

Brave New World

As man has progressed through the ages, there has been, essentially, one purpose. That purpose is to arrive at a utopian society, where everyone is happy, disease is nonexistent, and strife, anger, or sadness are unheard of. Only happiness exists. But when confronted with Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, we come to realize that this is not, in fact, what the human soul really craves. In fact, Utopian societies are much worse than those of today. In a utopian society, the individual, who among others composes the society, is lost in the melting pot of semblance and world of uninterest.

In the science fiction book Brave New World, we are confronted with a man, Bernard Marx. Bernard is inadequate to his colleagues. So he resorts to entertaining himself most evenings, without the company of a woman. This encourages his individual thought, and he realizes that independent thought is rewarding, and that he must strive to become a real individual. Although this is true to a certain extent, Bernard does not realize that he would much rather attain social recognition. At least, not until the opportunity presents itself. Thus, through a series of events, Bernard uses the curiosity of the society to his advantage, fulfilling his subconscious wish of becoming someone important; a recognized name in the jumble of society. This ends when the curiosity of others ends, and as a supreme result of his arrogant behaviour, he is exiled.

The instigator of this curiosity as well as the author of Bernard's fame (and folly), is an outsider known as the Savage. The Savage is brought in from outside of the utopian society by Bernard as an experiment. He faces "civilized society" with a bright outlook, but eventually comes to hate it bitterly.

Lenina, the supporting role of the novel, is the most pronounced example of the ideal citizen. She adheres to the principles of the society without so much as a second thought.

In the utopian society that Huxley presents, everyone is happy. There are no differences. Everyone is brought up to be happy, and most do not even know what sadness or anger is. All is cured artificially through surrogates or drugs. Even happiness alone is not unique to the individual. Soma, the hallucinatory drug, the 'perfect drug' that is used by all, even induces the same kind of happiness. The only variant is to what extent this happiness overwhelms the user (one or two half-gramme tablets?).

"Everybody belongs to everyone else" (127) is the basic psychology of the society. This suggests that an individual owes everything to society, but society in turn owes everything to him or her. This applies to all. No one capitalises on the efforts of others and no one performs excessive manual labour for minimum wage. Everyone is the same.

In Huxley's perfect world, sex is a mundane undertaking. It happens to each individual almost every night. And no one knows what marriage is. They simply have each other and move on. All for one and one for all. Everyone is the same in bed.

The inhabitants of this society are not given any sort of mental flexibility. If you spend time alone, or think, you are considered strange, and are considered an outcast. Nobody wishes for this, and so correspondingly nobody commits this unspeakable crime. Everyone goes out at night with a different partner, or takes a few grammes of soma and goes

to bed for a soma-holiday. Nothing new, nothing different.

Each person of this society has a predestined future. They all develop in their fetal stages inside a jar, where they are provided with their needs, are vaccinated against all known diseases. Also, special treatments are performed to aid in the mental growth (or standstill) of the individual after 'birth', according to their future occupation.

"The first of a batch of two hundred and fifty embryonic rocket-plane engineers was just passing the eleven hundredth metre mark on Rack 3. A special mechanism kept their containers in constant rotation. 'To improve their sense of balance,' Mr Foster explained. 'Doing repairs on the outside of a rocket in mid air is a ticklish job. We slacken off the circulation when they're right way up, so that they're half starved, and double the flow of surrogate when they're upside down. They learn to associate topsy-turvydom with well being; in fact, they're only truly happy when they're standing on their heads.'" (32)

All two hundred and fifty beings will be the same - they will look alike, talk alike, act alike, have the same job, and generally be the same people inside different media. One never knows which is which.

After birth, all children are mentally conditioned to think and act with the same motives. Through hypnopaedia, all of the basic rules of the society are learned by the children, and they learn to repeat and obey by these rules.

There are no chances for anyone to develop any differences. Or if they do, they are exiled so that they cannot influence those around them. Nothing changes, including the government and the lifestyle of the

inhabitants.

Last and most importantly, the Bokanovsky method of reproducing causes great numbers of genetically identical human beings (up to 96 at a time from a single egg alone). As well, the same ovary can be used to produce over seventeen thousand individuals with the same basic genetic background. Everyone is the same. Same birth, same upbringing, same lifestyle. Any differences are remedied immediately.

Huxley presents the ultimate in utopian societies. But nobody is open for mental growth. All are limited to set barriers. Although this would appear a perfect society at first, it becomes obvious later on in the novel that the race will no longer evolve. Nobody will have new ideas. Nobody will improve on society. Nothing will change. This is not what the human race desires. It desires to acquire knowledge, unceasingly and neverendingly. Without this advantage, we will go mad.

