

the ~~state~~ of the people. Dancing was highly <sup>02</sup> subtle art in the past, now it has become total mechanical. It cannot be contrasted between the past and modern age.

As Huxley things modern civilization is doomed. It is self poisoned. It stands in danger of being destroyed through its inner weakness. It may go the way of Roman civilization. The Romans had lost the taste for intelligent pleasures. They tried to satisfy themselves with cheap entertainment. At last they grew tired of their cheap pleasures. They tried to satisfy their taste for pleasures in violent ways. They became cruel in their pleasures. Modern man will also get bored because his pleasures do not demand any personal participation. He will also try to satisfy his pleasures in violent ways. They will follow the examples of Romans. They will like to have cruel pleasures by becoming a member of a secret society like Ku Klux Klan. The presence of a few idealists among us may check this wild tendency for sometimes but the desire to find relief from mental boredom is sure to find expression in violent ways.

The essayist here makes a searching criticism of the bases of modern civilization. He sounds a note of warning to modern man. Man is fast becoming a machine even with regard to his pleasures. Pleasures must something to do with the mind. Otherwise, they are sure to lead to mental boredom. Huxley points out the psychological weakness of modern man. The key-sentence in the essay is the following -

"Self poisoned in this fashion, civilization looks as though it might easily decline into a kind of premature senility." Our civilization will decline if we do not revive the taste of intelligent pleasures. We have lost the





Proper sense of values. This is a dangerous <sup>03</sup> symptom. It may lead to the destruction of modern civilization.

Huxley is a learned writer. His study is vast. He has an encyclopaedic mind. His learning is shown in this essay in reference to public taste in various periods. His range of studies covers every subject. Hence there is a wealth of reference in the essay. Huxley's illustrations are always to the point. Thus while referring to modern man's taste for secret pleasures, he refers to the anti-social activities of such a secret society as K U K L U X Klan.

The style of the essay is appropriate to the subject. Huxley's expressions are forceful. He hits at the low taste of people in the present age.

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Dr. Anand Kumar  
Asst. Professor  
Dept. of English

Mob. No. - 9199895259/9631232868

Email ID - akumarabg@gmail.com

Dated 17.04.2020 and  
18.04.2020



D. B. College Jajnagar, Madhubani 01  
(L. N. Mithila University Darbhanga)

Dept. of English

class - B.A. - II P-IV

Dr. Anand Kumar

Topic - Pleasures

Unit - A critical Appreciation

Cont. No. - 9199895259, 9631232868

### A critical Appreciation of "Pleasures"

"Pleasures" is one of the most famous essays which is thought provoking written by Aldous Huxley in 1923. It is a very different essay which is full of characteristic of the early Huxley in its ruthless criticism of modern civilization. The main point of Huxley in the essay is that the real dangers to modern civilization are not external but internal. Since the first great war, various things were described as dangers to modern civilization. The rise of Prussian (German) military power, wars, years of stupid peace, even such a minor thing as prohibition - all have been described as threats to civilization. But the real dangers to civilization come from within. There is something wrong with the state of modern man. The mind of modern man has become mechanical. It does not like intelligent pleasures. It realises relishes organised readymade distractions. This is a dangerous sign. In the past, people enjoyed intelligent pleasures. In the seventeenth century all sections of people wanted mental entertainment. The Elizabethan music was highly complex; yet people appreciated it. The royal pageants wanted mental pleasures. Debates were held on the occasion of the marriage of Princes. But in the present age "pleasures" have come to stand for mechanical and readymade distractions. It is a sad state of affairs. The modern films have lowered