Reflection on The Pursuit of Happiness: Opinion Essay

Introduction

Happiness is often sought through external stimuli and we are no strangers to fuelling our dopamine levels with artificial sources to achieve the satisfaction of desire. We have all depended on something or someone as a source to uphold our idea of happiness. We freely pursue joy and live life in a way that makes us happy and often selfishly grab hold of opportunities sometimes to the detriment of other as our obsession to be happy grows. This pursuit of happiness is not a new concept and was explored by Aldous Huxley in his novel; “Brave New World”.” Huxley warns society that by putting happiness as the upmost priority of society we are leaving ourselves open to become the dystopian future of “The World State”. Like everything else in the World State, happiness has become a manufactured construct. It has been commodified and neatly packaged – usually in the form of soma – to control a docile society. Worryingly, our own world is not too dissimilar to this extreme world that Huxley’s prophesizes. Our conditioned society continues to pursue external sources of happiness disregarding the lack human satisfaction due to the superficiality of the sources. Will we be led into a fool’s paradise or will we see the error of blindly pursuing pleasure before the greater good of individuality?

Body paragraph 1

Good fortune, contentment of wellbeing and a pleasurable satisfaction, three states which are supposed to lead to a pure satisfaction of happiness. However, In Brave New World, Aldous Huxley presents a society that redefines happiness through the government’s manipulation of the environment and the human mind itself. The government achieves this by mind conditioning throughout the process of maturing, keeping a caste-based society, and obliterating problems. The government then defines happiness as the absence of all conflict. For problems that nature creates, the society of Brave New World abolishes them to keep pestering thoughts from infringing on people’s happiness. In contrary, it is evident that Bernard and Lenina change their attitudes after they meet the fierce, John. Bernard gets a taste of power after bringing him home to London and becomes satisfied and happy as defined by Brave New World, a complete shift from his previous, almost realistic ideals. Lenina finds love and joy, defined as ‘normal’ after being content for so many years in the social order of Brave New World. She is a prominent example in representing how the World state corrupted any emotions within the humanity of Brave New World and used sources to distract them from any excess thinking. Lenina compares a song about love to soma, “” Sweet!' said Lenina and, laying her hands on his shoulders, pressed herself against him. 'Put your arms round me,' she commanded. 'Hug me till you drug me, honey.' She too had poetry at her command, knew words that sang and were spells and beat drums. 'Kiss me'; she closed her eyes, she let her voice sink to a sleepy murmur, 'Kiss me till I'm in a coma. Hug me, honey, snuggly…'. The taboo word 'love' refers primarily to sex, but still it seems that the use of soma helps to distract them from reality. Therefore, preventing them from ever considering too seriously the nature of their extremely controlled and conditioned society.

Body Paragraph 2

The reality of us leading to a dystopian future is becoming closer every day. As we attempt to externally seek happiness. We became obsessed with little things. We take things like romantic relationships, friendships, work and illicit substances as an addiction to keep our minds occupied from the reality. The reality that we either can't face, we aren't happy, or we aren't living our dream. We all try to find happiness in people and things around us, instead of finding it within. And of course, the pleasure we get from these things is not constant, only temporary, and so our happiness goes up and down depending on whether these things are giving us pleasure instantly or not. You might not realize it, but it's undoubtedly something you do in at least one area of your life. The people in Brave New World are ignorant of the concept of love, it is traded for promiscuity and casual relationships. Old age, nature, thought and anxiety are removed, and a rigorous structure of psychological conditioning is practiced upon the youth. A strict ban on books, philosophy and religion is in place, the people view this as protection from harmful material. Each of these pursuits are a distraction from the sadness that comes with being aware for they are all too uncomfortable and confusing for a people in pursuit of pleasure. Everyone has a job that they have been conditioned for since their development. We learn that rocket mechanics are conditioned to only be happy when gyrating like they would at work. As the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning states; 'that is the secret of happiness and virtue liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that making people like their inescapable social destiny.' Happiness is also achieved in people's social lives through the closure of family and the fact that sex is embraced as a source of happiness. Family is viewed as something that caused tension and stress. They have been conditioned to a society in which external sources are their only peruse towards happiness, exactly what our civilization is heading for.

Body Paragraph 3

Huxley's dystopian future is dominated by the idea of synthetic happiness, presented through the mantra "everybody is happy now". To reach these aspirations, Aldous Huxley introduces a joy-inducing pharmaceutical drug; Soma, as a control for self-medicated happiness. Through the drug 'soma', an opiate with no withdrawal symptoms, is used to numb emotions and feelings. It is necessary to maintain their sanity as they cannot imagine a life without it. As Brave New World was bred from Huxley's paranoia formed through his own drug addiction, he understood that psychotropic drugs were not just toys for recreational purposes but had the power to fuel a level of happiness. Huxley stated; "In Brave New World the soma habit was not a private vice; it was a political institution. The daily Soma ration was an insurance against personal maladjustment, social unrest and the spread of subversive ideas. Religion, Karl Marx declared, is the opium of the people. In the Brave New World this situation was reversed. Opium, or rather Soma, was the people's religion". Through all those uprising human emotions — pain, sorrow, trust, delight — are never experienced and people are instead reduced to an unfilled existence. Like our society, addictions are encouraged to take control of our own happiness. Our current society involves the abuse of illicit drugs to remove ourselves from our depressing reality into an escape

Conclusion

To pursue happiness is to find obstacles that replace emotions. Within Brave New World, Aldous Huxley eliminates any sign of emotion and replaces it with an abuse of drugs. Constantly

overthrowing reality with external sources of happiness such as the use of Soma to access a synthetic happiness. In our civilization we are moving towards a dystopian future in which we use addictions to cover up reality.