



Brave New World: A Premonition regarding the Present and Future

Ms. Priya Cornelius

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Sophia Girls' College (Autonomous), Ajmer, (Rajasthan)

ABSTRACT

Albert Camus rightly said that “The modern mind is in complete disarray. Knowledge has stretched itself to the point where neither the world nor our intelligence can find any foot-hold. It is a fact that we are suffering from nihilism”.

In simple terms, anything which is new, easy and different is regarded as modern. Modernity is a jewel which everyone wants to wear and showcase. But the important question is- Are human beings progressing in the name of modernity or are they receding? Is modernity helping human beings in easing out their difficulties and complexities and making them humane, or is it bringing them down to the level of machines, where all are preconditioned with one program (modernity) and are blindly following it?

“But I don't want comfort, I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness, I want sin”. These words are taken from *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. A novel set in a futuristic world, wherein, the people create a UTOPIAN environment in the name of MODERNITY to establish IDENTITY and STABILITY.

The research paper seeks to delve into the SELF-GENERATED IDEOLOGY and UTOPIAN WORLD which the citizens of the novel have created and to find out how far they have succeeded.

It is an endeavor to move into the hidden DYSTOPIA of the novel and relate it to the present world.

KEYWORDS: Utopia, Self-Generated Ideology, Modernity.

Octavio Paz rightly said that “The characteristic feature of modernity is criticism, what is new is set over and against what is old and it is this constant contrast that constitutes the continuity of tradition.”

Learning and development have been the two inevitable elements in the history of mankind. Since times immemorial, continuous efforts have been made by the leaders of the world for the growth, progress and comfort of all. Rules and regulations have changed with every new leader. The leaders of the world have always wanted to establish a Utopia which takes birth from their Self-generated ideology. Keeping the same view in mind, they have made numerous attempts to introduce changes and make lifestyle easy and modern. The important question to be asked here is- What do we understand by the term Modern? The simplest answer to this question is- Anything which is new, different and better than the present is regarded as modern. For example, the various Ages or periods of English literature in the manner of their occurrence could be regarded as modern.

The present generation is regarded as modern, better and much more developed and aware than the older generations. We have the concept of modern technology i.e., artificial intelligence, virtual reality and globalization. Everything is available at the click of the mouse button and this is what has made life simpler, easier and better than the olden days. But have things really become easy and simple or have we become slaves or machines to the modern technology?

There have been many people who have predicted the future of human beings being too dependent upon technology. One such prediction was done by Aldous Huxley in his 1932 novel, *Brave New World*.

The novel begins in “the Year of our Ford 632” in London in the World State. The motto of this World State is “Community, Identity, Stability” and the leaders take a number of initiatives to fulfill them. The first initiative is population control. Human beings are now produced or rather manufactured in bottles rather than through natural reproduction. They are then decanted from the bottle. This means that they do not have any parents or relatives. Another horrifying feature is that 96 identical twins are decanted from one embryo, that means that there is no uniqueness. These humans look and think alike. And this is how stability is achieved.

“Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!..... For in nature it takes thirty years for two hundred eggs to reach maturity”. But our business is to stabilize the population at this moment”.

Secondly, Hypnopedia or sleep teaching is practiced to make certain rules and regulations a part of the sub-conscious minds of human beings so that they accept their inescapable social destiny and do not revolt. The Director of London Hatcheries and Conditioning tells the students-

“In brief hypnopaedia, the greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time..... Till at last the child’s mind is these suggestions and the sum of these suggestions is the child’s mind..... The mind that judges and desires and decides- made up of these suggestions which are our suggestions!”

Thirdly, the society is divided into five categories or castes, namely, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon and all are conditioned to accept their respective castes so that they do not strive to grow and develop which could lead to social unrest. The member of each caste is conditioned to love his caste or category and hate the other castes through the recording that says-

“Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they’re so frightfully clever. I’m really awfully glad I’m Beta, because I don’t work so hard. And then we are much better than Gammas and Deltas.”

Fourthly, all the members are expected to be social and indulge in erotic or sexual pleasures. The shocking fact is that sex is practiced as a social activity rather than a means of reproduction and women take birth control pills to avoid it.

Fifthly, the consumption of the drug i.e., Soma is also compulsory which keeps the citizens of the World State away from anxiety and discontent.

Abstract concepts such as religion, immortality, literature, emotions, morality, death etc. are forbidden.

“There was something called Christianity.”

“There was a thing called the soul and a thing called immortality.”

“Pain was a fascinating horror.”

Now a simple question arises to the mind i.e., what made the World leaders adopt such strategies? When the Director of the London Hatcheries and Conditioning is asked this question, he replies-

“The world was full of fathers- was therefore full of misery; full of mothers-therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts- full of madness and suicide.”

