

THE SPIRITUAL QUEST IN THE WRITINGS
OF
ALDOUS HUXLEY

by
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I declare that the dissertation which is
herewith submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand
is entirely my own work and that it has not
previously been submitted for a degree in any other
university.

Paula Helle
.....

... 10th April 1969.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

IMPRESSIONS OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

1

I ACCIDIE

1

I MULTIPLICITY

33

III UNITY IN DIVERSITY

82

IV THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY

132

EPILOGUE

190

BIBLIOGRAPHY

226

IMPRESSIONS OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

In piecing together the fragments and mosaics of opinions of those who remembered Huxley and paid tribute to him in A Memorial Volume,¹ we are left with an overall impression of size, both physical and mental, of a "gigantic grasshopper",² a giant among Lilliputians with an encyclopaedic appetite. We can study him through his cousin, Juliette Huxley's eyes and picture him at Garsington in that summer of 1915 - tall, slender, slightly stooped, with generous mouth, sculptured nose, thick brown hair over a broad forehead and blue eyes which "had an inward look until one realized that he was almost totally blind in one eye, and not fully seeing with the other."³ Sightless yet observant, he was the Homeric seer launching on mental odysseys, a brilliant conversationalist whose talk ranged from the marriage ceremonies of octopuses to the backside of the moon, the rents in Regent Street, the heroin addict, Rubens and grasshoppers.⁴ Edith Sitwell comments on his deliberately absurd and erudite monologues in her autobiography, Taken Care Of:-

The animal and vegetable world became endowed, under the spell of his talk, with human characteristics, usually of a rather scandalous nature. I remember one monologue of this description on the subject of the morals of the octopus tribe - the tribe in question being, according to Aldous, conversant with Ovid's theory of love. He expatiated on the advantages possessed by the octopus in every amorous adventure.... so many arms with which to enfold the beloved! His enthusiasm grew as he proceeded. We were, at the moment, on a platform in Sloane Square underground station. It was Sunday morning, the platforms were crowded, and the passengers waiting for trains listened, spell-bound, to the monologue.⁵

Yet, like Denis Stone at Crome Manor, Huxley was usually silent and withdrawn in the Garsington household, lonely and brooding over his drawing and poetry or else reminiscing with Juliette about his mother's death, his blindness, his brother's suicide which he transposed into the novel, Eyeless in Gaza. To Juliette he was

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1. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968)
 2. Ibid., p. 34
 3. Ibid., p. 40
 4. Antic Hay (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930), p. 292-294.
(In future references only the title Antic Hay will be given.
Ref. Bibliography p.226-227 for editions of texts used throughout the thesis.)
 5. Edith Sitwell: Taken Care Of (London: Hutchinson, 1966), p. 89-90

"a kind of amphibious creature, rejecting emotional contacts with skilful evasions, using his intellectual equipment as a shield."⁶ And Leonard Woolf who encountered him in the same period, was struck by his personality and ideas as a "remarkable combination of velvet and steel."⁷ We see him again in his old age as described by the psychiatrist, Humphry Osmond, who administered Huxley's first dose of mescaline:-

He seemed to be suspended a fraction of an inch above the ground like one of Blake's allegorical figures. He was very tall. His head was massive, finely shaped, with a splendid brow. His gaze, from his better eye, was keen and piercing, but seemed to be focussed a little above and beyond me. His handshake was sketchy and uncertain, as if he did not enjoy the custom, and this was indeed so, for the thin-skinned, lightly built, slender people whom Sheldon calls cerebrotonic do not relish physical contact overmuch.⁸

Huxley's friend, Robert Craft, fills in the gaps of Osmond's idealized picture. He looks back on Huxley dining with the Stravinskys, absurdly out of place in their minute house, handicapped by his semi-blindness, indulging in his usual eclectic conversations. Craft comments that:-

... he is the gentlest human being I have ever seen, and the most delightfully giggly..... As he listens to us his fingers plait and unplait, or tickle the fenders of his chair, but when he talks his arms move continuously and rapidly in large illustrative gestures so that he seems, like Vishnu, to have several pairs of them.⁹

It is exactly here that the reader is at a disadvantage: he cannot see this three dimensional figure, witness the gestures, the nuances of tone, the side-tracking. All he can do is to bear the image of the conversationalist in mind as he reads Huxley's works which, at their worst, become records of talks, often infuriating in their digression and repetition. Critics might then level

6. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, p. 42-43

7. Ibid., p. 34

8. Ibid., p. 115 Osmond refers to the American psychologist, Sheldon, who proposed a theory of three constitutional types, the morphology of each corresponding with temperament: hence the definition of Huxley as ectomorph or thin man, by temperament a cerebrotonic, sensitive, restrained, inhibited.

