Scientific Feudalism: Reconstruction of the Medieval Hierarchy in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

Muhammad Maaz

Ph.D. Scholar

Southwest University

Chongqing, P.R China

maazasrar@gmail.com

Abstract

Are we truly living in a scientifically advanced world where science and technology serve humanity, or have they become tools of control disguised as progress? This study explores Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as a profound critique of such misuse, examining how the novel constructs a futuristic caste system that mirrors the fixed social orders of the medieval past while cloaking itself in the rhetoric of progress, efficiency, and stability. Through close reading, this paper identifies three major pillars of what may be called Huxley's "scientific feudalism": biological predestination, conditioned consent, and visual hierarchy. These mechanisms ensure that individuals not only perform their roles without resistance but also take pleasure in doing so, perceiving their positions in the social structure as both natural and desirable. Beneath the surface of modernity and technological advancement lies a meticulously engineered society where human freedom and individuality are sacrificed for the illusion of stability. By mapping the parallels between medieval feudalism and Huxley's imagined future, this study argues that *Brave New World* transcends dystopian speculation to expose a deeper philosophical concern; the dehumanizing potential of science when subordinated to political and ideological control. Ultimately, Huxley warns that the technologies designed to liberate

Doi: 10.24113/ijohmn.v12i2.362 Received 2 January, Accepted 5 April 2026

humanity may instead perfect its subjugation, revealing that the greatest danger to civilization lies not in scientific progress itself, but in its exploitation to sustain systems of power.

Keywords: Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Medievalism, Scientific Feudalism, Dehumanization.

1. Introduction

Feudalism, as it functioned in medieval Europe, was a socio-political system built upon rigid hierarchies of land, labor, and loyalty. At the heart of the medieval feudal order lay a network of mutual obligations binding lords and vassals, a system legitimized by birthright, the control of land, and the authority of religious sanction. Political and economic power flowed in a descending chain, from monarchs to nobles, from the nobility to the clergy and knights, and ultimately to the serfs, who labored on the land in return for protection yet remained legally and spiritually bound to their station. Despite later portrayals that cast it in a nostalgic light, feudalism functioned as a rigid and deeply unequal structure, allowing virtually no opportunity for social advancement. It rested on the conviction that an individual's position in the world was fixed from birth, a conviction manifested not only in material distinctions; evident in dress, dwellings, and occupation, but also embedded in the collective consciousness, perpetuated through inherited beliefs and sustained across generations.

In *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley recasts this medieval hierarchical model through the mechanisms of modern science and technology. The World State dispenses with the theological foundations and hereditary aristocracy that once legitimized social order, substituting in their place a system of control rooted in genetic design, caste determination from birth, and the systematic shaping of thought and desire through psychological conditioning. Huxley's dystopia operates on the same foundational principle as medieval feudalism, that individuals should remain fixed within a hierarchical order, but it updates this logic with the tools of modern science. Each citizen is produced, conditioned, and distributed according to the

needs of the system. The different castes of people are produced for different roles, such as Alphas are designed to lead, Epsilons to serve, and all intermediate castes are satisfied within the roles they are given. The difference, and the danger, lies in the fact that this structure is not imposed from above but built into the very biology and psychology of its subjects. In this new form of feudalism, which the present paper proposes to be called 'scientific feudalism', there is no need for force or fear; control is maintained through the engineering of consent and the elimination of alternatives.

This paper defines 'scientific feudalism' as the biotechnologically enforced caste system where societal hierarchy is rigidly maintained through artificial means (genetic engineering, conditioning, and psychological manipulation) rather than inherited nobility or divine right. It mimics the fixed social orders of medieval feudalism but replaces religious and birth-based justifications with (pseudo)scientific ones. Although there are other related frameworks in existence, but they do not fully grasp the kind of system portrayed in Huxley's novel. Yanis Varoufakis employs the concept of 'technofeudalism' to characterize the dynamics of the contemporary global economy, wherein major technology corporations assume a role analogous to that of feudal lords in the medieval era. In this framework, land, the traditional basis of feudal power, is replaced by control over digital infrastructures, online markets, and the accumulation of data. Smaller enterprises and individuals, therefore, find themselves dependent upon these corporate platforms for visibility, access, and participation in the digital sphere, much as peasants once relied on feudal lords for subsistence and protection (Varoufakis 129-131).

