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Imperialism, Neo-colonialism and International Politics
in Aldous Huxley's *Island*

By

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Signature Page

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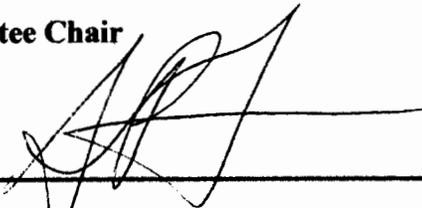
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INTRODUCTION

Imperialism, Neo-colonialism and International Politics in Aldous Huxley's *Island*

The purpose of this thesis is to understand and analyze Aldous Huxley's presentation of neo-colonialism in his utopian novel *Island*. Particular attention will be given to his portrayal of economic relations between first world powers and the third world in this novel. Furthermore, his fictional rendition of military intervention and foreign policy by the United States and Britain and the role it has played in the developing world during the 20th century will be the central focus of this thesis. Huxley's claims and critique presented in *Island* of the process by which first world powers dominate international politics, world markets and peripheral economies through the use of military intervention and foreign policy will be supported by historical accounts. An application of Dependence Theory and World Systems Theory will also be included in order to substantiate claims made in the novel regarding neo-colonialism and imperialism. Theorists of Dependence Theory, World Systems Theory and economic history such as Immanuel Wallerstein, Andre Gunder Frank and Anthony Brewer and their scholarship on the economic and military relationships between core and peripheral nations will serve as the theoretical framework for this thesis.

The main argument of this thesis will be to demonstrate how the characters, plot and the setting of the story in *Island* serve as a metaphor and are fictional renditions of political actors and processes that have real-life counterparts in history. Huxley relies on his knowledge of history and international politics in *Island* in order to argue that a real utopian society is a possibility. This thesis, therefore, takes a historicist approach in interpreting the arguments and contentions made in the novel. By applying neo-colonialist theory and placing the novel in the

context of 20th century international history and politics, a new and original reading emerges that does not have a precedent in the scholarship of *Island*. Research in the Huxley archives in Special Collections at the Young Research Library of UCLA will also be part of the methodology for this thesis. New material such as previously unknown manuscripts and correspondence that are part of the recent Laura Huxley bequest to UCLA will be written about for the first time and will form an integral part of this thesis. Much of this material, especially the correspondence, is directly related to the writing of *Island* and will give new insights into this novel.

This project is original because it focuses on a topic that is generally not addressed in the scholarship of *Island*. As the following review of literature indicates, none of the critics of *Island* have addressed the subject of international politics, neocolonialism, nor imperialism as it is treated in the novel. Although these critics are conscious of the political, military, technological and utopian elements of *Island*, none address the subject of neo-colonialism or international politics as they appear and are treated by Huxley in this novel. Also the new material that has been recently released as part the Special Collections of Aldous Huxley at the Young Research Library includes correspondence and manuscripts of *Island* that have not yet been studied by critics.

Although *Island* has failed to attain the literary accolade of *Brave New World*, critics William Curtis and Jeff Kripal agree that Huxley's positive utopia is worth a second look, and that currently a kind of "Huxley renaissance" is taking place. Kripal asks, "What do neural Buddhists, individual spiritualities, cultural wars over science and religion and creationism and evolution, a nature-hating technology, the violence of extreme religious belief, and potentially omniscient government surveillance all have in common? They were all core elements in the life

and work of literary prophet Aldous Huxley.” He concludes that Huxley is now more relevant than ever, and that *Island* should be read along with *Brave New World*.

CHAPTER ONE

A Review of the Scholarship of *Island*

Island marks the culmination of a life-time of speculation on the problems of the modern world and on possible solutions for these problems. In this novel Huxley brings together the principal ideas he had examined in earlier works, yet introduced some new ones. From the beginning of his career, Huxley presented a portrait of a sick society. In his earlier novels such as *Point Counter Point* and *Crome Yellow*, he gave a picture of modern society as being sterile, corrupt and unable to give individual happiness. His characters in these novels reflect their social environment and live in despair and spiritual disillusionment. With *Brave New World*, he presented his opinion of the inevitable result of the conditions he saw around him, a totally materialistic world with no room for anything beyond the physical, the pleasurable, or the reasonable. This world is one of spiritual slavery. Following this book, Huxley's work seemed to take a new direction. Although there was still the picture of a spiritually sick society, there began a new search for solutions to the illness of the modern world. He began to examine such ideas as pacifism arrived at through mystical understanding and mind-expanding drugs. He also proposed many ideas for social reform ranging from political and economic changes to reorganization of educational procedures and goals in order to create the necessary conditions for the individual to find his way to spiritual enlightenment and freedom. The examination of these ideas took place over more than thirty years until they reached a point of convergence in the fictional society of Pala. (McMichael 73)

For years Huxley was not interested in and in fact disliked utopians. To him their countries of the mind were compensatory dreams inspired by acute disappointment with reality. "My own feeling, whenever I see a book about the Future," Huxley wrote in *Do What You Will*,

“is one of boredom and exasperation. What on earth is the point of troubling one’s head with speculation about what men may, but almost certainly will not, be like in A.D. 20,000?” Despite this stance, Huxley still concerned himself with the future (Meckier 619). *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence* had made the point that utopianism could only exist together with dystopianism, and that one must remain skeptical of attempts at formulating a perfect hypothetical world. This view does not entirely change with the writing of *Island*.

What was Huxley revealing about his view on the utopian genre in an interview with the *Paris Review*? He states, “At the moment, I’m writing a rather peculiar kind of fiction. It’s a kind of fantasy, a kind of reverse *Brave New World*, about a society in which real efforts are made to realize human potentialities. I want to show how humanity can make the best of both Eastern and Western worlds” (Beauchamp 59). According to the critic Jerome Meckier, it appears that he has made a decision to join the rest of utopians in an effort to write yet another “unrealistic hypothesis of what should be but is not.” Yet *Island* is not another daydream. Unlike *News from Nowhere*, *Looking Backward*, and other positive views of the future, *Island* can be defended as a reasonably complex novel in which a would-be utopian’s attempt at optimism is challenged by the possibility that his characters inhabit a Manichean universe. *Island* goes beyond providing for potential solutions or for a synthesizing schema for a better world. Unlike most utopians, Huxley tries to confront several inescapably negative factors in his perfect society, and these ultimately convince him that utopia is not of this world. The prevailing social myth will always be that of paradise lost, of the perfect society somehow gone to ruin. (Stewart 327).

The scholarship of *Island* that is most relevant to this thesis divides into three main groups. Each group of critics approaches the novel differently and each of them analyzes a particular aspect or theme in the novel. The first group is primarily concerned with the utopian

elements in *Island*, and they seek to find a place for *Island* among utopian novels. They draw important comparisons between *Island* and other works of the utopian genre. The majority of scholars concerned with the utopian elements of *Island* have judged it to be a utopian novel that faithfully continues the utopian tradition and genre and that takes it to a new and more sophisticated hypothetical and theoretical level. Huxley's contribution and elaboration on utopianism is praised as being well informed and innovative by this group of critics. They include Gorman Beauchamp, Peter Bowering, Alex MacDonald, Charles McMichael, Jerome Meckier, William W. Matter and D.H. Stewart.

One of the critics that analyses the utopian aspect of *Island* is Peter Bowering. According to his article, "Aldous Huxley: a Study of the Major Novels," *Island* is Huxley's *Summa Philosophical*, or a synthesis of his political views and prescription. It also does not retract Huxley's previous worldview of skepticism in the form of a palinode that we notice in *Crome Yellow* or *Brave New World*. But in fact, it proposes something new, because in *Island*, even though the perfect society cannot exist for ever or even be accomplished, the individual can recover the paradise within, which Huxley defines as the reconciliation of the good and evil within the self. The transformation of Will Farnaby from conspirator to defender of the Palanese way of life makes *Island* a relatively suspenseful novel that grants the possibility of individual salvation while growing increasingly skeptical about the world's desire for a perfect society. (Beauchamp 60; Meckier 621; Bowering 182) Huxley's own account of his intentions in writing *Island* is revealing:

Most of us Mean well and would prefer, on the whole, to behave decently... The difficulties arise when we try to translate the ideal into practice. To achieve our noble ends, what are the means which must be employed? Precisely how do we intend to

implement our high purposes? What must multiple amphibians do in order to make the best, for themselves and for other multiple amphibians, of all their strangely assorted worlds?

These are the questions to which... I have been trying to find answers plausible enough to take their place in the kind of Utopian and yet realistic fantasy about a society (alas, hypothetical) whose collective purpose is to help its members to actualize as many possible of their desirable potentialities. (Foreword to Laure Archer Huxley's *You Are Not the Target*)

As an answer to the problem of man's moral and physical welfare, *Island* represents the product of Huxley's eclecticism over a period of almost two decades, and must be considered as the final and most important chapter of the Huxleyan synthesis. However, this Huxleyan synthesis is not only of his personal views, opinions and philosophy but also a sort of synthesis on the genre of utopianism itself. It represents a culmination or climax to this genre which has its distant origin in the writings of the Greek utopists such as Plato, author of the first western utopian novel, *Republic*.

According to William Matter, in an article titled "The Utopian Tradition and Aldous Huxley," the study of various touchstones in the history of the utopian genre affords valuable insight into ideas and ideals that influenced the utopian thought of Huxley. *Brave New World*, *Ape and Essence*, and *Island* demonstrate Huxley's awareness of and also dislike for major phases in utopian literature. In early utopias there are references to mythical *Islands* and to a prehistoric Golden Age that provided a simple and congenial life. Especially in *Brave New World*, Huxley rejects primitivistic and pastoral perfection as containing escapist tendencies. Opposed to the escapist utopia is the ideal commonwealth established and maintained with

careful regulation. This sort of utopia, of which the *Republic* is the best known example, requires that the individual offer much of his freedom for the privilege of living in the heavenly city and for pursuing the good. Although the *Republic* is more descriptive than prescriptive, Huxley did not like what he believed was an authoritarian stance. He rejects it as being descriptive of the good and cannot regard it as a good prescription for attaining desirable goals. According to his philosophy, it is an example of the type of utopia that must be avoided. (Matter 146)

The majority of the early Greek utopists were highly restrictive. Renaissance writers attempted to expand man's freedom but did it unconvincingly. Punishment of criminals and war are part of life, and utopians often prepare themselves for the danger of attack. Plato's citizens are warriors; More's *Island* is strongly fortified; and Campanella's city is encircled by high walls. Huxley's Pala, in contrast, does not have the tropical defenses and it is easily invaded by Rendang. But eugenics and education are of central concern to Plato, More, Andreae, Huxley and other Utopists because it helps prepare the people for life in the new world. However, Aristophanes and Aristotle viewed the Platonic ideal as lacking credibility. Aristotle became more practical in his *Politics* and Aristophanes produced an anti-utopia in which sexual practices become quite indecent. (Matter 147)

However, there were several deviations from the mainstream of the utopian tradition. The noble savage and their isolation from civilized evils such as Montaigne's cannibals are an example. In the 19th century there were also rebel utopists. Morris returned to the land, and Butler banned machines from his utopia. However, the development of science captured the imagination of utopian writers and provided them with a tool to make the earthly appear more realizable. Industrialization and progress could produce the utopia that writers like Bellamy hoped could happen with a combination of man and machine. In the early 20th century, Wells

reinforced Bellamy's optimism and speculated upon a utopia based on science and a successful confrontation of the enemies of progress. One such enemy was Huxley. He strongly opposed the idea that progress, especially through science, could bring about a perfect world. Utopists aside from Huxley also became skeptical about the ability of science and machines to save the world. Reflecting the mood of the times, dystopian fiction assumed the leading role in the utopian genre. Writers began to question both classical utopianism and the even more positively optimistic utopias of the late nineteenth century. Also the fear of totalitarian utopias that practiced institutionalization alarmed writers like Huxley. The doubts that Huxley and Orwell had of previous utopias is captured by Lewis Mumford in the following excerpt:

Isolation, stratification, fixation, regimentation, standardization, militarization—one of more of these attributes enter into the conception of the utopian city, as expounded by the Greeks. And these same features remain, in open or disguised form, even in the supposedly more democratic utopias of the nineteenth century, such as Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. In the end, utopia merges into the dystopia of the 20th century; and one suddenly realized that the distance between the positive ideal and the negative one was never so great as the advocates or admirers of utopia had professed. (148)

Satire has always been a part of utopian thought. Several critics have observed that the very idea of creating a better world implies that there is something wrong with the present world. The utopian genre contains sharp criticism of society, but also by contrasting the perfect world of a utopia with contemporary society, the latter is oftentimes more pleasant. Huxley's *Brave New World* is an attack upon utopianism as is *Ape and Essence*. In the first one contemporary life is better, and in the second, he rescues society from utopia. (Matter 149) The question then arises as to whether *Island* is Huxley's attempt at writing a traditional utopia, or if it is a satirical,

pessimistic critique of the utopian genre. Is *Island* an earnest attempt at providing a realizable utopia and has Huxley transformed from the severe critic that wrote *Brave New World*? Or is it pessimistic and satirical because the utopia known as Pala is doomed from the very beginning because of the aristocracy's disapproval and its tragic ending?

