

The first character I decided to draw was Brahma, one of the leaders of the “Gods” and a central character of the narrative. In a scene at the beginning of the book, he meets with Sam and attempts to persuade him of the benefits of the society which they have established. The quote I used was one which succinctly summarises his argument.

Although Brahma projects a confidence in his paternalistic view of science, the dialogue of his thoughts presents an altogether more insecure mind. This is a running theme throughout the book, in which the “Gods” may be genetically perfect, but their minds and personalities remain all too human, with all the flaws that this entails. However, he is a leader among the “Gods” and therefore fully devoted to his charade of divinity. To this end, I sought to depict Brahma as good-looking, crowned man, shining a radiant Indian mandala behind him, but with a worried looking expression, almost as though he does not quite believe what he is saying and is desperate to be believed.

The second piece of my student devised assessment is a depiction of the hero of the story, Sam. Originally one of the foremost members of the grouping which would become the “Gods”, he returns from decades of exile at the beginning of the book to find that the world has changed. Priests and temples have sprung up in which the populace worships his former comrades, and wider society has regressed to a medieval state of technology. Following a confrontation with Brahma in his temple, Sam takes on the persona of Gautama Buddha and begins to preach to the populace against the “Gods”, with a doctrine called “accelerationism”. The quote I chose is one in which he describes his view. I chose to depict Sam as a young man, with a mocking smile on his face. This is appropriate, as Sam assumes the role of trickster throughout the story to undermine the overwhelming power of his adversaries. His simple ascetic garments and the leaves of Bodhi tree behind him reflect his manufactured identity as the Buddha.

The third and final character I chose to depict is Yama, the “God of Death” and a more complex character than the previous two, divided between the arguments of the “Gods” and of Sam. His dialogue with Sam comprises some of the most amusing and interesting lines of the book, from which it was difficult to select my favourite. However, I chose one in which Yama discusses with Sam his view of godhood and the divine right of rule.

In a sense, Yama is making an excuse for his siding with the “Gods”. He is saying that he does not wish to be considered a God, but it is merely how he is seen. Sam replies,

*“If someone asks you why you’re oppressing a world and you respond with a lot of poetic crap, there can’t be a meeting of minds”*

This cuts to the heart of the one of the arguments posed in the book, that science is a tool for oppression and that this oppression may be justified in many different ways.