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AP Literature

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The Effects of Alienation Throughout Literature

Alienation is a condition in which a person or being feels detached from either themselves or others. It often brings about feelings of sorrow and loneliness but it can also incite anger. Throughout the most moving and well known literary works such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, characters are alienated from themselves and others by their appearances, actions, and obsessions.

In *Brave New World*, John's history on the reserve makes his life in the city harder. John's background indoctrinates him with the beliefs of the society to which he belonged. The beliefs he was raised with directly conflict with those of the society in the new world and thus prevent him from creating relationships. This inability to create lasting relationships, even with those who have a desire to help him creates a divide between the other members of society and himself (Yelle 9). Since John was raised on an Indian reservation, he is automatically seen as a different class from everyone he encounters (Yelle 18). On the reservation and in the new world, he is an outsider because his mother's values and life choices. He is also seen as an outsider in both societies because of his skin color. Since John is unable to change the way he is seen by others, he is unable to fit into any society (6). This divide causes John immense pain. He tearfully states "They disliked me for my complexion. It's always been like that. Always" (Huxley 117). When John travels to the city, he hopes to find a place where he could fit in, but

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instead he is alienated once again (Hailwood 2). However this time it was his decision. Although he tried to overcome his old belief system, he was unable to. This inability leads to his alienation because people are naturally characterized by their values (Yelle 6). John's desire to fit into society and his inability to do so lead to his discontent with civilization because people who have different ideologies are bound to disagree when they are together (Cavus 10). In the end John's alienation causes him great pain and he is only able to survive "As long as I can be alone" (Huxley 243). John's upbringing on the Indian Reserve was full of torment and alienation because of his appearances which lead to his desire to be a part of society. When he traveled to the city he hoped to find this satisfaction but in reality he was even more alone in the city than on the reserve because his beliefs and appearances were too strong for him to overcome.

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