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1974

FROM CASTLE TO COMMUNE: A STUDY OF EXPANDING  
CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE NOVELS OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

by

Ronald Martin Herzog

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
in English in partial fulfillment of the require-  
ments for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The  
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Marvin Magalaner (L/A)  
Chairman, Examining Committee (per pm)

May 6, 1974  
date

Allen Mandelbaum  
Executive Officer

Davis J. Gordon

Robert H. Day

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

But the purpose of life, outside the mere continuance of living (already a most noble and beautiful end), is the purpose we put into it: its meaning is whatever we may choose to call the meaning. Life is not a cross-word puzzle, with an answer settled in advance and a prize for the ingenious person who noses it out. The riddle of the universe has as many answers as the universe has living inhabitants. Each answer is a working hypothesis, in terms of which the answerer experiments with reality. The best answers are those which permit the answerer to live most fully, the worst are those which condemn him to partial or complete death. The most fantastic answers will serve their turn as working hypotheses.

Aldous Huxley, "Swift, " Do

What You Will

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PART I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: A NEW BEGINNING

General Introduction:

A New Beginning

We shall not cease from exploration  
 And the end of all our exploring  
 Will be to arrive where we started  
 And know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," Four Quartets

It is unnecessary at this point to catalogue the theories, discoveries, and events whose cumulative effects were radically to transform modern man's view of himself and the world. Nor need we question, for the moment, the actuality of this supposed transformation. Suffice to say, man believed a change in human nature had occurred -- be it in December of 1910 or not. Believing himself different, he thought and behaved as if he were. Feeling that an irrecoverable split had divorced him from past history, the early twentieth-century Occidental lost faith in the traditional body of values which formerly gave definition and purpose to life. Attendant upon this loss of faith was a corresponding attitude of the futility inherent in embracing any ideal since the old absolutes had been discredited<sup>1</sup> and no new external point of reference and measure was as yet forth-coming. But valuelessness is an impossible predicament for most people and there was no dearth of personal solutions being advocated by sundry would-be saviors. Neither was there any effective consensus. It was during this period of disillusionment and flux that Aldous Huxley rose to prominence in English letters.

The relationship of an artist to his time is a perennial question in criticism, for through its exploration we have often broadened our insights into both the artist himself and his era. But the generalized terminology

under which we catalogue our perceptions can obscure the essential characteristics which differentiate the individual from his contemporaries. The instance pertinent to this study is the term "Modern." Some of Huxley's critics have labeled him a Modernist writer<sup>2</sup> and herein lies our problem. Modernism is not a school, in the sense of having a monolithic dogma. The term itself is a protean one, its descriptive elements do clash, and so there is difficulty in ascertaining whether a given writer or work should be classified under its rubric.<sup>3</sup> This is not to deny the bonds which tie the Huxley of the Twenties and early Thirties to the Modernist movement. Certainly, if we examine those works in the light of the salient features of Modernism Professor Howe outlines in his essay,<sup>4</sup> we find they appear as several of the central concerns in Huxley's writing: the exacerbation of the problem of belief, the radical modification of the idea of aesthetic order, a fascination with the shocking and the perverse, a new sense of character, structure, and the role of the protagonist, and a preoccupation with the demon of nihilism.<sup>5</sup> While these elements continue to be manifested in his work after Eyeless in Gaza, their importance (with the exceptions of aesthetic order and character) greatly diminishes. With Eyeless, Huxley ceases to be a conscious exponent of Modernism and becomes a different kind of writer.

To view Huxley primarily from the perspective of Modernism, then, not only obscures his later development, but places undue emphasis upon his earlier writing. And since the thrust of my argument will be that the importance of Aldous Huxley resides in his work from Eyeless on, I will eschew the Modernist label other critics have employed. To be totally consistent with my earlier caveat on terminology, I should probably avoid any categorical tag. But used carefully they have a descriptive value. Therefore, I prefer to call Huxley, for want of a better designation, a

"post-Modern," by which I mean one who has passed beyond the Modernist devotion to "the problematic as a style of existence and inquiry,"<sup>6</sup> who has discovered solutions which resolve the tensions created by the formerly plaguesome position, and whose work focuses upon the exposition, often didactically, of those answers. Because Huxley's answers to the Modernist dilemma of meaninglessness challenge not merely our present notions concerning the value of literature, but the current ontological and epistemological premises of Western civilization, one could also describe his work as avant-garde, even though he has as yet attracted only the faintest outlines of a coterie. But let us not become bogged down, at this point, in the assignation of labels. Suffice to say, there are major aspects in Huxley which distinguish him from his once-controversial contemporaries who have now become ensconced in our universities (and rightly so) as luminaries of English literature. These aspects, largely epistemological, are, I believe, crucial considerations for life in the Seventies.

One way to understand the significance of Aldous Huxley for our own time would be to examine how Huxley perceived the work of his contemporary artists. They were suffering, said Huxley, from a fear of the obvious, a reaction to the then current state of the arts. Whereas in the past the great obvious truths had often been presented with such repellent emphasis and in such an incompetent fashion as to make them seem great and frightful lies, in the Twentieth Century these artistic outrages began proliferating at an alarming rate. The fault lay with the unprecedented demand of popular art that had been created by the spread of education, of leisure, and of economic prosperity. It was popular art only in the sense that it was produced for people, but not by them. As such, it was merely another consumer item manufactured to meet the standards of the market place by causing the least offense to the greatest number. It was composed

half of little obvious truths, presented with painstaking realism, and half of the great obvious truths, presented, usually, with a falsifying ineptitude, for it is exceedingly difficult to give them satisfactory expression. The more sensitive and self-conscious artists responded by abandoning not merely the external realism of Mr. Bennett, but also, in many instances, the internal realism of Mrs. Brown. Repelled by the excesses of popular art, these artists tried to ignore the obvious, even the obvious beauties, marvels, and sublimities. However, since nine-tenths of life, according to Huxley, was composed of the obvious, modern artists who attempted to avoid the obvious would be constricting themselves to an exploration of a fraction of existence. Certainly Beckett and Woolf were more guilty of this than Joyce. Joyce was less terrified of the obvious in subject matter than of the obvious in his artistic medium.

But both willful obscurity of expression and restrictedness of subject matter were justified by a philosophy of historical discontinuity which expounded the idea that human nature had radically altered in recent years. Huxley could not accept this proposition. He felt that those who espoused such a doctrine were confusing knowledge with nature. Only the former had changed. And he exhorted modern artists not to run from the obvious, but to subdue the "monster of obviousness" to a state of artistic domestication. The great obvious truths were facts, he contended. Pretending otherwise would condemn modern art to incompleteness, sterility, premature decrepitude, and death.<sup>7</sup>

Huxley's criticism contains a two-fold rejection of twentieth-century life that is central to our study. First, there is the refusal to accept historical discontinuity in human nature, and second, the refusal to accept as workable the structure and direction of contemporary Western society. The two positions were woven into a whole by Huxley's

epistemological investigation of the self and the world. Tracing the development of Huxley's epistemology will be the primary objective of this disertation.

There are three discernible stages in Huxley's progress.<sup>8</sup> The first period, covering his work during the Twenties and early Thirties, describes the modern dilemma of meaninglessness and attempts to discover an alternate mode of living through the Life Worshiper Credo, Huxley's redaction of Lawrence's blood consciousness. However, Huxley's perception of the regressive nature of this stance ushers in the second phase, which is dominated by the study of mysticism and the possible transformation of the self that might be effected by it. The final phase redefines Huxley's relationship to the Perennial Philosophy and culminates in the formulation of a new kind of society whose goal would be the realization of Huxley's new man.

That, briefly, is the itinerary. What gives cohesion to these several periods is Huxley's concern with the impact of knowledge upon human life, the ways in which what we know directs what we are and do. Even as a child, his brother recalls that Aldous had a fascination with the strangeness of things which, as he matured, became a recognition of the fundamental mystery at the heart of life and which led him into mysticism. But let his world-renowned scientist-brother explain this turn in Huxley's thinking.

He was never a mystic in any exclusive or in any woolly sense, though he was keenly interested in the facts of mystical experience. He was equally fascinated by the hard facts revealed by scientific discovery and the new clarity of understanding which they provided. But science abolishes only the false mysteries of mere failure to understand how existence works. The more it discovers and the more comprehension it gives us of the mechanisms of existence, the more clearly does the mystery of existence itself stand out. It was this combination of increasing

comprehensibility of operative detail with increasingly obvious mysteriousness of the process itself, this contrast between luminous science and numinous existence, which came to fascinate Aldous ever more compellingly as his thought developed.<sup>9</sup>

Not how the world works, but the very fact that it is must give us pause. We have been so preoccupied with merely doing that we have ignored the wondrousness of being itself -- a misapprehension typical, also, of Huxley's characters. Julian Huxley's recollection underscores this point by emphasizing his brother's desire and willingness to pursue not only new kinds of knowledge, but, more especially, different ways of knowing. This is precisely the kind of spirit one could expect from a scion of the family Stephen Spender has termed representative of "the conscience which tore liberal Victorian sensibilities" asunder over the conflict between science and religion.<sup>10</sup>

The writings of Aldous Huxley do evince what might, figuratively, be called a congenital concern with the impact of science upon man's value systems. In Jesting Pilate, for example, he wrote of the effect scientific materialism has had upon Western values. The belief that things have value rests upon an intuitive apprehension not readily amenable to logical, "scientific" proof. But the triumph of the materialist hypothesis led modern Europeans to doubt intuition and to see themselves as living in a devaluated world. Artistic merit was stripped of significance, religion was explained in terms of sex, the moral conscience denounced as an illusion. "Amuse yourself" became the sole categorical imperative and Freudianism was adopted as the realpolitik of psychology and philosophy.

Even more dangerous, in Huxley's eyes, than the denial of values, which was a perspective limited in its appeal to an intellectual and cultural minority, was the transmorgrification of values so as to accord with

a spurious conception of democratic precepts. Americans, he felt, were the most thorough-going perpetrators of this. Utility and Necessity were elevated to the place of highest honor. Business, because it rendered "service," was therefore better than Art.<sup>11</sup> This kind of transvaluation is reflected in Huxley's novels by those of his characters (comprising a majority of his creations) who conceive of their view point as the sole and absolute truth in life. Ironically, when Huxley began to reunite science with religion, he moved to America and began to subordinate art to utility. This alteration in Huxley's own values will be fully explored in the body of this dissertation.

Although Huxley's concern in this matter has moral overtones, it would be wrong to consider him a moralist, in the restricted sense of one who examines in the light of a predetermined definition of what constitutes virtue. Not virtue, but living in accord with all the facts of life was Huxley's goal. Therefore, he is more correctly viewed as an empirical, intellectual explorer than as a moralist.<sup>12</sup> And intelligence is the key word. Near the end of his life, in an interview with Hans Beerman, Huxley stated that he believed there were three factors necessary for human happiness: freedom, love and intelligence (in that order). Of the latter, he said, "there is just no substitute for brain power."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the most striking feature of his work is the constant presence of a critical intelligence filtering experience.<sup>14</sup>

Huxley's analytical mode of perception, when coupled with what his brother had previously called his fascination with the "contrast between luminous science and numinous existence," produced a fiction that was of necessity ironic.<sup>15</sup> Given his view of how human awareness operates, it could hardly have been otherwise.

We live in a world of non sequiturs. Or rather, we would live in such a world, if we were always conscious of all the aspects under which any event can be considered. But in practice we are almost never aware of more than one aspect of each event at a time. Our life is spent first in one watertight compartment of experience, then in another. The artist can, if he so desires, break down the bulkheads between the compartments and so give us a simultaneous view of two or more of them at a time. So seen, reality looks exceedingly queer. Which is how the ironist and the perplexed questioner desire it to look. Laforgue constantly makes use of this device. All his poetry is a mixture of remote discovery with near sentiment. Hence its pervading quality of irony. In the remote future, when a science infinitely better informed than ours shall have bridged the now enormous gulf between immediately apprehended qualities, in terms of which we live, and the merely measurable, ponderable quantities in terms of which we do our scientific thinking, the Laforguan method will cease to be ironical. For the juxtaposition will then be a juxtaposition of compatibles, not of incompatibles. There will be no curious discord, but a perfectly plain and simple harmony. But all this is for the future. So far as we are concerned, the bringing together of remote discoveries and near feelings is productive of literary effects which we recognize as ironical.<sup>16</sup>

Irony, then, would be only a temporary strategy, not Huxley's end as a writer. The final goal was to transcend the need for irony by enlarging man's consciousness so as to accord with all the facts of reality -- some of them being obvious, but some requiring specialized means of knowing. Huxley's willingness to explore both the obvious and the esoteric has been courageous and fruitful, reaching its height in a vision of society in Island that challenges the very premises of Western industrial civilization.

But the early Huxley had first to select an adequate form which would encompass his initial perceptions about the crisis in values and contemporary consciousness. Presented as he was with an image of man adrift upon unknown waters, possessing only the transiency, and, therefore,

the insufficiency of other drifters to preserve him from drowning in a sea of meaninglessness, it was understandable, given his personal preference for the written word and the low esteem in which this man with notoriously bad eyesight held film, that Huxley should turn to the most appropriate alternate medium through which to explore the dilemma of modern life -- the novel. Even if one were to grant that Huxley was, as Philip Quarles has said of himself, not congenitally a novelist (a point which can be conceded only if one subscribes to a curious branch of genetics and if a fascination with the diversities and peculiarities of the human species be not considered a natural hallmark of the writer who elects to be a novelist), both its scope and technical flexibility dictated the use of the novel as the most satisfactory genre in which to record his observations upon twentieth-century social man's search for a new center of focus.

Huxley was fundamentally an intellectual writer in the broadest sense -- one who, through the combination of observation and analysis, imaginatively synthesizes the bewildering multiplicity of that which is known into an intelligible and meaningful pattern of art. The awareness of multiplicity dictated a type of literature which Huxley called "Whole-Truth Art."

Wholly-Truthful art overflows the limits of tragedy and shows us, if only by hints and implications, what happened before the tragic story began, what will happen after it is over, what is happening simultaneously elsewhere (and 'elsewhere' includes all those parts of the minds and bodies of the protagonists not immediately engaged in the tragic struggle)... In Wholly-Truthful art the agonies may be just as real, love and the unconquerable mind just as admirable, just as important, as in tragedy.... But the [y] ... are placed... in another, wider context, with the result that they cease to be the same as the intrinsically identical agonies and indomitables of tragedy.... Wholly-Truthful art produces in us an

effect quite different from that produced by tragedy. Our mood when we have read a Wholly-Truthful book is never one of heroic exultation; it is one of resignation, of acceptance. (Acceptance can also be heroic.) Being chemically impure, Wholly-Truthful literature cannot move us as quickly and intensely as tragedy or any other kind of chemically pure art. But I believe that its effects are more lasting. The exultations that follow the reading or hearing of a tragedy are in the nature of temporary inebriations. Our being cannot long hold the pattern imposed by tragedy. Remove the magnet and the filings tend to fall back into confusion. But the pattern of acceptance and resignation imposed upon us by Wholly-Truthful literature, though perhaps less unexpectedly beautiful in design, is (for that very reason perhaps) more stable. The catharsis of tragedy is violent and apocalyptic; but the milder catharsis of Wholly-Truthful literature is lasting.<sup>17</sup>

Implicit in Huxley's analysis is a literary criterion which places greater value upon the long-range effect of a work than upon the momentary intensity it produces. In the Thirties, he would begin to write novels that incorporated this new standard with such uncompromising thoroughness as to challenge the validity of the supremacy the aesthetic view of life has held in modern literature since the advent of the art for art's sake movement.

As Huxley perceived, the Whole-Truth mode had become the predominant pattern in contemporary literature, a phenomenon which cut across generic distinctions.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as a writer seeking to portray the Whole Truth about modern Occidental, he could, of course, have turned to poetry. But although Huxley first came to public attention as a poet, verse is too personal and compressed a form for adequate social study. Even The Waste Land reflects but a single, albeit fragmented, sensibility sifting through the rubble of a ruined civilization. Drama, which Huxley occasionally attempted, requires a shared set of social values if it is to be realistic, or, lacking such a framework, must become a stylized metaphor of life

based upon the playwright's personal vision, such as in the theatre of the absurd or the plays of Eliot and the later ones of Yeats, whose view might not necessarily be held by his audience. Lacking both a communally held body of beliefs and the ultimate transcendent vision, the Huxley of the Twenties found narrative prose to be most suitable as an expression of his discursive mind.<sup>19</sup>

The short story, however, was too restricted in scope to realize his more comprehensive ambitions. Interesting to note, some of his finest stories are reminiscent of the European Henry James, both in tone and subject. "Two or Three Graces," "Little Mexican," "Eupompus Gave Splendour to Art by Numbers," "Young Archimedes," "Nuns at Luncheon," "The Tillotson Banquet" all employ the detached observer through whose cultivated sensibility are reflected the private experiences of their subjects. The tales seem to impinge upon the consciousness of the narrator as though they were merely anecdotes told to him by another -- as some indeed are. If the narrator is at all involved with the central figures, it is only in a minor way, and then the relationship usually provokes a sense of annoyance or embarrassment on his part for having been directly implicated in the events. This same voice and technique are never used in the novels. Too personal in their subject matter and implications, these stories are told so as to place at one remove both Huxley and the reader. We are asked to respond like connoisseurs of living confronted with an interesting, but isolated example of "life nouveau." Even those short stories which employ the omniscient author concern themselves exclusively with the private drama, which, of course, is not to reflect upon their quality as art, but merely upon their relationship to the novels. For, from the many personal types come the characters whose collective and contrasting experiences, when cast in the light of modern society, form the substance of Huxley's novels.<sup>20</sup>

The conventional subject matter of the novel provided Huxley with a forum for presenting his analysis of modern society and its tradition of experimentation left him free to construct "forms that would suggest the confused texture of contemporary thought, the relativistic universe of values in which modern man dwells, the corrosive nihilism from which he suffers, his incapacity for arriving at any constructive affirmations."<sup>21</sup> Much, therefore, has been written about the type of novel Huxley wrote. Certainly it is true that he broke with the realistic novel of Bennett and Galsworthy,<sup>22</sup> but critics disagree in their attempts at a definition.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the largest body of such commentary has been directed at the genre known as the "novel of ideas," prompted, no doubt, by Philip Quarles's speculations in Point Counter Point. The best description of the form has been given by Frederick J. Hoffman.

The novel of ideas is a narrative form peculiar to an 'unstable' age -- one in which standards are not fixed beyond removal or alteration. It assumes a diversity of mood and intention, but it is careful not merely to label its characters. They are not allegorical figures, for there is no single thing which the drama of their interaction is designed to illustrate.... a novel of diversity in points of view, in each of which the intellectual nature is modified by the local circumstances governing it. Such a novel has a development which consists mainly of the demonstration in terms of human events of the effects of a point of view upon the person who holds it. The drama implicit in an idea becomes explicit when it is shown as a point of view which a person holds and upon which he acts. The comedy implicit in an idea is revealed in a concrete demonstration of its inherent untenability.... There is no 'moral' to be drawn from the career and fate of ideas in such a novel.... there is never any fixed contest between right and wrong, or between the true and the false, from which we are supposed to get what comfort or instruction we can.<sup>24</sup>

But, as Hoffman concludes, from Eyeless in Gaza on, Huxley abandons the novel of ideas. Rather than the dramatization of ideas, we get a narrative which provides for their exposition.<sup>25</sup>

To explain this alteration in Huxley's mode of writing, we must turn to Huxley himself. In a letter to his father, dated 29 April, 1924, he says that "the mere business of telling a story interests me less and less. I find it very difficult to understand the mentality of a man like Bennett who can sit down and spin out an immense realistic affair about life in Clerkenwell.... The only really and permanently absorbing things are attitudes towards life and the relation of man to the world."<sup>26</sup> Consequently, it would be more accurate to say that Huxley wrote novels about ideas as they serve to animate and direct the lives of human beings operating in a world whose dimensions generally exceed the limits of their comprehension. To reach those outer limits becomes the goal of the Huxleyan hero. This means that Huxley's primary commitment as a writer was to a process of exploration, an intellectual kinesis, if you will, which would therefore relegate the formal arrangement of that process, the aesthetic stasis, to a mere question of expediency, differing points in his progression possibly necessitating differing structural configurations in order to adequately express particular stages. This differentiates Huxley from Modernist novelists whose aesthetic forms reflect their "struggle" with experience.<sup>27</sup> Huxley's forms reflect the exposition and "wisdom" of his solutions. Because Huxley continued to re-evaluate his answers, he continued to experiment with new or modified forms till the very end, so what characterizes a Huxleyan novel is not its method, but its spirit. We must ignore all the critical blather about the aesthetic failure of Huxley's later novels and confront them on their own terms, without the critical prejudices we may have inherited from other novelists or even other Huxley novels. And since pattern follows from process, it is time we turn our attention to the thing itself, as that subject will constitute the principle focus upon the vistas before us.

The process begins with a society that is the product of the triumph of the industrial revolution. Man has become the servant of the machine and its intellectual counterpart and creator, scientific materialism. Now, it may be argued that man in society has always been seen as a means to an end that lies outside of himself, a bondsman to powers and forces which have claimed a fealty superior to that of his own individuality. Call these powers Gods, Nations, or Ideals, the nature of man's response has remained the same. And this is an essential ingredient in Huxley's view of man. He begins by denying the Modernist premise that man has changed. "Neither the hereditary differences between men, or the similarities, have greatly varied. What has varied has been the vehicles of thought and action by means of which the hereditarily constant differences and similarities have been expressed. The form of institutions and philosophies may change, but the substance that underlies them remains indestructible, because the nature of humanity remains unaltered."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is to the quality of life effected by the new vehicle of the industrial revolution that Huxley turns his attention.

The net result of that revolution has been to produce human monsters. Rational, objective thought has become the sole means of knowing; intuitive, subjective perception denied its validity as a consequence of scientific methodology. The reliance upon ratiocination has engendered an intensive degree of self-consciousness in that small percentage of the populace inclined to thought, while the machine has provided the rest with the alternative course of mindless work relieved by mass-produced and passively received mindless leisure. Given such people, one could hardly expect the Huxleyan characters, who belong essentially that that intellectually conscious minority, not to be distorted beings. However, they "are not monstrous because they can reel off neatly formulated notions, but spout

precious ideas because they are monsters. The tendency of Huxley's characters to talk endlessly and accomplish nothing is not a lapse in the author's style, but a symptom of the disease which afflicts society."<sup>29</sup> Living in an age without universally acknowledged absolutes, their time is spent in seeking that which would provide meaning and coherence in their lives. But in a world of relativity they must continually defend their answers against those who have found variant solutions to the dilemma of modern chaos. It also becomes incumbent upon them to proselytize in order to convince themselves of the correctness of their beliefs. Spandrell's conversion of Illidge becomes the most chilling example of the human perversion of intellect in its quest for certainty. But even in the later novels, when Huxley has found his answers, the need to preach persists, for there is still an entire world outside of the fiction left to convert.

The society Huxley depicts is consequently one in which human relationships and personal resources are sorely strained because of the need to exert one's will over others as a means of finding certitude. However, both victim and victimizee are equally afflicted. The former feels the anguish of violating what he knows to be right and the latter never quite frees himself from the torments of self-doubt. Behavior and action, in this context, become extensions of individual will, divorced from any consideration other than that of the exertion of one's power. And the self is merely the animated record of its past events, doomed to behave in accordance with the insights those events have taught it to believe are the true reality of the world. The Huxleyan characters are therefore the slaves of their own histories and can only operate within the circumscribed limits of their chains of consciousness. The heroes in these novels are those who attempt to break out of bondage, to perceive the world in terms larger than their own egos.

But all such strivings are vain until the self can be freed from the past. Once a way is found to transcend one's already formulated state of being, then, and only then, can the individual live his life as a complete man, cognizant of all the worlds he exists in, as taught by mystical philosophy and modern science. No longer an egotistical grotesque, the Huxleyan new man is a metaphysical creation<sup>30</sup> -- an aspect of the life process itself, equipped with a conscious mind to direct it towards its naturally appointed end.

With man no longer a slave, his actions take on a new perspective. Existentially, he becomes responsible for his acts. Consequently, the novels themselves have to be altered in kind so as to consider the ramifications of action, which formerly were merely reflections of idiosyncratically distorted beings, but which now become patterns tracing the inter-relatedness of all beings and events, and, simultaneously, a moral barometer of individual awareness and motivation. Thus, the novels of Huxley wrote during the Twenties can be viewed as books without a center, held together only by transitory occasions, the emphasis resting upon the types of attitudes there represented.<sup>31</sup> But starting with Eyeless in Gaza, the novels are carefully organized around a central action whose unfolding provides the impetus for character revelation and situation. Island might be seen as a partial return to the earlier form since this is a utopian novel, which means its purpose is static, the depiction of a society. But even here the full value of Palanese society is only comprehended when seen in the light of the action detailing its betrayal and invasion, an action characteristic of the power-oriented civilization in opposition to which Pala was conceived.

Although it will not figure as a central theme in this study, some mention should be made of the role of place in Huxley's novels. When viewed

chronologically, the physical locations of the novels form a leitmotif illuminating the direction of Huxley's thought. We start with the country house of Crome Yellow. Once a symbol of the new power structure instituted by the Tudor Monarchy, modern industrialism has reduced it to a social anachronism. We must leave it for the new seat of twentieth-century power, the city (Antic Hay). The city, however, is also the Modernist's central symbol of meaninglessness. And so Those Barren Leaves takes a traditional English escape route -- the sun-drenched landscape of Italy. But flight proves impossible; twentieth-century civilization is in the air, in the blood of modern man. Therefore, we return to London in Point Counter Point; armed with the Life Worshiper Credo, we are prepared to do intellectual battle with the values crisis. But are we? The noble savage of the Age of Enlightenment is also anachronistic in the Age of Scientific Materialism (Brave New World). No, the answer cannot be found in an adaptation of an historical fashion. The only way to balance a change in the human condition is through the rediscovery of the perennial in human nature; neither in the spatial nor the temporal, but in eternity, or, as it manifests itself in human experience, as the eternally recurring in time and space (which is the perennial). So armed now with the Perennial Philosophy, plus pacifism and the F.M. Alexander Method, Huxley retraces his literary footsteps in Eyeless in Gaza, testing at each geographical and chronological station along the path of the old life the power of his new solution by contrasting it with what had been done in the past. The new answer might be correct, but Europe is locked, hell-bent, into self-destructive error. Perhaps in the new world a new order can be constructed. Although America can accommodate the new, it can do so only peripherally. As After Many a Summer Dies the Swan makes clear, the majority of Americans are still Europeans, obsessed with the pursuit of Western

civilization's manifest destiny. Consequently, the novel ends in England; still tied to the Western umbilical cord, Americans have not grown up, only returned to the womb. The mother, however, is dead; her death throes recreated, along with the fatal disease, in the Florence of Time Must Have a Stop.

But because Huxley has found a personal center for himself, he no longer needs to travel further. After Anthony Beavis, the novelist stays home in California and his heroes cease to be surrogates and become, instead, new Ulysseses created by a Homer who has already been through all that. The lack of personal involvement critics have bemoaned in the later novels is more accurately the acquired detachment of a Buddha's compassion. But if Huxley's Propter is Gotama, Huxley himself becomes a Bodhisatva offering salvation to Western man through the exemplary lives of Sebastian Barnack, Alfred Poole, and Will Farnaby. In this sense, these heroes are not so much Huxley's voyagers, but ours and he takes them where we seem to be going: during the Cold War to the post-nuclear holocaust of the Los Angeles community of Ape and Essence; now in an age of capitalist imperialism to the Third World of Pala in Island. Significantly the natural environment becomes redemptive only in Island. In the previous novels nature had been regarded exclusively as a setting for man. Because his characters had treated nature symbolically, the potential benefit of nature had been ignored. We can view the journey from Crome to Pala as a literary, cultural, and spiritual movement from symbolism to realism, from the world as we imagine it to be to a discovery of the world as it really is. In that path lies strength.

The following chapters propose to study the alteration in consciousness in Huxley's characters, detailing the varying concepts of self and reality and the kinds of action and behavior these views dictate.

Phase One deals with the novels of the Twenties, during which the dilemma of modern life is presented and the first steps taken to find a workable solution. Phase Two includes three novels of the Thirties and Forties, Eyeless in Gaza, After Many a Summer Dies the Swan, and Time Must Have a Stop, which graph Huxley's progressive involvement with mysticism and the possibilities it offers for self-transcendence. A transitional chapter follows, which discusses the two historical biographies, Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudun. Both books investigate the intervention of mysticism into public affairs. This chapter serves as a bridge between the individualistic considerations of Phase Two and the social ones of the next period. In Phase Three, I will examine the kind of society Huxley believed would be created by his new man. I have reserved analysis of Brave New World and Ape and Essence for this last section, for I feel these two dysutopias will put Island into clearer perspective in the development of Huxley's social thinking.

Although the central emphasis throughout will be upon the novels, I have made free use of Huxley's other writings, especially the essays, in order to illuminate and supplement the currents in Huxley's ideas as embodied in the novels. I have also decided to treat The Genius and the Goddess as a short story because in both its scope and narrative technique it coincides most closely with the manner of Huxley's practice in that genre than with his treatments in the novelistic mode.

1 Harvey Curtis Webster, "Facing Futility: Aldous Huxley's Really Brave New World," Sewanee Review, 42 (1934), 201.

2 Sisirkumar Ghose, Aldous Huxley: A Cynical Salvationist (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1962), pp.5 and 12; Charles I. Glicksberg, "The Intellectual Pilgrimage of Aldous Huxley," The Dalhousie Review, 19 (1939), 176; Jerome Meckier, "Aldous Huxley: Satire and Structure," Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, 7 (1966), 293.

3 Irving Howe, "The Idea of the Modern," The Idea of the Modern in Literature and the Arts (New York: Horizon Press, 1967), p. 12.

4 Ibid., pp.23-40.

5 Features from Professor Howe's list which do not apply to Huxley are: the tendency to make the work of art self-sufficient; the tendency for Nature to cease being a central setting; the tendency of primitivism to become a major terminus. Huxley's direction was counter on all three heads (Huxley saw run-away technology as potentially destructive of civilization).

6 I use the term "problematic" in the sense Howe discusses it; Ibid., pp.18-22.

7 The preceding analysis was based upon Huxley's essay, "Art and the Obvious," Music at Night and Other Essays (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1931), rpt. in On Art and Artists, ed. and introduced by Morris Philipson (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1960), pp.78-80.

8 Milton Birnbaum, "Aldous Huxley's Conception of the Nature of Reality," The Personalist, 47 (1966), 298. Although I agree with Birnbaum's chronological divisions, I must take issue with his characterization of the phases. He sees the first as a time of disillusionment with traditional Western civilization, whereas it would seem more accurate to say that the disillusionment arose from the conditions and attitudes consequent upon the breakdown of that tradition. And his view of the final phase as an attempt to merge Buddhism with science is too restrictive, when one realizes that Huxley's intent was the creation of a totally new kind of civilization.

9 Julian Huxley, in Aldous Huxley: 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p.21.

10 Stephen Spender, "The Conscience of the Huxleys," The New York Review of Books, 25 March, 1971, p.21.

11 See Jesting Pilate: An Intellectual Holiday (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926), pp.306-312.

12 Peter Bowering, in his Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels (London: The Athlone Press, University of London, 1968), views Huxley as the "unchallenged moralist of a scientific age," p. 3.

13 Hans Beerman, "An Interview with Aldous Huxley," The Midwest Quarterly, 5 (1964), 224-225.

14 Glicksberg believes Huxley's critical contribution may well constitute his chief importance. "His fiction is remarkable, not for its recording of life passionately lived, but for its interpretation of life in terms of intellectual experiences;" "The Intellectual Pilgrimage of Aldous Huxley," p.165. In another essay written a few years later, Glicksberg added the thought that Huxley's intellectualism, albeit a major weakness in his writing, was, at the same time, a source of creative strength; "Huxley the Experimental Novelist," The South Atlantic Quarterly 52 (1953), 99. E.E.M. Joad, in his Return to Philosophy, Being a Defense of Reason, an Affirmation of Values and a Plea for Philosophy (New York: E.P. Dutton Co., Inc., 1936), finds the "luminous intelligence of the mind that pervades" Huxley's writing is their hallmark and greatness, p.81. And G. Kester believes that Huxley remained throughout the detached, rationalist and lucid observer whose favorite mode of presentation was analysis; "Aldous Huxley: A Retrospect," Revue des Langues Vivantes, 30 (1964), 180.

15 See Bowering, pp.213-233, for a thorough discussion of Huxley's use of irony. Bowering errs, I feel, in maintaining that Huxley should have remained an ironist, but his analysis of Huxley's method is perceptive.

16 "And Wanton Optics Roll the Melting Eye," Music at Night, rpt. in On Art and Artists, pp.85-86.

17 "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," Music at Night, rpt. in On Art and Artists, pp.66-67.

18 Ibid., p.67.

19 Huxley's major essays do not appear until the end of the Twenties. Proper Studies was published in 1927, a year before Point Counter Point. After this, the essays occupy a significant place in the Huxley canon. It might also be instructive at this point to quote a letter Huxley wrote to Henry S. Canby, an editor of the Saturday Review of Literature, which addresses itself to the question of selection of form. The letter, dated 9 May, 1929, is in response to a review of Point Counter Point written by Canby. "In very belated reply to your letter and the enclosed article, I'd like to say that the novel form is preferable to the treatise because the fictionally embodied idea is different from, and much more alive than, the 'same' idea in the abstract. My book contains both abstract and (more or less effectively) embodied ideas. It would have been less effective if the embodied ones had been omitted." Letters of Aldous Huxley, ed. Grover Smith (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), p.312. I believe the above reason prompted Huxley to return to the novel in his last years in order to make Palanese society more palatable to the reading public. His inclination for the form is further evidenced by the fact that he even used the novelistic techniques in writing his two book-length studies of seventeenth-century France. See Part IV for a discussion of this new form of non-fiction novel he developed.

20 It should be noted here that throughout his literary career Huxley was in the habit of transposing phrases, and, at times, whole paragraphs from one piece of writing to another, although this practice was basically confined to the essays. But, then, Huxley did transform the short story, "The Giaconda Smile," into the play, Mortal Coils. Point Counter Point and The Devils of Loudun were also cast into stage productions, albeit not by Huxley himself.

21 Glicksberg, "Aldous Huxley: Art and Mysticism," Prairie Schooner, 27 (1953), 345.

22 Jocelyn Brooke, Aldous Huxley, rev. ed., Writers and Their Work, No. 55 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), p.6; Harold H. Watts, Aldous Huxley, Twayne's English Authors Series, No.79 (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 42.

23 Bowering thinks Huxley's novels are a dialectic of ideas shaped in the form of a moral fable, p.5. Ghose sees them as a series of vast rationalizations marking his progress towards self-knowledge, in which he not only justified, but modified himself and explained the rationale behind those modifications, p.162. Glicksberg, in "Huxley the Experimental Novelist," calls the novels "confessions," p.107. Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley (1936; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), believes them to be internal debates, a dramatization of Huxley talking to himself, p.142. Yoi Maraini, in "A Talk with Aldous Huxley," The Bermudsey Book, 3 (1926), was told that the author's aim was to merge the novel and essay forms so as to create "a novel in which one can put all one's ideas, a novel like a hold-all," p.78. And William York Tindall describes Huxley's books as intellectual monologues in the tradition of Plato's dialogues and the Book of Job, a type of novel also written by H.G. Wells; "The Trouble with Aldous Huxley," The American Scholar, 11 (1942), 464.

24 Frederick J. Hoffman, "Aldous Huxley and the Novel of Ideas," College English, 8 (December, 1946), 132.

25 Ibid., p.136. For a similar view point, see Charles G. Hoffmann, "The Change in Huxley's Approach to the Novel of Ideas," The Personalist, 62 (1961), pp.87-88, who considers the novels beginning with Brave New World as "dramatic essays," a form of discourse in which knowledge is achieved by a synthesis of discordant views."

26 Letters of Aldous Huxley, p.228.

27 Howe, pp.29-30.

28 Proper Studies (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1928), p.249.

29 Stephen Jay Greenblatt, Three Modern Satirists: Waugh, Orwell, and Huxley (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1965), p.78.

30 Ghose sees the characters as "invariably metaphysical animals," p.36, but not as conscious agents of the life process.

31 Crome Yellow, Huxley's first novel, conforms most closely to this description. The three which follow do have actions developed to a degree sufficient to provide them with a semblance of plot, but that is not where the interest in them resides.

PART II

PHASE ONE: CITY AND SUBURBS

CROME YELLOW TO POINT COUNTER POINT

Phase One: City and SuburbsIntroductory

I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.  
T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land

while one who sings with his tongue on fire  
gargles in the rat race choir  
bent out of shape from society's pliers  
cares not to come up any higher  
but rather get you down in the hole  
that he's in  
Bob Dylan, "It's Alright Ma, I'm Only Bleeding"

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?  
W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

Oh I am the walrus GOO GOO G'JOOB  
The Beatles, "I am the Walrus"

Let Isaiah Berlin stand witness to the formative impact the early Huxley novels had upon the generation of young English men and women then emerging into post World War I society.

...Huxley was among the few writers who, with all his constantly commented upon inability to create character, played with ideas so freely, so gaily, with such virtuosity, that the responsive reader, who had learnt to see through Shaw or Chesterton, was dazzled and excited. The performance took place against a background of relatively few, simple, moral convictions; they were disguised by the brilliance of the technical accomplishment, but they were there, they were easily intelligible, and like a monotonous, insistent, continuous ground bass slowly pounding away through the elaborate intellectual display, they imposed themselves on the minds of the boys of seventeen and eighteen -- still, for the most part, eager and morally impressionable, no matter how complex or decadent they may in their naiveté have conceived themselves to be.<sup>1</sup>

If their significance for contemporaries lay in their being mirrors of the age,<sup>2</sup> we, with the benefit of hindsight, can see the books from Crome Yellow to Point Counter Point as a microcosm of Huxley's career-long

concern with the individual's dual need for achieving both unity of being and social involvement.<sup>3</sup>

The imperativeness of these two ends arose out of Huxley's awareness of the rootless and disconnected quality of modern life. Because human nature had not changed, man's basic need for an external point of reference, of definition and belonging remained, despite the epistemological changes that had destroyed the Victorian sense of reality. Traditionally, such things as a stable society, a system of conventions, even a house, a piece of property, a family had served to satisfy this need. The Twentieth Century, however, found man living in circumstances that made a return to the old sources of meaning impossible.

Already in the most completely urbanised and industrialised parts of our world we can find migrant populations of men and women, who live in no place long enough to become attached to it or influenced by its spirit, who own no land, nor any tangible possessions -- only the convenient symbol of money -- who have few or no children, who believe in no organised religion. These people are being compelled, by their mode of life, to impose an enormous strain on their own resources of mind and will, on personal relationships with their fellows -- on love, marriage, friendship, family ties. They have nothing solid, outside of themselves, on which they can lean. The strain they impose on them is often more than their spiritual resources and their personal relationships will bear. Hence a dissatisfaction, a shallowness of life, a profound uncertainty of purpose.<sup>4</sup>

This was the tenor of modern life as Huxley perceived it and as his characters exemplified it. Important to notice is the fact that Huxley speaks above about the most "advanced" centers of Western civilization. This helps explain why the range of society included in his novels was restricted generally to an articulate upper-middle class (according to the standards of the English class structure). He was not motivated by snobishness, but by prophetic insight.

Huxley was a social novelist during an age when an epistemological crisis was rapidly eroding the ideological underpinning of English society. He could not take advantage, as his nineteenth-century counterparts had, of the literary convenience of a static social structure within which he could have portrayed the various social classes. Given the conditions of a society in flux, the important questions to investigate involved the changes taking place. What else could he do, then, but be selective in choosing primarily those kinds of characters who would be most acutely aware of the impact of new ideas? One could argue that the comprehensiveness of both psychological types and age groups in Huxley's novels compensates for the limited range of class representation,<sup>5</sup> but that would miss the fundamental point. Huxley was not trying to write another Middlemarch. Faulting him for failing to do so would be like faulting Jude the Obscure for not being like the world of Under the Greenwood Tree. To compare the changes in Hardy's perceptions of rural society with the difference in purpose which distinguishes Huxley's novels from those of other social novelists is to indicate the nature of the transformation in consciousness that has been responsible for much of the history of the Twentieth Century.

Huxley made this transformation a central theme in his novels. The dilemma his characters of the Twenties faced stemmed from the absence of a social consensus of values, at least among members of their own class, compounded by the multiplicity of interpretations of reality available to them. This was not a new kind of situation, for in less aggravated form Huxley saw that the transition from one perceptual stage to another was inherent in the human condition. Just as the impressions of the external world received by the adult's mind are more complex than those received by the child's mind, so, too, are the perceptions of modern man more

sophisticated that those of his aboriginal ancestors. In both cases the intervening factor is increased knowledge.<sup>6</sup> What was unprecedented, at least since the Renaissance, was the degree of new knowledge becoming accessible to the twentieth-century Westerner, which greatly exacerbated the natural alterations in the perceivable from one time of life to another, from one generation to another. By exploiting the intellectual penchant of his characters, Huxley was able to reflect what once had been for a few, but now has become for us all, one of the most acute of human problems -- the ability to understand and direct the forces controlling man's life. In this regard, Huxley's characters were in the vanguard of their time.<sup>7</sup>

What direction an epistemological crisis in society takes depends upon the kinds and degrees of knowledge individuals possess. The absolute beliefs of a cohesive society represent an impersonal wisdom transcending the idiosyncracies of personal experience. When faith in the old absolutes becomes untenable, when they can no longer serve as criteria against which to judge the validity of individual perception, certainty must be sought within one's self. But what is the self? For Huxley's upper-middle-class Englishmen essence was not to be found in caste distinctions. That was a Victorian dodo. Although they steadfastly retained the privileges of class, they felt themselves liberated from its restrictive obligations. In this sense, they saw themselves as members of a classless society, which meant that individual definition would follow from what one did in society, rather than from who one was. But because Huxley's people were classless only amongst themselves, what they could do was still restricted by caste mores. The upper-middle-class Englishman was allowed the choice of pursuing some form either of mental or sensual activity; rarely did he try to combine them both and most decidedly did he not work!

Since his vocation was an expression of self-exploration rather than the dictates of economic necessity, he naturally tended to identify his self with what he experienced. His experiences being confined to indulging his personal bents, each character became his occupation (or pre-occupation). So the Huxleyan eccentric looks surprisingly like the Dickensian grotesque.

Unlike the Dickensian, the Huxleyan grotesque was further imbalanced by his tendency to be an extremist either of the mind or the body. The consequences of such an imbalance may best be evidenced in Huxley's artists, whose art would indicate the predominance within him of an intellectual or sensual orientation.<sup>8</sup> The heavily intellectualized writings of Philip Quarles and the overtly sexual paintings of John Bidlake in Point Counter Point represent the unsatisfactory compromise each has made. Quarles's personal life fails in the flesh at the same time as Bidlake's art deteriorates when the flesh fails him. Some kind of alteration of the self is required before artistic creation and individual living can achieve a productive balance. But whereas Francis Chelifer would represent a willfully distorted diminishing of character because of his abandonment of intelligence, Huxley, in his own life, established the pattern his heroes would attempt to emulate -- that of consciously expanding the self through enlargement of the areas of personal experience. Contemplative by nature, Huxley found that the requirements of art forced him to concern himself with the life of the emotions to an extent that was distasteful to his own sensibilities. Huxley's "Swiftean" treatment of physical realities might have been his subconscious reaction to his conscious decision, but his belief that the artist's function was aptly to express the common human emotions certainly accounted for his choice.<sup>9</sup>

The correlation, then, between the artist's sense of self and his ability to create became another major theme in the novels.

We shall see that only the heroes have honestly attempted to transform themselves. More than good intentions were necessary. Just how much more was needed Huxley spent an entire lifetime in discovering. During the decade that annals Phase One we will learn why the disguises and deceptions employed by Gumbriel and Denis Stone prove to be self-defeating and why Huxley abandoned Calamy's contemplative withdrawal for Rampion's Life-Worshiper Credo. Although separately Calamy and Rampion could offer only partial solutions, when joined together they foreshadow Huxley's final wisdom.

Most of the other Huxley artists, intellectuals, scientists, lovers, and pleasure-seekers choose, instead, to limit their awareness exclusively to a fascination with their "sweating selves." They isolate themselves, as other critics have noted, in endless talk about their several hobby-horses, hoping, thereby, to keep the threatening world of external reality at bay.<sup>10</sup> The interaction -- or collision -- of their various interpretations of life accounts for the curious quality of Huxley's plots. These are records, not of happenings, but of individual behavior patterns, for little beyond the meeting of differing view points occurs. Because they remain Euclidean parallel lines cast into a space governed by Einsteinian relativity, whatever actions they are capable of generating must necessarily be ironic. Often, these actions are the results of mere chance, with a touch of the ghoulish thrown in for heightened effect.<sup>11</sup> The prevalence of irony symbolizes the failure of Huxley's characters to control their own lives. They are victimized as much by their own egos as they are by others.

In a society composed of isolated and random points of self-assertiveness, we can expect to find movement, but nothing constructive will be accomplished by it. The societal consequences of a philosophy of meaninglessness become ominously clear as we descend from the harmless activities of Crome Yellow into the violence, degradation, and death of Point Counter Point. "Surely the Second Coming is at hand" -- the second coming of global warfare, that is!

- 1 Isaiah Berlin, in Aldous Huxley: 1894-1963, p. 145.
- 2 P.H. Houston, "The Salvation of Aldous Huxley," The American Review, 4 (1934), 211.
- 3 Jerome Meckier, in Aldous Huxley: Satire and Structure (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), offers a different way of viewing the early novels. Meckier finds in the first three novels what he considers to be a major trend in Huxley's thinking: "from a desire for involvement and unity to a later preference for properly motivated escape." What Meckier calls "the burden of inadequacy" shifts away from the heroes themselves and comes to rest more heavily upon their society; p. 71. But what Meckier describes as a "shifting" is, I believe, more accurately a sharpening of Huxley's social analysis without a corresponding clarity as to an alternative vision, both for the hero and society. Because the failures of society are so graphically presented, we tend to overlook the vagueness of Calamy's answer. Huxley, however, was not so satisfied. That is why Point Counter Point is necessary for a more precise understanding of this theme. In this fourth novel, as in Island, the escapism latent in Calamy's contemplative is vigorously demonstrated and the desire for involvement and unity once more affirmed, although their achievement through the Life Worshiper Credo proves equally problematic.
- 4 Jesting Pilate, pp.171-172.
- 5 John Atkins argues for this position in Aldous Huxley: A Literary Study, new and rev. ed. (New York: The Orion Press, 1968), p. 46. Perhaps an answer to those critics who felt he had restricted his characters to a socially exceptional minority, Huxley has Anthony Beavis make the charge that his was a natural tendency of literature. "'....Life's so ordinary that literature has to deal with the exceptional.... People who are completely conditioned by circumstances -- one can be desperately sorry for them; but one can't find their lives very dramatic. Drama begin where there's freedom of choice. And freedom of choice begins when social or psychological conditions are exceptional. That's why the inhabitants of imaginative literature have always been recruited from the pages of Who's Who.'" Eyeless in Gaza (1936; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1954), p.214. All future references are to this edition.
- 6 Huxley's reflections on this question can be found both in the narrator's opening comments in "Uncle Spencer," Little Mexican and Other Stories (London: Chatto and Windus, 1924), he notes that mind's apprehension of reality is "crude and simple." The limitations of mind's sight are again raised in The Doors of Perception (1954; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Colophon Books, 1963) and there become part of the justification for the taking of consciousness-expanding drugs, allowing, thereby, for the penetration of additional segments of reality; see pp.20-26.

7 Greenblatt indicts Huxley for failing to deal with the "great social and political issues of his time," preferring, instead, to concern himself with characters who live in a "colossal debating society or an everlasting tea party," p.77. Greenblatt's accusations should really be directed at Huxley's characters themselves. And even then the charges are more pertinent to the people of Crome Manor than to those of successive novels, in which Huxley does attempt to reflect the spirit of the times as experienced by his characters. We must remember that they are the subjects of the illustrated weeklies, not the London Times.

8 Meckier, "Aldous Huxley," p.289.

9 "A Night at Pietramala," Along the Road (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1925), p.231.

10 Glicksberg, "Huxley: Art and Mysticism," p.346; Greenblatt, p. 87; Meckier, Aldous Huxley, p.16; Watts, pp.54-55.

11 Atkins, pp.91-92, sees the operation of chance as punishment.

Chapter One

(a) Crome Yellow

"The Caesarean environment makes the Caesar, as the special food and the queenly cell make the queen bee."<sup>1</sup> Although the idea sounds like a pronouncement by B.F. Skinner, the words are actually those of Mr. Scogan and they aptly describe the tenor of life at Crome Manor. Isolated from the circumstances of modern, urbanized, industrial man -- culturally, geographically, socially<sup>2</sup> -- the residents and guests find their country-house ambiance conducive to the growth of "characters functioning in the void."

Pursuit of the self, without regard for context, is certainly the central failing of the people at Crome. As Denis Stone himself realizes, "Did one ever establish contact with anyone? We are all parallel straight lines (CY, p.14)." One factor maintaining their separateness is the diverse time associations which help define their several characters. Denis, the young poet, echoes the elderly Swift's comment upon the writing of his youth. Denis, however, is only six months removed from the "youthful" lines he remarks upon.<sup>3</sup> Priscilla Wimbush is off in the infinite while her husband, Henry, is preoccupied with the history of Crome. Although Henry is described as unaging in appearance, he does have a greyness of color (indicative of an unhealthiness not related to the physical man). His counterpart, of course, is Scogan -- engaged in projects for the future of mankind. Scogan looks like an "extinct saurian," but is actually contemporary with Wimbush -- and despite his antiquary features is more alive and youthful than his friend. Of the others, thoroughly modern Mary looks much younger than her age, Gombauld is Byronic in mein, Mr. Bodiham is a

present-day Savonarola, and Barbecue-Smith's lack of neck is seen by him to be Balzacean confirmation of his own genius.

Those whose physical and psychological identifications adhere to the present provide additional ironic commentary on their class's temporal condition. Anne is generally blank of expression (a family trait), except when possessed by one of her mercurial moods. Ivor fits (and flits) in everywhere because he remains a dilettante at everything, interested only in the general effect he makes. And Jenny Mullion, whose drawing book becomes a symbol of objective intelligence operative within the world,<sup>4</sup> is, despite this, deaf.

The three centuries of history at Crome serve to reinforce the distorted character of the English gentry's pretensions.<sup>5</sup> From the privy towers of Sir Ferinando to George Wimbush privy to the tower secret of the ethereal Georgiana and her sisters, the occupants have refused to acknowledge the reality of their physical natures and dimensions. In this; however, they are reflections of their respective eras. Sir Ferdinando's conception of man's exalted status was motivated by the Renaissance image of the "great chain of being;" Sir Hercules, a true noble Roman, was an unconscious parody of Augustan England; Romantic Georgianna, to whom high mountains were a feeling, reveals the absurd extent to which people go to be in fashion. Their eccentricities are the consequence of individuals distorting themselves in order to conform to a particular Zeitgeist. Their twentieth-century descendants feel no such compulsion to squeeze their psyches into any one historical mold because no one image of self is available to them. It is not really Denis's "twenty tons of ratiocination" that weighs so heavily upon them, but the knowledge of the variety of the human type -- coupled with the absence of absolute values -- that forces upon them their self assertions.<sup>6</sup> The modern people of

Crome have been liberated from the psychological tyranny of social fashion, but their freedom must be purchased at the expense of the old forms of social cohesion. The country house can no longer serve as the cultural, intellectual, and marital meeting place for the upper-classes it once was. The inadequacy of the manor reflects the breakdown of class as a community of interest. Place becomes, in the historical present of the novel, an occasion for pursuing self-interest. Civilized behavior retreats before the law of the jungle. It's every ego for himself!

Crome, however, is not a natural jungle, but a cultivated English garden; its predators have eschewed fang and claw, attacking their prey with the mind alone. The loss of absolute values has transferred appetite from the stomach to the head. The most pressing need, therefore, is not the carcass, but the convert, to find in the allegiance of one's fellow men what society no longer provides, validation of one's egocentric conception of reality. And so they pounce upon the unwary, holding them captured but not captivated, chewing on ears rather than flesh. The idiosyncratic nature of their talk almost guarantees the fallaciousness of their views, although the isolation and self-absorption of the characters in Crome Yellow prevents them from doing too much harm. The Reverend Dr. Bodiham's Savonarolaesque ferocity is greeted by his parishioners with a silence that is interrupted by "only an occasional cough and sometimes the sound of heavy breathing." The spiritual pretensions of Barbecue-Smith, because of the financial success of his books, might be viewed as a more serious perversion of thought, but the lightness with which Huxley treats such "Pipe-Lines to the Infinite" negates any but an amused response. Of course Priscilla's gambling by means of astrology might be costly, but her confinement to the country does provide some check. What these three represent is pseudo-thought, the bigotries and banalities man

has always assumed in order to disguise the absence of individual cognition.

