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### The Two Ways a Society Can Change and How People React

Both the settings of *Watchmen* and *Brave New World* originate from the same place since the worlds of both stories used to be the real-life 20<sup>th</sup> century versions of the US and the UK respectively. The settings during the stories came from the same original world, except the societal hierarchy of said world developed in the opposite ways in the time between when the world was the same and when the events in the story takes place. The way the societal hierarchy is formed can be split up into two elements, the first being the biological and physical element with the second being the sociocultural element. The natural element refers to Darwinism and foundations of evolution, more or less limited to what a person is born with while the sociocultural elements refer to the man-made qualities of society. In terms of changes, the primary natural and man-made elements in *Brave New World* can be family ranks and social class, as the setting of *Brave New World* sees the former entirely removed and replaced by a more solidified version of the latter. Meanwhile, in *Watchmen*, the societal concept of the justice system, built upon man-made system of hierarchy has been replaced by the natural and arguably primitive concept of the physically strong reigning over the physically weak and the capacity of violence deciding everything. This shows how the society in the two stories, despite starting from the same place, develops in opposite directions.

Before commenting on which direction is superior, there is an important detail in how these changes are implemented which must be recognised first. In different ways, in both settings, the people implementing these changes strive to keep up the pretence the world is still the same as it was before. In *Brave New World*, this is shown through how despite families,

which are built through sex, do not exist anymore. Yet sex itself, despite no longer being fundamentally connect to how the hierarchy works, is still used in a way where it affects the status of people. On the other hand, in *Watchmen*, the vigilante group, which replaces the police, project themselves as an organisation with leadership while none of the members actually have any control over each other.

When the two worlds are compared together, it is easily noticeable how much more work it took in *Brave New World* to remove family ranks compared to how the justice system in *Watchmen* was almost completely negated in a short amount of time. This may show biological conditions as harder to break and compared these two works to the psychological study of nature versus nurture. Expanding on nature, in terms of human nature specifically, societies in both works seem to still run on and appeal to people's desire to grow in status and authority. *Brave New World* shows people still wanting to develop in these aspects, but locking it within a specific social class, while characters in *Watchmen* again do the opposite, and break through social barriers by gaining power over more and more people regardless of their prior standing. These three aspects combined show control in terms of how much power over how many people a person can get and which elements set these limits. It is only *Brave New World* shows more limits being set while *Watchmen* show limits being removed, all while both pretend nothing is inherently changing as people's desires remain the same. However, despite or because of everything, whether the people accept change depends on when change is introduced.

If family ranks are identified as the element being removed in *Brave New World*, what the term refers to should be known. Families and the concept of relatives in the evolutionary sense is built upon reproduction. Two people could have children which would result in them gaining the rank of parents, giving them power over the people they created. This is not limited

to the direct relationship between parents and their children. Aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents within a family tree are all ranks in which they get to tell those below them what to do and in turn are told what to do by those above them. Familial hierarchy is loosely based on age, which determines how much power one has, and directness, which determines how much power one has over a specific person. In *Brave New World*, these structures and titles are completely gone.

What still persists, and has become even more determinant, in *Brave New World* is social class. Loose, controversial and changing concepts with the constantly evolving terminology including phrases such as ruling class and working class has become a set numbers of castes from letter alpha to epsilon. These castes progress linearly in power, with alphas controlling betas, betas controlling gammas and so on. The levels are the same as both how contemporary social classes are structured by the class above having power over the class below and how familial hierarchy is structured by one level of creation having power over another. However, both social class and familial hierarchy exist in current culture, but one appears to have been completely removed to further develop the absoluteness of the other. Yet biology deciding power is not a concept easy to remove.

Ruling classes have made many attempts throughout history to argue the class and caste system is built upon a biological foundation. For example, the Proclamations of the Keian declares peasants not being able to think for themselves as the reason why the ruling class must control them and their labour (Shiba, 1-4). The foundation of this statement is the assumption and belief of a person's innate and natural ability being the reason for their place on the hierarchy. Since whether a person is a peasant or not cannot be changed, then the proclamation must also mean whether a person has the sense or forethought necessarily to lead others also

cannot be changed. There are even religious elements implemented in the reasoning for class for the same purpose. In Christian countries, such as England, where *Brave New World* is set in, there was once a concept of the divine right of kings, which serves the purpose of showing the one deciding whether or not someone will rule others is a higher power (Burgess, 837). This concept and the concept shown in the Proclamations have the similarity of using predetermination as an excuse. By declaring people are created to be in a class, the concept of creation being a determinate of a person's place in a hierarchy has been appropriated from familial hierarchy into the man-made social classes. However, *Brave New World* has shown a world where it is no longer an excuse.

The world state has actually implemented procreation, a foundation element of familial hierarchy, into its caste system. Biological difference in social classes has become a fact instead of an excuse for its existence. In a way, higher powers have also become involved, as who is in which cast is determined by the world controllers. Since people are now created, biological differences between classes are implemented during the creation of the people meant to be within them. During creation, the development of foetuses is limited and sabotaged more the lower the caste the foetus is eventually meant to be in with. Before anything else, differences in class in *Brave New World* are implemented into a person's making and matter before birth. They are further conditioned after the foetus becomes a baby through ways such as hypnopaedia. While this is nurture, it is arguable what the actions during creation counts as.

