



Spatial Construction of *Brave New World* from the Perspective of Literary Cartography

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Abstract—Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* constructs two contrasting yet mutually reflective social spaces through the juxtaposition of the World State and the Savage Reservation, revealing the tensions among technological rationality, institutional discipline, and human nature. Drawing upon Robert Tally's theory of literary cartography, this paper examines the awakening of topophrenia and the spatial construction of the novel from the perspective of literary space. It focuses on the metaphorical functions of literary cartography in representing civilizational conflicts, cultural divergence and ideological tensions, which together constitute a complex network of power discourse. Furthermore, this paper investigates the influence of power space on character identity formation and explores the utopian paradox and dystopian essence embedded in the novel from the perspective of heterotopian space. The study demonstrates that the World State, characterized by a highly standardized and institutionalized spatial order, eliminates individual differences through technological rationality and disciplinary mechanisms, whereas the Savage Reservation, as a heterotopian space, preserves primitive human emotions, religious beliefs, and experiences of suffering. This paper argues that literary cartography serves not only as a spatial narrative strategy but also as an intellectual practice to rethink social order, power relations and the potential of free space in the future, which provides a new theoretical perspective for studies on spatial politics in dystopian literature.



Keywords—*Brave New World*, literary cartography, opposed spaces, other spaces, power spaces

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of literary cartography, associated with the American scholar Robert T. Tally Jr., occupies an important place in contemporary studies of literary space. Fredric Jameson remarked that, before Tally, no one had traced as a whole the development of spatial practices and spatial thought in contemporary theory (Fang, 2021). Over recent decades, spatiality has come to rival temporality in accounts of literary narrative; Eric S. Rabkin discussed the relation between spatial form and plot (Rabkin, 1977). Spatial approaches to literature now draw on the work of Henri Lefebvre, Edward W. Soja, Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Yuri Lotman, and other scholars, whose concepts include the production of space, Thirdspace, spaces of power, binary spatial structures, and cultural semiotics. Tally's work ranges across literary cartography, topophrenia, geocriticism, and utopia. His contributions

involve the formulation of concepts, theoretical analysis, and critical practice. Influenced by Jameson's cognitive mapping and utopian thought, he understands literary writing as a form of mapping and as a significant part of contemporary utopian thinking. In *Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation, and the World System*, he treats utopia as a way of mapping the world system (Tally, 2013). On this account, literary cartography uses the imagination to think through apparent impossibilities and represent the world system in an age of globalization (Shen, 2021). A novel can thus offer a figurative image of the world, a possibility especially evident in utopian literature.

This article takes Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as a practice of literary cartography. In the novel, material abundance, rapidly developing technology, totalitarian conditioning, and the chemical management of mental life

form the cultural setting for Huxley's anxious projection of modern society's future. Since its publication in the 1930s, the novel has attracted sustained scholarly attention. Alongside Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* and George Orwell's *1984*, it is often grouped among three major dystopian novels. Scholars in China and elsewhere have examined it through totalitarianism, personality development, technological alienation, and spatial discipline. Taking Tally's literary cartography and geocriticism as its main theoretical basis, this article interprets the novel's spatial representation and metaphorical significance through the mapping of narrative space, the formation of character identity, the metaphor of power space, and the possibilities of the future suggested by other spaces. The aim is to show how this visual way of reading shapes spatial images, deepens the novel's themes, and prompts readers to think about future social spaces.

II. THE AWAKENING OF TOPOPHRENIA IN A LOST SPACE

Tally's literary cartography brings together Jameson's cognitive mapping, Bertrand Westphal's geocriticism, and Henri Lefebvre's distinctions among forms of space. Jameson's thinking was itself influenced by Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan. He regards cognitive mapping as a way of understanding new postmodern spatiality: in a vast social space that seems impossible to represent, an individual needs a mapping project to locate relations with other people (Tally, 2021). Cognitive mapping does not produce a precise map of an actual place. Through the interaction of subject and space, it enables a changing critique of power structures, social institutions, and ideology. The resulting map is therefore a critical representation of a subject's place in a social whole, not a neutral diagram. In Tally's formulation, the subject needs to read the relations among institutions, practices, and people rather than merely identify a point on the ground. This understanding helped shape Tally's approach to spatial criticism and literary cartography. After repeated discussions with Tally, the Chinese scholar Fang Ying summarized the system as a progression from being, or topophilia, to writing, or literary cartography; from the text, or literary geography, to criticism, or geocriticism; and finally to theorization through cartography (Huang & Wu, 2025; Fang, 2021; Zhu et al., 2020).

