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Remaking Divinity in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

by

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Master of Arts in English

Department of English, School of Arts and Sciences

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Introduction

Humanity is an experience. Shaped through both individual and collective encounters, we understand the self and the world around us as an amalgamation of interactions over the course of our lives. Arguably, one of the most common experiential archetypes is religion, and more specifically the relationship one has with a divine being as it has been framed by a religious institution. While the United States does not have an official religion, there is a host of people who refer to the U.S. as a “Christian nation,” and it is therefore irresponsible to elide the panoply of inequities that run through this specific religious institution, like cracks in a glass pane. What happens if we let that stained glass pane brake and shatter, watch it scatter across the floor; would civilization lose its shape at the death of their god? And with one divine thing being absent what would step in to take its place? Would it look anything like the old thing, or would it be so emphatically different, so opposite what the old world was, that old notions of what divine would be are relegated to dusty books and “savage religions”? This issue lies at the heart of Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and was the source of outrage and offense at the time of the novel’s publication in 1932, with many countries decrying the novel for its overt “anti-family” and “anti-religion” themes. While the global civilization within the novel mirrors our contemporary lifestyle (e.g. consumerism, mass consumption, instant gratification) personal identity is discarded and replaced with an inherent desire to be part of the community. While monotheistic religious institutions thrive on collective individualism, the society in *Brave New World* is held together by *soma*, a hallucinogen that takes the user “out of time” and creates what I call the New Divine.

Using Huxley’s later philosophical work *The Perennial Philosophy* as well as his autobiographical account of a controlled mescaline trip in *The Doors of Perception*, I aim to

determine two things. First, that historical reception of *Brave New World* was shaped by a series of parliamentary decisions made by the Republic of Ireland in the early 20th century, and that their reasoning for banning the novel grew from purely dogmatic principles, ones which other countries like Australia and the U.S. share. Secondly, and more centrally, is that the reasons the Irish Parliament gave for banning *Brave New World* were merely symptoms, not the cause. It has less to do with public health, and more to do with morality, more specifically the dogma that pervades throughout the entirety of the Christian world. Huxley suggests that there is a way for people to experience this New Divine more intimately, where the individual can come to a sense of oneness with their environment and feel divinity within ourselves and our surroundings, rather than hope to have it bestowed upon them in return for their reverence and devotion. In the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church, his notion of an inner, more accessible divine was seen as a threat. Much of what I have said is reflected in the novel, but the concepts themselves are revisited by Huxley decades later, where they are not hidden beneath plot and character development, allowing him to speak more directly. *The Perennial Philosophy* and *The Doors of Perception* were published in 1945 and 1954, respectively, and there are moments in these texts where Huxley revisits divinity and religion with an inquisitiveness that asks one to consider the reality he is proposing in *Brave New World*. In fact, there are moments in these secondary texts that speak explicitly to a scene or object from *Brave New World*, and I argue that those instances prove invaluable when envisioning an alternative to religion. Some critics classify the novel as satire, but this diminishes the utility of *Brave New World* as a thought experiment in reshaping divinity as an experience to be shared rather than restricted.

The Politics of Religion

Most articles, blogs, and even portions of Wikipedia pages reiterate that the novel was banned in Ireland, where the basis for the ban was that it was “anti-religious” and “anti-family.” It turns out that this phrasing circulated because a Wikipedia contributor cited an archived webpage from Portland Community College’s library (Banned Books).

In 1926 – only four years after declaring independence – the Minister for Justice of the Irish Free State, Kevin O’Higgins, faced an immense amount of pressure from the Roman Catholic church to ban certain written materials they saw to be offensive. At this point in time, roughly ninety-three percent of the Irish Free State’s population identified as Roman Catholic, so when the church made such a request, it was assumed that most of the country would support their decisions (Fig. 1). Despite his contention that the current obscenity laws were effective,

RELIGION	SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN
CATHOLICS	2,751,269
TOTAL OTHER RELIGIONS	220,723
Protestant Episcopalians	164,215
Presbyterians	32,429
Methodists	10,663
Jews	3,686
Baptists	717
Others	9,013
TOTAL PERSONS	2,971,992

O’Higgins gave way and on February 12th, 1926, The Committee on Evil Literature was established; of the five elected members, two were of the clergy, two more were Teachta Dála (members of Dáil Éireann, which is the lower house of the Oireachtas, the Irish Parliament) and the Chairman was a professor of English Literature at University College,

Fig. 1 Population of Irish Free State by Religion

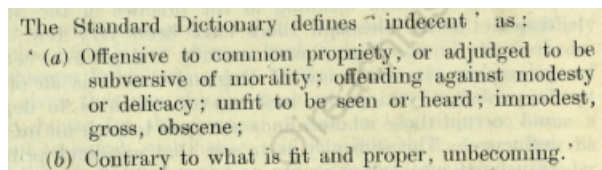
Dublin (Report 3).

The inclusion of clergymen, while unsurprising, does tell us that the decisions made by the committee were influenced by the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, published by the Catholic Church in 1559 under Pope Paul IV. This document was the culmination of years of censorship and was a definitive list of materials that members of the Catholic church were forbidden to read

(Schmitt 45). This was done to “to prevent the contamination of the faith or the corruption of morals through the reading of theologically erroneous or immoral books” and this exact moment is the seed that grew to become The Committee on Evil Literature, which then evolved into the Censorship of Publications Act, a few years before the publication of *Brave New World* (Encyclopædia Britannica).

With that in mind I turn to the *Report of The Committee on Evil Literature*. These five men set out to define what is meant by “indecent” and “obscene” literature. They cite an earlier ruling made by the Select Joint Committee in 1908 that defines “indecent” and “obscene” as “anything calculated to influence the passions or to suggest or invite to sexual immorality, or in any other way to corrupt and deprave, should be included within the word 'indecent'” but this new Committee felt that the definition given decades prior had not been interpreted broadly enough; they felt that it pointed to something explicitly immoral (Report 7). Shortly after, the Committee cites definitions from The Standard Dictionary, and it is the inclusion of a secondary definition that enables them to paint this new interpretation with much broader strokes (Fig. 2).

Now denoting “contrary to what is fit and proper, unbecoming,” the word ‘indecent’ could now be applied to “any such pictures



The Standard Dictionary defines ‘indecent’ as:
 (a) Offensive to common propriety, or adjudged to be subversive of morality; offending against modesty or delicacy; unfit to be seen or heard; immodest, gross, obscene;
 (b) Contrary to what is fit and proper, unbecoming.’

