Brave New World Essay, Research Paper

The theme of Huxley’s Brave New World is community, identity, and stability. Each of these three themes represents what a Brave New World society needs to have in order to survive. According to the new world controllers, community is a result of identity and stability, identity is a part of genetic engineering, and stability is what everyone desires to achieve. These themes are represented in the book by the symbolic meaning of the phrase “Children are from bottles” and the hypnotic phrase “Everybody belongs to everybody else” (qt. Hazlitt 285). For a better understanding it is useful to explore these themes in detail. Community refers to the thought of one whole unit. Everyone is connected, by their actions toward each other in every day life, sexual desires, and what they do to remove the feeling of horrible emotions. This connectedness and lie, and its effects can be seen in the character of Bernard, a person who hates what society has become. Bernard is disgusted by the thought of “having anyone” he says, referring to sexual relations with women. Bernard is longing for a sense of individuality which he cannot posses in Brave New World. “He emerged with a self-consciousness intensified to the pitch of agony. He is utterly miserable, and perhaps it is his own fault” (Huxley 86, ch. 5). Thereby jeopardizing the stability of the community as a whole, near the end, it was decided that he be banished to the Falkland Islands, so that he could not tell anyone else of his individuality. In Brave New World community is upheld and reinforced at any and all costs. Identity is the one thing that no one person can experience. There is no individual identity in Brave New World. There is only a collective identity which is shared by all members of society. Collective Identity is achieved by forcing everyone in society to conform. It is maintained in society by making someone who has any individuality feel different almost as an outcast. But sometimes as in the case of the character Bernard, people in Brave New World long for their own identity. For example, Bernard was having feelings and thoughts he is not proud of, “Did you ever feel you had some sort of extra power,” Bernard said to a friend while talking secret (Huxley 69, ch. 4). The extra power Bernard is referring to is individuality. This shows that as much as the world controllers try to rob people of their individuality, it cannot be taken away that easily. Stability is a third of these three goals, but it is the one most mentioned in the book. “The world is stable now. People are happy; they’re blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they’re so conditioned that they practically can’t help behaving the way they ought to behave” (Huxley 226, ch. 16). The desire for stability, requires the production of large numbers of genetically identical humans, because people who are exactly the same are less likely to come into conflict. Stability is seen in Brave New World to minimize conflict, risk, and change. Setting plays a particularly important role in Brave New World. The novel opens about six hundred years in the future. Civilization as people know it has ended. There has become a new world state, an all powerful government headed by ten world controllers. Almost all traces of the past have been erased. Faith in Christ has been replaced by faith in the community. The cross has been replaced by the T, and My Life and Work has replaced the bible. “Religion like genuine learning thrive on sacrifices and passions, which are impossible in a standardized superficial world with its cheap department store happiness” (Hesse 286). But some parts of the world were allowed to remain the same. For example, the savage reservation, the New Mexican home of the Zuni Indians. It is a world away from civilization, the Zunis are still threaten by disease, filth, and religion. “These savages were people of the old regime, living not, according to science but to nature, kept behind fences lest they contaminate the blessed, and yet not exterminated because their blind state could serve a perpetual moral (Buck 288).” The settings of Brave New World only offer a choice between cultured slavery and primitiveness. Of the characters in Brave New World few have a mind of their own and most are not able to do things on their own. People exist to voice ideas or to manifest them in their behavior. Lenina Crowne, a character in the novel, is the perfect example. She is young, pretty, happy, and shallow. Lenina’s one fault is that she sometimes spends more time dating one man then society thinks is correct. Like all well conditioned citizens of the new world state, Lenina believes in utopia and loves it. “The secret of happiness and virtue as one director points out is liking what you’ve got to do” (Hazlitt 285). Lenina spends much of her time spreading the words of utopia to her fellow citizens. The characters in Brave New World can be compared to robots, made in test tubes by scientists and programmed by hypnosis. The controller Mustapha Mond is one of the ten people who control the world. He is good natured, intelligent, and