While terms such as technocracy and biopolitics have been central to discussions of power and control in modern societies, they also fall short of fully capturing the unique system at work in Huxley's World State. Technocracy refers to a form of governance in which scientists, engineers, and technical experts hold authority, valuing efficiency and empirical decision-making over democratic processes. Though the World State operates under

technocratic ideals (governed by Controllers and planners), technocracy alone does not account for the rigid, biologically enforced caste divisions that define the novel's social structure. Similarly, Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, which explains how states regulate populations by managing life, health, reproduction, and desire, is vital for understanding how bodies are shaped and controlled (Foucault). Yet biopolitics emphasizes fluid regulatory mechanisms, not the fixed, caste-based hierarchy portrayed in our selected text. None of the terms fully address the way science in *Brave New World* is used not just to manage or govern, but to recreate a hereditary caste system where individuals are manufactured, standardized, and psychologically conditioned to serve roles assigned to them before birth. Hence this paper proposes the term 'scientific feudalism' to describe this system.

Ultimately, this study approaches *Brave New World* as a sophisticated reworking of feudal hierarchy, reconfigured through the mechanisms of scientific advancement and industrial organization. The following sections will explore this idea in depth, focusing on three key dimensions: biological predestination, conditioned consent, and visual hierarchy, each of which contributes to the maintenance of the World State's superficial harmony while concealing the deeper structures of control at its core.

2. Literature Review

Feudalism has long been a focal point of medieval historiography, with scholars debating its origins, structures, and socio-political implications. Traditional interpretations, such as those by Marc Bloch in *Feudal Society*, emphasize the decentralized political order and mutual obligations between lords and vassals as the foundation of medieval European governance (Bloch). Susan Reynolds later challenged this orthodox model in *Fiefs and Vassals*, arguing that feudalism as a coherent, uniform system is a modern construct imposed on a more fluid and varied historical reality (Reynolds). More recent studies have sought to dismantle the monolithic image of feudalism by exploring its diverse regional expressions and by questioning

whether the term can be meaningfully applied beyond its Western European context, as in examinations of Japan or the Islamic world. Marxist historians, notably Perry Anderson, have approached the subject from a socio-economic perspective, interpreting feudalism as an intermediate mode of production bridging the systems of slavery and capitalism (Anderson). Taken together, this body of scholarship suggests that while the concept of feudalism remains a valuable analytical tool, its definition has become increasingly nuanced, debated, and dependent on historical and cultural context.

In her groundbreaking essay "The Tyranny of a Construct," Elizabeth A. R. Brown challenges the deeply ingrained scholarly habit of treating feudalism as a fixed and systematized framework for understanding medieval Europe. She contends that the term is less a product of medieval reality than a modern construct, shaped by historians' desire to impose structural order on the past. Brown highlights the inconsistencies and contradictions in the definitions advanced by influential figures such as Marc Bloch, F. L. Ganshof, and Joseph Strayer, illustrating how feudalism has become an ideologically charged label rather than a precise analytical category. The result, she argues, is an oversimplified model that privileges coherence over accuracy, often sidelining evidence that resists easy categorization and fostering a misleading impression of systemic uniformity (Brown 1063-1081). This critical interrogation of feudalism as a construct provides a useful backdrop for examining how modern cultural texts, particularly dystopian fiction, mobilize "feudal" frameworks not as historical realities but as ideological metaphors.

Dystopian fiction operates as a critical lens, reflecting and interrogating the ideological frameworks of contemporary society by projecting them into speculative futures. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* stands as a landmark in the genre, envisioning a meticulously rationalized caste system maintained not through overt coercion, but through the calculated use of science and psychological conditioning. This mode of governance retains the fixed hierarchy and birth-based stratification of traditional feudal orders, yet replaces hereditary lordship with

the mechanisms of biopolitical control and the subtle imperatives of psychological conditioning. George Orwell's *1984*, by contrast, emphasizes surveillance and state terror, presenting a more overtly repressive dystopia. Scholars like Tom Moylan argue that dystopias such as Huxley's critique ideology through cognitive estrangement, wherein the reader is alienated from the familiar enough to recognize the underlying mechanisms of domination in a concerned ideology (Moylan 33). In *Brave New World*, the mechanisms of domination are soft power, conditioning, and pharmaceutical compliance, making it a predictive exploration of the fusion between science and subjugation.