Fig. 2 Report of The Committee on Evil Literature

or literature (intended for the young) which offend against modesty or common propriety” and it is the term “common propriety” that sets the tone of the legislations to come (Report 8). The Catholic Church has censored written works for centuries so the grounds for this claim, along with a majority Roman Catholic populous, it is evident that “common propriety” is a term predetermined by the influence of Catholic dogmatism.

The Committee, having completed the task put before them, was disbanded in December of 1926. However, three years later, a piece of legislation came before the Irish Parliament which very closely resembled the findings of The Committee on Evil Literature. The Censorship Publications Act of 1929 sought to establish the Censorship of Publications Board, which would be comprised of five men appointed by the Minister for Justice. If a complaint was filed to the Minister, he would pass it to the Board and, if the majority was in agreement, they would return to the Minister and state the following:

...in the opinion of the Board the book or the particular edition of a book which is the subject of such report is in its general tendency indecent or obscene and should for that reason be prohibited or that in the opinion of the Board such book or edition advocates the unnatural prevention of conception or the procurement of abortion or miscarriage or the use of any method, treatment or appliance for the purpose of such prevention or such miscarriage and should for that reason be prohibited...

(Censorship of Publications Act, 1929)

The Committee of 1926 set out to define indecent and obscene in a matter keeping with the morals of the Catholic Church, and they succeeded on every front; the rhetoric of within the 1926 report is very clearly reflected in the Censorship Act of 1929. This comes as no surprise as the nation of Ireland at this time was still overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and this made for a religiously guided sense of morality, and further supports the idea that Catholic theology played a fundamental role in the legislation of this Act. Ironically enough, Huxley's *Point Counter Point* was one of thirteen books to have been immediately banned when the bill was passed into law.

Having said all of this, it is imperative to understand that claims like “anti-religious” and “anti-family” do not come from explicit moments in the text, but from broad brush

interpretations of “common propriety” by the Committee of 1926 and the ban on anything that spoke about abortion (along with feminine sexuality in general) from the Board in 1929. A transcription of a debate within the lower house of Oireachtas on June 19th, 2019, further uncovers these motivations. Deputy Brendan Howlin of the Labour Party states:

One of the clear indications of Catholic influence on the new Irish Free State was the establishment in 1926 of the Committee on Evil Literature. It led to the Censorship of Publications Act 1929. Over the course of the following decades, many works of literature were banned... Censorship was used as a tool of social engineering and control, including for the suppression of sexual freedom
(Dáil Éireann debate)

The series of events that took place in Ireland had a direct impact on how the novel was received. While *Brave New World* is now seen as satire or a fictional work, there was no shortage of religious persons who saw this book as the Irish Parliament did in the years after its publishing. There are similar instances in Australia around the time of publication, but also within the United States as recently as the last fifty years. I contend that Huxley inadvertently suggested a different kind of divinity in *Brave New World* and it is one that relies on the person – the human – rather than the deity. He moves away from divine beings and towards being divine, and in doing so allows his characters to embody divinity as it is described in *The Perennial Philosophy*. Huxley’s philosophical observations of spirituality in *Perennial Philosophy* surface in *Brave New World* as he takes organized religion off the table and replaces it with an experience that society shares, and this is ultimately more unifying than the “old religions” had been; these concepts frightened the policy makers in 20th century Ireland, more than contraceptives and violence ever could.

Overview

Huxley was known for his sharp wit and expansive intelligence. He was no stranger to the trials of life; his mother died when he was fourteen, only to then contract Keratitis punctata three years later, leaving him mostly blind for about three years, and half-blind for the remainder of his life. He went on to attend Balliol College, Oxford, where he earned his BA in English studies, only after having his service turned down during World War I. In need of both a job and money, he began teaching at Eton College, where he eventually taught Eric Blair, who would later take up the name George Orwell. Then, at some point in the 1920s he went to work in a chemical factory, wherein he experienced what he called “an ordered universe in a world of planless incoherence” (comes from 2004 Vintage edition with David Bradshaw introduction). His time at the chemical plant deeply influenced the recurrent factory setting by which the powers that be asserts their omniscient control. Although Huxley incorporates aspects of his life and the world around him, it was his challenging of the spiritual status quo that enraged policy makers and educators around the world. To better understand why *Brave New World* caused such a stir, we must first understand the philosophy that influenced this secular work, as well as his understanding of how reality is perceived, and how those perceptions are formed and reformed by experience.

Although he authored fifty novels in his lifetime, this is the one for which he is most recognized. Though the novel has made its way onto the banned book lists in a handful of countries, the author himself received criticism for the book as it relates to Huxley’s own set of

beliefs, and where some were concerned, his absence of belief. Of course, the critical reception of the novel also had a hand in determining the reputation the book would come to garner.

The novel opens as a group of young, school age boys visit the Central London Hatching and Conditioning Centre. We are immediately introduced to The Director, a man who for all intents and purposes, holds the world in the palm of his hand. We receive a few chapters where we are in direct contact with The Director, but we are also introduced to Henry Foster, who appears to be The Director's right hand man in this situation, as well as our protagonist Bernard Marx. Bernard appears only in passing, protesting the conversation Henry has about a mutual interest of theirs, Lenina Crowne. While Lenina's presence throughout the novel works to highlight Bernard's individuality, she also proves useful when more closely examining the "humanity" of the propaganda on which every person is raised. We soon learn that Bernard has romantic intentions towards Lenina; however, it becomes apparent that the typical courting process we are accustomed to in our reality is deeply frowned upon. In their reality, sex is not something sacred or intimate, it is something you share with *everyone*, something to bring the community together, rather than to set one individual above the other. Sex is no longer a necessary component in procreation, people are quite literally hatched, not born to a mother or father; we learn later that even saying the words is one of the highest social offences; this was one instance the Irish politicians pointed to when defining "indecent" and "obscene".

