

Title: Brave New World

Composer: Aldous Huxley

Source: Longman

Date of Publication: 1932

Type of Text: Fiction Novel

Summary of the text: A futuristic, utopian world set in AD2540 (AF 632, Year Zero being 1908, the year in which Henry Ford produced the Model T Ford) where the world is one state. “Everyone is happier now”, humans are genetically engineered and conditioned to believe the values of the state (such as consumerism) and only a select few people are individuals. Those who are individuals are social outcasts in this utopic world and deemed a threat to stability.

In what ways does this text explore the development of belonging through connections to people, places, groups, communities or the larger world?:

- Belonging to people: BNW explores the concept of belonging with “everyone belongs to everyone else”. The Savage is confused about this idea which goes against all his morals and values. He believes that one person should only belong to another person (eg: marriage) because this was what he was taught on the Reservation, this conflicts with the idea of the new world.
- Belonging to groups/society/communities: Belonging to society as a group is challenged in BNW. We the reader see the irony in the statement “Community, Identity, Stability” – the World State motto. The reader can see that characters such as Helmholtz and Bernard are different to everyone else (Identity) however because they are individuals, they feel as if they do not belong to the Community, they are ostracised. Those who do not belong to the group, have some individuality and identity are shipped away as they threaten stability.
- Belonging to the world at large: We can see that in BNW, the whole world is one large group, therefore, if you do not belong to the world society, there is no place for you in it. The Savage is a good example of what can happen to you if you do not belong anywhere in the world. He does not belong to either world and ends up committing suicide.

In what ways are identity, relationships, experience and understanding significant in this exploration of belonging?:

BNW explores the concept of identity and belonging. Many of the humans that inhabit this new world are conditioned from a very early age to accept what the state wants and to not question. They perform routines and tasks automatically as they have been drilled into them. There is a use if repetition of quotes, sayings and phrases throughout the novel which shows that these humans are simply mindless. There is no sense of self identity, individuality but rather state governed identity. Each caste within this world is conditioned to believe that their life is the happiest and best life for them. This state dictated sense of identity, of belonging to a certain group is evident throughout the novel.

Whereas, John, having grown up on the Reservation and read Shakespeare, has the experience and understanding to compare and contrast the two worlds. He can explore alienation and belonging like no other character as he has not had the severe influence of conditioning from an early age. It is through the use of this highly unrealistic character that Huxley explores the sense of belonging or alienation in the case of the Savage.

In what ways does this text show the potential of an individual to challenge or enrich the lives of others?:

The text BNW demonstrates quite clearly the ability of an individual to challenge authority and question if they really belong. Helmholtz and Bernard both challenge society and its idea of belonging however they keep these thoughts to themselves for fear of reprimand. It is only the Savage that challenges the life of others however he does not succeed as he does not understand that due to their conditioning, the Deltas will never see the reality. Deltas have not been conditioned to think about the negative effects of Soma hence, the Savage is powerless to change/enrich the lives of others.

In what ways does this text reflect attitudes to belonging that have been modified over time?:

BNW compares the attitudes to belonging over time through the use of the Savage and his knowledge of Shakespeare and the Reservation. The Reservation could be considered a time warp as it has not experienced the effects of "civilisation" and so practises and values that existed hundreds of years ago have not changed that much (eg: Jesus, marriage, ceremonies, rituals). The Savage, an avid reader of Shakespeare also interprets from his readings what it is to belong to a society. When placed into the new world, the Savage is very confused as this new sense of belonging does not match the Reservation or Shakespeare and we the reader can see the clear demarcation between old attitudes and new attitudes.

How does the text represent the issue of not belonging? Include in your assessment any barriers to belonging explored in the text as well as an individual's choice not to belong.