Recent critical discourse expands the scope of dystopian critique to include capitalist consumerism, technological determinism, and reproductive control, all key elements in Huxley's imagined world. *Brave New World* remains notably cynical in its portrayal of total social submission. By framing scientific innovation as a tool for maintaining hereditary castes and emotional passivity, Huxley offers a dystopian critique that aligns with Elizabeth A. R. Brown's concerns about historical constructs like feudalism, where abstract systems become tyrannical when imposed rigidly on lived realities.

3. Reconstruction of the Medieval Hierarchy in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

A recurrent concern in dystopian literature is the deployment of science as a mechanism of domination, what Michel Foucault conceptualizes as biopower, the governance of populations through pervasive, institutionalized regulation rather than open force. In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, such scientific control saturates every dimension of existence, from reproductive interventions like the "Bokanovsky Process" to the relentless shaping of thought and behavior through conditioning, and the pacifying effects of soma. Huxley's vision presents a world in which science ceases to be a vehicle for human emancipation and instead becomes the apparatus that disciplines, restricts, and ultimately defines the boundaries of life itself. Critics such as Neil Postman have noted that Huxley's vision differs from Orwell's in its method

of control: not through fear, but through the sedation of desire, making the people love their servitude (Postman xix-xx). In *Brave New World*, science becomes a form of social engineering, a rationalized mechanism of caste stability, emotional suppression, and manufactured happiness, key components of what this paper has termed scientific feudalism. Brad Congdon argues that *Brave New World* critiques not science or eugenics themselves but the way Fordist consumerism becomes a secular religion that exploits humanity's biological "religious emotion" to legitimize and organize a planned scientific society (Congdon 85-102).

Huxley exposes how scientific progress, far from liberating humanity, reinvents feudal oppression through genetic engineering and psychological conditioning, a system where, as the Director boasts, 'We predestine and condition' (Huxley 14). Like medieval serfs bound by birth, the Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons are biologically engineered for their roles, creating a caste system that parodies medieval feudalism while masquerading as "Community, Identity, Stability" (1).

While medieval feudalism used divine right and birth-based roles, Huxley replaces it with science. In the foreword of the 1946 edition of the novel, we find Huxley explaining the main vision and theme of his book. He clearly states that the "theme of *Brave New World* is not the advancement of science as such; it is the advancement of science as it affects human individuals" (Huxley xii). He argues that science needs some complementary force for it to be used in the right way, in the service of humans. For him, that complementary force is faith. He believes in the use of science for the service of humanity, and is not against science in its totality. He says, "Science and technology would be used as though…they had been made for man, not (as at present and still more so in the *Brave New World*) as though man were to be adapted and enslaved to them (Huxley x).

The caste system in the novel is upheld through conditioned consent. The different classes of people are conditioned to love their servitude. Huxley believes that "A really efficient

totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude (Huxley xvi). Huxley believes that the controllers of the World State condition and engineer the masses in such a way that they love the way they are, and would never resist the existing system. There is also a visual hierarchy in the novel. Caste identity is clearly defined in the uniforms the different caste people have to wear, the kind of transport they have to use, the type of housing they have to live in, and so on. For example, the Delta caste has to wear a Khaki uniform as Huxley writes, "eight-month-old babies, all exactly alike (a Bokanovsky Group, it was evident) and all (since their caste was Delta) dressed in khaki" (21). These tropes (biological predestination, conditioned consent, and visual hierarchy) are discussed in detail below.