9. Robert Craft, "With Aldous Huxley," Encounter, Vol. xxv, No. 5, November 1965, p. 11

the accusation that this is not art, merely a writing down of the spoken word with the minimum of artistic planning, except in the novels, Point Counter Point and Eyeless in Gaza. But this is not strictly true for Huxley as intellectual and rational idealist was very much concerned with the structural; with planned art, society planned along the lines of Jeffersonian democracy, and even religion planned in terms of the 'Perennial Philosophy.' At the same time, he recognized the limitations of the artistic form, as neatly summed up in the words of John Rivers:-

"The trouble with fiction," said John Rivers, "is that it makes too much sense. Reality never makes sense."

"Never?" I questioned.

"Maybe from God's point of view," he conceded. "Never from ours. Fiction has unity, fiction has style. Facts possess neither. In the raw, existence is always one damned thing after another, and each of the damned things is simultaneously Thurber and Michelangelo, simultaneously Mickey Spillane and Thomas à Kempis. The criterion of reality is its intrinsic irrelevance." And when I asked, "To what?" he waved a square brown hand in the direction of the bookshelves. "To the Best that has been Thought and Said," he declaimed with mock portentousness. And then, "Oddly enough, the closest to reality are always the fictions that are supposed to be the least true." He leaned over and touched the back of a battered copy of The Brothers Karamazov. "It makes so little sense that it's almost real. Which is more than can be said for any of the academic kinds of fiction. Physics and chemistry fiction. History fiction. Philosophy fiction...." His accusing finger moved from Dirac to Toynbee, from Sorokin to Carnap.¹⁰

Treading the undefined line between fiction and reality, Huxley lived his art: his art revolved around him as personality and it is this personality which dominates all his writings and forms their nucleus. He did not refine himself out of his works and create a separate aesthetic world in the style of Henry James or James Joyce. He wrote as personality, using personae or masks as mouth-pieces for his different points of view. These enabled him, like W.B. Yeats, to assume his opposite: the poet-dreamer assuming the mask of the man of action, the inhibited masked as the hedonist,

10. The Genius and the Goddess (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955), p. 7

the sceptic masked as the naively credulous. Craft points to these extremes: "There are only Mozarts and imbeciles in his world, only extreme aspects of humanity, and these aspects continually shock him."¹¹

The dialectic of opposites is the crux of Huxley's personality and personae. The drama of the novels is staged with scientist against poet, realist against idealist, the innocent against the experienced, the young against the old, with the focus on the figure of the artist, sensitive, inhibited, tormented. Like his creator, the artist or hero is "preconditioned by his intellectualism,"¹² the detached, disinterested intellect which analyses and dissects humanity from a distance (as is the case with the "zoological novelist",¹³ Philip Quarles), and which forms the basis for mystical non-attachment as practised by Miller and Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, Rontini and Sebastian Barnack in Time Must Have a Stop. The hero's is a quest towards understanding, a search for significance in the light of "man's predicament, his relationships with reality, with the awful circumstance which bound aspiring spirit to wretched flesh."¹⁴ Yet there is little active questing in the early works -- novels, short stories and essays -- concerned as they are with the lethargic disease of accidie. The fictional heroes, Denis Stone and Gumbriel Junior, are either hampered by ratiocination or content to dance the antic hay to destruction to the accompaniment of boredom, emptiness and futility, themes extended in the On the Margin essays and early short stories. In Point Counter Point, the accidie remains as a trait of the hero, Philip Quarles, but is submerged among multiple themes, attitudes and points of view, in which human voices are counterpointed according to the principles of a Bach fugue. Once again, the essays of the period extend, diversify and clarify the hero's quest.