Scogan and Wimbush, because they are men of genuine intelligence, invite more serious consideration. Both present willful constrictions of intellect -- mind refusing to go beyond limits narrowly conceived for itself. Both men are motivated in their thinking by a need to compensate for personal anxieties and inadequacies. And they are ruthless in their ideas, though not in their deeds, for their private world of Crome seems either impervious to or inhibitory of individual action. Their will-to-power drives find expression only in daydreams and idle chatter, as if the summer sunshine of the countryside had the power to reveal the illusoriness of their ambitions, even as the darkened shadows of the city conceal the forces in society working to turn those dreams into reality. Ah, but that will become evident in the following novels; in the light of Crome Yellow the spider spins a web of fantasy and not of fact.

Scogan prides himself on being an implacable rationalist, a man lacking either a religious or an aesthetic sensibility. His attempts to cultivate a sense for these modes of perception have met with inevitable failure because he pursued them as if they were pieces of information, knowledge to be gleaned from books written by mystics and art historians. Unwittingly, Scogan has confused knowing with understanding. How could he have comprehended art and religion as knowledge when they are ways of understanding, of experiencing reality, not classes of factual data. But Scogan has elevated his own confusion of mind into a general principle of man's inability to transcend what must be his inherent limitations. Not until Anthony Beavis will we encounter a Huxleyan intellectual capable of realizing the distinction between restriction and constriction. Scogan's web, therefore, is woven with irony.

Despite the fact of his fallacious reasoning, he proffers his Rational State as a solution for the world turmoil. His persistent faith in reason is less pathetically touching than it is ominously foreboding. Order in Scogan's utopia means the manipulation of the many by an intellectual elite. Science would dictate his brave new world. The intelligentsia would harness the ability and enthusiasm of "Men of Faith" into a machine for generating within the masses a fanatical adherence to any predetermined precept of the ruling class. Cynically delighting in the prospect of a totalitarian science, Scogan fails to see the ironic quality of such a victory. As Bowering points out, the triumph of Scogan's science would result in the mystification of scientific knowledge and the dissemination of irrational belief as a substitute for a general increase in knowledge. Science would be trampling upon the goal of science!<sup>7</sup>

But one may well imagine Scogan's being amused by this irony. Throughout the novel he expresses disdain for the well-being of the majority of mankind and this unfeelingness seems but a logical consequence of his cold, mechanical mind. Intelligence, divorced from empathy and understanding, naturally aligns itself with ego, producing a character of limited awareness whose concomitant moral vacuity readily prompts him into offering political support to whoever or whatever will ensure his own personal freedom. But the Huxley of the Twenties was not acutely aware of the full dimensions of this danger, as his letters seem to indicate.<sup>8</sup>

Scogan's schoolfriend, Henry Wimbush, presents a complementary construction of vision. Whereas Scogan's utopia is predicated upon man's incapacity for self-transcendence, Wimbush's originates in his belief in man's ability to find certainty through experience. The Lord Scogan denieth and the Lord Wimbush compensateth. But such compensation hardly seems worth the price. Before we can even attempt to achieve full

comprehension of a moment and its significance, we must first gain the detachment from it possible only in the moments which follow. Only in the past may certainty be found. Fine, says Wimbush; so much then for the present moment. He willingly eschews the here and now, along with its attendant bothers of people and personal relationships, for the solitude of his study. Wimbush's retreat makes a satirical, Keatsian emendation of Pope: "the proper study of mankind is books (CY, p.143)." There is a world of difference between "the realms of gold" and that peak in Darien. And had he lived anywhere other than at Crome, Huxley would probably have seen to it that Wimbush would have suffered for his biblio-addiction.

Because Huxley preferred to view Crome with amused detachment, he merely implies the consequences of Wimbushism through Henry's vision of a future time when the habit of reading will substitute for the need of social life. In that perfect future, man will "live in a dignified seclusion, surrounded by the delicate attentions of silent and graceful machines, secure from any human intrusion (CY, p.142)." Yes, books and machines go together; both products of technology which throughout history have had the surreptitious tendency to distract man from the totality of reality. It seems the very quality in new technology which works for human liberation from the brute circumstances of an old reality is also the quality which enchants and then imprisons man. Because "freedom tastes of reality," man forgets to think of the cost. After all, it's free! But look at the exorbitant price we pay for the mobile autonomy of the private car. Books, too, are more expensive than the publisher's price. We're deluding ourselves if we think companies out to make a dollar from us would be so honest as to reveal the full cost. Huxley, to his credit, does examine these hidden costs so throughout his career, with increasing depth of perception.

Already in Crome Yellow we see the enrichment of individual consciousness possible through books turned into an addiction by Wimbush. It's extreme linear navel contemplation hardly conducive to life on any other than a monastic level. This is an unavoidable consequence of overly indulging human appetite; it makes us attach ourselves to certain kinds of experience which we find pleasurable. Now that's bad enough at the best of times, for it produces people who develop only several of their potentialities, leaving the rest of the individual (and by extension all of society) with untapped resources. But in an age of values crisis, when each man's sense of self must go it alone, man's knowledge of his real being and of external reality become confused and distorted if his appeasement of appetite prevents him from expanding his means of perception. Since his primary concern must be self, as an underdeveloped being he becomes only an egotist. Since he cannot see within the broader context of group experience and its wisdom, he comprehends the world only through the restrictions of narrowly pursued personal experience. The impetus for developing untapped potentialities is thereby reduced and we have then the grotesque or eccentric.

No harm results in the nearsighted warmth of Crome. The characters are too isolated for that to happen. So we must extrapolate from the later Huxley novels to discover the dangers of Scogan and Wimbush. Ironically, using this method vindicates Wimbush to a degree. He was not wrong about the direction in which certainty could be found, only in his emphasis upon the experience itself. We must break-out of the "big house" of ego attachment. This is Huxley's perennial cry. Wimbush and Scogan reveal the ego entrapments of reason and technology. Yes, even reason. For Scogan's reason is not faulty because he uses an imperfect instrument, but because he fails to understand that it is only an instrument, a faculty of

mind and not the whole mind. What holds true for man's technology also holds true for his faculties. The ancient Greek philosophers first elevated the rational faculty to a position of supremacy among human powers and since the Age of Reason Western man has grown steadily more lopsided by his exclusive preoccupation with it. Their twentieth-century avatars in Crome Yellow, Scogan and Wimbush, have both, therefore, imagined ideal societies in which reason alone can rule. If their systems strike us as dictatorial and rigidly stratified, even inhuman, what else should we expect? Reliance upon reason alone is the psychological analogue to political totalitarianism -- one man, one faculty rule.

But mental perversion is not limited to the intellectual and political realms. Mary Bracegirdle, a corollary to the emotionally stunted Scogan and Wimbush, is a comic illustration of the modern woman whose liberated mind only corsets her body. Prompted by Freudian interpretations of dreams, she dispassionately attempts, by logical deduction, to select a suitable man who will save her from the repressed symbolism of wells and ladders. But for all her rational analysis as to the relative social (although not sexual) merits of Denis and Gombauld, her intellect fails to conceive the possibility of their being uninterested in her. Being obtuse to other's emotions, she is even gauche enough to seek advice from Anne, who has been the obvious romantic preoccupation of both men. Poetic justice triumphs nonetheless; Anne merely laughs at her (Mary is oblivious to that) and Gombauld and Denis ignore her overtures, leaving Ivor first to deflower her and then quickly to buzz off in search of greener gardens, remaining throughout totally indifferent to her own person.

The self-intoxication that appears endemic to Huxley's intellectuals and lovers extends also to his artists. Because of it, they are usually incapable of maintaining a relationship with external reality that might

enrich their work. Denis Stone is a case in point. As a poet, words are his natural metier, but when sound begins to substitute for sense, the poet becomes a jingler. "Black ladders lack bladders" might have magic for Denis, but its no more mysterious than an alliterative sleight of hand. Denis's constricted fascination with the phenomena of language represents another retreat from meaning, a by-product, Huxley seems to imply, of the traditional English educational system. Denis's intellectually-oriented schooling has so overwhelmed his capacity for direct experience that "things somehow seem more real and vivid when one can apply somebody else's ready-made phrases about them (CY, p.16)." Because of his training, he tries to make the facts of life conform to preconceived theories. And this is what he also does to language, for what sound and spelling are to meaning, ideas are to the data of reality -- convenient media for symbolically communicating one's sense of the way things are. Only picking-up the baggage of sound without first packing the meaning leaves Denis holding an empty literary bag. He would rather fill those "suit-cases" as his travels in literature progress with any meanings that at least seem to match the ideas the sounds suggest to him. In purging language of meaning with his personal "carminatives," Denis becomes representative of modern writers who have turned literature into pure, but idiosyncratic form.<sup>9</sup>

The tendency of modern art to become mere form is also apparent in painting, as can be seen through the figure of Gombauld, who is the kind of artist Huxley appreciated.

He had begun by painting a formalised nature; then, little by little, he had risen from nature into the world of pure form, till in the end he was painting nothing by his own thoughts, externalised in the abstract geometrical forms of the mind's devising. He found the process arduous and exhilarating. And then, quite suddenly, he grew dissatisfied; he felt

himself cramped and confined within intolerably narrow limitations. He was humiliated to find how few and crude and uninteresting were the forms he could invent; the inventions of nature were without number, inconceivably subtle and elaborate. He had done with cubism. He was out on the other side. But the cubist discipline preserved him from falling into the excesses of nature worship. He took from nature its rich, subtle, elaborate forms, but his aim was always to work them into a whole that should have the thrilling simplicity and formality of an idea; to combine prodigious realism with prodigious simplification (CY, p.52).

Gombauld is thus the only character in the novel to escape from the confines of his own mind into the suggestiveness of the external world. And even though he feels he has, as yet, failed to attain his ideal, he is engaged in a pursuit whose end is not self-defeating, like the ultra modern Tschuplitski, for whom "painting's finished; he's finishing it (CY, p.55)." Gombauld's reconciliation of intelligence and nature is a method of enrichment of self and is also a pictorial analogue to the kind of novel Huxley wrote. He becomes the first Huxleyan figure to pass beyond pure intellect and yet retain the value of rigorous mental activity in order to create. In this, he more nearly presages Anthony Beavis and Sebastian Barnack, both of whom remain in the world as active agents after their "conversions," than Calamy, who takes himself off to the mountain.

In Crome Yellow, Gombauld, like the others, remains an embryo in Huxley's mind. That mind, too, must still develop. His level of awareness at Crome is symbolized by Jenny Mullion's notebook: clever, perceptive caricatures drawn by a deaf person. Huxley, too, lacks a perceptual depth in Crome Yellow which allows him to take a bemused, ironic look at his people, catching the outlines of their being, but missing the conceptual relationships between what they are and what they mean. This "significance gap" is reflected in the lack of action in the novel. The plot revolves around Denis's pursuit of Anne. Anne merely plays with him,

for she is more strongly attracted to the more forceful Gombauld. Perhaps it is Anne's awareness of Gombauld's resoluteness which also frightens her back to the more insubstantial Denis. Her being is a creature of shifting moods would be threatened by the solidity and definiteness of the Byronic-looking painter. Denis is manipulatable and consequently safe. However, it is that very factor of pliability which transfers the passive poet out of her reach and back again to London. Failing to seize the moment, the moment has seized him. We take leave of him the way we meet him -- in transit. Because he remains in constant motion, he lacks a means of attaching himself to the world in other than egotistical ways; as the passive and transient observer he has no vantage point from which to act. He is at one only with the flux.

Like Anne, the Huxley of Phase One wavers between his desire to become the Gombauld kind of artist and his awareness that philosophically and creatively he more closely resembles Denis's type. Crucial to the distinction between the two artists is the difference in their respective media. Gombauld begins to realize his creative potential only after he returns to representational painting. The explicit message for the artist is that the replication of external reality enables him to transcend the insulation and relativity of individual perception. The difficulty for the writer lies in the nature of his medium. By its nature, language is an abstraction from reality; the content of literature must necessarily remain a symbolic representation. Only in the ways in which he shapes and arranges his subject matter can he hope to approximate the ways in which the world functions. For the modern novelist, form follows the texture of the writer's personal experience.<sup>10</sup> The Huxley of the Twenties discerned only a world of meaningless flux and his plots reflect this perspective. When he finds a philosophical alternative to futility, his

novels stop dancing their antic hays and step to the sound of a different drummer. But we must wait until Point Counter Point for another, fuller kind of orchestration. In Crome Yellow we skip from scene to scene without apparent purpose. Denis wants Anne, but his resolution seems rather pallid. He appears content to drift, letting events take their own course. His author, too, seems resigned to the surface of things, without deeper purpose in mind than merely recording the way people are.

But Huxley's intellect was too probing to drift contented over the surfaces of living. His dissatisfaction with that position is reflected in the attempts of his next two heroes, Gumbril and Calamy, to assume roles which will provide both a coherent perspective and a course of purposeful action. Since pursuit becomes their primary endeavor, Huxley must shift his central focus away from being, per se, to the more complex question of the relationship between character and action.

(b) Antic Hay

If Crome represents the past, London would be the present of the 1920's. Writing to his father on 26 November, 1923, Huxley describes Antic Hay as a "book written by a member of what I may call the war-generation for others of his kind; and that it is intended to reflect -- fantastically, of course, but none the less faithfully -- the life and opinions of an age which has seen the violent disruption of almost all the standards, conventions and values current in the previous epoch."<sup>11</sup> Critical commentary agrees with Huxley's estimation of the Twenties as a period of meaninglessness consequent upon the loss of values.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, then, the modern quest is for the knowable. But what is known? And how reliable is that knowledge?

No, but seriously, Gumbril reminded himself, the problem was very troublesome indeed. God as a

sense of warmth about the heart, God as exultation, God as tears in the eyes, God as a rush of power or thought -- that was all right. But God as truth, God as  $2 + 2 = 4$  -- that wasn't so clearly all right. Was there any chance of their being the same? Were there bridges to join the two worlds? And could it be that the Rev. Pelvey, M.A., foghorne away from behind the imperial bird, could it be that he had an answer and a clue? That was hardly believable. Particularly if one knew Mr. Pelvey personally. And Gumbril did.<sup>13</sup>

The collapse of belief in the old absolutes has created a split between subjective and objective perceptions of reality. Subjective, personal feelings exist -- people do have emotions -- but these are necessarily idiosyncratic, for one cannot experience another's emotions. How, then, can one accept the universal validity of what anyone -- even one's self -- feels to be true? Certainty must reside only in the objective realm, in what is quantifiable; scientific materialism had convinced people of that. But no one, not even scientists, lives exclusively in the objective realm. Therefore, Gumbril's dilemma is the same as Denis's, how to get from the subjective perceptions of the self into the external world that each individual shares with all other beings? Either one finds some verifiable means of reconciliation or one is doomed to drift through the flux symbolized in the image of the modern city.

Rather than a grotesque, unnatural growth, a distortion out of man's mind, London is but an extension of the natural world.

Lancing expounded to the visitors all the secrets. The vast, unbelievable, fantastic world opened out as he spoke. There were tropics, there were cold seas busy with living beings, there were forests full of horrible trees, silence and darkness. There were ferments and infinitesimal poisons floating in the air. There were leviathans suckling their young, there were flies and worms, there were men, living in cities, thinking, knowing good and evil. And all were changing continuously, moment by moment, and each remained all the time itself by virtue of some unimaginable enchantment. They were all alive.

And on the other side of the courtyard beyond the shed in which the animals slept or uneasily stirred, in the huge hospital that went up sheer like a windowed cliff into the air, men and women were ceasing to be themselves, or were struggling to remain themselves. They were dying, they were struggling to live (AH, p. 283).

Birth and copulation and death. This is the view of life as seen through the eyes of science, here momentarily assuming the guise of Lancing. And, as far as he can see, that is all there is. Raw, palpitating life, an amorphous given to be shaped as the mind and hand of the perceiver so desires. Medical science (and, by extension, all of science) merely compartmentalizes life into subjectively determined categories -- human or animal. But the essential nature is not thereby ennobled or even made more intelligible, for the emphasis of scientific materialists upon distinguishing characteristics has, until the recent emergence of ecology and ethnology, obscured the significance of similarities.

Within the city, however, there is form and order which differentiates and elevates that which is human.

The other windows looked on to the river. The lights of London bridge were on the right, of Blackfriars to the left. On the opposite shore St. Paul's floated up as though self-supported in the moonlight. Like time the river flowed, silent and black. Gumbriel and Mrs. Viveash leaned their elbows on the sill and looked out. Like time the river flowed, staunchlessly, as though from a wound in the world's side. For a long time they were silent. They looked out, without speaking, across the flow of time, at the stars, at the human symbol hanging miraculously in the moonlight. Lancing had gone back to his German book; he had no time to waste, looking out of windows (AH, p.283).

The dome of St. Paul's is the symbol of proportion -- the balance achieved by man's rational, yet imaginative imposition of created form to comprehend at least a part of the natural chaos. Just as Gombauld's painting of man and horse (again two different aspects of living matter) articulates the darkness of the surrounding space, here the church illuminates with

subjective, human meaning the temporal darkness. Science, of course, has no interest in this other method of differentiating matter, even though architecture, as a branch of knowledge, represents a union of art and technology.

But St. Paul's is a relic of Christopher Wren's London, not a product of contemporary endeavor. Therefore, like the other images of fixed value capable of bringing order and permanence, it, too, remains only an artifact of the past -- impotent to revitalize unless its value be realized by the individual observer. Mozart's G minor Quintet is another affirmation that "man's greatest strength lies in his capacity for irrelevance (AH, p.169)," those actions of his which defy and stand over and against the primordial chaos of life.

Apart from the values which "staunchlessly" flow from the mind of man, there is also that spirit which emanates from within. Gumbriel's dead mother is such a figure who radiates goodness as a manifestation of her nature. She is Huxley's initial tribute to the spirit of Julia Huxley, whose principle of love is analogous to "God as a sense of warmth about the heart."<sup>14</sup> And even in mother nature can be found symbols of perpetuating value. The starlings outside Gumbriel Sr.'s window represent communion and constancy, despite the physical and social decay of the neighborhood.

Therefore, the novel does acknowledge the presence of value, both in nature and within man himself, but it also understands the difficulty which prevents that act of awareness necessary to reintegrate the individual with those values. Gumbriel Sr. illustrates the problem of transmitting that consciousness to the succeeding generation. He believes the telepathic faculty can be sufficiently developed in man, much the same as in the starlings, so as to obviate the problems of linguistic communication, thereby doing away with the need for leadership -- a plaguesome political

problem in Huxley (and elsewhere, lest we forget). But his son and Mrs. Viveash are as unresponsive to his theory as they are to the view of St. Paul's. The classical education he has provided for his son has also been misconstrued -- the latter becomes a teacher, hardly the purpose of such training, according to Gumbriel Sr. And the benefits of his own architectural talents have been misdirected since society reduces them to the level of designing workmen's cottages, which he sees as a constriction of the spirit of human aspiration implicit in his vocation. Even his one act of goodness proves ineffectual. He sells his model of Wren's projected London to provide money for his friend, Porteous. But the latter's wastrel son immediately squanders the sum.

If the post-war generation can find no effective means to employ their cultural heritage for social cohesion, many still feel the need to realize their own selves through identification with figures of the past.<sup>15</sup> The poses each assumes allows him to indulge his private dream to its fullest, but like the differing time identifications in Crome Yellow, the masks in Antic Hay represent differing historical periods. And like the characters in the first novel, the egotistical pursuit of disparate personal ends leads them into cross-purposes. Only now, because we are in the real world, the seriousness of the consequences become more evident.

It is in the character of Gumbriel that we see the broadest consciousness of this dilemma. Although sensitive to the presence of both suffering and value in the world, he believes the abstractedness of his education has made him incapable of alleviating the former or of living his life in accordance with the latter. The need to align himself with the world at large forces him to renounce the irrelevant intellectualism of his academic position. His get rich quick scheme of "Gumbriel's patented small clothes" has been considered an acceptance of "aimlessness," of

"irresponsibility," an opting for unreality.<sup>16</sup> By implication, those who propose this view must find the essays of teenagers on Renaissance Popes "purposeful" and "real." Huxley, Gumbriel and his students did not! Better confront the vacuity of modern commerce than learning in a vacuum.<sup>17</sup> Gumbriel's switch from school to business is therefore an extension of Huxley's advice to modern artists to do direct battle with the "monster of obviousness." In this regard, Gumbriel's successful business transaction with Boldero contrasts sharply with his effectiveness as an educator. Of course, it would be wrong to see Gumbriel, then, as heroic. He does spend most of his time as a member of the leisured class, engaged in personal futility. Even his one moment of triumph is the result of his assuming a disguise and not the reward of "honest effort." In fact, it reinforces Huxley's judgment upon the debased quality of modern life which offers people only the alternatives of irrelevance or deception (within England, that is, for the departure at the end of the novel represents a third choice).

Gumbriel dons the Rabelaisian Complete Man's guise in compensation for his lack of personal forcefulness, a symptomatic deficiency of his class and his age. But his only real accomplishments when so costumed are the bluffing of Boldero and the bedding of Rosie Shearwater, the latter proving decidedly the less satisfactory of the two attainments. Both entail acts of bad faith, although Huxley's comic treatment of these incidents prevents us from attaching too much moral significance to these events. Instead of a moral, these affairs make an ironic commentary upon the value of role-playing. The conscious fraud of the Complete Man's pose besting the assumed personae of Boldero's Benefactor of Humanity and Rosie's Seductress becomes nothing more serious than poetic justice; it is an absurdist victory.

The comedy of futility, however, must be abandoned before Gumbriel can get close to Emily, the innocent victim of other's deceptions. This episode with Emily symbolizes Gumbriel's deepest aspirations and the insufficiency within himself which makes their realization impossible. Because his thoughts on "the quiet places of the mind" foreshadows not only the hopelessness to the dilemma of meaninglessness, it will be necessary to quote the passage in full.

It re-establishes itself, an inward quiet, like this outward quiet of grass and trees. It fills one, it grows -- a crystal quiet, a growing expanding crystal. It grows, it becomes more perfect; it is beautiful and terrifying, yet, terrifying, as well as beautiful. For one's alone in the crystal and there's no support from outside, there's nothing external and important, nothing external and trivial to pull oneself up by or to stand on, superiorly, contemptuously, so that one can look down. There's nothing to laugh at or feel enthusiastic about. But the quiet grows and grows. Beautifully and unbearably. And at last you are conscious of something approaching; it is almost a faint sound of footsteps. Something inexpressibly lovely and wonderful advances through the crystal, nearer, nearer. And, oh, inexpressibly terrifying. For if it were to touch you, if it were to seize and engulf you, you'd die. All the regular, habitual, daily part of you would die. There would be an end of bandstands and whizzing factories, and one would have to begin living arduously in the quiet, arduously in some strange unheard-of manner. Nearer, nearer come the steps; but one can't face the advancing thing. One daren't. It's too terrifying, it's too painful to die. Quickly, before it is too late, start the factory wheels, bang the drum, blow up the saxophone. Think of the women you'd like to sleep with, the schemes for making money, the gossip about your friends, the last outrage of the politicians. Anything for a diversion (AH, pp.163-164).

Although Gumbriel's crystal is not exactly the Ground of all being, it does prefigure Huxley's future images of ultimate reality through whose penetration his heroes die to the old, egotistical self and are reborn as new, non-attached men. Even in his second novel, then, we have a glimpse of the direction Huxley will take. A sense of the inevitableness of that

turn is apparent when we realize the analogy between the crystal and both St. Paul's dome juxtaposed against the flux and the telepathic silence through which the starlings communicate. All three are antithetical to the waking distractions of modern life; the former are illustrations of harmonious being, whereas the latter are examples of mental agitation. Huxley's future position, then, that the end of action is contemplation, for only through contemplation will the real self be revealed, seems to originate here in these three images of timeless serenity.

If we examine Gumbril's response to the crystal and his failure with Emily, the idea clarifies itself. The footsteps he hears are obviously Emily's, whose approach spells annihilation for the self enmeshed in the music of Nil which gives only the "sense of being alive." But dying to self and being born anew requires an identity conscious of itself as capable of a unitive being which transcends exclusive preoccupation with the activities of the present moment. Past, present, and future must be reconciled in eternity. Gumbril, however, is too much a hero of his time, too readily caught up by momentary distractions, to actualize eternity in the here and now of present time save on the symbolic level. His relationship to the past exists as a memory of goodness (derived from his mother) whose objective reality he cannot ascertain by modern operations for the verification of truth. If he were to make the obvious correlation between his mother and Emily, scientific knowledge, that is, psychoanalysis, would call it sublimated incest.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Gumbril only "has" Emily in chaste fashion in his private rooms, the existence of which his friends are unaware. Emily, as an integrative principle coalescing the past and present beings of Gumbril, is therefore possible nowhere save in that one secreted moment of "eternity," as he characterizes their one night together. Like his Complete Man disguise, Gumbril's "eternity" is

but a self-conscious playing with the idea of the real thing. Because it lacks Eliot's "objective correlative," Gumbril's timeless moment remains a product of egotistical wish-fulfillment, an abstraction and not a direct experience.

Although he plans to join Emily in her country retreat and thereby escape futility, his London interlude with her has not had the concreteness necessary to strengthen his will to act. Not having been transformed by his experience, he finds it simpler to follow the path of least resistance, in this instance, to be deflected from his objective by the hedonistic diversions of Myra Viveash. But even when he behaves in accordance with the spirit of the age (Myra Viveash),<sup>19</sup> Gumbril is still not a moral mole. He must assuage the guilt he feels for the cowardice of his life by finding some persona through which he can escape the consciousness of his actions.

But one can refuse to accept responsibility; a clown cannot be held accountable. And besides, when the future and the past are abolished, when it is only the present instant, whether enchanted or unenchanted, that counts, when there are no causes or motives, no future consequences to be considered, how can there be responsibility, even for those who are not clowns (AH, p.181)?

What choices! He can be either a clown or a fragmented personality, a series of disparate moments which would allow him to forget time, but not to transcend it. Gumbril's solution, a precursor of Anthony Beavis's theory of personality, demands the disintegration of an integral self. Even the role of the Complete Man has become too forceful a part to assume.<sup>20</sup> Like Emily, that character is sacrificed in homage to the spirit of the age; both are reduced to anecdotes, burnt offerings to alleviate the perpetual boredom of Mrs. Viveash. The abandonment of the Rabelaisian guise here explains why Huxley elected the ironic view of the

actions committed under its influence. To have highlighted the superficial problems of role-playing would have mitigated against the fundamental dilemma of the age that Gumbril illustrates -- the failure of consciousness and imagination to transcend conceptual circumscriptions dictated by the prejudicial, solipsistic values of its own time, even though a larger truth is there all around -- in St. Paul's, in Mozart, in the starlings.<sup>21</sup>

Lypiatt is Gumbril's opposite. Possessed of the right imagination and consciousness to transcend his time (he is vociferous in his denunciations), he lacks the talent to create. He sees life as the essential ingredient in painting, but is incapable of organizing onto canvass the passion needed to express it. To conceal his deadness as an artist, he theorizes out loud -- incessantly. "It was as though the man had to shout in order to convince himself of his own existence (AH, p.44)," Gumbril reflects. The accuracy of Gumbril's remark is substantiated by Huxley's essay on Ben Jonson. Huxley there says that the artist is forced back upon consciously articulated theories of art during times when traditions are dissolving. These theories represent necessary guide lines, which, during times when traditions are maintained, are only utilized unconsciously by the artist.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, Lypiatt's hollowness is not dependent upon the fact that he clings to ideas, but upon the fact that his ideas don't define his reality. He's simply not an artist. All of which serves to qualify the importance of values derived from abstract theories. In themselves they are only the estimation of the thing we perceive; they can never be a substitute for the thing itself. To fly from the consciousness of either the concrete object (Lypiatt) or the subjective evaluation of it (Gumbril) leaves one in limbo: a life in death and a death in life.

Shearwater's history may be viewed as a combination of the two above extremes. Like Lypiatt, he is, initially, engrossed in his own narrowly defined reality -- the kidney. But his physiological interests ironically preclude his awareness of his wife's physiological needs. Not until Myra Viveash ensnares him, the way she entraps Lypiatt and Gumbril, does he awaken to the life of the body and its emotions. His knowledge, like Gumbril's, is to no avail. Because Rosie has embarked upon her own emotional investigations into modernity, and Myra flees any man who attempts to possess her, Shearwater sees no alternative but to retreat again into the isolation of scientific research.

Symbolically, Gumbril, Lypiatt, and Shearwater stand for the failure of intelligence, art, and science, caught up as they are by the Circe (Mrs. Viveash) who transforms their spirits, when, indeed, their true functions should have been to transform hers. The three men thus represent the capitulation of human creativity to the spirit of futility. Consequently, the plot reflects their pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp by going round in concentric circles. The inner ring of London leisured life, with its game of changing partners and circular taxi rides, is circumscribed by the outer ring of Gumbril's peregrinations which begin and end outside the city.

Confronted with such an age, one can either retreat from it into a refinement of personal sensibility or engage the meaninglessness through cynical manipulation. Mercaptan and Coleman present two manifestations of the former position, whereas Bojanus and Boldero illustrate the latter. Mercaptan prefers to live his life as an *ormolu* exquisite, an example of dix-huitième effete-ness reminiscent of James's Gilbert Osmond in Portrait of a Lady. His perversion of culture parallels Coleman's perversion of morality. Coleman's satanism is a psychological phenomenon often analyzed

in Huxley's writings. The mental type is there in Swift, as well as in Baudelaire. Huxley sees its frequency increasing as a result of the failed romantic optimism so characteristic of the Nineteenth Century.<sup>23</sup> Huxley's insight into the religious character of this spiritual despair is reflected in the title given to his first study of the temperament, "Accidie," which appeared in On the Margin in 1923. That Coleman's condition might be a more drastic one than Mercaptan's can be judged by comparing Rosie Shearwater's experiences with them: Mercaptan seduces; Coleman ravishes!

Bojanus and Boldero prefer to operate on a broader, public level. The tailor's revolutionary fervor is an outgrowth of his scientific delight in experimentation -- the thrill of observing an action whose outcome is unforeseeable. All that revolution could possibly accomplish, to his mind, would be a change of personnel. It could never alter "the fundamental slavery -- the necessity of working. Liberty? Why, it doesn't exist. There's no liberty in this world, only gilded cages (AH, p.35)." And Boldero's purpose is to line his pockets by gilding the "cages." As an advertiser, he, too, is motivated by science -- the science of psychological persuasion. His mode of operation is the inculcation of a knowledge that is part spurious fact, part manipulated fear and prejudice. Working in ways that reinforce one another, the combination of Bojanus and Boldero has created a false consciousness whose destructiveness is analyzed in Those Barren Leaves.

Gumbril leaves England at the end of the novel, hoping to find a different, revitalizing spirit on the continent. It's a futile flight into the past, for the modern age has even taken hold of Shelley's Italy. As Francis Chelifer explains, there is no geographical escaping from the "Beastliness of the bourgeois."

(c) Those Barren Leaves

In his third novel, Huxley shifts the focus of attention from the awareness of the loss of tradition to the awareness of the omnipresence of matter, which seems to dominate the character of immediate experience when the mediating perspective of tradition is lost. The narrative technique of presenting two different points of view indicates the nature of the two alternate responses to such a reality. The omniscient author would approximate the detached, contemplative approach Calamy selects, whereas the first person "fragments" of Chelifer's "autobiography" would imply the immersion of self (as attached to ego consciousness) into the turgid waters of bourgeois living.

Both Calamy and Chelifer change their modes of life because of the failure of love (matter made flesh) to be all-in-all for them -- just as Cardan and Mrs. Aldwinkle organize their lives to stave off the ultimate triumph of death (matter unmaking flesh). But Calamy's awareness is of the narrowness of the subject of love and his action is an attempt to enlarge himself by rejecting constrictions. Chelifer, on the other hand, is reacting to the puncturing of his illusory ideal. His behavior is a variation on the satanist theme. He seeks to punish himself by devotion to a mode of life impossible for him to believe in. The prime distinction, therefore, is between upward transcendence and a wallowing in the mud.

For Chelifer, the slime of Gog's Court is the "navel of reality," and to ignore it or retreat from it would be an act of escapism.

However grateful [sic] we may feel for the existence in civilised society of these homely jungle virtues, we cannot justifiably set them off against the horrors and squalors of civilised life. The horrors and squalors arise from man's lack of reason -- from their failure to be completely and sapiently human. The jungle virtues are merely the obverse of this animalism, whose Heads is instinctive kindness and whose Tails is stupidity and instinctive cruelty.<sup>24</sup>

But the reality Chelifer perceives consists entirely of his own reaction to the punctured ideals of his earlier youth. In other words, Chelifer's world is that of wounded ego intentionally irritating itself by preserving its septic environment.<sup>25</sup> That he, in the quotation above, thinks in terms of comparison and contrast is the key to the distorted quality of his thought. It has its parallel (perhaps even its origin) in the before and after fluctuation of his biography. Chelifer began life believing in the idealism of nineteenth-century Romanticism. His father was a Wordsworthian nature worshiper and his mother another representative of innate goodness whose humane warmth was of sufficient strength to preserve fading customs and stray animals. Raised in such rarified surroundings, he would soon find that "reality gives imagination the lie direct (TBL, p.125)."

Barbara Waters (the symbolism of her last name should be noted as an obvious reference to the flux of life) was the mainspring for Chelifer's present attitude towards life. It was because of the pain involved in learning the discrepancy between his imagined estimation of her nature and her rather ugly reality that Chelifer became cynical. Barbara's major characteristic was her need for ego gratification. Chelifer, for her, represented Art, and cultural snobbery accorded the artist the highest rank in society. To have a poet as her devoted slave symbolized complete achievement. Therefore, Chelifer became an object she could use as best served her desires of the moment. Her unfaithfulness was inescapable. Chelifer's extreme reaction -- his rejection of art, of intelligence -- needed no other impetus than his disillusionment in love. Consequently, one must distinguish between the accuracy in what Chelifer says about the way people live and his fallacious response to that life.<sup>26</sup>

The brutish tameness of bourgeois existence is, however, rapidly becoming the mode of most people and Chelifer's analysis of the middle class is quite perceptive. Intellectually indistinct from the working class, "morally and spiritually they are worse off; they suffer from a greater reverence for public opinion, they are tortured by snobbery, they live perpetually in the midst of fear and hate (TBL, p.235)." According to Chelifer, their very position in society accounts for their manner. Above the workers, they must keep that class down in order to maintain their own status and, without internal cultural supports, they can only ape those they believe above them.

He lives according to his lusts, but timorously and in a conventional way; his diversions are provided for him by joint stock companies. He has no religion, but a great respect for genteel conventions which have not even the justification of divine origin. He has heard of art and thought, and respects them because the best people respect them; but his mental capacities and his lack of education do not allow him to get any real satisfaction out of them. He is thus poorer than the savage, who, if he has never heard of art or science, is yet rich in religion and traditional lore. The life of a wild animal has a certain dignity and beauty; it is only the life of a domesticated animal that can be called degraded. The burgess is the perfectly domesticated animal (TBL, p.236).

The spiritual malaise of this class is rapidly becoming pandemic as newspapers and radios spread a homogeneous, Boldero kind of knowledge and a psychic dependency upon amusements which require little intelligence and initiative.

Although Chelifer believes we must wait for some utopian future which would seriously increase the amount of leisure devoted to mindless distractions before upper class ennui attacks and destroys the majority of men, Huxley saw the present combination of standardized labor and standardized recreation leading ineluctably to that conclusion.

Self-poisoned in this fashion, civilization looks as though it might easily decline into a kind of premature senility. With a mind almost atrophied by lack of use, unable to entertain itself and grown so wearily uninterested in the ready-made distractions offered from without that nothing but the grossest stimulants of an ever-increasing violence and crudity can move it, the democracy of the future will sicken of a chronic and mortal boredom.<sup>27</sup>

Chelifer's response to this boredom is to take his seat on the switchback and slide down into the abyss. Conceived of as a means for achieving "enlightenment," for removing the blindfold of idealism, Chelifer's action is only a negative form of egotism -- the imagination of horror instead of heaven.

The clue to understanding this aspect of his mind lies in his poem on Nero as artist:

Christ died, but living Nero turns  
Your mute remorse to song; he gives  
To idiot fate eyes like a lover's  
And while his music plays, God lives (TBL, p.107).

The transcending, redemptive role of the artist, superior even to that of the religious scapegoat, is a cultural pretension (an emperor, perhaps, but a tyrannical one) which the artist manipulates -- until it turns, in the form of Barbara Waters, and manipulates him. When burst, inflated ego collapsed entirely. As punishment for the sin of believing himself better, Chelifer imprisons himself in a world which thwarts the expression of the best in him. He has merely exchanged one form of blindness for another. That his editorial job for the Rabbit Fancier's Gazette is merely another aspect of unawareness, one need only turn to his response upon seeing a herd of goats. "'I believe those are the first goats I have seen, or smelt, in the flesh since I took to writing about them in my paper. Most interesting. One tends to forget that the creatures really exist (TBL, p.302).'" Of such is the reality of navel contemplation in Gog's Court!

Mary Thriplow represents a variation on this theme of the artist's exploitation of both his medium and external reality. Mary, too, believes it necessary for her to mask her intelligence. She presents herself as a woman of emotion. "It was the knowledge of her sub-normality (which she had come, however, to attribute to a lack of opportunities -- we lead such sheltered, artificial lives -- for the display of her potential passions and emotions) that had made Miss Thriplow so passionate an admirer of fine spontaneous feelings (TBL, p.215)." Sharing Chelifer's misconceptions and priorities, she, too, dips into experience (amorous for her). The external world exists as a location on which to do field research. When she has collected sufficient data, Mary withdraws to the privacy of her notebooks and "creates." Like Chelifer's autobiographical "fragments," Mary's notebooks reduce the quality of the experience because she treats it symbolically. The affair with Calamy is translated into a plot outline for a romantic triangle, one of whose angles becomes a mystic. Calamy's ideas on meditation, however, become for her mental warm-up exercises to put her in the right frame of mind to write about a contemplative. He is used as a substitute for the emotional exercise the memory of her dead cousin had previously provided. Mary's "progression" from emotional to contemplative novelist is spurious. Like Chelifer, Miss Thriplow continues to adhere to an egocentric apprehension of reality, so her alteration in subject matter fails both to enlarge her consciousness and to enrich her novels. Since their writings merely reproduce the content of their own minds, their art ceases to be a means for comprehending reality and becomes, instead, an end in itself, which thereby justifies their present modes of living. This is a transvaluation of art which subordinates experience to expression. Such an art is pure onanism because it relates to nothing outside of itself.

If Francis Chelifer and Mary Thriplow thus diminish the "suchness" of the world, Lilian Aldwinkle magnifies it. Mrs. Aldwinkle expropriates unto herself the matter of her environment, embellishing its value in the process. This is but another form of Chelifer's immersion in reality. But whereas Chelifer's immersion seeks to mullify the function of intelligence, Mrs. Aldwinkle's seeks to negate the function of time.

Everybody, everything had always slipped away from her. She had always missed all the really important, exciting things; they had invariably happened, somehow, just around the corner, out of her sight. The days were so short, so few now. Death approached, approached. Why had Cardan brought that horrible imbecile creature to die in front of her like that? She didn't want to be reminded of death. Mrs. Aldwinkle shuddered. I'm getting old, she thought; and the little clock on the mantel-piece, ticking away in the silence of her huge room, took up the refrain: Getting old, getting old, getting old, it repeated again and again, endlessly. Getting old. Mrs. Aldwinkle looked at herself in the glass -- and that electric massage machine hadn't arrived. True, it was on its way; but it would be weeks before it got here. If she had had it before, if she'd looked younger.... who knew? Getting old, getting old repeated the little clock. In a couple of days from now Chelifer would be going back to England; he'd go away, he'd live apart from her, live such a wonderful, beautiful life. She'd miss it all. And Calamy had already gone; what was he doing, sitting there in the mountains? He was thinking wonderful thoughts, thoughts that might hold the secret she had always been seeking and had never found, thoughts that might bring the consolation and tranquility of which she always so sorely stood in need. She was missing them, she's never know them. Getting old, getting old (TBL, p. 280).

I reproduce this long passage, in part, to show that Huxley was capable of introducing a note of pathos into his writing. Admittedly, most of his characters don't deserve such treatment, but Mrs. Aldwinkle does. As Huxley's Everyman in the Twentieth Century, she is the keyless citizen, lacking the means of ordering the flux of time. Time is the enemy which releases whatever momentary control she has over the life around

her. In a vague, indefinite way, she senses that an answer exists which will bring her the salvation of eternity. But art and intellect refuse to yield her the key that will unlock the door to eternity. Given the egocentric artists and intellectuals around her, how could her search in those directions prove anything but fruitless? If, then, eternity is closed to her, she will seek refuge in regeneration through time. Sexual love is her means of extracting herself from sinking in the temporal flood, for the cessation of passion for the old lover is followed by its growth for the new one. The cycle spells rebirth. But aging thwarts eternal return. To grow old makes one unattractive, makes one undesirable, gives one over to the time that is death.

The triumph of death is the ultimate reality for Cardan as well. Although the man delights primarily in pleasures of the mind, the "tyranny" of the body is still, for him, "the one appalling fact." His dilemma is that nothing in his background will enable him to adapt himself to death as being anything other than the "essential horror" (to borrow a phrase from Will Farnaby). Cardan, as he proudly asserts, is a product of nineteenth-century scientific materialism whose "faith" in man's ability to achieve certainty through reason precludes the need for belief. Unlike Mrs. Aldwinkle, then, Cardan cannot even find solace in the hope of one day discovering the "secret illumination" which will allay his fear of death. His only answer is to stave off the economic and material unpleasantness of decay and death. Significantly enough, that hope depends upon an idiot!

Cardan's urbane conversations about love, language, and morality are his only other defenses against mortality. But he is keenly aware that talk is but a diversion of the mind. The only truly efficacious manner would be to confront death through the protective shield of belief.

Blessed are the fools, thought Mr. Cardan, for they shall see nothing. Or perhaps they do see and seeing, nevertheless comfortably believe in future compensations and the justice of eternity. In either case -- not seeing, or seeing but believing -- they are fools. Still, believing is probably the best solution of all, Mr. Cardan went on to reflect. For it allows one to see and not to ignore. It permits one to accept the facts and yet justify them. For a believer the presence of a coffin or two would not interfere with the appreciation of Sammicheli's architecture (TBL, p.269).

The practiced deception Cardan sees as essential to belief reveals a telling criticism of scientific materialism. Having been taught that truth is measure and measure truth, Cardan and his age (and the succeeding one, as well) thought that this was all they could know. They have learned, however, that is far from all they need to know.

Because, according to Huxley, the awareness of value is innate in man, the lack of a comprehensive system of values forces him into distorted perceptions. Looking back upon Cardan's positions with regard to love, language, and morality, we can see how this process of transvaluation operates. Love, when viewed scientifically, becomes sheer boredom. It requires hypocrisy and secrecy to tempt the imagination. Dead languages, too, are uninteresting in their specific meanings; each generation should rewrite them to suit their needs. Socially, his class is able to absolve moral qualms about conditions amongst the "lower class" by building a few public bathrooms. In all of these opinions, Cardan articulates the mental outlook of the nineteenth-century Englishman. The end is, in each instance, to focus on some perspective which will elevate the self, providing the self, rather than the thing observed, with primary value. But Cardan, himself, is intellectually too acute to be completely deluded by such rationalizations. His behavior is consciously motivated by self-interest. He saves Miss Elver from her brother's murderous scheme only

because he wants her money for himself. Cardan, here, is not being cynical, merely "realistic," according to his limited view of what life holds in store for him. Never having been an idealist, like Chelifer, his psyche is not unbalanced by the awareness of self-interest that underlies human behavior.

Yet a narrowly determined realism leads as inevitably as cynicism to a vision of ultimate debilitation. Cardan's position vis-à-vis death parallels Chelifer's vis-à-vis reality. Spirit must yield to matter; intelligence to domesticated brutishness. Because both have become personally aware of the insufficiency of intelligence, it is logical that the two should give a unified forecast for society and twentieth-century man that entails a gloomy prognostication for individual intelligence.

The difficulty begins when the individuals begin to get thoroughly conscious of themselves apart from the tribe. There's an immense number of people who ought to be tribal savages, but who have been made conscious of their individuality. They can't obey tribal morality blindly and they're too feeble to think for themselves. I should say that the majority of people in a modern educated democratic state are at that stage... (TBL, p.297).

Cardan's words recall Chelifer's description of the bourgeois life. Ironically, consciousness of their own individuality -- in the form of intellectual isolation -- is responsible for the spiritual crises of Cardan and Chelifer as well. They are right that intelligence, by itself, is not sufficient consolation. Something which can redefine man as both individual and member of society must be added -- a new consciousness. But Cardan and Chelifer, tied as they are to the dictates of reason, can only foresee such a transformation as the product of applied science, whose standardization will yield a world "composed of innumerable individuals, all thinking and acting in exactly the same way (TBL, p.297)."

As an alternative to a global village of Babbitts, there is Calamy. Although contemporary with Chelifer, Calamy is very much a twentieth-century man, whereas Chelifer's intellectual framework is decidedly Nineteenth Century. Calamy is imbued with the spirit of the possible, arising from "the sense that everything's perfectly provisional and temporary -- everything, from social institutions to what we've hitherto regarded as the most sacred scientific truths (TBL, p.34)." Cardan and Chelifer are characterized by mental fixity, faith in an absolute, even if it must be an absolute despair. Calamy, on the other hand, has a more scientific spirit, a freely investigative mind. Calamy is liberated by capturing the essence of science, whereas the other two are caught up in the letter of its law. And the letter most certainly killeth!

Calamy's liberation, however, should not be viewed as an easy victory. His prison, like Gumbriel's is the spirit of the age -- distractions, which veil the world of "large and silent things beyond." The conflict within him is between the sensual gratification of the body and the contemplative gratification of the mind. But the conflict appears to exist exclusively in his own head; there is no dramatization. Because it is difficult to regard Mary Thriplow as a Circe, his decision to reject the flesh seems a perfunctory one. His function in the novel is mechanical, to show the fraudulence of Cardan and Chelifer, which explains the technique of the debate at the conclusion.

In a letter to his friend, Robert Nichols, dated 10 April, 1925, Huxley speaks of the ethical and emotional problem of love and humility, which he regards here as the most vital for the age. He accepts the validity of the Cardan-Chelifer analysis on contemporary man's isolation consequent upon the loss of authority and the disappearance of the tribe as symbol of social coherence. But Huxley does not see this as a justification for cynicism.

Obviously, the only thing to be done is to go right through with the process; to realize individuality to the full, the real individuality, Lao-Tsz[u]'s individuality, the Yogis' individuality, and with it the oneness of everything. Obviously! But the difficulty is huge. And meanwhile the world is peopled with miserable beings who are neither one thing nor the other; who are solitary and yet not complete individuals; conscious only of the worst part of themselves (that deplorable and characteristic self-consciousness of the present time that examines all that is good and beautiful until it discovers its opposite); devilishly proud of what they regard as their marvellous independence and their acuteness of spirit. For them love and humility are impossible of achievement. What's to be done about it? That's the great question. Some day I may write a good book, or at any rate a mature book, not a queer sophisticatedly jejune book, like this last affair, like the blooming lot, in fact.<sup>28</sup>

The emotional sterility and intellectual inflexibility of the Cardan-Chelifer position are to be negated by the open-minded stance of Calamy. That Huxley himself found the current solution unsatisfactory can be explained in terms of the limited progress Calamy actually makes. He merely argues for the need to study the layer upon layer of universes, distinct and separate, in which we exist. But this study can only be accomplished through detached contemplation. Calamy justifies his withdrawal with the examples of highly regarded contemplatives, living at different poles of time and space.

The "scientific" methodology Calamy here employs, his collation of authoritative opinions, reflects an attempt to derive a coherent tradition which would encompass man's past experience as well as his new knowledge. The quest for the perennial, however, extends only as far as book knowledge. Because Huxley has yet to gain immediate, first-hand experience of the perennial, because he has yet to test its wisdom against the facts of reality itself, the novel ends without indicating anything more about this new, reintegrative tradition that would serve to counter the American

century. The image of the shining peak in the last line is a literary camouflage to hide the vagueness of the intellectualized conclusion Calamy reaches. The guarded optimism in the book must be tempered with the pessimism of the letter quoted above. Gumbril's Complete Man is not succeeded by a Whole Man, but by the Life Worshiper!

1 Aldous Huxley, Crome Yellow (1922; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1955), p.76. All future references are to this edition.

2 Greenblatt, p.80, sees the world of Crome as an "artificiality." But it is as decidedly real and purposively constructed as either the London or country life he counterpoints to it. The significant factor is not its supposed "unreality," but, as Bowering has indicated, its moral irresponsibility. The people of Crome are indifferent to suffering (which Greenblatt also acknowledges). The jaundiced color in the novel's title implies the moral illness; Bowering, pp.34-35. Bowering might also have added that the metal in the title comments adversely upon the mettle of the characters. Witness, in this regard, their viewing of the charity fair -- a highly profitable venture for the community -- as an encumbrance, a mere obligation to be endured.

3 Denis's time warp represents a form of "self-division," a quality which relates him to the rest of Huxley's heroes, but distinguishes him from the other characters in Crome Yellow, whose identities do remain whole. This first novel concerns itself with social- rather than self-divisiveness; consequently, the problem of Denis's character remains a minor theme here.

4 This is Denis's evaluation of Jenny's caricatures.

5 Others have seen the relationship between the novel proper and the history in different lights. Meckier, in "Aldous Huxley," sees it as a personification of the futility of egocentric escapism, p.285; Greenblatt sees an allegory of man against nature, pp.83-87; Bowering sees the past as a time which offered possibility for fulfillment, as opposed to a present which holds only "futility and frustration," p.44.

6 In the essay, "The Pierian Spring," from Along the Road, Huxley speaks of the decline in artistic work as a consequence of the knowledge of multiple styles stemming from various ages and cultures. Because the twentieth-century artist knows so much, he cannot validly select one style as being necessarily better than many others. The result -- he tries his hand at many, never allowing himself the time to perfect his skill at any one, pp.200-203. I think the same principle applies to character as well -- as an explanation for the various time identifications. It's another example of twentieth-century man alone with the universe and all of it at his disposal. Ivor would therefore parallel the artists Huxley refers to above.

7 Bowering, p.39.

8 It is impossible to deny the proto-fascist tendencies in Huxley's pre-mystical phase, especially in matters of domestic politics. In a letter to his brother, Julian, dated 12 November, 1923, Huxley speaks of the problem of leadership in the modern state. His solution is a variant of Scogan's. The modern "leader must be something of a charlatan and an actor; he must have courage and determination and charm. It seems to me that the chances of finding an active charlatan who is also a philosopher and man of science -- and to lead a modern state one must

be those too -- are almost infinitely small. Mussolini, I suppose, comes as near as anyone to fulfilling the conditions. A little more pure reason and he would be the philosopher king." Letters, pp.222-223. I imagine that it took an overly-privileged Englishman, whose modest income was inflated by the backwardness of the Italian economy, to make such a politically and morally obtuse observation. The greatness of Huxley was in his ability to grow beyond a rather bad beginning. It also shows that there is hope for us all.

9 He is also a specific example of the general tendency of man to invert his mode of perceiving the world so as to reinforce his ego-tistically motivated confusion as to the true relationship between reality and mind's apprehension of it. This is why Huxley correlates Denis's art with his education. What Denis does with words on a literary level, Scogan does with reason on an intellectual level. Both forget reality because they are too busy indulging their delight in their respective tools. They can see reality only in terms conforming to the resources of their tools. Since their tools can't do everything, they can never begin to approach a full comprehension of the world as it actually is. One of the most valuable services Huxley has performed has been his demonstration of just how restricted any one means of knowing is.

10 Howe, pp.29-30.

11 Letters, p.224. Leonard Huxley, by the way, found the novel "distasteful."

12 Bowering, p.49; A.E. Dyson, "Aldous Huxley and the Two Nothings," The Critical Quarterly, 3 (1961), 295; Ghose, p.81; Glicksberg, "Huxley the Experimental Novelist," p.52; Greenblatt, p.89; Charles M. Holmes, Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970), p.26.

13 Aldous Huxley, Antic Hay (1923; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Perennial Library, 1965), p.4. All further references are to this edition.