3.1. Biological Predestination

In the very beginning of the novel, we find the director of the London Hatchery say "We also predestine and condition. We decant our babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future ... 'He was going to say 'future World controllers,' but correcting himself, said 'future Directors of Hatcheries,' instead" (14). While explaining the work they do in the Hatchery to the visiting students, he carefully describes the necessary details while also being careful not to give extra information as that will disturb the social predestination of the students themselves. The verb "decant" reduces human reproduction to an industrial process, evoking the image of bottled commodities rather than born individuals. This lexical choice reinforces the State's objectification of life, framing human beings as manufactured products rather than autonomous subjects. The passive construction, "are decanted" further erases human agency from the reproductive process. Second, the pairing of "predestine and condition" establishes a causal relationship between biological determinism and psychological shaping. The term "predestine" carries theological connotations of immutable

fate, here repurposed to justify state-mandated caste roles through (pseudo)scientific authority. The subsequent "condition" reveals the State's twofold control: not only are citizens biologically designed for specific roles, but they are also behaviorally programmed to accept them without question. Third, the condensed listing of caste destinies "sewage workers or future Directors of Hatcheries" performs two ideological functions: it juxtaposes society's extremes (lowest laborers and mid-tier administrators) to imply a complete, natural social spectrum, and the Director's abrupt self-correction (avoiding 'World Controllers') demonstrates the State's careful regulation of information to maintain the illusion of meritocracy. By omitting the ruling class from the list, the Director obscures the State's most concentrated power structures. There is only a description of different types of workers 'produced' for different jobs, such as;

> On Rack 10 rows of next generation's chemical workers were being trained in the toleration of lead, caustic soda, tar, chlorine. The first of a batch of two hundred and fifty embryonic rocket-plane engineers was just passing the eleven hundred metre mark on Rack 3. (18)

Unlike feudal societies that appealed to divine will, the World State legitimizes hierarchy through the Machiavellian language of efficiency and progress. This shift from theological to technocratic justification reflects Huxley's critique of how scientific discourse can be weaponized to defend oppression. He says in the foreword:

> Technically and ideologically, we are still a long way from bottled babies and Bokanovsky groups of semi-morons. But by a. f. 600, who knows what may not be happening? Meanwhile the other characteristic features of that happier and more stable world —the equivalents of soma and hypnopaedia and the scientific caste system—are probably not more than three or four generations away. (Huxley xviii)

Huxley directly extends the novel's theme of social predestination by demonstrating how ostensibly speculative biotechnological developments (bottled babies, Bokanovsky groups) emerge as naturalized instruments of control within just “three or four generations”. The rhetorical shift in the argument, from the Director's clinical description of caste engineering (“We predestine and condition”) to Huxley’s prophetic speculation reveals the dialectical process by which dystopian technologies transition from theoretical possibilities to institutionalized realities. Huxley’s menacing question “who knows what may not be happening?”, coupled with the precise generational timeframe, constructs a continuum between present technological capabilities and future social stratification, mirroring how the World State's caste system evolved from earlier, seemingly benign scientific advancements. This intertextual dialogue between the novel's internal reality and Huxley's meta-commentary emphasizes his core warning: that social predestination becomes increasingly inescapable as its mechanisms become more technologically sophisticated and ideologically normalized. The social predestination is very strictly regulated in laboratories. Nothing can go wrong as the numbers are fixed. Henry Foster explains to the visiting students;

> The lower the caste, the shorter the oxygen. The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy percent of normal oxygen, you got dwarfs. At less than seventy eyeless monsters… “But in Epsilons”, said Mr. Foster very justly, “we don't need human intelligence. (15)

The clinical account of oxygen deprivation exposes one of the World State’s most insidious strategies for enforcing biological predestination. Foster’s detached description of teratogenic outcomes illustrate how the idiom of science can neutralize the moral weight of systemic harm, reframing deliberate impairment as nothing more than a technical procedure. The specification of exact thresholds, such as reducing oxygen to seventy percent of normal, echoes the precision of laboratory protocols, revealing how quantification itself becomes a tool

of dehumanization. In this system, the physical and intellectual capacities of each caste are not expressions of natural human variation, but engineered parameters calibrated to predetermined social functions.