As the focus of the novel becomes clearer, Bernard asks Lenina to vacation on the Reservation, and after some thought she agrees. He then flies to see his one true confidant, Helmholtz Watson, and though Bernard now has his weekend with Lenina, he and Helmholtz spend the night discussing their dissatisfaction with their "deformities." While yes, every individual is engineered to fulfill a specific role in life and is given an appearance and

intellectual capacity appropriate for such a job, there are still mistakes, and Bernard and Helmholtz are among the outliers. In Bernard's case, he was frailer than the other members of his caste, and Helmholtz was far stronger, possessing a higher intellect than Bernard and the others. But there are also subcategories within the overarching castes, and while the two men occupy the same caste (Helmholtz being slightly above Bernard), these factors place them on the fringes of their community, and it is here we find the forging of an otherwise unlikely friendship. Following this private discussion, Bernard visits The Director, requesting permission to visit the Reservation with Lenina. After reveling in his past journey to the Reservation, The Director signs off on the request.

Upon arriving at the Reservation in New Mexico, Lenina and Bernard are quickly overwhelmed by the obscene living conditions, but more importantly, at the age and natural decay of the human body. In their civilization, most people die before the age of sixty, and even then, the science in this reality is advanced enough to prevent any change in physical appearance. The dying are so "out of time" on *soma* that there is no pain in death, and for them, death has no afterlife, so it just *is*. After spending some time observing one of the "Savages" many rituals, Bernard is approached by a young man, John, who is very quickly revealed to be the son of The Director; biological reproduction is seen as an abomination, so this discovery proved to be shocking opportunity to disgrace The Director and redeem Bernard. Lenina leaves the two men and, having rendered herself into an eighteen-hour *soma* coma, leaves Bernard free to fly into Santa Fe where he contacts The Resident World Controller of Western Europe, Mustapha Mond, where Bernard requests that John be permitted to visit London with the primary intent of exposing The Director as a father, something that civilization worldwide now views as a perversion. It is necessary to note that at this point in the novel The Director means to remove

Bernard from the DHC to an island facility (which is a huge step down), so this revelation serves as Bernard's second chance at society at the expense of The Director's livelihood. Mustapha approves Bernard's request and he, Lenina, John, and John's mother Linda, fly back to London.

With John by his side, Bernard quickly garners the attention of everyone, including many persons of status. This newfound popularity wildly inflates Bernard's ego, quickly transforming the man who once condemned this society to one who thrives in the heart of it, sleeping with as many women as he can, shaking hands and making promises he would ultimately be unable to deliver upon. Eventually, John meets Helmholtz and, seeing themselves in the other, they quickly become close friends. As all of this is playing out, Lenina finds herself more and more attracted to John, almost obsessively so. She finds him in Bernard's apartment one night and, after taking some *soma*, puts her best foot forward in an attempt to seduce him. The situation quickly takes a turn as John is filled with reproach and condemns her with verses from Shakespeare. He recuses himself to the bathroom, only to receive a call that informs him of his mother's impending death; he rushes to the Hospital for the Dying. Once there, he finds his mother in the midst of a perpetual *soma* dosage, and he is met by a group of young children receiving their death conditioning (desensitizing them to the sight of a dying or dead person). Seeing that Linda looks drastically different from the other bodies in the hospital, they begin to ask John all kinds of questions. Though the young children ask out of an innocent curiosity, John is infuriated, and later finds them as they were being given their *soma* tablets. After failing to convince them to rebel by *not* taking the *soma*, he takes what he can and throws it out the window. Having caught wind of the revolt, Bernard and Helmholtz fly to John's aid; the police arrive shortly after and deploy *soma* gas. Once the situation deescalates, the children received their *soma*, and the three men are arrested and brought to the office of Mustapha Mond.

Helmholtz and Bernard receive their sentence from Mustapha, but John stays behind. The World Controller shows John his collection of forbidden books, and they have a long conversation relevant to the status of humanity in the world at large, as opposed to the humanity John is familiar with back on the Reservation. This interaction provides us with the most substantive interaction in the novel's entirety, and for the first time in the novel we see the tension between the Savages' religion and the new form of divinity found in civilized society surface in a way that speaks directly to philosophy in *The Perennial Philosophy*. The final scene in the novel is the long-awaited clash of two worlds, and it is here that we receive multiple confessions from Mustapha on the importance of things like Shakespeare and religious texts, but with the distinction that you cannot have those things and maintain a content society. At the end of the conversation, John decides to live out the rest of his life in the forest outside of London. As he attempts to live a solitary life, he is observed – quite irreverently – by the citizens of London, one of whom records John and turns his experience into a “feely,” which is their version of a movie. To pay penance, John proceeds to flog himself. Rather than repulsing the people of London, they are drawn to him, culminating in a visit from Lenina. In what comes to be the most intense scene, the publicized self-flagellation turns into an orgy. They return the next morning to find John hanging in the center of the building.

The novel is also structured by an intricate caste system which is reinforced by the chemical engineering put on display at the novel's opening. I would like to briefly discuss the caste system that structures how we come to understand London, and by contrast, the Reservation. As The Director establishes very early on, there are technically six ranks within this society. At the top we have the leaders and thinkers, the Alpha's, followed by the bottom end managerial staff *or* high-end technical workers who wear mulberry, the Beta's; it is important to

note that many of the Beta's are women, as we hear in passing while touring the World Hatchery in the first few chapters. Then we have Gamma's, who are the pinnacle of the servant class and are considered to be somewhat skilled, they wear green; the only notable Gamma we encounter is The Director's butler. The khaki wearing Delta's are produced *en masse* through a scientific miracle called the Bokanovsky Process, and they are the load bearing class; the work they perform is physically demanding and they are designed to withstand such work conditions. Finally, Epsilon's mark the bottom of the social ladder, wearing the color black, and they are effectively illiterate; they are frequently identified as "octaroons" which is defined as "a person of one-eighth black ancestry" (Merriam-Webster). Not only is this a racially insensitive term, but the definition also conflicts with the absence of biological families and ancestry as it relates to the society we see in London as every person is created via chemical engineering, and therefore has no ancestral roots. This kind of blood quantum biology has (and continues to be) used to discriminate based on appearance, however this kind of discrimination is not found withing *Brave New World*. Now, the sixth spot is held by a group called Freemartin's, and while they are mentioned early on and are seemingly of some kind of importance, they appear to fade into the background as the plot progresses. Bernard, Helmholtz, The Director, Mustapha, and Henry are all examples of Alpha's, however, there are distinctions made within the top tier, and they designate individuals as an Alpha Plus or an Alpha Minus, but even here, there are clearly exceptions. As for our Beta's we have Lenina and Fanny Crowne, as well as Linda, all of whom work similar jobs in the hatchery.