The quest for multiplicity in Point Counter Point forms the basis of the search for unity in diversity, as pursued by Anthony Beavis. His is the struggle of the rational idealist within the

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11. Robert Craft, "With Aldous Huxley," Encounter, Vol. xxv, No. 5, November 1963, p. 13
 12. R.C. Zaehner: Mysticism Sacred and Profane (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 16
 13. Point Counter Point (Penguin, 1963), p. 334
 14. Ronald W. Clark: The Huxleys (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 218

political context of pacifism towards the ultimate goal of mysticism. And from this point onwards, Huxley's heroes - from Propter in After Many a Summer to Rontini and Sebastian Bernack in Time Must Have a Stop - combine the uneasy roles of rationalist and mystical adherent to the 'Perennial Philosophy.' Drawing chiefly on The Perennial Philosophy and The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, critics tend to isolate Huxley as mystic: in the words of John Mortimer: "The unfortunate Beatles, like many of us it seems, are in grave danger of coming into contact with the Spirit of Universal Truth, an unhelpful tippie which has in the past turned the great mind of Aldous Huxley to mystical blotting paper...."¹⁵ But the attackers fail to take into account the complexity of his work, the variety of topics which preoccupied him throughout his literary career. Side by side with the mystical is a firm grasp of the political, the industrial, the scientific. Besides, he himself veered between belief and unbelief until gradually he journeyed through a period of cynicism and accidia towards a renewal of faith which culminated in his final novel, Island.

Huxley's vision was not confined to the spiritual problems of contemporary life: the frantic 1920's reflected in Antic Hay, the pre-and post-war problems pondered in Time Must Have a Stop. The utopian novels form an important part of his own spiritual quest in probing not only the complexities of the future, but in isolating and crystallizing the spirit of the realistic works: the scepticism of the early works, Crome Yellow and Antic Hay, together with the religious affirmation of The Perennial Philosophy. From the despair and hideousness of Brave New World and Ape and Essence, Huxley soars to the harmony, tranquillity and mystical intensity of Island. Theoretically, the hero, Will Farnaby's spiritual quest has come to an end - in Pala he finds the ideal society - but before he can fully savour utopian life, the island is invaded by the forces of industrialism and imperialism, and the utopian bubble bursts.

15. John Mortimer, "No Gurus is Good Gurus," New Statesman, September 29, 1967, p. 397

ACCIDIECrome Yellow.

The setting is Garsington, home of the Morrells, an Elizabethan manor house combining the traditional Gothic windows and Tudor panelling with the exotic flavour of the East - ornate black and gold Chinese lacquer cabinets, oriental rugs, rich brocaded curtains; all this the inimitable stamp of Lady Ottoline:-

A vague scent of incense and pot-pourri enhanced one's sense of privilege, of living in a 'habitable work of art.'¹

And within this "'habitable work of art'" were gathered the writers, thinkers, politicians and pacifists of the First World War years: the Garsington home served as refuge, haven and platform for the ideas of, among others, Bertrand Russell, Middleton Murry and Siegfried Sassoon. Period, setting and people were caught and transmuted into the fiction of Huxley's Crome Yellow, published in 1921.

The characters of this early novel are clearly defined types: Scogan, the rationalist, reminiscent of Bertrand Russell; Wimbush, English gentleman-historian; Gombauld, French artist and rake; Mary, birth control protagonist; Anne, languid seductress; Priscilla Wimbush, *passée* seductress, an echo of Lady Ottoline; Barbecue-Smith, the smug hack journalist, a caricature of Middleton Murry. Each is drawn, not only from a contemporary figure, but also from among the aristocracy, the only class which can really afford to indulge in eccentricities - as Scogan ironically points out:-

'Eccentricity..... It's the justification of all aristocracies. It justifies leisured classes and inherited wealth and privilege and endowments and all the other injustices of that sort. If you're to do anything reasonable in this world, you must have a class of people who are secure, safe from public opinion, safe from poverty, leisured, not compelled to waste their time in the imbecile routines that go by the name of Honest Work.'²

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1. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 39
 2. Crome Yellow, p. 58