The assertion, “we don’t need human intelligence in Epsilons,” encapsulates the ideological essence of the World State: intellect holds value only when it aligns with preassigned social purposes. This recalls the medieval three-estates framework, in which the mental capacities of peasants were regarded as irrelevant to their role, yet in Huxley’s dystopia the logic is rearticulated through biochemical engineering, transforming feudal disregard into the calculated precision of scientific design. The passage's power derives from its juxtaposition of cold physiological cause-and-effect with profound ethical violation, exemplifying how scientific management perfects, rather than eliminates, historical forms of oppression. On the contrary, the relatively upper caste, where a certain degree of intelligence is needed are treated differently; “Eton is reserved exclusively for upper-caste boys and girls. One egg, one adult. It makes education more difficult of course. But as they'll be called upon to take responsibilities and deal with unexpected emergencies, it can't be helped” (192). The upper-caste boys and girls will have the necessary education, because they will need it for the specific role they have to play in the predestined caste chosen for them. Unlike the lower-caste Epsilons who are kept on low oxygen to make their brains weak, the upper-caste boys and girls are kept like an aristocratic class who will deal with more intricate matters in future.

3.2. Conditioned Consent

As mentioned earlier, the caste system is upheld in a way that the people belonging to each caste are conditioned to love their caste, and the respective role they have to play. To sustain this structure, there is a psychological base at work, as there is a genetic one. The visiting students function as eyes for a reader to see how the Hatchery works. We read Henry Foster and the Director explain to the students; “We condition them to thrive on heat…Our

colleagues upstairs will teach them to love it…that is the secret of happiness and virtue — liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny" (17). They train workers for very specific jobs and they are conditioned to love their job. They will always believe they are the best caste and be grateful they are not anything else. The director's use of words like 'unescapable social destiny' solidifies our argument that there is no chance of upward mobility in the scientific feudal society of the World State in the same manner as there were rare chances of upward mobility in the medieval feudal society. Their fate is determined at birth. The five castes in the World State replicate the medieval feudal hierarchy. Alphas act as the nobility, engineered to rule. Betas are the clergy/administrators who are skilled but subservient. Gammas/Deltas/Epsilons play the role of the peasantry or serfs who are physically normal but mentally hampered.

The lower-caste people are made less human by removing certain feelings and emotions from them (which is true for all classes but in different degrees). They are deprived of loving nature and reading books as both activities do not serve the purpose the state wants of them. "A love of nature keeps no factories busy. It was decided to abolish the love of nature, at any rate among the lower classes" (24-25), and "They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an 'instinctive' hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from books and botany all their lives" (23). While all citizens of the World State are conditioned to different levels, the lower castes, particularly the Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons are subject to the most aggressive forms of psychological limitation. Their humanity is gradually erased not through violence or visible oppression, but by carefully curated absences: the absence of critical thought, of aesthetic appreciation, of emotional nuance. From infancy, they are conditioned to reject nature and literature, two domains historically associated with personal reflection, spiritual insight, and inner freedom. These chilling details reveal the

core logic of the World State: eliminate that which does not serve production, and more crucially, eliminate the desire for that which cannot be commodified.

By systematically stripping away emotion and intellectual curiosity, the World State reduces its lower castes to mere cogs within an industrial apparatus, recalling the serf's position in the feudal economy, bound not only by the demands of physical labor but also by the denial of education, autonomy, and upward movement. Huxley constructs not simply a social hierarchy, but an epistemological one: certain groups are designed to possess knowledge, while others are biologically and psychologically shaped to remain in ignorance. Both nature and literature, domains that might nurture alternative visions of life, are deliberately suppressed, lest they awaken discontent or generate ideas incompatible with the State's objectives. In this framework, control is exercised through a mechanism more insidious than coercion or surveillance: the eradication of the very impulse to desire something beyond the prescribed order. The lower castes are not merely resigned to their circumstances; they are fashioned to believe that nothing beyond them is worth aspiring to.