In fact, according to Gorman Beauchamp in "*Island: Aldous Huxley's Psychedelic Utopia*," *Island* is more than a blueprint for an ideal society, while it also transcends the usual Huxleyan satire. *Island* is a particular kind of utopia in that it falls more under the *eupsychic* than the *eutopic*. It focuses more on the quest for individual than for social perfection. In reorganizing Palanese society, the king and the doctor agree, "Private improvement was to be the preliminary to public improvement." These two goals are not incompatible and in fact they should occur simultaneously. But the casual relationship tends to differ East to West. The eupsychic tradition of the East assumes that the right order of society will emerge only from the enlightenment of individuals: the eutopic tradition of the West assumes, by contrast, that enlightened individuals will result from the right ordering of society. At one extreme are Taoism and Hinayana Buddhism, where eupsychia can lead to a withdrawal from the world into the private self. At the other extreme, eutopianism like Plato's or Comte's portray the individual as a purely public persona without any private self to cultivate. In Plato's society *noesis* or enlightenment is for the elite, but in Huxley's society *noesis* is for the masses. (Beauchamp 63)

The interpretation of *Island* as a eupsychic type of utopia resolves the issue of whether *Island* is a pessimistic/satirical work or a positive/optimistic theory of how to live. Pala is a small un-militarized *Island*, which helps make its utopian reforms possible yet exposes it to an invasion. In the end the realities of global economics and politics end the utopian experiment. However, Huxley was free to end *Island* by suggesting a positive future for Pala. It could have

come under the protection of the United Nations or of a powerful nation as a model for world development. Or he could have ended it unresolved or with a non-aggression treaty. But when he chose to bring in the troops we notice the pessimism of the early novels returning with an ironic vengeance. Also the words of Mr. Bahy “Pala doesn’t have a chance” (70), and Dr MacPhail’s proclamation that “one is justified in feeling extremely pessimistic about the current situation...” is indicative of its pessimism (130). But Gorman Beauchamp suggests that the reason Huxley brings the troops in at the end of the story is to elevate the importance of the eupsychic over the eutopic. Although there might be little possibility of utopia the individual can work his or her own salvation, in whatever social context. Therefore, although we remain pessimistic about the world at large we can be optimistic about the prospects for individual enlightenment. In the last analysis, *Island* is an optimistic novel. Individual enlightenment comes to Will Farnaby in the climax of the novel and is demonstrated throughout the novel.

To further the defense of *Island*, Jerome Meckier in an article titled “Cancer in Utopia; Positive and Negative Elements in Huxley’s *Island*,” points out that the most common response to *Island* by the reader is that it lacks an interesting plot and that the narrative is obscured by the desperate effort to cram ideas into it. But it is important to keep in mind that most utopias bog down under the weight of “the necessary exposition,” or the extensive Baedeker the author must supply so that the reader comprehends the *modus vivendi* of the ideal society. Utopias almost always become essays about the future. In Morris’s *News from Nowhere*, the action stops permanently once the Guest encounters Hammond. From then on the old man explains the life style of an arts-and-crafts society in the twenty first century. More’s *Utopia* is really a lengthy lecture by Raphael Hythloday. *Island* never quite bogs down in this way. Meckier elaborates that the expository nature of *Island* is in fact a tribute to the genre itself, and

it seem obvious that when it appears to be a thinly veiled essay of potential solutions for social ills, we know that it is a utopian novel. The only fact that confuses the matter is that Huxley always prioritized his ideas more than the narrative in the majority of his novels. Meckier aptly puts this aesthetic decision Huxley made; “The need to make the novel do more than tell a story—a need he often discussed much too apologetically—set Huxley off from the so-called congenital novelist who seldom raised the fundamental questions about man’s Final End and the purpose of life” (Meckier 621).

Furthermore, Huxley’s understanding and involvement in the utopian tradition and genre transcends fiction. He was not only concerned with utopias as they occur in novels, but also how these experiments occur in real life and contemporary society. As a citizen of Llano in the Antelope Valley, his proximity and interest to the utopian society known as *Llano del Rio* combined to produce his essay titled “Llano del Rio; Ozymandias, the Utopia That Failed,” published in 1953. This essay examines the history and most importantly the series of events and factors that accounted for its subsequent dissolution and ruin. Beyond the fact that this essay is proof of Huxley’s well rounded and extensive involvement with utopian studies, it also indicates that his analysis of this social experiment influenced his writing of *Island*.

The second group of critics takes a more political approach in their analysis of the novel. They focus primarily on the political aspects of *Island*, which include the political views of Huxley himself and the political and ideological prescriptions proposed in the novel. These critics demonstrate the extent to which Huxley’s own political philosophy makes its way to the political structures and practices of the countries in the novel, Pala and Rendang. These critics explain what parts of these political structures and practices in *Island* take their inspiration from contemporary ideologies and political systems and which were original creations and theories of

Huxley himself. This group of critics include D.H. Stewart, Charles T. McMichael, Werner Christie Mathisen, Peter Firchow and Sanford E. Marovitz.

Sanford Marovitz, in his article “A ‘Phantasy’ and A Fable: Huxley and Faulkner on Nationalism and War,” points out that Huxley’s views on nationalism are still relevant to today’s international politics. Conflicts around the globe, which originate in individual states, spill over into the global stage. Nationalism, in fact, has grown since Huxley spoke out so strongly against it. Huxley asserted in 1959, that “nationalism is a kind of theology” that leads to idolization of the state, but he had been writing about the dangers of nationalism since long before that. Much earlier in his career he had said that over the past century Europe has moved from monotheism “toward tribal idolatry. The place of God has been largely usurped by such diversified entities as the Nation, the Class, the Party.” This statement was drawn from *An Encyclopedia of Pacifism* (1937), which Huxley edited and probably also wrote much of it himself. After WW II however, his strong concerns over socio-political issues had temporarily waned in favor of meditation and mysticism, perhaps under the influence of his friend Gerald Heard. The most memorable instances of Huxley’s treatment of nationalism are his portrait of Everard Webley in *Point Counter Point*, and the shocking film script in *Ape and Essence*.

Marovitz argues that Huxley returns to his concern with nationalism in his last novel, *Island*. In a letter to of 30 January 1956 to his son Matthew and his daughter-in-law Ellen, he announced: “I begin to have insights into the problem of realizing in practice the notions for a fantasy, which have been haunting me, abstractly, for several years” (186). This appears to be the first reference in print to the creation of *Island*, which he had hoped to make his cardinal achievement. Marovitz explains that Huxley was not sure of the ending of *Island* until a late stage in its composition. Several of his letters from the late 1950’s testify to the difficulties that

plagued him over trying to establish a sound story line. Bernfried Nugel has recently explicated Huxley's struggle over the plot and his extensive rewriting in the final stages of the manuscript. His struggle with plot may have been necessary in the preceding stages as well. Huxley's long devotion to the cause of peace in conjunction with his condemnation of nationalism and war made it necessary for him to create Pala as a culture with no military nor any means of defense but passive resistance. Nationalism predominates after all. The dream of Pala and of Huxley with it, remain, "far removed from our present reality" (187).

One of the central concerns of Werner C. Mathisen's article, "The Underestimation of Politics in Green Utopias: The Description of Politics in Huxley's *Island*, *Le Guin's The Dispossessed*, and Callenbach's *Ecotopia*," is to analyze how politics is described in these three important utopias. He tries to understand what kind of political institutions does the reader encounter in these utopias, how do they operate, and what are their responsibilities. He focuses on the character and role of politics in the green utopias, and refers to several recent contributions from political theory and political science and draws them into the discussion. Politics, understood as activities associated with government, does not seem to be an important ingredient in the lives of the inhabitants of the utopian society of Pala of *Island*. Huxley does not describe the political institutions of Pala, and we do not learn what kind of political parties—if any—or other political organizations they have. He merely tells us that Pala is a constitutional monarchy, with a parliament and a cabinet wielding the true political power. However, Huxley gives us pretty clear picture of the general policy and the basic guidelines of social and cultural development. This society is an alternative to capitalism or communism. What makes it function is a collective effort to break away from the widespread and indiscriminate industrialization and consumerism common to the opposite powers of world politics. Mathisen ends the article by

indicating that academic political theorists may certainly benefit by more systematically using green utopias as a source of inspiration and new ideas.

Peter Firchow, in an article titled “Brave at Last: Huxley’s Western and Eastern Utopias,” points out the difficulty in assigning the label of utopia or dystopia to a novel of this genre. Huxley’s utopias and that of many other authors always have an element of dystopia, especially *Island*. The novel ends on the impossibility of a utopia because Pala is overtaken militarily by the neighboring militarized Rendang. Huxley makes an attempt to put forth his vision of what a realistic utopia might be like in *Island*, but he is acutely aware of the limitations and unsustainability of a place like Pala. Firchow makes a comparison between Will Farnaby, the protagonist of *Island*, and Huxley himself. He explains how Will Farnaby is an autobiographical rendition of Huxley, and that Will’s refusal to say ‘yes’ in the novel to the Palanese way of life mirrors Huxley cynicism and refusal to accept the possibility of a utopia until he reaches the end of his career.

According to D.H. Stewart in the article “Aldous Huxley’s *Island*,” like most of Huxley’s earlier book, *Island* is probably most accessible to social, rather than purely literary, criticism. It was not written to exhibit technical virtuosity but to teach, to move and to delight in the Aristotelian tradition. It is at its core a social hypothesis. In Stewart’s view, the fabrication of utopias is a game men play when new moral visions or new scientific ideas and techniques have not been tried experimentally. However, once experiments begin seriously, the fantasy dies out for a while. For example, he claims we have seen this in the demise of science fiction since the arrival of sputnik; or again in the absence of true social utopias since the birth of the USSR.

Charles T. McMichael in his article “Aldous Huxley’s *Island*: The Final Vision,” claims that Huxley, in *Brave New World*, presented his opinion of the inevitable result of the conditions

he saw around him, a totally materialistic world with no room for anything beyond the physical, the pleasurable, or the reasonable. This world is one of spiritual slavery. However, following this book, Huxley's work seemed to take a new direction. Although there was still the picture of a spiritually sick society, there began a new search for solutions to the illness of the modern world. He began to examine such ideas as pacifism arrived at through mystical understanding, mind-expanding drugs. He also proposed many ideas for social reform ranging from political and economic changes to reorganization of educational procedures and goals in order to create the necessary conditions for the individual to find his way to spiritual enlightenment and freedom. The examination of these ideas took place over more than thirty years until they reached a point of convergence in the fictional society of Pala. But whether Huxley was addressing the issue of psychedelic drugs, education or eastern philosophy, his primary end was to address the political problems in society.