There are also a handful of physical markers which Huxley repeatedly makes mention of. During the creation process, the surrogates (embryos) are affected in various ways during its time on the conveyer belt in accordance with the caste level it will be born into. Alpha's do not

have any alcohol introduced into their bloodstream and are not deprived of oxygen at any point in their creation process. They are distinguished by their intellect, but also by their exceptional physical stature, as is most noticeable with Helmholtz, often being described as beautiful, agile, and massive in size. The Beta's are more intelligent than the Gamma's, but slightly less so than the Alpha's, which could point to a slight oxygen deprivation at some point in their process. Since this caste is comprised mostly of women, we are led to assume there is a youthful beauty to them as a whole, especially since it is clear that sex is a communicative tool more than a reproductive one. Gammas are notably shorter than Alpha's and Beta's, and we are told they have alcohol introduced into their surrogate while they are still an embryo, which diminishes their physical stature. The Delta's have received a further dose of alcohol, as well as the explicit mention of oxygen deprivation, which drastically reduces their intellectual capacity; since they will be performing the most physically demanding jobs in this society, they need not concern themselves with anything beyond the task in front of them. Lastly, Epsilons have the most amount of alcohol in their blood and undergo oxygen deprivation for eighty percent of the surrogate process.

While it is understood that the London we see here is a reflection of a larger global society, there is still the matter of the indigenous peoples on the Reservation in New Mexico. While they will feel the most familiar to us, in terms of family, aging, and religion, they are still referred to as savages, a played-out term used to other the Native population. However, the thing that others the Natives in this novel is takes on multiple forms. Their natural aging is an affront to the miracles of science, and their spiritual and religious beliefs wholly alien since any text regarding religion or spirituality are locked behind the doors of the Resident World Controllers. Huxley complicates Christianity in this part of the novel as he works Jesus Christ into the

polytheism of the Reservation, which in turn lends the idea of Jesus as absurd to the civilized folks in the novel. In making Jesus one of many deities, Huxley takes the core icon of Christianity and places it in the furthest recesses of the world. He pairs the foundation of Christianity with the repeated use of the word “savage,” and then writes all of these spiritual deities onto an equal plane of reverence. This, paired with how divinity is experienced within the novel, is what provoked many of the anti-religious claims that arose soon after the novel was published. The society we see on the Reservation was meant to interrogate the nature of religion. Here we find that divinity is established by the worshippers and their belief rather than then by some holy mandate or innate superiority. By withholding religion from most of the world, he allows himself the space to relocate Jesus. In shifting the locus of power from civilized society to the Savage Reservation, Huxley illustrates the process of divine unmaking, proving that there is power in the belief of the masses, that no god is below being forgotten.

The New Divine is a Visionary Experience

As we approach the heavier portion of this inquisition, it should be noted that both *The Perennial Philosophy* (published 1945) and *The Doors of Perception* (published 1954) were written well after the publication of *Brave New World*. I ask that you keep this in mind going forward, as what is written in these essays are shockingly relevant to the novel he had written ten to twenty years before hand. *The Perennial Philosophy* was written as a survey of East/West theology, and Huxley makes frequent comparisons to highlight the similarities and differences between the two theologies and creates an understanding of spiritual being that is complex and layered; while the overall aim of the book was to address some criticisms of Perennialism (the hierarchical ranking of religions and that the definition of Perennialism itself is still relatively undefined) Huxley created an interpretive space for spiritualists which is supported by

preexisting religions. With this specific philosophy as the scaffolding, it is only fair to then look to the *The Doors of Perception* to better understand Huxley's own divine experience, his very own *soma* trip. In this essay, he provides a detailed account of his mescaline trip (very clearly undergone in the name of science) and what follows is a deep dive into the concept of "the All" (a collective consciousness), the self, and the not-self (of which the latter two are described as "in here" and "out there") and how Huxley experienced all three simultaneously as a result of his chemically induced visionary experience (Huxley 25).

The Perennial Philosophy is expansive in its content, but I find that there is one place where the prime intention surfaces:

Like any other form of imperialism, theological imperialism is a menace to permanent world peace. The reign of violence will never come to an end until, first, most human beings accept the same, true philosophy of life; until, second, this Perennial Philosophy is recognized as the highest factor common to all the world religions; until, third, the adherents of every religion renounce the idolatrous time-philosophies with which, in their own particular faith, the Perennial Philosophy of eternity has been overlaid; until, fourth, there is a world-wide rejection of all the political pseudo-religions, which place man's supreme good in future time and therefore justify and commend the commission of every sort of present iniquity as a means to that end.

Earlier I stated that the complaints lodged against the novel were symptomatic of something larger, and it is here that we find the culprit. The theological imperialism he writes about is embodied in the motivations of the Committee for Evil Literature, so it makes sense that Huxley himself would create world with a permanent peace where organized religions (like Catholicism and Christianity) are entirely absent. Though he expounds on other aspects of Perennialism for

another hundred or so pages, this the essence of his argument, not only in *Perennial Philosophy*, but also at the core of *Brave New World's* society. To take it step by step: religion (time-philosophy) had been relegated to the annals of history, the people of London now have a singular shared, *metaphysical* experience through *soma* (which is the cornerstone of Perennialism), which ultimately leaves the collective society existing in the moment rather than worrying about the future (with the sole exception of Mustapha Mond). What fascinates me most in all of this is that Huxley wrote this civilization into existence a decade before he explicates the conditions listed above. To say that *Brave New World* was not influenced by Perennialism would suggest the theoretical work Huxley did in the latter part of his life was a sudden leap rather than a lifelong journey to reshape how we perceive the world around us.

It becomes clear that, in both *Perennial Philosophy* and *Brave New World* the human mind prefers eternity over time. Take Linda as an example. In her dying state she chose to live out the last of her days under the effects of *soma*. Yet, we are never given an official list of the effects *soma* has on the mind, just that it made people more agreeable, happier even. Despite the absence of certainty, there one moment in the novel that mention specific effects of the drug, and this coincides with Huxley's own ethereal adventure. The first being Lenina and Henry's night out on the town where the "second dose of *soma* had raised a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds" and the second being Bernard's attendance at the "orgy porgy" (which reads like a satirical Sunday Service) where he describes how "Eyes shone, cheeks were flushed, the inner light of universal benevolence broke out on every face in happy, friendly smiles" (Huxley 77, 81). The first instance resonates with Huxley's own account, where he explains that "Space was still there; but it had lost its predominance. The mind was primarily concerned, no with measures and locations, but with being and meaning" and this is actively

reflected in the experience of Lenina and Henry as they lost themselves in the rhythm of the night, minding only their enjoyment and having nothing to do with the physical reality of their time together.