14 The young Huxley, in a letter dated by Smith as October, 1915, writes that "friendship, love ... is the only reality.... It simply is truth in the highest form we can attain to (Letters, p.83)." This concept is evidence of his mother's influence upon him. Her final advice not to be over-critical of others and to 'love much' parallels the departing words of Mrs. Gumbriel to her son. In the novel, however, the mother's words are not specifically stated; AH, p.5. Huxley's refusal to repeat his own mother's letter in the fictional context may possibly be a desire to avoid false biographical identifications between himself and Gumbriel, since much of his writings are based upon his own life.

15 Greenblatt sees these masks as hiding the despair in their souls, p.92; James Hall, The Tragic Comedians: Seven Modern British Novelists (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1963), believes that the characters, suffering the pain of knowing their freedom to choose their own standards, must have their role-playing, despite their pride in being liberated, p.35; Meckier, in Aldous Huxley, sees the modern disguises as dim reflections of the original from which they are modeled, p.68.

16 Pelham Edgar, The Art of the Novel (1933; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p.281; Bowering, p.52; Meckier, Aldous Huxley, p.70.

17 The failure of Western systems of education was a perennial subject for Huxley. If we look, for example, at his chapter on education in Ends and Means, we find him condemning the traditional liberal education that he and Gumbriel received for producing either parrots who repeat, but cannot understand, or specialists who understand only their narrow sphere of learning, or, at best, intellectuals who understand the relationships between many facets of apprehendable reality, but who do so only in the abstract. Ends and Means: An Inquiry into the Nature of Ideals and into the Methods Employed for Their Realization (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1937), pp.225-226.

18 During conversation in a Soho restaurant, Gumbriel finds Lypiatt's use of the word "dream" to imply noble aspiration "inadmissible" in the Twentieth Century because the "word merely connotes Freud (AH, p.51)." But it is only during dream time that Gumbriel unites the past of his mother with the future of Emily. Moral -- re-joyce in post-Freudian polymorphous sexuality!

19 Bowering accurately describes her as "the spirit of the age," p.54. She is more symbol than real person, her function in the novel being the consciousness of the period's underlying vacuity and the need for soporific distraction to numb that awareness.

20 Hall interprets Gumbriel at this point as being talkative passivity seeking to justify itself through the negation of action, p.41.

21 Meckier, Aldous Huxley, sees Gumbriel as suffering from a lack of sufficient faith, p.69. But this places too much emphasis upon spirit, which even for Huxley's mystical phases takes second place to intellectual grasp. In Huxley, faith follows upon understanding. And Gumbriel's level of awareness is the matter at hand.

22 "Ben Jonson," On the Margin (London: Chatto and Windus, 1923), rpt. in On Art and Artists, p. 150.

23 "Uncle Spencer," pp.123-124.

24 Aldous Huxley, Those Barren Leaves (1925; rpt. New York: Avon Books, 1956), p.83. All future references are to this edition.

25 Meckier, "Aldous Huxley," sees Chelifer's distortion of himself as the role the artist must play in a society of eccentric egotists. Since such a mind is the reality, the artist must join in if he is to deal with life as it is actually lived, pp.284-285. Meckier takes Chelifer too much at his own word and fails to see the fallacy in Chelifer's restricted definition of reality.

26 Chelifer not only presents one manner of the Huxleyan satanist, as artist-rejector he also has a forerunner in the short story, "Eupompus Gave Splendour to Art by Numbers," Limbo (New York: George H. Dorn Company, 1920, rpt. in Collected Short Stories by Aldous Huxley (1958;

rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1960), pp.39-48. The central character, Emberlin, discovers that the ancient painter, Eupompus, had abandoned a successful career as a portrait painter in order to paint number because that seemed to him to be the sole reality. Emberlin follows suit and abandons his talent for verbal expression to become a "phil-arithmic." The narrator's negative response to his friend's, Emberlin's, new direction would apply equally to Chelifer. The narrator perceives the death of Eupompus as an act of sanity, rather than madness, for Eupompus kills several of his followers before taking his own life.

27 "Pleasures," On the Margin, p.51. Lucy and Spandrell, in Point Counter Point, are the harbingers of this social malaise.

28 Letters, pp.245-246.

## Chapter Two

### Point Counter Point

Huxley's friendship with Lawrence during the second half of the 1920's appears responsible for the abandonment of Calamy's position.<sup>1</sup> Asceticism, examined under the lenses of Lawrentian criticism, only served to reinforce the imbalance in favor of intellectualism in twentieth-century man without, in compensation, providing him with a means for effective action within society. Contemplative withdrawal is therefore rejected in favor of the Life Worshiper credo. Point Counter Point, in this regard, represents a return to the world of Antic Hay in order to re-examine the interrelated individual and societal crises from the new vantage point.

The quotation from Fulke Greville's "Mustapha" on the antithetical relationship between mind and body, selected by Huxley as the novel's epigraph, immediately establishes the book's central concern -- self-division. While the Rampions are the prime representatives of its opposite condition -- harmonious living achieved through the embracement of human diversity -- they are not the only ones who do so. Fanny Logan, a minor character seen only at Lady Tantamount's musicale, provides an active illustration of how balanced excess, a cardinal tenet of the Life Worshiper's belief, can neutralize the potential distortion of behavior consequent upon the division of self.

Fanny Logan felt the tears coming into her eyes. She was easily moved, especially by music; and when she felt an emotion, she did not try to repress it, but abandoned herself whole-heartedly to it. How beautiful this music was, how sad, and yet how comforting! She felt it within her as a current of exquisite feeling running smoothly but irresistibly

through all the labyrinthine intricacies of her being. Even her body shook and swayed in time with the pulse and undulation of the melody. She thought of her husband; the memory of him came to her on the current of the music, of darling, darling Eric, dead now almost two years; dead, and still so young. The tears came faster. She wiped them away. The music was infinitely sad; and yet it consoled. It admitted everything, so to speak -- poor Eric's dying before his time, the pain of his illness, his reluctance to go -- it admitted everything. It expressed the whole sadness of the world, and from the depths of that sadness it was able to affirm -- deliberately, quietly, without protesting too much -- that everything was in some way right, acceptable. It included the sadness within some vaster, more comprehensive happiness. The tears kept welling up into Mrs. Logan's eyes; but they were somehow happy tears, in spite of her sadness. She would have liked to tell Polly, her daughter, what she was feeling. But Polly was sitting in another row. Mrs. Logan could see the back of her head, two rows further forward .... And suddenly, as though she had felt that her mother was looking at her, as though she understood what she was feeling, Polly turned round and gave her a quick smile. <sup>2</sup> Mrs. Logan's sad and musical happiness was complete.

The above passage should recall similar instances in Antic Hay in which artistic creation functions as a medium for human connection with the world beyond the self. But, whereas Mozart's quintet and Wren's St. Paul's dome remain values unutilized by the characters, Bach, in the present novel, is efficacious because of Fanny Logan's ability to express freely her emotional responses. By not interjecting between the music and her inner feelings a self-conscious ego which would monitor the external world according to preconceived standards of behavior, she can allow the music to evoke correspondences within her, thereby enriching her own mood of the moment with the experience of the art. Elevated, at least during the interval of the performance, by harmonizing inner being with external environment, Fanny unites through memory with her deceased husband and, through what Gumbril Sr. would have liked to the telepathic communication of the starlings, with her daughter as well.

Fanny's action is possible only because she can accept the psychological validity of her moment-to-moment states of being. Her acceptance implies a foregoing of belief in the consistency of personality and conduct. Desire for consistency had been Calamy's reason for retreating to the mountain. But Huxley has now come down from the mountain in order to live in the ever continual present of the Life Worshiper. In his essay on Pascal, we find him saying that consistency is mummifying, something only the dead can achieve. Although the living must necessarily be diverse, the majority of people refuse to accept this fact because of man's "intellectually vicious love of system and fixity." For Huxley, such a propensity conceals an underlying terror and hatred of life. In order to exist on these terms, such people must "pretend, in the teeth of the facts, that they are one person all the time, thinking one set of thoughts, pursuing one course of action throughout life."<sup>3</sup> The majority of Huxley's characters in Point Counter Point exemplify man's passion for consistency by constricting their natures into intellectual, spiritual, or sensual molds. Because of the rigidity of their positions, their relationships with others serve only to reinforce and perpetuate those defects which prevent them from leading whole, balanced, harmonious lives. Fanny Logan, therefore, is not only a minor character; she is also an exception from the general mode of modern society. Yet her presence prevents the reader from viewing the Rampions's mode of living as being either idiosyncratic or unique.

If consistency is at variance with human nature, then the behavior of those characters who have willfully regimented their beings according to some principle of personality or abstract theory should evince the kind of tension Huxley describes as self-division. Action, therefore, should be the primary focus here. And in Point Counter Point there are

two central types of action, the pursuit of another being and the taking of life. They are simultaneously parallel and contrasting types of action; both concern that which is outside either the self or the present state of the self, yet the first is an attempt to gain, whereas the second necessitates loss. By having his characters perform actions which possess a common generic basis, Huxley can reveal the dimensions of each character's self-division through the counterpointing of their individual manifestations of the general act (the particular skewings of the action being dictated by the particular natures of the people performing these acts). So we find that what should have been a novel of action is really a character analysis. The counterpointing technique reduces the action to the subordinate role of a device for character revelation.

This follows Huxley's usual ordering of priorities, but marks a divergence from the tradition of Western thinking, which conceives of personality as fixed and knowable and concentrates attention upon action as the mysterious factor to be unraveled. Why else is time so central to our civilization? Through time we locate and differentiate events. This is what make the Western mentality an historical consciousness. No wonder then that the modern values crisis should have produced writers who eschew history for mythology. Huxley, however, avoided both. If human nature has remained constant throughout the centuries of recorded history, then human actions should be generically similar. What would be new in human behavior would arise from the utilization of previously untapped potentialities in man. We are, then, more than we seem to be, but the fiction of the fixed personality prevents us from discovering this. Since we live physically only in the present moment and our physiologies, as well as our psychologies, are constantly fluctuating,

who we really are will be revealed in the aggregate moments of alteration. Hence, Huxley's technique in this novel of counterpointing such moments in the lives of his characters in order to pierce the mask of consistency.<sup>4</sup>

Realizing and living fully with the multiplicity of selves latent in every individual, when raised to the position of a criterion for human behavior, means focusing attention upon man as an end in himself. But to avoid the pitfall of self-consciousness, attention, for the Life Worshiper, must be emotional, as well as intellectual. For the fully conscious Life Worshiper, then, one's guide to conduct is his momentary emotional-intellectual state. What differentiates this position from mere self-indulgence is the kind of value Huxley places upon being completely human.

Under the influence of Lawrence's thinking, Huxley transcendentalizes the transitory quality of human behavior. In essence, it is an answer to the problem Gumbriel faced when he abandoned the Complete Man's disguise and lost the integrative possibility of Emily's love. Because he was a product and reflection of his time, Gumbriel was skeptical about transcendental values. His skepticism, however, provided him no means for justifying his actions. Some kind of flight from responsibility was necessary. Gumbriel chose physical departure, both because he could not cope with a life lived moment by unconnected moment and because the clown's mask was just too demeaning. So Gumbriel ran. And Calamy ran. But Lawrence seemed to hold a way of returning that would confront the problem head-on.

What the Life Worshiper offered Huxley is revealed in an essay Huxley wrote shortly after Lawrence's death and a year before Brave New World would repudiate the efficacy of that ethos. In "Belief and Actions" Huxley speaks of the sterility of merely living in the immediate reality of changing desires, emotions, and moods. That leaves one without the

courage, the motive, the power to follow a course of effective action. The alternative, of finding justification in totally secular ideas, is also unattractive to Huxley. Justification of feelings and moods in terms of a "right to happiness" or a "right to self-expression" places too heavy a reliance upon human relativity. "In other words, we claim to do what we like, not because doing what we like is in harmony with some supposed absolute good, but because it is good in itself."<sup>5</sup> The people of Point Counter Point are Huxley's demonstration of the social impoverishment of this solution.

The Life Worshiper's creed considers, instead, the aggregate of man's transitional states of being as an absolute. It says that doing what we like is not a good in itself, but doing what we like is consonant with being fully human -- and that consonance is the good in itself. If this seems to approach a verbal sleight of hand, then I think it becomes clear why Huxley finally jettisoned Lawrentianism. The Life Worshiper's position only relates man to himself, but leaves him stranded vis-a-vis the rest of the universe. If we were all Life Worshipers, more likely than not, we would all be acting at cross-purposes because we would each be living in accordance with our individual needs of the moment and the likelihood of these momentary desires intersecting cooperatively would be minute. The failure of this credo, then, lies in its falsification of man's real nature. It first ignores the fact that man has a cognitive mind which allows him to live on a more self-reliant, self-corrective level than the instinctual level of the animal. And second, it compounds the initial error by transcendentalizing the relative value of this restricted view of self, a view of self which also denies the diversity of human types.<sup>6</sup> Only if the human species were as homogeneous as other species of animal life could we then achieve the herd conformity necessary

to share this value as an absolute good.<sup>7</sup> But as Point Counter Point itself reveals, what we do share are the generic natures of our actions, and the performance of these by separate beings serves to individualize even them. When we turn to the novel proper, we see that Huxley himself had difficulties putting the theory into practice.

The characterizations of Mark and Mary Rampion serve as illustrations of the Life Worshiper hypothesis. Both individually and as a couple, they are the only major figures to be fully themselves. And yet, they remain always outside the action of the novel. Our first view of them is revealing. They are not present at Lady Tantamount's. Instead, we meet them gathered at Sbisa's Restaurant, where Rampion is characteristically complaining of the tameness of modern society. The transition from Tantamount House to Soho is made for us by the nihilistic hedonist, Lucy Tantamount, and her devoted pursuer, Walter Bidlake. The outline of this action places the Rampions outside the mainstream of the world represented by the party.<sup>8</sup> The younger generation leaves that other life, but never relates to the substance of Rampionesque living. Instead, like those who only saw the sexuality of Lawrence's writing, Lucy is attracted only to the sensual aspects of the restaurant; she never makes contact with the ideas there expounded.

The flashback to the courtship and early marriage of the Rampions emphasizes through time their societal separateness seen first in terms of space. The episode contains the kind of transformation Huxley would characterize as growth. The restrictedness of their pocket introduces and awakens Mary to those "ordinary facts of existence" her upper-class background had shielded her from. But her natural enthusiasm for indulging in her immediate impulses, her instinct for being both "a perfect animal and a perfect human" remains unimpaired, finally enabling Mark to overcome

the puritanism inculcated by his mother. Their union represents the possibility of learning to live life concretely, rather than second-handedly in the realm of abstractly formulated "rules" of conduct. However, the others in the novel prefer to continue to exist as pursuers of ideals which emphasize only one aspect of their beings, rather than as learners of their total selves. This condition might explain why the Rampions do exist outside of the action. For their own improvement, at least, if not for society's, they don't have to act because they have already achieved the desired end.<sup>9</sup>

Once viewed as realized states of being, the Rampions become a standard of evaluation for Huxley, which is one of the two ways in which Mark Rampion operates in the book, the other being as an expounder of new ideas. For his capability as a touchstone, we are given, along with concrete examples, the testimony of Mary. "Wherever human relationships were concerned, she had an absolute trust in Rampion's judgment (Pt Ct Pt, p.99)." Rampion's "nose for souls" is amply demonstrated throughout the novel by the pointed comments he makes about his friends. The specific illustrations of this faculty are less important to remark (and pun) upon than is the general direction of his discernment. His forte is his insight into the quality of life people lead. This strength helps to explain why Rampion's commentary on others is so perceptive and why he is so correspondingly vague when proposing alternate life styles.<sup>10</sup> His failure, on this head, is one of vision. He is an analyst, not a seer.

Analytically, however, Rampion occasionally provides a corrective to ideas presented by other characters. An illustration of this would be the positions taken by him and Illidge on the mode of life wealth makes possible. Both believe their working-class backgrounds have molded them from a clay morally superior to that which molds the bourgeoisie. The

targets of their respective animosities engendered by the circumstances of wealth, however, are significantly different. Illidge, we are told,

... resented the virtues of the rich much more than their vices, Gluttony, sloth, sensuality, and all the less comely products of leisure and an independent income could be forgiven, precisely because they were discreditable. But disinterestedness, spirituality, incorruptibility, refinement of feeling, and exquisiteness of taste -- these were commonly regarded as qualities to be admired; that was why he so specially disliked them. For these virtues, according to Illidge, were as fatally the product of wealth as were chronic guzzling and breakfast at eleven (Pt Ct Pt, p.61).

Clearly, what he reacts against is evidence contradicting his desperately egotistical need to believe himself better than the rich. His fundamental drive is for self-affirmation in the face of a reality which would, indeed, judge him inferior. Wealth, as a condition external and gratuitous to the individual's inherent being at birth, is therefore seen by Illidge as that unfair advantage accounting for his own, actually personal, deficiencies. By describing the differences between himself and the rich in Marxian terms of class, he can hide this truth both from himself and from the world at large.

Whereas Illidge's attack upon wealth reflects a need for personal justification, Rampion's is of a piece with his philosophical position. When asked by Mary, during their courtship, if he likes the plays of James M. Barrie, he replies that such a question can only be possible in surroundings like her family's country estate.

'But come down with me into Stanton and ask me there. We're sitting on the hard reality down there, not with an air cushion between us and the facts. You must have an assured five pounds a week at least before you can begin to enjoy Barrie. If you're sitting on the bare facts, he's an insult (Pt Ct Pt, p.104).'

Wealth, then, is a divider for Rampion, too, but one which serves to abstract people from reality rather than to purify them, as Illidge would

have it. The divorcement from the immediate experiences common to all men effected by a five percent gilt-edged security constitutes the fault of money. Accordingly, Huxley expected the reader to realize the distinction between the "reasonableness" of Rampion's philosophically motivated critique of wealth and the mean-spiritedness of Illidge's solipsistic condemnation. Such counterpointing would emphasize the epistemological superiority of the Life Worshiper's concreteness of living over the abstract rationalizations endemic to egotism.<sup>11</sup>

And Rampion's general analysis of the modern malaise has the virtue, for Huxley, of not only being reasonable, but also analogous to the picture of bourgeois life given in both Antic Hay and Those Barren Leaves. Twentieth-century Western society is debased and dehumanizing -- both Huxley and Lawrence (as well as most other modern artists) held this truth to be self-evident.

'....Civilization is harmony and completeness. Reason, feeling, instinct, the life of the body -- Blake managed to include and harmonize everything. Barbarism is being lop-sided. You can be a barbarian of the intellect as well as of the body. A barbarian of the soul and the feelings as well as of sensuality. Christianity made us barbarians of the soul and now science is making us barbarians of the intellect. Blake was the last civilized man (Pt Ct Pt, p.107).'

In a later passage, Rampion seems to divide science between Freud and Ford, which would correspond roughly to the theoretical and the applied sciences respectively. And his central preoccupation in the novel seems to be explaining the whys and wherefores of these various barbarisms.

The trouble, according to Rampion, follows from the pursuit of "wrongful" knowledge. Rampion posits a curious dichotomy between "human" and "non-human" truths. Human truth would be that knowledge man discovers with his whole being, that is, body working in harmony with mind. Non-human truth would be discoverable when man operates with only a

specialized part of himself. Scientists, here, are the arch-whoremongers of the non-human. By distorting their humanity, scientists have gained a faint notion of how the world would look to non-human eyes. And Rampion haughtily asks what good can come from the pure sciences of quantum theory, wave mechanics, relativity, et. al? Philip Quarles's reply, that such knowledge is both "fun" in itself and may possibly lead to practical applications like harnessing the energy of the atom, seems intentionally constructed of straw. Rampion merely jeers at him. Not only is the knowledge irrelevant to ordinary human life, it has the added danger of distracting people from the important human truths. "'It makes them falsify their experience in order that lived reality may fit in with abstract theory (Pt Ct Pt, p.406).'" It is obvious from Rampion's argument that he believes the findings of science have been instrumental in making man subservient to the machine, but his fulminations merely obscure the issue. To clarify this mixture of insight and confused thinking, we must turn away from the novel proper (which, with regard to illuminating Rampion's ideas, leaves much to be desired) and look at what Huxley says in the initial essay of Do What You Will, his handbook to the Life Worshiper's Credo.

Although Huxley traces the dilemma of the modern mind back to the psychological effect of monotheism, the industrial revolution would have been a more revealing phenomenon to analyze. For what he accurately describes in "One and Many" is the preferential treatment accorded to intellectual, scientific knowledge as opposed to a direct knowledge of things gained from instinct, passion and intuition. The latter are less beneficial (from the standpoint of efficiency) to an industrial society. But, as Huxley, in Island, will ultimately come to realize, the preference has nothing to do with science as a method of knowing the universe, but,

instead, with the ends to which science is put. And here is where an understanding of what the industrial revolution accomplished is telling. That age marked the final assumption of power by what could now be categorized as the capitalist class. This, of course, meant that all national resources would serve not King and Country, but the individual's pursuit of profit, the reward, material and otherwise, of domination in and of society. Science, which on this level must be viewed as the substitution of mind for muscle and military power, became the fundamental tool of the capitalist revolution. Science has yet to exist independent of specialized class interest. That is the next revolution!

Returning to what Rampion says, however, we can see that he is correct about the perverted application of science, but wrong in thinking that categories as "human" and "non-human" truths exist. Again returning to the essay, "One and Many," Huxley says "the apparent boundaries of any real being are not its real boundaries.... a human spirit is all that it can experience. Its boundaries are even more indefinitely wide than those of the corporeal man. The whole experienceable world is potentially a part of it, just as the whole edible or otherwise physically assimilable world is a part, potentially of the body."<sup>12</sup> Clearly, the absolutist position against scientific research taken by Rampion was not shared by Huxley. But the significant thought that the soul becomes that which it experiences would certainly have a strong influence in favor of a more balanced, more various mode of living -- one which would avoid restrictedness. Huxley's anti-onesidedness here would coincide with Lawrence's. Hence the attraction for Huxley of the Life Worshiper's creed.

Huxley also agreed with the deleterious effect of the predominance of the mental faculty in contemporary life.

'If men went about satisfying their instinctive desires only when they genuinely felt them, like the animals... they'd behave a damned sight better than the majority of civilized human beings behave today. It isn't natural appetite and spontaneous desire that makes men so beastly -- no, "beastly" is the wrong word; it implies an insult to the animals -- so all-too-humanly bad and vicious, then. It's the imagination, it's the intellect, it's principles, it's tradition and education. Leave the instincts to themselves and they'll do very little mischief. If men made love only when they were carried away by passion, if they fought only when they were angry or terrified, if they grabbed at property only when they had need or were swept off their feet by an uncontrollable desire for possession -- why, I assure you, this world would be a great deal more like the Kingdom of Heaven than it is under our present Christian-intellectual-scientific dispensation... (Pt Ct Pt, pp.411-412).'

The above passage is reminiscent of what Chelifer says about the effectiveness of human virtues. But whereas Chelifer despairs of man because he feels there is something fundamentally defective in being human, Rampion places the blame upon not being fully human enough, for any tendency which disturbs the mind-body balance in favor of one side would be a distortion away from the totality of human being. Chelifer's cynicism, then, can be seen as the consequence of his belief in the "Christian-intellectual-scientific dispensation."

But the question remains, how are we to become more human in a society which must subvert that end in order to maintain its machine-oriented domination of people? Since what is called for is an alternate view of man, the obvious starting point must be within the mind. Rampion advocates a campaign to re-educate the modern worker in the necessity of leading a dualistic life. Industrialization has become so integral a part of modern society that to dismantle it wholesale would condemn the majority of people to death by starvation. Since the folly of our ancestors has foreclosed our options, we must consign ourselves to eight

hours a day of idiotic, machine work, without any of the delusions about the "sanctity of labor" or "the christian service that businessmen do their fellows." It's all dirty work, but it must be done. In the remaining sixteen hours man can be free to devote himself to being a complete human, which means avoiding the "standardized, ready-made amusements" industrialists have produced for mass consumption. Rampion, however, is mum on what alternative leisure-time activities would be available to the average citizen of the modern industrial ghettos. And what would happen to those who work for companies producing the passive entertainments he wants workers to eschew? They're going to be unemployed and starving. The vagueness of Rampion's dualistic solution makes one highly suspicious. Yet, incredibly, Philip Quarles finds this a "good programme." Even more astonishing is Huxley's apparent approval.

How do we explain this? I think we must alter our conception of Rampion's origins. The man is as much Huxley as he is Lawrence. Rampion's analysis of mind's lopsided domination of modern life and his critique of mechanized living are not new ideas for Huxley. He had been writing about these problems throughout the Twenties. What is Lawrentian in Rampion, aside from superficial biographical details, is the spirit animating the man. Rampion, then, reflects Huxley's metamorphosis from the "satiric pyrrhonist" into the passionate believer. The message, however, has remained the same -- we must recover our sense of the human. Calamy had taken the contemplative path to self-discovery. But because that approach seemed to reinforce man's exclusive reliance upon mind, Huxley took up Lawrence's idea of living according to the dictates of the body since this seemed a logical means of righting man's imbalance. And herein lies the telling point. At this time in his development, Huxley had no comprehensive solution to meaninglessness other than a bookishly instigated

withdrawal from society. The Life Worshiper, based upon the flesh and blood example of Lawrence, at least promised the theoretical outline for a frontal assault upon the modern malaise. Being an inveterate empiricist, Huxley tried it out. The stance he assumed didn't quite fit the bill, as Rampion's vague proposals would indicate and Philip Quarles's failure will verify.

The reason, I believe, lies in the pretence implicit in the Life Worshiper. To achieve the Credo's state of balance excess one must be prepared to bovarize the diverse elements of one's personality.<sup>13</sup> Although the surface intention of bovarization would be for convenience's sake alone, a fictionalized unity masking the individual's diversity, the underlying idea reveals a Huxley who must make a conscious effort of intelligence and will in order to believe the Lawrentian Credo itself. What we have then, is a psychological tension between desire and realization, both in Huxley's own mind, and in the novel's characters as well. Rampion shows us the limitations of achievement. Turning now to Quarles, we will see just how efficacious the wish proves to be.

Philip Quarles confesses to having a propensity for self-directing. "It was so easy for him to be almost anybody, theoretically and with his intelligence. He had such a power of assimilation that he was often in danger of being unable to distinguish the assimilator from the assimilated; of not knowing among the multiplicity of his roles who was the actor (Pt Ct Pt, p.199)." The fusion, however, is neither perfect nor permanent; it is easy to know the dancer from the dancer from the dance.

Clearly, then, Philip Quarles is the novel's Huxleyan hero, evincing that role's distinguishing characteristic -- the existential concern for self.

The essential character of the self consisted precisely in that liquid and undeformable ubiquity; in that capacity to espouse all contours and yet remain unfixed in any form; to take, and with an equal facility efface, impressions. To such moulds as his spirit might from time to time occupy, to such hard and burning obstacles as it might flow round, submerge, and, itself cold, penetrate to the fiery heart of, no permanent loyalty was owing. The moulds were emptied as easily as they had been filled, the obstacles were passed by. But the essential liquidness that flowed where it would, the cool indifferent flux of intellectual curiosity -- that persisted and to that his loyalty was due (Pt Ct Pt, p.200).

A most revealing passage! Not only does it make inevitable the transitoriness of Lawrence's influence upon Huxley, but, for the work at hand, it also shows the difficulty of adapting to Rampion's position. If Quarles were as protean a personality as he states, he would be able to satisfy Elinor's emotional demands by imaginatively perceiving himself in the role of lover. His failure to do so stems as much from his misconceptions about the functional relationship between intellect and will as from his suppression of the body.<sup>14</sup> It is necessary, therefore, to examine more closely this predicament of self-division in Philip Quarles which lies at the heart of the novel's action.

In one of his notebook entries, Quarles describes a projected fictional character who is but a thinly disguised version of his own self. The man is an extreme introvert who has always been careful to develop his intellectual tendencies at the expense of his other faculties. He is ever the spectator of life, never an actor. His actions are reserved for the interior life of mind. By suppressing his emotional relationships and feelings of natural piety toward commemorative dates and places, he believes he has freed himself from sentimentality, from the irrational, from passion, impulse, and emotionalism. Gradually, however, he realized

that he has only succeeded in narrowing and desiccating his life. Even his intellect has been cramped by the very process he thought would liberate it. His reason's free, but his mind is open only to a tiny fraction of experience. Being cognizant of his defect, he desires to change, but cannot find the means to break life-long habits. Then, too, his repressions may really be the expression of a congenital coldness which would be, perhaps, impossible to correct. The intellectual life might be safer; for him, it's the line of least resistance. In this hypothetical character outline, Quarles has delineated the salient features of his own self-division. It is but another Huxleyan portrait of willful distortion of the self, an egotistically motivated concentration upon one outstanding aspect of being (intellect in Quarles's case), to the inevitable detriment of the rest of the man.

Quarles complicates the dilemma of his fictional surrogate by giving him a wife like his own Elinor, who lives on the emotional and intuitive levels of her being. Both love each other, but in their separate and conflicting ways. Consequently, he's satisfied with minimal demonstrations of tenderness and warmth, while she grows increasingly more frustrated. She threatens to leave him for a more passionate lover, but finds herself too much in love with her husband to act. But nothing more than this character sketch is ever given, a fact which tellingly coincides with the fate of Quarles himself.<sup>15</sup> Despite the events which take place in the novel, including the horrifying death of his son, he remains the same man at the end that he was at the beginning -- still aloof, still in transit. Quarles never grows beyond the embryonic stage, a potential for action and change which somehow never reaches fruition.

Why does Quarles fail to realize his instinctual self? The answer lies, of course, in the nature of his self-division. We are told, by his

mother, that his lameness, the consequence of a childhood accident, reinforced, but did not initiate, his remoteness. "He ... it seemed to her, was lacking in something -- in the desire and the capacity to give himself, to go out and meet his fellows, even those who loved him, even those he loved (Pt Ct Pt, p.268)." Therefore, congenitally introverted to begin with, his physical defect understandably forces him to compensate by perfecting his intellectual faculties, thereby enabling him, nonetheless, to excel in society. But since compensation is development through adaptation, a natural mode of survival found in most biological organisms, nothing dehumanizing (from the Life Worshiper's perspective) should have followed. Something, however, has.

Independent of, but possibly coincidental with, his intellectual growth has been an emotional desiccation. "By dint of being secretive about them, he had almost abolished his intimate feelings. Very little seemed to go on in the unintellectual part of his mind -- very little, at any rate, that wasn't either trivial or rather discreditable (Pt Ct Pt, p.335)." This is the deadness which lies at the heart of Philip Quarles. He can empathize with Rampion only because the latter exists for him -- and for us as well -- as an idea. Rampion's failure to be an actor in the novel's drama can, in this context, be interpreted as the expression of his creator's inability to bridge the gap between perception and performance.<sup>16</sup> Quarles, although he cannot be viewed as a biographical surrogate for Huxley himself, should be seen as a representation of the dilemma Huxley was then facing -- how to heal the divided self. Quarles reduces Rampion to an intellectual proposition, merely think of one's self in different terms. In like manner, Huxley reduces Lawrence to the creed of the Life Worshiper, with its emphasis upon bovarization (Even in Brave New World the Lawrentian Savage can only advocate an opposing life style

which he is thwarted by society from practicing.). What is lacking is some efficacious action that would bring life to the idea of integral living embodied in Rampion. But action is impossible for Quarles because he has destroyed the very resource, his feeling self, he needs to live as a full human being.

Ironically, however, Quarles actually does follow Rampion's advice to live instinctively. His central problem, as he conceives of it, is the need to open himself to others on an intimate, emotive basis -- the very thing he finds impossible to do. And the reason lies with his instincts.

The discussions of personal relations always made him uncomfortable. They threatened solitude -- that solitude which, with part of his mind, he deplored (for he felt himself cut off from much he would have liked to experience), but in which alone, nevertheless, his spirit could live in comfort, in which alone he felt himself free. At ordinary times he took this inward solitude for granted, as one accepts the atmosphere in which one lives. But when it was menaced he became only too painfully aware of its importance to him; he fought for it, as a choking man fights for air. But it was a fight without violence, a negative battle of retirement and defence (Pt Ct Pt, pp.78-79).

If this is the instinctive Philip Quarles "in action," then the wisdom of Rampion, for him, is self-defeating and the Life Worshiper merely an ineffectual pose masking the real question, not how to be more one's self, but how to be an entirely different self! This is the answer Lawrence cannot provide. He can only counsel a self-awareness which, when translated by Huxley into a mental activity, becomes totally unworkable, as Quarles's notebook entries make manifest. Despite their revelation of the mechanical operation of the novel, they are extraneous to the action of it. Consequently, they offer a level of awareness that is both gratuitous and irrelevant. The notebooks became, instead, symbolic of the paralytic self-consciousness of the age that Huxley has been deploring.

Despite his failure, Philip Quarles does represent someone attempting to grow and develop through intellectual interaction with his environment. The remaining characters in the novel illustrate a contrasting relationship with ideas, a phenomenon Huxley has commented upon elsewhere.

Thought has a life of its own independent of its thinkers, and even, on occasion, hostile to them. A notion comes into existence and, obeying the laws of its notional being, proceeds to grow with all the irresistableness and inevitability of a planted seed, or a crystal suspended in a saturated solution. For a growing notion, human minds are simple receptacles of crystal-forming liquid.... In the end the grown thought often comes to dominate its thinkers, to impose upon them a way of life which it is not to their advantage to adopt.<sup>17</sup>

Point Counter Point is peopled with figures whose beings have become thus enslaved to ideas. They may be categorized under various headings, but for my purposes, I shall classify them under the subdivisions of materialists, spiritualists, and sensualists.

Inspired by a philosophical article which spoke of "the great natural harmony" of the universe, Lord Edward Tantamount has devoted his adult life to a study of the scientific truth of this relationship of matter. His work has gained him great renown and given him an understanding of the ecological catastrophe consequent upon current industrial methods. And it is the insensitivity of politicians such as Everard Webley to this issue that prompts Lord Edward's rejection of their movement to preserve the "natural" social order of England. But despite his comprehension of the need to maintain the balance of matter, he remains blind to the non-material imbalance within himself. His scientific achievements were made possible by the existence of the Tantamount fortune, itself predicated upon the continued spiritual and physical exploitation of man and natural resources from the time of the dissolution of the monasteries to the present-day spread of industrialization. He has therefore gained his

insight into the forthcoming "cosmic revolution" by reaping the profits from that which is fast bringing on such a revolution. Then, too, his scientific experiments with newts have engendered monsters, thereby creating an imbalance in nature where none had previously existed.<sup>18</sup> And finally, his intellectual preoccupation, coupled with his Victorian upbringing, have left him childish in his emotional life, incapable of being more than weak and apologetic as a husband.

A similar conflict between fact and theory afflicts Lord Edward's assistant, Illidge. As Spandrell points out, his politics contradict his scientific professionalism. As a Marxist he is committed to a mechanistic view of the world in which the fundamental realities are space, time, and mass. Everything else is mere illusion and primarily bourgeois illusion to boot. But Einstein, Eddington, Mach, Poincaré, et. al. threaten to undermine his simple faith by telling him that the so-called laws of nature are only humanly manufactured conventions. As Spandrell gleefully observes, "'he's a scientist, but his principles make him fight against any scientific theory that's less than fifty years old (Pt Ct Pt, p.158).'"

But even his instincts belie his communism. His financial support of his impoverished family is viewed as bourgeois loyalty by Spandrell and his funking of Webley's murder and his fright at death's reduction of man to the bare physiological facts is a betrayal of his political-scientific materialism. It appears that his class hatred is merely a pose employed to cover a deeply seated sense of inferiority. He can only operate within the theoretical confines of that guise. His communist ideology dictates a pattern of behavior that contradicts the man's inner being. As soon as he is called upon to act out his beliefs, Illidge is paralyzed into inaction. He is thus a dramatization of what Huxley meant in "Obstacle Race" by the detrimental power of ideas that come to dominate the mind of their thinkers.<sup>19</sup>

But Webley, too, his arch villain, is also a charade. His donning of the green of the British Freemen only hides his will to power. In like manner, his use of military trappings destroys the very sense of individual distinction he says his organization is fighting to preserve. Like Illidge, Webley the demagogue assumes a stance calculated to enhance his self-image. But his death puts the lie to his pretensions of personal distinctiveness, reducing him to a handful of chemicals, no different than you or I.

If the materialists share, as their common denominator, a belief in the authenticity of their science (even Webley purports to be in accord with the natural order of a "hostile symbiosis"), the sensualists share a need to follow hedonistically the dictates of their bodies. What scientific theory is to the materialists, gratification of physical desire is to the sensualists -- a means of enhancing the self by negating contradictory reality. To the sensualist, life asks only one question: who's next?

Sidney Quarles's sensuality is a protective maneuver. Conscious of his own mediocrity and resentful of his wife's abilities, he takes refuge in the company of women more likely to be impressed by his Oxonian manners and social position. With them, his baaing "a's" become a symbol of his superiority. "To feel himself unequivocally superior and genuinely admired was, for Sidney, a luxury also as great as an embracement (Pt Ct Pt, p.272)." With lower-class women he is free to indulge both ego and libido, playing the dual roles of great man and passionate lover. But Quarles's downfall comes when he takes up with Gladys Helmsley, who soon sees through him. She mocks his pretences, withholds her favors when he proves too miserly, and exposes him to the family when she finds herself pregnant. Quarles takes to his deathbed. But even in dying he is no more than a

sham, for his illness is not a mortal one at all. He fails as a sensualist because his real needs are more of the ego than of the body.

John Bidlake is a true sensualist of the "old school." "He hated everything in the nature of a fuss and he was the enemy of every definite and irrevocable contract. Any arrangement that bound him down, that imposed responsibilities and kept him in mind of duties, was intolerable to him.... The ideal was to live, emotionally and socially speaking, from hand to mouth -- without status, in good company of one's own daily choosing, not the choosing of others or of some dead self (Pt Ct Pt, p.327)." Bidlake's Olympian stance protects him from the nasty realities of living. Absorbed only by the pleasures of the flesh, he paints pictures which celebrate only that. Significantly, his critics have found that the quality of his work has diminished of late, as though the art, being exclusively of the body, indeed must suffer the same process of physical (meaning qualitative) decay attending the man who produced it. In the end, Bidlake becomes a querulous old man. Having spent his life ignoring whatever lay beyond his body, he is now trapped by the tyranny of his corporeal being -- his mind wholly consumed by the cancer growing in his stomach.

His son, Walter, is a man divided. In conscious opposition to the careless sensuality of his father and taught by his mother and Oxford to admire purity, refinement, and spirituality, he takes Marjorie Carling as his mistress, only to discover that he is repelled by her half-dead, bloodless virtuousness. His true sensuality is brought out when he falls in love with Lucy Tantamount. His sensuality, when realized, however, makes him sentimental.

He accompanied his ardours with all the delicate and charming tenderness of his rather weak and still adolescent nature. He treated Lucy, not as the hard, ruthless amusement-hunter he had so clearly recognized her as being before he became her lover, but as an

ideally gracious and sensitive being, to be adored as well as desired, a sort of combined child, mother, and mistress, whom one should maternally protect and be maternally protected by, as well as virilely and -- yes! -- faunishly made love to (Pt Ct Pt, pp. 203-204).

But the tenderness, which is a concomitant of his sexual enjoyment, requires a yielding, a transformation of being in the beloved. Lucy, however, is incapable of so responding. Her strongly willed sense of independence is repelled by this kind of relationship and she repudiates him on these terms, although she keeps tantalizing him with false hopes in order to maintain her control over him. Walter is thus caught between two impossible alternatives. On the one hand, he is obsessed by a Lucy who exists only as a creation of his needs, but the possession of that ideal would resolve the conflict between his instinctual and moral selves. On the other hand, he is saddled with a mistress (Marjorie Carling) whose real nature is more aptly suited to his type of loving, but whose sexlessness is incapable of arousing those feelings in him. Fittingly, Walter is only in control of his powers when reviewing tripe for the Literary World. Like his brother-in-law, Philip Quarles, Walter can only act effectively in the mind. But the quality of his actions there are as valuable as the world in which they are enacted.

His tormentor, Lucy Tantamount, also suffers from the deficiency of value in her actions. For Lucy is the embodiment of the young, modern sensualist to whom life is meaningless, save for the momentary sensations which can be felt from any new experience. Consequently, she must seek increasingly more novel and bizarre situations to stave off the boredom ever attendant upon her jaded sensibilities. John Bidlake, her Victorian counterpart, at least had social convention to fight against in order to preserve his freedom for pleasurable self-indulgence. But since Lucy is already born with that societal freedom, the only thing she does have is

a self which can be aroused only by a continual assault upon it in order to feel alive. She finally opts for a sadistic lover whose brutality enlivens her sense of self through the physical degradation of it.

Lucy's employment of "negative capability" contrasts with the satanism of Maurice Spandrell. Both, it is true, are motivated by what they believe to be an all-encompassing knowledge -- Lucy of worldly pleasure learned too early and made inured to by over-exposure, and Spandrell of evil prompted by what he terms his mother's betrayal of goodness when she married Major Knoyle. But whereas Lucy's desire is to relieve herself of the relative psychic state of ennui, Spandrell wants to assure himself of the existence of an absolute morality. Together, they are complementary inhabitants of a modernist version of classical hell. For Lucy the relativity of boredom is fast becoming an absolute state; for Spandrell the absoluteness of God continually manifests itself in ever-changing forms of emptiness.

Spandrell hunts God by the calculated performance of acts of perversion, hoping thereby to damn himself thoroughly for the initial wrong in his life, which had occurred at age fifteen. His debauchery, however, produces nothing more than a sense of emptiness. His belief that events are like the person to whom they happen nevertheless compels him to pursue what he conceives of as his predestined course. What he fails to realize is that if his belief is correct (and the novel's action seems to verify him on this), then man has responsibility for his actions and responsibility implies some degree of control over events. But Spandrell is too slothful to alter the course of his life and so his belief in his own damnation necessarily becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Even the murder of Webley, his most base act, fails to invoke the presence of God for Spandrell.

But no, but no, God was there, outside, absolute. Else how account for the efficacy of prayer -- for it was efficacious; how explain providence and destiny? God was there but hiding. Deliberately hiding. It was a question of forcing him to come out of his lair, his abstract absolute lair, and compelling him to incarnate himself as a felt experienced quality of personal actions. It was a matter of violently dragging him from outsideness and aboveness to insideness. But God was a joker. Spandrell had conjured him with violence to appear; and out of the bloody stream of the magically compelling sacrifice had emerged only a dust-bin. But the very failure of the incantation had been a proof that God was there, outside. Nothing happens to a man except that which is like himself. Dust-bin to dust-bin, dung to dung. He had not succeeded in compelling God to pass from outsideness to insideness. But the appearance of the dust-bin confirmed the reality of God as a providence, God as the predestinating saviour or destroyer. Dust-bins had been his predestined lot -- in giving him dust-bins yet again, the providential joker was merely being consistent (Pt Ct Pt, p.432).

Spandrell's persistence here is tinged with the ridiculousness of a man whose monomaniacal fixity of purpose blinds him to the reality of events.<sup>20</sup> He needs to believe in a grand design in order to glorify (in negative terms) the actual squalor of his behavior. Spandrell is an example of the depth of childishness to which the search for a father-figure can plummet in modern literature.

God, however, in Rampion's terms (and in those of the novel) is not a remote deliverer of judgment, but "a quality of actions and relations." In this sense, God would be the "total result, spiritual and physical, of any thought or action that makes for life, or any vital relation with the world (Pt Ct Pt, p.431)." It is precisely this relationship with the world that Spandrell has avoided since his mother's second marriage. By repeatedly choosing actions which divorce him from society, he can never hope to experience an imminent deity, only a spiritual void which is the token of his alienation from life itself.

That alienation has its culmination in his suicidal execution. Convinced that he has finally found, in Beethoven's A minor Quartet, the only real proof of God's existence, he sets himself up to be shot by the British Freemen. First, however, he must have his discovery confirmed by Rampion, who is the only person he has faith in (that father-figure again). But Rampion, although he concedes the heavenly quality of the music, rejects it as inhuman, leading man not to life, but to death.<sup>21</sup> Which, of course, is exactly what Spandrell wants and gets.

If Spandrell's negative route to God the Absolute irrevocably separates him from life, those who select a more traditional path are equally divided from the living who surround them. Janet Bidlake, secreted in her "imaginative meditations" upon Art and Spirit, is an obvious illustration of such a private life. But Rachel Quarles's Christianity is an even more telling example. Without intending to, Rachel's principles also serve to encourage spiritual isolation. Her merely being a "high-tone Christian woman" provides sufficient grounds for her husband's defensive hypocrisy and for the coolness between her and her daughter-in-law, Elinor. The only person she manages to communicate with is Marjorie Carling, who, under Rachel's protective tutelage, quickly develops into a spiritual snob.

Under the older woman's guiding influence, Marjorie stops seeking for happiness, beauty, and goodness. Instead, she directs her attention to the attainment of the peace of God. In a passage that can only be seen as a consciously ironic parody of Gumbriel's crystal and Calamy's mountain top sunset, Marjorie's mind sinks into a contemplation of a "green and golden tranquility."

'Peace, peace.' She had no desires, no more pre-occupations. The liquor which had been turbid was now quite clear, clearer than crystal, more diaphanous than air; the mist had vanished and the unveiled reality was a wonderful emptiness, was nothing. Nothing -- the

only perfection, the only absolute. Infinite and eternal nothing. The gradual revelation was now complete (Pt Ct Pt, p.363).

Rachel's attempted salvation has led Marjorie into quietism, a total nullification of being. Huxley, here, has turned his back upon the path of contemplative withdrawal he had previously embraced in the earlier novels because, under the influence of Lawrence, he has come to view it as a denial of living, an opting for self-obliteration that leads to the universal nothingness now espoused by Marjorie Carling. For the pre-mystical Huxley, an egoless consciousness was synonymous with the void. That is why he adopted the Life Worshiper's Credo, for it seemed the way out of the dilemma of egotism, on the one hand, and nothingness, on the other.

But if instinctive living is now seen as the proper way, following that road can lead to equal difficulty, as the case of Elinor Quarles makes evident. Tired of playing the emotionally unrewarding role of interpreter of the world of personal feelings for her husband, Elinor decides to become Everard Webley's mistress. But although her intellect has no qualms, she must make a conscious effort of will to overcome her instinctive revulsion. Her love is for her husband, not for Webley and she only agrees to the latter's importunate demands as a last resort, thereby giving in to her desire to punish Philip. The deaths of little Phil and Webley interpose themselves to thwart her self-denying action. At the end, Elinor's real conflict, between her own need to have love returned with affection and warmth and Philip's aloofness, remains unresolved. She seems to have no alternative but to stay a right-liver in a world providing no adequate expression for that life.

In such a corrupted world, the only possible means of success would seem to lie in the spiritual fraudulence of a Denis Burlap. Burlap is society's moral being.

'.... For what is the practice of morality? It's just pretending to be somebody that by nature you aren't. It's acting the part of a saint, or a hero, or a respectable citizen. What's the highest ethical ideal in Christianity? It's expressed in A Kempis's formula -- "The Imitation of Christ." So that the organized Churches turn out to be nothing but vast and elaborate Academies of Dramatic Art. And every school's school of acting. Every family's a family of Crummleses. Every human being is brought up as a mummer. All education, aside from merely intellectual education, is just a series of rehearsals for the part of Jesus or Podsnap or Alexander the Great, or whoever the local favourite may be. A virtuous man is one who's learned his part thoroughly and acts it competently and convincingly....'22

The words of Tilney from "Chawdron" accurately describe Burlap's source of respectability. Ironically, Burlap triumphs because of his ability to bovarize himself into the requisite psychological states. The implicit criticism of Huxley would be that if hypocrisy be the means of attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, then of what value such a kingdom? Better Philip Quarles's failure than Burlap's success. The quality of his victory is certainly questionable. The inner man remains perverted, Beatrice Gilray is but a dubious prize and the financial gain which will accrue to him has already been described as the root of modern evil, by no less an authority than Burlap himself!

But if Burlap ascendant represents Huxley's final critique of society at this time, where does it leave his Life Worshiper? Untranslatable it would seem. Mark and Mary Rampion were capable of realizing the desired mode of living, but Philip and Elinor Quarles are not. Why? Despite the novel's elaborate counterpointing technique, this question is never answered. The condition is presented as a given fact of their individual psychologies and that seems impervious to change. To merely imagine oneself in a different light does not alter the fundamental self. In fact, as the case of Burlap demonstrates, it only reinforces

one's hoggishness. Huxley, having attained a glimpse of the right way to be, has still to find the means of radically transforming the self so that the individual can relate to the world on terms better than those of a Burlap.

The Lawrentian mode, because it concentrates upon the instinctual level of man, to the exclusion of the spiritual, solves only half the problem of modern self-consciousness. That is why the Savage, in Brave New World, can teach the World Staters nothing but a new way of indulging the senses (witness their enthusiastic imitation of his penitential flagellation). When Huxley fully realizes the limitations of the Life Worshiper, his turn to mysticism becomes the only logical alternative. The mystic, because he discovers who he is by transcending the self, avoids the pitfall of bovarization, which, in Tilney's terms, is never more than the ethics of role-playing, another form of egotism. The mystic says don't be like Jesus, be Jesus. And so, in his next phase, Huxley goes back to the mountain to accomplish the task Calamy had begun.

1 Although individual critics will disagree on the exact dimensions of Lawrence's influence, they do seem to unite in viewing the effect as abetting Huxley's dissatisfaction with the primary role of intellect (especially its tendency towards a paralytic self-consciousness) in twentieth-century life. Lawrence, they believe, helped widen Huxley's perspective by his espousal of the rights of the body and instincts to determine human behavior. See: Atkins, p.142; Joseph Bentley, "Huxley's Ambivalent Responses to the Ideas of D.H. Lawrence," Twentieth Century Literature 13 (1967), 143; Bowering, p.78; Dyson, p.296; Meckier, Aldous Huxley, p.122; Tindall, p.456.

2 Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point (1928; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Perennial Classic, 1965), pp.27-28. All further references are to this edition.

3 "Pascal," Do What You Will (1929; rpt. The Thinker's Library, No. 58, London: Watts and Co., 1936), p.186.

4 A corollary benefit of counterpointing has been demonstrated by Jerome Meckier. He sees the technique as providing both reader and novelist with an objective standard by which to evaluate each mode of being and to perceive the reason for its failing. The diversities of people and manners are therefore unified by a singleness of vision shared by author and reader, but denied to the characters (with the possible exception of the Rampions) who, because of the partiality of their perspectives, are unable to see life steadily and to see it whole. Aldous Huxley, pp.42-48 and 126-132. Meckier's book contains the best discussion available of the structural techniques in Huxley's novels.

5 "Beliefs and Actions," Music at Night, pp.105-106.

6 Huxley's final philosophical position maintains the diversity-unity duality, but he denies Lawrence's restriction of man to his corporal dimensions. The later Huxley, leaning upon the knowledge gained from both science and the metaphysics of Eastern religions, perceives the fallacy of Lawrence's cut-off point. Man's physical delineation is an illusion -- a failure of eyesight. Being truly human, therefore, becomes the means of achieving harmony with the universe, from which man is not separate but continuous, and not merely a harmony with Lawrence's outmoded conception of the self.

7 I think this point helps explain the totalitarian bent in Lawrence's thought. He might have believed in the "dark" gods rather than in a Christian one, but because they were gods, they meant a monolithic pattern of behavior to which man was expected to conform, making him one with his god, perhaps, but also undifferentiated from his fellow celebrants. Lawrence's position, then, would have as its logical conclusion a denial of individuality. This is the path taken in The Plumed Serpent.

8 The impetus for change always comes from outside the society in Huxley's novels. The marginal relationship between reformer and his world, however, is usually kept as a subordinate theme, a condition accepted as inevitable rather than one fully explored. Even the transformation of

Palanesian society is presented as historical subplot, to be counterpointed with the type of alteration espoused by Colonel Dipa. Only Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudun treat this separateness at length.

9 Action is here defined in the restricted sense of a performance which creates an alteration in the condition of the object acted upon so as to produce something new. The creation of the new underlies the concept of progress in time-bound, Western civilization. But in the context of a timeless society, action is always repetition, the idea of the eternal return, the reaffirmation of primal experience. The Rampions, as an achieved state of being, are therefore free from the need for striving. They have attained the condition of certainty unrealized by the rest of their society. They might even be said to operate in an entirely different world because they do not live in accordance with the principles motivating modern society.

