***“People Believe in God Because They are Conditioned to Believe in God”***

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Brave New World is a book about a bizarre utopian world. In it, a man named John has been isolated from this perfect society when suddenly, he is exposed to the surreal reality that the rest of the world is experiencing. As you follow John through Brave New World many of us could say it is not truly a so called perfect world but a dystopia. In the book no one is born naturally but born in factories. In their society people are separated into castes which do different things to keep their society stable. There are the Alphas, the highest caste; Betas, Deltas, Gammas, and then Epsilons the lowest caste which does the menial work. When children are in their early stages of growth the factories condition them to fit their qualities of their caste. Many of these qualities are quite strange and do not fit to our social norms.

Brave New World intertwines a wonderful plot that mixes a strange utopia with an array of interesting and weird things that I found very interesting. In addition, the book manages to highlight a variety of pertinent and profound ideas that left a mark in my thinking. For example, how religion is depicted in the book and how it is relevant to Brave New World will be the focus of my essay.

“People believe in God because they are conditioned to believe in God.” This is a quote from Brave New World that I have decided to focus my essay on. I was born in a Christian home, and have called myself a Christian ever since I could remember. Going to Animas has really been good for me. The setting at Animas has not only made my faith stronger, but has taught me to have an open mind to new and different things. All my closest friends are atheists. It’s hard to really share my heart to any of them because I am totally in a different boat then they are. From the quote “People believe in God because they are conditioned to believe in God,” when I first read this it really troubled me. I gave it some real deep thought and made me question my faith. Was I a Christian only because my parents brought me up to be one? I came to see the quote was true but also wrong.

Conditioning could be way to say control. Out of all the people I’ve seen wherever they come from they always seem to have the same morals as their parents. Even me, I look at myself and I see a lot of my parent’s morals. Conditioning to believe in God is factor of how they were socialized growing up. Someone born in an atheist family is most likely to be atheist, or if someone born in a Jewish family is probably going to be Jewish. In a more extreme sense there have been children that have been cut off from human socialization at a very young age and exposed to animals. Since they are so young they’re brain is still developing and they cling and mimic anything they can attach to. These strange cases are called feral children. In Russia there is a girl named Oxana Malaya who when just a baby was neglected by her parents and thrown out of the house with the dogs and left to die. Amazingly she survived and over time she started to act and think that she was a dog. Eventually she was rescued and threw lots and lots of therapy began to live with humans again. Feral children prove that a lot of us are in a way conditioned to reflect how our parents act. You might even think that everything that we know about ourselves is conditioned, but is that really the case when it comes to religion?

What drives people to believe in God? Many people may start to believe in God because the fear of the unknown, like death. For most, the unknown triggers an intense fear which drives them to look for answers and reassurance. It is likely that this is why so many more people believed in God a hundred years ago than they do today. The Vikings, the Romans, and the Ancient Greeks had many Gods, most of which represented things they couldn’t explain like weather or sickness. Zeus, Thor, and Uranus were all Gods of the sky. These gods and others may have all explained something that people of that time period didn’t understand: weather. Now a days scientists have found why things happen like the weather and many other things which might be the reason why so many people have stopped believing in God.

But one thing that remains mysterious about God, is this divine presence. In the book The Varieties of The Religious Experience by William James it says, “It is as if there were in the human consciousness *a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what they call something there,* a more deep and more general than any of the special and particular *senses* by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed.” This statement is describing this feeling people get that is very different to them, it’s usually a feeling they have not felt before. It’s a feeling of a presence, like something is there. You could choose to believe it or not but it is still that idea which we can’t explain that drives us to religion. Going back to the book The Varieties of the Religious Experience there is another passage that describes this, “There was not a mere consciousness of something there, but fused in the central happiness of it, a startling awareness of some ineffable good. Not vague either, not like the emotional effect of some poem, or scene, or blossom, of music, but the sure knowledge of the close presence of a sort of mighty person, and after it went, the memory persisted as the one perception of reality. Everyone else might dream, but not that.” This feeling is the presence of God; it is a warm shaky feeling that seems to rise up within the heart. There are an endless amount of people who have experienced this feeling and could describe it very similar to what William James said. But there is another type of presence many have experienced, one that goes along the same lines as talk about experiencing demons. This is described as a sudden chill, which then causes a deep sort of intense fear, a fear you could not explain to yourself. If you were to experience this right now it would be a fear that you wouldn’t have experienced before.

Although you could look at many of Christians say they may only Christians because their parents are Christians, but there is others that may seem to have something more. There is a time in some one’s life were they have to take ownership over themselves and take the responsibility to ask themselves why they are Christian in the first place. And if you have to ask me this question I would say I am a Christian because I believe that Jesus did die for our sins and looking at him I realize he sacrificed all he had to save us all. And since he did that for not just me but all of us, this drives me to do the same for him, to sacrifice everything I have for his glory. Going off one of my own experiences I have had about feeling the presence of God I was at my youth group one night and it was just after worship and I was last to leave the room. I was praying and all a sudden a supper warm tingly feeling rose up in my heart and filled the rest of my body. Through this feeling it made me tear up quite a lot and made me break down. It lasted about five minutes untill I finally left. From what William James says, “everyone else might dream, but not that.”

I know this essay is very personal, I don’t want any of you to feel like you are being targeted, or feeling you have to believe this, but all I wanted to do is inform people about what I believe, and convey my perspective on the quote from Brave New World, “people believe in God because they are conditioned to believe in God.” Although I do agree that people believe in God because they are conditioned to believe in God, I think with all of us, there is a time in growing up where we have to take ownership over our lives and take choose what we believe in, whether its atheism, Christianity, Jewish, or any other form of belief.