

“happiness at a price”

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



“ Happiness At a Price" In the novel Brave New World, Aldous Huxley creates a dystopian setting that causes the future to appear frightening. The society becomes continuously more undesirable as the idea of scientific domination over people begins to configure. With a lack of individuality, memories, love, family, emotions and truth, the Brave New World's ability to supply happiness is offered with a high price to pay. Children enter The Brave New World in large quantities after being created through genetic engineering and evolving from the inside of a test tube. Mothers and fathers do not create these embryos, nor do mothers and fathers raise them. Each embryo group is genetically designed using chemicals to prepare them for specific, society satisfying, jobs pre-assigned to them before they are born. Every child is also born into a caste. The members in a caste are all alike, and there are only five castes in the society. Two of the most contrasting castes are the Epsilons, the unintelligent who have menial jobs, and the Alphas, the intelligent with commendable jobs. After the children are produced, they spend their childhood in hatcheries and conditioning centers, where they are equipped for their role in the Brave New World. For conditioning in the lower castes, whenever the children approach books they are tortured with loud noises, so they grow up to believe that books associate with treacherous noises. Torture is not desirable. Also, all of the children run around playing sex games with one another, even though it makes some children feel erroneous. “ This little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I'd noticed it once or twice before and now again to-day. He started yelling just now..." (Huxley 32). Even at a young age some of the children notice how morally improper the games are. These children are a

threat to the society and are treated as if they're strange by The Leaders, so that the other children don't take them seriously. " I'm taking him to see the assistant superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything's at all abnormal" (32). Because their lives and morals are pre-planned for them, there is no room for them to use their own judgment, which prevents them from growing into better people and improving themselves. Also because of castes, there is no variety in the people living in the society. All of the members of a caste have the same personalities, strengths, weaknesses, and color of clothing. Outcast Bernard Marx is an example of why the hatchery and pre-destined fates make for a dystopian society, because when he was created to be an Alpha, a mistake was made that constructed him with a smaller body size than Alphas should have, which made him a social outcast, and an unhappy member of the Brave New World. There was nothing he could do to fix himself because he couldn't perfectly fit into any caste. Even in a supposedly " perfect world", mistakes are made; mistakes that set humans up to be forever unhappy. A world with no emotions could be viewed as a Utopia, but Lenina, a promiscuous woman, proves that no emotions or capability for identifying her emotions is a dystopian attribute. When she grows feelings towards John, who was raised on the Savage Reservation, she doesn't know exactly what they mean. She knows that it's the strongest thing she has ever felt, but she can't tell herself that she " loves" him because love is foreign to her. When she tries to seduce him, she is rejected, because John, who knows what love is from reading Shakespeare, thinks she only wants him for sex and that upsets him, as he truly loves her. Although it is obvious in the end that Lenina does love John as Juliet loves

Romeo when "two tears rolled down her cheeks" (257) at the sight of him, she can in no way understand that tears express emotion, and can in no way express her feelings towards him. Therefore, they can never be together. She forces soma, a drug that dulls her senses, on herself through these situations to be happy, but soma wears off, and she always returns to her thoughts of John. If the Brave New World were a Utopia, tragedies like Lenina and John's would not occur. The Directors claim that the people of the Brave New World are "happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get" (220), but Lenina proves that theory wrong. The members of this society often feel lugubrious, and the only solution to their depression is the government-supplied drug. If certain humans become too unhappy, they can accidentally take too much soma and die as Linda, John's outcast mother, does. Her death proves that the only source they have for happiness is also something that can end their lives. "Happiness is never grand" (220). No one knows they are being lied to and are being deprived of sensations. Lenina will never know why John rejected her. The only people who know of their superficial happiness are John and The Leaders, who admit that they do not live in a perfect world. They sneak off to read forbidden poetry and history because they enjoy the art so much. "I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin" (240). The civilians are forbade to read the bible because the government doesn't want them to feel as though they need a God, poetry is banned because the government doesn't want the community to feel real emotions due to their belief that their beauty would be found attractive and they "don't want people to be attracted to old things. We [they] want them

to like new ones" (217), and history books are debarred because The Leaders are anxious that the members of their society will compare the past with the present, and aggrandize the past. The leaders show great hypocrisy when they admit that they prefer to feel real raw emotions instead of the artificial emotions provided by "feelies" and "soma". The Brave New World cannot offer them all the things that they desire, regardless of the amount of synthetic happiness they are supplied with. The price the citizens of the Brave New World have to pay prevents their society from being a Utopia. They live without family, history, art, love, and religion, not by choice, but by command. The characters in the book that had at some point in their life acquired one of those forbidden entities prefer to live in a world that has them in it. John, who experienced love, family, history, art, and religion on the Savage reservation, eventually killed himself because he couldn't stand living in such a lacking and deficient community. Also, the thought of being contaminated by their lifestyle was more than he could bear. The price of this Brave New World is very high... fatally high. "Work Cited" Huxley, Aldous. Brave New World. New York: Harper Perennial, 1969.