The Director means to say that Newness is the need of the present generation. It is much more important than values and practical experiences. They want to do something different. They want to keep the population away from hunger, disease, death, social unrest etc.

The story revolves around Bernard Marx who is an Alpha Plus and a social misfit according to others and his girlfriend, Lenina Crowne. Bernard is not liked by the Director and the other people because he is not like the others, he thinks and questions the ways of living life. A turn comes in the story when Bernard Marx along with his girlfriend Lenina Crowne goes for a holiday to one of the Savage Reservations where life is continuing in its normal way. A place which still has the concept of reproduction, poverty, hunger, relations, religion and death.

Here, both of them meet John who reveals his life story to them and says that his mother Linda does not belong to this place. She had come along with someone referred to as Tomakin (Thomas, the Director of London Hatcheries and Conditioning) and had an accident. He left her and went away. It was the villagers who saved her life and since she did not have any contraceptives, John was born. John and his mother later move to the World Station along with Bernard and Lenina and there is a shocking encounter between Linda and Tomakin, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning. The Director then resigns from the post as everyone learns about the scandalous relation of him with Linda and John being the product.

Slowly and gradually, John realizes the difference between people living in the Savage Reservation and that of World State. He is shocked at the fact that there is absolutely no concept of parenting, religion, studies, love for nature etc. People at the World Station do not have the faculty to think, imagine and discern between what is right or wrong.

He feels sad at the sight, that people are being manufactured for the benefit of society. There is no uniqueness or individuality.

“Everyone belongs to everyone else.”

After some time, his mother Linda dies and he is looked upon as an alien when he bemoans the death of his mother.

The nurse shouts- “Don’t shout! Think of the little ones”.

They are conditioned to accept what others have thought best for them that means that they are not having the freedom to think and progress in life. People are also being drugged with Soma and therefore he gets frustrated and tells the people-

“I come to bring you freedom. Don't you want to be free and men? Don't you ever understand what manhood and freedom are?”

John then retires to a secluded Lighthouse in order to escape from the crowd. He is then looked upon as a celebrity and people are fascinated to see John taking off his shirt and hitting himself. They are unable to understand his frustration as they lack emotions and human understanding. John finally hangs himself to death.

This classic novel was published in the 1932 but it has been a premonition of what is happening today and will happen in the days to come. Aldous Huxley wanted to portray the drawbacks of technology and too much modernism through his novel and he justified it totally.

It is a noted fact, that today the world has become tech savvy. Everything ranging from making relations to making online transactions can be done through our phones. But the irony is that we do not recognize our own neighbors and relatives or have the time to talk to them and portray our affection.

The society is losing its values. If anyone stays with his parents or is too obedient and takes every decision after consulting from them, then he is mocked upon by society as a child who is immature.

Caste system still prevails in society. In spite of our nation being a secular country which is recognized for the jewel of 'Unity Amidst Diversity', there are so many communal conflicts that take place every day. The backward classes are still looked down at, just like the caste system in the *Brave New World*.

Modern Technology has given a lot of benefit to society but it has made human beings its slaves. People belonging to the older generation did hard work. Things for them were very difficult. Everyone could not afford Education and yet their experiences were full of practical knowledge and wisdom. They could do everything. On the contrary, people of our generation have very easy lifestyle. Everything is open and available at our disposal. But sadly, human beings have lost their imaginative and thinking faculty. Originality of thoughts, words and deeds have somehow become extinct. Everyone wants to do what others are doing and therefore possess no uniqueness. All thanks to modernity.

“You don’t really need modernity in order to exist totally and fully. You need a mixture of modernity and tradition.” -Theodore Bikel

The main motive of this research paper is to motivate people to be rooted in their values, culture and tradition, to not lose one’s uniqueness by following others, to be imaginative, creative and a bit critical, when the time requires. God created human beings as his magnum opus. He blessed them with every possible talent and ability. He made them so intellectual that today they are able to probe into the mystery of creation and solve it. But due to the self-generated ideology of a few people, the majority has to blindly follow it and is not in a position to answer back.

Let us become human beings and not go down to the level of machines but be a vessel of uniqueness and originality and form a mid-way between modernism and traditional values and that is how we can create a BRAVE NEW WORLD.

WOKS CITED:

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Vintage Classics, 1994. Print.

Adelaide Farag, Ahmed Ahmed. “Enslavement and Freedom in Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World.” *International Journal of English and Literature*, 11th March, 2016, pp. 57-61. Web.

"Dystopian Futuristic Society In The Novel Brave New World." papersowl.com. 27 August, 2022, <https://papersowl.com/examples/dystopian-futuristic-society-in-the-novel-brave-new-world/>. 12 February, 2023