

Brave new world theme assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

There is a popular saying thrown around quite often as a wise piece of advice; " you never know what you have until it's gone. " This saying contrasts times of plenty with times of suffering, comparing the feelings of contentment felt when one has something with the loss and sorrow felt when it is taken away. It implies that one can never really truly appreciate something's worth unless one has had to endure without it. In order to fully enjoy something, one has to appreciate its worth. In order to do so, one must have endured without it. The same can be applied to emotions and knowledge.

In Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, Huxley develops the theme that one experiences true happiness and enlightenment only if one also experiences the truth, and the suffering that accompanies it; conversely one who is ignorant and never experiences suffering will never know true happiness and enlightenment. One who is ignorant of truth and suffering may experience happiness, but it will be a shell of what it could be. At its essence it may be happiness, however it will not be happiness in the true sense of the word. One must first suffer to be truly happy.

This can be seen through Epsilons, Mustapha Mond and the World State as a whole, Helmholtz, and John. " I suppose Epsilons don't really mind being Epsilons," she said aloud. " Of course they don't. How can they? They don't know what it's like being anything else. We'd mind, of course. But then we've been differently conditioned" (pg 64). In this scene, Henry and Lenina are flying in a helicopter on their " date". They are flying over the crematorium, talking about how Epsilons are indispensable, and how they do not mind

being what they are, because they have never known any different due to their conditioning.

The Epsilons are content in their social niche, because they are made for it. They are bred too stupid to have ambition, and conditioned to not want any of the higher jobs. They only ever experience the things that come with their status, and do not have the mental capacity to fathom what else might be possible to experience. They are, in a sense, "happy". However, if an Alpha was put in an Epsilon's place, or made to do Epsilon work, the Alpha would be extremely unhappy. They get none of the fulfillment that they are used to, and are stuck not being challenged and kept in the dark about most of the goings on in the world.

The Epsilons do not feel this way because they are ignorant and do not know the truth of how good life can be. Since they do not know the truth, they are content with their position, and may even consider themselves to be happy if asked, but any Alpha or even Beta would be able to say that they are merely content, because they have never known any greater happiness or suffering, so they have nothing to compare their current feelings to and form a basis for their opinion. Without the contrast of suffering, one is unable to truly appreciate happiness, and therefore is never truly happy.

The Epsilons will never experience true happiness, and instead will be merely content. Therefore, It is proven through the Epsilons that if one is ignorant of the truth, one can never experience suffering, and subsequently can never experience true happiness. "... What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled - after the Nine Years' War. People

were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course.

But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. You're paying for it, Mr. Watson - paying because you happen to be too much interested in beauty. I was too much interested in truth; I paid too" (pg 201). Here, Mustapha Mond is talking with Helmholtz and John about why everything is controlled, and why truth and beauty were sacrificed for comfort and happiness. Mond speaks about how truth and beauty does not keep the wheels of society turning, and that comfort and happiness do. He says that the masses always preferred truth and beauty, which led to conflict.

After the Nine Years' War, people wanted anything for peace, stability, and happiness, so they relinquished control. Science represented a great amount of truth, and so that was controlled so that the people remained ignorant and "happy". Mond even tells Helmholtz that he was interested in science and was nearly sent to an island because of it. Mond wanted more, and pursued his search for truth even though he might get in trouble. He only stopped when the authorities would not let him go any further. Mond was so interested in the truth that it provided a sense of happiness for him. True happiness, and not merely contentment.

He suffered by not going to an island (where he could have been amongst others with similar thoughts and ideas), and instead became a controller, managing other people's "happiness". Since truth was controlled after the Nine Years' War, so too was true happiness. All suffering was eradicated, and

no reason to be truly happy remained. With this new pervasive sense of contentment, people are at their most productive, as they have no reasons to do or feel anything else. It is therefore proved that, contrary to Mond, the masses do not know the truth, and can therefore never experience suffering and true happiness.

Helmholtz rose from his pneumatic chair. " I should like a thoroughly bad climate," he answered. " I believe one would write better if the climate were bad. If there were a lot of wind and storms, for example..." (pg 201). This quotation occurred shortly after the previous one, where Mond is asking Helmholtz what kind of island he would like to be sent to. Instead of requesting a tropical paradise, he would like some place desolate and miserable. Helmholtz would like the opportunities for his writing that such a climate would present. The reason why Helmholtz does this is because he realised the link that suffering and happiness have.

He is an extraordinarily intelligent individual, and because of this he is not merely content with his job as the masses are. Because Helmholtz is not content, he seeks the truth in the form of thought and expression. To do this he writes. His discontent prove to be the suffering needed for him to experience satisfaction and true happiness when writing. He realizes this when asked which island he would like to be sent to, and chooses a place that will make him suffer so that he may again experience true happiness through his writing.

Helmholtz therefore proves that one who experiences the truth and suffering also experiences true happiness. " But the tears are necessary. Don't you remember what Othello said? 'If after every tempest came such calms, may

the winds blow till they have wakened death. ' There's a story one of the old Indians used to tell us, about the Girl of Mataski. The young men who wanted to marry her had to do a morning's hoeing in her garden. It seemed easy; but there were flies and mosquitoes, magic ones. Most of the young men simply couldn't stand the biting and stinging.

But the one that could - he got the girl" (pg 210). Here, John is telling Mond about a story from the reservation, shortly after that last quotation. He first quotes Othello, which essentially states that if after unrest and suffering came true happiness and serenity, he would want the most suffering he could possibly get so that he may experience more of the happiness. He goes on to explain this quotation with his story. The suitors of a girl in the story had to complete a miserable and tortuous task before they could wed her, thus suffering in order to achieve great happiness.

He is explaining to Mond that without suffering, one can never be truly happy. Mond replies that they have done away with all of the suffering so that one may go straight to the reward. John sees that Mond does not get the point. John is saying that without the suffering, one can never truly appreciate the value of the reward, and can never truly be happy with it. If one goes straight from want to reward, one has no possibility of experiencing the passion, desire, and excitement in the capture of the reward. One would never know its true value.

How can a reward be a reward if there is nothing required to attain it? Therefore, it can be seen through John that without suffering initially, one can never experience true happiness. Suffering is a key part of human life. It is present in both truth and lies, and is necessary for a contrast between

good times and bad. If one lives for a long time in the dark, and suddenly a light is turned on, that light will seem more brilliant than if one has lived amidst its glow one's entire life. Such is the purpose of suffering to happiness. If one is happy all the time, one is never really happy.

If one suffers, the happiness seems exponentially more full and satisfying. Truth is required to feel such suffering, as one only feels the suffering in lies when the truth comes out. When one is ignorant and unable to feel suffering, one is unable to feel true happiness, and is merely content; conversely, when one knows the truth, one knows suffering and can therefore feel truly happy. This theme is extremely prevalent in Huxley's novel, and is demonstrated through numerous groups and characters. As happiness comes with a sense of freedom, it is then quite apt that the truth can set you free.