The second comes from another of Huxley's essays *Heaven and Hell*, and while it was published two years after his controlled mescaline trip, it utilizes the same vocabulary and rhetoric, and so the two essays have since been published as one under the title *The Doors of Perception: Includes Heaven and Hell*; while the essays are separate ventures I cannot imagine a more perfect union as both summarize the broader implications of his work while simultaneously paying homage to the visionary at the heart of all of these essays, William Blake. While the two are indeed separate endeavors, the interplay that exists is undeniable and I believe they are two halves of a whole. In *Heaven and Hell*, Huxley references *The Doors of Perception* in his discussion of the "antipodes of the mind." While the term itself is geographical in nature and was used to define Australia in reference to Ireland and Great Britain, it has since taken on a subsequent definition, and that is to be diametrically opposed to a place or thing. In this situation, Huxley compares the antipodes of the mind to visionaries like William Blake, and in both *The Doors of Perception* (which receives its namesake from Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*) and *Heaven and Hell* Huxley defers to Blake and his use of imagery to more accurately describe the magnificence he experienced during this scientific experiment; this is to say that the opposite of the rational mind is that of the visionary, one who experiences ordinary life in brilliant illuminations. Huxley believed that the visionary experience was divine in itself, and like mescaline and *soma*, this new experience provides a new way to perceive the world around oneself. During the course of his experience Huxley notes that:

First and most important is the experience of light. Everything seen by those who visit the mind's antipodes is brilliantly illuminated and seems to shine from within. All colors are intensified to a pitch far beyond anything seen in the normal state, and at the same time the mind's capacity for recognizing fine distinctions of tone and hue is notably heightened.

This precisely what Bernard notes while taking part in the "Orgy Porgy" when the group calls upon their higher being, Ford. What an experience this must be, to witness light emerge from within a person or thing, not in the way we perceive bio-luminescent organisms, but rather in the simple fact that they just *are*. Huxley believed that this was something the visionaries saw on a daily basis, something that he himself was allowed to experience if only through chemical means. Herein lies the foundation of the new divine. When one exists out of time, which is the perception of the visionary, you see things not in terms of space, but rather through one's state of being, and what that current state means in relation to the shared experience of others. This is a drastic departure from contemporary spirituality as it suggests that divinity is not some disjointed path to a higher being, but that the higher being is experiential, that the mind is capable of being both human *and* divine.

In reshaping how divinity is experienced, Huxley incidentally probes at the concept of free will. The first five or so chapters take place in a factory that produces human beings in batches like a Fordist assembly line. On top of reassigning Jesus to the Reservation, Huxley takes the reproductive power away from sex and gives that responsibility to the state. Still a pseudoscience for the reader, the genetic engineering displayed in *Brave New World* has already raised ethical issues in the real world; detecting and correcting any deformity or mutation caught at the early stages of a pregnancy. Huxley took this to its rational extreme, and in doing so

removed another tenant of the old divinity: the illusion of free will. The foundation of *Brave New World* is set so that we are immediately faced with an image of the future that is saturated in the recognizable and features of an advanced society. He complicates futurity with his dystopian reality, and the scientific marvels of the World State ruptures how we identify with the many possibilities afforded to us via science. While many dystopian films and novels are predicated on the extinction of humanity, the disruptive “thing” here is the exact opposite – a surplus so expansive it requires a different kind of preservation. This excess leaves an uncanny reflection to look upon; possibility in the opposite direction. Instead of taking everything away from civilization, he gives them the world, and in exchange he takes only those things that would “threaten permanent peace”. With any post-apocalyptic script there is going to be a drive to “save the last of humanity,” and while the novel takes place after a biochemical war, the setting we are given resembles *The Giver* more than it does *28 Days Later*. There is no struggle, everyone within the society is content with their station in life, and death is nothing to fear. Huxley is using this uncanny and previously unimagined surplus of bodies to further separate his novel from traditional religious pretexts that speak to subservience, reverence, and honoring thy mother and father.

Family Matters

The nuclear family is at the heart of all things. How we advertise, the things we teach in schools, and the laws we pass in our government. Much to the dismay of the Irish and Americans, the concept of family was nowhere to be found in *Brave New World*. From the very beginning, it was clear that people came from bottles, which in itself is strange enough, but there are a few moments in the earlier chapters that clarifies the stance the novel takes on family. The first place I would draw your attention to are the moments following the appearance of Mustapha

Mond in the middle of The Director's presentation. In a kind of social hijacking, Mustapha challenges the young boys to imagine the following life:

'Just try to realize it,' he said, and his voice sent a strange thrill quivering along their esophagus along their diaphragms. 'Try to realize what it was like to have a viviparous mother.' That smutty word again. But none of them dreamed, this time, of smiling. 'Try to imagine what "living with one's family" meant.' They tried; but obviously without the smallest success. 'And do you know what a "home" was?'. They shook their heads.

From the very beginning, we are made aware not only the absence of family, but repudiation of it. The provocative language and the absence of family frames how we come to understand society in *Brave New World*. The words mother and father elicit strong physical reactions from those who hear it, and the notion of biological birth is lewd, and the mere mention of it causes a few of the boys in the opening of the novel to go pale. But why does the idea of family disturb these Londoners? It comes down to the cleanliness of it all. And, in part, this is what Mustapha is working towards as he sets the scene and describes life in a "home" to the visiting students. Biological birth is no longer necessary for procreation and is so far removed from their own reality that it has become a boogeyman of sorts. And if there are no families, who takes care of the children? Well in this case, that would be the government. Now this is understandably a touchy subject, after all, children need to be protected...right? Sheltered from violence and death and the forever uncomfortable "birds and the bees" talk, at least until they're "old enough to understand". Take every notion of that and throw it away, at least that is what Huxley did.