The third group of scholars have authored a miscellany of articles and book chapters that although are political in nature, their main focus is on various themes in subjects. They range from subjects such as technology and gender in *Island*, to the influence Dartington had on Huxley's writing of *Island*. The range of subjects that are treated in these scholarly works reflects the multiplicity of issues that Huxley addresses in *Island*. These critics include Frederick W. Conner, David Parsons, William M. Curtis, Sanford E. Marovitz and June Deery.

In June Deery's article, "Technology and Gender in Aldous Huxley's Alternative (?) Worlds," she focuses on the role and treatment of women in *Brave New World*, *Ape and Essence* and *Island*, and on the effect technology has on women. In her opinion it is possible to argue that in some areas, despite its being a dystopia, *Brave New World* offers women a better deal than the contemporary British society of the 1930's. There is no housework, no wifely subjugation, no

need to balance children and career. Yet, for all this, if we compare their position to that of men in *Brave New World*, women are less well off. Although a dystopia is a negative picture, in this novel we find an automatic importation of the sexist norms of Huxley's own society into the imagined world. Rarely is the citizen in any dystopia in an enviable situation, but Huxley's portrayal goes further by placing women in an even lower position than men, and by not making a point of it. In short, there are many unattractive features of this society, but women's lack of position is not foregrounded as one of them.

Also in *Ape and Essence*, gender differences are preserved, even exaggerated, both in neosavage America and among the "civilized" New Zealanders," and again it works against females, though it is not the narrator's major concern, nor is it always explicit and decried. For example, Huxley assigns the "softer" fields of botany and anthropology to the women scientist, while the hard sciences are still a male preserve. In *Island*, even when attempting to better the female lot, he repeatedly adopts the sexist norms of his own society without even being aware of it. But it is not a question of realism, for one of the obvious features of utopias is that they need not reflect anything of the current status quo; in fact, their agenda is generally to radically alter it. Although *Island* does show improvement of the position of women compared to society and to Huxley's previous dystopias, it is not as alternative a world as one might expect. According to Derry, this reflects the lack of a serious attention to the position of women.

William M. Curtis, in an article titled "Rorty's *Liberal Utopia* and Huxley's *Island*," argues that *Island* should be included in Richard Rorty's canon of literary works that help us think about liberal politics. Rorty praised *Brave New World* as "the best introduction to political philosophy," because it shows us "what sort of human future would be produced by a naturalism untendered by historicist Romanticism, and by a politics aimed merely at alleviating

mammalian pain” (91). While readers may judge whether Pala is utterly unrealistic, it does not fail to provoke the liberal imagination. As critic Wayne C. Booth discovered, *Island* “made me think in fresh ways about my own society.... I am provoked in the best sense from beginning to end... arguing with Huxley all the way.” Curtis, therefore, argues that in fleshing out his fictional version of a pragmatic liberal utopia, Huxley undoubtedly complements Rorty’s literary political project. Therefore, *Island* should be added to Rorty’s canon of literary works that help us think about liberal politics.

However, there is no scholarship dedicated to the themes of international politics and imperialism, although they are very important in *Island*. This peculiar omission of this theme in the scholarship of *Island* will be corrected in the following chapter of this thesis. I will attempt to cover this theme through several angles and approaches. Chapter two will historicize the novel, in the sense that it will provide the historical events and historical figures that inspired and informed the plot and character of *Island*.

CHAPTER TWO

International Politics and 20th Century History in *Island*:

A Historicist Approach to Plot and Character

“In general I feel that the expression of abstract ideas is much more penetrating if it can somehow come through concrete biographical or fictional case histories. And this is something I am always looking for. I always hope to find a historical episode which I hope would have the same parable rich qualities.”—Aldous Huxley

The plot of *Island* is about a well-funded and carefully orchestrated military coup of the Palanese utopian government by a few powerful individuals. They include the materialistic prince of Pala, the ambitious military dictator of the neighboring *Island*, a journalist, and a greedy publishing and oil tycoon from Britain. These individuals seek to overthrow the Palanese government in order to have access to the cheap labor of the Palanese people and to exploit Pala's vast natural resources such as oil and bullion. In this chapter, several historical accounts of military coups around the world that were organized and funded by the US government and corporations will be provided in order to examine how they might have influenced Huxley's composition of *Island* and informed its plot and characters. In order to gain a deeper understanding of *Island*, these historical case studies will provide examples of how the complex process of regime change in the third-world is orchestrated and executed by first-world governments and multinational corporations. The first three examples of regime overthrow in Nicaragua, Honduras and Iran closely resemble the regime overthrow that takes place in *Island*. Much like the Palanese government, the democratic governments of these countries were overthrown, not because they threatened world peace or US national security, but because they attempted to avoid intervention from exploitative corporations, and because they tried to prevent foreign governments from wielding excessive influence in their economies and political systems.

In addition, not only the plot, but also several of the characters in *Island* resemble the individuals involved in overthrowing third world governments in recent history. *Island* is not merely a well informed fictionalization of these historical events, however. In keeping with the tradition of *Brave New World*, it is also a prediction, a warning of sorts, of what can happen to vulnerable democracies of third-world countries if the business practices of multinational corporations and politicians of powerful nations are left to their own devices without oversight or regulation. To demonstrate the validity of Huxley's prediction or hypothesis as presented in *Island*, the overthrow of the Chilean government of President Salvador Allende after Huxley's death in 1972 will serve as an example of what Huxley hoped to avert. In fact, in light of more contemporary examples of regime change and US intervention in third-world countries like Korea, Vietnam, Iran, and most recently Afghanistan and Iraq, Huxley's predictions or hypothesis become more credible and relevant.

According to Laura Huxley, the year in which *Island* was published had been "a troubled and confusing year for Aldous." Apart from losing his home along with his books, notes and diaries in the fire, Laura pointed out that "*Island* had been little publicized and grossly misunderstood" (Murray 447). The majority of contemporary reviews of *Island* were disparaging and dismissive. One such review that exemplifies this gross misunderstanding reads as follows:

Reviewers ought to watch their superlatives, but *Island*, it is reasonable to say, must be one of the worst novels ever written... If he is essentially philosopher rather than novelist, that makes his good novels remarkable as testimony to what can be done by intelligence and information in the absence of original talent. But he has obviously lost interest in fiction. Much of *Island*, the sermonizing fact, has great interest, and so have his recent

essays. One may look forward to many more volumes from Huxley, but it is permissible to hope that this is his last novel. (Watt ed. 454)

This review is the most negative and dismissive of a series of poor reviews written at the time *Island* was published. A few other critics during this time, however, differed in their opinion of *Island*. Cyril Connolly, an example of a more hopeful reviewer, captures the value of *Island* for scholarly research yet does not explicitly demonstrate exactly how it is an important work of fiction. He writes, “[*Island*] deserves to rank among the philosophical novels where real people act and are acted upon and discuss at the same time problems which engross us all and which they know more about than we do” (Watt ed. 449). This same reviewer, however, points out:

Such a community is bound to be pacifist and therefore, since it possesses oil, bound to be invaded. Mr. Huxley can put up no defense, for this is not science fiction and the *Islanders* have no magic. They convert the troublesome journalist; they cannot take on the nearest dictator. The conclusion implies that, while the world is so wicked and wrong-headed, such an isolated community of perfectionists in living is bound to be swamped... (Watt ed. 448)

The Ambassador in *Island* addresses this same point when he remarks that “So long as it remains out of touch with the rest of the world, and ideal society can be a viable society” (Huxley *Island*, 250). Pala, however, is not ignored by the rest of the world, which wants its oil. There are also some on the inside, like prince Murugan, who would prefer consumer capitalism to beatific isolation. In order to accomplish this, he must give in to the systematic expropriation of oil, ore, and other natural resources which the multinational oil company of Standard Oil wishes to accomplish with the aid of the neighboring dictator of Rendang-Lobo. It is in the context of international politics and history, therefore, that *Island* rises from being a mere testimony to what

can be done by intelligence and information in the absence of original talent, to a testimony of what can be done by historicism and historical awareness in the presence and context of US foreign policy and international politics.

The plot of *Island* provides a compelling metaphor for the plot of another very real story found in recent history. The plot of this history consists of US covert and open military intervention in Latin American and third-world countries around the world throughout the 20th century. It consists of systematically overthrowing regimes unfavorable to American economic interests with the collaboration of military assets, the CIA, congressmen, business executives, the media in its many forms, and last but not least, the collaboration of brutal military dictators and their regimes. In this thesis, I will argue that *Island* draws its nuances, twists, suspense and overall inspiration from Latin American history, especially the extensive US political, military and economic interventions in Latin American countries. As evidenced by the previous chapter, the scholarship on *Island* has neglected to address the controversial issue of neo-colonialism and new imperialism, although it forms one of the main themes of *Island* and underwrites its plot, characters and setting.

To briefly summarize the plot, it begins with the shipwreck of a British journalist sent to Pala by Joe Aldehyde, an oil and media tycoon. He is sent to Pala with the intention of facilitating a military coup d'état and of securing an oil concession for Joe Aldehyde's oil company after the coup has taken place and a new military regime is in power. This military coup is spearheaded by Prince Murugan of Pala in cooperation with Colonel Dipa, the military dictator of a neighboring island called Rendang-Lobo. For over a hundred years the government of Pala has prevented the expropriation of its natural resources by foreign interests in order to avoid the "wattled huts, the garbage, the children with ophthalmia, the skeleton dogs, the women

bent double under the enormous loads” that are found all over Rendang as a result of selling its oil to other countries (Huxley Island, 54). This island, unlike Pala, has been selling its oil, ore and forests to the highest bidder for many decades. The above quote indicates that the poverty and repression its citizens experience, is a direct result of the military regime in power and its unrestrained expropriation of natural resources. In the end, Pala meets a similar fate. The coordination between British economic interests, a journalist, a military dictatorship and a few prominent Palanese dissidents prevail in their attempts. Pala’s subsistence economy, like most of the third-world, falls victim to the indiscriminate and insatiable ‘invisible hand’ of the world-capitalist economy. In the Ambassador’s words, “the outside world has been closing in on this little island of freedom and happiness. Closing in steadily and inexorably, coming nearer and nearer. What was once a viable ideal is now no longer viable” (Huxley *Island*, 66).

But why had Pala not become a colony during the 18th and 19th centuries like most of the third world had? Why now only in the 20th century does it find itself threatened by the outside world—by neo-colonialism? Ranga, a young Palanese, covers this point when he gives Will Farnaby a brief history lesson of Pala and Rendang. He recounts:

Well, to return to Rendang. After the Arabs it got the Portuguese. We didn’t. No harbor, no Portuguese. Therefore no Catholic minority, no blasphemous nonsense about its being God’s will that people should breed themselves into subhuman misery, no organized resistance to birth control. And that isn’t our only blessing: After a hundred a twenty years of the Portuguese, Ceylon and Rendang got the Dutch. And after the Dutch came the English. We escaped both those infestations. No Dutch, no English, and therefore no planters, no coolie labor, no cash crops for export, no systematic exhaustion of our soil.

Also no whisky, no Calvinism, no syphilis, no foreign administrators. We were left to go our own way and take responsibility for our own affairs. (Huxley *Island*, 96)

This passage demonstrates Huxley's awareness of the impact 18th and 19th century colonialism had on the third world even after independence from colonial powers was established. Pala was fortunate to avoid that chapter in history, and Ranga makes this clear when he announces that "It's had the luck, first of all, never to have been anyone's colony" (Huxley *Island*, 95).