10 Rampion's prototype, Kingham, in the short story, "Two or Three Graces," Two or Three Graces and Other Stories (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926), pp.11-218, was also noted for his penetrating analysis of people. It was this ability which formed the basis for the friendship between Kingham and the tale's narrator, as it also provided the bond between Philip Quarles and Rampion. Significantly, this trait, and the lower-class origins, are the only features Huxley transposed from the story to the novel. Suppressed are those aspects of his being which make for ambivalence in the reader's response to Kingham. If one cannot completely empathize with Rampion, then, the failure was certainly not intentional on Huxley's part.

11 Unfortunately for Huxley, Rampion's argument bears a telling resemblance to Chelifer's against the separate life of the intellect. Although it is Illidge who shares Chelifer's egotistical motivation, it is Rampion who comes closer to the fallacy of a solipsistic definition of reality. But most important of all is the fact that despite the impetus for his attack, it is Illidge and not Rampion who comes closer to illuminating reality. Yes, Barrie is irrelevant if one is confronted with economic deprivation. But as Illidge alone seems to perceive, more than merely allowing one to "appreciate" Peter Pan is implicit in the possession of wealth. It does determine the conditions under which human potentialities may be realized in a capitalist society. Therefore, one's goodness is intimately tied to one's financial situation. But Huxley was always obtuse to the implications of wealth, beyond the manipulative power it brings.

12 "One and Many," Do What You Will, p.33.

13 "Pascal," pp. 219-220.

14 Bowering, p.87, also notes that Quarles's conversion to Rampion's position remains exclusively on the intellectual level, that he never puts theory into practice.

15 The irony of the passage alluded to (see Pt Ct Pt, pp.347-348) stems from the contrasting acuteness of Quarles's self-analysis and his obtuseness in regard to his wife's feelings. Unlike her fictional counterpart, the real Elinor does decide to leave her husband, although

fate intervenes to thwart the action. Herein lies the intellectual limitations of Philip. He can see only with his eyes, know only with his mind. Levels of reality which must be apprehended through other faculties remain forever closed to him. As a consequence, he is at the mercy of blind fate -- and yet also blind even to this fact.

16 This view does not negate my earlier interpretation of the Rampions as residents of a timeless society who consequently have no need to act in the sense previously defined. I was there concerned with the couple as a theoretical possibility. But now, considering their function within the mechanics of the plot, their ineffectualness must be seen as a failure of authorial vision.

17 "Obstacle Race," Music at Night, pp.150-151.

18 Perhaps I've been conditioned by too many Frankenstein movies to perceive any great moral question involved in the creation of laboratory mutations. However, it is clear that Huxley wants the reader to be aware of the inherent irony in scientific pursuits which, while proclaiming to have as their ends lofty ideals, actually employ means that run counter to those values.

19 Bowering sees Illidge as illustrative of the type of revolution Rampion believes the lower-class would wage, a merely mindless destruction. For Bowering, Illidge becomes symbolic of instincts repressed within the body politic that parallel instincts repressed within the individual being, pp.94-95. But since the contradictions between his theory and his reality actually render him immobile, it would be misleading to consider Illidge as a potential action. He is more clearly an example of individual self-division which translates itself into social and political terms in order to inflate the sense of personal worth. If anyone, it is Webley who comes closest to Rampion's mindless destruction since his behavior seems motivated by a rapacious self-interest. Illidge's instincts are fundamentally humanitarian.

20 Huxley, in his essay, "Baudelaire," in Do What You Will, pp.137-161, sees the ridiculous as a necessary part of the inhuman nature of the satanist. The character of Maurice Spandrell has been generally acknowledged to be based upon the life of the French poet. But lest one assume that the ridiculous accompanies only the satanic God-hunter, Huxley gives us Lord Gattenden, brother of Lord Edward, who attempts to "salt the tail of the Absolute" with Mathematics. The good Lord's method parodies Spandrell's resort to Beethoven, since both attempt to know God as an abstraction from created reality.

21 Huxley himself was to ignore Rampion's warning to some extent during the early years following his conversion to mysticism. Only in his last phase does Huxley fully reject the value of questing for a transcendental God. And significantly, he returns again, in these later years, to a position which encompasses major features of the Life Worshiper.

22 "Chawdron," Brief Candles (New York: The Fountain Press, 1930), rpt. in Collected Short Stories, p.343.

PART III

PHASE TWO: NO COUNTRY FOR WHOLE MEN

EYELESS IN GAZA TO TIME MUST HAVE A STOP

Phase Two: No Country for Whole MenIntroductory

God does not go for personalities; nor does the Last Judgment consist in the award of prizes to personalities for the performance of their parts. The performance principle must go; the show must not go on. The parts are not real: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus; he is not your personal Saviour. In the Last Judgment the apocalyptic fire will burn up the masks, and the theater, leaving not a rack behind. Freud came to give the show away; the outcome of psychoanalysis is not 'ego psychology' but the doctrine of 'anatta' or no-self: the ego is a 'me-fabrication' (ahamkara), a piece of illusion (Maya), which disintegrates at the moment of illumination: 'the self has been completely understood, and so ceases to be.' And with the doctrine of no-self goes the doctrine of non-action: action is proper only to an ignorant person, and doing nothing is, if rightly understood, the supreme action.

Norman O. Brown, Love's Body

My own feeling is that the most that should be claimed for any metaphysic, theology or cosmology which is trying to say something about the way things are, about how the universe really works, is plausibility. For what one needs in this universe is not certainty but the courage and nerve of the gambler; not fixed convictions but adaptability; not firm ground whereon to stand but skill in swimming.

Alan Watts, Beyond Theology

We have reached the borders of what has been for most readers their intellectual homeland, the territory of literary modernism. Before crossing over, let us familiarize ourselves with some of the distinctive features of the new country, since for many this will be their first direct encounter with the metaphysics of mysticism. As citizens of modernism, they may experience difficulty understanding the mystical perspective. I recommend, then, that Watts's statement be kept in mind as we discuss the salient aspects of mysticism. Essentially, we will be

exploring an hypothesis about reality at variance with the predominant hypothesis in the West. However, because many in our society have already begun their personal "Journeys to the East," an open-minded investigation of mysticism is important for an understanding of the forces now beginning to influence Western culture.

Huxley himself emigrated when he found the realm of the Life Worshiper untenable. The failure was inevitable. To man as thinker, it had added man as feeler. But that still only totaled up to man as the sum of his experiences, to man as doer. Traditionally, however, man has been classified as homo sapiens, not homo factor. Assuming, as a working hypothesis, that the terminology expresses a real distinction, we can say that the man of action (in the broadest sense) is not the whole man; some mental process bridging experience and wisdom is necessary for completion. Mystics posit that the end of action is contemplation, for through awareness comes wisdom, i.e., the knowledge and understanding of who in fact we really are. As intellectuals, we should find this proposition highly appealing. Huxley certainly did.

In his interview with Beerman, he explained his espousal of Buddhistic thinking by characterizing Buddhism as "one of the few religions that hates compulsory conscription of men into the house of truth. It is interested only in the promotion of an intellectual conscience and sensibility to truth."<sup>1</sup> For men constituted like Philip Quarles and his creator, for whom meaninglessness had proven conscientiously impossible and for whom being their "full selves" had only revealed their psychological deficiencies, the mystical discipline had a twofold appeal. Its empiricism preserved intellectual integrity and its techniques promised transcendence of the old self. So, from the variety of contemplative modes available, Huxley chose the mystical. As we will see

from Anthony Beavis's case, he had nothing left to lose. He made the existential leap into a philosophy which, ironically, denied the fundamental premise of Existentialism.<sup>2</sup>

The kind of alteration in consciousness Huxley underwent in the Thirties can be shown in his statement that "knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing."<sup>3</sup> Note that Huxley uses the term "being" and not "self." "Being" denotes a state of existence. "Self," on the other hand, denotes a type of psycho-physical consciousness located in an existence. That the two were not synonymous, but had distinctive properties was a cardinal insight for Huxley.

The idea of self is the outgrowth of individual consciousness, an historical development in human awareness. Our primal ancestors had no conception of individuality. Totemism and tribalism were their initial forms of consciousness. In this light, we can interpret the Biblical myth of the Fall as the dawning of man's awareness of self; the expulsion from the garden as the individual's sense of his distinctiveness from the rest of created nature. The self, then, is mind's knowledge of physical and psychological separateness. In the wisdom of the ancient Hebrews, the fruit of such knowledge is of both good and evil, inextricably entwined. In psychoanalytical terms, self is ego, which divides the world into mine and thine, perpetuating the distinction by ingesting into the self-image that which it finds desirable and projecting onto the external world that which it finds objectionable.<sup>4</sup> Turning our eyes eastward, we find a middle way between these two divergent Western interpretations of self (religious mythology and scientific empiricism). For ancient Indian metaphysicians, self was an illusion. By processes no less empirical -- and really no more speculative -- than Freud's, they

"rediscovered" (or perhaps, like the Hebrews, never completely forgot) that human consciousness extended beyond the perceptual limitations of ego. And they developed operations whereby man could transcend ego's knowledge, achieving a state of "total" awareness they called "enlightenment." Based upon their metaphysical investigations of that state of expanded consciousness, a definition of man was formulated, symbolized in the expression "thou art That." "That" represents the original source of all separate, created beings, the unitive principle of the universe.

Now, does there exist a unity behind the visible diversity of life? Huxley undertook to answer that question in Ends and Means. Science, he said, saw the material universe as composed of myriad patterns of energy units, atoms. With his limited sense organs, man could only perceive the more densely compacted units, which, to him, had the appearance of solid, independent masses. But with the aid of scientific instruments, he began to see the inter-connected network of electro-magnetic, chemical, and gravitational relationships which gave seemingly independent forms their real being as dependent parts of a greater whole. The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this "non-human truth" would be that man, operating exclusively upon the basis of his common sense perceptions, "inhabits a home-made universe, hollowed out of the real world by means of its organs of perception and its intellectual faculties."<sup>5</sup>

Science has corrected man's solipsistic view of matter, but is matter the sole component of the universe? Examining the scientific investigations of mind, Huxley discovered two mutually exclusive theories. The first conceived of mind as merely an epiphenomenon of matter, which would eliminate the idea of consciousness and explain mental activity as conditioned reflex, the mind secreting thought much like the adrenal glands secreting adrenalin. If such be the case, how, then, can we assume

that notions formulated by mind would have universal validity, rather than being reinforcements of individual conditioning? If this theory be an accurate account of mind, it would therefore be impossible to validate. It is science demanding blind faith, an incipient undermining of science reminiscent of Scogan's thinking. This implicit contradiction prompted Huxley to espouse the alternate view that mind was a primary reality and therefore capable of making valid assessments of the world. This was to be his working hypothesis.<sup>6</sup> And from studies of telepathy in experimental psychology and parapsychology, he deduced the further proposition that mind might also exist independently of body and the temporal and spatial conditions of physical existence.<sup>7</sup>

Much of Huxley's speculations on the nature of mind remain highly controversial. It is essential, however, to realize that his inquiries were not, in Humean terms, the result of "abstract reasoning," but of "experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact or evidence." If he departed from the path of traditional science, it was because scientific experimentation was restricted to facts translatable into mathematical language, the realm of the quantifiable, and consequently unsuitable to his purposes. But there was a body of information, gleaned from aesthetic, and, most especially, religious experiences which spoke to the problem at hand. Huxley's turn to religious explanations was a logical development. When old beliefs become untenable and the new prove inadequate, one seeks recourse through the mediation of the perennial in human experience. For most modernists, it was the only way out of the dilemma of meaninglessness.

Huxley's approach was an empirical one,<sup>8</sup> to gain direct knowledge of universal mind through practice in the mystical technique of meditation. To those who reject the validity of the mystical experience for its being

subjective and illusory, Huxley replied that those who have never undertaken the training cannot be in a position to pass judgment. Tone-deaf music critics, color-blind aestheticians, living on "the common levels of being," they believe all experience must be through means of a self.<sup>9</sup> But for those trained as mystics, a different kind of experience transcending the subject-object relationship can validly be inferred by direct intuition. The mystical experience, though, is an exclusive one. An act of faith, of freely willed trust in the authenticity of prior mystics, is the necessary pre-condition for transcendental enlightenment.

The idea of free choice represents a keystone in Huxley's conception of man. Man is a trinity of body, existing in time, of spirit, existing in timelessness, akin to, or even identical with, divine Spirit, and of psyche, associated with the body, but also capable of knowing the divine Spirit through identification with spirit. It is within the realm of psyche that free will exists, according to Huxley. Choosing to align itself with body leads to selfness; with spirit, enlightenment. In actuality, man oscillates in his behavior because of the psyche's inability to adhere permanently to one or the other. The saint is as rare as the total sinner.<sup>10</sup>

Competition for psychic allegiance, then, is the condition of man's present existence. When the phenomenon is examined in a literary mode, it is the salient feature distinguishing psychological from sociological literature; emphasis upon character's minds produces the former, whereas emphasis upon their roles produces the latter. It is the difference between the plays of Shakespeare and Jonson, the novels of Richardson and Fielding, the twentieth-century English novel and its nineteenth-century counterpart. But we can also see that the artists's selection of mode is a reflection of his own position in society, as well as his perceptions about social order. Shakespeare and Richardson were

bourgeois artists during periods of great social mobility for that class. Jonson and Fielding were, roughly speaking, aristocratic, aligned by birth or education to the predominant power structure. Their classicism was, partly, an apology for that order. The same, I believe, can be said of nineteenth-century English novelists. The social criticism of such diverse writers as Scott, Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, Trollope, and Hardy were attacks upon currents which they believed to be disruptive of social cohesion.<sup>11</sup> Change, in the Twentieth Century, shifted the novel's focus away from social dynamics to psychological drama. Discerning psychological relationships became the modern path to social coherence. In Lawrence, Joyce, Woolf, Forster, Conrad, class distinctions tended to pale in importance when cast in the light of mental affinities.

Huxley's attention to the problem of psychic alignment is therefore a part of literary tradition. Being a Huxley, however, he also saw the question in the broader context of biological evolution. On the "evolutionary scale" man stands on what is, for the moment, the highest rung, for his is the only species which has not opted for a specialized development in one direction, which would preclude biological adaptation. Modern man, then, stands at a crossroad in human evolution. His tendency to become a specialized doer threatens his potential for further development. The problem, as Huxley had already identified it during the Twenties, had its locus in the mechanism of individual, ego consciousness. Man will have to transcend the limitations of a personal consciousness which perceives the world in terms of a physically distinct self. This means focusing one's attention upon the relatedness of things, rather than an exclusive preoccupation with their separateness. Metaphysically expressed, it means a "dying to self," an end to identifying one's being with one's bodily form alone and its physio-psychological cravings.

Spiritual enlightenment, for Huxley, represented a movement toward a higher evolutionary stage, first because it neutralized the deleterious effects of specialization by expanding individual consciousness and, second, because it offered an escape from the otherwise final limitation of created matter, which is biological death, a consequence of "the initial cosmic Fall of creation" into "multitudinous manifestation in time." The second reason is really an extension of the first, mortality, in this sense, being a form of physical specialization. Biological death can only be experienced by a self that is identified with its body. When the psyche is released from its time-bound, physical fixation through identification with spirit, according to the mystical hypothesis, man no longer perceives his being as a separate consciousness, but as part of the eternal divine Ground of unitive Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

The merging of scientific and religious terminology signified a new direction in Huxley's thinking. He saw them now as interchangeable languages revealing the same story, albeit from different perspectives. That he chose to think within the metaphysical frame of reference indicated a desire to transcend the distinction-making, rational faculty of mind which he had come to view as hopelessly wedded to the illusory world of separate appearances. But by adhering to the methodology of science, he hopes to avoid alienating Western rationalists.

The problem of language was an acute one for Huxley. The vocabulary at his disposal was primarily intended for thinking strictly human thoughts about strictly human concerns. This kind of language becomes inadequate for describing non-human realities and "non-human ways of thinking," to use Rampion's phrase for scientific epistemology. But even in literature direct intuitions are not verbally rendered. The words only provide a name for the experiences and the reader's comprehension derives from the

power of words to evoke corresponding memories of similar experiences. There is usually no attempt at a description of analysis that would give a verbal equivalent of the facts themselves. And those who try to be descriptive have to flounder about with figurative analogies. The situation is such because men are more interested in doing and feeling than in understanding and are, therefore, too preoccupied with those levels to forge an adequate verbal instrument for elucidating their experiences. The vernacular is incomparably effective in rousing violent and exciting emotions because of this indefiniteness. Helpful for living in the world of the senses, but useless for disinterested understanding; hence the need for specialized, impersonal languages like mathematics and scientific vocabularies. In order to understand, man has rejected traditional language and substituted others, more precise and less contaminated with self-interest.

The dilemma of the mystic lies in the fact that a specialized language does not exist for him. Were he to attempt to invent a more descriptive vehicle of expression, a "calculus of eternity," no one not already initiated into the experience could comprehend him. But to resort to ordinary language would create confusion because strictly human language doesn't refer to the same reality. Its use encourages identifications when distinctions are intended. This false interpretation of the non-human leads ultimately to metaphysical falsification.<sup>13</sup> The disastrous consequences of such verbal confusions are graphically illustrated in Huxley's two studies of seventeenth-century France, Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudun (see Chapter Five). Metaphysical language presents further difficulties because using it commits one to an explanation of the facts, as well as a description of them. The phrase, "union with God," for example, implies a knowledge of what God is and the additional assumption

that the term has the same meaning for all people. Therefore, explanations of actual experiences in terms of metaphysical entities would be explanations of the known in terms of the either unknowable or, at best, only inferable from the nature of the very experiences the terms are supposed to describe. The language developed by professional psychologists who have written about mysticism offers no help because their knowledge has been derived from the literature of mysticism, not the experience itself. For Huxley, there was only one final way out of the dilemma of linguistic inadequacy and that was to have a first-hand experience of "union with God" for oneself.<sup>14</sup> But this solution really begs the question, as Huxley certainly knew, for he continued to attempt descriptive elucidations of the mystical experience, floundering perhaps in figurative representations and metaphysical entities.

The limitations of language imply corollary limitations about the serviceability of reason itself. Huxley's skepticism about the supremacy of reason was already clearly evident in the Life Worshiper Credo. But besides the downgrading of reasoning as a mode of knowing, two other central features of the Life Worshiper retained their essential character. First, the proposition that the purpose of life is more life was preserved by the mystical Huxley in the concept of "dying to self." The ultimate purpose for human existence lies in unitive knowledge of the divine Ground, which means the infusion of the timeless and immortal (God, for those who have no aversion for the term) into the here and now of the living being. Transcendence of separateness would be the metaphysical corrective to Rampion's advocacy of being more completely human. Union, however, is with an impersonal reality which is amoral (the second of the Life Worshiper tenets maintained) since it represents the total absence of differences and the purpose of morality is to preserve the integrity

of distinct territories of right. But because it is impossible to give full attention to one's real relation to Spirit without having first detached one's self from concerns with the flesh and the world, virtuous behavior constitutes the necessary pre-condition for the mystical experience. The capacity for qualitative change in the "being of the knower" is directly proportional to his capacity for goodness. Right action is therefore of paramount importance for the Huxleyan hero who follows the way of the Buddha.

Achievement of enlightenment presupposes belief in the "Philosophia Perennis ... the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being."<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that this definition of Huxleyan belief is couched in terms of intellectual categories, for it specifies the way in which mind speaks to Mind. Awareness becomes the cardinal virtue and stupidity a mortal sin. Levels of consciousness, then, continue to be the central focus in the novels to be discussed.

To gain awareness, the Huxleyan hero must practice a mode of behavior which leads to non-attachment, but not separateness. The distinction will be made clear when analyzing the novels themselves. Here it is sufficient to say that the candidate for enlightenment must create the state of non-attachment for himself through a series of actions of "intelligently directed will," being aware at all times of the moral implications of his actions, a problem around which Huxley formulated the plots of the three works treated in this section. In seeking non-attachment, the protagonist must avoid specialization in one field, for,

like its biological counterpart, intellectual specialization closes off further development by too restricted an identification with one field or mode of knowing. That is why Propter, Beavis, and Sebastian all abandon to some degree their initial careers. They seek to avoid the pitfall of one-sidedness which Rampion also preached against.

A new type of literature is needed to depict the growth of the new man. Multiplicity of viewpoint gives way to multiplicity of behavior patterns, only one of which is correct. The shift has been judged detrimental to the quality of Huxley's art by some critics,<sup>16</sup> but I believe it gives to the later books a dimension of relevance more appealing to post-modernist readers than the sense of meaninglessness characteristic of the novels of the Twenties. The new works touch the heart of contemporary problems in so direct a manner that questions of aesthetic performance pale in comparison, which is not to underrate the artistic merits of Eyeless in Gaza and After Many a Summer (Time Must Have a Stop is admittedly unsalvageable on this head). But the themes themselves are the great things in these novels.

The central theme is the urge-to-separateness. Huxley explains that "suffering and moral evil have the same source -- a craving for the intensification of the separateness which is the primary datum of all creatureliness."<sup>17</sup> This desire establishes the behavior patterns of his characters. They are caught in the web of selfhood and can extricate themselves not merely by a change in behavior, but of mind as well. The "dying to self" undergone by the heroes implies an escape from time and the process of mind bound to time which is memory. In each of the three novels at hand, time and memory act as nets which stretch not only into the past, but, in Time Must Have a Stop, into after-life. At any instant the way is open to escape from the cycles of "those dying generations" if

one would but adopt the teachings of the Perennial Philosophy and become, not the Complete Man, but the non-attached man.<sup>18</sup>

Accordingly, the major focus of the novels centers around the freely willed actions of individuals. The problems of society serve only to highlight the personal psychological drama. The belief is present that the world can be saved through the universal espousal of the Perennial Philosophy,<sup>19</sup> but, by the close of the Thirties, Huxley was rather pessimistic about the probability of large-scale reform being enacted under the agency of non-attached men of affairs.<sup>20</sup> The failure of the Peace Pledge Union and the inevitability of World War II are directly responsible for his forebodings. It appeared to him at this time that private beings could individually achieve their potential, or perhaps even small groups could, but society as a whole was doomed.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, each of the three novels contains defeated world-savers and successful avatars of enlightenment in competition for the allegiance of the protagonist.<sup>22</sup> But there is little drama attached to this intellectual contest, for the outcome is a foregone conclusion. What really matters is the intense dissatisfaction of the main characters with the world of abstractions like art, politics, and scholarship, and their willingness to substitute for that the concrete reality of the mystical experience, which, in this light, is the spiritual analogue of Rampion's integral living.

1 Beerman, p.288. See also, Atkins, p.146; Holmes, pp.182-183; Meckier, Aldous Huxley, pp.152-154.

2 Mysticism reverses the Existential premise that existence precedes essence. In Buddhism, existence is the fall from essence into separateness, a diminution of spirit into created form. Because man possesses self-consciousness, human form is the necessary transitional stage from existence back into essence.

3 The Perennial Philosophy (1945; rpt. Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), p.iv.

4 This is an oversimplification, I know, but useful as a generalized outline of the process.

5 Ends and Means, pp.293-295.

6 In his Franklin Lectures in the Sciences and Humanities, at Auburn University, Buckminster Fuller draws a useful distinction between "brain" and "mind," based upon two decades of physiological and neurological experimentation. The brain stores individual experiences; that is what it always deals with. Mind, however, is the ability to generalize. See R. Buckminster Fuller, et. al., Approaching the Benign Environment, ed. Taylor Littleton (1970; rpt. New York: The Macmillan Company, Collier Books, 1970), pp.81-85. Fuller admits that the distinction is only a working hypothesis scientists have found useful in explaining their data. It would, however, resolve the conflict between the two theories of mind mentioned above and justify Huxley's explorations into the consciousness of mind.

7 See Ends and Means, pp.296-300, for Huxley's speculations on mind.

8 Berlin, in Aldous Huxley: 1894-1963, remarks that Huxley's turn to mysticism might seem, to some, speculative and imaginative only because man had come to conceive of the range of meaningful experiences too narrowly. But Huxley's approach to the "inner world," says Berlin, "remained scrupulously empirical, directly related to the facts of experience," p.147. Bowering, p.29, also describes Huxley's method as an empirical one.

9 Ends and Means, p.332. I would strongly recommend a reading of the entire chapter, "Beliefs," pp.291-350, to anyone who still clings to the notions of scientific materialism.

10 The Perennial Philosophy, pp.38, 40, and 187.

11 Emily and Charlotte Brontë were outcasts, although Charlotte's struggles were for entrance, whereas Emily's were for a private reality.

12 See The Perennial Philosophy, pp.182-184 and Ends and Means, pp.302-308. According to Huxley's metaphysical redaction of evolutionary theory, the highest stage of evolution would be pure mind without bodily form. It would seem he has gone Shaw's Ancients of Back to Methuselah one better. Such speculations, of course, are purely imaginative; Huxley himself never seriously advocated this.

13 The potential falsification of reality engendered by believing words represent ideas themselves rather than being merely symbols for those ideas existing within specific contexts was a perennial subject for Huxley. To change the context will change the meaning. But if one falsely pretends that he can transpose the word intact, he will distort the reality of the new context by continuing to think it must conform to the old context. Employing the identical word will foster the illusion of having an identical situation. See the essay, "Words and Behavior," in The Olive Tree for the essence of Huxley's commentary on the contribution of language to the clouding of reality.

14 The preceding discussion of language was based upon Propter's analysis in After Many a Summer Dies the Swan (1939; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Perennial Classic, 1965), pp.121-128. All further references are to this edition.

15 The Perennial Philosophy, p.iv.

16 Bowering sees a lack of interest in formal questions in the later works, plus an increase in didactic material which accounts for their artistic failure. However, he believes that Huxley's sense of the urgency of the times to be a major factor in the shifting of emphasis and as such would represent an attack upon the moral failure of so-called "good literature," p.142. Glicksberg, in "Huxley the Experimental Novelist," says that Huxley abandoned much of his powers of observation gained from ironic multiple perspectives and the attitudes of detachment and suspended judgment which he found to be hallmarks of the earlier Huxley writing, pp.98-99. And Tindall believes that the "religious monologues" make the later novels unreadable, p.463. As I hope to demonstrate in my discussion of these novels, such evaluations are wide of the mark.

17 The Perennial Philosophy, p.228.

18 Meckier, Aldous Huxley, p.54, sees the change in considerations for the mystical Huxley being from the need to balance mind and body to that of balancing time and eternity.

19 See The Perennial Philosophy, p.200.

20 In a letter to Kingsley Martin, dated 30 July, 1939, Huxley expresses his despair about being able to work on the political level. Letters, p.444.

21 See letter to Eva Herrmann, dated 1 August, 1939, Letters, p.445. Meckier comments that mysticism caused Huxley to shift his focus from a "balanced norm" to a view that only on the periphery of society could normative behavior be achieved; Aldous Huxley, pp. 55-56.

22 After Many a Summer Dies the Swan has world-savers and avatars, but not a protagonist in the traditional sense. This problem will be discussed in Chapter Four.

### Chapter Three

#### Eyeless in Gaza

Eyeless in Gaza is Huxley's finest, most successfully realized piece of fiction. Here, novelist and thinking achieve a unity of being, a creative balance which he had been philosophically incapable of before and which he would find literarily impossible to duplicate again in the purely fictional mode. For all the intellectual razzle-dazzle of the earlier novels, they remain, today, no more than self-conscious, highly articulate studies of society in extremis. They delight us still for their portrayal of a distinctive rogue's gallery of characters. Their talk holds our attention because they themselves do. For this we can thank the sharp eye and keen ear of the novelist. But their ideas? Really, if it weren't for the fact that we hear the same self-inflating absurdities mouthed daily by their real-life counterparts in our own society, we would listen to them with the same detached sence of fun we normally reserve for the characters of Fielding, Thackeray, and Dickens. That's why Huxley was able to assume the stance of the social novelist -- he was in tune with his time because he himself had nothing better to say. Oh, he tried with Calamy and Rampion, but there was always the novelist behind the prophet proving that somehow it just wouldn't do. Mary Thriplow reduces Calamy's mysticism to the level of trite plot device and Philip Quarles needs to go beyond, not further into, selfhood.

But Huxley's turn to the Perennial Philosophy provided the intellectual catalyst to convert a witty, satirical novelist into a visionary, philosophical writer. If the later novels suffered as a consequence, that, I hope to show, had at least as much to do with the insufficiency

of the medium as it did with the didacticism of the message. In Eyeless, however, it all comes together, but in a manner so strikingly different from conventional and other experimental novels both, that the form will require as much exposition as the philosophy.

We'd better begin with the form, since one valuable heritage of literary Modernism has been to make us feel more comfortable with aesthetic radicalness, whereas a radical realignment of metaphysical positions which depart from traditional Western perceptions remains controversial. And to many, Huxley was a metaphysical apostate, doomed for his heresy to reside eternally in the limbo of unreadable literature. Therefore, a discussion of Eyeless in Gaza will seem to some like a harrowing of hell.

Meckier has described the novel as a bildungsroman which questions the genre's acceptance of self-discovery as an appropriate conclusion, for the mature Anthony finds his self insufficient and takes up the difficult task of transcending the self.<sup>1</sup> Although illuminating,<sup>2</sup> Meckier's thesis has this serious limitation: a novel that rejects the standards of its genre ceases to belong to that class and becomes something else. Classifying Eyeless as a bildungsroman diminishes what is new and unique here. To facilitate that end, I suggest we view Eyeless as a trinity of novels, having the same three-in-one unity as the Christian trinity. Novel A, whose present starts on 30 August, 1933, counterpoints the prior growth and development of Anthony Beavis, Helen Amberley, and Mark Staithes into separate, isolated egos with their present difficulties in living such lives. Novel B, whose present starts on 4 April, 1934, traces the transformation of Anthony from theoretical convert to practicing mystic. Novel C exists outside of time, for it is the reader's apprehension, gained through Huxley's counterpointing of A and B, of the underlying

unity of the first two novels. In effect, only C can rightly be called Eyeless in Gaza, just as only the triunal deity can be called the Christian Godhead.

To make manifest the triune nature of the novel, Huxley had to depart from traditional chronological sequencing.<sup>3</sup> While previous critics have elaborated upon the thematic and aesthetic values of such a method,<sup>4</sup> one of the most significant considerations has been generally underplayed. Development in time is a lie. It identifies one's being with a self perpetuated from the past, thereby sanctifying consistency of personality (and we are all familiar with Emerson's "hobgoblin of little minds") which precludes that growth of consciousness leading to ultimate enlightenment. No wonder Huxley became impatient with so-called "good literature," for it only illuminated what we deplorably insist on being and not what we can become. Existentially, Huxley shifts the emphasis to becoming, essence over existence. This matter is the concern of the moment, not of the ordered movement of time. What we are given in Eyeless are selected segments of time. At any one point it is possible for the central characters to stop being their "sweating selves." The will is free to choose another course if the individual is aware of his options. Dilemma results from unawareness. And Huxley has clearly recognized the contributing factor of memory to the maintenance of the illusion. "The world is what (in our eyes) it is because of all the consciously or unconsciously and physiologically remembered habits formed by our ancestors or by ourselves, either in our present life or in previous existences .... Hence the need ... for mortification ... of the reasoning powers, of consciousness itself and of that which makes our consciousness what it is -- our personal memory and our inherited habit-energies."<sup>5</sup> The destruction of chronological development in the novel becomes such an act of

mortification, demonstrating the freedom of willing by shedding from our eyes the scales of time and their gluey memories.

With the revoking of the reader's attention from the "habit-energies of accumulated memory," he can thus concentrate upon the drama of free will which has Anthony, Helen, and Mark as its central players. Just how this drama develops can be more readily apprehended if I first give a schematic outline of the chapters.<sup>6</sup>

<u>Novel</u>	<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Argument (Action/Theme)</u>
A	1	8/30/33	Together, these three chapters form an introduction to the whole novel, expressing the central theme of unity of being vs. separateness
B	2	4/4/34	
A	3	8/30/33	
A	4	11/6/02	Anthony and Helen as conditioned reflexes
A	5	12/8/26	
A	6	11/6/02	
B	7	4/8/34	Anthony's commentary on conditioned reflexes
A	8	8/30/33	Anthony's old sense of freedom
A	9	4/2/03	
A	10	6/18/12	
A	11	12/8/26	
A	12	8/30/33	
B	13	5/20/34	
A	14	12/8/26	Restrains imposed on loving others
A	15	6/03-1/04	
A	16	6/19/12	
B	17	5/26/34	Anthony on the will to love
A	18	12/8/26	Sexual appetite and sexual repression
A	19	7/7/12	
A	20	12/8/26	
A	21	8/31/33	
A	22	12/8/26	
B	23	6/1/34	
A	24	6/23 & 7/5/27	Hypocrisy and the false positions one's thrown into
A	25	5/20/31	
A	26	9/5/33	
A	27	5/27/14	

<u>Novel</u>	<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Argument (Action/Theme)</u>
B	28	6/25/34	Anthony on the ease with which one becomes a Stiggins
A	29	5/24/31	Anthony's desperate adventures
A	30	7/2/14	
A	31	9/6/33	
B	32	7/29/34	Miller's pacifism in action
A	33	7/18/14	Anthony in false positions because of
A	34	3/3/28	his old values
B	35	8/4/34	Anthony on the break-down of liberalism
A	36	7/19/14	Anthony clinging to selfhood
A	37	Autumn, 1933	despite awareness of vulnerability
B	38	8/10/34	Out of selfhood: Anthony through abstinence; Helen via Ekki
A	39	3/25/28	Helen's abortion and turn to Hugh
B	40	9/11/34	Automatic progress as a shifting of responsibility
A	41	12/33	Anthony's cowardice in Mexico
B	42	9/15/34	Anthony on "Force subduing but Love gaining"
A	43	7/20-21/14	Anthony the guilty becomes Anthony the judge via Brian's confession of moral dilemma
B	44	9/21/34	Anthony on building bridges between given facts and philosophical inferences
A	45	4/14/28	Hugh trapped into marrying Helen
B	46	10/30/34	False literature and false pacifists
A	47	1/10-11/34	Failure to realize goodness because of
A	48	7/23/14	reliance on individual will
A → B	49	1/12-14/34	Anthony meets Miller
B	50	12/25/34	Anthony on realizing goodness
A → B	51	2/7/34	Mark
A	52	7/24/14	Anthony
A	53	2/23/34	Helen
			-- Rejecting others and suffering loss
B → C	54	2/23/35	Overcoming separateness through acts reinforcing interrelatedness of beings

Before commenting upon what this schematic outline reveals, let me make a necessary prefatory comment upon what is not revealed. I have several times refrained from designating a central character for the chapters of novel A, even though each of these chapters usually has one of the three major figures playing a dominant role. My reason lies in the nature of the relationship between Anthony, Helen, and Mark. Biographically and psychologically they are three distinct people,<sup>7</sup> but sociologically and metaphysically they merge into one being. The diversities in their personalities and behavior represent the self-division Huxley found to be characteristic of members of their class and generation. Seen as the multiple personalities of a single being, Helen becomes the instinctual half of Anthony's intellectual and Mark his repressed ego. The problem for Anthony is to overcome his repressions by unifying his intelligence with his emotions. He is Philip Quarles granted a second chance. Thus, the novel's triunal structure has a corresponding triunal characterization in its hero, Anthony Beavis. Just how this Beavis trinity functions will become clear in the ensuing discussion of Huxley's "secular gospel."

Let us first direct our attention to the sequential alternations of novels A and B. Although no regular pattern seems apparent, closer examination will reveal the logic guiding the sequences. The first three chapters alternate the initial day of A's present time with the initial day of B's present. In effect, we have an introduction to the central theme of the will to separateness versus the possibility of achieving unity of being, with A baring the thesis of separateness and B the antithesis of unity. This dialectic controls the development and organization of the book.<sup>8</sup>

We can also discern two turning points in the argument. After Chapter 32, the dialectical alternations become more frequent, indicating

the growing strength of the anti-thesis over the thesis. Significantly, in Chapter 32 we see the practicality of Miller's type of pacifism, which counterpoints with three of Anthony's desperate actions in Chapters 29-31. This clearly casts Miller in the role of bridge between the characters, actions, and themes of the two novels. With this insight, we are prepared for the second turning point in Chapter 49, as novel A begins to merge with novel B when Anthony meets the doctor in the jungle (a Livingstone, we can presume).

The second turning point is a necessary corollary to the first. The courage Miller displays at the pacifist meeting, in contradistinction to the cowardliness of Anthony's behavior in Chapters 29-31, can only emerge once the individual learns to forgo his personal will and relies upon his instinct for loving. We act willfully, Huxley seems to say, for two reasons, either out of desperation or upon the basis of preconceived abstract theories. Here, at the second point, behavior has been motivated by preconceptions about the self. In Chapter 47, we see the failure of Mark's reliance upon will to overcome the physical impediment of his accident and in 48 we see Brian's death as the consequence of his failure to reconcile moral precepts with instinctual feelings. Both men are incapable of realizing the good they strive for because they seek efficacy through the personal will. Relax the will and let the instincts guide personal relations. That is the lesson of Chapters 51-53. The Mark of 1934 and the Anthony of 1914 cannot do this and suffer loss, just as Helen suffers when she stifles her instinctive revulsion for Holtzmann, the man who betrays Ekki to the Nazis. Having learned from Miller the art of relinquishing the control of the conscious self, the ego, the Anthony of 1935 is capable of achieving unity of being. In effect, this last chapter constitutes the novel's synthesis (which I have represented by

B → C). Both we, the readers, and Anthony, the hero, have gained a new perspective upon the themes of separateness and unity. A means has been found whereby the facts of both may be utilized to realize the kind of goodness that had previously been impossible.

Significantly, the synthesis occurs in a new year, which post-dates the action in the rest of the book. Let us, then, examine the temporal patterns. If we look back at the outline, we can perceive that novel A has both a present time and three distinct periods of past time, whereas novel B has only a present. And notice that exactly one year separates the termination of A's present (2/23/34) from B's (2/23/35). This year largely concerns itself with extractions from Anthony's diary. Interspersed as they are throughout the past and present of A, they constitute his antihetical commentary upon the events of that novel. The sequencing of B's appearances dictates when and what pieces of novel A will next be presented to us. We can therefore define B as the mind of Eyeless in Gaza.

The operation of novel B (the mind) is analogous to the supposedly random associations with Brian Foxe and Mary Amberley that surface into Anthony's consciousness as he strokes Helen's bronzed flesh in Chapter 3. At first, Anthony thinks these consecutive, but unchronological memories from the past are merely photographs being dealt to him by an idiot in his own brain. As I previously noted, there are critics who have taken this view of the novel's structure. But Anthony's further reflections on the phenomenon of memory begin to reveal what Huxley is up to.

But what of the innumerable remembered things without any particular emotional content, without utility, beauty, or rational significance? Memory in these cases seemed merely a matter of luck .... Unless, it now rather disquietingly occurred to him, unless of course the reason were not before the event, but after it, in what had been the future .... In order that he might be

forced, in the midst of this act of detached and irresponsible sensuality, to think of Brian and of the things that Brian had lived for, yes, and had died for .... even Brian's suicide, he now realized with horror, even the poor huddled body on the rocks, was mysteriously implicit in this hot skin (Ein G, p.16).

The purposive value Anthony assigns to his memories is, of course, the promptings of a guilty conscience. The life he has led since Brian's death in 1914 has been a conscious attempt at avoiding responsibility for his complicity in that act. Memory must be mortified and died to. But this can only happen after one has come to terms with the past. And so, in Eyeless the novel's mind (novel B) raises the past in order to exorcise it. As the Anthony of 1934 progresses towards enlightenment, he gains the strength to lay to rest increasingly more painful and repressed parts of his former self. The chapters of novel A, then, comprise the personal subconscious of novel B. Once Anthony has come to terms with this level of mind, he is capable of penetrating the "non-personal subconscious" in his meditation upon the inverted cones (Chapter 54) and tapping that reservoir for the courage he needs to face the possible danger that awaits him at the pacifist meeting.<sup>9</sup>

If B is the mind, then all of A, past and present, are the past tense of novel B and what need have we of such categories as novels A and B? Here, I think, Meckier's bildungsroman theory bears fruit. We do have the growth and development of two distinct Anthony Beavises, the one who becomes the "Higher Lifer" and the one who becomes a mystic. And these two men live in different psychological worlds, the first suffering a progressive disintegration of personality, the second becoming progressively more whole. The present tense of novel A contains the events pointing these two Anthonies and their worlds. It is the essential link which, if seen merely as a part of B, relegates it to just another period of

past time. Of course, Huxley could have placed the B chapters at the end of the book and we would then have Meckier's multiple bildungsroman. Had such been the case, Eyeless in Gaza would have been a psychological case history, instead of the psychological therapy session Huxley seems to have intended it to be. The interspersal of B provides the book with an analytical consciousness amenable to therapeutic treatment. And since mind is distinct from, although influenced by the data of experience it contains, I feel it necessary to preserve the distinctions of novel A and novel B in order to reflect the differences in their nature and function.

The data filtering through B's consciousness group themselves into four time periods: 1902-1904 presents the young boyhood of Anthony from the death of his mother to the re-marriage of his father; 1912-1914 presents the undergraduate manhood of Anthony from his meeting with Mary Amberley to the death of Brian; 1926-1931 presents Anthony the aloof Higher Lifer from the time of Helen Amberley as ingénue to Helen as mistress; 8/30/33 - 2/23/34 presents the crisis in the old Anthony which leads to his conversion. Death and sex lie at the heart of all these periods, probably because they are the areas of life which most intensely engage our sense of self.<sup>10</sup> And since dying to self is the necessary prerequisite for enlightenment, it is essential for Anthony to recollect and understand these critical, formative periods (the past of novel A) before he can transcend his old self (the present of novel A).

To see how this is accomplished, let us look at the time column of the outline. We notice that, although the events of A recur in groupings without regard to chronology, the separate periods do unfold according to chronological progression.<sup>11</sup> So it is the groupings and not their chronology which must draw our attention. Earlier, I gave the

metaphysical reason for this, that the development of self in time is an illusion fostered by a time-bound consciousness. Now, having perceived the structure of Eyeless, we can understand the psychological reason for rejecting chronology. The individual behaves the way he does not primarily because of the order in which the events of his life have occurred, but because they have occurred. And since Eyeless mimics psychoanalytical therapy, its development replicates the mind's process of thought association under the specialized conditions of analytical self-examination.<sup>12</sup> Of course explorations of mind have been a favorite subject for modern novelists. What makes Eyeless in Gaza unique is Huxley's refusal to be a mere reporter. Instead, he places mind on the doctor's couch and tries to heal it. This is what Huxley meant by a utilitarian literature that provides the means by which we can transcend the selves we currently are. Eyeless is thus metaphysical psychoanalysis in fictional disguise; it's the kind of novel Freud might have written had he been a novelist with a mystical bent.

If we scan the time and argument columns simultaneously, we can see why Huxley needed a psychoanalytical approach. The mind surveying its past experiences has a badly divided self. He is not only Anthony Beavis, but Helen Amberley and Mark Staithes as well! Since the mind in novel B is certainly Anthony's, this must be the tentative conclusion to be drawn. Why else have several of novel A's chapters related from Helen's point of view if she did not constitute, on the metaphysical and sociological levels, another aspect of Anthony's being?<sup>13</sup> Mark, because he stands for the repressed ego, would not allow his story to be told directly (Even Chapter 51, although dominated by Mark's debate with Miller, is seen through Anthony's eyes.) But to prove my hypothesis conclusively will require a more extensive analysis of the novel proper.

First, let me state that on the biographical and psychological levels, all of the characters are distinct people. This is one aspect of the separateness of created forms that is an undeniable fact of reality. But unity is also a fact of reality. Indeed, the demonstration of this fact is Huxley's purpose in Eyeless in Gaza. Clearly, on the sociological level, there is no difficulty in seeing that all the characters are members of one class and/or age. So it is on the level of metaphysical unity that the difficulty of recognition lies. We must begin by granting Huxley the literary license of incorporating his mystical hypothesis into his novels, regardless of our private philosophical differences. The central thesis is "thou are That," or, in other words, mind in man is either similar to or identical with Universal Mind. My contention is that the mind of novel B is simultaneously that of Anthony Beavis of 1934 and Universal Mind. The data of experience contained within this dual mind should therefore encompass more than just the personal events of Anthony's life -- even if he himself is not cognizant of its presence. When we look at the chapters of novel A (the data), we find that Huxley occasionally shifts his point of view to characters other than Anthony. Some would consider this an aesthetic offense, but if we suspend our disbelief and give tacit assent to Huxley's metaphysics, we can justify the shifts from the personal to the omniscient point of view as hints to us, the readers, of the presence of Universal Mind. After he has healed his divided self, Anthony, in the last chapter, comes to share our knowledge<sup>14</sup> and, in his meditation, joins his mind with the Universal.

Anthony, then, is the hero of Eyeless in Gaza, not only in the literary sense of being its protagonist, but in the mythological sense of being the physical embodiment of the ideals of his race,<sup>15</sup> although

he only emerges in this role at the end. First, he must become a whole man by overcoming the Mark of repression and embracing the Helen of emotion, for if he is to become the mythic hero, he must be capable of seeing his interrelatedness with others. The task is accomplished by the presence or absence of characters during critical moments in novels A and B. For coherence's sake, let me trace these alternations for both Mark and Helen separately.

Mark Staithes represents Anthony's repressed ego, the force within him that prevents Anthony's psyche from aligning itself with spirit by insisting upon identification with ego. Because it is emotional, not spiritual repression that characterizes Anthony's relationship with Helen, Mark is not present in the first three chapters. We first see Mark at Bulstrode, where he is clearly defined as the egotistical half of Anthony's divided psychic loyalties; Brian Foxe is the other, spiritual, half. Anthony fluctuates between them. With Brian he can express the grief he feels over his mother's death, but Brian represents the kind of decency and courage of conviction Anthony so deeply admires, yet cannot emulate. With the snobbish, but popular Mark, he can feel the self-satisfaction of being part of the "in-group." Whenever he finds himself in the position of having to choose between the two, it is always Mark he selects.

We are given two such episodes at Bulstrode. Significantly, both concern Hugh Ledwidge who, as the timorous sexual fantasizer, is the onanistic counterpart to Anthony's detached sensualist. At Mark's instigation, Anthony joins in the general embarrassing of Hugh for being caught masturbating and later excludes him from their "swotting sessions," both times over the objections of the more compassionate Brian. Brian argues for recognizing their commonality with Hugh; Mark for distinctions. The differences, however, are merely superficial, whereas the similarities

are more fundamental. All of the boys masturbate and, like Brian and Anthony, Hugh is naturally studious. But Hugh wears "goggles" and a truss -- so razz him and exclude him! Mark's chastisement of Hugh's sexual behavior, coming as it does during the conditioned reflex phase of the separateness-unity dialectic (in Chapter 6), foreshadows the sexlessness of his later manhood and partly accounts for Anthony's own penchant for impersonal sex. So, too, the intellectual snobbery of both men seems to originate in their scholarship preparations. And since this incident occurs during the restraints imposed upon loving others phase of the argument (in Chapter 15), the implication is that intellectual achievement will become for them a way of divorcing themselves from others.

Mark plays no part in the central events of 1912-1914; after all, the crisis revolves around the question of sex. We see him only once, on 18 June, 1914 (in Chapter 10), when he is Brian's rival for the presidency of the Fabian Society.<sup>16</sup> Anthony avoids the question of allegiance by accepting Gerry Watchett's last-minute dinner invitation. For Anthony, Watchett's crowd of young aristocrats represents social and moral freedom from the restraints of his own middle-class up-bringing. But without the moral support of Anthony's presence at the meeting, Brian withdraws from the election and Mark, not wanting to be one-upped, follows suit. Mark's egotistically motivated abdication parallels Anthony's evasion of responsibility since both act purely out of self-interest. That Mark is prompted by his desire to reinforce self-esteem, whereas Anthony attempts, albeit misguidedly, to enlarge his being, indicates the essential difference in the two. As psyche, Anthony always maintains his freedom of willing. The ego, however, is a fixed pole; its consciousness can only be intensified or diminished, depending upon the degree to which

psyche adheres to egocentrism. We should therefore expect Mark's rigidity to increase the further Anthony slips into insulated self-hood by avoiding recognition and responsibility for what, in fact, he really is.

And that is exactly what happens. But having discussed how Huxley establishes the psychic relationship between Mark and Anthony in some detail during these schoolday episodes, I think it would suffice for our purposes if I merely outlined the course it follows in Anthony's later development. The illusoriness of Anthony's theory of personality, the 1926 manifestation of his spurious conception of freedom, has its psychological doppelgänger in the Mark of 1926, who takes pleasure in offering cynical explanations for his genuinely creditable achievements and attitudes. Mark's behavior is the egotistical correlative of Anthony's flight from the past.<sup>17</sup> When Anthony, in 1933, can no longer maintain his "freedom," Mark once more appears to offer him a way out -- the desperate Mexican adventure. Mark's injury, however, forces Anthony back upon his own resources. Metaphysically, psyche, perceiving the impossibility of relying upon ego, must seek an alternate solution. Thus, at this point, Anthony "miraculously" encounters Miller. In accordance with the metaphysics, Anthony remains the passive observer during the debate (in Chapter 51) between the relative values of Miller's anthropological view of man and Staithes's entomological view (their respective positions are indicative of the realism of spirit, as opposed to the distortions of ego). The doctor's sagacity (the acuity of spiritual consciousness), coupled with the serenity Anthony had previously seen on Mark's anesthetized face prior to surgery (ego consciousness quiescent), impells Anthony to choose Miller's way. The ego, under the cutting edge of spirit's knowledge (Miller's surgical knife), is now revealed as the truncated mechanism it has ever been.

The egoist as amputee provides the appropriate image for Anthony of novel A. Since childhood he has been attempting to sever his emotions from the rest of his conscious self. That the operation should finally succeed on 8 December, 1926 validates my characterization of Helen as the emotional half of Anthony Beavis, for this day simultaneously records the formulation of Anthony's theory of personality and the first chronological appearance of Helen as a distinct person with an independent will of her own.<sup>18</sup> Intellect and emotion leading separate existences impoverishes both faculties. Without the guidance of intelligence, the emotions are unstable; Helen's unsatisfactory amours and her revulsion towards raw physicality are the consequences of this split.<sup>19</sup> Without the capacity for fellow-feeling, the intellect becomes aloof rather than unattached; Anthony's Higher Life scholarship, his ironical Bouvard et Pécuchet sociological study, and his detached sensuality are the result.

The tenuousness of a life thus fragmented, whose chronologically disjointed biography would be its objective correlative, is demonstrated in the dog episode. The splattering of the dog's body upon the roof of Anthony's villa shatters the purely physical relationship between Helen and Anthony.<sup>20</sup> Because no channel has ever developed between feeling and reason, the suddenness of the shock prevents the possibility of communication. Although now conscious of his love for Helen, Anthony's attempt to express it is frustrated by her withdrawal from physical contact.

The disparity of their responses indicates the contradictory behavior of the divided self during moments of crisis. Acting at cross-purposes, each half seeks wholeness in extreme measures: Anthony tries to arouse his emotions through the violent action of Mark's Mexican revolution; Helen tries to find intellectual guidance in Ekki's communism. Both necessarily fail. Anthony experiences only cowardice; Helen, when

Ekki dies, feels contempt for herself and for others. Without a specific person to love, her communism becomes merely organized hatred. At this point in her life, she is the intellectual obverse of Anthony's aloof scholar -- the dedicated crusader. The two positions represent the opposite extremes of allegiance to abstract principles for the individual devoid of love.<sup>21</sup> And so, when Anthony advises Helen "to cultivate the difficult art of loving others," he is, in effect, talking to himself as well. His resolution to speak at Battersea, confirmed by his meditation upon unity, promises to cure both his cowardice and her contempt. More than just an acknowledgement of responsibility for Helen's well-being, the impending action which concludes the novel marks the first time Anthony has opened himself to receive another's love. When we compare this act with the one that necessitated his self-division, we can see that Anthony has indeed been healed.

The contrapuntal act that culminates in Anthony's theory of personality in his rejection of Mrs. Foxe's love (in Chapter 52).<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Foxe was Anthony's only healthy means of exculpating his responsibility for Brian's suicide. Because she, too, contributed to that death,<sup>23</sup> Anthony's refusal compounds his guilt, for it effectively denies her the possibility of atonement as well. Since emotional entanglement thrust him into this predicament, divorcing himself from emotion seems to be the logical means of extricating himself. And so, the theory of personality.

If we examine Anthony's theory, we can see how it operates as a psychological defense mechanism. Personality, according to his theory, is that which a sentient and cognitive "I" selectively identifies with out of the totality of experience. To some degree the society in which the "I" lives dictates part of this selection, so that personality is only partly personal "property." Modern man's abundance of knowledge has made

him increasingly aware of the discrete psychological instants which comprise experience and of the influence that arbitrary, non-rational elements have in selecting those states collectively termed the personality. Such knowledge is responsible for the break-down of clearly defined personalities in our time. Hamlet becomes the Representative Man.

