

In the US one of many non-governmental aspects of life that has power is religion. Not just religion as what “church” is commonly defined as (the physical building), but also the hold religion has on life, death, love, and marriage. *Brave New World* has all of these components of religion wrapped into its hierarchically structured society, but lacks the sense of the individual that we have. The way this lack of individuality is evident in *Brave New World* isn’t necessarily that clear, and how they compare to how we understand individuality is even less clear, so I’ll explain how I see them all tied together as best I can.

In the US there are many religions with solid communities following and practicing them. In the World State, the single country in *Brave New World*, religion is very different. There aren’t multiple religions. In place of the many religions there is just one religion that started when Henry Ford produced the Model T. Unlike in Catholicism where the sign of the cross is the primary symbol, the “T” is the primary symbol of this religion where their God is Ford. In simple terms, their religion is one of mass consumerism and scientific production, whereas all of our religions have some notion of truly higher beings that have no direct human ancestry or limitations. As there is only one religion in the World State there can’t be the same diversity in religion that we have.

The religion of “Ford” is the foundation on top of which the controlled and caste-centric society is constructed. One can even see the complete similarity between the mass production system that Ford created and the way the Hatcheries turn out the next generation of World State citizens. Science is at the heart of the religion of the World State and therefore is a major ingredient for the life-blood of the World State society. Most aspects of life that in the US are natural (for example, birth) are manufactured in the World State. The few World Controllers are the only ones who know real history, and have all the control of the World State. In our society religion plays a

huge role, but we allow secular governmental control to lead the US. Biology is respected and trusted in the US in a way it isn't in the World State.

Life and death are very natural occurrences in our society, they come when they come, we consider them out of our control. For us religion helps to form the social understanding of these events. In the World State birth, life and death are closely controlled, in fact manufactured, to occur at the right time and to create the right effect. The World State has full control over what a newborn will look like and become from before conception. The citizens of the World State are fine with this unnatural takeover of the most fundamental aspect of life. These are capabilities that today's scientists are getting closer to, but not without anger and fear from citizens across today's world.

Natural aspects of life are so controlled and normalized in the World State that from infancy you're conditioned to view death as something that is as normal and uneventful as going to sleep. There is nothing like that level of conditioning to life's inevitable happenings in the US. Aspects of life in the World State are so controlled with consumerism, predestination, and Soma that citizens lose their individuality (or at least creativity) before birth. The Bill of Rights and the Civil Rights Movement in the US are part of what has kept us free and our individuality honored. The World State's outlook on life is completely totalitarian. We, as citizens of the US, have historically looked on nation-states that have that mentality as not being respectful of the individual.

The next human experience that is largely made sense of in religion, marriage (and love), is fundamental in our society. These experiences are generally better understood through the lens religion gives them. They are also nearly nonexistent in the World State. Love is present, as Lenina's thoughts about the Savage made clear. But given the structures of the World State, the ultimate opportunity love provides us in the US, marriage and making a family, aren't an option.

“Family” is a fantastical concept to residents of the World State, who know only the hatcheries. Further, there is an understanding that men will have sex with as many women as they can, so neither the concept of marriage, or even of love, is necessary in the World State.

Love is part of what keeps human beings happy, and its love that at a basic level contributes to maintaining our society through reproduction. Love isn’t needed at all in the World State, with Soma taking care of keeping citizens happy and oblivious to the hard realities of life. But love is also quite natural, and it seems that all of the hatcheries haven’t removed that element of being human, so like us the citizens of the World State can feel love. Love that leads to commitments can’t be the same as it is for us, but it is what truly underlies all major relationships in the World State.

Life, death, marriage, and love are all tied together under a shared narrative of “religion” as I look at it. These comparisons between our society and the World State make it clear that the World State has many similarities with our society, but at its base lacks the central value we place on individuality, as well as our respect for natural processes. Given that crucial difference, I would still say that Aldous Huxley has given us good insights into society as a whole. We in the US could very well fall into something closer to the World State. Any predictions on how society may evolve are dangerous to make, but Huxley depicted a society that matches some of today’s US society. We are creating the science behind *Brave New World*, for instance, if current scientific explorations are allowed to continue without respect for values of love and family. We share, sadly, a fascination with unimportant things such as media celebrities, while for the most part ignoring major issues such as poverty or war, which disrupt human relationship. We also share with the World State its consumerism and some might argue that our TV and film industries contribute to what in the World State were Soma holidays.