The Theme of Alienation through Brave New World

Alienation is the one of the tools Huxley utilizes in Brave New World; he juxtaposes with the societies of Brave New World with individual beliefs held by estranged characters. This divide contributes to the book’s mood of “happy ignorance”(77), “conditioning”(18), and “a hive of industry”(146) which coincides with the values of “Community, Stability, [and] Identity”, respectively. Huxley creates a government that specifically attempts to block rational thought in their caste system. However, alpha-plus individuals receive special opportunities, and in order to further social progress, they are conditioned to think more than other castes, as their jobs require. Upon thinking, these characters realize the slavery all around them, and this builds a small group of individuals, but society prohibits exclusive friendship. Bernard, the DHC, John, Linda, Hemholtz, and the World Controller all came to the correct conclusion that the meaning of life is personal fulfillment, but the collectivist society only leaves them three options: controlling others, social isolation, or suicide, since their own individualistic views make them differ from the status quo.

Of the alienated characters appearing in *Brave New World,* Helmholtz Watson displays a positive example; not only is his alienation something that would make him be part of the norm in our modern-day society, his heightened abilities make him a huge success in Aldus Huxley's futuristic setting. Helmholtz looks "exactly like an Alpha-Plus" (67) with his tall stature and handsome features. As a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering, a writer for the "Hourly Radio," a composer of feely scenarios, and maker of happy slogans and rhymes for hypnopaediac educating, Helmholtz was so successful that his peers thought of him as too much of a success. "'Able,' was the verdict of his superiors. 'Perhaps,' (and they would shake their heads, would significantly lower their voices) 'a little *too* able.'" (67) Helmholtz's individuality stems from his self-awareness; rather than conforming to the rest of society and allowing the participation of earthly pleasures to satisfy him, Helmholtz cannot find himself to be content. "A mental excess had produced in Helmholtz Watson effects very similar to which, in Bernard Marx, were the result of a physical defect... which made Helmholtz so uncomfortably aware of being himself and all alone was too much ability [in this society]. This Escalator-Squash champion, this indefatigable lover, this admirable committee man and best mixer had suddenly realized that sport, women, communal activities were only, so far as he was concerned, second bests." (67) Remarkably, Helmholtz directly connects and has an intimate relationship with another character separated from society: John the Savage. On page 183, Helmholtz respectfully listens to John's readings of*Romeo and Juliet* with "growing excitement." Helmholtz shows an interest for much of what John reads to him, "Getting into a state about having a girl--it seemed rather ridiculous. But taken by verbal detail, what a superb piece of emotional engineering!" (p. 183) Helmholtz delights in finding emotionally-moving compositions, and relates the reading to his job by calling the reading a "piece of emotional engineering." Finding traditional ways of writing more effective and emotional, Helmholtz fondly comments on Shakespeare's skill. "'That old fellow' he said, 'makes our best propaganda technicians look absolutely silly.'" (184) Helmholtz believes that writing in the world he lives in is so dull and objective because writing stems from pain, and people in *Brave New World* couldn't write since no one was hurt or upset, "'Why was that old fellow such a marvelous propaganda technician? Because he had so many insane, excruciating things to get excited about! You've got to be hurt and upset, otherwise you can't think of the really good, penetrating, X-rayish phrases."' (185) When Helmholtz tries to help John (who is throwing soma out of a window while fighting off an angry mob), he plunges into the throng, expressing relief and excitement in his attempt to free others from the strict societal structure and rules."'Ford helps those who help themselves.' And with a laugh, actually a laugh of exultation, Helmholtz Watson pushed his way through the crowd." (213) In the end, Helmholtz chooses to spend the remainder of his life away from the perfect society of *Brave New World* as a good writer, and finally choosing the life he wants, "'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...'" (229) Speaking his last words of the novel, Helmholtz alludes to what he said earlier--about the need to feel emotionally wretched and painful to write well. As Helmholtz makes his final appearance, he literally isolates himself from society by being sent off--with the World Controller's approval--to a lonely island to live out the remainder of his life peacefully.