The following passage, on the other hand, acknowledges the existence, purpose and the threat that 20th century neo-colonialism poses on Pala. Dr. Robert explains how the first world would benefit if a military dictatorship would allow natural resources and cheap labor to be expropriated from Pala, a third world country. Dr. Robert elaborates,

The West wants [Pala] because our labor costs are low and investors' dividends will be correspondingly high. And the East wants it because industrialization will create a proletariat, open fresh fields for Communist agitation and may lead in the long run to the setting up of yet another People's Democracy. We say no to both of you, so we're unpopular everywhere. Regardless of their ideologies, all the Great Powers may prefer a Rendang-controlled Pala with oil fields to an independent Pala without. If Dipa attacks us, they'll say it's most deplorable; but they won't lift a finger. And when he takes us over and calls the oilmen in, they'll be delighted. (Huxley *Island*, 131)

In order to avoid this threat, given that Pala has no army, Dr. Robert reasons that "the most we can do, if [Dipa] starts making trouble, is to appeal to the United Nations"¹ (132). Pala's history is, therefore, a fictional representation of the history of many third world countries, which

¹ During American intervention in Chile, President Salvador Allende addressed the General Assembly of United Nations in 1972 with what he called "the battle in defense of natural resources." He declared, "We find ourselves opposed by forces that operate in the shadows, without a flag, with powerful weapons, from positions of great influence... We are potentially rich countries, yet we live in poverty. We go here and there, begging for credits and aid, yet we are great exporters of capital. It is a classic paradox of the capitalist economic system. (189)

throughout the course of the 20th century have provided first world economies with cheap labor and natural resources. This expropriation has been systematically carried out through the coordination between intelligence and military institutions, financial and banking institutions, and congressmen, of both the neo-colony and the neo-colonial power.

The history of the Central American country of Nicaragua is an early example of this process. Its history has largely been shaped by the intentions and for the benefit of American business interests. Nicaragua might have emerged long ago as a peaceful and prosperous country had it not been the subject of American intervention. Instead it is chronically poor and unstable, and a stage for repeated American intervention. During the latter part of the 19th century, the ideals of social and political reform swept across Central America. Visionary leaders were inspired by European philosophers and nation builders and sought to wipe away the feudal system that had frozen the economies of their countries. One of these visionary leaders was Jose Santos Zelaya. He took his nationalist principles so seriously that the United States government felt compelled to overthrow him. The current president of the US, Theodore Roosevelt, was indirectly responsible for Zelaya's overthrow because he supported the principles that justified it. Since 1823, US policy in the Western Hemisphere had been shaped by the Monroe Doctrine. This unilateral declaration stated that the United States would not tolerate any attempt by European powers to influence the course of events in the Americas. In 1904, Roosevelt decided to go further and added the "Roosevelt Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted the right of the United States to intervene in any country in the Western Hemisphere that it judged to be in need of intervention (Kinzer 56-64).

After he left the presidency in 1909, Roosevelt's successor was William Howard Taft. President Taft was closer to big business, and chose Philander Knox, a highly successful

corporate lawyer and former attorney general, to be secretary of state. Knox had spent years representing major American corporations, most notably Carnegie Steel, and had worked closely with William Nelson Cromwell to organize the company that became United States Steel. One of his most cherished clients was the Philadelphia-based La Luz and Los Angeles Mining Company, which held lucrative gold mining concessions in eastern Nicaragua. Apart from his professional relationship with La Luz, Knox was socially and politically close with its owners, the Fletcher family of Philadelphia. The Fletchers protected their company in an unusually effective way. Gilmore Fletcher managed it while his brother, Henry, worked at the State Department, where he held a series of influential positions and where he ultimately rose to undersecretary. Both detested Nicaraguan President Zelaya, especially after he began threatening, in 1908, to cancel the La Luz concession. Encouraged by the Fletcher brothers, Knox looked eagerly for a way to force Zelaya from power (Kinzer 65). The characters from *Island* that most resemble Knox are both Joe Aldehyde and Will Farnaby. Joe is an oil and publishing tycoon who uses Will Farnaby, a journalist, to help secure an oil concession from Pala for his Standard Oil Company. He tells Will:

“Pala’s full of oil. Southeast Asia Petroleum has been trying to get in on it for years. So have all the other companies. Nothing doing. No oil concessions to anyone. It’s their fixed policy. But the Rani doesn’t agree with it. She wants the oil doing some good in the world. So, as I say, if ever you get to Pala, make a beeline for the palace. Talk to her. Get the inside story about the men who make the decisions. Find out if there’s a pro-oil minority and ask how we could help them to carry on the good work.” And he had ended by promising Will a handsome bonus if his efforts should be crowned with success... Unspeakable creature! But all the same he wrote for the unspeakable creature’s

vile papers and was ready, for a bribe, to do the vile creature's dirty work. And now, incredibly, here he was on Palanese soil. (Huxley *Island*, 25)

The overthrow of Zelaya's presidency closely resembles that of Pala's government. Not only is the plot of the coup similar but also, the characters involved provide an eerie fictionalization of the individuals involved in Zelaya's overthrow.

Aside from continually clashing with American companies operating in his country, Zelaya was trying to make his country less dependent on the United States by borrowing money from European rather than American banks. Knox could not abide by this and found it quite intolerable. In the summer of 1909, he began orchestrating a campaign designed to turn American public opinion against Zelaya. He seized on several minor incidents in Nicaragua to paint the Nicaraguan regime as brutal and oppressive. He sent diplomats to Nicaragua whom he knew to be strongly anti-Zelaya, and passed their lurid reports to friends in the press. Soon after, American newspapers were reporting that Zelaya had imposed a "reign of terror" in Nicaragua and become "the menace of Central America." As this sensationalist campaign reached a peak, President Taft gravely announced that the United States would no longer "tolerate and deal with such a medieval despot" (Kinzer 66). With this declaration, the US pronounced Zelaya's political death sentence. American businessmen in Bluefields, the main town on the Caribbean coast, rushed to carry out the execution. With approval from the American consul, William Moffett, with whom they shared their plans at every stage, they formed a conspiracy with the ambitious provincial governor, General Juan Jose Estrada (66). Estrada's role is strikingly similar to the one played by the ambitious prince Murugan of Pala or by Colonel Dipa of Rendang in staging the coup.

The overthrow of Zelaya was very well financed. The chief accountant for the La Luz mining company, Adolfo Diaz, served as its treasurer. American companies operating in and around Bluefields sent him large sums of money. The cost of the revolution has been estimated at \$2 million. Estrada used much of the money to raise and equip a militia. In *Island*, Will Farnaby wonders as to the amount of compensation the Ambassador of Rendang and the Rani will receive for orchestrating the coup:

Behind the ambassadorial verbiage he could see and hear the Levantine broker in quest of his commission, the petty official cadging for a gratuity. And for her enthusiastic sponsorship of Southeast Asia Petroleum, how much had the royal initiative been promised? Something he was prepared to bet, pretty substantial. (Huxley *Island*, 70)

Will then assures the Rani, “let me explain my position in this matter. All I’m interested is money. Two thousand pounds... A year of freedom just for helping Joe Aldehyde to get his hands on Pala” (70).

After the plan was executed in Guatemala on August 21, 1910, General Estrada entered the capital and was sworn in as president. “On that day,” New York Times correspondent Harold Denny later wrote, “began the American rule of Nicaragua, political and economic” (Kinzer 50). The overthrow of President Zelaya in Nicaragua was the first real American coup (70). By 1912, Americans were also running the country’s national bank, steamship line, and railway (99). During this time, the United States also had a special interest in Honduras. Under a series of Liberal presidents, Honduras had fallen into the habit of borrowing money from European banks. President Taft and Secretary of State Knox disapproved of this practice, just as they had disapproved of Zelaya’s railroad loan in 1909 from European banks. They asked President Davila to transfer his debt by accepting a \$30 million loan from the American banking firm of

J.P. Morgan, most of which would be used to pay off the European creditors. To guarantee repayment, J.P. Morgan would take over the Honduran customs service and oversee its Treasury, in effect turning the country into a US protectorate. Even though he accepted the terms of the loan, officials in Washington concluded that Davila was untrustworthy because of his well known Liberal sympathies and feared that, if allowed to remain in office, he would become a dangerous symbol of independence which might inspire nationalists elsewhere in Central America (Skidmore 380).

The American government and three conspirators were responsible for the overthrow of President Davila. Lee Christmas, a flamboyant soldier of fortune who had fought in almost every Central American war and revolution of the past quarter century; a notorious New Orleans gangster, George “Machine Gun” Molony, Sam Zemurray and Manuel Bonilla. Bonilla was the man Zemurray had chosen to be the country’s next president. Sam Zemurray, known as “Sam the Banana Man” was one of the most colorful figures in the history of American capitalism. In New Orleans he is remembered as a philanthropist who donated \$1 million to Tulane University and paid to build a hospital for black women. Agronomists still admire his contributions to the science of banana cultivation. Some Jews consider him an exemplary figure of their Diaspora, an immigrant from Eastern Europe who arrived at *Ellis Island* as a poor youth and rose to great wealth and power. In Honduras, however, people know him as the man who overthrew their government and took over their country. One historian later wrote, “Honduras had escaped the grasp of bankers only to fall into the clutches of banana men” (Kinzer 76). After the coup, President Bonilla replaced Davila and as a reward for placing him in power, he gave Zemurray a total of 20, 000 hectares of banana land in Honduras and a unique permit allowing his businesses to import whatever they needed duty-free. Zemurray soon became known as “the uncrowned

king of Central America.” After Bonilla’s death in 1913, he controlled a string of presidents. In 1925, he secured exclusive lumbering rights to a region covering one-tenth of Honduran territory. Later he merged his enterprises with United Fruit and took over as the firm’s managing director. Under his leadership, United Fruit became inextricably interwoven with the fabric of Central American life. According to one study, it “throttled competitors, dominated governments, manacled railroads, ruined planters, choked cooperatives, domineered over workers, fought organized labor and exploited consumers” (Kinzer 336). United Fruit Company would later help overthrow other Central American governments (77).

In the following decades, US foreign policy adjusted its approach with what President Taft called “dollar diplomacy,” which added a commercial element to the way in which the US controlled third-world countries. He assured foreign leaders that they had nothing to fear as long as they allowed American businesses free rein and sought loans only from American banks. The practice of using commercial and military force in US foreign relations with the third-world for over a century was aptly described by Guatemalan President Juan Jose Arevalo soon after he was deposed from his presidency. In his farewell speech he proclaimed:

The banana magnates, co-nationals of Roosevelt, rebelled against the audacity of a Central American president who gave to his fellow citizens a legal equality with the honorable families of exporters... It was then that the schoolteacher, ingenuous and romantic, from the presidency of his country, discovered how perishable, frail and slippery the brilliant international doctrines of democracy and freedom were. It was then, with the deepest despondency and pain, that I felt, with consequent indignation, the

pressure of that anonymous force that rules, without laws or morals, international relations and the relationships of men.² (132)

This speech addresses issue of neocolonialism. In *Island*, Dr. Robert gives Will Farnaby a lengthy lecture on the risk that opening Pala's economy to western business poses to the utopian way of life in Pala. The 'pressure' that rules international relations is the demand for oil industrialized nations need to fuel their industrial sectors. Dr. Robert claims that if Colonel Dipa goes through with the coup, the Palanese government will appeal to the UN, but he realizes that they will not really care. If Dr. Robert is an extension of Huxley's view on international organizations such as the UN, then his view align with the cynicism of Guatemalan President Juan Jose Arevalo.