Topophilia denotes the discomfort experienced in a place and a persistent anxiety about one's surroundings. It includes the fear of being spatially lost and calls for a cognitive map of the place one occupies. This gives rise to the cartographic imperative and, in turn, to mapping (Zhu et al., 2020). In reading or writing, this activity requires

continued reflection on the relation of people and things to the larger world. It attends to both the whole and the relations within it, represents the subject's situation in a place, and commonly takes shape in narrative writing. Chad Walsh describes the creators of fictional societies as concentrating on an ultimate dream or nightmare and enlarging or clarifying it so that readers can study and assess it (Walsh, 1962). Such narrative mapping is metaphorical. In utopian literature, the actions and routes of individuals or groups carry the story within a dynamic overall space that stands outside ordinary history. This process can bring about a sense of disorientation and anxiety about place, through which a subject attempts to construct a sense of self.

In *Brave New World*, Huxley invents a society that dates its years from Ford and replaces childbirth with the mass production of embryos through biological engineering. The first space presented is the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, where human beings are divided into castes. Alphas stand at the top, followed by Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and the Epsilon workers at the bottom. Bernard Marx is an Alpha, yet his short stature and appearance make him feel inferior: in the World State, being small is a mark associated with the lower castes (Huxley, 1975). His unusual character soon damages his social standing and makes him uneasy in familiar surroundings. His acute self-consciousness weighs heavily on him (Huxley, 1975). Aware that he thinks and behaves differently from others, he becomes anxious about what he cannot predict. The cartographic anxiety generated by topophilia leaves him unable to map himself and his environment in a meaningful way (Tally, 2016). The representational crisis associated with this anxiety creates a desire for narrative and prompts the activity of literary mapping (Fang, 2021). He therefore flies south to Propaganda House to seek out Helmholtz Watson, who also senses an independent life beneath his assigned role.

Helmholtz differs markedly from Bernard. He excels in sport, has access to material comforts, and has no shortage of social or sexual attention; yet sport, women, and communal activities have come to seem secondary to something he cannot name (Huxley, 1975). He feels unable to describe his fleeting inner perceptions with the vocabulary and accumulated knowledge available to him. The distinction matters: Bernard feels visibly marked as different, whereas Helmholtz has all the outward signs of success and nevertheless finds the language allotted to him inadequate. As Tally and Fang argue, a change of situation involves both a change in the subject's position and perspective and a change in the objective conditions in which an experience occurs (Tally & Fang, 2023). Bernard's and Helmholtz's unease arises from changes in

self-understanding as well as from their social circumstances. Their positions in space involve history, society, and psychological perception, rather than physical distance alone.

John faces a related difficulty. He is the son whom Linda, originally from the World State, gave birth to on the Reservation. Motherhood is stigmatized as something filthy in the World State, whereas the older society holds a different view of maternal identity. Linda's upbringing and beliefs make her an outsider on the Reservation. The resulting hostility extends to John. Other children isolate him, and as an adult he is barred from taking part in a ritual. Unable to discover a secure system of values around him, he turns to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to develop his understanding of emotion and the world. In his anxious situation, a form of mapping appears to offer an appropriate aesthetic and political practice (Tally, 2021). Psychological need and lived experience together impel him to travel to the World State, to understand that society and reconsider his own position.

