Cassa.
- 13 mused. Meditò.
- 14 consumption. Il consumo.
- 15 clumps. Macchie.
- 16 heather. Erica.
- 17 D.H.C. Direttore dell' 'Hatching Centre' (Centro di Incubazione).
- 18 patronizing. Pieno di condiscendenza.
- 19 contempt. Disprezzo.
- 20 fooling about. Che si trastullavano.
- 21 maudlin. Lacrimoso.
- 22 boo-hooing. Pianto rumoroso.
- 23 shrubbery. Boschetto.
- 24 trotted. Correva.
- 25 shrugged her shoulders. Alzò le spalle.
- 26 scampered off. Scappò via.



‘Exquisite little creature!’ said the Director, looking after her. Then, turning to his students, ‘What I’m going to tell you now,’ he said, ‘may sound incredible. But then, when you’re not accustomed to history, most facts about the past do sound incredible.’

He **let out** the amazing truth. For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations afterwards, erotic play between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!); and had therefore been rigorously suppressed.

A look of **astonished** incredulity appeared on the faces of his listeners. Poor little kids not allowed to amuse themselves? They could not believe it.

[...]

‘The results were terrible.’ A deep resonant voice broke **startlingly**²⁷ into the dialogue.

They looked around. On the **fringe**²⁸ of the little group stood a stranger – a man of middle height, black-haired, with a hooked nose, full red lips, eyes very **piercing**²⁹ and dark. ‘Terrible,’ he repeated.

The D.H.C. had at that moment sat down on one of the steel and rubber benches conveniently **scattered** through the gardens; but at the sight of the stranger, he sprang to his feet and **darted forward**³⁰, his hands **outstretched**³¹, smiling with all his teeth, effusive.

‘Controller! What an unexpected pleasure! Boys, what are you thinking of? This is the Controller; this is his **fordship**³², Mustapha Mond.’

[...]

Mustapha Mond **leaned forward**, shook a finger at them³³. ‘Just try to realize it,’ he said, and his voice sent a strange **thrill**³⁴ **quivering**³⁵ along their **diaphragms**³⁶. ‘Try to realize what it was like to have a viviparous mother.’

That **smutty**³⁷ word again. But none of them dreamed, this time, of smiling.

‘Try to imagine what “living with one’s family” meant.’

They tried; but obviously without the smallest success.

‘And do you know what a ‘home’ was?’

They shook their heads.

From her dim **crimson**³⁸ cellar Lenina Crowne **shot up** seventeen stories, turned to the right as she stepped out of the lift, walked down a long corridor and, opening the door marked Girls’ Dressing-Room, **plunged**³⁹ into a **deafening**⁴⁰ chaos of arms and bosoms and underclothing. Torrents of hot water were splashing into or **gurgling out**⁴¹ of a hundred baths. **Rumbling** and **hissing**⁴², eighty **vibrovacuum** massage machines⁴³ were simultaneously **kneading**⁴⁴ and **sucking**⁴⁵ the firm and sunburnt flesh of eighty superb female specimens. Everyone was talking at the top of her voice. A Synthetic Music machine was **warbling out**⁴⁶ a super-cornet solo.

‘Hullo, Fanny,’ said Lenina to the young woman who had the **pegs**⁴⁷ and **locker**⁴⁸ next to hers.

Fanny worked in the Bottling Room, and her surname was also Crowne. But as the two thousand million inhabitants of the planet had only ten thousand names between them, the coincidence was not particularly surprising.

Lenina pulled at her **zippers-downwards**⁴⁹ on the jacket, downwards with a double-handed gesture at the two that held trousers, downwards again to **loosen**⁵⁰ her undergarment. Still wearing her shoes and stockings, she walked off towards the bathrooms.

Home, home – a few small rooms, **stiflingly**⁵¹ over-inhabited by a man, by a periodically **teeming**⁵² woman, by a **rabble**⁵³ of boys and girls of all ages. No air, no space; an **understerilized**⁵⁴ prison; darkness, disease, and smells.

(The Controller’s evocation was so vivid that one of the boys, more sensitive than the rest, turned pale at the mere description and was on the point of being sick.)

- 27 **startlingly**. In modo sorprendente.
28 **fringe**. Margine.
29 **piercing**. Penetranti.
30 **darted forward**. Balzò in avanti.
31 **outstretched**. Si allungarono.
32 **fordship**. Maestà (parola modellata su *lordship*, sostituendo *Lord* con *Ford*, che nel romanzo è la massima autorità).
33 **shook ... at them**. Agitò un dito contro di loro.
34 **thrill**. Brivido.
35 **quivering**. Tremando.
36 **diaphragms**. Diaframmi.
37 **smutty**. Oscena, indecente.
38 **crimson**. Color cremisi.
39 **plunged**. Si immerse.
40 **deafening**. Assordante.
41 **gurgling out**. Gorgogliando fuori.
42 **hissing**. Fischando.
43 **vibrovacuum ... machines**. Apparecchi di vibromassaggio aspirante.
44 **kneading**. Massaggiando.
45 **sucking**. Risucchiando.
46 **warbling out**. Cantando.
47 **pegs**. Mollette.
48 **locker**. Armadietto.
49 **zippers-downwards**. Chiusure lampo.
50 **loosen**. Slacciare.
51 **stiflingly**. In modo soffocante.
52 **teeming**. Feconda.
53 **rabble**. Folla tumultuante.
54 **understerilized**. Non sterilizzata.