BNW succinctly represents the issue of not belonging. It is those characters who do not belong, are individuals in this mindless society that are shunned and others whisper about. Bernard is one of the few who do not belong, he does not enjoy sports, likes crowds and is unhappy. Initially, we see Bernard as an individual, someone who stands up for their rights and battles against the system. However, we see that his discontent about his life stems from his alienation in society. When he returns from the Reservation, he becomes a hero and socially accepted, he also becomes more happy and enthusiastic about life. Bernard accepts life in the World State when he is accepted and this can also be seen as a challenge to belonging in BNW.

Those who are different, think differently or act differently are not accepted, do not belong and it is these people who challenge the State. The individuality is the barrier to their acceptance into society and with the acceptance, the feeling of belonging.

In BNW, we also see an individual's choice to not belong, demonstrated in the Savage. After having "tasted civilisation" and finding it unpalatable, the Savage decides to live his own life, away from the hub-bub of London. This is a direct choice not to belong to society, he is hoping to find his own little

niche where he may settle down and “belong” on his own terms however, civilisation catches up to him and in the end, it forces him to take this life.

How does this text use language forms and features to construct its ideas about belonging? In your response you must discuss 3 specific techniques and cite examples of them:

- Repetition: Repetition is the basis on which the society is built. “Moral Education” as taught through the process of hypnopaedia has drilled into the minds of citizens the key values and morals that the World State wants them to grow up with. Repetition is used throughout the play for differing effects. Much of the time it is used ironically such as the repetition of the World State motto “Community, Identity, Stability” when we the reader know that there really is no such thing as Identity as we know it. We also see constantly throughout the play various characters repeating such phrases as “everyone belongs to everyone else”, a key belonging phrase. Other examples include: “everybody’s happy nowadays”, “when the individual feels, the community reels” which has taught the citizens from a very early age to reject individualism.
- Symbolism (Themes, Motifs): There are many symbols and motifs throughout the novel, two key ones which relate to belonging include:
 - Alienation: The motif of alienation contrasts that of the total conformity which permeates the World State. Bernard Marx is alienated because he is a misfit, too small and physically defective for the position that he was conditioned for. Helmholtz Watson is the opposite, he is too intelligent even for an Alpha Plus and his superiors believe that he does his job too well. John is alienated on multiple levels, at the Indian Reservation, they reject him because he is white and his mother was not born on the Reservation, but he is also unwilling and unable to fit into the World State and therefore he cannot belong. “If one’s different, one’s bound to be lonely”. Alienation is a key feature that drives the story and a key aspect of (not) belonging.
 - Soma: The drug soma is a symbol that represents religion to control society, it is also a symbol of the power of science and technology. By taking soma, the citizens of the World State can have instant gratification and this drug is a key weapon in the World State’s arsenal to control the populace. It is a barrier to individuality and therefore a barrier to belonging.
- Juxtaposition: Many key elements are juxtaposed against each other to emphasise the point which is mainly changing attitudes to belonging over time.
 - The Reservation and Civilisation: The two completely different worlds are compared to each other to show differences in belonging over time and how social attitudes change. The reservation has not changed in time and therefore represents the old values of belonging. When Linda, who represents new ideals of belonging, is thrown in there, she does not fit in.
 - Savage and Mond: Here we see a clash of ideals. On one hand, the Savage is suggesting that old things are good and the new citizens should be allowed to access old texts with Mond arguing that if they have time for reading, they won’t consume and will start thinking about their lives, society and where they belong in it. If they do this, stability is at risk.

How does this text either help you to explore and understand the possibilities of belonging or exclude you from connecting with the world it represents:

BNW does not exclude me from connecting to the world that it represents, instead it helps me to explore and understand belonging and how that can affect individuals. Huxley was not interested in developing or creating realistic characters but simply uses them as a mechanism to deliver his message. This may exclude some readers as they cannot relate to the characters very well and to see the real meaning, you need to read the novel very carefully. Personally, I can see the message that Huxley is sending out about belonging. The character of the Savage sums it up neatly: "If one's different, one's bound to be lonely". As humans, we have an inherent need to belong to something and it's human nature to flock to those who are similar (in looks, thinking etc.) to you but what does a human do when there is no one it can relate to?