Britain, the country that plays the role of the imperialist power in *Island*, also has a long history of foreign intervention. The British Government's orchestration of the Iranian coup of 1953 provides a clear example of how third-world oil is of great importance in international trade. During the early 1950's, Britain was facing a grave challenge. Its ability to project military power, fuel its industries, and give its citizens a high standard of living depended largely on the oil it extracted from Iran. Since 1901, a single corporation, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, owned by the British government, had held a monopoly on the extraction, refining, and sale of Iranian oil. Anglo-Iranian's contract, negotiated with a corrupt Iranian monarch, required to pay Iran just 16 percent of the money it earned from selling the country's oil. This company made more profit in 1950 alone than it had paid Iran in royalties over the previous half century. In the spring of 1951, an anti-colonialist Iranian Mohammad Mossadegh, rose to power. He was

² The United States was strongly denounced by Latin American nationalists for its intervention in Guatemala, and to this day the episode is a symbol for Latin Americans of cynical U.S. action. As described twenty years later by a CIA officer who had been intimately involved in the overthrow of Arbenz: "Castillo Armas (Arbenz replacement) was a bad president, tolerating corruption throughout his government and kowtowing to the United Fruit Company more than to his own people" (Skidmore 392).

determined to expel the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, nationalize the oil industry, and use the money it generated to develop Iran. “All of Iran’s misery, wretchedness, lawlessness and corruption over the last fifty years has been caused by oil and the extortions of the oil company,” a radio commentator declared (118). Mossadegh’s rise to power and the subsequent vote by his parliament to nationalize the oil industry outraged British leaders. To this, Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison responded, “Persian oil is of vital importance to our economy. We regard it as essential to do everything possible to prevent the Persians from getting away with a breach of their contractual obligations.” Britain had dominated Iranian politics for generations, and during that time had bribed a variety of military officers, journalists, religious leaders, and others who could help overthrow a government if the need arose (119). The characters in *Island* that orchestrate the coup of Pala are the religious leader known as the Rani, the journalist, Will Farnaby, and the military leader of Randang, Colonel Dipa. Evidently, Huxley had a clear knowledge of the actors involved in the process of overthrowing governments. Furthermore, Huxley continued the career-long practice of using real life and historical characters in *Island*. He had done this in several of his other novels, including his first one, *Crome Yellow*. *Crome Yellow*, *Point Counter Point* and *After Manny a Summer* were based on real people he personally knew, and some also on famous people and historical figures. For example, Jo Stoyte of *After Manny a Summer* is an allegory for William Randolph Hearst, by his acquisitions of art, etc., and living in an opulent estate—similar to Hearst Castle—and with Virginia, another character who can be taken as a parody of Marion Davies, Hearst’s love interest. Or in *Point Counter Point*, where the character Everard Webley and his Brotherhood of British Freemen might have been inspired by Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists. *Island* can be referred to as, “a historical parable.”

With the approval of President Truman, the British government went ahead with its plan to overthrow Mossadegh. Two secret agents, Donald Wilber of the CIA and Norman Darbyshire of the British Secret Intelligence Service, spent several weeks that spring in Cyprus devising a plan for the coup. It was unlike any plan that either country, or any country, had made before. Under their plan, the Americans would spend \$150,000 to bribe journalists, editors, Islamic preachers, and other opinion leaders to “create, extend and enhance public hostility and distrust and fear of Mossadegh and his government.” Then they would hire thugs to carry out “staged attacks” on religious figures and other respected Iranians, making it seem that Mossadegh had ordered them. Meanwhile, General Zahedi would be given a sum of money, later fixed at \$135,000, to “win additional friends” and “influence key people.” The plan budgeted another \$11,000 per week, a big sum at that time, to bribe members of the Iranian parliament. On the day of the coup, thousands of paid demonstrators would converge on parliament to demand that it dismiss Mossadegh. Parliament would then respond with a quasi-legal vote to do so. If Mossadegh resisted, military units loyal to General Zadehi would arrest him. When US secretary of State Dulles received a copy of the plan he exclaimed, “So this is how we get rid of that madman Mossadegh.” This coup was code-named Operation Ajax, and the American press played an important supporting role. The *New York Times* regularly referred to him as the dictator. Other papers compared him to Hitler and Stalin. *Newsweek* reported that, with his help, Communists were “taking over” Iran. *Time* called his election “one of the worst calamities to the anti-communist world since the Red conquest of China” (122-124). Subsequently, with a few alterations to the plan, Mossadegh was deposed and replaced by General Zahedi as the new prime minister (Kinzer 177). This historical account demonstrates the importance of oil in the growth and maintenance of world powers and their economies. Huxley places the issue of oil

exportation in *Island* at the center of the novel's conflict. The importance of oil in the real world is reflected in *Island*. The main conflict in *Island* is whether Will Farnaby will help overthrow the Palanese utopia in order to help an oil tycoon. *Island*, therefore, as utopian novel, takes place in today's world, not in some distant post-apocalyptic civilization. Huxley does not cloak issues concerning world politics with subtlety, but rather simply transplants political issues of his time into the narrative of *Island*.

The coup that occurred in Chile in 1973 also closely resembles the coup that takes place in *Island*, although the coup in Chile takes place after Huxley's death. The formula of overthrowing governments had been well refined and adjusted by the time the US decided to stage a military coup in Chile. This coup, orchestrated by the CIA, President Nixon and a handful of multinational corporations, was carried out in order to avoid a left-wing president from nationalizing the lucrative foreign-owned mining and telephone companies. When presidential candidate, Salvador Allende Gossens, won the election in 1970, many wealthy individuals panicked. Agustin Edwards, one of Chile's richest men and owner of its largest newspaper, *El Mercurio*, could not allow Allende to realize his promise to nationalize the American owned companies that dominated his country's economy. Edwards went to the American embassy in Santiago, the capital of Chile, and began plotting to overthrow Allende. Edwards was friends with executives with interests in Chile such as directors of the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation, ITT, which owned the Chilean telephone system. Pepsi-Cola Corporation, Kennecott Copper Corporation, Anaconda Copper Mining Company and Chase Manhattan Bank all had interests in Chile and played a major role in the overthrow of Allende. (Anaconda and Kennecott Copper made four billion dollars over 40 years in Chile, while their initial investment was less than 30 million.) All these companies were all on

Allende's nationalization list. The board member of ITT and friend of Edwards was none other than former CIA director, John McCone. Also, Donald Kendall, chairman of the board of Pepsi-Cola had hired President Nixon in the mid 1960's as the company's international legal counsel and had contributed generously to his presidential campaign. Kendall was Edwards business partner. Agustin Edwards, therefore, was well connected to Washington elites and corporate executives. He spearheaded the campaign to overthrow Allende. When finally, Agustin Edwards, President Nixon, Henry Kissinger of the State Department, Attorney General John Mitchell and Donald Kendall all met to discuss the 'problem' Allende posed, Edwards painted a dark picture of what was happening in Chile. He predicted that if Allende was allowed to take office, he would nationalize the Chilean economy and force American businesses out (Kinzer 180, Skidmore 130). Similarly in Island, Prince Murugan paints a negative picture of the future of Pala, while highlighting the greatness of Rendang. He claims that the current Palanese government has keep Pala in the dark ages and stumped industrial development. Rendang, on the other hand, he claims has been able to achieve a moderate level of industrialization and weapons production. The young Murugan attempts to convince a savvy journalist, Will Farnaby, how his rule would do much good for Pala. In reality, however, he simply wishes to gain greater access to consumer goods. His own greed blinds him and morally compromises his statesmanship.

To return to Chile, soon after this meeting, President Nixon gave the order to organize a coup in Chile. As he spoke, former deputy at the CIA, Richard Helms, scribbled a page of notes that has become a classic document in the history of diplomacy and covert action;

- 1 in 10 chance perhaps, but save Chile!
- worth spending
- not concerned with risks involved
- no involvement of embassy
- \$10,000 available, more if necessary
- full-time job—best men we have

- game plan
- make economy scream
- 48 hours for plan of action

However, long before this plan was put together, since 1964, the CIA had set out on a decade-long campaign of intervention and destabilization in Chile. For example, the CIA covertly spent \$3 million to ensure that presidential candidate Eduardo Frei would defeat Allende in the 1964 election, paying more than half of his campaign. Over the next four years the CIA spent \$2 million on covert projects aimed at supporting Frei, along with \$175,000 in covert aid to twenty-two candidates who ran for Congress in 1965, nine of whom were elected. Nevertheless, in 1970, Allende became president despite the CIA's campaign to determine election results in Chile (Kinzer 188).

As a result, the CIA determined that covert spending would not be enough to keep Allende from power, and decided to stage a military coup. The CIA formed Chile Task Force and placed a man named David Atlee Phillips as its director. He had overthrown President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in the coup of 1954 and was well prepared to overthrow his second Latin American government. He sent a lengthy cable to agents in Santiago. It read as follows:

Sensitize feeling within and without Chile that election of Allende is a nefarious development for Chile, Latin America, and the world... Surface ineluctable conclusion that military coup is the only answer... Key is psych war within Chile. The station should employ every stratagem, every ploy, however bizarre, to create this internal resistance.

Prop war should become sharper and more provocative... Public and provocative rallies

should be held, growing in size and intensity until the Communists must react... If we are successful in heightening tension through the three main lines noted above, the pretext will, in all probability, present itself.³ (181)

A similar cable was transmitted from Joe Aldehyde to the Rani of Pala, one of the plotters of the coup. In *Island*, the cable is not written but its contents are described by the Rani in a letter she sends to Will Farnaby. Part of it reads:

I had been TOLD again and again what Our Mutual Friend was predestined to do for poor little Pala and (through the financial support which Pala will permit him to contribute to the Crusade of the Spirit) for the WHOLE WORLD. So when I read his cable (which arrived a few minutes ago, by way of the faithful Bahu and his diplomatic colleague in London), it came as NO surprise to learn that Lord A. has given you *Full Powers* (and, it goes without saying, the WHEREWITHAL) to negotiate on his behalf—on *our* behalf; for his advantage is also yours, mine and... the SPIRITS. For reasons which are partly political, partly Economic, and partly Astrological, it has been decided to precipitate an Action originally planned for the night of the lunar eclipse next November. (307)

This cable eerily resembles a cable written by a number of trained CIA operative throughout the coup of Allende. The last sentence of the above quote is especially an appropriate characterization of the lingo of CIA agents involved in overthrowing governments. “It has been decided to precipitate an Action,” declares the Rani, and thus the overthrow of Pala’s utopian

³ Years later, in 2000, the CIA officially confirmed its 1971 role when it acknowledged the authenticity of a memorandum that stated: “Since Allende’s inauguration, U.S. policy has been to maintain maximum covert pressure to prevent the Allende regime’s consolidation. Under this policy the 40 Committee (executive action arm chaired by National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger) has approved since January 1971 financial support totaling \$6,476,166 for Chilean political parties, media and private sector organizations opposed to the Allende regime.” This official admission confirmed charges that critics of U.S. policy and Chilean nationalists had long been making. (Skidmore 150)

government begins. Allende's government was finally overthrown in 1973. CIA agent named Jack Devine sent his superiors the news they had been waiting for nearly three years a few days before the coup, "A coup attempt will be initiated on September 11. All three branches of the armed forces, and the *Carabineros* (federal police), are involved in this action, A declaration will be read on *Radio Agricultura* at 7 A.M. on 11 September. The *Carabineros* will have the responsibility of seizing President Allende" (192).

After Chilean soldiers stormed the government palace, La Moneda, and killed Allende. General Javier Palacios, who led the assault, reported to his superiors by radio "Mission Accomplished. Moneda taken. President dead" (194). But minutes before the coup, President Allende gave an impassioned farewell to his people through a makeshift radio hookup:

I am ready to resist by all means, even at the cost of my own life... Foreign capital—imperialism united with reaction—created the climate for the army to break with their tradition... Long live Chile! Long live the people! These are my last words. I am sure that my sacrifice will not be in vain. I am sure it will be at least a moral lesson, and a rebuke to crime, cowardice and treason. (194)

Island is also a novel that seeks to serve as "at least a moral lesson." As a novel it is overburdened by the intrigues of international politics and economics. If a novel's success is measured by its ability to instruct and delight, then it certainly instructs much more so than it delights. The last example of the Chilean coup, however, demonstrates that Island is more than a mere summary of historical accounts. It is also a prediction of what would happen to future democracies around the third world if agencies like the CIA and State Department of the US were to refine their techniques and sharpen their skills of overthrowing governments over time. The example of Chile shows that the US government became not only more effective but also

more ruthless in their dominance of global economics and geopolitics. Although *Island* is more instructive than delighting, it nevertheless continues the tradition of *Brave New World*. This tradition consists of providing a warning of what might be if we do not pay “Attention, Attention,” to the “Here and now,” as the mynah birds of Pala parrot (15).