III. CHARACTER IDENTITY ACROSS OPPOSED SPACES

Once topophilia emerges, space is no longer only a narrative background; it becomes a means of producing meaning, and the cartographic imperative follows. Huxley's writing performs an initial act of literary mapping. The author maps while readers redraw that map in the act of reading (Yao, 2024). By examining the represented landscape, readers and critics produce a second map in their own minds. Although the novel's society differs greatly from their own, its narrative map becomes a way to understand and consider their social space (Tally, 2021). As the story unfolds, the World State and the Savage Reservation move from separation toward contact. Bernard's, Helmholtz's, and John's identities are unsettled and repeatedly reconstituted as they move between, or imagine themselves across, these opposing spaces. This is more than geographical movement. It is a transition between systems of discourse in which individuals must redefine their positions under different spatial norms.

The two societies first meet directly when Bernard takes Lenina to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. Their journey is a turning point in the plot and a new act of mapping. Flying across the frontier between what the World State calls civilization and savagery, they encounter two opposed social spaces. On one side are soma, which produces artificial happiness, and such technologies as liquid air, vacuum vibrators, synthetic music, and escalator squash courts. On the other are drinking, hardship, and the Reservation's rugged landscape. The fence extends in an

uncompromising line over mountains, across salt flats and deserts, and through forests, ravines, peaks, and mesas, tracing a geometric design over uneven terrain (Huxley, 1975). Through the travellers' route and perspective, readers can reconstruct the Reservation's outline. The fence also runs across deep canyons, precipices, and flat-topped heights, transforming natural irregularity into what the narrative depicts as a proud geometric assertion of human will. The flight crosses a cultural and moral boundary as well as a physical one and offers an aerial view of both societies at once. After landing, the visitors walk in the shadow of a mesa, pass an outcrop, and climb a steep path through a water-cut ravine; the path twists in a zigzag among the gullies (Huxley, 1975). Their growing sense of disorientation reverses the apparent clarity of the aerial map. The World State appears brightly ordered, while the Reservation seems backward from their perspective. The contrast shows how spatial mapping and the construction of a subject's sense of self shape each other.

Bernard and Lenina meet John and his mother Linda and bring them back to the World State. The juxtaposition of the two spaces brings formerly separate social orders into direct conflict and forces the characters to confront incompatible ways of life. The people involved in this exchange act as catalysts for the further development of the map (Ma, 2018). The geographic and cultural differences between the two societies register in Bernard's and the others' contrasting responses. They also intensify John's sense of division. Raised between two sets of values yet accepted by neither, he cannot fully belong on the Reservation or accept the values taught by the World State. This double rejection leaves him at the margins of both.

The public spaces of the two societies form another contrast. Huxley depicts splendid places of entertainment in the World State. After work, Lenina and Henry go to the Westminster Abbey Cabaret. Coloured screens in its dome display a tropical sunset, while four hundred couples dance five-steps on the shining floor. At the height of the music and dance, they move together like twin embryos gently swaying in a sea of blood-surrogate (Huxley, 1975). The spectacle and the dancers' movement act as strokes in a spatial map of happiness and stability amid material abundance. Bernard's Solidarity Service presents a related scene. Every other Thursday he goes to the 320-metre-high Fordson Community Singery for a collective rite. Its recurrent Thursday schedule is as important to the scene as its architecture: participation is organized and repeated until belonging seems habitual. The recurrent ceremony draws him into a cycle of time and space. Outside, its white Carrara-surrogate façade gleams above Ludgate Hill; an immense red T stands at each corner of its helicopter

platform, and solemn synthetic music issues from twenty-four golden trumpets (Huxley, 1975). Architecture, sound, and ritual together create a quasi-religious atmosphere in which collective celebration offers an artificial sense of belonging.