The aristocrats are all seen, analysed and assessed through the sensitive, easily disillusioned eyes of Denis Stone. He peeps out of his confused adolescent shell, struggling to emerge from its confines and communicate with the outside world. His chief difficulty is to establish contact with others:-

Parallel straight lines, Denis reflected, meet only at infinity..... Did one ever establish contact with anyone? We are all parallel straight lines. Jenny was only a little more parallel than most.³

Myra Viveash voices a similar opinion in Antic Hay, only this time contact is not desirable:-

Why was it that people always got involved in one's life? If only one could manage things on the principle of the railways! Parallel tracks - that was the thing. For a few miles you'd be running at the same speed. There'd be delightful conversation out of the windows; you'd exchange the omelette in your restaurant car for the vol-au-vent in theirs. And when you'd said all there was to say, you'd put on a little more steam, wave your hand, blow a kiss and away you'd go, forging ahead along the smooth, polished rails. But instead of that, there were these dreadful accidents; the points were wrongly set, the trains came crashing together; or people jumped on as you were passing through the stations and made a nuisance of themselves and wouldn't allow themselves to be turned off.⁴

But on the occasions where Denis plucks up enough courage to unburden himself, he is cut short and over-ruled. Arriving at Crome Manor, he finds Priscilla Wimbush unreceptive and is forced to listen to her absurd talk. Then, eager to communicate with Anne, he is interrupted by a well-meaning Henry Wimbush. Disappointed and hurt he retracts, his reserve reinforced, and the battle rages on between contact and withdrawal - he wants to communicate, yet, afraid of a rebuke, he holds back. Jenny, another visitor to Crome Manor, apart "in the secret tower of her deafness"⁵ is the first to observe Denis's dilemma, revealed in the caricature in her secret red notebook. Here she depicts Gombauld and Anne dancing, watched by an aloof and envious Denis, the scene entitled "'Fable of the Wallflower and the Sour Grapes.'"⁶

It is Jenny's revelation which shocks Denis out of his own little world and forces him to see other people as independent entities:-

3. Crome Yellow, p. 19

4. Antic Hay, p. 100

5. Crome Yellow, p. 14

6. Ibid., p. 137

He felt no resentment towards Jenny. No, the distressing thing wasn't Jenny herself; it was what she and the phenomenon of her red book represented, what they stood for and concretely symbolized. They represented all the vast conscious world of men outside himself; they symbolized something that in his studious solitariness he was apt not to believe in.....periodically he would make some painful discovery about the external world and the horrible reality of its consciousness and its intelligence. The red notebook was one of these discoveries, a footprint in the sand. It put beyond a doubt the fact that the outer world really existed.⁷

We see Denis starting out at a point where he is unable to express himself. His emotions run away with him and as a result he escapes into a harmonious world of theory, a clear-cut world of ideas:-

One had a philosophy and tried to make life fit into it.....In the world of ideas everything was clear; in life all was obscure, embroiled.⁸

Unlike the pagan Anne, he cannot live by disordered sensation. He has to have art to create order from chaos: with art comes the need for justification and ratiocination, the very activities which inhibit his emotions. Caught up in the refrain of the dance one evening while suffering the agonies of love for Anne, he feels:-

Wild inside; raging, writhing - yes, 'writhing' was the word, writhing with desire. But outwardly he was hopelessly tame; outwardly - baa, baa, baa.⁹

Unable to communicate his feelings, to do something about this wild desire, he lashes out verbally at the inoffensive Mary who, at a most inopportune moment, attempts a literary conversation:-

'Which of the contemporary poets do you like best?'
'Blight, Mildew and Smut,' he replied, with the laconism of one who is absolutely certain of his own mind.¹⁰

To lash out verbally is his only defence for he lives in the world of words and is fascinated by the sheer sensuality of language -
"Galbe, gonflé, goulou: parfum, peau, pervers, potele, pudeur: vertu, volupté:-"

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7. Crowe Yellow, p. 137-138
 8. Ibid., p. 22
 9. Ibid., p. 51
 10. Ibid., p. 53

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Dinted, dimpled, wimpled - his mind wandered down echoing corridors of assonance and alliteration ever further and further from the point. He was enamoured with the beauty of words.¹¹

And again during a discussion with Scogan he reveals a similar love for the physical sensation of the word "carminative", warm, rosy, glowing, though ironically he completely ignores the actual meaning of the word as "curing flatulence!"