... Hamlet didn't have a personality -- knew altogether too much to have one. He was conscious of his total experience, atom by atom and instant by instant, and accepted no guiding principle which would make him choose one set of patterned atoms to represent his personality rather than another. To himself and to others he was just a succession of more or less incongruous states (E in G, p.100).

Astute Shakespearean criticism this certainly is, but its self-justificatory nature is evident when Anthony fails to draw the obvious analogy between himself and Hamlet. Both resort to personal atomization when moral obligations force them into psychologically untenable positions.

If the individual is only "a succession of states enclosed in the flesh of his own side," then Anthony would be free to disassociate his personality from all moments of shameful behavior, most especially those centering around Brian's death. "Not me, but that other guy in my body." This is not double-talk, but the kind of ego-instigated perversion of language and thought Huxley refers to in "Words and Behavior." "For, consciously, or subconsciously, it is with deliberation that we do not know or fail to understand -- because incomprehension allows us, with a good conscience, to evade unpleasant obligations and responsibilities, because ignorance is the best excuse for going on doing what one likes, but ought not, to do."<sup>24</sup>

That Anthony's excuse for adhering to his theory is the need for an emotional amputation can also be demonstrated by the course of Helen's and Anthony's lives from 1926, when the theory is formulated, to 1931,

when she becomes his mistress. At her mother's party, on 8 December, 1926, Anthony ignores her. Helen, feeling that she lacks seriousness, flirts with Hugh, Anthony's sexual counterfoil. From this time until 1931 she has a number of disastrous emotional experiences, the sum total of which resigns her to Anthony's detached sensuality. Anthony's interest in her begins only after he learns, in 1931, that Mrs. Foxe is on her death-bed. Believing that the source of his shame has been laid to rest, he can now re-establish his "Amberley connection," but on his terms. To ensure his dominance, he substitutes daughter Helen for mother Mary, working on the assumption that by a regulated repetition of the past he can magically exorcise the consequences of past actions and thereby preserve his freedom.

In mysticism, not magic, however, does Anthony find the means to transcend the past. Only after Anthony elects to follow Miller's way (Chapter 51) can the mind of novel B contemplate Anthony's rejection of Mrs. Foxe (Chapter 52).<sup>25</sup> Since the dialectic develops the rationale for adopting the mystical approach, let me briefly sketch in the argument column of the outline.

Chapters 1-3 present the familiar Huxleyan problem of self-division in the new terms of the will to separateness. The new expression indicates an alteration in Huxley's approach. In the earlier novels, the question had been analyzed in the context of society. But despite societal influences, the primary manifestations lie within the individual's psyche. Accordingly, Huxley discards the stance of social novelist for that of the psychological novelist. In like manner, Anthony converts his sociological text into a psychological diary and proceeds to analyze his former self in the light of Miller's mystical teachings.

Chapters 4-54 detail the specific content of the dialectic. The problem begins with the responses of early childhood which establish behavioral patterns whose repetition condition one's reflexes (4-6). But what has been conditioned can be re-conditioned. The will remains free, but must rely upon the individual's ability to maintain maximum consciousness of his actions in order to re-direct the will (7). Free will raises the question of what freedom is. Anthony's old sense of freedom is a fraud because it is a willful denial of the facts of reality (8-12). Freedom does not exist in a vacuum, but within the confines of one's relations with everything outside the self. To preserve freedom, one must preserve relationships, which implies the acknowledgement of mutual dependency, of responsibility (13). To feel responsible, one must be capable of loving others. But the ego clings to a host of sensations and ideas which restrain one from loving (14-16). Therefore, one must learn to freely will one's loving (17). The difficulty of fulfilling this prescription is readily demonstrated when one examines the role of sex in human behavior (18-22). Techniques exist, however, for educating one in the proper use of the self which will enable one to overcome stumbling blocks like sex. One must also avoid situations which normally elicit bad behavior (23). But one is constantly being thrown into false positions (24-27). Yet, it is easy to become a Stiggins (28). And often, one takes desperate measures to extricate one's self (29-31), but Miller's mystical pacifism demonstrates a more effective alternative (32). The problem seems to be traceable to one's values (33-34), which, even on the societal level, must be re-examined (35). Conscious of the vulnerability these values open one up to, one still clings to selfhood nonetheless (36-37). The solution must lie in escape from selfhood (38). Some answers, however, are less than satisfactory, for they merely shift the

burden of one's responsibility onto someone or something else (39-40). As a consequence, one behaves cowardly (41). Love and force are two sources of courage, but force only subdues, whereas love unites (42). And to physical cowardice must be added moral cowardice (43). To resolve the dilemma one needs to bridge the gap between the observed facts and the philosophical inferences drawn from them. This bridge would be a theoretical point of leverage from which to act (44). Without such a perspective, one can only acquiesce to circumstances -- in love (45), but in literature and politics as well (46). As a victim of circumstances one can never realize goodness through one's actions (47-49). One must establish a relationship with some kind of psychologically conducive representation of goodness outside the self (50). Reject such a relationship and one loses the ability to act (51-53); accept and unifying action becomes possible (54).

My abstract of the dialectic contains several points which require detailed analysis, for they are issues of contemporary controversy. The first centers around the question of the proper use of the self. Miller's program of physical re-education is a thinly disguised version of the F.M. Alexander method.<sup>26</sup> The student learns to inhibit bad physical habits by concentrating upon what happens within the body when simple movements, like sitting down, are performed. Through felt experience he learns to discern which movements are correct and which are incorrect. After diligent, conscious repetitions, the student gains increased powers of physical control and mental awareness, without having to resort to the psychologically damaging method of repression. So far, there is nothing controversial in this; it's standard athletic training.

But the theory behind the method maintains that habits of mind and body formed in one sphere are transferable to other spheres. The theory

takes Gestalt psychology's proposition as to the interrelatedness of mind and body and combines it with the epistemology of Structuralism. From the structuralist's perspective, the mind establishes general structures of behavioral patterns rather than what we usually consider to be particular, individual habits by themselves. Once formed, these structural patterns are available for the performance of any action conforming, structurally, to the general circumstances.<sup>27</sup> Anthony's behavior throughout novel A illustrates how the principle operates. Whenever anyone needs his psychological support, Anthony retreats into himself. The specific circumstances always differ; the response remains the same. What neurologists call a reflexive arch between brain and muscles, via the nerves, has been formed. So, when Anthony attempts to reach out to Helen after the dog incident, she (as the symbol of his emotional nervous system) instinctively recoils from his touch. It's pure Pavlovian conditioning, with the dog providing the stimulus for the physical reaction.<sup>28</sup>

Alexander's method differs from Pavlov's in maintaining that the stimulus does not have to be a specific constant -- at least not for humans. In man, the potential for transference being greater, because of the human mind's ability to generalize its experiences, his potential for learning should be greater.

Skill acquired in getting to know the muscular aspect of mind-body can be carried over into the exploration of other aspects. There is increasing ability to detect one's motives for any given piece of behavior, to assess correctly the quality of a feeling, the real significance of a thought. Also, one becomes more clearly and consistently conscious of what's going on in the outside world, and the judgment associated with that heightened consciousness is improved. Control is also transferred. Acquire the art of inhibiting muscular bad use and you acquire thereby the art of inhibiting more complicated trains of behaviour. Not only this: there is prevention as well as cure. Given

proper correlation, many occasions for behaving undesirably just don't arise. There is an end, for example, of neurotic anxieties and depressions -- whatever their previous history (E in G, p.224).

Huxley's claims for transference may be exaggerated. But then, they may not! The question has only recently undergone experimental investigation, so we must withhold final judgment until the evidence becomes conclusive. Huxley, however, maintained his position, making transference a cardinal principle in Palanese education (and the decade since his death seems to be vindicating many of his hypotheses ). But despite the scientific controversy, the artistic value of transference cannot be denied. It cements the episodes of the novel together, making them amenable to aesthetic shaping by providing them with a unifying intellectual perspective.

Transference, because of its insistence upon the symbiotic relationship between mind and body, between psychic consciousness and feeling, also supports the mystical hypothesis of unity of being. Huxley's conversion to mysticism has been the single greatest obstacle to critical appreciation of the later novels. For the rationalist, the mystical experience is, at best, a subjective fact of individual psychology. But our purpose here is not to verify, but to clarify. Let us, then, forgo questions of proof, and examine, instead, the fruits of Huxley's metaphysics. As students of literature, this should be our overriding concern. For Huxley, the benefits of mysticism were simultaneously manifested on the psychological, sociological and literary levels.

All three levels converge in Anthony's meditation in the final chapter. Anthony's meditations are a form of mental discipline corresponding to Miller's physical re-education. They are not an end in themselves; conceived as such, meditation leads into quietism, not liberation.

Therefore, Anthony meditates for the purpose of actualizing his potential for the love and goodness he had previously been incapable of realizing during the critical moments of life recorded in novel A. In Chapter 54 (novel B) he is once again faced with an analogous crisis. An anonymous letter threatens him with bodily harm if he should speak that night at the pacifist meeting in Battersea. Since Miller is out of town, he must rely upon his own resources for guidance. He could run away, as he has always done before. But Anthony is well aware of the fact that the degree of his commitment to his friends is too strong for his behavior not to have an adverse effect upon them -- especially upon Helen, whose future life depends upon his appearance. To save his own skin would be to insist again upon his separateness, but the realization of his responsibility belies that separateness. Beneath division there lies the unity of mutual dependency, on both the societal and psychological levels. Denial of this unity is evil in itself and the producer of evil consequences, as Anthony's biography is intended to demonstrate. The suffering engendered by the will to separateness arises from its falsification of the facts of reality (Anthony's theory of personality). Yet consciousness for modern man is a function of ego, which divides the world into subject and object. One can only perceive undifferentiated unity as nothingness (see Marjorie Carling's "meditation" in my second chapter). The basic condition of man's existence is separateness; is evil. Thus, on the biographical level, Anthony Beavis, Helen Amberley, and Mark Staites remain three distinct people.

If, for modern, individualized man the achievement of complete unity is impossible, the consciousness of separateness can still be transcended. Unity can be experienced directly through love and compassion and known intuitively through meditation. These pave the road to metaphysical union

because they clear the obstacle of ego from their paths (something Marjorie fails to do and so the nothingness she perceives is the product of ego consciousness). For the intellectually-oriented Anthony (and Huxley) contemplation is the most efficacious way. From intellectual comprehension of unity the mind can gradually progress to unmediated knowledge, united, in that "peace which passeth understanding," with the unitive Ground of all being. And so Anthony meditates upon the image of peace as an inverted cone, whose base is the surface of the ocean of existence, its ceaseless motion destroying the consciousness of unity, but whose apex in the underlying darkness is peace. At this concentrated point of the cone, peace expands into an upright cone, whose base is a steady, tranquil light, the source and substance of all being. Focusing his attention downward into the cones, the surface of the waters is forgotten. "For now there is only the darkness expanding and deepening, deepening into light; there is only this final peace, this consciousness of being no more separate, this illumination... (E in G, p.423)."

Has Anthony penetrated to the depths of mind or merely perpetuated a self-willed delusion? Impossible to tell (he's only a fictional creation). All we can know is that the experience is only momentary. The struggle to recapture it must be continually renewed. Yet each instance of success enables one to perform purposeful action, as illustrated by the fact that the meditation here gives Anthony the courage to face with equanimity the challenge of the meeting.

Anthony's development is only partly completed, but we are left with the impression that he has made the correct choice and that fulfillment lies in the direction now taken. His history resolves the recurrent dilemma of the previous Huxleyan heroes. His awareness of eternity as being unitive peace, as well as its possibility of being utilized within

the world of time if one makes the necessary effort, saves him from suffering the fate of Denis Stone, that self-conscious victim of chance and necessity, just as his dying to self releases him from the ego cravings of Gumbriel and Quarles. And both concepts provide the means for acting in the world which Calamy, lacking that knowledge, is forced to renounce. But social action is a tricky business, a problem that was to preoccupy Huxley for the remainder of his life. So we must now examine how Huxley's first new man, who has transcended his self by expanding his consciousness, handles the difficulty.

The central question confronting socio-politically concerned adherents of the Perennial Philosophy would remain throughout Huxley's career the one formulated by Anthony: "how to combine belief that the world is to a great extent illusory with belief that it is none the less essential to improve the illusion (E in G, p.58)?" The problem of right action, resolved on the personal level in the recognition of the unity of beings underlying separateness, is resolved on the social level when Anthony joins Purchas's pacifist group. The difficulties besetting such an organization, as presented in the novel,<sup>29</sup> reside in the narrowness of its conception, its questionable base of support, and its opportunities for egotism. But we need not consider these difficulties here; they are extraneous to our immediate concerns and the novel itself never gives specific information about the group's activities. The group seems to exist more as a public therapy session for Anthony and proof of his personal transformation than as a serious organization in its own right. Huxley most probably preferred to subordinate the entire question of social reform to its vague presence in the novel, so as not to distract from the personal conversion of Anthony. Ends and Means deals with the matter in detailed programs, covering a variety of areas, national and international.

More pertinent than the question of pacifism is Anthony's analysis of the break-down of liberalism, for it reflects on the national level the atomization of modern man. The traditional English method of dealing with crises in piecemeal fashion as they arise allows for tolerance of differences and for individual liberties. But a politics of issues is incapable of managing the economic threats posed by new technology and a stabilized population growth. The alternative is systematic planning predicated upon first principles that would reorganize the entire society. In doing so, it must demand uniformity of acquiescence and the eradication of dissent. So chaos or tyranny appear to be the only options -- but only if one thinks in terms of nations rather than of individuals. Nationalism is the political obverse of egotism; the former denies the fact of individual separateness, whereas the latter denies the fact of unity. Through mysticism, Huxley found the means of reconciling both facts. A systematic approach to the real needs of people, in line with the teachings of the Perennial Philosophy, would preserve civil liberties and negotiate economic questions on the international level where the dictates of imperialistic capitalism have so clearly placed them. These ideas, as outlined in Ends and Means, require the wisdom and good will of the rulers for implementation. Nearly forty years later, we are still waiting for their infinite wisdom and selflessness to become manifest. Huxley had less faith and quickly abandoned the idea.<sup>30</sup>

But Huxley maintained to the end his emphasis upon the individual man. Anthony Beavis should therefore be seen as Huxley's testament to the redemptive potential of the individual. In the years before Eyeless in Gaza Huxley had flirted with fascism, but his conversion to mystical philosophy had revitalized his roots in the British liberal tradition, giving a new energy and sustenance to his belief that salvation lies within

each man, in this world and the next. It is doubtful he would ever have given his full allegiance to any form of totalitarianism, but had he not embarked upon the path of enlightenment, he most certainly would have degenerated into a kind of Mark Staithes, or perhaps a Vladimir Nabokov.

The note of optimism which ends Huxley's first novel after his espousal of the Perennial Philosophy signifies the value he derived from mysticism. He has found a personal solution to the dilemma of meaninglessness, but also what would seem to be a literary dead-end. After Eyeless in Gaza additional conversion novels would be redundant. Huxley's answer is to reverse the patterns of his last book. He reverts to the format of the Twenties; After Many a Summer Dies the Swan and Time Must Have a Stop conform essentially to the manor house model to gather a multiplicity of viewpoints. This reversion in form parallels Huxley's retreat from the public arena as a stage for effecting reform. After the collapse of the Peace Pledge Union, he becomes disillusioned with political action and seeks refuge in the private reorganization of individuals on the periphery of society. The isolation of the manor house is most suitable for this kind of exposition. The revival of the old mode also shifts the emphasis away from conversion. Pete Boone is killed before he can do more than intellectually assent to Propter's teachings and Sebastian Barnack undergoes his changes off-stage. Instead of a drama of free will, we have the drama of living without freedom. The characters are no longer the slaves of ideas, as in the earlier novels, but of their appetites, Huxley's mysticism having sharpened his analysis of human behavior. And because their carvings are a function of life in time, Huxley transforms the anti-time development of Eyeless into time narratives with a vengeance. Time past, time future, and time after life become the central themes.

The next two novels thus represent Huxley during a period of re-trenchment, perhaps, but one in which he has gained sufficient faith in his position so as to make a frontal assault upon opposing life-styles the focus of interest. The social novelist re-emerges to personally challenge a world gone mad!

1 Meckier, in Aldous Huxley, pp.151 and 155-156, suggests that Eyeless is possibly the most multiple bildungsroman in English since it traces the development of Anthony's schoolfriends and of Helen Amberley as well.

2 I agree with Meckier's thesis that Anthony's flight from responsibility represents his entire generation's sense of negligence and guilt; Ibid., p.158.

3 See Ibid., pp.147-148, for a convenient chronological reassemblage of chapters and events.

4 Glicksberg sees the dissolution of time as revealing the "unstable nature of personality" and the manner in which the past affects the present; "Huxley the Experimental Novelist," pp.106-107. Meckier sees the chapters as providing the missing links connecting the two Anthonies of 1926 and 1934; Aldous Huxley, pp.148-149. Bowering believes the chronological break-up serves to intersperse the diary material more effectively, thereby avoiding its placement in a lump at the end of the novel as an undigestible section similar to the second epilogue of War and Peace, p.117. This would be a paramount consideration if one shared Ghose's view that the diary entries were the heart of the story, p.155. On the negative side, Watts thinks there is no essential meaning lost if the chapters were read in time sequence, pp.89-90. He obviously doesn't believe the medium has a message.

5 The Perennial Philosophy, p.189.

6 I have found such an outline indispensable for divining what Huxley was doing in Eyeless. And since my interpretation of the novel radically departs from that of previous critics, I feel appending my outline would facilitate the reader in following (and checking the plausibility) of my argument.

7 Bowering sees correspondences between the characters and W.H. Sheldon's three physiological archetypes. Anthony is cerebrotonic, an intellectual preoccupied with ideas; Helen is viscerotonic, her experiences being dominated by emotions; Mark is the somatotonic man of action whose schemes to reform the world prove futile. Each of them is a prisoner to his bodily type; Bowering, p.128. I think Bowering's schematization has validity, but pressed too far, it obscures the ways in which they function as three aspects of one person. Bowering's interpretation makes the novel one-dimensional.

8 Meckier says the structure "gradually reveals itself to be an integral whole in the Wordsworthian vein;" Aldous Huxley, p.150. I feel Meckier's description misleading, for the unifying consciousness, as I will later argue, derives from Buddhist, rather than Romantic metaphysics.

9 Huxley may be skating on scientific thin ice here. What proof have we for the existence of a "non-personal subconscious?" Certainly he had no more evidence available to him than Freud did. And like Freud's theories of mind, Huxley's theories rely heavily upon introspective and historical speculations. Let us then emulate Freud and Huxley and treat the theory

as a working hypothesis. Here, in Eyeless in Gaza, the hypothesis works as an aesthetic principle. In The Devils of Loudun we shall see how it operates as an intellectual proposition.

10 For an avowedly anti-Freudian, Huxley was intensely preoccupied with Freud's traditional subject matter, especially during the second phase of his career. As the previous note suggests, the two used analogous methodologies. Huxley's major contention with Freud and other schools of modern psychology was based upon his view that psychologists ignored the influence of the body upon the mind. For the heart of Huxley's critique, see his essay, "The Oddest Science," in his Collected Essays (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), pp.319-326.

11 There is one exception to this. Chapters 25 and 29, occurring on 20 May, 1931 and 24 May, 1931, respectively, appear before we are given all the events of 1928. This is because sequence is governed by thought association and not by chronology. Of course, 1931 could be considered as a separate period, but the action so clearly places it within the framework of 1926-1928 that despite the gap of three years, it would seem to be the logical epilogue to the episode.

12 The dialectical form accounts for the specialized nature of the analysis. Only a highly intellectualized mind would select such a framework for thought association. It is even doubtful if so controlled a method could, in reality, create a state of relaxation sufficiently free to bring to consciousness deeply repressed experiences. But, then, this is art and not reality. As with all art, contrivance is the cost for cohesion. The contrived becomes objectionable only when we cannot perceive its necessity. Being as yet unacclimated to a literature that both represents the interior operations of mind and jettisons the external orientation of sequential time, the early readers of Eyeless in Gaza were at an understandable loss. Their annoyance reflected the newness of the novel. Thanks to the modernists, today's reader has a more sophisticated tolerance for disorientation. Perhaps too great a tolerance? Tolerance slips easily into obsequious acquiescence.

13 Here, let me raise another potentially damaging deviation. Chapter 45, in which Hugh is trapped into marrying Helen, is told from Hugh's perspective. But even Hugh Ledwidge represents another side of Anthony. Anthony's detached sensuality is no less onanistic than Hugh's masturbation fantasies. Neither man is really there as a lover for Helen. Be this as it may, to have maintained a totally consistent perspective, Huxley should have given Chapter 45 from Helen's view. Had he done so, however, consistency of characterization would have been lost. Helen, like Anthony and Mark, is too self-centered to have been aware of Hugh's misgivings at this point. Therefore, she could never have provided us with this insight. Nor is this the only chapter in which Huxley shifts his point of view. We occasionally find ourselves in the minds of John Beavis, Brian Foxe, and even Joan Thursley. Two conclusions are thus possible: one, Huxley was just sloppy; two, the novel's mind, nominally Anthony Beavis's, actually encompasses an entire class and generation. In the body of my chapter, I will argue for the second alternative.

14 This is why, in my outline, I represented Chapter 54 as B → C, for C is our apprehension of the totality of Eyeless in Gaza. At the conclusion, our consciousness (if we have read the book correctly) and Anthony's become one.

15 Meckier also sees Anthony as a deliverer of society and fiction by teaching pacifism to society and by being a counter to the predominance of the anti-hero; Aldous Huxley, p.145.

16 This incident predates, by a day, Anthony's first meeting with Joan Thursley and the divorcé Mary Amberley and therefore foreshadows Anthony's behavior during the ensuing crisis in 1914.

17 Bowering, p.128, sees little connection between Mark the public school boy and the grown man. By focusing upon morality rather than metaphysics, Bowering must necessarily be bewildered by this novel. The psychological permutations from social snobbery to Communistic cynicism, however, should be clear enough to perceive, even from the moral perspective.

18 Chronologically, the first time we see Helen is on 27 May, 1914 (in Chapter 27), but then she is only her mother's daughter; like Mary, an amoral pagan. That she appears here as a child indicates the emotional immaturity of Anthony during his affair with Mary Amberley.

19 When Bowering, on p.130, attributes Anthony's suffering to his refusal to face physical reality, he is right, but for the wrong reason. Bowering sees the characters only as distinct people. On this level, however, Helen is the one who finds the visceral so repugnant. For Anthony, psychological reality is the nemesis.

20 Symbolically, their affair acknowledges their cohabitation within a single body. Significantly, Helen, although frustrated by the arrangement, appears resigned to it before the dog makes it impossible, whereas Anthony feels comfortable with it, even though stroking her body raises suppressed emotional memories of past loves, Brian and Mary.

21 Of course, since Anthony's adherence to the Higher Life was mental, it manifested itself as irony, whereas Helen's belief, being emotional, manifested itself as hatred.

22 Meckier attributes the theory to Anthony's sense of guilt for Brian's death; Aldous Huxley, p.149.

23 The lovelessness of her marriage caused Mrs. Foxe to concentrate all of her repressed emotions upon Brian. Hemmed in by social mores, she could neither divorce her husband (the most healthy release that, had it been available to her, would have avoided disaster), nor commit physical incest with her son (an alternative as deforming as the one taken). Love, under such conditions, could only find expression in a perverted spirituality. Brian grew up unable to reconcile his sexual desires with his mother's inculcated morality. Mrs. Foxe's burden of responsibility is not lessened by the fact that she has partly been a victim of circumstances. As After Many a Summer will demonstrate, acceptance of local belief is grounds for

personal culpability. In her defense, her confession of guilt to Anthony indicates that suffering has raised her consciousness sufficiently to recognize its cause and possible means of alleviation.

24 "Words and Behavior," The Olive Tree (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1937), rpt. in Collected Essays, pp.245-26.

25 In Chapter 53, Helen loses Ekki; the loss of her intellectual orientation thus parallels Anthony's loss of emotional orientation. The two halves of the self are free to unite within one body again, not with the detachment of 1931, but in recognition of mutual responsibility.

26 Huxley openly advocates the Alexander approach in Ends and Means, pp.254-259.

27 This is the principle of structuralism, the concept that everything in the universe, even ideas, has form as well as content, that different substances are interchangeable as long as their components maintain the identical structural configuration as the original. A good introductory study of the methodology and its application to various fields of learning would be Jean Piaget, Structuralism, trans. and ed. Chanihah Maschler (1970; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1971).

28 This is why Helen's episode with the kidney appears in Chapter 5 as part of the early conditioning grouping.

29 I think it would be misleading to identify Purchas's group with the Peace Pledge Union because the former exists ahistorically, as a shadowy idea of reform action. From what little we are given of it in the novel, it even seems to operate without a specific set of goals. Pinpointing a biographical cognate would tend to give too definite a character to what Huxley leaves as a vague conception.

30 In his essay, "The Double Crisis," Huxley once again proposed international cooperation. This time he suggested that nations temporarily forget their political and economic differences and concentrate upon the demographic and ecological problems which were even more urgent. Again his voice fell upon deaf ears. That was more than twenty years ago and the piper's bill has arrived for payment. See Themes and Variations (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), p.235-272.

Chapter Four(a) After Many a Summer Dies the Swan

After Many a Summer brings us to a new world. Literally, we have left the rigid confines of a class-bound Europe insanely arming itself for international holocaust and come to the relatively freer air of California, where philosophical theories still retain the latitude for practical application. Figuratively, we are no longer on the level of the seeker for spiritual truth, but in the presence of its practitioner. Propter is the logical conclusion of Huxley's search for meaning.<sup>1</sup> Against his theory and performance we judge the quality of life led by the other characters. One is almost tempted to say that they exist exclusively as negative validations of Propter's wisdom. Although that would be too sweeping and extreme a view, on one level they certainly do function in that way. Yet, they do operate on other levels as well. They are simultaneously fascinating personalities in their own right and their desires, not Propter's, generate the plot's action. In this respect, Propter inhabits a separate and independent universe which most of the characters feel no need of participating in and therefore make little effort to understand. Because we have two different worlds in the novel, we can, without distorting his meaning, temporarily extract Propter from his environment and hear what he has to tell us about the Perennial Philosophy. Anthony Beavis has already explained how to change the self, so now Huxley introduces Propter to elucidate the way in which the new man is to live.

We begin that discussion with a definition of man. The source Propter quotes is the seventeenth-century French prelate, Cardinal Berulle. Man,

he says, is "a nothingness surrounded by God, indigent and capable of God, filled with God if he so desires (AMSDS, p. 70)." This God is "a being withdrawn from creatures, a free power, a pure working (AMSDS, P. 70)."<sup>2</sup> Three essential points can be deduced from these statements. First, both God and man are defined as non-personal, man as an entity, God as a consciousness. Second, that man's attainment of God rests upon an act of free willing. We have already encountered these concepts and need not elaborate further upon them, except to point out that what man, as an entity possessed of consciousness, actually achieves, when he knows God, is self-knowledge. So critics who object to the "subjectivity" of the mystical experience are right -- in a limited way. What they cannot accept is the validity of subjective knowledge. Like Gumbril, their attitude is permeated with the values of nineteenth-century scientific materialism. But that, even for many scientists, has come to be regarded as an outmoded view of reality. The work of Einstein, et. al. has shown us the subjectivity of all our intellectual categories. To disregard the subjective would be, to coin a phrase from Point Counter Point, an "Illidgism."

The third concept deriving from Propter's definitions, that of time,<sup>3</sup> forms the crux of the novel. Implicit in the conception of God is his existence out of time. Therefore, man must free himself of life in time in order to gain direct knowledge of God. As we saw demonstrated in Anthony's meditation in Eyeless and once again when Propter meditates in the present work, unmediated knowledge is possible when the mind, in a state on recollection, focuses upon the non-personal, unitive Ground of all being. The experience, described by Propter as analogous to sensuous experience, is one of timeless good. Now, if man knows good as God in eternity, he also know good in the temporal world? According to Propter, no. Time is evil, is the medium through which it propagates itself.

When he begins elaborating on the idea, Propter qualifies his previous statement. Time is only potentially evil, but human cravings of the body and ego, themselves functions of time, actualize that potential. Actualized good lies outside of time, although any act which contributes towards the liberation from time and personality would justifiably be considered good. That liberation can operate on two levels, the animal and the spiritual. Good on the animal level comes from living in accord with the laws of our physiology, what had been previously termed the proper use of the self. On the spiritual level, good would be "knowledge of the world without desire or aversion; . . . as the experience of eternity, as the transcendence of personality, the extension of consciousness beyond the limits imposed by ego (AMSDS, p. 93)." In so far as we persist in remaining on the human level, we mitigate against the good we receive from the other two spheres because, for Huxley now, to be human is to be obsessed with time, with personality, and those projections of personality which are our desires and ideals.

But, if appetite and anxiety lie at the heart of being human, what of virtue? What of reforming evil? Poppycock! says Huxley's mouthpiece. A man may possess all the requisite virtues and still do evil if he lacks compassion and understanding. In fact, the world's greatest evils stem from the actions of virtuous, respectable people who commit their crimes in the name of principles which, because of being merely abstractions, are naturally devoid of compassion and limited in understanding. Beware the bloodless virtuous, reads Propter's motto. Even reform work performed in the right spirit only palliates particular misfortunes; it does not transform evil into good. This latter piece of advice, which Propter imparts to Pete Boone, is not intended as an invitation to despair, but as a corrective of expectations. Beneficial action can and should be undertaken, which is

why most of Propter's energies are organized in that direction. And in The Perennial Philosophy, Huxley speaks of the circular and reciprocal<sup>5</sup> relationship existing between moral actions and spiritual knowledge. The crucial lesson is that awareness of all the facts of reality must<sup>6</sup> determine action in time.

One of the most important facts is our own participation in the evil which befalls us. Huxley incorporates the Man from Kansas and Hansen, Stoyte's estate manager, as foils for Propter's exposition of this hypothesis. The hard-bitten, transient life of the Man from Kansas is not unlike the portrait of the Joads in Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath. Published in the same year as After Many a Summer, Steinbeck's Okies receive the kind of sympathetic treatment Huxley would consider a falsification of reality. The Man from Kansas had been reduced to the level of a peon and pariah and his circumstances were exacerbating his tendencies toward resentment and self-pity. And yet he was largely responsible for his own suffering through the sin of stupidity. Like victims of the medieval concept of Fortune's Wheel, the Man from Kansas had subjected himself to the inevitable turnings of fate by accepting his world on its own terms as being normal, rational, and right.

. . . he had allowed the advertisers to multiply his wants; he had learnt to equate happiness with possessions, and prosperity, with money to spend in a shop.... he had abandoned any idea of subsistence farming to think exclusively in terms of a cash crop, and he had gone on thinking in those terms, even when the crop no longer gave him any cash. Then... he had learnt that what the experts had been saying for a generation was perfectly true: in a semi-arid country, it is grass that holds down the soil; tear up the grass, the soil will go. In due course, it had gone. (AMSDS, p. 74).

Hampered by low intelligence, fundamentalist religion, and a nervous irritability that inflames his wounded ego, it is difficult for such a man to realize that the world consists not of anthropomorphic gods and demons, but

only of causes and effects and the complexities of their interrelationships. Live in ignorance of this fact and one must suffer the consequences. Time brings all things about in accord with what Propter calls the law of large numbers, which others mistakenly call Chance. The difference, then, between Steinbeck's treatment of migrants and Huxley's lies in the sentimentality that the former's communism generated. Huxley's hard-nosed rationalism will therefore shock those who persist in believing that mysticism had made him "misty." Just compare his presentation of the Man from Kansas with his ethnocentric "Anglo-Saxon attitudes" towards other races during the Twenties. No, it was mysticism that made him a more rational analyst.

Lest we think that Huxley lays exclusive blame upon the stupidity of the migrant workers, we also have Hansen, the good man who perpetuates evil by systematically exploiting their misfortunes. Hansen's sin is holding fast to the comforting illusion that he is only doing his duty, a transmutation of values which allows him to spread misery under the guise of adherence to the categorical imperatives of so-called "moral" beliefs. Hansen's position is a psychological defense mechanism which saves him from the unpleasant necessity of either radically transforming the pattern of his life so as to harmonize the will to do right with the possibility of its performance, or else continuing his present ways in the cynical knowledge of their manifest wrongfulness.

Between the culpable ignorance of the victim and the culpable transvaluation of the victimizer we have the common denominator of illusion, which is at once the essential nature of this world and the cause of human suffering. What is to be done about it? Recourses to conventional methods have been a failure. Salvation through science is rejected for essentially the same reason Rampion had condemned it in Point Counter Point, although

the language used has necessarily changed so as to coincide with Huxley's metaphysical changes. Rampion saw science as pursuing non-human truths, but Propter sees these truths as all-too-human projections of ego. Propter, however, is not so absolute in his condemnation as Rampion. Scientific knowledge does contribute to our awareness of the universe and Huxley has been able to incorporate the investigations of the laboratory as additional confirmation of the Perennial Philosophy's validity. What Huxley really deplores about science are the applications of that knowledge. In both Rampion's and Propter's estimations, unbridled technology has cluttered up our lives, thereby decreasing our ability to perceive the fundamental reality by increasing our bondage to things. A correlative objection was voiced by Anthony Beavis. New technology fools us into believing in automatic progress through newer inventions. This deludes us into thinking that salvation must be just a gadget away. But false expectations induce a false faith in the future, so that we forget to live here and now in favor of some golden dawn looming over an ever-receding horizon, justifying present enormities of horror in the name of future bliss. Coupled with this fictitious perspective is a fallacious reliance upon reason. Because science advances through rational exploration, it is assumed that reason will suffice to reveal all truths. But reason is incapable of yielding the ultimate illumination (as well as many lesser ones) achievable only through the direct intuition of the mystical experience. At best, reason can make comprehensible our condition as separate egos and facilitate our conscious efforts to transcend selfhood. From there on, our indwelling spirit must conduct us to final union with Spirit. Our continued belief in reason as the proximate means is responsible, in Huxley's opinion, for the impoverishment of intellectual vision and spirituality in contemporary life.

Salvation through politics, revolutionary or otherwise, is another twentieth-century shibboleth that cannot answer the needs. Most politicians are "humanists," that is, they see the world as projections of their own personalities; therefore, their actions are inappropriate to the real world and the consequences have been the rather dismal events of recorded history. A realistic politician, according to Propter, would know, first of all, that the most he can hope to accomplish on the human level would be preventative in nature, to make the earth a fit habitation for physiology and disinterested consciousness (which are the lower and upper levels, respectively, of man). To effect that kind of reform necessitates a social system which provides enough economic security for all to prevent the rich from coercing those less wealthy, at least a sufficient degree of personal responsibility, political and civil liberties to protect individual rights, and as little centralized authority as possible so that the few don't dominate the many. The economy should be decentralized so that most goods could be produced at home or in small workshops. Whatever cannot be more satisfactorily made in this fashion will have to employ the means of mass production.

Pete, to whom these ideas are expounded, questions whether people would be willing to leave the large cities for life in the small communities Propter's proposals would envision. Admitting that the vast majority would not alter those habits of thought, feeling, and action directly accountable for their distress, Propter sees this as no reason for not taking the only effective course open on the mundane level, even if it benefits only the few now capable of understanding his system.<sup>8</sup> He has already begun acting upon his theories by establishing a small, self-sufficient community modelled on the ideals of Jeffersonian democracy. Although still in its initial stages, the technological resources were

already becoming available for maintaining an independent, agrarian  
 9  
 life style.

But the enterprise requires large sums of additional money for full implementation. Bank loans, however, would place the community in financial jeopardy and donations from the rich will not be forthcoming. The Stoytes of the world make their endowments to public institutions like Tarzana College, investments which guarantee the double returns of the cloaking mantle of public benefactor plus the continued malleability of  
 10  
 the recipients of their philanthropy. Propter's plan for pluralistic, small-scale communities challenges the fundamental premises of the American corporate state by decentralizing the economy and eliminating the  
 11  
 need for repressive, bureaucratic manipulation of a mass population.

Propter's dismissal of conventional approaches to social reformation would be darkly pessimistic were it not balanced by his compensatory optimism regarding the possibility of transforming and transcending human nature by the appropriate re-directing of individual intelligence and will towards immanent Spirit. "No human society can become conspicuously better than it is now, unless it contains a fair proportion of individuals who know that their humanity isn't the last word and who consciously attempt to transcend it (AMSDS, p. 189)." For Huxley, that was the basic truth of social life which was to remain the guiding tenet of his latter writings. In fact, after Time Must Have a Stop, it became his almost exclusive pre-occupation since he believed the personal dilemma of meaninglessness had been resolved by the Perennial Philosophy.

That men of good will would eventually realize the rectitude of his position Huxley had little doubt, although he entertained no illusions about the difficulties that might hinder them from coming forth. Pete

Boone and Jeremy Pordage serve to emphasize the severity of some of those impediments. Pete's youthful idealism makes him a natural disciple, for it is accompanied by innate intelligence, kindness, sensitivity, courage, generosity, and "spontaneous decency of impulse and reaction." First-rate ore, thinks Propter. But his Jack Armstrongish virtues also appear to be inseparably wedded to a sexual naivete that less charitable novelists would pronounce as stupidity.<sup>12</sup> And his seemingly willed ignorance of Virginia's true position at Stoyte's castle causes his death, ironically at the moment of his conversion.

Although murdered by mistake, Propter's analysis of the event precludes our misinterpreting it as just another of those grotesque misadventures that repeat themselves with disturbing frequency in Huxley's fiction. Pete's destruction is not an accident.

'...An accident is the collision of a train of events on the level of determinism with another train of events on the level of freedom. We imagine that our life is full of accidents because we imagine that our human existence is passed on the level of freedom. In fact, it isn't. Most of us live on the mechanical level, where events happen in accordance with the laws of large numbers. The things we call accidental and irrelevant belong to the very essence of the world in which we elect to live (AMSDS, p. 221).'

Pete's active participation in his enslavement to circumstances is as culpable as was the Man from Kansas's. Having already re-evaluated his beliefs, it would have been only a matter of time before he had abandoned Obispo and joined Propter's community. But time was the enemy. Reliance upon time for the realization of one's expectations subjects one to the possibility of suffering its vicissitudes. The intervention of fate is<sup>13</sup> but one of the flies in Huxley's ointment of conversion.

The persistence of habit, as reflected in the person of Jeremy Pordage, constitutes another. Pordage is too comfortable in his own home-

made universe to change his style of life. Its deficiencies are clear to him, but self-knowledge for such a man is his excuse for continuing on in insulated selfhood. "Justification by psycho-analysis -- the modern substitute for justification by faith (AMSDS, p. 49)." His self-deprecating sense of humor is the hallmark of his civilized compromise, a spurious form of chastisement which protects him from the painfulness of a disquietingly honest appraisal. Pordage knowingly settles for second best, finding solace in the thought that at least his manner of living prevents him, unlike his brother in the Foreign Office, from inflicting the greatest suffering on the greatest number of people.

14

But the negative salve of harmlessness cannot entirely stave off the pangs of conscience Propter's words inflict upon him. A sincere respect for the achievements of Propter's academic past lends an air of authority to the man's ideas which Pordage finds disturbing. He, too, has had a first-hand knowledge of mystical literature and had once even considered the possibility of perhaps acting upon their teachings. Because they had moved him then, as Propter moves him now, he resorts to ridicule in order to neutralize their effect. Why? Because Pordage is guilty of an all-too-common failing in intellectuals. "For Jeremy, direct, unmediated experience was always hard to take in, always more or less disquieting. Life became safe, things assumed meaning, only when they had been translated into words and confined between the covers of a book (AMSDS, p. 19)." Pordage's fear of raw experience is but another aspect of a deep-rooted need for certainty. To satisfy that need he has already sacrificed the possibility of psychological maturation for the security of a knowingly perverted life with his domineering mother. It

would be foolish to expect him to relinquish his tenacious grip on the protective "decencies and indecencies" which comprise his carefully regulated existence for the uncertainties of undertaking enlightenment. No. Stoyte's castle, that embodiment of a cultural "imbecile's no-track mind," becomes his spiritual home. Secure in its "infinite cosiness of issueless thoughts and feelings and actions, of hermetically bottled art and learning, of culture for its own sake," Pordage knows that he has at last returned to the womb. How tempt a man with ultimate peace who has already found an ersatz peace in the realization of infantile regression.

Ironically, the proprietor of Pordage's earthly paradise finds no comparable refuge in his own mansion. For Stoyte's life is a desperate, protracted attempt to transcend his personal limitations. Sunken in the slough of personality, his efforts to extract himself take a characteristically American direction -- to dispel his sense of inferiority by proving to the world that he can possess more of what the world values than anyone else. What matter that he has no appreciation of their intrinsic worth; at least he owns them! His acquisitions and charitable donations might compensate for inadequacies in childhood, but they cannot assuage the fear of death and final punishment that had been instilled in him in early youth. "'IT IS A TERRIBLE THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD (AMSDS, p. 30).'" The motto of his Plymouth Brethren grandmother echoes repeatedly in the subterranean caverns of his mind. To escape the Living God, he delivers himself into the hands of the Living Devil, Dr. Obispo, who exploits Stoyte's fears, as well as Virginia's lusts, for his personal aggrandizement. To the one means of deliverance from the torments of ego Stoyte remains blind. For him, Propter is only an ego enhancer. Styote feels Propter's moral superiority as a standing

reproach, yet he has desired to remain in close proximity to him because Propter's manifest friendliness towards him flatters his self-image, at the same time as Propter's ideas irritate his preconceptions. For this reason, Propter is a closed possibility for Stoyte. <sup>15</sup>

The world of Stoyte, Virginia, Obispo, and the Fifth Earl of Gonister illustrate the truth of Propter's estimation of the human level as a swarm of appetites and anxieties. As such, they do not require elaborate exposition. We have met their types before in Huxley's fiction and to trace their failings would be redundant. Unfortunately, their interactions create the novel's plot, which brings us up against a literary impasse. I have already mentioned at the end of the last chapter that the achievement of Eyeless in Gaza necessitated a re-thinking of Huxley's deployment of the novel. I said that he had solved that problem by reverting to older models. The insufficiency of that strategy is apparent in After Many a Summer, given the detachable quality of the philosophy from the story. But this is more of a difficulty in criticism than a hindrance to a direct experience of the novel itself. The interspersal of the didactic material amidst a skillfully handled satire <sup>16</sup> still provides a highly enjoyable reading experience. Perhaps a re-evaluation of critical standards is therefore in order. But clearly, although the energy is there, Huxley's interest in the merely human level has begun to flag. How sharply, the next novel will reveal. What happens to the literary quality of Huxley's fiction can be explained by examining his increasing dissatisfaction with <sup>17</sup> "good literature."

Discontent is evident in the literary conversation held between Mark Staithes and Anthony Beavis in Eyeless (Chapter 46). Mark complains of the profound untruthfulness of even the best imaginative literature, for it omits both the small physiological events which determine the tone of

daily living, as well as the small distractions that comprise the greater part of human life. Its lies of omission lead to lies of commission. The implications of literature are that people are controlled by comprehensible, well-organized, avowable sentiments, if not necessarily by reason itself. But it suppresses the mere tics and tropisms, unavowable and lunatic cravings which play as large a part in life as the organized and recognized sentiments, thereby propagating a colossal lie about human nature.

Anthony agrees with Mark that it is essential to know everything, and not exclusively from the perspective of the scientific textbook, but also in a form powerful enough to make manifest the facts to the whole mind, not merely to the intellect. He calls for a literature that would be "a complete expression (in terms of imaginative literature) leading to complete knowledge (with the whole mind) of the complete truth: indispensable preliminary condition of any remedial action, any serious attempt at the construction of a genuinely human being (E in G, p. 356)." What Huxley obviously desired was a utilitarian fiction that would facilitate enlightenment rather than reaffirm the dominance of appetite and anxiety. Both Eyeless and After Many a Summer are attempts in that direction, although Joyce's Ulysses would certainly satisfy the objections of Mark, if not the utilitarianism of Anthony.

But Propter's comments on literature demonstrate a more thorough alienation from the traditional modes of fiction. Carrying Mark's criticism a step further, Propter finds only a collection of facts about behavior, without a co-ordinating philosophy that goes beyond the level of common sense or the local system of conventions, and utilizing no more rational method of arrangement than aesthetic expediency. Compounding this deficiency is the more basic failing of misplaced seriousness. According

to the Perennial Philosophy only the suffering man inflicts upon others should be taken seriously. But literature, by accepting the conventional scale of values -- respect for power, position, success, and the pre-occupations of those engaged in their pursuit -- takes seriously the very causes of suffering. Therefore, by either implicit or explicit approval of the acts, thoughts, and feelings which must necessarily culminate in misery, "good literature" perpetuates human misery. The very eloquence and persuasiveness of the language contributes to this effect by hypnotizing the reader into believing that despite what might have happened it was somehow all noble and worthwhile. On this head, the great tragedies would be the greatest offenders. For Huxley, a good satire would be more deeply truthful than a good tragedy. But so few good satires exist for the reason that few satirists are willing to push their critiques of human values far enough, that is, in the name of the highest possible ideal (meaning, of course, mystical enlightenment).

After Many a Summer would represent Huxley's first whole-truth satire. But the critical problem of the philosophy's detachability previously mentioned requires us to re-examine our expectations for a work of fiction. Propter's function resides at the heart of the difficulty. Since Propter occupies the center of the novel's truth, he would normally be its protagonist. However, since that role implies that the character functions within the action of the novel, Propter could not accurately be described as "the protagonist." To place Pete in that position because, like Anthony and Sebastian, he becomes the young convert, would be to exaggerate his importance in the book. His absence would not diminish the degree of whole-truthfulness, for although he represents the idealistic reformer pursuing the wrong means towards world liberation, another minor character could

have carried this burden without simultaneously participating in the plot. As a plot device, Pete's murder could have been replaced with any other that would deliver Stoyte into Obispo's clutches. And as a victim of circumstances Pete Boone duplicates the situation of the Man from Kansas. No, despite the convenient mileage Huxley gets out of him, Pete is entirely expendable. Certainly the last condition one would expect a novel's protagonist to be in, vis-a-vis its conception.

Clearly, Propter's the one. But he is a special kind of hero, one whose actions relate not to the novel's, but to the world's. Propter's connection with life itself creates a new novelistic form, one in which the relevance of a major facet lies not in its ability to integrate its vision of truth into the plot, although as a secondary consideration it should operate on this level as well, but primarily in its possible implementation into the here and now of our lives. Because relevancy to life carries the subordinate burden of harmonizing theme and plot, we should not confuse this new form with the Wellsian notion of the novel as a catch-all for any digressive idea that happens to catch the author's fancy. Instead, Huxley's form constitutes a variation of the self-contained novel, one whose wholeness of vision requires more than verisimilitude and integration as criteria for realism and unity, respectively. Huxley's new novel makes the additional demand of direct applicability in the utilitarian sense Anthony advocated. Extending the Perennial Philosophy to fiction itself, the novel too must die to self in order for it to be an experience of enlightenment, not of reinforcement. In effect, Huxley challenges literature to come up to his standards. Therefore, we should not judge his work in the same light we would writers who obviously intend to adhere to different literary norms and critical principles. We must avoid

the critical fallacy of elevating to the level of the universally true elements of form deduced from the immediate experience of particular works. This would make the demand that the present conform to the past.

Ironically, Huxley's preference for whole-truth satire borders upon just such a fallacy and consequently confronts him with the following predicament. How many satires can a writer create before redundancy mitigates against their effectiveness? I believe this limitation explains the paucity of Time Must Have a Stop,<sup>19</sup> and, contrarily, the high quality of the very different kind of literature he evolved in Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudun, which combine historical authenticity, penetrating intellectual analysis, and the imaginative powers of fiction. But before going to France, we must pause first in Italy for the history of Sebastian Barnack.

(b) Time Must Have a Stop

Time Must Have a Stop is a kunstroman with a twist -- the final development of the young artist is away from art. Although its philosophical teaching is essentially the same as After Many a Summer,<sup>20</sup> it contains less didactic exposition than its predecessor.<sup>21</sup> Instead, we have a dialectic between the ars contemplative and the ars vivante, both vying for the allegiance of the budding poet, Sebastian Barnack. Significantly, the gift of his uncle, Eustace, the advocate of fine living, precipitates Sebastian's difficulties, whereas the intervention of Bruno Rostini, the mystical cousin, makes possible his extrication from the tangle. Sebastian's failure to acquit himself honorably, by allowing Weyl's fib to shield him from a full confession, indicates that he has learned little from his experience. It is only in the epilogue that he realizes the consequences of his actions and, under the guidance of Bruno, amends his life.

Structurally, the novel's two-part division correspondes to the two sides of the dialectic. The story proper occupies the bulk of the novel, yet it only serves as an introduction to the transformation Sebastian undergoes in the epilogue. The plot line, Sebastian's pursuit of evening clothes, while it demonstrates the vanity which motivates Sebastian's behavior and the degree of suffering that can generate from so trivial a cause, is actually a negligible affair, requiring little commentary. More pertinent to our concerns are the after-life experience of Eustace and Sebastian's poetic evolvment. To these parallel themes we must direct our attention.

As Bowering has demonstrated, Eustace Barnack's experiences after death reproduce the Bardo Thodol section of The Tibetan Book of the Dead.<sup>22</sup> Eustace has had a premonition of the bardo plane while still alive, yet he chose to ignore the invitation to grace. While driving through traffic with Bruno, Eustace's face is illuminated by the reflected light of the sun upon a shop window. The vision of Eustace's pouched and blotchy flesh is a memento mori for Bruno and, when the light withdraws as the car slowly moves on, he views the enfolding shadow which succeeds it as the irrevocable closing of a sarcophagus's lid. To Eustace, the light comes as "an enormous and blissful brightness," and reminds him of the words Bruno had spoken earlier: "To be forgiven ... forgiven for being what you are."<sup>23</sup> But Eustace has no desire to renounce what he is and so dispells the impression of the light by sharply jerking his arm away from the hand Bruno has compassionately laid upon him.

The sudden accession of grace is wasted upon Eustace because, like Jeremy Pordage, he is too comfortably enwombed in the grace of civilization. Like Pordage, he is a warning of the spiritual destructiveness inherent in

the pursuit of culture as an end in itself. Their pleasures, when so  
 enjoyed, are perversions, an expression of infantile regression.<sup>24</sup>

Eustace lacks Pordage's awareness that a longing for the womb entraps  
 one in the circumambience of an idiot's no-track mind. And so Eustace  
 is condemned to learn this fact on the bardo plane.<sup>25</sup>

In the initial stage of the bardo there is no such entity as Eus-  
 tace, only an awareness knowing itself as a boundless absence surround-  
 ed by another boundless absence that is without awareness. The knowledge  
 of the awareness is that of excruciating privation and a growing hunger  
 for something that does not exist. This condition continues for an end-  
 less duration, until the awareness of absence becomes conscious of itself  
 as included in and interpenetrated by another presence, of light -- which  
 is the knowledge by which the awareness is known. The light replaces the  
 privation and brings bliss in its stead. The hunger remains, localized  
 into a hunger for more knowledge, yielding a more complete denial of ab-  
 sence. The light proceeds to intensify, bringing with it a corresponding  
 joy of knowing. But as the light grows in brightness, the awareness is  
 present against the limits of its bliss until it finds itself apart from  
 the light into another existence. "An existence where the knowledge of  
 being included within a shining presence had become a knowledge of being  
 oppressed by an excess of light. Where that transfiguring interpenetra-  
 tion was apprehended as a force disruptive from within. Where the know-  
 ledge was so penetratingly luminous that the participation in it was beyond  
 the capacity of that which participated (TMHS, p. 110)." Awareness has  
 now passed the initial stage of knowing itself as part of the divine Ground,  
 but before it can have final union it must also know its reality as a sep-  
 arate existence. The disruptive force the awareness experiences would be

analogous to indwelling spirit on the human plane. What it disrupts is the persistence of the separate self, now apprehended as a hideous clot of dust. Because the awareness still participates in the light, its knowledge of separateness is agonizing.

In the next phase there is new knowledge, an awareness that if there were no participation in the light, half the agony of separateness would be gone. There would be no perception of its vileness, only "an untransparent separateness." But a sudden flashing of the light reveals the knowledge that there is no right to exist apart; that the clot must be denied, annihilated in the beauty of the light.