understands that people have different ideas (which is rare in utopia). He has read all the forbidden literature, the Bible and Shakespeare, that the rest of utopia is forbidden to see. Mond was once a gifted scientist, he made the choice to become one of the rulers instead of becoming a troublesome outcast. “On the assumption that the happiness and stability of man are the only ultimate ends, all troubling qualities which men are dangers and must be suppressed” (Jones 306). He is one of the few utopians that has and can make a choice of his own free will. The characters in Brave New World are shallow. They lack depth at any level. They are mindless robots controlled by the universal program of utopia. Though sometimes they stray in areas of their life, such as Lenina, they are good mindless slaves. Even though the people of Brave New World think they are happy they do not realize that it is a manipulated drug induced genetic emotion that is not real. Most lack what it is to be human. They deny pain, suffering, and anguish. All the things that make humans, human. This denial makes them take drugs to cover up these feelings. There are few characters with true depth in Brave New World like Mond who can make choices of their own free will. In making the characters in this fashion, Huxley is showing the downside to Brave New World. “Mr. Huxley has portrayed here a Utopia that obviously he would wish to avoid” (Dawson 284). The lack of individuality, freedom, and choice. The characters represent the ultimate evil in society, the loss of ones self. They have become humans without a soul. The early life of Aldous Huxley contributed to the concept of Brave New World. Huxley was born July 26, 1894, to a family that was among the intellectual elite. Aldous grandfather, Thomas Henry Huxley, was one of the biologists that helped to develop the theory of evolution. Huxley, himself, was different from the rest of his family. His personal experiences helped him stand apart from the upper class into which he was born. A long time friend of Huxley said that “Huxley’s ancestry brought down on him a weight of intellectual authority and a momentum of moral obligations” (Yonson 2). Huxley felt that heredity made each person unique. This uniqueness is what made each person an individual and gave them freedom. Huxley believed in human freedom and autonomy and despised the class system of society. He felt that Society was robbing people of their freedom and individuality. Brave New World was written, in part, to show what can happen when government has too much power. Huxley relied on this idea a long with his rich background in science and biology to write about a society which just might become reality if society stays on its present course. Another event in Huxley’s life which aided him in writing Brave New World was his college years. When Huxley was sixteen and a student, a sickness made him nearly blind, but he was able to recover enough to attend Oxford university. Huxley graduated Oxford with honors and published his first book, a collection of poems, in 1916. It is during this time that he found a passion for writing. After college, Huxley moved to fascist Italy. His experiences in Italy with the fascist government and its methods reinforced his outlook that the future of society was doomed to a Authoring manner. With this idea in mind Huxley began to write Brave New World. It took only four months for Huxley to write Brave New World. It is important to remember that Huxley wrote Brave new World before the rise of Hitler to power in Germany and before Stalin started killing millions in the Soviet Union. Huxley had then no real life reason to make tyranny and terror major elements in his story. After world war II Huxley said “The future dictatorship of my imaginary world was a good deal less brutal then the future dictatorships” (qtd. Oreston 307). Obviously referring to the crimes of Hitler and Stalin before and after world war two. What Huxley thought to be a overdone look at the future dictatorship’s turned out to be no were as brutal as real life. Suddenly, the story of Brave New World did not seem so much like fiction as it did a window to the future. “That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach” (Huxley qtd. Yonson 3). It is this willingness of man to make the same mistake twice that in 1997 the ideas in Brave New World do not seem that far off base. Most people thought that with the collapse of the Soviet Union it would put an end to the suffering and an all controlling government. But with an influx of clones, test tube babies, government controls of television, needless violence, and the search for the perfect mood altering drug. Who is to say that Brave New World is not earth in fifty years? As more people lose their individuality they become connected with community. It is with this connection that they begin to let others control their lives and humanity is already headed in that direction. Brave New World should not only be seen as a great piece of science fiction. It should be seen as a warning. Of what can happen when people live up to the influence of outside sources.