Public ritual on the Reservation provides a sharp contrast. At a village ceremony intended to seek rain and crops and to honour Pookong and Jesus, the square concentrates the crowd's movements around a single centre. Masked participants, some with faces painted beyond recognition, emerge from an underground chamber and sing and dance around the square. A leader distributes snakes of various colours, including black, brown, and mottled ones. The dancers carry them as they move, then throw them into the middle. An elder sprinkles cornmeal over the snakes while a woman adds water. Images of an eagle and a crucified man rise above the square. The elder conducts the next part of the rite. A boy of about eighteen circles the snakes and is whipped by a man wearing a coyote mask until he collapses. The elder touches a feather to his blood and waves it toward the snakes. The crowd cheers and leaves, while the boy lies still until three older women carry him away (Huxley, 1975). The scene exposes the individual directly to religious custom, collective force, and physical suffering. Its portrayal can appear exaggerated and othering. Nevertheless, the represented ritual provides a map through which readers can consider their own society and imagine a future one.

John's difficulty of belonging comes to a head within this contrast. He witnesses both worlds and bears the consequences of their collision. Each society reveals its cruelty to him, and each places demands on him that he cannot reconcile. The conflict between rational order and emotional life intensifies his instability and foreshadows his eventual withdrawal to an abandoned lighthouse and his suicide. His fate is at once an individual tragedy and an indictment of the failure of both spatial orders.

IV. THE METAPHORICAL MEANING OF POWER SPACE

From the 1970s onward, the work of Lefebvre, Foucault, and others advanced the spatial turn in scholarship. This turn changed approaches in human geography and also affected literary criticism and cultural studies. As Lefebvre argues, space is not an object that ideology or politics subsequently distorts: it is already political and strategic (Lefebvre, 2008). Space is closely bound to power. Even if it does not itself produce power, it provides a medium in which power can operate and become visible. A room, boundary, or route may prescribe movement, separate groups, or make a hierarchy seem natural. In a literary

narrative these arrangements can be read as part of the action of power rather than as incidental scenery. The formation, distribution, and use of spaces take place within particular structures of control and social order. Tally's account of literary mapping converges with Foucault's analysis of power, knowledge, and the spaces of modern society: cartography allows detailed scrutiny of the maps produced within and about those societies (Tally, 2021). A map does more than depict a place. It can encode and organize relations of power and make them available for interpretation. Louis Marin's work on utopia also treats space as a system of signs: imagined utopian places can rewrite and criticize the power relations of the actual world. The relation between space and ideology is thus central to their interpretation.

For Tally, literary cartography represents metaphorically the social space of a narrative and the position of individual or collective subjects within a larger spatial, social, and cultural whole (Tally, 2018). Space, in this sense, is integral to the production of narrative meaning. Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* uses a literary method akin to mapping to relate actual and imagined spaces to a wider system of power in a postnational world. Their movement and instability disclose the complexity of that system. Huxley likewise depicts the power structures of the old and new worlds through particular places, using those local spaces to suggest larger social and political wholes.

The Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre is the World State's most consequential institutional space. It is a future heterotopic site through which individuals are monitored and controlled and a model of the society as a whole (Foucault, 1986). This local space of experiment extends its logic outward. Jameson describes such discontinuous development in terms of a quantitative leap in the expansion of capital (Jameson, 1991). As the Hatchery's logic spreads, a local institution becomes the pattern of an entire social order. Unlike the heterotopic spaces imagined by ideal utopias, this future space projects a bad or evil place whose appearance overturns a supposedly good present (Ji, 2012).

At the Hatchery, people are assigned to castes before birth, and each embryo travels along a production line. Bottling is followed by social predestination and then the underground Embryo Store. In its hot red darkness, automatic sprayers stand at intervals of twelve metres along a route extending to the 2,040-metre mark (Huxley, 1975). Bottles are carried on racks that form three levels. The web of metal shelving disappears into the dark in every direction (Huxley, 1975). This arrangement suggests both discipline and enclosure. Each distance corresponds

to a stage of treatment: the space itself functions like a programme, while the developing human being is moved and processed within it. The precise stages give an otherwise abstract caste system a physical scale. The visitor sees not only the completed divisions between people but the measured process by which those divisions are made. Pituitary doses increase during the final ninety-six metres of the embryos' journey. At Metre 112 each bottle receives an artificial maternal circulation. Embryos destined for tropical labour begin to be inoculated at Metre 150. On another rack, heat conditioning occurs around Metre 170; at Metre 320 on Rack 11, a mechanic slows the circulation of blood-surrogate to restrict oxygen for a developing lower-caste embryo (Huxley, 1975). Oxygen restriction leaves selected embryos underdeveloped and helps produce caste differences. In the final two metres of each eight-metre interval, the bottles are shaken to simulate the experience of being born. This manufactured experience acts like a prearranged memory, preparing the embryo for subsequent psychological control. What might seem a technical process is also the production of thought: biological stages are made to secure the roles assigned in advance.