Conditioning cannot compete with biology in regard to a person's self-image. Even human categories of a social nature cannot be changed purely through conditioning. During the experiment by John Money on David Reimer, starting after birth both the biological aspect of sex and the societal aspect of gender was changed on a baby (Rolls, 137-139). The results showed

despite both social conditioning and intentional physiological changes by another party, the person ended up still rejecting the sex and gender he was given. In relation to the result, if it's impossible to change who a person naturally is after birth, why was the world state in *Brave New World* able to determine what category someone belongs to before birth? It is possible the reason the conditioning and nurture works is because the nature of humans have been changed during production, before birth.

However, the innate desires of humans appear similar to how they were prior. The people of the world state in *Brave New World* still want power and authority or superiority over others. While power has become predetermined, the hypnopaedia has been shown to reassure people of the relative superiority of their own caste, which facilitates a desire to not be a part of either a lower or higher caste because their current one is the best one (Huxley, 27-28). The fact this needs to be a part of the conditioning reveals people's desires to be in a part of the best caste still existing. Furthermore, the conditioning does not even completely prevent people competing with each other for superiority.

The solution the world state implemented for this was to turn these drives and desires towards factors which do not affect the structural hierarchy nor the functionality of the world state. The most noticeable factor would be the aforementioned sex. As families are replaced by class, sex is no longer a determinate in a person's status in the overarching hierarchy, but it still is a determinate in status. Only now, the status remains in the set class. Sex does affect a person's popularity with others and is used to show how well-liked they are. However, the social classes are solid and unchangeable, so sex is only a determinate in superficial status. The pretence here is achieved through making sex seem like a determinate of status, just like how it used to be, without it actually being so.

Keeping up appearances of social hierarchy being dependent on the same factors as they used to is also used in *Watchmen* by the original organisation. There are two scenes which mark the during and ending of pretence, one is when the vigilantes act like an organisation and the other is when all the members leave (Moore, 47-53). The police strike marks the complete inactivity of the police force, which essentially makes the watchmen organisation a replacement of the police instead of an addition. However, while the members portray themselves as a crime fighting organisation similar to the police, there is no structure and rule-based hierarchy. All members do what they want and what their capacity for action is is completely based on physical strength.

Firstly, the members of the vigilante organisation do not have applied rules and systems for who is in charge of who within the organisation. This is shown even when the pretence of it being an organised group is still up, during the meeting from page 48 to 49, when the characters are shown to do exactly what they want to who they want because, in the specific situation, they can do so without regard to anything but their desires (Moore). Secondly, achieving goals through this matter is not limited to internal conflicts. The characters also follow their desires in the most straightforward way when applied to third party groups shown by the comedian shooting the pregnant woman in the bar and shooting the protestors in the streets (Moore, 56-60). This means what the vigilantes in *Watchmen* do and the power they have is determined only by physical traits and limited only by whether or not those actions are related to their desires.

By indirectly removing the police, which had power over normal people, the watchmen now have power over normal people. Since the vigilantes' power over both each other and third parties is based completely on physical strength, by making it to the top of the food chain, they have turned the hierarchy of the society they are a part of into one based completely on

situational physical power, a biological trait. Here is where the progression of *Watchmen* and *Brave New World* being opposite reveals itself. The characters in both are still, at some level, driven by a desire to get more power. However, the environment they are in within *Watchmen* changed to allow them to achieve power regardless of social class and rules by them being replaced by a system determined by biological factors, where it was the former replacing the latter in *Brave New World*.

This makes it seem like the base difference between the two stories is whether society replaces biology or biology replaces society. As the previously mentioned changes in *Brave New World* remained intact and was not changed through the story while the changes in *Watchmen* were reverted quickly and the police returned, it may seem as though replacing biology with sociology is a more reliable path. However, a change of the same fundamental level in the setting of *Brave New World* was attempted once before, which resulted in riots and rebellions, similar to how the changes in *Watchmen* resulted in protests and also similar in the way it was because the changed was forced too quickly (Bloom, 31). This makes it seem like changes in both directions will be met with opposition. It may not be because of which way they go, but because they deviate from the status quo.

“People expect the future to be like the past,” this is the problem the two settings faced (Eidelman, 720). People favour what the world was like the way it used to be, it is not related to rationalisation or debate of which state is better. People will naturally push against change (Eidelman, 270-274). Following this pattern, people will also prefer themselves to be what they used to be. Under the assumption the settings of *Watchmen* and *Brave New World* used to be the same, it becomes noticeable how what the *Watchmen* setting becomes is not the status quo during the events of the story, but the setting in *Brave New World* has already been the status quo

for a long period of time, so the people in *Watchmen* were actually resisting change in general as opposed to what kind of change it was specifically. It is similar in terms of hierarchy, where *Watchmen's* setting actively moved them around, whereas in *Brave New World*, their place in the hierarchy was consistent since before they were born. All the differences between the two works stated may exist, but it does not matter, because the only thing that determines whether something is accepted by someone, is whether they are used to it.



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