While there is a clear omission of the typical family, the anti-familial claims were less concerned with the lack of a mother/father and hinged more fervently about the way in which children were treated from the very early stages of the novel. Just before the arrival of

Mustapha, the group happen upon a young girl trailing a nurse and dismayed boy, and when they group approaches her, she confides with The Director: “It’s just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in ordinary erotic play,” he assures her that it was nothing she had done, and that the boy would be tested for abnormalities (Huxley 31-32). The thought of children having this kind of relationship with one another is challenging at best, but it also dictates that sex is done simply for pleasure and has no reproductive values in the novel. We have our own contemporary thoughts on how and when a person should be sexually active, and we vilify those who would sexualize children at an early age. But the situation here is slightly different in that the children are all willing participants (so long as there is consent, as is displayed by the concern of the young girl). Perhaps what disturbed readers the most was the idea that each child was a willing participant? Granted, this is a fictional work and nowhere close to reality, still, the idea that this might have been inflicted on children is understandably upsetting, especially to parents. This hierarchical restructuring of sexual utility pushes against the dogma of the Catholic church, so I imagine this to be one of the offending moments.

But Huxley did not stop there. Later in the novel we find John hovering over the bed of his mother, Linda. In the moments after her passing, a group of Deltas bears witness to the emotional reaction to his biological mother and the “scandalous exhibition” being performed by John as he knelt at the bed of his dead mother. What follows is not done for his sake, but for the sake of the Delta children watching him:

Should she speak to him? try to bring him back to a sense of decency? remind him of where he was? of what fatal mischief he might do to these poor innocents? Undoing their wholesome death-conditioning with this disgusting outcry – as though death were something terrible, as though any one mattered as much as all that! It might give them the

most disastrous ideas about the subject, might upset them into reacting in the entirely wrong, the utterly anti-social way.

Death is never easy, and trying to explain it to anyone under ten is complicated by a simple lack of understanding. But in *Brave New World*, the World State has managed to completely circumvent the emotional response through what they call “death-conditioning.” From what we are given in the text, classes of young children are brought to the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying and bear witness to the many sixty-year-olds lying in bed, dosed with *soma*, on the brink of death. Except, in the tour we are privileged to, the status quo is violently disrupted by the presence of Linda, a former citizen of London, whose body has aged well past the typical citizen, enough for the children to make verbal note of it. On what appears to be just another round at the Hospital for the Dying, an unsuspecting class of Deltas are caught off guard at the moment of Linda’s death, and quite honestly do not know how to react to such a visceral response to something as commonplace as death.

We have our preferences when it comes to raising children, and if we were to closely examine child rearing practices, one would find they those have not actually changed since the early 1900’s. So, it should not come as a surprise that Huxley might challenge how we handle these still relevant issues, not to ask us to change our ways, but to question why it is we do what we do. But for some this was too much, the sheer audacity of suggesting children might be capable beyond what contemporary society deigns appropriate was all the Catholic church needed to condemn the novel. But, again, I think this has less to do with how childhood is handled and more to do with our own perceptions of death and sexuality. Huxley challenges both by suggesting that it is not the inability of the young, but rather the reluctance of the old that perpetuates the challenges of a given society.

Where Old Gods Lay

I made it a point earlier to note that Huxley's intent was not to slander or defame the Catholic Church, that the world he had created was a challenging reflection of contemporary civilization. I would like to, for a moment, look at the use of Christian verse and iconography in the novel, and how Huxley uses the hegemonic power of our real-life religious institutions to lend authority and power to the government within the novel. He does this is by first coopting Biblical scripture, changing a few words to echo the propaganda *Brave New World*, then by taking the seat of Christianity's power on Earth – Jesus Christ – and consigning him to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico, where he is now one of many deities. We find that Huxley has created a fusion of old-world religion and spiritual beliefs into a new system for the post-apocalyptic Native Americans.

Historically, Christianity has been used like a hammer to subdue the native inhabitants of a land, either to force conformity or to break and scatter resistance. We need look no further than the centuries of history within our very own United States to find that this was the case. Whether he meant to or not, Huxley does some interesting rhetorical work, due in large part to the historical relationship between Christianity and Indigenous spirituality. When we are introduced to John, before being given his name, he is ranting to Bernard and Lenina about the weakness of another man's participation in what appears to be a harvest ritual: "For the sake of the pueblo – to make the rain come and the corn grow. And to please Pookong and Jesus" (Huxley 117). I would imagine that for traditional American readers in the 1930's, the addition of Jesus as a secondary harvest deity to an unfamiliar Indigenous god would have been, at the very least, baffling. Now we cannot be sure why Huxley chose to pair the two as Pookong is also a derivation of a real-world Indigenous god, but it does leave us with some wiggle room in terms

of how divinity is made and unmade. He shows us that what is holy, revered, and even eternal is entirely reliant on the belief of the practitioners, and not the supposed power of the divine being. For the Natives on the reservation, that is Pookong – a derivation of a native Zuñi deity – and Jesus, the savior of the Christian people. But for the citizens of London and the rest of the world, divinity is found in *soma*, and amplified by production and consumerism, all of which is the new age burnt offering to “Our Ford.”

Although there are some who said this book was anti-religion, they were not speaking of a general disregard for it, but specifically towards Christianity. While phrases like “Our Ford” and “My Ford” are repeated with great enthusiasm throughout the novel, there are two instances that are clear derivations from Christianity. The first being a conversation between John and Mustapha, where “his Fordship” echoes a parable from Matthew 9:17, stating “You cannot pour upper-caste champagne-surrogate into lower-caste bottles...” (Huxley 223). Mustapha uses this point as a theoretical segue for the larger conversation at hand. Although this is only a passing remark, it tells us that there are still remnants of the Old God, but that the mere knowledge of it was afforded to only a handful of men.

In this second instance, we find ourselves on the Reservation with Lenina and Bernard, and while they are walking about and witnessing life unaltered, they begin to have a conversation on the cleanliness of the “savages”:

‘But cleanliness is next to fordliness,’ she insisted. ‘Yes, and civilization is sterilization,’ Bernard went on, concluding on a tone of irony the second hypnopædic lesson in elementary hygiene. ‘But these people have never heard of Our Ford, and they aren’t civilized. So there’s no point in...’