After birth, conditioning continues in the Neo-Pavlovian rooms, where a long row of bowls filled with roses stands beside picture books showing birds, animals, and fish (Huxley, 1975). The infants reach toward the flowers and books, but the institution links these objects with fear and pain until the attraction is destroyed. Its purpose is to produce an aversion to books and nature that will serve the governing order. What appears to be an individual's preference has been constructed by power. Compliance ceases to feel like an external command and becomes an internalized belief, limiting the possibility of independent thought.

In the older society, religion operates as an institution of authority. People turn to gods, Jesus, and sacred stories to give shape to hopes that they cannot realize through their own actions. In the World State, the symbolic centres of authority are Ford, the industrialist associated with the production line, the Hatchery's Social Predestination Room, and the repeated voices of sleep-teaching. Ford becomes the sign of an ideological system within which every citizen must live (Li & Liu, 2010). The apparent disappearance of traditional religion is not simply the result of contentment or a lack of fear; it also reflects the erosion of people's capacity to question their surroundings. Citizens can appear equal in a narrow physical or chemical sense, and even the work of an Epsilon may be described as indispensable. Yet this appearance of equal usefulness conceals the structural inequality built into the Hatchery. It is the upper castes that organize and supervise the system,

whereas the lower castes have been engineered to accept the roles allotted to them. Lower-caste citizens have been taught to welcome their own position and not to envy those above them. Conditioning forms their beliefs before they can choose them, and the surrounding social environment reinforces those beliefs. The Controller lends the seemingly natural hierarchy an absurdly religious colouring (Ma, 2018). He is no god, yet his position invites a form of belief that assists government.

As Tally argues, mapping can be associated with empires, social oppression, and ideological projects that manipulate spatial representations for particular political interests (Tally, 2020). Huxley's spatial order reveals a further form of alienation: as people are shaped and disciplined by the spaces they inhabit, they can lose the ability to reflect on their circumstances and become willing participants in the operation of power.

V. OTHER SPACES AND THE PROSPECT OF THE FUTURE

The future-oriented force of an other space lies both in its alteration of familiar places and in its capacity to generate different ways of understanding and criticizing the world. The spatial theories of Foucault and Soja offer ways to interpret power, social structures, and spatial practices, but the spaces considered within them remain closely tied to actual experience. Even an imagined space can be understood as a secondary space produced by representing, distorting, or reorganizing the real. Fantasy and dystopian writing, however, loosen this reality-centred model by asking how a world might be constructed beyond existing spatial categories. Their alternative spaces need not merely mirror the real with a changed surface. They can propose new relations among people, institutions, and the possible future, opening a different standpoint from which the present can be judged.

In *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*, Kathryn Hume treats fantasy as a way of responding to reality through the reorganization and extension of experience (Hume, 1984). J. R. R. Tolkien's account of sub-creation and the Secondary World in "On Fairy-stories" (Tolkien, 1983) likewise grants a writer the capacity to build an internally coherent world beyond the one already given. Such a world cannot be reduced to a distorted photograph of actual geography; it has its own relations and internal consistency. Hume's account of fantasy and Tolkien's account of making a world thus provide different but complementary reasons to treat invented literary space as an active construction. Together, these ideas help explain why literary cartography can work where mimesis and fantasy overlap. A map need not

reproduce an existing place. It can serve as a constructive and critical narrative form. Tally argues that utopian other spaces offer an especially useful setting for thinking about mapping and spatiality, because even a practical map is ultimately a fictional or metaphorical representation of what is called real space (Tally, 2021).