For Denis, the stay at Crome and particularly Jenny's caricature of its inmates all help to bring him out of himself. He attempts to express his new sense of awareness of others to Mary, though once again the moment is inopportune: she is wrapped in her own thoughts. He sees now that the individual is not self-supporting, though he finds himself unable to pit this theorizing against real life, against his disappointment at seeing Anne and Gombauld in what he interprets as a romantic situation. The chaotic emotions he experiences force him back into his shell, his own personal, tormenting universe. With Mary's encouragement he chooses the line of least resistance: he leaves Crome at the very point where he is becoming more aware of himself in relation to others. Yet he fully realizes that his cowardly departure spells a kind of death: "He felt as though he were making arrangements for his own funeral."¹² Finally the taxi arrives:-

He climbed wearily up the stairs. It was time for him to lay himself in his coffin.¹³

Assessing Denis within the scheme of characterization, we find that he is not merely the fictional counterpart of Huxley himself. He may represent one particular facet of the young Aldous but we somehow feel that Denis, by his very nature, is incapable of conceiving of other characters in such detail and as independent entities. And so we become aware of an unobtrusive author looking above and beyond Denis's limited vision and presenting in the other characters alternatives to Denis's stance as artist, retiring like a snail into the cosy shell of ideas and neat philosophies. Denis may be regarded as the focal point of a group of personae or masks, each embodying different Huxleyan points of view - the rational, scientifically-minded man,

11. Crome Yellow, p. 7

12. Ibid., p. 171

13. Ibid., p. 173

Scogan; the soft-spoken historian Wimbush, escaping into the past; the sensualist, as represented by Anne. But to label Huxley's works as novels of ideas is not strictly accurate, in that they do not just illustrate ideas so much as use them "in default of characterization...",¹⁴ and although we may condemn Huxley for this lack of individual and convincing characters, it gives the novel a singular unity. We watch a magnificently varied and erudite performance by a ventriloquist who stands behind the scenes, projecting his voice and ideas into various figures on the stage.

Similar figures and masks recur within the sequence of the novels. The idealist-philosopher like Denis is offset by the rational "Brave New World" man, who germinates through Scogan in Crome Yellow to Shearwater in Antic Hay, Mr. Falx in Those Barren Leaves, Lord Edward in Point Counter Point, Obispo in After Many a Summer, Maartens in The Genius and the Goddess. Not that the figures are exactly alike: Scogan and Obispo are predominantly cynical, Obispo brutally so, whereas Shearwater, Lord Edward and Maartens, though scientifically minded, are essentially naive and emotionally immature.

Scogan in Crome Yellow is a Shavian mouthpiece. He overrules the mild idealism of both Denis and Wimbush, preaching about man and the state of the universe as a result of human stupidity and blindness. Scogan is marked off from the others by his energy and mental vitality: even though he reduces man to rational animal and reacts with a kind of "metallic rigidity,"¹⁵ he does so vehemently and energetically. His is the rare vitality of the tough "extinct saurian."¹⁶ Denis complains of being treated like a specimen for an anthropologist: still, Scogan makes some penetrating remarks about him and pithily sums up his novel writing:-

'I'll describe the plot for you. Little Percy, the hero, was never good at games, but he was always clever. He passes through the usual public school and the usual university and comes to London, where he lives among the artists. He is bowed down with melancholy thought; he carries the whole weight of the universe upon his shoulders. He writes a novel of dazzling brilliance; he dabbles delicately in Amour and disappears, at the end of the book, into the luminous Future.'¹⁷

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14. Forms of Modern Fiction, ed. William Van O'Connor, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1948), p. 189
15. Crome Yellow, p. 27
16. Ibid., p. 15
17. Ibid., p. 17

Scogan's role is more typically confined to prophetic visions, a role parodied in his guise as gipsy at Crome Fair - "Sesostris, the Sorceress of Ecbatana,"¹⁸ who succeeds in seducing a pretty, muslin-clad girl by predicting a meeting the following week on the way to church. He describes himself as "a small man with a sharp nose, not exactly good looking nor precisely young, but fascinating."¹⁹ In more serious prophetic vein, he voices Huxley's pet opinions, advocating a split between love and propagation - love as Eros, the gay butterfly flitting from flower to flower; propagation in terms of artificial insemination and incubation in bottles.²⁰ Gumbril Junior expresses the same idea in Antic Hay, while conversing on the subject of overpopulation with the old gentleman on the train:-

"And is there any prospect," Gumbril earnestly asked, "of our ever being able in the future to support the whole of our population? Will unemployment ever decrease?"