CHAPTER THREE

An Application of Dependency Theory and World Systems Analysis to the Political and Economic Arguments of *Island*.

*“But I don’t want to be more aware,” said Will. “I want to be less aware... Less aware of my fat income and other people’s subhuman poverty. Less aware of my own excellent health in an ocean of malaria and hookworm, of my own safely sterilized sex fun in the ocean of starving babies. ‘Forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ What a blessed state of affairs! But unfortunately I do know what I’m doing. Only too well.” (Huxley *Island*, 292)*

In order to fully understand some of the arguments made in *Island*, a thorough acquaintance of particular social theories in the field of economics and politics is a requisite. Aldous Huxley supports the arguments he makes in *Island* regarding political economy with post-World War II economic and social theories, in particular Dependency Theory and World Systems Analysis. These economic theories, which Huxley subtly weaves into *Island*, use a primarily Marxist approach in order to understand world politics and historical developments. One such argument that requires a comprehensive acumen in the field of political economy is the one made by the character, Dr. Robert. He claims that Pala’s economy and political system must remain in regulated isolation from the outside world. If Pala were to open its doors to the world capitalist system, its utopian system would surely come to an end. For most of Palanese history, keeping the world capitalist system at bay has been possible, but in the end, capitalism’s growing need for Palanese petroleum to fuel its industrial sector overwhelms Pala’s sovereignty. After a military coup, a puppet regime is installed in Pala in order to exploit its oil, and Pala is finally reduced to just another underdeveloped third world country. Huxley’s argument, that the unbridled participation of a third world country like Pala in the capitalist world system is

detrimental to its economic development and sovereignty is, in fact, one of the main principles of Dependency Theory and World System Analysis. These fields of political economy seek to demonstrate that the underdevelopment and poverty of the third world is largely due to the exploitative structure of the world capitalist system—a system that is maintained and manipulated by military and financial institutions of developed nations. Huxley's *Island* is a masterful, albeit fictional, representation of this economic phenomenon. Through the use of plot and characters, Huxley provides a sobering rendition of this economic phenomenon and calls our attention to its ethical implications and tragic consequences. In the process of reading *Island* with a sociological approach or bias, albeit behind a literary one, this novel becomes more than a mere utopian fantasy. It is one of Huxley's most earnest attempts at exposing the dystopian conspiracies that perpetuate economic underdevelopment and provoke war.

The tension and development of *Island's* plot hinges on one issue—the Palanese government's policy on oil exportation. The vast oil reserves that the islands of Pala and Rendang possess are coveted by western oil companies. Their ruthless pursuit of this oil and the resistance that the majority of Palanese people pose creates the central conflict in the novel. The centrality of oil in the story of Pala is made clear in the novel as early as page twenty five when Joe Aldehyde declares, "Pala is full of oil. Southeast Asia Petroleum has been trying to get in on it for years. So have all the other companies" (25). Towards the end of the novel, after more than a hundred years of keeping foreign oil companies from exploiting Palanese oil, Susila McPhail concludes that "Our enemy is oil in general. Whether we are exploited by Southeast Asia Petroleum or Standard of California makes no difference" (323). Undoubtedly, oil plays an important role in the fate of Pala and Rendang. This has also been true for many real, oil-rich countries in the third world in the last century. Oil has played a key role in determining the fate

of third-world countries and their economies for more than a century. There are and have been several other types of natural resources in the form of raw materials that have in great part shaped the economic history of third world countries, but oil remains the most important type of raw material in global capitalism. The importance that Huxley gives to the issue of oil in *Island* genuinely reflects the significance of oil as a valuable commodity in the context of the world economy.

For example, the US has had a long-standing geopolitical interest in the Middle East due to the fact that it is the repository of most of the world's proven oil reserves. Crucial to the agenda of global control as worked out during WWII was the control of the Middle East. It was regarded as absolutely essential for the economic, military, and political control of the globe. As a result, the United States began a long series of overt and covert operations in the region in the 1950's, the foremost of which was the 1953 overthrow of the democratically elected Mossadegh government in Iran, which had nationalized foreign-owned oil companies. As a result, the success of US involvement in the Middle East dramatically grew in the 20th century. Between 1940 and 1967, US companies increased their control of Middle Eastern oil reserves from 10 percent to close to 60 percent while reserves under British control decreased from 72 percent in 1940 to 30 percent in 1967 (Harvey 20). The mounting demand for Palanese oil from oil companies and their growing involvement in the politics of Pala and Rendang reflects this phenomenon. Oil or rather the world-wide demand for it is indeed Pala's worst enemy. It is important to note that Southeast Asia Petroleum, owned by the British oil tycoon, Joe Aldehyde, is one of several oil companies that want an oil concession in Pala. Other companies include Shell, Royal Dutch and Standard of California. Susila McPhail declares that exploitation by the American firm of Standard of California or by a British one will be just as detrimental for Pala.

As Britain's control of the Middle Eastern oil industry waned, the US's control grew, but both countries used the same exploitative business model.

By assessing the historical importance of oil in world capitalism, a better understanding as to why it occupies a central place in *Island* can be reached. In the late 1960's, the British abandoned any military presence east of the Suez Canal, leaving the US in sole command. Because of Vietnam, the US chose to use the surrogate states of Iran and Saudi Arabia to look after its proliferating interests in the region. It also looked to its particularly strong support of Israel to create there a solid outpost of American surrogate power in the region. Huxley correctly predicted that oil would play an increasingly important role in geopolitics and international affairs. The first oil boycott and price hike of 1973 organized through OPEC, and then the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, made the solution of indirect rule through distant surrogates untenable. As a result, direct American intervention in oil rich countries increased. President Carter enunciated the doctrine that the United States would not under any circumstances allow an interruption of the flow of Gulf oil. US foreign policy in the region since has stated that the US would not hesitate to use military force in the Gulf region and would do so unilaterally if necessary, if US interests were in any way threatened (Harvey 22). The need for oil, in many ways, has determined the foreign policy of industrialized powers and the turbulent history of third-world, oil-rich nations.

Through a better understanding of the role of oil in the world capitalist system, one can also better understand why it is given so much attention throughout the story of *Island*. However, there is another phenomenon concerning international politics and economics in *Island* that is directly related to the world's oil trade and is also treated thoroughly in *Island*. It is a significant phenomenon in the context of world economics and trade that has taken place for centuries and

that has intrigued thinkers, economists and historians. Huxley, as evidenced by his focus on it in *Island* and in several essays, appears to have had a particular interest in this subject. Karl Marx is the person that was among the first to be interested in this economic phenomenon. (Frank 21)

The study of this phenomenon has grown in importance and relevance, especially after the 1960's, and has been referred to by various names, including neo-colonialism and new imperialism. The body of social science theories that covers this economic phenomenon is known as Dependency Theory, and more recently, World-Systems Analysis. The main concern of these social science theories is to understand the economic and political relationship between the 'core,' or industrialized and developed nations, and the 'periphery,' or underdeveloped nations. The main objective of theorists in this field is to determine why there is a large economic disparity between these two categories of nations and to understand how much of this disparity is intentionally orchestrated by the core nations. In other words, they seek to understand how the core nations subject poorer peripheral nations to economic underdevelopment and gain economically from their economic subordination and inferior economic condition.

Huxley grappled with the premise of neo-colonialism in several of his essays, but he makes neo-colonialism the center focus of *Island*. Whether Huxley was acquainted with theories of world economics of Dependency Theory when he wrote *Island*, or whether he reached similar conclusions on his own about world politics is not clear. Nevertheless, Huxley extensively addresses this issue in *Island*. He does so by drawing a comparison, which is carried out throughout the novel, between the islands of Rendang-Lobo and Pala. They are both underdeveloped third-world export economies, but Pala is a utopia where everyone is well taken care of, whereas Rendang is a violent military dictatorship with a very poor population. This contrast is developed throughout the novel and several reasons are given for the difference in the

political and economic circumstances of these two islands. One such reason, for example, is given by the Palanese Ranga when he recounts the history of the region:

“Well, to return to Rendang. After the Arabs it got the Portuguese. We didn’t. No harbor, no Portuguese. Therefore no Catholic minority, no blasphemous nonsense about its being God’s will that people should breed themselves into subhuman misery, no organized resistance to birth control. And that isn’t our only blessing: After a hundred a twenty years of the Portuguese, Ceylon and Rendang got the Dutch. And after the Dutch came the English. We escaped both those infestations. No Dutch, no English, and therefore no planters, no coolie labor, no cash crops for export, no systematic exhaustion of our soil. Also no whisky, no Calvinism, no syphilis, no foreign administrators. We were left to go our own way and take responsibility for our own affairs.” (Huxley *Island*, 96)

He prefaces this brief lecture with, “It’s had the luck, first of all, never to have been anyone’s colony” (95).

This first explanation for Pala’s success over Rendang is one that was well established in the scholarship of economic history before Huxley wrote *Island*. Many historians and economists attribute the unstable and underdeveloped economic and political condition of the peripheral nations to their history with colonialism. Although most colonies achieved independence by the mid 20th century, this independence has been largely nominal, with their economies and political institutions remaining primarily in the control of the previous colonial power or by some new world power. This phenomenon has been referred to as neo-colonialism, because it implies the old geographical form of colonialism has been replaced by a more profitable form of economic, cultural and political colonialism. (Frank 22) This new form of economic exploitation is formally

referred to as the capitalist contradictions of surplus expropriation by Andre Gunder Frank. These capitalist contradictions of surplus expropriation/appropriation, and of the core-periphery structure of global capitalism, made their appearance in Latin America in the sixteenth century and have characterized that continent ever since. Latin America was conquered and its people colonized by the European metropolis so as to expropriate the economic surplus of the satellite's labor and to appropriate it for the capital accumulation of the metropolis. This initiated the present underdevelopment of the satellite and the economic development of the metropolis. The capitalist metropolis-satellite, or also called the core-periphery relationship between Europe and Latin America, was established by force of arms. And it is by this same force as well as by the force of ever-growing economic and other ties that this relationship has been maintained to this day; as demonstrated by the historical accounts of military intervention presented in the previous chapter of this thesis (Frank 20). Furthermore, the process of neo-colonialism is also aided by 'locals,' or individuals native to the satellite/periphery. This point is addressed in *Island* with the characterization of Colonel Dipa of Rendang. He is a powerful figure in the region's politics, and his main occupation is to facilitate exploitation of Pala and Rendang's natural resources by foreign companies and to provide "guarantees against nationalization" (24).

The intellectuals of Pala are keenly aware that although geographical colonialism is a thing of the past, there is a modern and current form of colonialism that continues to exploit the natural resources and cheap labor of peripheral economies like Rendang and Pala. Dr. Robert points out that

"The West wants [Pala] because our labor costs are low and investors' dividends will be correspondingly high. Regardless of their ideologies, all the Great Powers may prefer a Rendang-controlled Pala with oil fields to an independent Pala without. If Dipa

attacks us, they'll say it's most deplorable; but they won't lift a finger. And when he takes us over and calls the oilmen in, they'll be delighted" (131).