- 100 Lenina got out of the bath, towelled herself dry⁵⁵, took hold of a long flexible tube plugged into the wall, presented the nozzle⁵⁶ to her breast, as though she meant to commit suicide, pressed down the trigger⁵⁷. A Blast⁵⁸ of warmed air dusted her with the finest talcum powder. Eight different scents and eau-de-Cologne were laid on in little taps over the wash-basin. She turned on the third from the left, dabbled herself⁵⁹ with chypre and, carrying her shoes and stockings in her hand, went out to see if one of the vibrovacuum machines were free.

- 55 towelled ... dry. Si asciugò.
56 nozzle. Effusore.
57 trigger. Impulso di comando.
58 Blast. Una raffica.
59 dabbled herself. Si spruzzò.

LITERARY COMPETENCE

VOCABULARY

1 READ the text and match the highlighted words and phrases with their Italian translation.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 seriamente | 7 si piegò |
| 2 svelò | 8 sorpresa |
| 3 sparse | 9 gridava |
| 4 strillare | 10 legnetti, bastoncini |
| 5 rete | 11 indicando |
| 6 balzò su | |

COMPETENCE: READING AND UNDERSTANDING A TEXT

2 READ the text again and identify the three sections. Then say where each section is set and which people are involved in each of them.

- Part 1 (lines): Setting: ; People:
- Part 2 (lines): Setting: ; People:
- Part 3 (lines): Setting: ; People:

3 READ the first section again and answer the following questions.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 When was the passage set? | 6 How did the students react to the two children's action? |
| 2 What were the children wearing? | 7 Who was the nurse leading by the hand? |
| 3 What were they doing? | 8 What treatment was the little boy going to undergo? |
| 4 What were the Director and his students watching? | 9 What were the students not accustomed to? |
| 5 What was said to be 'charming'? | 10 What happened before the time of 'Our Ford'? |

4 READ the second section and find out

- who was speaking in line 58;
- where the D.H.C. was sitting and what he did at the sight of the stranger;
- who the D.H.C. introduced the students to;
- what the Controller asked the students to imagine.

5 READ the last section again and decide whether the following statements are true or false. Correct the false ones.

- 1 Lenina Crowne entered a sort of a classroom.
- 2 Vibrovacuum massage machines were kneading and sucking the firm flesh of eighty women.
- 3 Fanny had Lenina's same surname, Crowne.
- 4 That was a particularly strange coincidence.
- 5 The Controller pictured the 'home' in lurid exaggerated terms.
- 6 That sort of life was typical of pre-Fordian days.
- 7 Lenina had a bath and left that room.



> COMPETENCE: ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING A TEXT**6 CONCENTRATE** on the narrative technique and answer the following questions.

- 1 Who is the narrator of this passage? From whose point of view is the story recounted?
- 2 Can you find any examples of free indirect thought? What is the aim of this technique?

7 FOCUS on the characters of the Director and his students.

- 1 What world does the Director live in? Give reasons from the text.
- 2 How would you define the relationship between the Director and his students?
- 3 What feelings are the students linked to?

8 ANALYSE the presence of Mustapha Mond in the extract.

- 1 Through what device is he introduced?
- 2 Single out the details of his description and say who he reminds you of.
- 3 What is the target of his speech?
- 4 What need does he express for all the inhabitants of the new world?

9 FOCUS on two important female characters, a nurse in the first part and Lenina at the end.

- 1 What does the nurse represent?
- 2 What kind of woman is Lenina?
- 3 What actions is she linked to?
- 4 Lots of people in *Brave New World* have Lenina's surname. What does this reveal about this utopian society?
- 5 Do you think she is able to express her own feelings?

10 COMPLETE the following table with the most relevant examples of words and phrases of the two main semantic areas of the text: the 'brave' new race's life and man's traditional vision of life. Then answer the question below.

The 'brave' new race's life	Man's traditional vision of life

What are the effect the author tries to achieve using such a language?

11 HIGHLIGHT the symbolic names and say what they add to the dreary picture of this future world.**12 RECOGNISE** the lines in which informal, ironical, scientific, serious and technical linguistic registers appear.

> COMPETENCE: ESTABLISHING LINKS WITH THE CONTEXT OF THE AGE**13 DISCUSS.** Decide whether Huxley wanted to address himself to a learned few or to a wider readership and see if his attitude to science was typical of the age in which he lived.