"I don't know, sir," the old gentleman replied. "But the families of the unemployed will certainly increase."

"You are right, sir," said Gumbril, "they will. And the families of the employed and the prosperous will as steadily grow smaller. It is regrettable that birth control should have begun at the wrong end of the scale. There seems to be a level of poverty below which it doesn't seem worth while practising birth control, and a level of education below which birth control is regarded as morally wrong. Strange, how long it has taken for the ideas of love and procreation to dissociate themselves in the human mind. In the majority of minds they are still, even in this so-called twentieth century, indivisibly wedded. Still," he continued hopefully, "progress is being made, progress is certainly, though slowly, being made..."²¹

As a prelude to Brave New World, Scogan's view is anti-nature in the fields of love, art and politics. He proposes birth control in a scientifically planned society with "Amour" as "scientific ardour" flavoured with "the jovial spirit of Rabelais and Chaucer."²² He visualizes art "from which nature has been completely banished, pictures which are exclusively the product of the human mind."²³ In place of that useless and eccentric aristocracy, "a sort of Red Indian Reservation planted in the midst of a vast horde of Poor Whites,"²⁴ he advocates the Rational State, organized according to a

18. Crome Yellow, p. 151

19. Ibid., p. 153

20. Ibid., p. 28

21. Antic Hay, p. 245

22. Crome Yellow, p. 84

23. Ibid., p. 133

24. Ibid., p. 58

hierarchy of three main species, "the Directing Intelligences, the Men of Faith, and the Herd,"²⁵ the Men of Faith being most important as the fanatics and propagandists, tools of the Directing Intelligences. Significantly, Scogan feels Denis has no place in the Rational State, being too independent to belong to the Herd, too sceptical for a Man of Faith, not sufficiently lucid or merciless in his reasoning to be a Directing Intelligence. And this is all part of Denis's problem: to find a niche, a place for himself in society.

While Scogan the rationalist forms a contrast with Denis, Henry Wimbush, gentleman scholar and historian, complements Denis's attitude in that he, too, tries to escape life and its confusion. Denis's escape valve is art; Wimbush retires into history and the past - secure, comfortable and decorous - enabling him to look on the world with unchanging serenity, patience and gravity. To him: "The proper study of mankind is books,"²⁶ and he avoids human contacts as "tedious and revolting,"²⁷ whereas transmuted into history, people and their adventures became intriguing and romantic. Ironically, Wimbush is impressed by vitality and crude life though he possesses so little himself.²⁸ Like Mr. Topes of "Green Tunnels", he had become devitalized by his interest in the past:-

'Why do you always talk about art?' said Barbara.
'You bring these dead people into everything. What do I know about Canova or whoever it is?' They were none of them alive.....

Mr. Topes was silent; he walked with slightly bent knees and his eyes were fixed on the ground; he wore a speckled black-and-white straw hat. He always thought of art; that was what was wrong with him. Like an old tree he was; built up of dead wood, with only a few fibres of life to keep him from rotting away.²⁹

In contrast to Scogan, Wimbush clings to the vestiges of tradition and formal religion, though Mr. Bodiham's arid Puritanism only serves to stimulate the reverse in his mind, the images of old earthy Panic rites. Just as Wimbush is devitalized by his excessive preoccupation with recorded history, so the clergyman, Bodiham, is reduced by his confining beliefs to "the man in the Iron Mask,"³⁰ chained and destroyed by his rigid, hair-shirted attitude. Everything about him, about his sombre brown room with brownish smell and brown gloom indicates a lack of humanity:-

