
KÖNIGS ERLÄUTERUNGEN

Band 338

Aldous Huxley, BRAVE NEW WORLD

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PRÜFUNGSAUFGABEN MIT MUSTERLÖSUNGEN

In Ergänzung zu den Aufgaben im Buch (Kapitel 6) finden Sie hier zwei weitere Aufgaben mit Musterlösungen. Die Zahl der Sternchen bezeichnet das Anforderungsniveau der jeweiligen Aufgabe.

Aufgabe 5 *

Discuss the function of the entertainment industry and its media. Support your argument with relevant quotes from the text.

Model answer

Synthetic sounds
in place of music

The entertainment industry is represented by the media of film and music. Traditional instruments are no longer used to make music, music is now produced synthetically: with the help of the "Super-Vox-Wurlitzeriana" (p. 242), the "super-cornet" (p. 60), the "hyper-violin" (p. 205) or with the "oboe-surrogate" (p. 205). Natural timbres and differentiated sounds have disappeared, so it is no longer possible to speak of music, but merely of synthetic sounds. Music in the World State relies on being bombastic and overwhelming ("Thunder in A flat major." p. 102); and not on any musical appreciation.

The song lyrics can hardly be surpassed in simplicity and stupidity, as one of the song text goes: "Hug me till you drug me, honey; / Kiss me till I'm in a coma: / Hug me, honey, snuggly bunny; / Love's as good as soma." (p. 204) Or: "Bottle of mine, it's you I've always wanted! / Bottle of mine, why was I ever decanted? / Skies are blue inside of you, / The weather's always fine; / For / There ain't no Bottle in all the world / Like that dear little Bottle of mine." (p. 103) This simplicity and the bombasticity do not fail to achieve their desired effect as borne out by: "Five-stepping with the other four hundred round and round Westminster Abbey, Lenina and Henry were yet dancing in another world ..." (p. 103)

Music to
distract and
overwhelm

Even the dying are subjected to the lull of synthetic sounds as is Linda in "Park Lane Hospital for the Dying". The narrator informs the reader: "Linda was dying in company – in company and with all the modern conveniences. The air was continuously alive with gay synthetic melodies." (p. 240) The fact that happy, cheery music is played rather than funeral music is significant. This raises the question as to whether there is such a thing as e-music in the World State. Probably not; music seems rather to be used as a reliable means of distraction. For instance, when confronted with a situation which she finds uncomfortable, Lenina Crowne asks Bernard Marx to turn on the radio: "Let's turn the radio on. Quick!" (p. 118) In the World State, music is not played for pleasure, and certainly not for leisure, but provides a means of entertainment which is simple and undemanding.

This is also true of the medium of film. The films in question are so-called "Feelies" which are produced using a variety of different technical effects. As is to be expected, the feelies, too, rely on the bombastic, and aim to overwhelm. The opening credits to "Three weeks in a helicopter" scream: "THREE WEEKS IN A HELICOPTER. AN ALL-SUPER SINGING, SYTHETIC-TALKING, COLOURED, STEREOSCOPIC FEELY. WITH SYNCHRONIZED SCENT-ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT." (p. 205) The listing of the technical gimmicks of the film, or rather the "Feely", are longer than the film title itself, from which one can conclude that there is a distinction to be drawn between the technical and the intellectual demands of the film. This is indeed the case, as the films work with "feely effects" (p. 205). These effects produce tactile stimuli. John, for example, actually feels the film kisses on his lips ("The Savage started. That sensation on his lips!" p. 206). Olfactory stimuli are also part of the technical finesse of a "Feely": "The scent organ ... breathed pure musk." (p. 206) The feely also contains optical illusions: "... dazzling and incomparably more solid-looking than they would have seemed in actual flesh and blood ... there stood the stereoscopic images..." (p. 206)

Intellectual
challenges take
second place to
sophisticated
film technology

The plot – or rather the intellectual challenges of the film – take second place to the ingenious technology and its effects ("The plot of the film was extremely simple." p. 206). This is done on purpose since the "Feelies" are supposed to emulate social relations and not to question them. The audience are definitely enthralled, as illustrated by the remarks of an assistant predestinator to Henry Foster: "...I hear the new one [Feely] at the Alhambra is first-rate. There's a love scene on a bearskin rug; they say it's marvellous. Every hair of the bear reproduced. The most amazing tactual effects." (p. 58) This comment sums up what the film industry offers and what the audience expect: Not cinematics in the traditional sense of the word but entertainment using a sophisticated level of technology.

Music and film are used only for the purpose of entertainment.