Therefore, the second reason why Pala does not share the same problems of Rendang, such as the slums, starving children, overworked peasants and political repression, is due to its isolation. This isolation, however, is controlled and strategically executed in order to achieve economic autonomy and success through a limited participation in the world-capitalist economy. This isolation is practiced so as to gain the maximum benefit from exporting natural resources and developing specific industries, while avoiding excessive foreign influence and ultimately exploitation by foreign businesses, governments and cultures. In other words, Pala is a fictional realization of a long-standing daydream of many democratic governments in third-world countries throughout capitalism's history. The price of failing to achieve this economic independence is adequately exemplified by Rendang. Will Farnaby makes this connection early in the novel when he remembers Rendang's economic situation during his meeting with the plotters of the coup, "The villages through which he had passed in Colonel's Dipa white Mercedes—the wattled huts, the garbage, the children with ophthalmia, the skeleton dogs, the women bent double under enormous loads" (54).

This controlled isolation/participation and economic independence, is the main reason why Pala can be a utopia. It is the basic premise of Huxley's argument that a utopia like the country of Pala is possible, if and only if, such peripheral country closely regulates its interaction with developed nations and with global capitalism. This struggle to maintain Pala a closed or isolated economy, of insulating it from the exploitative expropriation of the world capitalist system, is what provides the main source of moral tension and suspense in the novel. Will Farnaby is divided between receiving a large fortune from Joe Aldehyde for opening up Pala to

Joe's oil industry, or of helping maintain Pala an isolated utopia. The Ambassador of Rendang concludes that "So long as it remains out of touch with the rest of the world, an ideal society can be a viable society. Pala was completely viable, I'd say, until about 1905... ..the outside world has been closing in on this little *Island* of freedom and happiness. Closing in steadily and inexorably, coming nearer and nearer" (66). Dr. Robert also explains, "Pala was to remain a forbidden *Island*. Dr. Andrew wholeheartedly agreed with the Raja that missionaries, planters and traders were far too dangerous to be tolerated" (157). However, before this argument regarding economic isolation can be fully understood, we must first establish how uncontrolled participation in the world-capitalist economy undermines development in peripheral economies and subjugates them to unbridled economic exploitation by the core economies. In turn, we will find that Huxley had arrived at a similar understanding of center-peripheral and dependence economics that several political economists, contemporary to Huxley, had also reached and elaborated upon.

The process by which the contradiction of capitalism takes place in metropolitan center-peripheral satellite economies is summarized in the *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*. This seminal work, which analyzes the consequences of neo-colonialism and of how the contradictions of capitalism play a major role in underdevelopment, became a major contribution to Dependency Theory. It argues that;

It is characteristic of capitalism that the development of some countries takes place at the cost of suffering and disaster for the peoples of other countries. For the soaring development of the economy and culture of the so-called "civilized world," a handful of capitalist powers of Europe and North America, the majority of the world's population, the peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Australia paid a terrible price. The

colonization of these continents made possible the rapid development of capitalism in the West. But to the enslaved peoples, it brought ruin, poverty, and monstrous political oppression. (Kuusinen 247)

Thus, Andre Gunder Frank, one of the most renowned theorists of Dependency Theory, contends that the metropolis or developed nations expropriate economic surplus from its satellites and appropriates it for its own economic development. The satellites remain underdeveloped for two reasons; for lack of access to their own surplus, and as a consequence of the same polarization and exploitative contradictions which the metropolis introduces and maintains in the satellite's domestic economic structure. The combination of these contradictions, once firmly implanted, reinforces the process of development in the increasingly dominant metropolis and underdevelopment in the ever more dependent satellites. Economic development and underdevelopment are the opposite faces of the same coin. Both are the necessary result and contemporary manifestation of internal contradictions in the world capitalist system. Economic development and underdevelopment are not just relative and quantitative, in that one represents more economic development than the other. In fact, economic development and underdevelopment are relational and qualitative, in that each is structurally different from, yet caused by its relation with, the other (8-9).

For the generation of structural development, more important still than the drain of economic surplus from the satellite after its incorporation as such into the world capitalist system, is the impregnation of the satellite's domestic economy with the same capitalist structure and its fundamental contradictions. In other words, once a country or a people are converted into the satellite of an external capitalist metropolis, the exploitative metropolis-satellite structure quickly comes to organize and dominate the domestic economic, political and social life of that

people. The contradictions of capitalism are recreated on the domestic level and come to generate tendencies toward development in the national metropolis and toward underdevelopment in its domestic satellites just as they do on the world level (Frank 10). The phenomenon is represented in *Island*, the first instance of which occurs on page 54. The structural contradictions of capitalism, that is, the polarization of wealth between the rich and the poor countries at the macro level, impregnates the domestic economy of a country, replicates itself and creates a similar disparity between wealthy and poor individuals at the microeconomic level. This occurs in Rendang, where there are very wealthy individuals that do business with core nations, while the majority of its population remains poor. The Rani of Pala, “a female tycoon,” (59) narrates:

“*Et combine sympathique!*” said the Rani. “Among other things, Mr. Farnaby, Bahu is the Last of the Aristocrats. You should see his country palace! Like *The Arabian Nights!* One claps one’s hands—and instantly there are six servants ready to do one’s bidding. One has a birthday—and there is a *fete nocturne* in the gardens. Music, refreshments, dancing girls; two hundred retainers carrying torches. The life of Harun al-Rashid, but with modern plumbing” (59).

Will contrasts this description with a description of the standard of living of the rest of the Palanese population:

“It sounds quite delightful,” said Will, remembering the villages through which he had passed in Colonel’s Dipa’s white Mercedes—the wattled huts, the garbage, the children with ophtalmia, the skeleton dogs, the women bent double under enormous loads.” (54)

The economic disparity that plagues Rendang is precisely what the Palanese wish to avoid. Their main course of action they take in order to avoid this is to not open their domestic economy to world capitalism, particularly by not allowing their natural resources to be exploited. This economic disparity is also mentioned later in the novel:

After the glare of the cocktail party, after the laughter and the luscious smells of canapés and Chanel-sprayed women, those alleys behind the brand-new Palace of Justice had seemed doubly dark and noisome. Those poor wretches camping out under the palm trees of Independence Avenue more totally abandoned by God and man than even the homeless, hopeless thousands he had seen sleeping like corpses in the streets of Calcutta.
(95)

This economic disparity within Rendang's population is directly attributed to its government's economic policy of opening its economy to world capitalism and selling its oil to foreign companies.

It was Karl Marx's analysis of capitalism which identified and emphasized the expropriation of the surplus value created by producers and its appropriation by capitalists. A century later, economist Paul Baran emphasized the role of economic surplus in the generation of economic development and also of underdevelopment between nations. Therefore, the expropriation of surplus value that occurs between capitalists and laborers or producers, is part and parcel of the expropriation that occurs between core and peripheral nations, or between metropolitan and peripheral areas within a nation or continent. The expropriation of surplus value is reproduced throughout the world capitalist system, from the smallest economic interaction all the way up to the world level. Thus at each point, the international, national, and local capitalist system generates economic development for the few and underdevelopment for

the many (Frank 8, 10-11). Will Farnaby is aware of this economic disparity, not only at the domestic level of Rendang as the previous quote shows, but also at the world level. He observes,

“Nice comfortable people just don’t have any idea what the world is like. Not exceptionally, as it was during the war, but all the time. All the time.” Negroes in South Africa, the man in the San Quentin gas chamber, mangled bodies in an Algerian farmhouse, and everywhere mobs, everywhere policemen and paratroopers, everywhere those dark-skinned children, stick-legged, potbellied, with flies on their raw eyelids, everywhere the nauseating smells of hunger and disease, the awful stench of death... (286)

Moreover, from the world-wide perspective, no country which has been firmly tied to the metropolis as a satellite through incorporation into the world capitalist system has achieved the rank of an economically developed country, except by finally abandoning the capitalist system. Pala had the luck of never being part of the world capitalist system, and as a result does not suffer the contradictions of capitalism that Rendang is subject to. Some satellites, however, have typically managed such temporary spurts in development during wars or depressions in the metropolis, which momentarily weakened or lessened its domination over the life of the satellites (Frank 12). By following this logic, the economic development of Pala is in fact jeopardized and its underdevelopment guaranteed if it enters into the world capitalist system, specifically by exporting oil. Furthermore, opening up Pala’s economy would allow the replication of economic disparity domestically that exists at all levels of capitalism and end its utopian distribution of wealth. Prince Murugan and several other dissidents hope to open Pala’s economy to the world capitalist system in the hope of achieving development, industrialization and greater access to consumer goods. But this path to development is proved to be a fallacy by the analysis presented

in Dependency Theory, the consequences of which are clearly shown in *Island* by the contrast between Rendang's poverty and Pala's relative high standard of living. This fallacy of development in fact underpinned the principles of analysis of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in the 1960's. This inaccurate view argued that Chile's closed, subsistence economy throughout the centuries before political independence, was the reason for Chile's subsequent economic underdevelopment. Economists of the school of Dependency Theory and World System Analysis have since argued that because of capitalism, the economies of several Latin American countries including Chile's were already underdeveloping throughout the three centuries before independence. And if the innate contradictions of capitalism continue to operate in Chile today, then no kind of capitalist development can save it from further underdevelopment (Frank 6).

Murugan clearly adheres to this fallacy of economic development. He tells Will Farnaby:

“Well, that's how the first twenty-five percent of the royalties will be used,” the statesman continued. “The remainder will go into an intensive program of industrialization.” The tone changed again. “These old idiots here only want to industrialize in spots and leave all the rest as it was a thousand years ago.”

“Whereas you'd like to go the whole hog. Industrialization for industrialization's sake.”

“No, industrialization for the country's sake. Industrialization to make Pala strong. To make other people respect us.” (50)

To this he adds:

“Look at Rendang. Within five years they’ll be manufacturing all the rifles and mortars and ammunition they need. It’ll be quite a long time before they can make tanks. But meanwhile they can buy them from Skoda with their oil money.” (51)

This fallacy of development that presumes that economic development is achieved through participation in world capitalism is further analyzed by World Systems Analysis theorist, Emmanuel Wallerstein. He argues that the economic history of the modern world system is replete with the shift, or downgrading, of products, first to semiperipheral countries, and then to peripheral ones. If circa 1800 the production of textiles was possibly the preeminent core-like production process, by 2000, it was manifestly one of the least profitable peripheral production processes. In 1800 these textiles were produced in a very few countries (notably England and some other countries of northwestern Europe); in 2000 textiles were produced in virtually every part of the world-system, especially cheap textiles. The process has been repeated with many other products. Think of steel, or automobiles, or even computers. This kind of shift has no effect on the structure of the system itself. In 2000 there were other core-like processes (e.g. aircraft production or genetic engineering) which were concentrated in a few countries. There have always been new core-like processes to replace those which become more competitive and then move out of the states in which they were originally located. The role of each state is very different vis-à-vis productive processes depending on the mix of core-peripheral processes within it. The strong states, which contain a disproportionate share of core-like processes, tend to emphasize their role of protecting the quasi-monopolies of the core-like processes. The very weak states, which contain a disproportionate share of peripheral production processes are usually unable to do very much to affect the axial division of labor, and in effect are largely forced to accept the lot that has been give them (Wallerstein 29).

The semiperipheral states, on the other hand, which have a relatively even mix of production processes find themselves in the most difficult situation. Under pressure from core states and putting pressure on peripheral states, their major concern is to keep themselves from slipping into the periphery and to do what they can to advance themselves toward the core. Oftentimes, they are eager recipients of erstwhile leading products, which they define these days as achieving “economic development.” But in fact this is a misunderstanding of economic development, because there have always been new core-like processes to replace those which become more competitive and then move out of the state in which they were originally located. Therefore, Murugan’s understanding of economic development is mistaken and his enthusiasm misplaced when he observes:

...Industrialization for the country’s sake. Industrialization to make Pala strong...

Look at what Rendang has been able to do because of its oil royalties.... Within five years they’ll be manufacturing all the rifles and mortars and ammunition they need. It’ll be quite a long time before they can make tanks.” (50, 51)

The periphery might one day produce today’s core-like processes such as genetic engineering, but this will not change their underdeveloped status relative to the core. Murugan’s view exemplifies this illusion of development.