From this perspective, literary space does more than describe geography. It can encode and reproduce ideological relations. In *Walking Virginia Woolf's London: An Investigation in Literary Geography*, Lisbeth Larsson studies the organization of streets, parks, squares, and buildings in Woolf's London (Larsson, 2017). Reading *Mrs Dalloway* and other works through literary geography and cartography, she examines how the characters' routes and spatial experiences connect particular urban sites into a cognitive map with ideological implications. London is thus both a physical city and a symbolic space reshaped by discourse and power. The movement of a character from one street to another can bring sites with different social meanings into relation without reproducing every detail of the actual city. Paths through parks, squares, and buildings contribute to the shape of an imagined urban whole. Mapping makes that symbolic organization visible.

Ideology is a powerful force in the making of such maps. Terry Eagleton argues that literary works are neither mysterious products of inspiration nor things that can be explained solely through an author's psychology. They are forms of perception shaped by the prevailing ways of seeing, or the social spirit and ideology, of their time (Zhu, 2001). Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* illustrates the problem. His ambition to depict real life remains limited by the ideological framework of late nineteenth-century Britain (Wu, 2008). The literary map therefore carries a particular historical perspective, including limits that the work itself may not be able to overcome. In the twentieth century, world wars and rapid technological development changed the historical setting and prompted intellectuals to reconsider the problems of society. Dystopian literature emerged in this context (Liu, 2015). Its extreme imagined societies magnify potential dangers in the present. Literary space becomes a way both to criticize existing arrangements and to test the possibilities of a future one.

Huxley's *Brave New World* is shaped by this ideological context. It places a recognizable older society beside a newly imagined one, constructing their values separately before bringing them into conflict. In the World State, technology promises to abolish acute suffering. For stability and efficiency, biological and psychological conditioning begins with the embryo and discourages emotional attachment and uncontrolled desire. Beneath the appearance of perfect order lies a profound emptiness; any

serious upheaval is treated as a threat to civilization. The Reservation, by contrast, is uncertain but tangibly human. Its social life may be disorderly and oppressive, yet its people retain the capacity to love, desire, grow old or unattractive, suffer terminal illness, go hungry, and endure other forms of pain. The argument presents these experiences as rights denied by the World State, while recognizing the cruelty and exclusion present on the Reservation. John, who grew up there, values a life in which sacrifice, devotion and defending one's convictions remain possible. These competing ideologies require readers to ask what an ideal society would mean and whether either of these societies could be one.

Mid-twentieth-century dystopian fiction often has a strongly political dimension, and its invented societies may seem implausible. Their power lies partly in their ability to go beyond the immediately real. Imagination can make unrealized forms of freedom and happiness thinkable, even where the novel offers no complete alternative social order. Such a perspective makes it possible to imagine new spaces of freedom. Tally likewise envisages future literary maps that will represent both the world we encounter and worlds that exist only in imagination (Tally, 2021). Huxley's fictional societies look back to older forms of human life even as they reflect critically on modernity. Their opposition offers readers a way to intervene imaginatively in the present and think about the future. By tracing identity, mapping the two societies, and considering their social values together, literary cartography gives the novel's spatial construction an enduring critical force.

VI. CONCLUSION

As literary criticism becomes more attentive to space, bringing literary cartography to bear on utopian and dystopian writing offers a way to examine how imagined places speak to the present. Tally's spatial studies draw on earlier scholarship while developing a distinctive account of how literature can use imagination to make a complex world system perceptible. On this account, established representations of space cannot simply be taken for granted. In *Brave New World*, topophilia first impels the characters toward mapping. Huxley's narrative then sets two spatial orders in opposition, depicting the confrontation between a remembered past and a projected utopian future. The construction of power spaces within that map represents political and social relations that are difficult to grasp as a whole. Readers can thus use the novel to reconsider their own position and values in a changing world. Its spaces remain open to interpretation

because the questions they raise about society, power, and possible futures remain unresolved.

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