For durations the clot hangs suspended between these two awarenesses, but ever insisting on its right to be separate, until finally the light is eclipsed and intervening between the light and the clot comes the memory of things familiar, yet not clearly apprehended. Gradually, the knowledge assumes definition; the opaque clot becomes Eustace Barnack and the memory, his Romeo and Juliet cigar. Though still a disembodied awareness, Eustace's constant fight with the light has crystalized into his conscious self with its attendant memories. That his cigar should be the first association he regains signifies the infantilism responsible for withdrawal  
26  
from the light.

During the next phase Eustace perceives lattice patterns of activity emanating from within the light. These patterns constitute his memories of the past (We shall soon notice the recurrence of this patterned image in Sebastian's poem.). Significantly, the first fragments of memory concern experiences of toilet training (the man even dies in the bathroom), the pleasure he received from the enemas he was given when he intentionally refused to defecate. But the light also reveals these fragments in their

full shamefulness, as clots of privation which must be annihilated. His will remains free, however, and he can therefore divert his attention away from the pure light and concentrate upon the memories, thereby diminishing the light's intensity.

In one memory we learn that Eustace had experienced a moment of illumination while still an undergraduate. The world around him had become transfigured. "Something had broken through the crust of customary appearances. A lava gush from some other, more real order of existence. Nothing had changed; but he perceived everything as totally different, perceived himself as capable of acting and thinking in totally new ways appropriate to the revolutionary difference in the world (TMHS, p. 125)." Huxley elsewhere explains this phenomenon as the intervention of eternity into the world of time which can possibly result in deliverance from the casual process.<sup>27</sup> Salvation was there for Eustace at that moment, yet he chose instead to remain in the false security of the familiar world. Resigning himself to vincible ignornace, he chalked the experience up to constipation. An apt ascription for an enema-addict. We can judge the degree of deterioration in Eustace by comparing his reactions to his first experience of grace with his response to the second in the car with Bruno. In youth he had felt an insurgence of power, but after a lifetime of "civilized" living, he responds angrily to the second instance, accusing Bruno of hypnotizing him. This seems to prove Bruno's favorite motto that he who is not getting better is getting worse.

The aesthetic growth of Sebastian Barnack parallels the karmic path of his uncle. That he manages to break the tragic circle of birth and copulation and death in the epilogue must be attributed in part to the influence of Bruno, but also to the difference in his and his uncle's relationship to

art. Sebastian's responsibility for Bruno's imprisonment, which ruins the latter's health and shortens his life, makes it impossible for him to share Eustace's belief in the harmlessness of the artistic life-  
 29 style. Then, too, as an artist, he is a creator, not a consumer. This distinction implies a degree of insight into reality and of self-control not present in the compulsive self-indulgence which dominates Eustace's behavior. Therefore, Sebastian operates on a different, albeit parallel plane of existence. And it is the potential for liberation latent within his own sphere which helps effect his salvation, just as it was the absence of that potential which predestined Eustace to an-  
 30 other round in the cycle of reincarnation.

When Eustace confronts the choice of the two courses of awareness in the bardo, his decision has already been predetermined by the accumulated weight of his temporal habit-energies. The joyful knowledge he desired more of during his initial state was partially the bliss of eternity, but also the dawning consciousness of separateness, although until the intensifying knowledge pushes him beyond the limits of the light, the two are as yet indistinguishable. Having now resumed his identity, Eustace clings desperately to his separate self, despite the urgings of the light and despite his comprehension of the loathsomeness of the trifles which have comprised his life. The light means suicide and so he refuses to go forward into the light.

While continuing in the bardo Eustace becomes conscious of an alternate form of liberation from the light. The seances held by his mother-in-law, Mrs. Gamble, bring the intervention of time into the universe of eternity. His bodily sensations return for the duration of each seance and he also finds that he can communicate with the temporal world, albeit through

the spirit of the girl, Bettina, who frequently misinterprets his words. A question from Mrs. Thwale reveals him to possess foreknowledge of events in time. These powers become significant in the next seance at which the Weyls are present. Eustace recognizes Mrs. Weyl as the source of his deliverance from the bardo if he should choose to be "reborn again." Although he foresees the child's witnessing of her gruesome death during World War II, Eustace opts for a return to the world of suffering. Having reversed ends and means during his lifetime, he perpetuates that error in after-life by denying the salvation of eternity for the damnation of time. His repetitions of the phrase, "backwards and downwards," become his unconscious self-condemnation.

Sebastian's exercise of his greater freedom, and its concomitant latitude for error, bears out the validity of Bruno's remarks concerning the inherent conflict within men of artistic genius. Their works implicitly or explicitly express their knowledge of reality, yet they rarely act upon that knowledge because their energies and attention are directed toward artistic creation. By subordinating being to composing, the artists prevent themselves from increasing their knowledge. "... if one gets better and knows more, one will be tempted to stop writing, because the all-absorbing labor of composition is an obstacle in the way of further knowledge. And that, maybe, is one of the reasons why most men of genius take such infinite pains not to become saints -- out of mere self-preservation (TMHS, p. 193)." The conflicting pulls of art and the world of spirit correlate with the conflicting pulls of art and the mundane world about which Eustace had warned Sebastian. "Real life" is a disappointment for those of creative imagination who are incommensurate with the world they live in. But the artist cannot live exclusively in his "mental world-substitute." He must descend to the physical level and will be continually tempted to

do so. As Eustace says, "Tempting you to embark on actions which you know in advance can only make you miserable and distract you from the one thing you can do properly, the one thing that people value you for (TMHS, p. 102)." Sebastian's vanity compels him to adhere to the life of art and while succumbing to the temptations of the flesh Eustace had forecast, he also falls victim to the spiritual blindness Bruno had foreseen.

Sebastian's physical beauty, the corporeal analogue to artistic beauty, reinforces his vanity and propensity for spiritual error. As usual, Bruno perceives the potential pitfalls of Sebastian's seraphic features. "The most dangerous consequence was that, whatever he might do or leave undone, he himself would tend, because of the beauty of his own intrinsic innocence, to spare himself the salutary agonies of contrition. Being angelical, he would be loved, not only by other people, but also by himself -- through thick and thin, with a love inexpugnable by any force less violent than a major disaster (TMHS, p. 190)." But the young Sebastian is more beguiled by the urbanity and sophisticated wit of his uncle than the apparent good-natured foolishness of his cousin Bruno. And of course, who can blame him? For Eustace's advice speaks to the immediate reality of the youthful artist, whereas Bruno's words would require a preternatural understanding for their wisdom to be comprehensible. Only time could substantiate their truthfulness. This condition necessitates the novel's epilogue, in which we have telescoped Bruno's vindication and Sebastian's conversion from the way of Eustace.

31

But in the beginning was the word and for Sebastian that word is poetry. The first samples of his writings we are given, composed while still in London, are mere playings with words, totally divorced from concrete

experience. Only after he comes under the influence of his uncle does his imagination find first-hand inspiration. Eustace's Florentine garden, which Sebastian characterizes as walking through the lines of "lycidas," suggests itself as a fitting setting for a modern-day "Tintern Abbey," whose subject-matter would range from "God Flat Minor to Sex Major and Squalor Natural," with a changeable and uneven versification to match. The pretentiousness of such themes for a seventeen-year-old boy is undercut by the ironic fact that these are the very ideas to which his experiences in Florence will introduce him.

He discovers the key to his poem in the work "limestone," which he had used to describe the breasts of the statue of Venus in Eustace's garden. He remembers that his comical old science master had spoken of the difference between a piece of stone and an atom, the latter being a highly organized pattern, whereas the former, although composed of patterned atoms, lacked true order. Only when life appears does there come a larger scale of organization than the molecular. Sebastian takes this idea of ascending alternations of pattern and chaos and later joins it to Bruno's suggestion for a genealogical charting of an offense to give shape and direction to the poem. In its final scheme, the poem would begin with the statue of Venus as the symbol of the ideal individual life, standing in the garden representing the ideal society. From the ideal created out of chaos by the guiding hand of intelligence, he would pass on to the ugliness, ineptitude, cruelty, and death of the real world, governed by its own geometric laws of disintegration. "The square on lust is equal, so to speak, to the sum of the squares on vanity and idleness. The shortest distance between two cravings is violence (TMHS, p. 188)." In the third section of the poem, the actual and the ideal would be bridged by the agencies of

ecstasy and intelligence, embodied in the persons of Mrs. Thwale and Andrew Marvell, respectively.

The triparte division of Sebastian's poem parallels the three stages of Eustace's bardo experience. Sebastian's creation of ideal order out of chaos repeats in reverse the emergence of the separate self as a hideous clot out of the ideal light. In the second stage of each, what Sebastian depicts as the chaos of human life governed by underlying geometric principles, Eustace perceives as patterns of darkness (reflecting the fragments of his past life) illuminated against the otherwise undifferentiated intensity of the light. Both apprehend the guiding force as the persistent cravings of appetite. But in the poem, the purity of the light's countervailing peace can only be suggested by the white spaces between the lines which record the separateness of suffering humanity. In the third stage, in which Eustace accepts his own vileness and accedes to rebirth nonetheless, Sebastian represents the actual world (ironically symbolized by "the corpse in the Lavatory") transformed into the ideal again. The error Sebastian makes is to place his faith in the transcendent experiences of sex and art. In doing so, he repeats Eustace's fatal error of identifying with memory (He also validates Bruno's comment upon the self-defeating knowledge of reality the artist incorporates into his world.). And he must be excused for this because until he reaches maturity the cannibal annihilation of Veronica's love-makings and the creative imagination have  
32  
been the only forms of self-transcendence he has encountered (Bruno's comments on the spiritual significance of the white spaces of a poem constitute only second-hand reportage for Sebastian). And given the boy's character and talent, these seem to be essential levels of experience for  
33  
him to pass through on his way to enlightenment.

He is therefore adequately equipped with self-knowledge, not only for conversion, but also to narrate his own progress in the epilogue. The alteration in point of view is coupled with the replacement of his poetry with his random notes. This change in form has a meaning analogous to the corresponding change at the end of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist; it represents the artist's search for a more authentic voice, although, since Sebastian has not produced literature for five years, one hesitates to call him an artist any more. The voice Sebastian speaks with sounds resigned and tinged with sadness. From one of his random notes, he makes his vale to poetry, an action in keeping with the elegiac tone of the epilogue.

For the nine Muses are the daughters of Mnemosyne; memory is of the very stuff and substance of poetry. And poetry ... is the best that human life can offer. But there is also the life of the spirit.... The progression is from animal eternity in time, into the strictly human world of memory and anticipation; and from time if one chooses to go on, into the world of spiritual eternity.... The life of the spirit is life exclusively in the present, never in the past or future.... There is absolutely no room in it for pathos, or remorse, or a voluptuous rumination of the delicious cuds of thirty years ago....<sup>34</sup> Which is why they all insist -- all the people best qualified to know -- that memory must be lived down and finally died to. When one has succeeded in mortifying the memory, says John of the Cross, one is in a state that is only a degree less perfect and profitable than the state of union with God. It is an assertion that, at a first reading, I found incomprehensible. But that was because at that time, my first concern was with the life of poetry, not of the spirit. Now I know, by humiliating experience, all that memory can do to darken and obstruct the knowledge of the eternal Ground. Mortification is always the condition of proficiency (TMHS, pp. 215-216).

The identification of memory with poetry recalls both Sebastian's old poem and Eustace's bardo experience. By rejecting poetry, Sebastian symbolically severs his attachment to the cycle of rebirth. For the artist, at least, time has had its stop.

1 Ghose, p. 85.

2 The source of Propter's definition of God is given as John Tauler's Following of Christ.

3 Bowering, on p. 152, sees the theme of time as unifying plot with the didactic material, the action of the novel demonstrating the proposition that existence in time is evil in no uncertain terms.

4 I have no concrete evidence which would give a definitive explanation for Huxley's new, pessimistic interpretation of being "human," which clearly contradicts the cautious optimism of Eyeless in Gaza. But the history of the late Thirties certainly served to dampen his spirits. Although he left Europe ostensibly for reasons of physical health, his letters at this time suggest an underlying psychological motivation (see footnotes 20 and 21 to the introduction of Phase II and the Letters themselves, pp. 421-474). Nor can we discount the influence of the Perennial Philosophy. His preoccupation, during what I call Phase II, with finding God seems to have led him into ignoring the "human" factor, as if the human element was a distraction he felt necessary to overcome in pursuing Spirit. Fortunately, this pessimism was to be a passing mood. In fact, my reason for the classifications Phase II and Phase III stems from Huxley's "re-discovery" of the value in being "human" in the years after World War II.

5 "Selfless behavior makes possible an accession of knowledge, and the accession of knowledge makes possible the performance of further and more genuinely selfless actions, which in turn enhances the agent's capacity for knowing. And so on, if all goes well and there is perfect docility and obedience, indefinitely." The Perennial Philosophy, p. 112.

6 Because egotism blinds us to all the facts, Huxley, in Grey Eminence, puts forth the proposition that only those who have already successfully annihilated ego consciousness should undertake reform work.

7 See Eyeless in Gaza, pp. 334 and 386 and The Perennial Philosophy, pp. 141-142.

8 Propter's belief that our consumer-oriented economy was on the brink of imminent collapse demonstrates once again that Huxley's insights into the directions of twentieth-century developments were right on target, even if the timing was a bit off. Because the planning has been left in the hands of the self-serving few (as opposed to Huxley's self-saving few) we have the suburban sprawl of the Fifties and the white, middle-class-only new town developments of the Seventies. Meanwhile, the cities deteriorate into ghettos of urban poor, on the one hand, living as precariously as they historically ever have, and the wealthy, on the other, living in twentieth-century versions of the medieval impregnable castle. Perhaps incorporating Propter's idea of community into the urban setting could save the cities. In running to the country, Huxley seems to have forgotten the historic relationship between the city and human civilization. And we are forgetting it, too, -- to our peril!

9 Huxley was firmly convinced of the feasibility of such an endeavor. In a letter to his brother, dated 15 December, 1940, he claimed that a project of this nature, recreating the conditions which made Jeffersonian democracy possible, would not result in an appreciable decline in the standard of living. Letters, pp. 463-464. Obviously, Huxley was not reckoning standard of living in the same spurious fashion the government does.

10 The nineteenth-century industrialist created the factory "wage-slave." His twentieth-century counterpart has created the university "mind-slave." With the expansion of automation, it is the intellectual worker who becomes, increasingly, the human base of exploitable support for the centralization of power. Here we have the underlying motive behind the reputed generosity of tax-sheltered foundations. The Fords, Mellons, Rockefellers, et. al. exploit intelligence by showering grants upon research projects whose investigations will ultimately maintain the privileged position of the endowers. The Stoyte-Propter polarity has turned out to be prophetic. Today's university no longer functions as a center for the disinterested pursuit of truth; it has "sold-out," in the most literal sense, as Huxley foresaw it would.

11 As Bowering points out, we can also see in Propter's scheme the groundwork for Palanese society; Bowering, p. 141.

12 I find it difficult to believe in the reality of Pete Boone for this reason. Granted that Huxley had a fondness for creating characters who could combine high intelligence in matters of intellect with limited awareness in all other areas, Pete's total blindness about Virginia's chastity yet smacks too much of the Hollywood All-American hero image for him to be a credible creation. But maybe in a more innocent, pre-World War II America Gary Coopers really existed. Media images have a way of creating new realities to which their viewers consciously conform.

13 The presence of time's winged chariot probably reflects the pressure of historical events in 1939. In contrast, the invasion of Pala, at the end of Island, leaves one with the feeling that the time is not now, but might be in the future. It would appear that Huxley had escaped from considerations of time altogether in his final vision.

14 Tom Pordage alleviates his moral anxieties through the confessional, which seems to indicate the consistency of behavior within any given family. To each his personalized "infinite squalor in a little room."

15 Stoyte is the American "cousin" of Mrs. Aldwinkle, yet Huxley never allows us to feel the pathos of his predicament as he did with the English-woman. Stoyte is clearly as pathetic a figure as Mrs. Aldwinkle, but the Perennial Philosophy dictates that we not empathize with the causes of suffering. And so After Many a Summer ends with the grotesque satire of Stoyte's willingness to follow the Earl of Gonister's rejuvenizing treatment, despite his horrified response to the Earl's fate.

16 Meckier considers After Many a Summer Huxley's strongest satire on science, aside from Brave New World; Aldous Huxley, pp. 161-162.

17 In a letter dated 1942 by Smith, Huxley responds to a request for autobiographical information. Speaking of his youthful fascination with art and knowledge for their own sake, he explains how art can be seen in its true light from the perspective of mysticism. "'Those barren leaves of science and art' are barren only when regarded as ultimate ends. The secret here, as the fields of morals and politics, lies in the indirect approach. Beauty, truth, goodness and happiness cannot be achieved (except at a price which sooner or later stultifies the achievement) by aiming directly at these ends, but only by aiming primarily at something else (Letters, p. 474)." For Huxley, that "something else" was ultimate enlightenment, which, according to the philosophy, is the broadest perspective available.

18 Huxley's use of psychoanalytical therapy and the theory of transference as the principles of organization in Eyeless were his first attempts to improve upon "aesthetic expediency."

19 Ape and Essence is another whole-truth satire, but it succeeds where Time Must Have a Stop fails because of its imitation of the film medium and its topicality. See my explanation in Chapter Six, footnote 18.

20 Bowering, p. 176.

21 In this I must disagree with Glicksberg, who believes the work ceases to be a novel and becomes merely a mystical tract; "Huxley the Experimental Novelist," p. 108. But it is true that the philosophy rigidly dominates the book and stifles its life.

22 See Bowering, pp. 167-176, for a detailed exposition of the correspondences. Bowering contends that the bardo is the main point of the novel and that the epilogue could have been omitted, p. 160. I think he misunderstands the book's structural conception. His misplaced emphasis seems motivated by a justifiable boredom with the novel itself. The analysis of the bardo plane is certainly one of the two new ideas (the rejection of poetry is the second) in an otherwise tiresome work in which Huxley appears to be doing little more than merely marking time.

23 Aldous Huxley, Time Must Have a Stop (1944; rpt. New York: Berkley Medallion Books, 1957), p. 86. All further references are to this edition.

24 All of Huxley's bon vivants have sado-masochistic sex lives. I don't believe this another illustration of Huxley's "Swiftean disgust of the body" which critics have often discerned in his writing. Rather, I think it reflects another application of the theory of transference. The infantile quality in Pordage's and Eustace's sexuality and their devotion to art seems to have as a common denominator the desire for the frisson of an experience. And an experience, in the broadest sense, is what art provides. To be compulsive, then, in one's consumption of art experiences may be interpreted psychologically as a form of libidinal addiction, or metaphysically as an intensification of selfhood. In either case, that such habit-energies would be carried over into sexual experiences seems more like psychological revelation than Swiftean revulsion.

25 The bardo might have more metaphysical validity than Stoyte's castle, but as a vehicle for truth, the aesthetic image has a greater impact than the mystical reality. The bardo's effectiveness is dependent upon the reader's having a preconceived belief in its existence, whereas the castle need only rely upon his sense of verisimilitude. One visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, or any similar kind of art "warehouse," is all it takes.

26 Huxley had earlier described Eustace in the act of lighting his cigar in terms of an infant receiving his mother's breast. "Damply, lovingly the unweaned lips closed on the object of their desire. He sucked at the flame of the little silver lamp, and a moment later the teat was yielding its aromatic milk, his mouth was full of smoke (TMHS, p. 98)." And the cigar's name equates his sensual infantilism with his cultural indulgences. The little descriptive touches such as these nearly save the novel, but they are, alas, too infrequent for redemption.

27 The Perennial Philosophy, p. 241.

28 In choosing time over eternity, Eustace duplicates Stoyte's decision. Despite his intelligence and culture (or perhaps because of them), Eustace is as stupid as Stoyte. Realizing this equality, we can see how unsparring Huxley could be in mocking our intellectual pretensions.

29 We learn in the epilogue that Sebastian's infidelity (a sexual analogue to his moral unfaithfulness) provides him with material for a volume of poetry, but at the price of contributing to the death of his wife, Rachel.

30 Huxley espoused the Hindu belief that one's karma from previous existences predestines one to choose the sort of parents who will, in turn, pass on the inherited and conditioned character and physical traits he will later develop. Eustace is therefore personally responsible for being born onto a sphere that will negate what Huxley called "the teleological pull from in front," or the intervening grace of eternity. In contrast, we can assume that Sebastian has had a better karma in his former lives, so that he has earned the right to be reborn on a higher level, albeit one still fraught with spiritual danger, which is why Bruno views him as a "predestined target." See The Perennial Philosophy, pp. 240-241. This scheme of cosmic justice extends Propter's analysis of the personal contribution to one's misery to its logical conclusion and becomes an additional explanation for the scarcity of people willing to follow the path of enlightenment.

Why Huxley's later writings either ignore or belittle the karmic influence is uncertain, although several possibilities may be deduced. On the one hand, there is the intellectual difficulty of insisting upon propositions which, by their very nature, are unverifiable. Huxley first began to consider this problem when he converted to mysticism. See Eyeless in Gaza, pp. 384-386 and The Perennial Philosophy, pp. 236-237. Second, karma might be misconstrued as sufficient excuse for persisting in selfhood, much like Pordage's "justification by psychoanalysis." The Rani, in Island, illustrates this propensity. And in an age of media manipulation, the likelihood of propagating metaphysical perversions in the interest of economic gain was a danger Huxley had begun to warn against as early as

the creation of Boldero in Antic Hay. A third explanation would be the wartime conditions under which the concept had been enunciated. The principle of karma reinforces Huxley's retreat from the sphere of public affairs. If the world has chosen to go mad, then that is its predestined fate, the necessary condition for the workings of God to become manifest to man. In Ape and Essence, Huxley's next published work following Time, this fate is viewed as the force of evil which, having been released, must expend itself before the harmony of the universe can regain its natural balance. It is the Arch-Songster who argues for the karmic position. These three reasons are not mutually exclusive, nor do they preclude the possibility of others I have not thought of that might equally have prompted Huxley to downgrade the karmic factor.

31 Edmund Wilson's criticism of the novel directs itself to this point. He writes that because the characters are satiric figures, a religious philosophy deduced from such conduct must be either without complete seriousness or restricted in its application to other people. "Aldous Huxley in the World Beyond Time," Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle of the Forties (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1950), p. 214. Wilson is wrong on all counts. Not all the characters are satirical and we know from Huxley's comments on satire that not only is the philosophy totally earnest, but universal. We are not to be fooled by the novel's art versus metaphysics dialectic into missing the broader implications for other walks of life. Huxley's other novels of the period should convince us of that. But Wilson, even in error, touches the core of the problem. It's the characters who can't be taken seriously, for they are too rigidly controlled by the dictates of the philosophy. Reduced to the level of exemplars, they cease to interest, either as worthwhile people in their own right, or, worse yet, as figures of amusement. The balance between foible and fascination, essential to satire, has been lost. This, I believe, is what Wilson intended by the restrictedness of application. After After Many a Summer Dies the Swan died the satire in Huxley's novels if we view Ape and Essence as other than a true novel.

32 In The Devils of Loudun, Huxley identifies such love-making as Veronica's as a form of "Downward self-transcendence;" art would be a form of "horizontal self-transcendence." See Devils, pp. 315-316 and 326-327, respectively. The distinctions between the different directions of self-transcendence will be made clear in the next chapter.

33 There is an additional parallel to be drawn, but this one is between Eustace's bardo and Sebastian's life. Just as Eustace's after-life experience has been in vain, so were Sebastian's machinations for the evening clothes. Both are condemned by fate to return to their points of origin -- Eustace to earth, Sebastian to London. Ironically, Eustace scorns what he should most have desired, whereas Sebastian desires what he should most have scorned.

34 This is why both narrative and epilogue are told in the present tense.

35 Huxley had had his misgivings about the compatibility of art and ultimate reality as early back as Jesting Pilate. In speaking about Hindu artists, he said they were too absorbed in metaphysics and ultimate reality, only to organize the chaotic features of life into an orderly, human universe, pp. 108-109 Little did he suspect, at that time, how these words would eventually be applied to him.

PART IV

TRANSITIONAL: AN HISTORICAL DETOUR

GREY EMINENCE - THE DEVILS OF LOUDUN

Chapter FiveIntroduction

If time must have a stop, if the accumulated habit-energies of memory must die, why then has Huxley dragged us back into the tumultuous history of seventeenth-century France? For one thing, the religious-nationalistic conflicts of that age were the spawning grounds for World War II, twentieth-century Europeans re-enacting in modern dress the ideological distortions of reality promulgated by their ancestors. The lesson: there is no clock time, no calendar time, no history; only ignorance and stupidity giving rise to appetite and anxiety, madness perpetually reincarnated until awareness brings enlightenment, illuminating our darkness and delivering us from the cyclical record of human suffering.

Engulfed by the holocaust of God-eclipsing nationalism, Sebastian Barnack proffered the Perennial Philosophy as mankind's only hope. But how faint a hope, when placed in the context of the forces which have shaped contemporary Western civilization, Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudun graphically demonstrate. Together, the two books comprise an extended analysis of Huxley's proposition that the presence of theocentric saints in a society could appreciably improve the quality of life for all. Seventeenth-century France represented the flowering of Western mysticism. But instead of worshipping God, the French erected a tabernacle to the idol of nationalism. Although the full reasons for this development are perhaps more complex than Huxley has suggested, the person of Cardinal Richelieu adequately symbolized the two major factors of power politics and dogmatic religion. Richelieu was a consummate politician, if an indifferent theologian, who subordinated every consideration (save his pride) to the concentration of power

into the hands of the monarchy. As a churchman, he knew how to exploit the energies of religion for his own ends. In this, he was aided by the cult of personality inherent in Christian dogma. The worship of Christ's divinity was inimical to the intuitive knowledge of an impersonal Ground of all being. By shifting the emphasis from the universal to the particular, Christian contemplatives perverted the nature of the mystical experience, guaranteeing that its practitioners might gain the benefit of specific spiritual graces, but not the transcendence of total enlightenment. Contemplatives still attached to personality (even though one believed to be divine) were also in a position to be manipulated by self-serving politicians like Richelieu into identifying service to King as service to God.

The conceptual confusion was created, as Huxley points out, by a false evaluation of language. "Treated as working hypotheses, propositions about the world are instruments, by means of which we are enabled progressively to understand the world. Treated as absolute truths, as dogmas to be swallowed, as idols to be worshipped, propositions about the world distort our vision of reality and lead us into all kinds of inappropriate behavior."<sup>1</sup> Substituting words for immediate experience effectively prevents increased knowledge and restricts one's understanding of the world to ideas formulated in the past, as embodied in language. Word-worship thus has the power of self-fulfilling prophecies. Mind's freedom to perceive is inversely proportional to the directedness of man's willing, for it is will that controls consciousness. Words act as a determinant upon that functioning of willing. The more literally one equates truth with the words intended only as a symbolic representation of that truth, the more intensely does a semantically-oriented will dominate perception, the more completely does mind reflect

the personal attachment to a verbally predetermined self, and the less it reflects the otherness of external reality. This is the plight of the Huxleyan grotesques, who seemingly exist in separate universes, and who, mounted upon their respective hobby-horses, hurl verbal lances at each other, but rarely communicate.

Word-worship therefore obviates the insight which might be gained by experience and, because words are the conceptual ghosts of the past, word-worship guarantees the repetition of past in the present. Clinging to words, man fails to improve his relationship to the world. What progress man has made has been largely technological because of the disciplining of individual will endemic to scientific methodology. Since mysticism entails a similar practice of discipline, its epistemological effectiveness should produce a corresponding spiritual progress. But when perverted by dogmatism, mysticism turns into diabolism.

The two works under consideration trace that deflection of the spirit on the national (Grey Eminence) and societal (Devils of Loudun) levels. Huxley's method of exposition combined the learning of the scholar with the dramatic immediacy of the novelist and the discursiveness of the essayist. The resulting form more satisfactorily realized his standard of a utilitarian literature than his novels did because the requirements of fiction necessitate a degree of contrivance which, when simultaneously employed for didactic purposes, ultimately becomes stultifying. But historical fact liberates the writer from the mechanics of the novel, allowing him to focus his attention upon the questions of vivid representation and comprehensive illumination. Since the plot and characters of history have an objective reality, they provide a balanced criterion for estimating the validity of the general conclusions drawn from them. In effect, what has now become known as the

non-fiction novel duplicates in its methodology the epistemological disciplines of mysticism and science. The novelist resolves the problematic relationship of personal willing to language and knowing by allowing the facts to speak for themselves to an extent not possible in the conventional novel, which must first create its own "facts."

Pure art is a dogmatic form, a self-contained statement about experience purporting to be that experience. Either we believe it or we don't. The type of non-fiction novel Huxley developed makes a more modest claim upon our acceptance. As a working hypothesis about reality, we are free to judge for ourselves its viability, without impairment to the facts it investigates. This is literature attempting to function as "scientific" instrument, rather than an experience recreated. A less thrilling genre than pure art, perhaps, but an essential one, if man is ever to awaken from the nightmare of history.

Since Huxley's primary purpose in utilizing the non-fictional mode was intellectual, I will reserve commentary upon the aesthetic implications of the new form for the conclusion of the chapter. But because the focus in these two studies at hand is upon the testing of an hypothesis, a few prefatory remarks on Huxley's "literary methodology" are in order. In both Grey Eminence and The Devils Huxley examines his material from a variety of perspectives, ranging from the dramatized scene to the summarized document. Alternately the novelist and the social scientist, Huxley freely adopts any point of view that will illuminate the dark mysteries of human behavior. And so we have the camera's eye focusing in on Father Joseph in the act of meditating while walking bare-footed into Rome, or Grandier being burnt at the stake, for these are moments of psychological revelation, demanding immediacy of presentation. At other times, the events are so

grotesque and horrifying that some distancing is necessary, lest we become overwhelmed by them. He therefore mixes Thomas Killigrew's and John Maitland's eye-witness accounts of the nuns's exorcisms with his own summaries. The ravages and savageries of the Thirty Years War are depicted through a description of Jacques Callot's series of etchings, Les Miseres et les Malheurs de la Guerre. And in both books the process of narration and analysis is interrupted for the introduction of necessary background information.

The patterns which emerge from these two books are intellectual rather than aesthetic. The meditations of Father Joseph, which opens Grey Eminence, are interrupted by his entrance into Rome. The action of this first chapter thus telescopes the course of his career, for, in like manner, the focus shifts, beginning in Chapter V, from religion to politics. Metaphysical questions of contemplative practices are superseded by philosophical questions of moral practices. Counterpointing the deterioration of Father Joseph's spiritual life is the development of Huxley's doctrine of "goodness politics," so that the monk's failure becomes the writer's success. Huxley's intrusions upon the narrative are thus an essential part of a dialectical argument between religion and politics. The doctrine of right action, as a final synthesis, reconciles the rival claims of time and eternity and transforms the Perennial Philosophy into a guide for the practical reformation of a chronically convulsed world.<sup>2</sup>

The Devils of Loudun, although a more complex work, counterpointing the progress of three separate lives, operates, essentially, along the same lines. Narration rather than dramatization is again the predominant mode, even though the characters and events would readily lend themselves to fictionalized treatment.<sup>3</sup> A lesser artist would have succumbed to the temptation of such sensational material.<sup>4</sup> A fornicating priest, a nun's

wet dreams, a schizophrenic mystic, power politics, and sado-masochistic orgies -- the very essence of psychological pornography! The purely novelistic approach would have swamped the work in salacious and morbid detail. Literary tact demands restraint upon the presentation of the real as well as upon the fictional. Therefore, Huxley joins the scholar to the artist in order to maintain perspective.

In The Devils, history itself establishes the themes. Worldly ambition and spiritual aspiration, represented respectively by Grandier and Surin, find their common locus of action in Soeur Jeanne. The novelist intervenes by approaching each character in a manner suited to his nature -- Grandier as the protagonist of a moral drama, Surin as the tragic hero, and Soeur Jeanne as comedienne. And the scholar enters as a frame of reference, encompassing and coalescing the three other points of view. The adoption of this fourth angle impresses upon us the impossibility of maintaining any one, sectarian perspective. In fact, the authorial shiftings are a narrative analogue to the philosophy, whose purpose is to expand our awareness of the potentialities of human behavior. Hence, Huxley's selection of the scholar who is both historical researcher and advocate of the Perennial Philosophy, for this position represents the broadest consciousness capable of comprehending the realms of the actual and the possible, balancing as it does the knowledge of time and eternity.

But Huxley's methodology, albeit a vital consideration for the writer who would rather give us reality than artifice, is subsidiary to the material. Granted the challenge of Huxley's non-fiction novel to our preconceptions about both imaginative and scholarly writing, the primary value of these two studies lies in the contribution they make, both to the development of Huxley's thought<sup>5</sup> and to our own understanding of the world. Let

us, then, address ourselves to the subject itself. Because most readers are unfamiliar with these two works (critics have generally ignored them), I have found it necessary to include a certain amount of background information, derived from Huxley, in order to clarify the conclusions reached in my discussion.

(a) Grey Eminence

The career of Francois Leclerc du Tremblay, known in religious circles as Father Joseph of Paris, and in the world of power politics as Richelieu's collaborator, l'Eminence Grise, straddled the two kingdoms of France and Heaven. His historical importance resides in his failed attempt to reconcile the disparate services of these two masters. "He was one of the forgers of one of the most important links in the chain of our disastrous destiny; and at the same time he was one of those to whom it has been given to know how the forging of such links may be avoided."<sup>6</sup> The enigma Father Joseph presents is why, as a man passionately aspiring toward union with God and possessing direct acquaintance with the world of eternity, he should have committed himself to a policy contrary to his religious experiences. Because the solution to that puzzle raises the question of doctrinal interpretation,<sup>7</sup> we must first explore the variant strain of mysticism which shaped Leclerc's devotional practices.

The first literary appearance of the mystical tradition dates from the earlier Upanishads, whereas its full entrance into Christianity begins only with the fifth-century writings of the anonymous Syrian monk who took the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. Like their Eastern counterparts, the Dionysians were empirical mystics who adapted their dogma to fit the facts of personal experience, although they took the orthodox Christian stand that becoming one with God did not mean being identical with him. The

maintenance of the distinction between God and man provided the opening wedge for the Catholic redaction which would finally pervert mysticism into a cult of personality.

The Dionysian tradition, whose non-dogmatic quality presented an internal contradiction for orthodox Catholic theology, continued intact until the late Sixteenth Century, when the ecclesiastically faithful began earnestly to undermine its integrity. Father Benet Fitch's The Rule of Perfection, reduced to the sole point of The Will of God initiated the metaphysical bastardization of Catholic mysticism. Written in the early Fifteen-Nineties, the book purported to be a technical treatise providing instruction for transforming the active life through spiritual contemplation. Although Benet of Canfield followed the Dionysian teachings in all but one point, that single departure proved fatal. He insisted that even the most advanced contemplatives should persist in meditating upon the image of the Crucifixion in a sustained act of faith which ultimately would absorb and annihilate that image in God's essence. To justify his assertion that contemplation of the Passion was more pleasing to God than contemplation of divinity, he paraded a series of Old and New Testament quotations. Clearly, what Father Benet did was to replace immediate experience with preconceived notions, a form of ego-assertion that empirical mystics have traditionally contended to be a God-eclipsing distraction.<sup>8</sup> Huxley posits three reasons for Father Benet's revisionism: that he himself was attracted to acts of personal devotion; that he was a Franciscan, an order that had always been especially concerned with the Passion; that intellectually, he sided with those theologians who regarded the empiricism of Dionysianism as too undogmatic to be truly Catholic.<sup>9</sup>

The influence of Benet of Canfield was primarily manifested through the careers of his two most renowned disciples, Father Joseph and Pierre

Cardinal Berulle, the latter a central figure affecting the ultimate suppression of the Dionysian tradition. Like his master, Berulle was first of all a Catholic. Theology, the gospel story, and ecclesiastical tradition were primary data for him and antecedent to personal experience, which he viewed as something that must be made to conform with church dogma. Berulle developed and systematized the traditional theocentricism of the Dionysians into an elaborate "Jesus-" and "Virgincentricism" (contemplating Christ and Mary in and for themselves). Berullism guaranteed that its practitioners would never achieve full enlightenment, although it could lead them into intense devotion to divine persons and unstinting activity on their behalf, making them effective instruments for church militancy (how effectively, the history of Father Joseph graphically demonstrates). The culmination of Berulle's teachings was the cult of the Sacred Heart and the dissipation of Christian mysticism.<sup>10</sup>

Father Joseph was an advanced contemplative to whom had been early vouchsafed at least an initial insight into the world of eternity. That he would never fully gain the kingdom of Heaven was certain from the assiduity with which he performed the devotional practices formulated by Fitch, although his considerable abilities were soon recognized, not only by church officialdom, but by the politically ambitious Bishop of Lucon, later to become the Cardinal Richelieu. When Richelieu came to power in 1624, he remembered the Capuchin whose political talents had been instrumental in the negotiations leading to the peace of Loudun and made him his unofficial collaborator.

Why did Father Joseph leave his natural field of religious work for the moral quagmire of politics? Certainly a man of his spirituality was not influenced by questions of personal ambition; he had progressed too far

in self-annihilation for that to be a factor. But there were other aspects of his history which account for his succumbing to Richelieu's temptations. Huxley lists three. First was the temptation to do his duty to accomplish what appeared to be the external will of God, one of the guides to right action formulated by Father Benet. Leclerc was an intense patriot and royalist. He had been born and bred during the Fronde wars, an experience which aroused in him a passion for order and national unity which only the monarchy was capable of guaranteeing. Leclerc's passion became rationalized into a religious principle by the old crusading faith in France's divine mission and the newly popularized theory of the divine right of kings. He came to believe that France was an instrument of Providence and that French greatness was providential. Believing as he did, it was natural for him to conceive of political work for France as much a following of the will of God as preaching, teaching, and contemplation would be.

Second, these habits of thought, which the circumstances of his upbringing had created and which his method of contemplation was incapable of annihilating, tempted him to interpret events as being necessarily in accord with the will of God. The crimes he was guilty of were committed in the name of France and the human suffering his policies engendered were seen as the workings of that will. If they happened, then God wanted them to happen. Or so Father Joseph rationalized the fruits of his labors. He knew he was not motivated by personal considerations, for he was constantly annihilating whatever of the personal might exist while performing his political duties. But he was ambitious for French glory and failed to perceive that even vicarious ambition was an obstacle to union with God and knowledge of God's will. Deluded as to the purity of his actions, he

could indulge all the attendant passions of ambition (malice, domination, and glory) with a reasonably clear conscience. His confusion blinded him to the implicit Manicheanism of his position.

His third temptation consisted in believing that the disagreeableness of a task must be a sign of its goodness. Political work was extremely arduous, especially since he continued to observe the strict rules of poverty of his order, and it was distasteful to at least a part of his nature because it took away from religious devotions. Although another part of him thoroughly enjoyed the machinations of political life, the burdens were enormous and their weight seemed to justify his enjoyment, convincing him that in being Richelieu's agent he was carrying out the will of God.

The strength of will which animated Father Joseph differed in quality from that of Richelieu's. The latter's inflexibility of purpose was directed by the upper levels of consciousness, the personal will, which accounts for the degree of strain he continually lived under and the physiological and psychological disorders that strain necessarily created. Father Joseph, because of his mystical training and the spiritual exercises he continued to practice, had the ability to command those sources of the will below the threshold of awareness. "The will of the self-abnegated person is relaxed and effortless, because it is not his own will, but a great river of force flowing through him from a sea of subliminal consciousness that lies open in its turn to the ocean of reality (GE, p. 141)." Although Leclerc's access to that "ocean" had been cut off by his devotion to the Passion and the residue of selfhood adhering in his nationalistic interpretation of God's will, he retained to the end something of the more-than-personal strength he had first demonstrated in his religious endeavors. The one-

pointedness which characterized his political actions remained throughout because perpetually enhanced by the rigorousness with which he always performed his devotional exercises. If one doubts the existence of such an internal reservoir of strength beneath the level of personal will, how then explain the operations of the Oriental martial arts?

But despite his religious scrupulosity, the quality of his spiritual life deteriorated, as he himself became aware. In later life, he became possessed by the sense that God had departed from him, leaving only the feelings of frustration and bitterness. The dilemma presented by Father Joseph is one common to all who aspire to enlightenment by following the way of Martha, the active life of good works selflessly performed. This implies a doctrine of right action, which Leclerc had available to him in the teachings of his predecessors and contemporaries. Stated briefly, the end of action is contemplation of God. Therefore, action is only safe for those who have already become proficient in the art of formal contemplation and have attained a state of constant awareness of God's presence. The more advanced one becomes in the inward life, the more, proportionally, of one's energy can be devoted to action because the less will one's acts be characterized by self-interest.<sup>11</sup> A corollary proposition states that good can never be mass produced; it remains the product of individual ethical and spiritual ability. Goodness of more than average quality and quantity can only be realized on a small scale by dedicated and specially trained individuals. In his religious work, Father Joseph strictly adhered to this tenet. But in politics he acted as if the opposite were true, thereby fathering the horrors of the Thirty Years War. His inconsistency was partly the result of his failure to totally annihilate his personal will in all its manifestations and partly the result of his acceptance of the providential theory of history.

The life of Father Joseph provided Huxley with additional material for considering the nature of political action. First, it confirmed him in his belief, presented in After Many a Summer, that large-scale reform was impossible. Although political action was necessary, the intrinsic nature of the human instruments which must carry it out and the human material upon which it must operate guarantee that the action will at best only partly achieve its objective. Unless people are willing to transform themselves through the discipline of mystical training, until most members of a society have become mystics, the history of that society will continue to oscillate between troughs of anarchy (more or less complete) and crests, not of utopia, but merely of a tolerably humane, partly free and partly just society, whose imperfections will invariably bear the seeds of its ultimate destruction. A point we must ponder as America tumbles head-long into the trough!

The history of disastrous actions can be instructive in this regard. Although the long-range consequences of political action are unforeseeable, history, as a record of the relation between types of action and their consequences, can inform us of what to expect from following courses of action which have already been undertaken in the past. But no one learns from history. History itself is proof of that. And here is why Huxley's insistence upon the presence of mystics is so adamant. Only the non-dogmatic contemplative is sufficiently selfless to learn and act with the requisite detachment Huxley characterizes as "goodness politics." The presence of just a few mystics in a given society can have a salutary influence upon the nation as a whole, even though their actions will of necessity be on a small scale. And let us not point to India in order to nullify Huxley's thesis. Action implies the material resources to effect its end. Lacking the

technological wherewithal, Indian mysticism was forced into Nirvana.<sup>12</sup>

In the West we have the power to act, but lack the guidance. What Huxley was advocating was an end to geographical solipsism. He was not going Eastern, but "Whole-Earth," advising us to allow the spiritual wisdom of the East to direct the material wisdom of the West.

The existence of such "Whole-Earth" mystics presupposes a social-political climate favorable to theocentric religion. What happened in seventeenth-century France, in large measure the direct outgrowth of Father Joseph's efforts, was the establishment of a totalitarian government whose central concern was to increase the social efficiency for threatening and waging large-scale war as a means of concentrating absolute power in the hands of the king. The old national security shell game; it has a contemporary ring to it. Richelieu planned that state for France and Louis XIV executed it. Both used religion as a tool for social consolidation. Therefore, they favored and encouraged an anthropocentric, exclusive, and nationalistic religion, while at the same time actively suppressing the Huguenots and the theocentric Dionysians within the Catholic Church. By eliminating the mystics as a source of potential contention, the House of Bourbon also eliminated the possible mitigating influence they might have had upon the revolution that would destroy the French monarchy.

What held true for seventeenth-century French totalitarianism remains true today. Technological progress has made totalitarian government more inevitable, as well as more efficiently effective. Industrialism has strengthened the control of centralized government, especially in the ostensibly democratic countries, where economic power is the prerequisite for political power. Religion, too, serves the same master. In socialist nations the State is the official religion. In capitalist nations anthropocentric religion is manipulated for nationalistic purposes.<sup>13</sup> At best, theocentric

religion is tolerated only so long as it maintains a purely contemplative posture. Then we can dismiss it with an intellectual sneer as "mysticism" (accentuating the "myst"). But should contemplatives undertake "goodness politics," the full might and wrath of the government descends upon them. In Nazi Germany. In Nixon's America. In Diem's and Thieu's Vietnam. The examples are many and the lesson depressingly the same. Action for societal reform, if it is to produce results commensurate with its aims, must be performed in a spirit of non-attachment, which can only be achieved by people trained in annihilating self-interest. Lacking true detachment, the actions of political radicals usually fall short of the mark. The difference between a Berrigan symbolically sprinkling blood and a Weather-person strategically throwing a bomb delineates the difference between "goodness politics" and politics as usual. What the life of Father Joseph most graphically illustrates is the essential need for discerning the individual's motivations for action. But maximum discernment is only possible when the mind has been liberated from the confinement of local customs and ideologies and the shackles of selfhood.

(b) The Devils of Loudun

The biography of Leclerc also depicts the entrapment and thwarting of the Capuchin's desire for self-transcendence. The need for transcendence appears to be endemic in man. So, in The Devils of Loudun, Huxley switches his analysis to the societal level, investigating the psychological phenomena that result when that desire manifests itself through the refracting medium of a localized epistemology. In essence, the book is a study in behavioral psychology from an historical perspective.<sup>14</sup>

We must begin with several general propositions about human behavior.

First, actual behavior can be explained geometrically as the resultant of the perpendicular forces of appetite or interest on one axis and of ethical or religious ideals on the other. Second, every tendency in man, on all levels of his psycho-physical being, generates its opposite. This is the process of induction, analogous in the physical world to Newton's third law of motion (For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.). Induction itself is a morally neutral mechanism and it is possible to circumvent the undesirable manifestations of a tendency through the psychological device of sublimation. In this regard, we can say that the purpose of society is to functionally direct human tendencies by a system of rewards and punishments. But despite societal pressures, undesirable behavior does occur. To explain this fact, we must examine the dimensions of those two perpendicular forces mentioned above. The axis of appetite, that which is feel-able and do-able in a given time and place, is restricted by individual temperament and constitution (as well as the resources of the society, operating as secondary conditioning factors). But the ethical axis, that which is think-able, is more severely restricted, being determined by the prevailing thought-patterns of time and place, which will also, to some extent, condition the expression of urges and emotions, although it cannot completely inhibit them. This means that insofar as the ethical attitudes of a society reflect an abstract, ideal standard, rather than inherent human desires, then by so much will the ranges of actual behavior be at variance with that standard. And, as a corollary, insofar as the prevailing thought-patterns of the society reflect the real potentialities of human nature, then to that extent will the society be capable of interpreting and treating "deviant" behavior.

The possessions at Loudun illustrate the validity of these two propositions. The pre-Cartesian theory of human nature prevalent in seventeenth-century France was predicated upon the notion of an immortal and indivisible triune soul, consisting of: the vegetal soul governing bodily nourishment, augmentation, and procreation; the sensitive soul governing sense, appetite, judgment, breath, and motion; the rational soul governing understanding and willing and including within it the first two souls. Lacking a conception of the subconscious mind and subconscious mental activity, the phenomena we now ascribe to that region of mind had either to be denied entirely or else attributed to non-human intelligences, i.e., as the temporary displacement of the soul from the body and its replacement by one or more superhuman spirits inhabiting the universe, generally evil in nature. Such psychological phenomena as trance, catalepsy, glossolalia, split personality, ESP, psychokinesis were taken as sure signs of possession by devils.<sup>15</sup>

From his investigations into the bizaare events at Loudun, Huxley concluded that contrary to the official records, the nuns were not the victims of possession, but were suffering from hysteria, the consequences of thwarted urgings for self-transcendence. For Huxley, this urge has been as strong in all times as the desire for self-assertion, the perennial problem for man being the choice between these two. He explains the need for transcendence as stemming from our awareness, even if it be on the most obscure and instinctual level, of the "primordial Fact" of thou art That. "When the phenomenal ego transcends itself, the essential Self is free to realize, in terms of a finite consciousness, the fact of its own eternity, together with the correlative fact that every particular in the world of experience partakes of the timeless and the infinite. This is liberation,

this is enlightenment, this is the beatific vision, in which all things are perceived as they are 'in themselves' and not in relation to a craving and abhorring ego (D of L, p. 69)." This primordial fact is a fact of individual consciousness which religion has traditionally externalized and objectified by the projection of an infinite deity existing outside of the finite, but which modern psychology has begun to assign to regions of the mind below the conscious level. The Freudians have concerned themselves chiefly with the id, the "personal subconscious," in Huxley's terminology, the area he classified as the seat of Original Sin, of appetite and anxiety. It is this region which was revealed and revelled in at Loudun. Beneath that level, however, lies the "impersonal subconscious," which the Jungians have explored as the collective unconscious, but which Huxley believed also contained the locus of Original Virtue, equated with Brahman (Mind in its eternal essence).<sup>16</sup> Surin, and to a lesser extent Grandier, were finally able to open themselves up to the resources of this mental region.

The central question raised by The Devils of Loudun is why Soeur Jeanne remained trapped within the confines of pre-Cartesian reality while both Surin and Grandier were capable of transcendence. Part of the answer lies in the arduousness of ascendancy. Most are deterred by the difficulties and take the easier alternatives of either downward transcendence, into a state less than personality (animality and mental derangement) or horizontally, into a state wider than personal ego, like art, politics, or science. But equally significant are individual temperament and an intellectual prejudice in favor of verbal formulae over the evidence of direct experience. Both Grandier and Soeur Jeanne were unsuited for the religious life, and even Surin had serious latent psychological disabilities which his sojourn

at Loudun was to make manifest. And all three were victims of word-worship to some extent. However, the events and forces which engulfed them were also to catalyze their latent potentialities.

Urbain Grandier, despite the fact that he was nearly the same age as Surin, and had received the same humanistic and religious education, lived in a different universe than Surin. Although a secular priest, Grandier's real universe was "the world," life lived according to the dictates of insulated selfhood, experience as perceived and conditioned by man's ego. With his intellectual abilities, personal charm, good looks, and commanding oratorical style, he seemed fully suited for a career which would satisfy his desire for a well-rounded life. Unfortunately, the priesthood was not designed for that purpose. True, many a churchman had led a life equally as self-indulgent and morally questionable as Grandier had, but Grandier's pride and snobbery, as well as his lechery, alienated powerful people in Loudun who anxiously awaited the first opportunity for revenging themselves against the arrogant and audacious prelate.

Although the bizarre happenings at the Ursuline convent provided the mainspring, the initial charges of the nuns and their exorcists had been contradicted by preliminary ecclesiastical investigations. However, Grandier's enemies were successful in attracting the attention of Cardinal Richelieu to the case. Then, with a ferocity that gives birth to cliché, "all hell" most certainly "broke loose!" Richelieu's interest was prompted by personal and political motives. The Cardinal was then in the process of raising all of the fortresses in the country as a means of breaking the power of the Huguenots and the feudal magnates. Grandier had interceded on behalf of the governor of Loudun castle, who was also a favorite of the king. Temporarily, the castle had been saved, but Grandier had earned the enmity

of Richelieu's creature, the Baron de Laubardemont, who was First President of the Court of Appeal of Guyenne, a member of the Council of State, and His Majesty's special Commissioner for the destruction of Loudun castle. Laubardemont was a firm believer in demonic possession and when the proceedings at the Ursuline house became snagged, Grandier's enemies inveigled him into approaching Richelieu with the matter by naming Grandier as the anonymous author of a violent and obscene pamphlet attack upon the Cardinal. The trick worked. Laubardemont was commissioned to investigate and bring Grandier to trial if the charges appeared sufficient.

Witchcraft trials were common occurrences, as were cases of possession, but Richelieu's intervention in this case was unique. Besides his desire for personal revenge against the impertinent Grandier, there were political considerations. The trial might serve as a springboard for attacking the Protestants of Loudun, whose loyalty to the crown during the previous uprisings in the other Huguenot cities had helped preserve their fortress. Their disgrace would enable Richelieu to transfer the city's ancient rights and privileges to the new city of Richelieu he was planning to erect on his family property. Then, too, if the Protestants could be implicated in the possessions, he could use this as justification for reviving the Inquisition in France as another political tool for centralizing power by claiming the presence of a Fifth Column of devils in the land. Because of these personal and political reasons, Richelieu had the king place the Grandier case above the power of the law, thereby leaving Laubardemont with a free hand to prosecute.

With Richelieu's blessings, an orgy of licensed spite, of perjury consecrated by the Church, of hatred and envy officially rewarded was initiated. The exorcisms became a means of gaining evidence against Grandier, rather

than a way of delivering the nuns. This, however, was heretical, for in 1610 a committee of theologians issued an authoritative statement on the admissibility of diabolic evidence which found such evidence invalid because even when he is telling the truth, Satan, as the "Father of Lies," is never to be believed. But Laubardemont and his colleagues recognized nothing else. Grandier was to be sacrificed to satisfy the needs of personal feelings and power politics.

