Brave New World 3 Essay, Research Paper

Brave New World: Oh, my God, my God!

In 1932, Aldous Huxley first published the novel, Brave New World. During this time, the ideas that Huxley explored in his novel were not a reality, but merely science-fiction entertainment. Brave New World confronts ideas of totalitarianism, artificial reproduction, anti-individualism, and forever youth- ideas which were not threatening in the 30 s. In the 1930 s, the high ethical standards people maintained and the limited amount of scientific knowledge did not allow for the acceptance of the types of ideas found in Brave New World. These values include abstinance, family structure, and life-long marriages- issues that had little to no importance in the Brave New World. As we begin the new millenium, our increasing scientific knowledge has taken our curiousity beyond ethical consideration, and Huxley s novel has become much closer to a reality than it was 65 years ago. Today, Huxley s Brave New World parallels current advances in genetical engineering, cloning, the lowering of moral standards held by the general mass, and the obsession people have with looking young.

Theses new discoveries of genetical engineering and cloning closely parallel the process of giving birth in the Brave New World. In Brave New World, people are born artificially in test tubes. Everyone is condidtioned to be the same: to share the same characteristics, their way of thinking, and their ideas. People who claimed individual thought against the community- such as Bernard in the beginning of the novel- were considered to have a defect from a lab mistake during birth, and were ostracized from the community, until they conditioned themself to think like the rest of the community. Scientific development in both genetical engineering and cloning, have made the idea of anti-individualism closer to a reality. Genetical engineering enables parents to choose characteristics for their child, creating a poster child which ultimately ends in every child becoming a poster child and all looking the same. Although genetical engineering is currently under ethical scepticism, and the cloning of humans is illegal, it is still possible to eventually end all diversity (except possibly between ethnic groups as in Brave New World). Huxley says:

Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines! You really

know where you are Community, Identity, Stability If we could bokanovskify

[a method whereby a human egg has its normal development arrested and whereupon

it proceeds to bud, producing many identical eggs] indefinetly the whole problem

would be solved.

Both Brave New World and genetical engineering address anti-individualism. In Brave New World, everyone is conditioned to believe the same ideas and values: that being a part of the community is the most important aspect of life, which are impressed on the minds of the people by two mottos, Community, Identity, Stability, and Everyone belongs to everyone else. The threatening similarity between Genetical engineering/cloning and the Brave New World, is that it idealizes a certain way for people to look, as well as disregard biological individual identity through the possibilty of obtaining identical genetic make-up.

Another similarity between Brave New World and our current society deals with scientific ethical issues and the general moral declension in today s world. In Brave New World, sex is viewed as instant physical gratification, promoting promiscuity, and looking at love condescendingly. No character questions these standards, and the lack of individual thought creates a cycle of declension. When Lenina and Bernard sleep together, Bernard later comments that he wished he had waited, saying:

I didn t want it to end with our going to bed, he specified.

Lenina was astonished.

Not at once, not on the first day.

But then what ? (p.93)

Lenina, being a victim of society, did not understand Bernard s reasoning, which by 1930 s standards, would reflect a lack of morals. Although in the 1930 s, sex before marriage and love was taboo, today it is completely accepted. Evidence of this can be seen in the high rate of teenage pregnancy out of wedlock, which is currently at 65 percent (according to The World Almanac 1998). Also, in Brave New World, the word family is looked down upon, and there is a lack of understanding as to why family is important.

In brief, the director summed up, the parents were the father and the mother These, he said gravely, are the unpleasant facts; I know it. But then most historical facts are unpleasant. This quote indicates how family structure is looked down upon in Brave New World, as everyone cringes at the tought of having a mother or father. In the past year, 1,225,000 divorces were granted, a rate of 5 per 1,000 population. This statistic indicates a decline in family structure and a lowering of moral standards according to anyone living in the 1930 s.

Americans have also become obsessed with forever looking younger than they are, as are the characters in Brave New World. Numerous ads on TV advertize wrinkle-free creams and make-up with ageless models- for example all the Revlon make-up products that promise to hide wrinkles . The obsession with looking younger has become especially strong today, as our psyche has been brain washed by images of perfection by supermodels on televsion and in magazines. In Brave New World, old age has been abolished and men work and are otherwise active until their death. Youthfulness is especially important to Lenina, who thrives on reflecting her personality through her youth, naivete, and innocence. Sixty-five years ago the obsession over looking young was not as strong. Miracle creams and ads reflecting youthfulness were not as common. In Brave New World, the members of the community were horrified at Linda s display of aging. As she lay dying in the hospital, a stream of identical eight- year olds gawked at her:

Oh, look, look! They spoke in low scared voices. Whateveris the matter

with her? Why is she so fat?

They had never seen a face like hers before- had never seen a face that was

not youthful and taut-skinned, a body that had ceased to be slim and upright.

All thses moribund sexagenarians had the appearance of childish girls. At 44,

Linda seemed, by contrast, a monster of flaccid and distorted senility.

The attitude of the children is similar to the attitude of today s society; people (women in particular), who are unsuccesful in striving for that look of perfection by society s standards, are not as easily accepted into society, and often gawked at, ridiculed or shunned.

Ultimately, Huxley had extreme foresight into the future. Huxley foreshadowed the ethical declension of our society through the naivety of our rapidly growing scientific knowledge. He understood the way in which scientology would overpower spirituality and in essence become the religion of our time. Hopefully, people will adhere to the anti-utopian message of oppressing individual thought, reflected in the Brave New World, and take action in stopping or at least acknowledging the ethical deterioration of our society. Today s society must realize the necessity of keeping its diversity, because individualism is what prevents our sociey from turning into the brave new world in Huxley s novel.