The function of the film industry in society becomes clear during the dialogue between Mustapha Mond and John the Savage below, in which John criticises the innovations of the new world and Mond justifies the sacrifice of art: "...We've sacrificed the high art. We have the feelies and the scent organ instead.' 'But they don't mean anything.' 'They mean themselves; they mean a lot of agreeable sensations to the audience.'" (p. 264) To sum up, it can be said that music and film serve merely as a form of distraction and entertainment.

Aufgabe 6 ***

Outline the character of John the Savage and support your argument with relevant quotes from the text.

Model answer

The topos of the 'Noble Savage' is undermined

In literature the topos of the 'Noble Savage' is innately good and has been unspoiled by society. Examples of this type of character can be found in the works of John Dryden, Daniel Defoe and in particular in the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Huxley counters this image by equipping John the Savage with a completely different character. John is a character who is disturbed. His experiences in childhood and during his years as a young adult, his formative years, have made him this way. His formative experiences have been characterized by feelings of isolation and pain, reinforced by Linda's ambivalent attitude towards him: While he loves her, her feelings for him change continuously.

Shaped by negative experiences in his formative years

John experiences isolation and pain in the Reservation on account of his origins. The trigger for this is Linda, who leads a promiscuous life, having been conditioned for this by the World State. This behaviour goes against the customs of the Indians, which is why Linda is despised in their society. John, too, finds himself treated more and more with contempt: "Lots of men came to see Linda. The boys began to point their fingers at him." (p. 162) This contempt finally culminates in violence; John is attacked and injured on numerous occasions; for instance, when he tries to participate in an initiation ritual and is chased away by people throwing stones at him: "'Go, go, go!' There was a shower of stones. Bleeding, he ran away into the darkness." (p. 170) Barring a few exceptions, John experiences his childhood as a boy who is both shunned and subjected to violence. The only Indian who seems to care for him is Mitsima. John finds solace in this, but it cannot help him in the long run.

John cannot expect any help from his mother. She is the reason why he is different from the others in the Reservation. Linda leads a precarious life. Not only does she indulge in numerous affairs, she also drinks heavily and spends her days in a vegetative state of intoxication. She harbours ambivalent feelings for John: In the World State, where Linda was conditioned, being a mother is outdated and embarrassing. Her pregnancy made it impossible for her to return to the London she longs for. Having suffered humiliation at the hands of the Indian women of the village, Linda physically attacks her own son, only to shower him afterwards with signs of affection: "'Little idiot!' she shouted; and then, suddenly, she began to slap him. Slap, slap ... 'Linda,' he cried out. 'Oh, mother, don't!' 'I'm not your mother. I won't be your mother.' ... Suddenly she put her arms round him and kissed him again and again." (p. 160) John feels responsible for Linda's fateful dilemma and is plagued by feelings of guilt. He feels responsible for her premature death from drugs, which he has been unable to prevent.

John turns to masochism

Rejected as an outsider and suffering from low self-esteem as a result, John decides to prove his own worth. He spends a night on his own in the Reservation choosing not to eat anything for several days (see p. 171/172). He indulges in ascetic exercises which step into the realms of masochism. John tells Bernard Marx: "...'Once,' he went on, 'I did something that none of the others did: I stood against a rock in the middle of the day, in summer, with my arms out, like Jesus on the cross.' 'What on earth for?' 'I wanted to know what it was like being crucified. Hanging there in the sun...' " (p. 172) Then John's actions become truly masochistic. He begins to whip himself when he thinks of Lenina: "But it was still the presence of Lenina that haunted him. Lenina whom he had promised to forget. ... The whip was hanging on the nail by the door... In a frenzy the Savage ran back to the house, seized it, whirled it. The knotted cords bit into his flesh." (p. 299/300)

He finds consolation and comfort in Shakespeare's works

Loneliness and chance inspire John to begin to read in the Reservation. Popé gives him the works of Shakespeare. Rejected by the other boys in the Reservation and cast in the role of the outsider, John finds consolation in reading: "'Rags, rags!' the boys used to shout at him. 'But I can read,' he said to himself, 'and they can't. They don't even know what reading is.' ... The more the boys pointed and sang, the harder he read." (p. 163) The combination of reading Shakespeare's works and his understanding of Indian culture which he learns from Mitsima finally helps John to develop his norms, his own morals and conscience. He

The collapse of
his persona

creates a persona for himself which does give him a certain strength, but his ideal is also clearly ambivalent as his psychopathic behaviour in London demonstrates in such a terrible way.

His psychopathic tendencies manifest themselves when Lenina approaches him suggestively and he reacts violently: out of fear that her seductiveness could destroy the persona which he has painstakingly constructed for himself. In this situation John just about manages to stay in control. When he is visited at his lighthouse by a crowd who are curious to see him whipping himself, he does not succeed. The situation degenerates into an orgy in which John joins in. His suicide can be seen as the consequence of his losing this image, the ideal that he has built up for himself. He has lost his self-respect.