That rhetoric sounds familiar, seeing as it was – and to some degree still is – the rationale behind white supremacist feelings; the old adage “cleanliness is next to Godliness” being a favorite of Catholicism. The notion that enacting certain rites or practices brings your physical body closer to godliness or some holy divine would endow believers with an elevated sense of worth, one that made them inherently more superior than those who did not practice their same religion. Huxley briefly speaks to the effects of white supremacy in *The Doors of Perception* and how it forced Native Americans to either Americanize entirely, or “retreat into traditional Indianism”; what we receive in *Brave New World* is a reversal of this history as the source of colonial power and white supremacy is now adopted by the Native Americans (Huxley 72). Much of what was written from the 17th to 19th century on Native Americans refers to them as savages (as is the case in *Brave New World*) while the United States established boarding schools to “Kill the Indian” and “Save the Man.” But, unlike the history we know, assimilation on the Savage Reservation in New Mexico has happened in the reverse, and we see Christianity coopted into a working Indigenous society, living out fulfilling lives without the interference of the outside world; the difference here being, the outsiders desire nothing the Natives possess, other than a tourist getaway for the upper echelon. But the idea here is potent as ever: if you do not believe what we believe, you are lesser and therefore deserving of either subjugation or dehumanization.

This is a move we have witnessed countless times, and it is inflicted by the dominant socio-economic group, and although it is not a necessary component, the assertion of one religion of another is often a part of this process. Organized religion was never being targeted outright, which is why it is only logical to assume that those anti-religion claims – offered by a Roman Catholic nation – came from an outrage due in large part to Jesus’ position among the Native gods, and the coopting of religious idioms and scripture. Furthermore, there is an active

religion within *Brave New World*, as there is the endless praise given to the chemical engineering of human beings, and the ways in which it saved society from total collapse, and how it indefinitely maintains the globalized utopia. This secondary instance proves the existence of a widely held pseudo-religion within the novel and once again instantiates that claims made against *Brave New World* were not endemic, they were symptoms of theological imperialism, which is pandemic to the human condition. This religion of sorts within the novel, but it is steeped in consumption, what the The Director refers to as “consumerism,” which could be best described as capitalism at its peak; a world driven and sustained by the belief that continuous consumption is the only way to be a productive member of society. Another marker of religion (specifically Eurocentric ones) that plays a role in the novel is the stigmatization of the individual and the insistence of community. One of the other reasons Bernard was always seen as different lie in his disdain for the crowd, and by extension, the status quo. Aside from Bernard’s stint with fame, he continuously acted against the hypnopaedic “everyone belongs to everyone else,” as we witnessed in his courting of Lenina, his relationship with Helmholtz and, to some degree, John (Huxley 43). But, aside from our misanthropic trio, most everyone in the novel is exceedingly happy. An enjoyable day at work is followed by a night out on the town and a few tabs of soma. This was the perfect world, guaranteed happiness, no suffering or hunger – a world where the was wont for nothing. So, what gives? What is being sacrificed for this perfect harmony?

Mustapha discloses precisely this right before he exiles Helmholtz to the Falkland Islands:

That was when science first began to be controlled – after the Nine Years’ War. People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We’ve

gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for.

It is not until Mustapha posits the two as opposites are we able to fully understand the price that has been paid in order to sustain this utopian society. The world was so broken, so helpless they gave up the "inalienable rights" and freedoms many democratic citizens cling to today. This also provides a wider frame for understanding how *soma* came to be the opiate of the masses: As we are given more and more ancillary information about this new London, we find that everyone is always experiencing some state of euphoria. The nights are filled with endless *soma* trips, timeless encounters and then a good nights' rest. Mustapha's claim here is reiterated by Huxley in *The Perennial Philosophy*, where upon writing a chapter entitled "Grace and Free Will" he states "But every gain has to be paid for" within the context of industrialization (Huxley 171).

This brings us, once again, to the making and unmaking of divinity. The next chapter begins, and John is pursuing knowledge, asking what else had been sacrificed for this happiness. Mustapha tells him of God and shows him The Bible and a few other religious texts. Being a person of belief, John's passion swells and he confronts this decision to withhold God from the people:

'But if you know about God, why don't you tell them?' asked the Savage indignantly.

'Why don't you give them these books about God?'. 'For the same reason we don't give them *Othello*: they're old; they're about God hundreds of years ago. Not about God now'.

'But God doesn't change'. 'Men do, though.'"

This was one of the more thrilling moments in the novel for me. Although there are plenty of intelligent people in that world, John and Mustapha have the most intellectually stimulating conversation and the fact that it takes place between two people occupying the highest and lowest social ranks in this society only adds to its significance. How often do you come across two individuals discussing the nature of God not in terms of eternity or omniscience, but as an extension of humanity? Consider what Mustapha is saying here: he suggests that the nature of God changes not in advance of, but in reaction to man. When we speak of God, there is a general understanding that the word signifies immense power, knowledge, and understanding. Yet in this context, “God” exists as a marker of time, known to a very few and making it a time-philosophy, and if we recall what Huxley says about time-philosophies we know them to be a tenant of theological imperialism, which is a threat to world peace. Mustapha only knows to refer to this form of divinity as God because he has access to those books, whereas the rest of the world does not. However, he does concede that some form of “God” continues to exist, but that it is not the “God [of] hundreds of years ago” *because* man has changed (Huxley 231). This would then mean that the divine is only so because the humanity makes it so. This begs the question then: where does truth and power lie? With the thing being worshipped, or the ones doing the worshipping? You might be inclined to side with the former, but when dealing with the metaphysical, belief – and those who supply it – would end up being the real source of power.

I find the dissection of what is divine essential in the context of *Brave New World* for two reasons. The first comes from Mustapha’s admission to there being a different version of God, but one whose continued reverence is not worth the happiness they are able to maintain. Secondly, the existence of an “old God” might lead us to believe there is then a “new God,” and I believe this to be not the God Mustapha and John debate, but a more generalized divine

experience in which everyone partakes in via *soma*; the congregation is made up of a global society, and *soma* is their Communion.

Media and Politics: Critical Reception in the U.S.