Up until the actual trial proceedings began, Grandier maintained his conviction that justice would prevail. But after his first appearance before the tribunal, he realized that justice was not the purpose of this court and that he was a doomed man. The insight had a revolutionary effect upon him. Suffering a total revulsion in his being, Grandier experienced sincere contrition for the egocentric life he had led. Through the aid of a confessor he emptied his soul of self, opening it up for Spirit to fill. That Grandier believed the presence of God was with him can be seen by the strength with which he endured the horrors of his subsequent tortures and excruciatingly painful death. Throughout it all, he resolutely refused to confess to the alleged crimes he was being condemned for. In so doing, Grandier foiled Laubardemont's attempts to whitewash the illegality of the proceedings and, more importantly, frustrated Richelieu's plans for using the trial as a political instrument for persecuting the Huguenots. Far more than the English Charles I did Grandier deserve that monarch's epitaph that nothing in his life became him as his leaving it.

Grandier's genuinely selfless act saved thousands from suffering a similar fate. In this, he came closer to an imitation of Christ than Father Joseph, despite the latter's assiduous contemplation of the Passion. This is not to imply that Grandier became a full-blown mystic overnight. Huxley

makes no such claim. His first-hand knowledge of the unitive life was inferior to Leclerc's but because he had more completely died to self than the Grey Eminence ever had, Grandier's experience of grace was not only more thorough, but was capable of effecting the good that Father Joseph could not accomplish. For Huxley, Grandier was an affirmation of his hypothesis that the impersonal quality of theocentric religion could inspire man to transcend the habits of a lifetime, enabling him to do good, even when the combined forces of Church and State are marshalled against him.

If Grandier achieved a kind of tragic nobility in death, the best that could be said for Soeur Jeanne des Anges was that she attained the level of comedy. Physically deformed from birth, her character and temperament were shaped by that anatomical factor, which she exploited through her native intelligence to her best advantage. Throughout her life she craved the recognition for her superior talents which she felt had been denied her because of her hunchback. Her basic mode of operation was dissimulation, for she was ever the actress. Ingratiating herself with the Prioress of the Ursuline house at Loudun, Soeur Jeanne, despite the fact that there were nuns more capable than she, succeeded to that office when the old Prioress retired. She also took to reading Catholic mystics as another means of exalting herself over others in the convent. She became resident expert on spirituality, although her experiences were confined to books. She would mouth the words of St. Teresa, but never took the trouble to actualize the spirit.

Grandier's reputation for seduction had an insidious effect upon her, firing her repressed and frustrated sexuality. Her mind was consumed by thoughts of him; even though she had never seen the man, the Prioress became

the victim of her insatiable imagination. But when Grandier refused her invitation to be confessor for the house, Soeur Jeanne's passion turned into an equally ardent hatred. Her imaginings transformed him into an incubus who tempted her to desecrate her vows. Communicating her nocturnal fantasies to the other nuns, she awakened their repressed desires. Soon, the entire house was seething with hysterical nuns claiming to be possessed by devils doing the bidding of their master, the "sorcerer" Urbain Grandier. Spurred on by his enemies and the exorcists, the nuns became an extraordinary and demeaning public spectacle.

The exorcisms trapped Soeur Jeanne and her sisters in their fantasies, making them habitual. For the exorcists they had ceased to be people, existing exclusively as objects with intense sensations. Although the experience was, on one level, horrible for her, yet, on another, it was a revelation and literally an ecstasy, a standing outside of her all-too-familiar self. She was a slave, both to the manipulations of the exorcists and to the fevers of her own imagination.

"Slavery is humiliating; and yet the consciousness of being no longer in control of one's own thoughts and actions is a form, inferior no doubt, but effective, of that self-transcendence to which all human beings aspire. Soeur Jeanne had tried to free herself from her servitude to the erotic images she had conjured up, but the only freedom she could achieve was freedom to be the self she abhorred. There was nothing for it but to slide down again into the dungeon of her addiction. (D of L, p. 114)."

During their lucid moments, the nuns suffered from bad conscience, for at these times they were aware of what they had become and what they were doing to Grandier. Some tried to retract their statements, but they were not believed. A few attempted to escape, but were forced to return. Soeur Jeanne even made an abortive suicide attempt after first having made a full

confession of her guilt. All of this was taken by their persecutors as evidence of Grandier's sorcery. Trapped into a position whereby if they persisted in their repentance they would be condemning themselves not only in this world, but in the next, the nuns suffered themselves to be persuaded into continuing the lurid charade. When it became psychologically impossible to go on pretending, they sought refuge in delirium. Downward transcendence became the only alternative for them -- and  
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 down they went.

Soeur Jeanne was finally liberated from the exorcists (but only after Grandier's death) by Surin, who tried to instruct her in the spiritual life during those intervals when she was not needed for public display. The Prioress was impressed by the Jesuit's obvious sincerity and experience (she already had some theoretical knowledge of the subject from which to judge him) and decided to transform herself from the "queen of the demoniacs" into a St. Teresa -- but in a very public way. She threw herself into the new role with her usual energy, subjecting herself to severe mental and physical mortifications, which can be an effective form of shock therapy for hysteria. From being possessed by devils, Soeur Jeanne became marked by miraculous stigmata, probably, according to Huxley, the result initially of auto-suggestion (in hysteria the skin becomes unusually sensitive) and afterwards embellished by her own hand. It was a grandstand play which worked. The Prioress became a walking relic exhibited before royalty, ecclesiastics, and a guillible public. In her copious memoirs and correspondences, she constantly analyzed her spiritual state, an effective means of disconnecting true spiritual progress, which begins where such analysis leaves off. But, then, Soeur Jeanne was not a mystic, only a self-conscious actress. In her writings she suppressed the fact of repentance and public confession of guilt, choosing instead to identify

herself with a basically literary fiction of a demoniac miraculously rescued by God. As Huxley remarks, this outward approach to character is the essence of comedy. In the last analysis, we share her vantage point of herself, but not her evaluation. She remains a grotesque figure of fun, the mystic manque.

Jean-Joseph Surin, however, was the real thing. His attraction for the way of Christian perfection began at an early age. At 12 he received his first instruction from a Spanish nun who had been a companion and disciple of St. Teresa. At 13, while praying in a church, he experienced a divine illumination, a supernatural light that seemed to manifest to him the nature of God. The memory of that experience never left him and enabled him to resist the temptations he felt toward physical desires and worldly ambition.

But Surin's Jesuit training under Father Louis Lallemand led him into temptations of a spiritually more dangerous kind. Lallemand's teachings laid especial stress upon purifications of the heart and docility to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. Taking an Augustinian view of the total depravity of fallen nature, Lallemand stressed the mortification of the natural man to the limits of human endurance. But such practices can produce undesirable results. Although physical austerities can be a vehicle for transcendence because of their shock effects upon a body enveloped in habit, the chemical changes they induce in the brain more often unleash that psychic region lying between the impersonal subconscious and the personal levels of the subconscious and conscious mind. The manifestations of this region used to be considered "supernatural" or "miraculous" because the psychic states from which they arise had been confused with spiritual enlightenment. But since these states do not emanate from the

deepest level of mind, they are more accurately forms of horizontal transcendence. These so-called "extraordinary graces" are indistinguishable from the workings of "evil spirits," and for this reason the Church has never considered them as other than gratuitous, unnecessary for salvation, and not to be identified with union with God. But their attraction has always been strong and both Lallemand and Surin were drawn to them and the rigorous practices by which they are produced. For a man as constitutionally delicate in body and mind as Surin, such a discipline must certainly result in disaster. But so narrow was his construction of that segment of human nature that was to be united with God that he willingly endured and accepted the consequences. Surin's attitudes in this regard were the product of Lallemand's teachings which he held to be superior in authority than the evidence of his own direct experience.

Surin's allegiance to doctrine is indicated in his view of nature. Despite the fact that his personal writings give evidence that he had experienced "the majesty of God" in nature, Lallemand and medieval tradition had interpreted the natural world in a strictly utilitarian sense as being symbolic of human nature. Nature was not imbued with Spirit, but was merely a soulless object to be manipulated by man. Consequently, Surin cut himself off from knowledge of God in the fullest and this ignorance was to prove nearly fatal to him, physically and spiritually. During the depths of his illness, his ability to determine which of the inspirations he received were truly "leadings of the Holy Spirit" (religious history gruesomely attests to the fact that not all are) was therefore restricted to Lallemand's tests of being in accord with the Catholic faith, Church traditions, and the obedience due to ecclesiastical superiors, which, for a man in his extremity, were insufficient in themselves to return him to

health. What he most needed was the balanced perspective derivable  
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 from the natural world.

But balance was a quality sorely lacking in Surin. At 34 (his age at the time of Grandier's death and immediately preceding his appearance at Loudun) he was highly regarded by his colleagues, but certain excesses to which he was prone gave cause for doubts. He believed it necessary to be extremely anti-social because of fallen man's natural depravity; he was over-righteous to the point of scrupulosity; his interest in extraordinary graces was considered indiscrete and even dangerous by some of his elders. Coupled with these attitudes was a tendency to neurosis. Even before Loudun, he had suffered from severe psycho-somatic disturbances. Then, too, he was incredibly gullible. He accepted stories of supernatural occurrences on face value and came to Loudun a firm believer in the nuns's possession and Grandier's guilt, although many of his fellow Jesuits seriously doubted their validity. As Huxley concludes, Surin was wanting in judgment and plain old common sense; a man of great abilities who was also a bit of a fool. But despite these failings, which were to lead him into extreme, albeit well deserved, suffering, Huxley considers the man a tragic figure because we share his inner vision of himself during his torment as he indeed was and not in some imagined role, in the manner of Soeur  
 20  
 Jeanne.

There is no doubt that Surin's madness was the direct consequence of his intense involvement in the exorcisms. At one point he even prayed that he be allowed to take upon himself the sufferings of Soeur Jeanne. And with an irony Huxley always delighted in, those prayers were answered, although it was not devils that Surin had to contend. His struggle was between a certain notion of God and a certain notion of nature. For

Huxley and many other mystics, especially those of the East, it is through the datum of nature (conceived in the fullest sense to include man himself) that the donum of God is received. What must be mortified is ego and the ideas emanating from ego which we set up in the place of nature ("Labour is blossoming or dancing where/The body is not bruised to pleasure soul/ Nor beauty born out of its own despair," as Yeats says in "Among School Children."). But because Surin believed the opposite, because he took verbal patterns and dogmas as the facts themselves, he spent twenty years of his life in a paralysis of the will and faculties. Unfortunately, his sensibilities remained acute and so he continued to suffer the torments of conscience of those sincerely believing themselves to be damned, irreparably separated from God, which in a sense he was since he had chosen to perpetually mortify his soul's relationship to both his physical nature and the natural world. Surin's colleagues considered him irretrievably mad and treated him accordingly, after the brutalizing fashion of the day. Salvation began for Surin when he was placed in the care of one Father Bastide who handled him with the humanity necessary to a sick man undergoing a spiritual crisis. With Father Bastide came hope and with hope his health began to return.

In the initial stages of his recovery, Surin clung to the belief that union with the Son (to use the Christian term for dying to self) entailed the systematic denial of the essential divinity of nature; he therefore realized only a partial union with the Father (God existing apart from the created world) together with union with a whole range of psychic experiences not always identifiable with Spirit (the bond of Love which unites created being with its source). He had now exchanged one abnormal condition for one of its opposite sign, in which extraordinary graces became as ordinary as his extraordinary desolations had previously been. Ignoring Father

Bastide's advice to forget his preoccupation with such psychic states and to rely upon faith alone, which empties the soul, thereby allowing God to enter, Surin persisted in his mortifications. But nature is restorative despite our best efforts to deny it. With old age, the strength that had returned during his period of extraordinary graces began to deteriorate and with that, the graces themselves ceased. In their stead, however, came a state of repose, in which God was able to enter. From his last writings, it is clear, Huxley asserts, that Surin achieved final union with God.

The histories of these three relatively obscure people illuminate Huxley's perennial themes of self-transcendence versus self-assertion, of World versus Spirit, of immediate experience versus philosophical preconceptions. The three ideas are inextricably intertwined. Since the drives for transcendence and assertion are both endemic to man, man does possess within himself the ability to curb the potential disruptiveness of self-assertion. In effect, this is what Grandier demonstrates. Despite the blindness of his worldly life, the shock of recognition that death was at hand galvanized his soul, enabling him to die to selfhood, and thereby allowed him to direct the courage he had previously employed toward personal ends for the good of many. This necessarily qualifies Huxley's former dichotomy between World and Spirit. For, as Surin demonstrates, what must be died to is the world of appetite, the cravings for power, for position, for pleasure, both the ordinary ones of the body and mind and the extraordinary ones of the spirit. The natural world is a vital, healthy source of regeneration. But Surin's spiritual life was so thoroughly hemmed in by theological dogma that he, too, had to wait until the end of life before receiving unitive knowledge of God. Spiritual self-assertion (for that's

what Surin's preoccupation with gratuitous graces and ecclesiastical doctrine was) thus prove as great a hindrance to transcendence as worldly self-assertion. They must be died to utterly or else we are left with the fictive life of Soeur Jeanne. The lesson seems to be that one must learn to balance time and eternity by being in the world, but not of it, regardless of one's sphere of action.

Being of the world puts one in harm's way, the nature of the danger according with the role one plays. Grandier, in pursuing the pleasures of this world, becomes embroiled in political machinations and petty jealousies and so suffers "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." Surin, in seeking the Spirit, becomes fascinated with the extraordinary psychic manifestations of the mental region that dwells within the depths of mind and so falls victim to his morbid enthusiasms. Soeur Jeanne's suppressed desires to play a role in the world are realized. No small achievement to rise from the obscurity of a provincial convent onto the great stage of public attention. But she must crawl through the psychic squalors of subhumanity before she can attain supernatural glory, of sorts. So, having chosen to be an actress, Soeur Jeanne is condemned to living a fictional life, before the world's view and in her own eyes.

Surin, Grandier, and Soeur Jeanne thus raise the difficult question all art must ultimately ask: how does one live? That, whatever his predispositions, the writer cannot answer for us; the decision is for us to make. All he can do is clarify the choices and their consequences. To pretend that he does have the answer, opens the artist to charges of egocentricity. And Huxley had traveled through that territory during the Twenties. Abandoning the traditional novel, Huxley was able to raise the question by referring to history, thus gaining an authenticity impossible

with fictional characters. Yet his scholar's point of view, while placing everything into perspective, enables us to see that this is just one more person talking. We have the facts themselves (which we can independently verify) to weigh against the persuasiveness of his argument. And the implicit lesson of both fact and thesis is that choice is inevitable, but nothing is free. We pay for everything.

There are two final questions which must be raised about Huxley's non-fiction novels; one concerns aesthetics, the other, the contribution of the works to Huxley's philosophy. I think if we discuss the more ticklish subject of aesthetics first, we will have a clearer background for considering the influence of the studies on Huxley's growth.

Huxley was an inveterate experimenter with form, not for aesthetic reasons, but as part of a constant search to find adequate modes of expressing his sense of reality. Aesthetic order is the internal harmony of an art work. Our demands for aesthetic unity are prompted by an awareness that life possesses such a harmony. Therefore, art, as an imitation of life, is required to satisfy this intuitive perception. Art, however, is not life, but a self-contained, symbolic representation of the artist's personal interpretation of life. Ultimately, it relates only to itself; it is pure play and its value comes from its ability to provide us with this experience of play. Since Huxley's final cosmology was the Mahayanist conception of the universe as purposeless play, the pure play of art can be a valuable experience for liberating man from his desire for an egotistically conceived meaning to life. Art, therefore, could have been a solution for the Huxleyan grotesque.

But aesthetics can be dangerous when it becomes a paramount criterion for art. It reconciles us to the symbolic representation and in so doing,

often blinds us to the question of the art's relationship to reality. How well is it executed substitutes all too frequently in critical circles for how true is it. The hallmark of the artist for art's sake (that creature of Modernism who exists today as the presiding spirit of those still living in yesterday's world) is his aesthetic performance. Only those rare talents possessing a high degree of creative imagination can satisfy that demand. Modernist art is therefore an elitist art, produceable by a few for the enjoyment of a slightly larger few.

Shakespeare and Dickens, the greatest creative imaginations in our language, were not immune to aesthetic lapses. Shakespeare perhaps wrote one nearly perfect play (King Lear); no Dickens novel would qualify. But Shakespeare and Dickens were not aesthetes. They were bourgeois materialists concerned with earning a living through their talents for representing the reality of their day. The audiences required that their works provide them with the opportunity for an imaginative participation in the life of the art. Therefore, the primary concern of the artist was for creating avenues for that interchange. That was satisfied by verisimilitude, not aesthetics, for aesthetic harmony means perfection, Apollonian Beauty of form. Psychologically, however, Beauty distances us from the work. We stand rapt in awesome contemplation of its grandeur and our own inferiority. Aesthetics was not the name of the game for the Elizabethans and Victorians. Theirs were active ages; periods of vigorous non-specialist doers. Today, we marvel at their expansive energy, their accomplishments, but we needn't marvel. Our vital fluids have not been sapped, merely untapped. With our increased knowledge and technology, we should have surpassed them in individual achievements, but we haven't.

The aesthetic demand is symptomatic of the failure. We have turned art into a passive experience that no longer quickens the imagination, but

only confirms our belief that life's experiences must be parceled out to the appropriate specialists. The doing is no longer valuable for us, only the quality of the achievement. "It's whether you win or lose that counts; not how you play the game." What an impoverishment of living is contained in this transvaluation of experience!

Huxley knew this and so created a literature that broke down the barriers of aesthetics. Fortunately, his creative imagination was intellectual in nature and not aesthetic and so he had no real alternative if he was to be a writer. Therefore, he became a satirist. When satire could no longer be his last word, he searched for a form that would both convey his heightened sense of reality and provide his readers with the means of participating in the reality of his art. His non-fiction novels, like his whole-truth satires, attempted to do just that. His ability to create the world of seventeenth-century France, a marriage of the scholar and the novelist, allows us imaginatively to know that world, while his commentary illuminates our understanding of what has happened. It is an art that successfully exploits the resources of its medium. The art lies in the participation. The commentary exploits the power of print to extract us from the tyranny of time's flow. We stop the duree of experience and examine what's happening without losing the sense of that experience. The Joycean God-Artist requires us to stop at our own initiative in order to analyze on our own. This works only when there is a shared understanding of reality between writer and reader. For Huxley, that community of comprehension was lacking when he became a mystic. He had no other recourse but to intrude his own voice. The importance of what he had to say justifies his aesthetic violation.

But along with a new form, Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudun corrected the metaphysical deficiencies of Huxley's first mystical phase. That phase had focused upon contemplative methods of transcending ego-centric consciousness in order to change the self and realize God as a transcendental being. He viewed life on the human level as spiritually deleterious and so monastically reduced the range of allowable experiences. Those who accused Huxley of rejecting the world were not completely wrong. The problem lay in his interpretation of the Perennial Philosophy. That, ironically, was too inclusive.

Leclerc and Surin awakened him to the respective dangers of providential and dualistic epistemologies. The providential theory explained events as being in accordance with the will of God, who was First Cause, as well as the source of all being. This, however, involved the problem of knowing God's will, a problem complicated by the intricacies of subconscious mind which Huxley only began to recognize when he studied Loudun. Mahayanism and Taoism offered a way out of these difficulties. Both God and the world were subject to a cosmic scheme, the immutable Order of Things. Dr. Robert's speech on the image of Shiva-Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance, in Island, best articulates this concept. The limbs of the idol symbolize the conditions of life and their movement in the dance, the successive comings to pass of those conditions. But Shive does not control the movements, <sup>21</sup> the dance, the cosmic scheme does. There is no will of God to worry about, for the universe has no other purpose than itself; it is all play. Man's purpose, too, is play -- the realization of his full self. This is why Huxley's next phase is so concerned with developing human potentialities. Enlightenment is the apex of achievement. Enlightenment makes liberation possible -- liberation from the cosmic scheme and into the source

of all being. Although Huxley's name for it is the Clear Light, one may call it what one will. No word is adequate because it is not accessible to conceptual knowing. We can only apprehend it through direct intuition, the experience that is Enlightenment.

The need to know God's will necessitates knowledge of God apart from the world, Disposing of that will allows one to know God as immanent in the whole of nature. Consequently, there is no longer a need to constrict one's experiences since all actions performed with awareness will reveal God in the form of self-knowledge. Remember: thou art That. When one learns who one really is, not the ego he thinks he is, then one will know himself as identical in essence with the source from whence he came. Western thinking viewed man as different from, not identical with, God. This dualistic philosophy of either/or, or subject/object, has continually wreaked havoc with our lives. God is both immanent within nature and within ourselves. We come to know God in ourselves by penetrating into the deepest regions of mind. Perceiving the "suchness" of nature provides the analogous experience in the external world. But if we conceive God as Other, standing outside of creation, then we fail to see the relevance of nature and we mistake the psychic manifestations of our own minds for the grace of God. But since all extraordinary phenomena are not the workings of Spirit, what will guide our discernment? From the doctrine of the Other to the voice of Authority is but a short step. If, however, we take the monistic view of the universe (on the spiritual and scientific levels, rather than on the pluralistic level of ordinary sense perception), then direct internal experience can be corroborated by direct external experience, provided, of course, that we have first transcended ego-consciousness. The futility of Gumbriel's efforts to know the

truth of God as  $2 + 2 = 4$  thus becomes self-evident. God cannot be verified by abstractions, be they scientific or theological, but only in the material world of created forms. And all abstractions turn into dogma when conceived as tangible realities, rather than as the symbols they truly are.

I believe that in the analysis of this conflict between dogma and empiricism lies the overriding significance of these studies of seventeenth-century France. From them, Huxley was able to derive the metaphysics and way of life that was to become Palanese society. The active life led in constant awareness and the interrelatedness of the mental and physical worlds which characterize Huxley's utopia was realizeable back then in France. And they are here and now in our own time, if only we learn to live life directly. But a passive art will never teach us that.

<sup>1</sup> Aldous Huxley, The Devils of Loudun: A Study in the Psychology of Power Politics and Mystical Religion in the France of Cardinal Richelieu (1952; rpt. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1959), pp. 300-301. All further references are to this edition.

<sup>2</sup> Remembering that Grey Eminence predates Time Must Have A Stop gives some substance to Sebastian's faint hope. But Sebastian was well aware that his hope could not begin to be realized until after the cessation of global hostilities.

<sup>3</sup> Because Father Joseph had progressed so far in annihilating personality, he would be too shadowy a figure for a novel.

<sup>4</sup> The Ken Russell film version of the stage play based upon Huxley's book graphically illustrates my point. The movie is quite literally engulfed in its mise en scene. And the camera wallows in the grotesqueries of character and event, to the near exclusion of their philosophical underpinnings. The result is a truly decadent experience. Such are the dangers of a direct presentation of the highly sensational; we get sensationalism for sensation's sake alone.

<sup>5</sup> Holmes says that Leclerc offered an opportunity for studying in the context of a real person, "rather than in the abstract, the search for ultimate truth, the destructive split within the self, and their relationship to the actual, living, material, political world;" Holmes, p. 130. If we substitute "fictional" for Holmes's "abstract," we can see that the benefit of clergy was as much literary as it was intellectual. Meckier substantiates this literary perspective. He, too, views Leclerc, along with Urbain Grandier and Maine de Biran, as historical analogues to Huxley's fictional heroes, presenting three variations on the mystical theme. But Meckier does not see in the non-fiction the potential for a new form which would replace what he calls "the discussion-novel-of-ideas." Aldous Huxley, p. 173. I think the difference between Meckier's and my evaluation of the non-fictional form results from the vantage point each of us takes. Meckier's study emphasizes structure as a vehicle for satire, whereas my discussion of form emphasizes the relationship between aesthetics and philosophy. Given the nature of our differing modes, our conclusions could not be otherwise.

<sup>6</sup> Aldous Huxley, Grey Eminence: A Study in Religion and Politics (1941; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Colophon Books, 1966), p. 15. All further references are to this edition.

<sup>7</sup> Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. sees the problem of perception as a major pre-occupation for Huxley's studies of individual mystics. "Aldous Huxley and His Mystics," The Virginia Quarterly Review, 42 (Spring, 1966), 291.

<sup>8</sup> A representative embodiment of traditional Christian mysticism was the anonymous, fourteenth-century English work, The Cloud of Unknowing, a practical guidebook for advanced contemplatives who had already arrived at the initial stages of moral amendment, discursive meditation, and training of the will. The Cloud teaches cultivation of the art of loving God

for himself alone, as he is in himself, and not for the personal benefit of the worshipper, nor as God would be when refracted through the medium of human personality. God is to be loved with a pure act of will, uncontaminated by discursive reasoning. The contemplative must train himself in devotion to abstract himself from all personal feelings, memories, thoughts, and wishes. Even the holiest of thoughts and feelings must be annihilated, for they, too, become distractions from the knowledge of God, who is to be approached only by the "blind" stirrings of love." See Grey Eminence, pp. 51-64 .

9 Grey Eminence, pp. 75-75.

10 This discussion of Christian mystical tradition was based upon "The Religious Background," Grey Eminence, pp. 47-82.

11 Although Huxley cites several Christian writers on what constitutes right action, he relies mainly upon the formulations of Father Louis Lallemant, a contemporary of Leclerc's whose teachings played a key role in the drama of Loudun.

12 Gandhi succeeded, in so far as we can say human actions ever achieve their ends fully, because he required people, not machines. And of people, India has a seemingly endless supply. Maybe that's why gurus are their major export item to the West.

13 "for you don't count the dead/ when God's on your side." Bob Dylan. "With God on Our Side." The Times They Are A Changin'.

14 Holmes seems to imply that Huxley's purpose was to show human personality in its most appalling forms because he believes Huxley identified the "abyss" which confronted man as being the extremes of human personality; p. 161. But ever since Huxley converted to mysticism, "self" has always been identified as the real problem -- even "normal" self, let alone the extreme conditions. What Huxley thus examines in The Devils is human potentiality, not extremity.

15 Cartesian theory disposed of the devil theory, explaining its manifestations as products of "imagination" (which to the scientific became synonymous with "illusion") or dismissing them out of hand. For Descartes, mind has consciousness as its essence and can interact with matter in its own body, but not directly with external matter or other minds. This was in keeping with the pre-Cartesian interpretation of the operation of the indivisible soul, their analogue for Cartesian mind (Descartes viewed the body as self-regulating and could therefore dispense with explanations in terms of subsidiary souls). For post-Cartesians, the range of the subconscious mind functions as an explanation for the discredited devil theory. And for those post-Cartesians who accept the evidence of ESP and psychokinesis, on the subconscious level mind can act directly upon other minds and external matter. By the time he wrote The Devils, Huxley had already come to believe in the evidence of psychical research and even entertained the possibility of non-human intelligences, although he found no evidence that such was the case at Loudun.

16 Huxley's litmus test for a religion would be the extent to which it enables the dying to self that prepares the way for enlightenment. See Devils, pp. 69-70. The test for a psychology (as distinct from psychoanalysis) would be the depth of its exploration of the subconscious levels of mind. Devils, pp. 88-90. Curiously, although the ability of LSD and mescaline to open up these levels prompted Huxley to experiment with drugs, as late as Devils he was still insisting that drugs were a form of bogus liberation.

17 There was one slight compensation for the nuns. Not only did their health not deteriorate, but because of the gymnastics involved in the exorcisms, those who had been somewhat delicate actually improved. Their acrobatics revealed latent athletic talents which their religious vocation, for which most were unsuited, had repressed.

18 Because man today still maintains this essentially medieval conception, we are now faced with "eco-disaster." As Huxley was fond of saying, "God is not mocked."

19 The parallel here with Gombauld's artistic development away from cubism to representational painting indicates the continuity of Huxley's career. The shifting of his focus from the artist to the mystic becomes, in this light, no more than an alteration in concern from one level of art to a "higher" one.

20 The parallel here between Surin and Shakespeare's king driven mad because of his insistence upon the superiority of the verbal formula over the direct experience provides additional clarification. Lear reaches tragic stature in the last act, only after we perceive his full humanity in Cordelia's expression of love's binding power, "No cause. No cause." Until that moment, our general conception of Lear is that of the foolish man reaping the deserved consequences of his behavior, much like Surin himself. Of course, this view is not intended to deny the countervailing hints provided by Kent, Cordelia, et. al., but the tragic stature comes late for both men.

21 Aldous Huxley, Island (1962; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1963), pp. 170-173. All further references are to this edition.

22 I use the term now in a purely metaphorical way, as a shorthand for other, equally metaphorical expressions, such as the Ground of all being, etc.

PART V

PHASE THREE: MIRANDA, WE HAVE ARRIVED

BRAVE NEW WORLD - APE AND ESSENCE - ISLAND

Phase Three: Miranda, We Have Arrived

Introductory

Ophelia: Lord, we know what we are, but know not  
what we may be.  
Shakespeare, Hamlet

Everybody is a part of everything anyway,  
You can have anything if you let yourself see.  
Donovan Leitch, "Happiness Runs"

The utopian novel had been implicit in Huxley's fiction from the beginning. The two models presented in Crome Yellow by Scogan's Rational State and Sir Hercules's private Lilliput foreshadowed the two distinct approaches to social organization Huxley later incorporated into his three utopian novels. Both Brave New World and Ape and Essence follow Scogan's principle of order imposed from above by an intellectual autocracy, whereas Island follows Sir Hercules's principle of order generated from the nature and needs of its individual members.

The central assumption upon which the genre operates is that a distinction exists between what we are and how we function in society. The purpose of the form is to demonstrate how what we are will alter when how we function socially is altered. The primacy of the conditioning influence of the social environment is regarded as axiomatic. Despite the behaviorist overtones of his hypothesis, Huxley's empirical habit of mind and his literary stance as a social novelist made his adoption of the utopian mode inevitable. The utopian novelist is inherent in the social novelist, but only comes to the fore when the writer feels he can

no longer give his allegiance to the society he has been describing. Huxley had reached this juncture after Point Counter Point. Rampion's acerbic criticism placed the blame for the debilitation of modern man squarely upon society. The question he raised was how man, and not society, was to be saved. The Perennial Philosophy provided an answer for individual man, but for men in the aggregate metaphysics alone was insufficient. The utopian genre, however, lent itself perfectly to an empirical investigation of the problem. "... for anyone who is interested in human beings and their so largely unrealized potentialities, even the silliest experiment has value, if only as demonstrating what ought not to be done.... Well planned and carried out with skill and intelligence, some of them have contributed significantly to our knowledge of that most difficult and most important of all the arts -- the art of living together in harmony and with benefit for all concerned." Although Huxley was here referring to historical utopian communities, the same intention and function would accurately describe his own novels.

Because the key factor is the realization of human potentialities, some discussion of Huxley's conception of human nature must precede his ideas about social organization. The central feature in Huxley's view of man is his rejection of the Cartesian definition of being as dependent upon a cognitive, subjective ego operating against an objective, external environment. Instead, Huxley saw man as an amphibian inhabiting, simultaneously or by turns, several worlds. The three basic levels were: (1) the electro-chemical level of the body; (2) the level of first-order subjective experiences, including those stemming from internal visceral functions, as well as from external stimuli; (3) the symbolic level, on

which the brain converts the experiences of (2) into systems of manageable symbols, the most important of which is language.<sup>4</sup>

For Huxley, language is the key humanizing agent, differentiating both man from the apes and the adult from the infant. Along with his genetic inheritance and his social surroundings, the structure and content of an individual's local language will determine the degree to which he can actualize his potentialities. We think in terms of the language we speak; therefore, our ability to learn and think realistically about the world depends upon the view of reality implicit in the language we use. In this sense, all we perceive and learn is a function of the processes of language. When we study a "subject" we are really learning the linguistic symbols and syntactical rules which comprise that so-called subject. In other words, such categories as physics, chemistry, biology are actually languages providing objective media for knowing and describing reality. A rose is a rosaceus is a molecular structure is a.... The different pieces of information which each science yields signify the differing perspectives that each language offers. And what holds true for the sciences, holds equally for the vernacular languages. Huxley had previously discussed the relationship between language and knowing in After Many a Summer. But there its implications had been restricted to the problems of relating the mystical experience. In his utopian novels he investigated the role language plays in the general educational development of the individual.

Huxley explained the inherent paradox of language through an analogy with Gresham's law of money. "Bad words tend to drive out good words, and words in general, the good as well as the bad, tend to drive out immediately experience and our memories of immediate experience."<sup>5</sup>

He is here referring to the tendency of imprecise language to gain greater currency because its failure to make definite distinctions allows it to be employed over a range of different, even contradictory situations; as well as the tendency of symbols to substitute for the things symbolized. And yet, as Huxley points out, without the mnemonic quality of language there would be no knowledge. We all suffer from amnesia about our richest period of learning, that of infancy, our time before language. But despite this handicap, we still assimilate the experiences of that age and indeed, we do learn, by a non-conceptual process, understanding. This implies a fundamental distinction between knowing and understanding which must be clarified because it lies at the heart of the kind of educational process Huxley advocated.

Stated briefly, knowledge is what we acquire when we have absorbed new experience into a system of concepts which have been based upon past experience; understanding happens after we have sufficiently liberated ourselves from the old and have unmediated contact with the new. Knowledge, therefore, reinforces our present system of ideas and word-patterns, that are held together by memory, analytical reasoning, habit, and the automatic association of accepted conceptions. Understanding is transcendental, for it alters our relationship with past thought through an intuitive process. Since knowledge is conceptual in nature, it can be transmitted to others through symbol patterns, such as words. Consequently, knowledge is "teachable", amenable to being doled out in prescribed dosages. But understanding is non-conceptual and therefore non-transmittible. Because it must be experienced, understanding is individual in nature.

If knowledge be transmitted through language (the symbol system used in the West to the near exclusion of all others), then language must be the medium of education. That we have also made it the sole subject matter of education as well, thereby totally ignoring the presence of living, individual beings in the classroom, begins to explain the failure of schooling for a growing number of young people who have begun manifesting (in various ways) their refusal to be considered as objects (that old Cartesian subject-object dichotomy again). Huxley's diagnosis of the academic malaise finds two overriding faults: that the schools fail to take into consideration the all-important fact of human variability and that they fail to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature and limitations of language. <sup>7</sup> The centrality of knowledge is to blame. Because that is all one can transmit, we mistakenly assume that some "feeding" process is all that can happen in a school. Because transmitting presupposes a receiver, students become the object of the teacher-transmitter. Because the symbol system used has uniformity, we assume and demand that its reception also be uniform and penalize those who don't meet preconceived levels of expectation.

Huxley did not advocate the abolition of knowledge. He conceded its indispensability for acquiring technical proficiency. But it can also be an obstacle for individual (and that's what each of us is) reactions to ourselves and others (all that is not the personal self). Knowledge, as I said before, reinforces the past, is conservative and therefore a deterrent to apprehending the new in any other terms than in those of the old. In other words, an inappropriate mode of response, for what distinguishes the new is its break with the past. What students must

acquire, along with knowledge, is the ability to liberate themselves from the tyranny of words, conditioned reflexes, and social conventions. They must be capable of understanding. And although understanding is "un-teachable", the processes of perception, being as they are types of knowledge, are definitely transmittible. The ability to perceive is the prerequisite for knowing and understanding. And this is what Huxley meant by teaching students about the nature and limitations of language (our most prevalent perceptual process in schools). Knowledge conditions; understanding liberates. "It is our conditioning which develops our consciousness; but in order to make full use of this developed consciousness, we must start by getting rid of the conditioning which developed it."<sup>8</sup>

Despite his changes in specific content and methodology of instruction, Huxley's central educational principle has remained constant throughout his life. The idea is to educate the whole man, a position he first expounded in Proper Studies. The schools should accurately measure each student's capacities and while training him for those functions in society he is most suited to perform, yet should maintain his sense of individuality, insuring thereby that he becomes both a man and a citizen. In the West, we have tended to identify a man with his socially useful abilities (based upon the knowledge we deem to have been successfully transmitted) and have ignored (or even actively suppressed) those aspects of his personality which could not be fitted into a vocational scheme. The consequences, according to Huxley, have been that two-thirds of the person has been educationally outlawed and a society of specialists has been produced, who, outside their fields of competence, think, feel, and behave in varying degrees of infantility.<sup>9</sup> In other words, like Huxleyan grotesques. And to think, it is Huxley who has been accused of distorting human nature! If his analysis is correct (and many in the field of

education do), then we have been guilty of blaming the messenger for the unpleasantness of his news.

Huxley's philosophy of education, like his mysticism, is another affirmation of the individual, whose importance must be preserved if democratic societies are to exist. Politicians who speak about the "American Experience" are talking a dangerous kind of nonsense, for the experiences of the individual are not the same as the experiences of his society. And any science of human behavior presents a similar kind of abstraction, which, too, is inadequate to explain the immediate facts of the individual, whose personal manifestations of the general are as important as the abstract theory. This means that as long as the phenomenon exists, the individual man can never be explained away and to ignore him can be socially disastrous, for nothing is accomplished in a society except by individuals, acting alone or in groups. The current emphasis upon "team work" and "group effort" and "mass demonstrations" can become insidious circumventions of individuality because of the difference between individual and group psychology. Like other life forms, man is a social creature, but only moderately so; he does not instinctively herd. This can be explained by the fact that biological variability within a given species will increase as we move up the evolutionary scale. Man displays the greatest degree of bio-chemical, structural, and temperamental diversity of any species. Our instinctual desire to preserve our distinctive individuality can be readily demonstrated by taking a ride on a New York subway during the rush-hour. No, man does not like to be herded into uniformity.

But so strong is the "will to order" (the desire to impose a comprehensive uniformity upon the manifoldness of things and events), especially for those who have a fatal attraction for the abstract -- educators,

scientists, industrialists, politicians -- that we have adopted a social ethic based upon behaviorist assumptions about human uniformity and the individual as the product exclusively of his conditioning. Individual liberty will be difficult to maintain if we all become programmed to act according to preconceived ideas of good.

Rather than Social Man (with its concomitant ideal of the infallible State), Huxley advocated Theocentric Man. On the levels of temperament, talent, and acquirements we are profoundly dissimilar. Resemblances begin again only on the deepest level of mind -- that of spirit, "of the something not ourselves which is the ground of our being." Herein lies the bond of similarity upon which society should be organized, for it is only on this level that uniformity has meaning and only upon this premise can individuality be preserved. To realize this end, Huxley believed that the existence of at least one class of people, analogous to the Indian Brahmin class, must exist in a society, whose ideal of Theocentric Man would mean that they would not be primarily concerned with human values, but with the process of knowing and actualizing within themselves ultimate reality.

In discussing Huxley's utopian novels, we run up against an anomaly. Utopias are static societies; that is their purpose, to be perfection realized and therefore impervious to and unneeding of change. Yet Huxley was an advocate of change, not merely in the sense of instituting reforms for general improvement, but as a life-process good in itself. As early as Jesting Pilate he had spoken against fixed societal organizations which preserve unalterably the character and life-style of its people despite alterations in external circumstances. He found the Indian village system acceptable only if one were to conceive the purpose of human life to be limited to birth and copulation and death. While

yet a believer in meaninglessness at the time, Huxley still thought this scheme totally ~~unsatisfactory~~ because it was so boring. His principle of living, at that time, comprehended the Victorian desire "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."<sup>13</sup> His conversion to mysticism did not negate the Tennysonian predilection for change; it merely directed it toward spiritual ends. In a letter to his brother Julian, dated 27 October, 1946, in which he questioned the reality of progress as a fact of individual experience, Huxley stated his belief that a society consisting of "perfectly-balanced, all-round individuals" would be one that did not evince much of the objective progress historians record.<sup>14</sup> The "subjective progress" he here implies would refer to the kind of individual spiritual development characteristic of the Palanese.

Utopia, for Huxley, would be a stable social organization designed to make possible and facilitate the dynamics of individual growth. The anomaly between perfection and change in Huxley's utopia stems, therefore, from our own misconception about the idea of utopia. We tend to think that because the system achieves perfection, the people must, ipso facto, also be perfect. But that is only another fallacy propagated by the will to order. Because of it, we fail to distinguish between the living and the non-living. Life is change. The ideal, the static can only be possible in the realm of the conceptual and can perhaps one day be manifested tangibly in the form of social institutions. The living, by definition, must change. That is why utopian fiction concentrates its redesigning upon the social system. Only the jejune or Platonic utopian tries to depict "perfect people". Our dissatisfaction with the Palanese derives from our feeling that they are perfect, but they're not. Only in comparison with our neurotic, Western selves do they seem so. Their finely-tuned sense of balance makes it possible for them to correct their

errors, but they are not immune from erring. Therefore, Island can accurately be described as a utopian novel, whereas Brave New World and Ape and Essence are dysutopian. The leaders of the World State and the community of Belial have striven to perfect both the institutions and their people, thereby dehumanizing them. Our horror comes from what the living have become, rather than from their social systems per se. In themselves, the societal structures are even reasonable, given the weltanschauung they embody.

The three novels to be discussed in Chapter Six of our journey can be viewed as summations of the three respective phases of Huxley's career, prognosticating the kind of society which seemed most likely to arise, given the forces prevalent during those historical periods. <sup>15</sup> Brave New World would be the realization of Rampion's dark forebodings. Ape and Essence would be the consequence of the triumph of the madness unleashed by the combatants of World War II. And Island would reflect today's conflict between the two opposite answers to international order -- that of multi-national capitalist dictatorship, which reconciles Eastern totalitarianism with Western consumer economics, on the one side, against decentralized self-governing community democracy, which reconciles Eastern metaphysics with Western science, on the other.

A sense of hopefulness emerges when the three novels are viewed together. Between the extremes of Mustapha Mond and John the Savage there is little for modern man to choose. They are two sides of a bad coin. Even the promise of Eden regained which ends Ape and Essence offers no real comfort. Poole and Loola are only characters in a rejected movie script. But with Island, Huxley dilutes disaster with more than just a ray of Technicolor hope. The invasion of Pala also ends its isolation; opens

it up to the world and the world to it. The physical defenses of Pala  
are as weak as the spiritual defenses of the outside world. Which side  
really is mightier? <sup>16</sup> Although Huxley does not end by shouting hosannas,  
the birds are singing: "Compassion." "Attention."

1 Of course it must be remembered that Sir Hercules's order was a solipsistic invention whose destruction resulted from its inability to adapt to internal changes (Sir Hercules's son was a man of "normal" stature). The problem stems from an inadequate application of the principle that society is a function of man and not man of society.

2 Aldous Huxley, "Ozymandias, the Utopia that Failed," Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow (1956; rpt. New York: Signet Books, 1964), p.78.

3 Holmes thinks Huxley wanted to "heal the split" between ego and the external world which had dichotomized thinking into a subject-object relationship; p.177. However, if I have interpreted Huxley correctly, there had never been a "split" as such, but rather a suppression of evidence which would have made the oversimplification of subject-object untenable. Both mysticism and scientific research provided him with the knowledge to present a more comprehensive understanding of the facts. Huxley's role was that of the revisionist thinker, not the physician. This distinction is more than semantic, for it indicates the general tenor of Huxley's career.

4 On the surface, it would appear that Huxley has redefined his earlier conception of man, as presented in Chapter Four (a). But there his triparted division into animal, human, and spiritual was intended to encompass the impersonal level, whereas in the present instance the concerns have been restricted to individual, personal aspects of man. Only the focus, not the conception, has shifted. Huxley's reorientation of emphasis provided him with the space to discuss the influence of education and other environmental conditioning agents in the development of human potentialities. By the early Fifties he had fully elaborated upon the spiritual and was free to concentrate upon the human level he had previously down-graded.

5 "The Education of an Amphibian," Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, p.12.

6 These definitions were based upon Huxley's distinctions in "Knowledge and Understanding," Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, p.32.

7 "Human Potentialities," The Humanist Frame, ed. Julian Huxley (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961), p.420.

8 "Knowledge and Understanding," pp.42-43.

9 Proper Studies, pp.172-174.

10 The preceding discussion of the individual was based upon Huxley's comments in Brave New World Revisited (1958; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1960), pp.96-101. The entire essay is a discussion of the tendencies in our society to destroy democracy and the integrity of the individuality and what steps must be taken to avoid such an outcome.

- 11 "Variations on a Philosopher," Themes and Variations, pp. 36-37.
- 12 See letter to Julian Huxley, dated 15 December, 1940; Letters, p.463.
- 13 See Jesting Pilate, pp.170-171.
- 14 Letters, pp.551-555.
- 15 Meckier offers a corollary interpretation, seeing the novels as a trilogy counterpointing Huxley's presentments of the future; Aldous Huxley, p.175.
- 16 Huxley, ever ready to add qualifiers to any intellectual question, also gives us the Rani and her "Spiritual Crusade," financed, of course, by the very people who finance the invasion of Pala. To which metaphysic will the spiritually vulnerable West yield? The total awareness of Pala or the escapist Nirvana of the Rani?

## Chapter Six

### (a) Brave New World

Huxley's reputation with the general reading public rests largely upon Brave New World; of all his writings, it is the one with the greatest popular appeal. Because the novel speaks to a mass audience rather than to the literate elite the earlier novels address, let us first see the book from the perspective of the popular imagination. Its negative vision of a world manipulatively governed by applied science touches a basic apprehension in Western civilization. Since the Renaissance the image of the scientist has been tinged with the mysterious and the awesome. Literature has depicted him as a man living in isolation, who dares to penetrate the secrets of the universe, usually at the risk of life and his immortal soul. From Faustus to Frankenstein his name has been synonymous in the popular imagination with the adventurous intellectual rebel and outcast. Although he enjoyed a brief vogue of respectability during the initial decades of the industrial revolution, from the time of Darwin to the launching of Sputnik, the scientist has been viewed with ambivalence, seen at once as man's liberator and his menace.

By the time of Brave New World's publication in 1932, the impact of science upon daily life had become manifestly clear to the average citizen. But because the knowledge of science was contained in languages inaccessible to the general public, the influence it exerted only served to further the mystification of the scientist. The psychological effect of the Depression, the insecurity and sense of things being out of control, unleashed the public's subliminal fears and anomosities toward

the godlike scientist. The spate of monster and mad scientist movies during the Thirties accurately reflected this mood. In these films, whose revival today signifies more than mere nostalgia, the scientist is either the cause of misery and death through his fiendish and impious tamperings with nature, or helpless to counteract and even comprehend the powers of the supernatural, which are only conquered through the efficacy of the symbols of religious faith and folklore.

Brave New World appeared as another attack upon the hubris of science. For clutchers of the cross and drawers of the pentagram the novel seemed to confirm their worst suspicions; scientists were a devious and dehumanizing lot whose secret plan it was to turn the human race into sexually promiscuous, assembly-line robots. Although the popular conception of the scientist has become more positive today, the underlying mistrust remains and probably goes far to explain the continuing popularity of Huxley's novel.

But Brave New World is much more than a satire upon the misuses of scientific learning.<sup>1</sup> It is more nearly an existential study of the relationship between selfhood and contemporary society,<sup>2</sup> following the form of a Voltairean conte philosophique.<sup>3</sup> Stripped of its futuristic details, the novel is an extension of the debates in Point Counter Point between Rampion and his pet bogies. Viewed from the perspective of the entire Huxley canon, it is an insignificant work, whose central purpose as a sequel to Point Counter Point<sup>4</sup> seems to have been to deny the tenability of the Lawrentian ethos. The Savage is as much an outcast in Malpais as in the World State. His cultural heritage (symbolized in his mother's behavior) makes him unfit for the Indian community; despite his efforts to appropriate their lore, John's solitary performance of the rites are

only an imitation of the Indian rituals, not an initiation, because he is denied the cohesive power of the group experience. And his education (symbolized by Shakespeare) is antithetical to the terms of survival in the World State. In the end, he can only make the worst of both worlds; flagellation and suicide. By Huxley's own admission, the alternatives open to John were too restricted and this constituted the novel's major defect in his eyes.

As a picture of the future, Brave New World is also less than satisfactory. As critics have pointed out, the World State is really the London of the 1920's and its people and values are a broad parody of those times.<sup>6</sup> Huxley, however, had already captured them in the earlier novels with greater subtlety and clarity of vision. And Brave New World Revisited provides a more precise analysis of the ways in which science is being used to inaugurate the age of totalitarianism, especially in the Western democracies. It is to the essay one should turn, and not to the novel, if one wishes to investigate the problem in greater detail. Huxley's own development, and not the general advance of time has made the novel out-dated. It owes its durability partly to its articulation of the popular imagination, partly to the flamboyancy of its prognosis for the future, partly to its literary cleverness, and partly, I'm afraid, to a general ignorance of the remainder of Huxley's books.

The novel's value, for our present purposes, lies in its depiction of a social ethos nearly identical to our own. If we differ at all from the World State, it is only insofar as our degree of conditioning remains sufficiently haphazard -- at present -- for the attainment of systematic control. But even the World State has its failures in this regard; hence the exiles on the outer islands.

The World State's motto -- Community, Identity, Stability -- provides a convenient framework within which to comment upon the structure, functioning, and values of that society. Although the written medium necessitates a linear discussion of the slogan's components, such a presentation must not be construed to indicate that the societal aspects entered under each heading operate exclusively to further only that particular objective; they are all mutually interactive and the respective categories they appear under here indicate only the primary direction of their impetus.

The elimination of the family, biologically and structurally, along with their concomitants, monogamy and romance, is the central factor making for the World State's conception of community. According to Mond's analysis, home was a physical and psychological hothouse environment, tending to produce exclusiveness and a narrow canalizing of impulse and energy. Although Huxley's evaluation of traditional family life was to remain as negative as Mond's, the extended family of Pala's Mutual Adoption Club preserves a humanly identifiable supportive group. The World State, however, substitutes the human element with the institutional. Literally and figuratively, the State is the parent of all, and therefore, "everyone belongs to everyone else".

Unifying this one State family is the doctrine of equality -- on the physico-chemical level -- whose purpose is to validate the individual worth of each inhabitant, despite his caste. Indeed, the caste system, which on the surface seems to enforce inequality biologically, only serves as a functional differentiator. The concept of individual value undercuts predetermined difference. "'Everyone works for everyone else. We can't do without any one. Even Epsilons are useful (BNW, p.49).'" Admittedly, worth is not an intrinsic quality in this society, but merely a matter of

social utility. Such are the logical consequences of placing the organization before the organism. In this regard, the World State gives the ultimate answer to John F. Kennedy's question of what you can do for your country.

To solidify the sense of at-oneness with the community there is the Solidarity Service, a curious form of religious ritual which annihilates the consciousness of being a separate self through drugs and sexual intercourse. Of course the form of transcendence achieved is downward in direction, because the union is with drugged and erotically charged bodies, rather than with a higher level of awareness. Awareness itself is effectiveness eliminated during the performance of these consciousness-annihilating rites.

Identity in the World State means both individual essence and sameness. The inculcation of this dual sense of identity begins during the period of gestation. Those embryos destined to become lower caste citizens are subjected to the Bokanovsky Process, a method of producing upwards of ninety-six identical twins from one original egg. With their physical sameness ensured, these, and all other embryos, are then socially predestined by alterations in their surrogate womb environments so as to chemically guarantee that they will like and feel most comfortable under the physical conditions that have been predetermined for them in society. This, for the State Controllers, constitutes the secret of happiness and virtue -- to have people enjoy what they are inescapably destined to do.

After decanting, all children receive Neo-Pavlovian conditioning, a series of behaviorist techniques designed to establish unbreakable patterns of behavior which will instill both a desire for the tools of their predestined trades and a prejudice for activities entailing maximum consumption of goods and services. They are also conditioned to hate

anything which might interfere with these labor and consumer goods. This kind of conditioning is largely non-verbal in nature, directing its focus upon the physical senses. But the conceptual value of language is not ignored. Hypnopaedia, or sleep-teaching, is used for the purpose of "moral" training. Words, devoid of rational content, are piped into the unconscious minds of the children and repeated, over a period of years, until "the child's mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too -- all his life long (BNW, p.19)." Of course, all these suggestions come from the State and reflect the values of the State.

Taken all together, the education of the World Stater, which begins at conception and lasts until he can be introduced into the labor force, serves to eliminate individual will. Physiologically, instinctually, intellectually the track he must follow in society is the one he wants to follow, for it represents the line of least resistance for him. Being himself means being what the State wants him to be. And his sense of sameness extends beyond his Bokanovsky twin group to his sense of being the same person throughout his life. The differentiation produced by the process of aging has also been eliminated, so that at sixty his powers and tastes are what they were at seventeen. The old still work, copulate, and play, without the time or the leisure from pleasure during which to sit and reflect. This might be attractive to a youth-fixated society such as ours. But the value of aging lies in its potential for breaking old habits conditioned by repetition of performance. As Surin's history illustrates, bodily change is nature's way of leading us out of the old and into the new. Its non-conceptual method of instruction allows us to understand who in fact we are by making it physically impossible for us to be our old idea of ourselves. This is the wisdom of old age, which in our

society we isolate from ourselves by sending the old people to death camps we deceptively call retirement villages. In the World State the sixty-year-olds merely breakdown and die like the wonderful one-horse shay, like the perfect mechanisms they are.