Bernard Marx would represent the opposite, negative view of those raised in the Brave New World; he is a coward, self-centered, too intent on establishing superiority to notice others emotions. He attempts to prove himself different, and takes pride in partaking and interacting with things that would horrify a normal member of Brave New World. Bernard is alienated by a physical disability; “… a mental excess had produced in Helmholtz Watson effects very similar to those which, in Bernard Marx, were the result of a physical defect.” (page 67) he must have had it his entire life, since he was pulled off the conveyors with rumors of a mistake during decanting , “…somebody…thought he was a gamma and put a little alcohol into his blood-surrogate.” (page 46) Bernard is described as “…so *small*…so stunted.” (page 46) He cannot find satisfaction in sports or communal activities because of this, even though he does still take soma. He talks readily and easily about the evils of society, but when opportunities to prove that he really thinks this arises, like when John and Helmholtz are disposing of soma, he hangs back and tries to escape punishment; he has no pride for what he believes in. Even as he learns of his consequence for the little involvement in the soma incident, he lacks consistency, he would rather live a lie than die from the truth. Alienated from the start due to his intellectual superiority, he is distanced from both the controlling society, but also the lunatic society. He doesn’t realize the prospects of being socially isolated on an island towards the end of the novel.

"This is the Controller; this is his fordship. Mustapha Mond." (page 33) "The eyes of the saluting students almost popped out of their heads... he was going to stay, to stay, yes, and actually talk to them." (page 34) Mustapha Mond is one of the world controllers, "The Resident Controller for Western Europe." (page 34) "Brave New World" views Mustapha Mond almost as Ford himself, a god. He represents all-knowing superiority, critical and intelligent. He is set apart by the authority he carries and the knowledge that comes with authority. "There were those strange rumors of old forbidden books hidden in a safe in the controller's study. Bibles, poetry - Ford knew what." (page 35) Mustapha Mond was one of the few aloud to understand the past and study the books left behind that were now prohibited, because of this he is set apart by a knowledge "...they couldn't understand." (page 219) Mustapha was once a scientist; he was given the choice to become a world controller or a resident of the island exiles.

John the Savage is the most important character that Huxley creates; he brings a man from a society much like ours today and suddenly throws him into the Brave New World; he is Huxley’s key direct contrast. John is horrified at almost every aspect of the Brave New World; the Soma, the general promiscuity, loss of self-restraint, the Feelies (a pun on movies, of course) and other attributes that the emotionless population contained. John himself was a strong, smart individual who never belonged quite in either world; born from Linda, he never fit into the Savage society because of his mother’s atrocities, and steadfastly rejects the Brave New World. He rigorously practiced Old Religion; atonement of sins through suffering and self-restraint were two key elements of his identity. These clashed directly with Brave New World, and ultimately drove him to suicide because he could not handle the difference between his desires and rash actions and what he strove to be as a man. Alienated from both societies, John represents the farthest possible facet of self-regulation. Huxley uses this to juxtapose both ends of the spectrum in direct contrast; Johns fight to remain self-regulated and not to give into sensory desires against the dangerous attraction of pleasure from Brave New World. John is too tough, trying to completely reject the Brave New World through intelligent conversation and reasoning. His methods are just as outrageous as those on the other end of the spectrum in the Brave New World; for the incredible lack of self-regulation in the Brave New World, John is just as incredible in his strict self-regulation.

Linda is the worst case scenario; she is alienated from Brave New World and the Savage Reservation. She is also the inverse scenario of John; instead of being thrown into the Brave New World from the Savage Reservation, she is lost in the Savage Reservation when used to the Brave New World. Her lack of self-regulation makes her a target in the Savage Society; which is closer to ours currently than it is to Brave New World itself. She represents the fact that someone taken from Brave New World back to old ways will not accept it or function as a member of the society; she rejects the Savages as much as John rejects the Brave New World. They both pay the ultimate price for it, by opposite methods; Linda dies from soma overdose, because she could not restrain herself from it after being deprived of it for years, and John dies because he cannot deal with the fact his self-restraint failed him.  
 The DHC is also alienated to a certain degree; after being made into a ‘dirty’ joke by Johns public display of affection and naming him Father, he disappears, goes into hiding, and is thus alienated from the Brave New World. Isolated from both the controller’s world, and the lunatic Indian society, he has no home, and the reader is left with the assumption that he has committed suicide by the end in some way.

All six of these characters were allowed to think and make critical decisions, revealing a startling connection between social alienation and individualistic values.