Finally, we arrive on grounds most familiar to us, the United States. It seems that the U.S. has mapped its reception of *Brave New World* not in an indefinite ban, but in a series of legal cases. In 1965 an English teacher in Maryland claimed he was fired for including *Brave New World* on the class reading list; he appealed and lost both times in separate courts. Then in 1979 “a high school principal in Matthews County, Virginia, requested that a history teacher in the high school withdraw an assignment that included *Brave New World*. The teacher assigned it anyway, and the school board terminated the teacher’s contract” (Karolides 481). Then again in 1980, where the inclusion of the novel was challenged by a parent and consequently taken out of the curriculum; then again in 1993 where the claim against the novel was that it went against “the school's health curriculum, which taught sexual abstinence, and said the characters of “*Brave New World*” went against those teachings” (Banned Book Week); and again in 2000 when it was removed from Foley High School because it “showed contempt for marriage and family values”; and once more

In 2003, parents of students attending a summer science academy in the South Texas Independent School District in Mercedes, Texas, challenged the use of this novel... They objected specifically to the themes of sexuality, drugs, and suicide in the novels and asserted that such adult themes were inappropriate for students (Karliodes 482)

Over the span of forty years Maryland, Missouri, California, Texas, Oklahoma, and Alabama all had issues when it came to teaching the novel in the classroom; there were also incidents in Indiana and Washington state. In all of this, the reason for removals, bans, and curriculum changes remains the same: traditional religious values still dictate what we will and will not allow America's children to read. In the instance of the Maryland teacher, the courts initially cited Christian morals and values, but later settled that his firing was because of his untenured status. Watch and see how fervently a society built on religion pushes back when they are asked to consider a reality without "God." The last time *Brave New World* was listed on the American Library Association's "Frequently Challenged Book's" was in 2011, which is still very recent (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10#2010>)! With the increasing conversation about race, gender, and sexuality, *Brave New World* has disappeared from this list to make way for more relevant novels, but that does not mean that it has been accepted in any way.

One of the earliest articles published about him ends by saying "But highly diverting as much of the book is, and to some extent valuable as a criticism of scientific optimism, it suffers from Mr. Huxley's characteristic inability to believe really in anything" and in doing so takes the attention away from the many positively review aspects of the novel (*Grave New World*). In the same week, Andrew Motion and Ian Thomson both published articles which alluded to *Brave New World* but only as a means to get to talk *about* Huxley in respect to a biography that had been published in 1994; Thomson then claimed that "Huxley was no George Orwell" which is wildly ironic considering Huxley was his professor for a time at Oxford (*Grave New World*).

Then, in 2007, Margaret Atwood wrote a lengthy and eloquent review of the novel. In her concluding remarks, she asks the following questions of her readers:

How does it stand up, 75 years later? And how close have we come, in real life, to the society of vapid consumers, idle pleasure-seekers, inner-space trippers and programmed conformists that it presents? The answer to the first question, for me, is that it stands up very well. It's still as vibrant, fresh, and somehow shocking as it was when I first read it. The answer to the second question rests with you. Look in the mirror: do you see Lenina Crowne looking back at you, or do you see John the Savage? Chances are, you'll see something of both, because we've always wanted things both ways. We wish to be as the careless gods, lying around on Olympus, eternally beautiful, having sex and being entertained by the anguish of others. And at the same time we want to be those anguished others, because we believe, with John, that life has meaning beyond the play of the senses, and that immediate gratification will never be enough. It was Huxley's genius to present us to ourselves in all our ambiguity.

(Everybody Is Happy Now)

Atwood was the first writer I had come across that took aim at the literature, not the man. *Brave New World* still elicits the same feelings it did the second time around, and in answering the initial question, she leaves us wrestling with the second. For Atwood, and other like-minded readers, Huxley's writing was a means of self-reflection. So what separates Atwood's review from others? She was less concerned with him and his actions, and more so with the utility of the novel as a tool for introspection. At the death of the author, the novel takes on a life of its' own. Once the novel fell off of the ALA's "Frequently Challenged Book's" list, there were less articles written, and then ones that were remember Huxley and *Brave New World* fondly. In 2012 Aiman A. concludes his review by saying "Overall, Brave New World is a scary depiction of

what could soon be our future. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this well written and thought-provoking novel” and, along with a handful of personal blogs, reviews became less focused on the author and how the novel represented traditional religious and family values and more so on the novel itself (*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley – Review).

But, part of the reason people turned away from an outright criticism of *Brave New World* was because they saw the exponential growth of technology, and only recently rediscovered the novel. John Naughton wrote an article for *The Guardian* in 2013, where he explains how Huxley was overshadowed by George Orwell and C.S. Lewis, and his final words on the matter were “let us spare a thought for the writer who perceived the future in which we would come to love our digital servitude” (Aldous Huxley: the prophet of our brave new digital dystopia). It is fascinating to see how, in just a few short years the tone around a novel can change. In 2011 parents and schools are raging against Huxley and his work for endangering their children’s minds, and three years later it is being picked up at the heralding of a technological era. Perhaps people have come back to it as a guiding light of what not to do or what to expect. One thing is certain though: parents, teachers, and lawmakers are less concerned about the novel than they were initially. There could be any number of reasons for this, whether it be an increase in progressive thought and legislation, or the younger generations mass exodus from religious institutions, something many evangelists and theologians have witnessed within the last decade. And this is a good thing, not just for Huxley and his work, but for writers in general, especially those looking to approach society from a different angle, one that is less guarded, or in this case so heavily fortified only a mad man would dare lay siege to it.

When Huxley wrote *Brave New World*, he was criticizing certain aspects of then contemporary society, and he did so by appropriating and recycling Christian rhetoric into a

novel that flaunted sexuality and drugs with no organized religion to contain it in sight. But as we have seen, this left room for a new kind of religion, and a new divinity to take its place. While it sent families and anything with ties to a Christian institution into a frenzy, there were some who saw this as a potential future, a possible reality, and now there are those who see that Huxley's vision might come to fruition. The reception of the novel, as well as Huxley himself, has changed drastically since the publication of *Brave New World*. Not because we have become more accepting of what is in the novel, but because we are now concerned with new dangers, new potentially corrupting novels from which we much shield the children. There is always the chance that the novel comes under fire again, especially with the recent television adaptation that offers a visual aid to some of the more "out there" concepts Huxley offers his readers. Feelings change and decisions are made and then unmade, but if there is one thing Huxley promises us, it is that people will always remain the same, and Naughton reflects in saying that "CS Lewis may be getting a plaque. But Huxley, for his foretelling of a society that loves servitude, is the true visionary" so, for now, Huxley is a visionary, much like Blake whom he looked to when writing *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell* (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/22/aldous-huxley-prophet-dystopia-cs-lewis>). When he stumbled upon this new divine, he saw its potential to reshape our worldview, and this perceptive transformation threatened a long-standing theological imperialism. He came to understand that the institutions that grew stronger over time would wither in a mind looking for a timeless experience, and that is exactly what the characters in *Brave New World* were able to find in *soma*. Blake knew this, when he wrote "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite" and Huxley illustrates this with astonishing precision.

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