Throughout *Brave New World*, one of the most unsettling aspects of the World State's control is not merely the enforcement of caste hierarchy but the internalization of that hierarchy by its citizens. Individuals across all levels of society are not only placed into a rigid caste system, they are trained to cherish it. Rather than resenting those in positions above them or questioning the fairness of the structure, they express genuine gratitude for being exactly who and what they are. Lenina and Henry Foster's exchange is one such example; "I'm glad I'm not an Epsilon," said Lenina, with conviction. "And if you were an Epsilon," said Henry, "your conditioning would have made you no less thankful that you weren't a Beta or an Alpha" (88). The process is so obvious that Henry Foster, himself an Alpha caste member, knows how exactly their Alpha caste, and the rest of the castes are conditioned in the same manner. It shows that even individuals who benefit the most from the system are aware of their own

psychological programming, yet remain unquestioning. That awareness does not translate into resistance; it is instead folded into the very logic of their conditioning.

It is such an effective system that even though they know in a certain way that they are conditioned, they can never think of resisting against the system and the existing social order. This effectiveness is not rooted in deception but in an engineered sincerity that renders resistance psychologically impossible. People do not pretend to be content; they are genuinely incapable of discontent. Even the recognition of one's conditioning is absorbed into the system itself. As the Controller Mustapha Mond later explains, “One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them…People believe in God because they've been conditioned to believe in God" (282). Mond’s commentary reveals a world where belief has become a product of programming rather than thought. Belief, in this context, is not a choice but an effect of institutional design. The citizens of the World State are not persuaded or forced to comply; they are built to comply, from the genetic level to the conceptual frameworks by which they understand the world. The result is a terrifyingly efficient form of control, one in which freedom is not taken but rendered meaningless, because the desire for it has been conditioned out of existence. Huxley's dystopia thus reveals a society in which the very tools of critical thought, belief, and self-awareness have been co-opted by the state, not to provoke rebellion, but to sustain perfect submission.

3.3. Visual Hierarchy

The final aspect of our argument is the visual hierarchy. Throughout the novel, we see a clearly defined difference among the ways the people of the different castes live their lives. They are taught in their sleep at their production stage that each caste has their own color of uniform to wear. They are conditioned to love their own color and abhor the rest. The lessons are called the Elementary Class Consciousness;

> Elementary Class Consciousness… "all wear green," said a soft but very distinct voice, beginning in the middle of a sentence, "and Delta Children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta". (30)

This color-coded system functions not merely as a visual aid to distinguish between castes, but as a deeper symbolic mechanism for reinforcing social boundaries in everyday life. In the World State, color becomes ideology, an extension of state doctrine embedded in the most mundane aspects of being. Huxley's society translates complex social hierarchies into immediate sensory signals, enabling even a child to comprehend and internalize their place without deliberate thought. Colors function simultaneously as markers of identity and as emotional signifiers, each evoking responses of pride, revulsion, superiority, or inferiority. This mechanism recalls the role of dress and insignia in historical caste or class systems, where visual differentiation both indicated rank and reinforced psychological separation. In this context, such distinctions are not merely observed, they are ingrained during early development, embedding class awareness deeply within the subconscious. The biases instilled through hypnopaedic instruction require no rational justification; they are experienced as instinctive truths. In this way, aversion to particular colors becomes a surrogate for social prejudice, maintaining division efficiently without overt coercion.

Furthermore, the system of visual hierarchy effectively precludes any possibility of solidarity among castes. By accentuating and aestheticizing difference, it creates an environment in which genuine empathy cannot emerge. The color system trains individuals to perceive each other through superficial markers rather than shared humanity. Even leisure, play, and socialization are policed in this visual manner. A Beta child, for instance, is not only conditioned to avoid Deltas or Epsilons but also to feel repulsed by their appearance,

specifically, the color they represent. This is a form of aesthetic stratification that transforms caste division into a matter of taste. The result is a society in which inequality is not merely endured but embraced, where discrimination is enacted not through explicit policy but through subconscious hostility. Huxley's world, then, is one where the visual is political, and where the power to see and be seen is always already structured by the imperatives of control. The visual order, encoded through color, ultimately serves to erase the possibility of cross-caste identification, ensuring that each individual, regardless of awareness, becomes a guardian of the very system that subjugates them.