It would seem that a society composed of standardized people, whose central beliefs are that everyone belongs to everyone else and that every one is important, would be a stable one. And the World State certainly is stable. Stability is the cornerstone of the civilization; law and order. So, to guarantee that its citizens will not, during the course of their lives, encounter situations which might counteract their conditioning, the State is organized so as to provide immediate gratification of individual impulses, for an impulse arrested produces an emotion that can build into a passion -- the very antithesis of equilibrium. But should some misadventure occur, one can always take a holiday from reality through soma: the great safety valve of this Brave New World, having "' all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects (BNW, p.36).'"

Even the caste system functions as a stress-preventative. Because everyone is conditioned into loving his predetermined niche, problems of occupational dissatisfaction can be held to a minimum. Admittedly, such a division of labor smacks strongly of an aristocratic societal hierarchy, but it would be false to judge the caste system here according to pseudo-democratic prejudices. What the organization of labor in the World State does is to actualize, through biological and psychological engineering, the ideal common to both democratic and autocratic societies, that of allowing each individual to find his own natural level in society. What Huxley seems to be saying is that the only way to realize this goal is through a thorough-going system of scientific manipulation. The only way, that is, as long as societies insist upon individuals conforming to

preexisting roles in society. For even in democracies the rebel is persecuted until such time as his form of rebellion can be made to serve some "socially useful" purpose, generally an economic one. It is only in the completeness of its logic that this Brave New World seems so frightening and dehumanizing. But, then, ideals aren't human anyway. And Huxley's persistent presentation of this truth may well be his most important contribution to English literature. Ironically, where Huxley's own writing fails most completely is where the exposition of ideas takes precedence over his feeling for the human. His good people, the Palanese, for example, are unspeakably dull because he animates their thoughts rather than their selves.

Therefore, it is our conception of society that Huxley attacks, not social stability. Pala, during its brief lifetime, is as static as the World State. Like the World State, it, too, resists new ideas, especially technological ones. It, too, has a division of labor which coincides with the natural potentialities of its citizens, and even encourages the practice of selective eugenics in order to improve its "genetic stockpile." But what prevents Pala from being as boring (on the non-literary level) and inhuman as the World State is the opportunities present in its society for the individual to experience the changes inherent in all organic life -- the natural processes of growth and decay. The awareness of inner diversity, which might well be a physiological, as well as psychological, need of the human organism, is systematically denied in the World State, except in a controlled, conceptualized, second-hand way -- the Violent Passion Surrogate. Its people are infantile because they must live their lives within the protective environment of a societal womb. Fetal is the only position for a human being in a society operated according to the logic for the machine.

When Mond says that such is the price of happiness, he uses a narrow definition of happiness, one which reflects Western man's inability to accept the totality of life as valuable, even essential for self-realization -- not only that suffering which seems inescapable, but more importantly, death itself. Linda's death ward must seem highly desirable for those readers who cannot accept the vision of a Christian heaven (another form of the Westerner's refusal to confront the fact of personal annihilation). So what Brave New World ultimately satirizes is the implicit escapism of Western civilization, a tendency which the consumer society appears to have converted into an explicit operational principle. And this society is the ineluctable outgrowth of transvaluating Aristotelian reason through Platonic idealization. The student's insight perverted by a refusal to let go of the teacher's error. The new is interpreted by the standard of the old, even though the function of the new is to correct the old and not to conform to the expectations of the past. By making the new dance to the old music, we have waltzed our way into a very "brave" new world. But as the flagellation and suicide which conclude the novel indicate, and as Lear so painfully learned, "that way lies madness" -- and death.

(b) Ape and Essence

Sixteen years after Brave New World's publication, the flight from reality had taken a sudden and unexpected turn, one which, for the moment at least, seemed to nullify Huxley's earlier social prognostications. Hiroshima and the assassination of Gandhi were the twin spectors responsible for Ape and Essence. Its motivation also accounts for whatever degree of cultural importance the novel has. Like Brave New World, it is primarily a cultural artifact. Ape and Essence was an initiator of the

doomsday-via-nuclear-holocaust literature which proliferated throughout the Fifties and Sixties.

A brief history of the literature proves instructive. Representative works would include Ape and Essence, On the Beach (novel by Nevil Shute, film by Stanley Kramer), Dr. Strangelove (the film version by Stanley Kubrick), and The War Game (made for BBC-TV by Peter Watkins). Huxley's novel, although it appeared first, is the only one to offer a specific alternative to destruction. On the Beach, riding the crest of the Ban-the-Bomb movement, used its chronicling of mankind's last days to emotionally jolt its audience into an awareness of the danger, but made no attempt to suggest any answers. Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove, coming after the planet's narrow escape from the Cuban Missile Crisis, gave us nuclear annihilation with gleeful black humor. Its subtitle, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb, bespeaks the general bankruptcy of imagination amongst the world's political and military leaders. But who expected them to have any imagination or morality anyway? And so the liberal-intellectual community merely laughed at seeing their private opinions being publicly screened. Watkin's powerful anti-war statement, however, coming during the height of Vietnam protests in 1968, placed the blame on the intellectual community itself, specifically those who had prostituted their minds to the war policies of government. The consequences of nuclear war depicted, based upon data derived from World War II heavy bombing and 1950's nuclear testing, were even more horrifying than Huxley had imagined. The film's conclusion: those immediately killed were better off than the survivors. The most outrageous scene, coming near the end of the film, showed a corpulent "professor-type", and associate of a "Think Tank", responding to the question of whether civilization could survive under such circumstances, jovially replying, "Who

knows?" The scene provided the kind of biting satire Huxley himself loved to employ. The film's indictment of the failure of intellect because of its refusal to consider such subjective factors as value, its deification of objective quantitative analysis, said precisely what Huxley had been saying throughout his entire career.

But Huxley's importance, as I have been trying to argue, resides not only in his ideas about what reality is, but also in how the artist presents it. The doomsday literature, until the publication of Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow (1973), has followed forms regarded by the academic community as appropriate to popular culture. To view "pop" culture with the same seriousness traditionally accorded to "high" art has been branded as kitsch. The term illustrates what Huxley meant by self-justificatory uses of language in "Words and Behavior". The derogatory label of kitsch exempts academia from directing its critical intelligence towards art forms readily accessible to the general public. Denigrating the worth of popular culture, academia correspondingly elevates the worth of "high" culture, whose self-appointed guardians they are. But it seems that popular cultural forms, especially films and rock music, have been providing the major contemporary forums for the discussion of values, whereas traditional high culture has become an ostrich-like retreat for those overly preoccupied with such rarified questions as aesthetics.

Huxley's break with "good literature" has not been a one-man break. An entire generation of artists, unconsciously following Huxley's directive to attack the "monster of the obvious" head-on, seem to have abandoned standard literary forms to the pedants, choosing, instead, to employ verbal language in what appear to be more fruitful media. Such a movement which rescues art from its ivory tower imprisonment is welcome, for, in reconciling art and technology, it makes possible the broader

dissemination of the former and the humanization of the latter. This is a way out of the egocentric isolation of both artist and scientist Huxley had first analyzed in his novels of the Twenties. That books can still function as a useful vehicle for ideas -- for those willing to see -- Huxley's own writings amply demonstrate. But his later, and most important writings have departed markedly from the verbal games favored by the New Criticism and his ideas have been anathema to Marxian critics and possessors of Trilling's liberal imagination. So both he and kitsch are ignored by academia; the blindness to the one seems to reinforce the blindness to the other.

Besides the cultural significance of Ape and Essence, though, there is the internal relevance of the novel to the Huxley canon. As a companion piece of Brave New World, Ape and Essence is at once more pessimistic in its forecast, yet less despairing in the alternative it offers than the earlier novel. Huxley's conversion to the Perennial Philosophy accounts for the difference. It provided the kind of corrective in vision he had mentioned in his foreward to the 1946 edition of Brave New World. It is in this light, and because of the variations in the use of dramatized narration, two-dimensional characterization, and the designation of forces manipulating science, that Ape and Essence might best be seen as an up-<sup>8</sup> dating of the first dysutopia, rather than merely its observe.

Like its predecessor, Ape and Essence was intentionally written as a piece of popularized fiction. The narrator of Tallis's script seems to be giving the secret away in his commentary on the film's opening frames, which depict a richer than Technicolor sunrise.

Beauty inexpressible, peace beyond understanding...  
 But, alas, on our screen  
 This emblem of an emblem  
 Will probably look like  
 Mrs. Somebody's illustration  
 To a poem by Ella  
 Wheeler Wilcox.  
 Out of the sublime in Nature  
 Art all too often manufactures  
 Only the ludicrous.  
 But the risk must be run;  
 For you there, you in the audience,  
 Somehow and at any price,  
 Wilcox or worse,  
 Somehow you must be reminded,  
 Be induced to remember,  
 Be implored to be willing to  
 Understand what's what.<sup>9</sup>

And there we have it. The urgency of the times prompted Huxley to present his message of enlightenment in a form and manner that might be comprehensible to a mass audience, whose aesthetic tastes had been educated by the Neo-Pavlovian conditioning of Hollywood and The New York Times "Best Seller List". The effort was as admirable as its failure to persuade was inevitable. Because of the "lowbrow" surface, the novel requires a rather high degree of cultural sophistication in order to be taken seriously. The best seller reader must have felt he was being put-on -- or worse, put-down (which in a sense he was). Ape and Essence was not what he had been publicized to expect from the "august mind" of Aldous Huxley. After all, he was an intellectual and an upper-class Englishman! Nor could Huxley have hoped for better treatment from literary and academic circles. By this time he was well aware that his turn to mysticism had placed him in the realm of the eminently ignored in  
 10  
 their eyes.

Actually, the literary merits of Ape and Essence surpass those of Brave New World, even if the latter's prophecies appear to be more accurate -- at least for now. To cite just a few illustrations: the movie

script, which constitutes the heart of the novel, is a studio reject saved from oblivion by a freak accident. The analogy here between Tallis and the film moguls and Huxley and the academics should be clear. Both groups of guardian-dispensators are too preoccupied with their own ego-centric, yet self-defeating concerns to give any attention to Tallis or Huxley. The significance of this analogy is extended once we realize the Gandhi-Tallis-Huxley identification.<sup>11</sup> All three, in their personal ways, represent the importance of acting on the periphery of society. This kind of multiple reference, provided by the novel's contemporary frame, is richer in its implications than the kind of satire in Brave New World, which, when it does extend beyond the novel's subject, touches only the person of D.H. Lawrence. Then, too, there is the simultaneous exploitation and parody of the Hollywood movie. By such a ploy, Huxley thumbs his nose at both the vulgarity of the film world and the pretensions of the book world, whose supremacy as a forum for new ideas<sup>12</sup> this novel's format openly challenges.

Even the characterization is handled with greater deftness in the present novel. Poole's progress from stage scientist to mature male follows smoothly and logically from a credible interaction with plot and other characters. The same cannot be said of John the Savage. Granted, the central premise of his being is his inflexibility. Still, the sequencing of events in Brave New World demands that our perception of him must fluctuate too markedly, too quickly, for empathetic understanding. He moves rapidly from outcast, to romantic lover, to manipulated dupe, to insufferable prig, to humanity's impassioned voice, to demonic masochist -- all in less than two hundred pages! And Mond's refusal to allow him to go to one of the outer islands, merely to complete the "experiment", seems a piece of gratuitous sadism on Huxley's part.

Mustapha Mond is another weakness. His arguments on the price of happiness appear intentionally constructed with straw in order to give John his one great moment, claiming the right to unhappiness. Surely Mustapha would have done better than that, if he were allowed to be more real. In contrast, the Arch-Vicar's devil theory of history is more persuasive, owing its logic to an interpretation Huxley himself shared. Given the force of the argument, someone like Poole would actually be hard put to refute the conclusion. And Poole's liberal Christianity is certainly shaken, although he never quite accepts the theory. Thus, the reader is here able to grant the validity of the argument, without having to swallow its conclusions. He is not forced into the absurd position of having to choose between the infantile and the melodramatic, as in Brave New World.

On one point, however, I must grant Brave New World's superiority. Its subject offers a much wider field for satire than Ape and Essence. After all, how much can one do with nuclear holocaust?

My brief discussion of the relative literary merits is not intended as an exposition of form, but as an attempt to right the imbalanced critical attention both novels have received. An extended analysis of the form of Ape and Essence is certainly in order, but it would be too digressive for this present study. Suffice to say, the novel is another example of Huxley's whole-truth satire. But unlike After Many a Summer and Time Must Have a Stop, Ape and Essence is not one of Huxley's major works, only a topical popularization of his thought. Its relevance for this dissertation resides primarily in the generic questions it raises. As a signal of the new direction in media presentation that would be pursued by writers in the second half of the Twentieth Century, the novel warrants a place in literary history. However, to examine how Huxley

exploits the "pop" medium of film would be to place too great an emphasis upon what Huxley himself considered a concession to the exigencies of the moment. All that need be said is that his merging of traditional literature and new technology remained incomplete because he adhered to the printed medium. But Huxley's failure to complete the transition will have greater significance for his last novel, Island. Let us, then, reserve the question for our examination of that work. There is, in fact, only one new concept in Ape and Essence that demands attention, as preparatory to a discussion of Island.

In After Many a Summer Propter was dubious about the value of sexual love for the initiate into enlightenment. But here, in the present novel, it is sexual love which provides the answer for Poole and Loola.

And so, by the dialectic of sentiment, these two have rediscovered for themselves that synthesis of the chemical and the personal, to which we give the names of monogamy and romantic love. In her case it was the hormone that excluded the person; in his, the person that could not come to terms with the hormone. But now there is the beginning of a larger wholeness (A & E, p.122).

This is a dramatic reversal in Huxley's fiction. Sexual love had always been depicted as destructive until now. Of course, this is the very kind of solution endemic to the Hollywood movie and the genre could have dictated that Huxley resort to this standard formula. But the frank and non-Technicolor acceptance of the regenerative power of human sexuality which forms the core of The Genius and the Goddess, the novella which followed Ape and Essence, negates the importance of that explanation. Has Huxley himself finally learned how to cultivate the difficult art of loving that Anthony Beavis has counseled for Helen Amberley?

A comment Poole makes to Loola during their escape from Los Angeles both indicates that he has and suggests the impetus for this change. Poole tells her that there is a force stronger than Evil that must ultimately triumph because Evil cannot resist the temptation to carry itself to the extreme, at which point, "'it always destroys itself. After which the Order of Things comes to the surface again (A & E, p.147).'" If we think of Edmund's death speech in King Lear, this passage becomes clear. Evil is a force of disruption, which, once unleashed, wrecks its havoc, but like all forces, must finally exhaust itself in expending its energy. The Order of Things Poole speaks of is the natural harmony of the universe, whose component parts are bound each to each in Love, the balance which holds the diverse elements together. This was the wisdom of Cordelia and seems to be at the heart of Poole's statement. Sexual love, the reconciliation of the chemical and the personal, is therefore another aspect of Love. For those like Poole and John Rivers in The Genuis and the Goddess, sexual repression is a hindrance to being at one with the universe. For them, copulation, as the physical expression of an emotional acceptance of and desire for another being, enables them to realize their latent human potentialities. I believe Huxley's shift in emphasis from God as transcendental to God as imminent, discussed at the end of the last chapter, prompted his favorable depictions of sexuality from here on. Of course, sexuality which served only to reinforce ego gratification continued to be satirized.

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The essential new point that Ape and Essence dramatizes is that although the re-establishment of the Order of Things on Earth must wait until the force of Evil has exhausted itself, here and now, on the individual level, it can be achieved through Love, in all of its manifest forms, even though the rest of the world be still reaping the whirlwind.

Thou art That now becomes more than the symbolic statement of mystical philosophy it was for Sebastian Barnack; it is the equation of Love, the balanced response, not only to a divine Ground of all being, but, equally, to all created beings.

(c) Island

Island is a frustrating book. It should have been Huxley's literary masterpiece as it was the consummation of his intellectual-spiritual growth.<sup>14</sup> Why its artistic merit fails to achieve the stature of its humanistic value may best be answered if we first examine the thematic conception of the novel.

As Bowering points out, Island is a work of reconciliation, the resolution of the opposite civilizations of East and West through the ideals of experimental science and experimental mysticism. Even the negative linchpins of Brave New World's reification of man -- eugenics, Pavlovian conditioning, sexual license, and soma -- have become humanized when applied in the context of Buddhistic metaphysics.<sup>15</sup> But the reconciliation encompasses more than culture. Meckier's comparative discussion of Huxley's three utopian novels emphasizes the intellectual synthesis of the three recurrent themes of sex, science, and religion in Island.<sup>16</sup> Translating these themes into terms of human life will reveal the levels of body, mind, and spirit, respectively, which are also harmonized in Palaese society, largely because the relationship between the human organism, the social organization, and the natural world has been put into a balanced perspective which clearly differentiates the ends of living from the means of attainment. Reconciliation is Island, therefore, is the animating spirit of the novel, whose purpose is nothing less than the evolution of a new consciousness for mankind.

To realize this monumental goal, the book must operate simultaneously as a persuasive argument, as an instructional manual, and as a work of art. The novel's argumentative function required a presentation of the conflicting philosophies of those perennial antagonists in Huxley's writings, all of which may be subsumed under the headings of the mechanistic-doctrinal versus the organic-empirical approaches to life. Such a presentation necessitated some elaboration of the causes and effects of both positions. The problem, however, was primarily aesthetic since Huxley had already devoted an entire lifetime to defining and developing the intellectual content of the analysis, and the advocacy role he had assumed as the result of his investigations effectively eliminated the potential for a dramatic, dialectical tension on this level of the novel. This was to be a persuasive argument, not an intellectual tennis match.

The didactic demands revolve around the question of achieving the new consciousness upon which the persuasive argument of life-styles is predicated. The problem is threefold. First, Huxley must offer effective means whereby man may break away from the old ego-dependency of personal consciousness. Second, techniques for utilizing this liberated individual perceptor as a "moveable screen between the small chamber of our organism and an infinite reality" must be detailed. And third, how to transform these abstractions into the practical reality of daily living.<sup>17</sup> The joint forces of the Perennial Philosophy and modern science and technology solve the conceptual aspects of the problems. So on this level, too, aesthetics becomes the central issue.

The generic model for Island had already been established in After Many a Summer. Like its forerunner, Island is utilitarian fiction designed to facilitate enlightenment rather than reaffirm the inescapability of appetite and anxiety. However, the problems of a detachable protagonist

and the inherent restrictedness of whole-truth satire which clouded the earlier novel are solved here by having Will Farnaby fill the protagonist's role. Will is both a central force in the novel's plot (the penetration and takeover of Pala by Western Imperialists) and the immediate object of its argument and didacticism. Indeed, the title could easily have been, "The Redirecting of Will", had Huxley had a penchant for weak puns. The difficulty of finding new satirical material is solved by restricting the satirical element to the plot level, a strategy which, because of the minimal importance of the plot in Island, might be disappointing for readers whose interest in Huxley lies primarily in the brilliance of his satire, but certainly welcomed by those who get tired by the same old thing, even when presented in new dress. After a certain point, there's nothing for the satire to wear but the Emperor's new clothes. And Huxley had reached that point with Time Must Have a Stop.<sup>18</sup>

But Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudon offered an alternative method of exposition to whole-truth satire. The plot of Island, coupled with the history of Pala and the biographies of Farnaby and Andrew MacPhail, operate in the same manner French history did in the earlier studies: they provide the framework for presenting and evaluating the society of Pala. Structurally, therefore, Island is a more integrated novel than After Many a Summer. And because a character like Will Farnaby, the isolated cynic, and not one like Propter, the detached philosopher, is the novel's protagonist, the reader's angle of vision has a new subtlety. With Propter as our central perspective (Pordage relinquishes this role soon after Propter appears), we merely look up to him and down on (or at best apart from) the others. In Island, we share both Will's and Pala's perspectives, the latter serving as a corrective to the cynicism of the former, just as Will's role as cynical outsider provides the reader with a

kind of I'm-from-Missouri way of approaching Palanese life. The "acid-trip" at the end represents the uniting of these perspectives into the vision of reality Huxley is expounding. Although we have not attained the new consciousness, at least we have come to understand what it is and how it may be realized.

In theory, then, Island should have been a great novel. But a reading of the novel reveals a deadness at its heart. I think Bowering's observation that too few of the ideas in this heavily ideal-laden novel are acted out, the way they are in Brave New World, is correct, but his explanation, that the absence of a real dialectic through which Huxley could deploy irony (the mainspring of his genius, according to Bowering), seems to miss the mark by its implicit assumption that the novel should satisfy this end.<sup>19</sup> Dialectic is not present because it would be out of place in a work whose purpose is advocatory rather than merely analytical. For those who are still unconvinced about the untenability of the present American way of life, a utopian novel like Island is the wrong place to look for an objective discussion of the issues. For that, of course, we cannot blame Huxley.

Huxley's failure lies in the impossibility of breathing life into his Palanese, given the medium he chose to create them in. Huxley was able to dramatize the citizens of the World State in the novelistic mode because they were two-dimensional parodies of ourselves. But the important fact about the Palanese is their ability to live completely on all the multiple levels of the human amphibian (something we have yet to learn). The printed medium, at the very best, can only provide a symbolic representation of their reality. All it has at its resource are words. That is why these people seem so preachy. Their flesh and blood

have been drained and we are left with words -- which can only express the ideas of them, but not they themselves.

The obvious objection to this thesis would be that other novelists, even Huxley himself, have created three-dimensional people out of mere words. But were these characters, in fact, real people? Hardly. They, too, were symbolic representations who, because of their verisimilitude as to our sense of the way real people are, gave us the illusion of reality. Our assent to the illusion, the suspension of our disbelief, that is the operational principle upon which representational art either stands or falls. But in Island, Huxley was after different game. His dictum of utilitarian literature here necessitated the creation of human beings who have already actualized the potentialities still latent within us. Therefore, in creating his Palanese he had no recourse to verisimilitude for the very reason that they don't yet exist in the objective world. What Huxley must appeal to is our imagination -- the expansion of our belief -- which means we can begin to comprehend his new people as more than abstractions only after our own consciousness has begun to rise to a new level. In effect, the novel will only satisfy those who are already predisposed to its argument. But, perhaps, that is the only audience any work of art can expect to find.

The new work, we are often told, must create its own audience. The new in Island lies in Huxley's reversal of the conventions of the standard utopian novel, in which the difference between what we are and what we might become derives from alterations in the way society is organized. Because the major changes are institutional rather than human, it is not too difficult for us to recognize ourselves in the traditional denizens of Utopia. Indeed, one of the perennial aims of the utopian novelist

has been to preserve and facilitate recognition. But for Huxley, man being made by society is anti-utopian because of its Platonically instigated inversion of ends and means. His conception of utopia has the alterations in society following from the alterations in man. In Island, change is primarily within the individual himself and only secondarily in society. The Palanese say to us: "See what we do because we are different." The World Staters say: "See what we are because we do more efficiently." <sup>21</sup> For readers who still adhere to the mechanistic principles of social efficiency, who see man as homo factor, who are still sunk in the slough of dualism, the Palanese are recognizable only as abstract preachments.

But even granted one's empathy, the inadequacy of Huxley's treatment remains a problem. A purely verbal representation falsifies their reality. The standard device for animating the verbal is the introduction of conflict. But conflict doesn't cause the same disruption in them it does in us. Being more fully human than we are, they know how to use the mechanisms of the mind-body and their understanding of the way things are to correct what can be corrected and to reconcile themselves to what cannot be changed. Knowing how to be, they know how to act. They transcend the traditional dilemma of so-called "good literature", to which Huxley's creations of the Twenties had fallen victim.

The puppet show, Oedipus in Pala, emphasizes the distinction by demonstrating the absurdities (from the contemporary perspective) of Sophocles's tragedy. Human behavior, as Huxley shows in The Devils of Loudun, is the confluence of the thinkable, the feel-able, and the do-able. Given the restrictions of the first and third terms for the ancient Greeks, the feel-able must be simultaneously more limited in range and intense in force. The Sophoclean hero, thinking himself the source of corruption

and unable to undo either his past actions or the present conditions of Thebes, can feel only self-hatred, which he expresses as self-destructive rage. The tragedy both confirms the suffering consequent upon egotism and transcendentalizes it as the ineluctableness of Fate. In the Palanese version, Oedipus's egotism is still identified as the cause of suffering, but, given the Perennial Philosophy, the past need not be atoned for by mutilating the self, but by transcending it. Crime and punishment become crime and rehabilitation. Modern science and technology makes it impossible for us to interpret the Thebean plague as the consequence of personal sin. Improve the sanitation system, we would say. Together, metaphysics and science, by expanding human understanding and capability, neutralize the destructive passions, allowing Oedipus to accept his past with equanimity. That was his fate; it need not be his future.

Even the invasion of Pala by Colonel Dipa fails to disrupt their harmony with the Order of Things. Since they won't become Westernized consumer-addicts, the future Dipa and the multinational conglomerates who make him possible have in store for them will inevitably include mass murder and the suppression of the Palanese way of life. But repression and death have no sting, for theirs is the same strength, if not theology, which animated the early Christian martyrs.

The only source of conflict would have to come from within ourselves, arising from a direct confrontation of what we are with what they actually are. Although Will Farnaby serves effectively as our surrogate, words can be no more than the ghosts of the Palanese. Huxley needed a new medium, a three-dimensional one, to give us the real people. The stage play might be an alternative, but how get all of Pala on a stage, and its length would become insufferable for a passively-seated audience.

What is needed is an art form which provides the personal pacing possible with a novel and the full-blooded immediacy of the drama. What Huxley should have become was a conceptual artist: <sup>22</sup> Disneyland with every reader-viewer-participator his own Will Farnaby, introducing his own plot. Then, instead of an invasion concluding the experience, forceable ejection into contemporary American society would suffice to convey Huxley's message!

I have dwelt at length upon what Huxley tried to accomplish with Island on the formal level because Huxley is so frequently accused of having lost interest in the medium of expression, concentrating his energies instead upon the ideas themselves. Careful examination of his experiments with form reveals that charge to be untrue. It would be more accurate to say that the ideas overtaxed the resources of the genre. If it be true that Joyce ended the novel, it is only in the sense of his having completed its development, Finnegans Wake showing us all the novel is capable of doing. By the same token, one might conclude that Huxley brought the novel to another kind of terminus, Island showing us the discrepancy between what it can do and what needs to be done.

Huxley's advocacy of a utilitarian, wholly-truthful literature, then, questions not only our notions about the purpose of art, but also the ability of established genres to satisfy that ambition. If art is to assume a didactic function, however, the instructions had better be palatable; otherwise, it will have great difficulty in reaching an audience. There can be no doubt that Huxley's didacticism was one factor in causing him to lose the interest of his contemporaries. Perhaps an art which successfully exploits the potentialities in a mixture of media, which, like the feelies in Brave New World, appeals to all the senses (but unlike the feelies engages the mind as well), would, by actively involving the viewer

in the experience, make him more amenable to receiving the message.

Huxley's failure in Island requires us to investigate all possible alternatives if we are to realize an art which is both good art and effective pedagogy.

23

The content of Island may well prompt a reappraisal of all our other values. A poem, written by the Old Raja, author of Notes on What's What and grandson of the Raja of the Reform (the ruler who, together with Andrew MacPhail, initiated Modern Pala), provides the metaphysical framework within which Pala operates.

All things, to all things  
perfectly indifferent,  
perfectly work together  
in discord for a Good beyond  
good, for a Being more  
timeless in transience, more  
eternal in its dwindling than  
God there in heaven (Island, p.26).

Here we have the concept of the Order of Things as a cosmic harmony transcending, yet immanent in both the created world and transcendental Godhead. The world is not enough; God is not enough. To achieve enlightenment, as Huxley now perceives it, the individual must experience all aspects of the universal scheme. The adoption of any one vantage point, exclusively, yields only partial vision.

This represents a redefinition of the Perennial Philosophy so as to accord with the investigations into mind Huxley had conducted in The Devils of Loudun and his experiences with consciousness-expanding drugs during the Fifties. In one sense, it would be true to say that Huxley had narrowed the segment of that philosophy to include only Mahayanist, Tantric, and Zen Buddhism and Taoism because the idea of a transcendental Godhead invariably led into dualism, but a desire to avoid dualism per se was not the impetus. We must turn, instead, to Heaven and Hell for an explanation. From his experiments with LSD and mescaline, Huxley

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realized that a distinction exists between the visionary and the mystical experiences. Essentially, the mystical experience extends beyond the level of opposites, whereas the vision remains on that level of duality. Heaven implies hell and because they exist on the same plane of experience, heaven is no more liberating than hell; at best, heaven is just another vantage point, albeit one superior to the position of ordinary individualized existence, from which the divine Ground can be seen.<sup>25</sup>

The vision takes one to the antipodes of mind, that region of the impersonal subconscious Huxley had written about in The Devils and which drugs had enabled him to experience directly. Because the mystical experience transcends heaven and hell and even Godhead, encompassing as it does everything, since it is monistic in nature, preoccupation with any one aspect of the All, or one class of experience, would be tantamount to egocentricism. Even the saint's one-pointedness is wrong. Nirvana can be as spiritually stultifying as insulated selfhood.

The consequences of Huxley's philosophical refinement can be seen in the Old Raja's Notes on What's What. In contradistinction to Propter's either/or definition of man as a triparted being capable of God only if he transcends the levels of the animal and the merely human, we have the Raja's both/and definition of man as "the reconciliation of yes and no and lived out in total acceptance and the blessed experience of Not-Two (Island, p.35)." Propter's dualistic view, with its Occidental emphasis upon distinction-making, necessitates an ascetic restriction upon human experience. The Raja's monism, with its Oriental acceptance of paradox, allows for a humanistic approach. Herein lies the essence of Huxley's "new wisdom". Ironically, by limiting the philosophy, he can expand the range of immediate experience.<sup>26</sup> He retains Propter's principle that knowing who in fact we are will result in Good Being and that only from

Good Being can appropriate action ("Good Doing") arise. Now, however, taking the monistic perspective, he realizes that self-awareness comes neither from systematic exclusion in the realm of thought -- concentration, abstract thinking, or spiritual exercises -- nor from systematic exclusion in the realm of sensation -- asceticism and hedonism -- but from man's ability to be aware in every context, at all times, creditable and discreditable, pleasant and unpleasant. Because every moment during which one is aware leads, cumulatively, to self-knowledge, Good Being becomes the knowledge of self in relation to all experience. There is only one yoga, the yoga of awareness, and every action performed with awareness becomes the yoga of that act, the particular manifestation of universal Oneness.

Palanese Buddhism, then, is a variation on modern science, one whose operations are psychological and whose results are transcendental. Although it makes metaphysical hypotheses, it provides operations by which each individual can empirically validate them for himself -- and only for himself. That is why direct, unmediated experience is given supremacy over all other forms of knowing. This is the proposition upon which scientific faith is postulated; it is the opposite of belief, the dogmatic acceptance of unverifiable abstractions. Like science, then, Palanese Buddhism is essentially materialistic. It accepts and makes use of the world and of all experiences as a means of correcting the distorting perspective of self-hood, in much the same way science, through trial and error, corrects the distorting perceptions of common sense. But whereas science, because it only increases man's capacity to absorb data on the rational level, must remain intellectually exclusionary and elitist, Palanese Buddhism, because it galvanizes man's capacities beyond the rational level, transcends the inherent inequalities of intellectual ability and is open for all to experience.

The social implications of this are so sweeping that I must restrict my discussion of them to the relationship between art and happiness. We saw that happiness in the World State necessitated the automatization of the individual within an impregnable caste system. But there happiness was no more than infantile sense gratification. Happiness in Pala, however, is predicated upon total self-realization and the acceptance of the total universe, including the unavoidability of suffering, a kind of cosmic stoicism. Though both societies are statically organized, only the World State, because it precludes the ability for individual growth, had to sacrifice art, for culture is the essential support of all individual originality and creativity -- which must lead to change. And change means instability for an inorganic structure.

Because our society is only an imperfect World State, we still tolerate art, but of a very restricted kind: university-sanctioned "high art", the kind of art that can be created and enjoyed by an intellectually gifted few. It is an art that is valued for its ability to express, rather than for the quality of what is expressed. Why do we show such a bias? Because the more skillful the expression, the more forceful the experience, and so the more intense the demand for aesthetic quality. It's an addiction, as Jeremy Pordage and Eustace Barnack demonstrate. Our art is the opium of the elite, just as popular entertainment is the opium of the masses. But it's more than just an escapist experience. It's part of a broader system of class oppression! We usually justify our preference for the more "accomplished" art because of our love of the Good. But what kind of "good" is this that restricts the creative experience to a handful of people? It is the good of "effectiveness", a definition of good devoid of moral content. It's a mechanical standard -- not to be ignored, but not to be deified! Competence is

beneficial, for it expands our awareness of the possible. But should the cost of competence be a largely passive majority whose avoidance of direct experience is their tacit acceptance of inferiority on more than a proficiency level? Competence, as an absolute standard, therefore negates its own real value by preventing everyone from realizing their individual potentialities. It leads to a reversal of ends and means and prompts us to say: "Leave it to the professional artist, the professional healer, the professional governor, the professional expert in every area". We reward their power to do by giving them the power to control our lives. We are being blackmailed by ability! Why shouldn't the doing itself be sufficient reward? Because we lack a metaphysical value system which places the emphasis upon being rather than doing.

The Palanese have such a metaphysical value system, and their art is a reflection of it. "Palanese superiority does not lie in symbolic expression, but in an art which, though higher and far more valuable than all the rest, can yet be practiced by everyone -- the art of adequately experiencing, the art of becoming more intimately acquainted with all the worlds that, as human beings, we find ourselves inhabiting (Island, p.176)." In Pala, all life is art -- the art of becoming and being. The function of symbolic expression in Pala is to provide the occasion for and to facilitate the state of awareness for the individual perceiver. The value of art lies in its being an analogue for the Order of Things; both are governed by the principle of play, both meaning nothing other than themselves. But the yoga of experience practiced by all Palanese has the same end. Clearly, then, the yoga of the Palanese artist has no intrinsic difference in value than the yoga of any other Palanese. Because they are all manifestations of the same principle, the fruits of their labors are equally valuable, being equally, in their different forms, the

expression of realized and realizable human potentialities. Practicing our personal yogas, we are all artists.

This makes for a society both more egalitarian and individualistic than any in the West. Because we give laurels for the quality of performance only a few can achieve, we believe it right and good to reward the specially gifted and punish with failure (and worse) those who cannot live up to those achievements. This is the mentality of scarcity operating according to the standards of mechanical efficiency. It disregards the human satisfaction which comes from the doing itself. It prevents people from experiencing life directly, making them passive spectators and consumers of the fortunate few -- the Alphas. But this is feudalism, the hierarchical distribution of power according to the exploitable commodities and services that an individual can provide. Democracy is possible only when the individual is valued for himself, and not for what can be got from him.

What Huxley creates in Pala is a society which incorporates Rampion's Life Worshiper within a monistic metaphysic. The Palanese judge their society "by what all members of the community, the ordinary as well as the extraordinary, can and do experience in every contingency and at each successive intersection of time and eternity (Island, p.177)."

Their standard, like Rampion's is that of a democratically accessible experience: being fully human. <sup>27</sup> Therefore, Palanese institutions are not geared for the proficient performance of mechanical tasks, but for human liberation.

Having explained the metaphysical and philosophical bases for Palanese society something should be said about the practical operations. A detailed analysis, however, would be too digressive, involving us in social, political, and economic controversies lying outside the province

of this dissertation. Suffice to say, social stability and human growth are achieved: economically, by maintaining the equation of electricity minus heavy industry plus birth control equals democracy and plenty; politically, by dividing the island into self-governing cooperative units; socially, by a family unit called the Mutual Adoption Club, a kind of extended family consisting of approximately twenty nuclear families; by an educational system designed to teach students how to utilize their entire mind-bodies, both their verbal and non-verbal faculties; by a work pattern which enables one to alternate his occupations, both serially over the years and simultaneously (the Palanese placing greater emphasis upon human satisfaction than upon mechanical efficiency). The vast range of knowledge these facets of Palanese society represent stands as a testament to the breadth of Huxley's interests and his syncretic intelligence. That we have ignored him for so long bespeaks the poverty of imagination that is destroying Western civilization. And those whose role it is to analyze works of imagination really are to blame.

Nor do I wish to enter into the drug controversy. Will's moksha trip does not need to be analyzed, for what he learns under the influence of moksha is a dramatic, immediate experience of the metaphysical propositions of Palanese Buddhism, which have already been discussed.<sup>28</sup> The trip is the finest piece of writing in the novel and should be read, especially by those who have never had such an experience. The important point to realize is that Huxley did not view drugs as essential. In the words of one of the Palanese, moksha is to meditation what a banquet is to a home-cooked meal. The moksha banquet is too rich for every-day diet; it is only an occasional treat. Because it's a catered affair (i.e., chemically induced from outside the body) it only prepared one for the reception of gratuitous graces -- either premystical visions

or full-blown mystical experiences. Meditation is the dietary staple. It is one way in which the individual cooperates with these graces by cultivating the state of mind that makes it possible for mystical insights to become permanent and habitual illuminations. It is through meditation, not moksha, that one trains the conscious mind and the forces it works upon the self. Drugs, therefore, are a luxury and could be dispensed with, even though for Huxley they did prove beneficial, helping him to penetrate beneath the layers of abstracting intellect. Huxley himself was too intellectual and he needed a bit of "mind-blowing".<sup>29</sup> Perhaps if our schools would overcome their abstract, verbal prejudices and teach students the physical uses of mind and the mental uses of body, there would be far less need of chemical experimentation.

What seems most relevant about Palanese society is the possibility of establishing such a society in the Western world. Huxley's selection of an epigraph for the novel is significant in this regard. He quotes Aristotle as saying: "In framing an ideal we may assume what we wish, but should avoid impossibilities." Now, instituting a Pala in America necessitates a revolution in consciousness. When Huxley died in 1963 such an eventuality must have seemed more remote than it would today; many of the ideas he espoused are being widely discussed and acted upon by people who have only a slight acquaintance with his writings.

But perhaps the realization of a literally successful revolution was not what Huxley was really after. If we return to his essay, "Pascal", we find that success is not the test of effectiveness, for revolutionary hopes have always proved disappointing. The value resides in the attempt itself, which induces people to live more intensely in the present moment and thereby helps to create a new reality.<sup>30</sup> Huxley's philosophical growth during the intervening years between Do What You Will and Island

would alter only one aspect of this praise of revolution. Although he would now want his revolutionaries to be advanced contemplatives, the Tentric Buddhist, like the Life Worshiper, places an extremely high value on living in the present moment. One can only conclude the question by quoting Pala's mynah birds: "Karuna. Attention."

1 Glicksberg takes this restricted position in "Huxley the Experimental Novelist," p.106.

2 Holmes, p.89.

3 Edgar, p.280; Henderson, pp.93-94.

4 Bowering believes John is essentially a savage, tied to a creed that is part fertility cult and part penitente ferocity. Huxley's presentation of John in this light indicates, for Bowering, Huxley's turning away from the Life Worshiper Credo; pp.105-106. But I think Huxley's argument is that because John is more than a savage, his attempt to align himself with Indian life is doomed to failure. Because man has become "civilized", he cannot accept less than what his nature and his knowledge have made of him. This seems to be the gist, too, of Anthony's rejection of Lawrence in Eyeless in Gaza.

In Chapter 26, Anthony is struck by the passage in Lawrence's The Man Who Died describing the crowing of the cock as the symbol of the assertive energy of life itself. Contrasting this with a film he had once seen of the fertilization of a rabbit's ovum, he realizes the insufficiency of Lawrence's vision. The energy of the cock is feeble in comparison with the raw, undifferentiated power visible through the microscope. The energy of the spermatozoa is only potentially valuable unless it serves the ulterior purpose of conception. Lawrence, never having witnessed the microscopic vision, was content that the final purpose of man to be animal living. He preferred such an option because he was repelled by the half-conscious life Western civilization imposed upon people and he had no other critical frame of reference than the visible body from which to formulate his philosophy. But animal life, for all its mysterious divinity, is only raw material, subconscious and beneath good and evil. It would be illogical for man, possessed of a mind, to settle for less than the fulfillment of his total potentialities, his ultimate realization. See Eyeless, pp.244-247.

5 "Forward," Brave New World, 2nd ed. (1947; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1953), p.vii. All further references are to this edition.

6 See Greenblatt, pp.96-97; Henderson, pp.87-88; Rudolf B. Schmerl, "The Two Future Worlds of Aldous Huxley," PMLA, 77 (1962), 331; H.T. Webster, "Aldous Huxley: Notes on a Moral Evolution," The South Atlantic Quarterly, 45 (1946), 379-380.

7 This should not be construed as an evaluation of "pop" as being superior to "high" culture, but merely an argument for overcoming cultural prejudices. Much of "pop" is nothing more than the expression of commercial opportunism. However, that which is valuable in popular culture would benefit from open-minded critical examination, especially by critics with a background in "high" culture.

8 Bowering, p.21, sees the novel as "the reverse side of the coin, where the more-than-human ideal of science and progress has given way to a less-than-human retrogression in the wake of thermonuclear war". I think this statement reveals the weakness of Bowering's position. First, it is a misreading of Brave New World to describe its ant-hill society as "more-than-human" when Huxley had been for years characterizing the mechaniation of modern man as a diminuation of human potentiality. In fact, his break with Lawrence was prompted by what Huxley came to consider as another philosophy of decapitation. Second, the dangerous militancy of nationalism, central to the premise of Ape and Essence, plays no part in the earlier novel. The prime similarity between the two books lies with the common awareness that the application of science for non-human purposes must ultimately have a destructive effect upon human nature. The restrictedness of vision which flaws both novels derives from the fact that in each Huxley has isolated only one of the forces controlling science in the modern world; alternatively designating either capitalistic economics or rampant nationalism as the chief villian. Island corrects this common defect.

9 Aldous Huxley, Ape and Essence (1948; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1958), pp.25-26. All further references are to this edition.

10 Huxley's acknowledgement of this attitude and his perfectly modulated, sardonic reply to those who called him a symptomatic failure of intellectuals can be found in his 1946 forward to Brave New World, p.viii in the Bantam edition.

11 Meckier, on p. 195 of Aldous Huxley, says the parallel is between Poole and Gandhi on the spiritual level because Poole finds a new way of life. Frankly, I just don't see it.

12 Ironically, had Huxley presented his story in celluloid and not print, it might have had the impact he wanted. But his opinion of films was probably too negative to allow him to carry his argument to its logical conclusion. Not suffering from Mailer's ego-hangups, he would probably have fared better than our self-styled Zeitgeist. Certainly, he couldn't have done worse.

13 Huxley's identification of romantic love with monogamy indicates a personal and cultural limitation. By force of logic Huxley should have realized this. Love, he maintains, is the bond joining the individual to the universe. As long as the bond is expressed compassionately, there should be no restrictions upon the type of expression, except, of course, those dictated by the nature of the parties involved.

14 Bowering characterizes Island as the synthesis of Huxley's eclecticism over the past two decades. Although I would extend the time to include the totality of Huxley's career, I agree with Bowering's judgment that the novel is the most important chapter of that synthesis; Bowering, p.182.

15. Ibid., p.184.

16 Meckier, Aldous Huxley, pp.197-199.

17 I am indebted to Laura Archera Huxley's This Timeless Moment: A Personal View of Aldous Huxley (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968), p.289, for the elaboration of this three-fold purpose.

18 Huxley's topicality and mimicry of film in Ape and Essence temporarily revitalizes the whole-truth satire. Perhaps the future of Huxley's mode of satire lies not in book form, but in the more ephemeral medium of television. The central factor at work here is psychological saturation. Because of the amount of time consumed in the reading of a book, we are less receptive to repetitions in print than we are in a medium demanding only brief periods of attention. Provided the format is sufficiently flexible, a television series can run for several years before the point of diminishing returns is reached. The extreme popularity of the series, All in the Family, the nearest thing to do whole-truth satire now available, offers some encouragement for mass acceptance of imaginative literature (both television and cinema bear the same relationship to the literary as drama). But if intellectuals maintain their present hands-and-minds-off policy to the new media, all we can expect from the commercial broadcasters are pallid imitations of innovative successes.

19 Bowering, pp.182 and 231-232.

20 In Brave New World Huxley does this, in part, through the names of his upper-caste characters. The lower castes have no individual names. Huxley must have been well aware which castes his readers would want to identify with. Had the situation been reversed, it is doubtful whether the novel would have been so popular, but perhaps our headlong rush to the Age of Our Ford would have been slower. After all, it didn't seem too intolerable being an Alpha. And who among us doubts in his heart of hearts his right to Alphahood?

21 The believers of Belial say: "See what we are because of what you have done". Having subjugated their freedom of willing to the "inexorable logic of history", their imagination is impotent to conceive the Order of Things as being other than a Manichean one. This is the consequence of man's failure to awaken from the "nightmare of history".

22 Conceptual artist: the term still lacks an established definition. What seems to distinguish a conceptual artist from other varieties is his primary allegiance to the idea he wishes to express, rather than to a particular medium.

23 This is not to assume that art should become didactic. That, too, is debatable.

24 Bowering's position, pp.199-200.

25 Aldous Huxley, Heaven and Hell (1956; rpt, The Doors of Perception/ Heaven and Hell, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Colophon Books, 1963), p.138.

26 Despite the irony, the new position is the logical extension of Huxley's conversion to mysticism. The preference mysticism accords to empiricism over dogmatism requires its adherents to eschew theories which devalue direct experience.

27 This is what the Declaration of Independence means by all men being created equal and endowed with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In the West, we have failed to realize these principles because we have subordinated being to doing. Consequently, we are faced with the simultaneous phenomena of increased personal alienation and increased mechanical efficiency. The latter has caused the former. In Pala, only the Westernized Murugan and his mother feel alienated. Essentially, they are outsiders, the Rani having been a native of Rendang who married into the Palanese royal family and Murugan, although Palanese born, having been raised in Switzerland.

28 Bowering claims Will's trip resembles Eustace's bardo experience; this because the visionary experience is supposed to be a foretaste of the bardo; p.211.

29 According to Laura Huxley, p.131, Huxley had only 10-12 trips between 1953-1963. And I know of no reason to doubt her on this. In his contributory essay to Aldous Huxley: 1894-1963, Gerald Heard says that drugs, especially LSD, were an aid to Huxley for banishing mental distractions; pp.104-105. But Huxley himself, in his interview with Beerman, p.229, said that LSD was valuable for consciousness expansion because the intellect in most people was insufficient to reveal the richness of naked existence.

This inevitably raises the question of whether Huxley ever achieved enlightenment through traditional techniques of mysticism. Even if he never had the experience, this doesn't invalidate mysticism, only Huxley's personal approach. But the question of his personal experience is irrelevant for our purposes, since we are interested in how the ideas have influenced his writings. Mysticism provided him with an empirical working hypothesis about the world, an hypothesis which allows each of us to test its validity for ourselves. What more can any honest writer really give us? Our desire for the answer is merely an egocentric fixation. It must be died to.

30 "Pascal", p.198.

PART VI

CONCLUSION: DAWNS THE AGE OF RELATIVITY

Conclusion:  
Dawns the Age of Relativity

The revolution of the past generation in the religious sciences has scarcely penetrated popular consciousness and has yet -- to significantly influence public attitudes that rest upon outmoded conceptions.

Donald Barthelme, Snow White

Throughout this study of the development of Huxley's art and thought, I have avoided extended discussions of influence, both the intellectual and literary influences upon Huxley himself and his similar influences upon others. My decision to do so arose from the practical consideration of sheer length, not from a dismissal of their importance. Before a thorough assessment of Huxley's place in English literature can be attempted, such matters must be carefully investigated. What, for example, was Huxley's relationship to nineteenth-century Romanticism? In the early novels, the Romantics, especially Wordsworth, seem to represent a kind of sensibility no longer possible for Moderns to emulate, whereas Ape and Essence contains frequent quotes from Shelley's platonic poetry. Does this represent a revival of Romanticism for Huxley or merely an attempt to express an "alien" metaphysic in familiar terms? Then, too, the decade since his death has witnessed a mushrooming interest in such Huxleyan subjects as the de-emphasis upon science and reason and the consequent enthusiasm for mysticism and the occult, and the more general phenomenon of raising levels of consciousness. To what extent has Huxley himself been a progenitor of the so-called "Counter-Culture"? Answers to these and similar questions await future examination. What I have hoped to accomplish in this dissertation is to promulgate the issues in

Huxley's writings which would stimulate students of twentieth-century literature to explore these and additional matters. If my work does indeed generate greater attention in Aldous Huxley than he has hitherto received, then I will have succeeded in my efforts.

As my final words here for the importance of Aldous Huxley, I would like to quote Huxley's commentary upon Prospero's farewell speech from The Tempest.

Prospero is here enunciating the doctrine of Maya. The world is an illusion, but it is an illusion which we must take seriously, because it is real as far as it goes, and in those aspects of the reality which we are capable of apprehending. Our business is to wake up. We have to find ways in which to detect the whole of reality in the one illusory part which our self-centred consciousness permits us to see. We must not live thoughtlessly, taking our illusion for the complete reality, but at the same time we must not live too thoughtfully in the sense of trying to escape from the dream state. We must continually be on our watch for ways in which we may enlarge our consciousness. We must not attempt to live outside the world, which is given us, but we must somehow learn how to transform it and transfigure it. Too much 'wisdom' is as bad as too little wisdom, and there must be no magic tricks. We must learn to come to reality without the enchanter's wand and his book of the words. One must find a way of being in this world while not being of it. A way of living in time without being completely swallowed up in time.<sup>1</sup>

Shakespeare knew no way round "this insubstantial pageant" and so retired from the stage for the comfortable dreams of Stratford. Huxley, believing he had found a way for us to wake up, continued as a writer twenty years after he discovered that time and poetry must have their stops. Few, indeed, are the issues fomenting the Seventies that find not their forum in Huxley. If for no other reason, then, than that of their relevancy, Huxley's writings, especially from Eyeless in Gaza on, deserve our careful consideration.

Relevancy has so frequently been appealed to of late that perhaps some justification is necessary to sound that trumpet once again. For one thing, Huxley's conception of a utilitarian literature naturally invites such a criterion. If his writings are to alter the ways in which we live, then we must need question not only their applicability, but also their pertinency -- in other words, to what extent has Huxley succeeded in defining our current reality? This question has been one of the underlining themes of my dissertation. My answer has been necessarily sketchy. On the one hand, a fully detailed examination would require, at the very least, a book-length study in itself, and, on the other hand, no reply could escape the ultimate limitation of the personal, for, in the last analysis, experience and perception remain individual. This seems the ineluctable consequence of ego's consciousness. Therefore, each reader must decide for himself how clearly Huxley has illuminated our time. For my own self, I can say that no twentieth-century writer has yet surpassed him in comprehensiveness of scope and intensity of vision.

Does this mean I believe Huxley to be the "greatest" novelist of the age? Not at all, since the question itself seems meaningless to me. Too long have we been preoccupied with the matter of ranking. According to whatever criteria for excellence we might be employing, we establish our lists of the ten best these, the ten best those. And what have we thereby accomplished? A touchstone by which to evaluate future performance? For the moment only. Soon enough a new work comes along which wrecks havoc with our rankings. So we are constantly engaged in a process of re-evaluation. Our absolutes thus turn out to be no more than relatives.

Hence the usefulness of relevancy as one, but not the absolute, criterion for literature, for relevancy, by definition, is a relative value, a measure of the moment.

Investigating the relevancy of a work, we avoid the futility of pursuing the chimera of greatness. Instead, we focus upon our personal relationship with the art, and, by extension, with the entire universe. Relevancy, then, not only acknowledges the relativity of life, but also its inter-relatedness. Because it downgrades, although does not entirely dismiss the question of quality of performance, relevancy encourages artistic expression on the part of those who would be otherwise inhibited by the barrier of ability. While the number of finely realized works of art might not be greatly increased thereby, certainly the entire society would be enriched by a populace freely engaged in discovering and developing hitherto unexplored human potentialities. And this, I submit to be Aldous Huxley's most valuable insight, the crux of his final wisdom -- that we are our richest resource. At present, our society seems to be strangulating in a spider's web of specialization. What brave new world awaits us if we but fly free of that web and undertake our most essential work, the development of our full selves?

1 "Shakespeare and Religion", in Aldous Huxley: 1894-1963, p.174.

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