We have established that one of the main contradictions of economic development and underdevelopment is the expropriation/appropriation of economic surplus. As previously mentioned, it was Karl Marx’s analysis of capitalism which identified and emphasized the expropriation of the surplus value created by producers and its appropriation by capitalists. A century later, economist Paul Baran emphasized the role of economic surplus in the generation of economic development and also of underdevelopment. What Baran called “actual” economic

surplus is that part of current production which is saved and in fact invested (and thus is merely one part of surplus value). Baran also distinguished and placed greater emphasis on “potential” or potentially investible economic surplus which is not available to society because its monopoly structure prevents its production, or if it is produced, it is appropriated and wasted through luxury consumption. The income differential between high and low income recipients and much of the failure of the former to channel their income into productive investment may also be traced to monopoly. This point is raised in *Island* in a dialogue between Dr. Robert and Will Farnaby. According to him, luxury consumption and its accompanying consequences is “the question that every underdeveloped country has to answer one way or the other” (171).

He lectures to Will that the Palanese

“have always chosen to adapt our economy and technology to human beings—not our human beings to somebody else’s economy and technology. We import what we can’t make; but we make an [sic] import only what we can afford. And what we can afford is limited not merely by our supply of pounds and marks and dollars, but also primarily—*primarily*,” he insisted—“by our wish to be happy, our ambition to become fully human. Scooters, we’ve decided after carefully looking into the matter, are among the things—the very numerous things—we simply can’t afford. Which is something poor little Murugan will have to learn the hard way—seeing that he hasn’t learned, and doesn’t want to learn, the easy way.” (171)

In *Island* the economic principles of Dependency Theory and World Systems Analysis are applied at two levels—at the microeconomic and the macroeconomic one. At the microeconomic level, the economic core of Rendang expropriates surplus value from its periphery and spends it in luxury consumption, thereby neglecting to invest in domestic economic development. At the

macroeconomic level, core nations such Britain, expropriate Rendang's surplus value by exploiting its oil. The impediments to economic development for Rendang, and for much of the third world, therefore, occur at two levels, within the country and through its participation in the world capitalist system. Pala's government on the other hand, intelligently invests its domestic surplus value, and does not allow the world capitalist system to expropriate its surplus value through the exploitation of its oil. As a result, Pala has achieved a utopian economy.

Pala is a utopia simply because it exercises two relatively straightforward economic policies. Its utopian status is not achieved through Pavlovian conditioning, genetic engineering or state terrorism as in the case of *Brave New World*. In *Island*, Huxley tips his hat to the power of economic theory and to the usefulness of its application at the state level. The contrasting economic development of Pala and Rendang as a result of different economic practices is one of the main themes of *Island*. However, there is also a contribution being made to the utopian genre in general. *Island* is not a futuristic utopian novel, with an unrealistic setting far removed from the present. Instead, the novel is set, as the mynah birds of Pala parrot, in the "here and now" (15). In this novel we not only find the story of a utopian fantasy, but also the story of the current condition of world capitalism and politics. *Island* is both a utopian and a dystopian novel; the imaginative society of Pala is the utopia, and the real world of the 1960's that surrounds Pala is the dystopia. They collide with each other in *Island*, and in Huxley's view, the dystopia prevails.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS:

Aldous Huxley, Political Philosopher, Novelist

Huxley's intellectual interests transcended and oftentimes overshadowed his dedication to fiction to the point where he neglected the quality of his novels. His fiction, one can venture to say, was not much more than a vehicle through which Huxley expounded and explored his deep concern with sociological and political issues. *Island*, a novel that demonstrates the breadth and scope of Huxley's intellectual interests, is a clear indication of Huxley's priorities. Many passages read as thinly guised essays, heavily burdened by personal bias and didacticism. For Huxley, the novel as an art form was more of a means to an end than an end in itself, more of an intellectual pursuit rather than an artistic one. However, there are instances in *Island* where a sublime interaction occurs between literary art and idea. After a closer look at what Huxley had to say about politics and economics in several essays, interviews and lectures, we get a glimpse at how Huxley weaved controversial political and sociological issues into *Island's* prose. At times, this practice of injecting ideas into his fiction is painfully obvious, but at times the subtlety and mastery of this practice endows certain socio-political issues with urgent immediacy and enhances their relevance. In *Island*, Huxley merges art and intellect, theory and history, in an effort to render his economic and political hypotheses more persuasive.

Laura Huxley recently donated several of her and Aldous Huxley's private materials to the University of California, Los Angeles, *Aldous Huxley Private Collection*. Such materials, which include taped interviews and lectures, manuscripts, private belongings and miscellaneous items, have become available to scholars and students since January of 2012. As a result, new primary source materials can be used to inform and qualify scholarship on Huxley's fiction.

Several of the observations and arguments Huxley makes in *Island* were also made by him in many interviews and lectures within these new materials at the Huxley Private Collection. Consequently, several of the interviews and lectures found within these new materials are relevant to this thesis and to the observations made within. By examining more of Huxley's primary sources the arguments made in this thesis are given greater validity. To recapitulate; in chapter one we discovered that scholars dealing with *Island* had overlooked or neglected to engage the international, political and economic dimensions and themes of the novel. In chapter two, we observed that the plot of the novel's story is very similar and might have been inspired by 20th century history of US foreign relations and regime overthrow in the third-world. Finally, in chapter three, the economic principles that are used in the novel closely resemble and are early, proto-type versions of those typically affiliated with the school of Dependency Theory and World Systems Analysis. Several of the assertions made in these previous chapters can be better substantiated by examining what Huxley had to say regarding politics and economics in several of the new primary sources.

Among the sea of spools of pre-cassette tape that fill many of the boxes at the Huxley private collection, there is one labeled UCLA Tape No. 109B. It is titled "Aldous Huxley, discussion with Walter Allen, 'Talking about books: A discussion of books with Utopian themes.'" After a brief survey of utopian novels, of the genre and of its evolution through time, Walter Allen asks Huxley to describe *Island*. The following description and summary that Huxley gives is one that emphasizes the international politics and economic themes of the novel, rather than the psychedelic or religious themes. Huxley begins by comparing Brave New World and *Island*, and by pointing out that in *Island* attention is given to the individual and his potentialities; whereas in BNW there is a standardized approach to the population. What is

essential in *Island* is that each individual is able to develop the desired potentialities and that each individual is different. The system in BNW seeks to iron out human differences and standardizes a human product. In *Island* a serious effort is made to help each inhabitant. BNW is a negative utopia, whereas *Island* is a positive one. Further, what is unique about *Island*, according to Huxley, is that it is a contemporary utopia. He points out, “Pala is an island that exists within our world, which is certainly not an ideal world.” Huxley admits that it is relatively easy to come up with ideas but to figure out how to actually implement them is difficult. Essentially, *Island* is a practical utopia, or a cookery book. Instead of simply forwarding good ideas, it actually attempts to implement them and tries to have them practically work out—albeit, in a hypothetical society.

Huxley also offers a comparison of the two islands in his description of *Island* during this interview. The difference in the economic and political condition between the two islands of Pala and Rendang is attributed to their history with the outside world. The following quote reveals Huxley’s concern with the political relationship between empires and the third world:

There are two islands divided by a narrow strait. One island happens to have a magnificent harbor and is therefore constantly being overrun during the centuries by foreign invaders. The other island, which is my island, does not have a harbor and has never presented any temptation to people. The result is that the first island, which I call Rendang, was run first by the Arab, then the Dutch, the Portuguese and then the English. It was given freedom 15 years ago, and is now of course, under a military dictatorship and exploited by oil companies. The other island, Pala, was never owned, and artificial factors have kept Pala isolated.

The fact that Huxley chose to talk about this particular issue in the novel during this interview indicates supports the claim that he meant for the subject of imperialism and international politics to be of central importance in the novel and even perhaps for the reader. This thesis takes a closer look at the themes of international politics and neo-colonialism in *Island* because the scholarship on this novel has neglected to do so and because these themes have only become more relevant since the publication of *Island*.

Huxley's interest in the subject of imperialism and its history is also made evident by the following paragraph in one of his essays titled Back Numbers. Here he demonstrates his knowledge of third world economic and political conditions. He addresses the contemporary repercussions that imperialism has had on the third world:

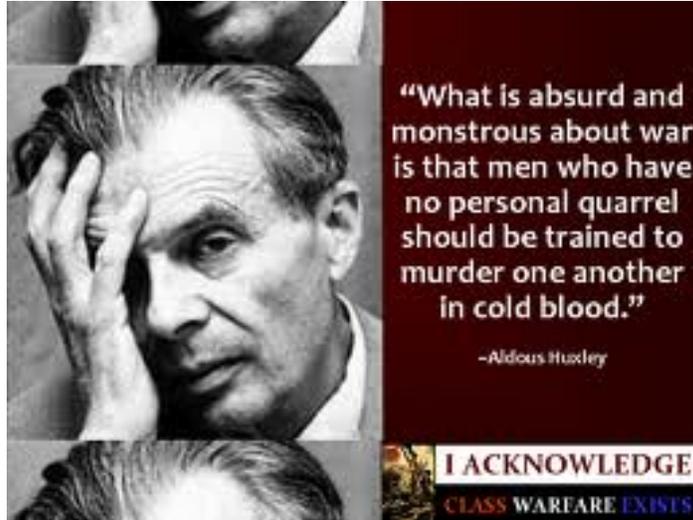
Up till a few years ago, Europeans rule the whole of Africa and most of Asia. Today the white administrators have gone or are soon going home, leaving their on-time subjects to a nationhood for which they are not prepared and with a population problem they cannot possibly solve. For fifteen generations Europe devoted itself systematically to upsetting the balance of cultural and biological forces in Asia and Africa. Hence the gigantic mess in which two-thirds of the human race are now living. And the mess is not only enormous, it is also dangerous in the extreme. For along with independence, insoluble population problems, and nonviable economies, along with cultural anarchy, hatred for white skins, and a state of political chaos, mitigated only by tyranny, Europe has bequeathed to its ex-colonials the arts and some of the instruments of modern warfare.

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Huxley's interest and concern in imperialism, as shown by the above quote, informed and inspired countless lectures, as well some of the themes in *Island*. A tape at the Huxley Special

Collection at UCLA, labeled “UCLA Tape No. 157. Aldous Huxley, Panel discussion, Ultimate revolution (The) Part I, Berkeley Language Center, 1962 Mar 20,” contains a lecture at the UC Berkeley Language Center in 1962. In this lecture he paraphrased the famous British Historian Arnold Toynbee. Huxley quotes, “History, as will be written by future generations, will not be on the headlines or on events that concern us, but on the impact of Western Civilization on other cultures, and the reaction of those cultures.” That *Island* is a novel where history, economics and politics merge with fiction is of little surprise coming from Huxley. However, *Island* is a unique novel in that these themes are artfully fictionalized.

Island is, therefore, a historical parable of sorts. It is a thinly fictionalized treatise on international politics, imperialism, and economics. Although a work of fiction, *Island* is an extension of Huxley as philosopher and essayist. To fully understand the arguments and claims made in *Island*, a journey must be made to the social science disciplines of history, economics and sociology. *Island*, in many ways, marks a moment of change in Huxley’s fiction, but we cannot know for sure since it is his last novel. The lectures and essays he wrote at the time *Island* was written show a slow drift towards engaging ideas within the realm of history, economics and sociology. Huxley became more political towards the end of his life, especially since the last years of his life were spent during the cold war, the civil rights movement, and the Korean and Vietnam wars.



“What is absurd and monstrous about war is that men who have no personal quarrel should be trained to murder one another in cold blood.”

—Aldous Huxley

I ACKNOWLEDGE
CLASS WARFARE EXISTS

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