> The upper-caste people specifically have a contempt for the lower-caste life. They take special pride in their lives and abhor everything associated with the lower castes. There are significant visual differences in their daily lives. We read in the novel that the upper-caste people use helicopters as the main source of transportation, or other alternatives by air. The lower-caste people use public monorail trains in contrast; "Every two and a half minutes a bell and the screech of whistles announced the departure of one of the light monorail trains which carried the lower caste golfers back from their separate course to the metropolis" (85). The lower-caste people have their separate golf courses. There is a clear segregation of the castes on all levels. They cannot even play together. As in the traditional medieval feudal structure, the people of the upper-castes had comparatively luxurious houses, we find that dichotomy in the World State as well. There is a visual description of how the housing differs for different castes; "Beneath them lay the buildings of the Golf Club—the huge Lower Caste barracks and, on the other side of a dividing wall, the smaller houses reserved for Alpha and Beta members" (86).

This separation is not merely logistical; it is ideological. Every material detail of life in the World State has been curated to reinforce class difference and to transform it into a lived

reality that feels natural, even inevitable. The architecture of the society mirrors the architecture of the mind: just as people are psychologically conditioned to internalize their caste, the spaces they inhabit are designed to ensure they are constantly reminded of it. Modes of transportation, housing structures, and recreational zones are all spatial signifiers of rank. The helicopters, used exclusively by upper-caste citizens, do more than provide mobility; they elevate them both literally and symbolically above the rest of society. Airborne travel becomes a visual metaphor for social standing, reinforcing the naturalized superiority of Alpha and Beta castes. Meanwhile, the monorail; shared, ground-bound, and governed by timed intervals, embodies the mechanical, utilitarian nature of lower-caste life. Even leisure activities like golf, which might imply equality in other societies, are segregated, preventing any chance of cross-caste camaraderie or the perception of shared interests.

The built environment in *Brave New World* thus replicates the spatial divisions of medieval feudalism, where the manor, the castle, and the village delineated not only physical distance but social order. Huxley's narrative makes it clear that such division is not simply a byproduct of caste but a tool for sustaining it. The dividing wall between Alpha/Beta homes and lower-caste barracks at the golf club is more than a physical barrier; it is a psychological boundary that ensures each caste sees the other only as distant, unfamiliar, or inferior. It prevents any collapse of the illusion that the social order is both desirable and necessary. In this sense, the state's control extends into the geography of daily life. Where one lives, how one moves, and who one sees are all governed by one's caste, leaving no room for aspiration, comparison, or even curiosity. As with historical feudal systems, where power was maintained through spatial dominance and symbolic distance, Huxley's World State relies on visual and architectural stratification to entrench inequality. It is a society built not only on hierarchy, but on the constant, visible affirmation of that hierarchy.

The monorail station becomes a symbolic site of convergence for the principles of modern technological society and ancient caste systems. "Crowds of lower-caste workers were queued up in front of the monorail station —seven or eight hundred Gamma, Delta and Epsilon men and women, with not more than a dozen faces and statures between them" (196). The lower castes are not only segregated spatially, as seen in their separate transport systems, housing, and golf courses, but also ontologically. Their sameness in "faces and statures" signals a society that sees them not as citizens but as functional units of labor. Unlike the medieval peasant who could still lay claim to a human soul within a theological system, these workers are products designed and assembled with no illusions of uniqueness. In this way, Huxley pushes the logic of feudalism to its scientific extreme. The caste system is no longer a cultural inheritance but a manufactured reality, one that transforms inequality from a historical accident into a permanent biological design. The masses at the monorail platform serve as a visual embodiment of the dystopia's core achievement: a caste of people who are not merely controlled by the system, but constructed by it. In medieval societies, social hierarchy was often naturalized through divine order; in Huxley's dystopia, it is enforced through genetic determinism. The Bokanovsky Process becomes a technological analog to divine will;

> "Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!" Major instruments of social stability. Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg. "Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!". (6)

