Brave New World (Huxley) Essay, Research Paper

Science Run Amuck in Brave New World

Brave New World is a novel set hundreds of years into our own future. On Earth, the Nine Years War tore the planet apart in the year A.F 178. Eerily, anthrax bombs dropped from the sky killed scores of people, what we in the post 9/11 world fear the most. When the dust settled, mankind banded together to create a new world called the “World State.” Their motto is “Community, Identity, Stability,” and it is all too much present as you will see. This future is a severely different place. To stabilize the populace, mankind has cloned each other by the thousands. Babies are conditioned by a caste system, and everyone grows up to do a specific job. Cold and sterile science replaces religion, individuality, and risk. Everyone is encouraged to pleasure themselves (through promiscuity, recreation and drugs… soma,) but not to have a bad day. This is reminiscent of the “Roaring 20’s” and the “free love” movement of the 1960’s. In this future, to be monogamous, bond, or soul-search would single you out as a loner. Here, “everyone belongs to everyone else.”

The years once noted by A.D (Anno Domini, or After Christ) are replaced by A.F (After Ford.) Ford’s philosophy became a religion, wiping out over two thousand years of Christianity from world history. Now there is no history, except that which existed After Ford, it was outlawed. As we all know, Henry Ford introduced the assembly line into modern society. In A.D, The assembly line was a more proficient way to produce the automobile. In the brave new world, however, the assembly line mass-produced human beings themselves. The brave new scientists discovered a way to progress the cloning process. They clone up to 96 embryos from a female ovum by Bokanovsky’s process. Embryos were then “bottled” and put on an assembly line that moved 33 centimeters a day. On the line, the fetuses were tampered with and they received early conditioning to be part of one of the five castes. “Alpha” was the highest class (think rocket scientist,) and Elipson was the lowest class (think gas station attendant.) These babies are not born of a mother’s womb, but “decanted” (unbottled.) They receive more conditioning and undergo “hypnopaedia” – a sleep teaching process where beliefs are inserted into their thoughts. Young children as young as seven years old are encouraged to be promiscuous and experiment with sex. They are practicing for their roles as adults in the new world. Of the females decanted, 70% are sterile “freemartians.” The other 30% are fertile, but adhere to a strict policy of birth control. The only reason so many are fertile is because they are living egg donors. To be pregnant is considered smutty and disgusting, and many new worlders do not even know what “parents” are. If this is not playing God, I do not know what is.

It is ironic that today what we regard so highly could possibly someday eradicate our personal freedoms. I believe Huxley, the author, intended to share a prophecy with us all: science run amuck will cost mankind its humanity in the end. The most striking parallel Huxley makes is to cloning: he was well ahead of his time… When this novel was written in the 1930’s, cloning humans was not even a possibility. Between then and now, technology has exploded, growing by leaps and bounds. As we all saw in 1998 with Dolly the sheep, cloning is possible. Huxley had foresight into what may just happen if humans continue to play God. There is a fine line where science can cross too far, where it hurts more than helps. The World State has crossed that line, and I believe they sacrificed their humanity in the process. We living in an era of nuclear and biological weaponry should take heed.