This process assigns fate at the cellular level, ensuring that the lower castes cannot dream, think, or function outside their intended roles. What Huxley critiques here is not simply the loss of individuality but the deliberate destruction of potential. When a factory is staffed entirely by genetically identical clones, it eliminates not just diversity of thought but the

possibility of dissent or disruption. In this system, stability is synonymous with stagnation, and uniformity is mistaken for peace. Furthermore, this scientific replication of the feudal model is not concealed; it is celebrated. That the Director proclaims this process with such pride signals a cultural shift where domination is no longer hidden behind ideology but worn openly as efficiency, progress, or even virtue. The rhetoric of productivity conceals the underlying reality of oppression. In the World State, lower castes are constrained not by overt laws or coercion, but by the very biological programming with which they are engineered. This form of what I call scientific feudalism functions not as an imperfect social order, but as a meticulously optimized system: its mechanisms of control are so exacting that dissent is not merely discouraged, it is rendered inconceivable. Social stability is maintained, not through negotiation or compromise, but by reducing human beings to their functional roles.

In a nutshell, Huxley's *Brave New World* offers a chilling depiction of scientific feudalism, in which technological advancement and meticulous planning do not liberate humanity but rather refine its subjugation. Unlike traditional feudal hierarchies legitimized by divine authority, the World State enforces its social order through genetic engineering, psychological conditioning, and visual codification, producing a population whose roles are predetermined biologically and embraced emotionally. The systematic manipulation of identity, from the mass production of lower-caste bodies to color-coded uniforms and segregated spaces, replaces religious or moral justification with a cold, empirical logic that renders inequality both natural and efficient. Huxley's vision cautions that when science is divorced from ethical responsibility, it can become an instrument of total control, shaping human life into fixed functions under the guise of stability and contentment. As he notes in his foreword, the peril lies not in science itself, but in its unrestrained application, adapting humans to machinery rather than the reverse. Within the World State, science ceases to serve humanity

and instead molds humanity to serve the system, ensuring that the new serfs of this meticulously ordered society accept, and even cherish, the invisible chains that bind them.

4. Conclusion

This study has argued that Huxley's novel depicts more than a mere totalitarian or technocratic state; it presents a rigid, stratified caste system, carefully engineered and upheld through both biological design and psychological conditioning. To capture the nature of this dystopian arrangement, the concept of 'scientific feudalism' has been employed, denoting a technologically orchestrated structure of hereditary inequality in which individuals are biologically produced for designated roles and socially conditioned to accept, and even embrace, their position within the hierarchy. By framing Huxley's dystopia through this term, we uncover not just a critique of science, but a warning about the use of scientific advancement to replicate and refine systems of domination. As real-world technologies such as genetic engineering, AI-driven surveillance, and behavioral programming continue to develop, Huxley's vision remains disturbingly relevant. In this light, *Brave New World* becomes more than a cautionary tale; it is a meditation on the ethical responsibilities that must accompany scientific progress. The world it presents is stable, efficient, and orderly, but at the cost of freedom, individuality, and humanity. The danger, as Huxley foresaw, is not science itself, but its capacity to entrench old hierarchies under the guise of reason and order. Scientific feudalism, then, names a future where the past is not erased but mechanized; where people no longer serve kings, but systems.

Conflict of Interest: The corresponding author, on behalf of second author, confirms that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

attribution. Author(s) are also permitted to post their work in institutional repositories, social media, or other platforms.

Works Cited

Anderson, Perry. *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*. Verso, 1974.

Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society*. Translated by L. A. Manyon, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961.

Brown, Elizabeth A. R. *"The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe." The American Historical Review*, vol. 79, no. 4, 1974, pp. 1063–1088. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1869563.

Congdon, Brad. " 'Community, Identity, Stability': The Scientific Society and the Future of Religion in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*." *English Studies in Canada*, vol. 37, nos. 3–4, 2011, pp. 83–105.

Foucault, Michel. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. Edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey, Picador, 2003.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Harper & Row, 1946.

Moylan, Tom. *Demand the impossible: Science fiction and the utopian imagination*. Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2014.

Orwell, George. *1984*. Harvill Secker, 1949.

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. Penguin, 1985.

Reynolds, Susan. *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted*. Oxford University Press, 1994.

Varoufakis, Yanis. *Technofeudalism: What killed capitalism*. Melville House, 2024.