25. Crome Yellow, p. 129

26. Ibid., p. 163

27. Ibid., p. 162

28. Ibid., p. 27

29. Mortal Coils, "Green Tunnels," p. 113

30. Crome Yellow, p. 43

A grey metallic face with iron cheek-bones and a narrow iron brow; iron folds, hard and unchanging, ran perpendicularly down his cheeks; his nose was the iron beak of some thin, delicate bird of rapine. He had brown eyes, set in sockets rimmed with iron; round them the skin was dark, as though it had been charred. Dense wiry hair covered his skull; it had been black, it was turning grey. His ears were very small and fine. His jaws, his chin, his upper lip were dark, iron-dark, where he had shaved. His voice, when he spoke and especially when he raised it in preaching, was harsh, like the grating of iron hinges when a seldom-used door is opened.³⁰

Paradoxically, the Iron Mask by no means indicates a sharp cutting quality but a blunting of the senses symbolized by the pamphlet containing his war sermon, "eight small grey pages, printed by a fount of type that had grown blunt, like an old dog's teeth, by the endless champing and champing of the press."³¹ At first glance, the clergyman, his Job-like predictions expressed in the sermon, contrasts directly with the airily optimistic hack-critic, Barbecue-Smith. Yet, the journalist, short and corpulent with very large head and no neck, "a leonine head with a greyish-black mane of oddly unappetizing hair,"³² is as soiled and outworn in appearance and ideas as Bodihem himself, so aptly mirrored in the dog-eared and outdated war sermon pamphlet.

Returning to Yellow, we find that his anecdotes, used to entertain the Crome group, accurately reflect and extend his escapist attitude. He delves into the history of Crome and unearths stories, romantic and intriguing, because of their antiquity. Besides, they reflect a revulsion from bodily functions and mundane activities together with a delight in the grotesque and the esoteric: the three sisters secretly gorge themselves in a hidden chamber while outwardly pretending to an ascetic other-worldly attitude in which eating is looked upon as unspiritual; Sir Ferdinand builds his privies in the tower of his mansion, "nearest to heaven,"³³ and lined with bookshelves containing tomes of philosophy:-

For, he argues in the third chapter of his Private Counsels, the necessities of nature are so base and brutish that in obeying them we are apt to forget that we are the noblest creatures of the universe.³³

30. Crome Yellow, p. 43

31. Ibid., p. 44

32. Ibid., p. 29

33. Ibid., p. 56

The third grotesque tale of the dwarf, ironically christened Hercules, revolves around a similar distaste for man, obscene giant, brutish and monstrous. It upholds the nobler facets of life, of "Man grown more refin'd":-

Slighter in muscle but of vaster Mind,
Smiled at his grandsire's broadsword, bow and bill,
And learn'd to wield the Pencil and the Quill.
The glowing canvas and the written page
Immortaliz'd his name from age to age,
His name emblazon'd on Fame's temple wall
For Art grew great as Humankind grew small.³⁴

Denis and Wimbush are afraid to live, afraid of being hurt by life. They have none of the conscienceless, carefree sensuality of Anne, Gombauld and Ivor. Denis admires and envies this hedonism in Anne, herself drawn to the same quality in Gombauld, who cuts a flashing Byronic figure. Unlike the idealistic Denis, Gombauld has no creamy visions of Anne, the hamadryad: he sees her as she is in reality - diabolical, her sensuality "melting into a kind of soft decay,"³⁵ her face a "lazy, expressionless mask."³⁵ And yet this is only a partial truth, more applicable to Priscilla Wimbush, in whom decay comes with old age. Anne's portrait, Gombauld realized, "was terribly like; and at the same time it was the most malicious of lies."³⁵

Despite her faults, Anne retains a certain spontaneity, a quick wit, an unashamed enjoyment of living. In a way, she benefits from not being bogged down by education, unlike Denis who finds himself crucified and destroyed by ratiocination. Where Anne lives according to a pleasure principle, enjoying the pleasant and avoiding the painful, Denis has to cope with a conscience which demands the justification of pleasure:-

'I can take nothing for granted, I can enjoy nothing as it comes along. Beauty, pleasure, art, women - I have to invent an excuse, a justification for everything that's delightful. Otherwise I can't enjoy it with an easy conscience. I make up a little story about beauty and pretend that it has something to do with truth and goodness. I have to say that art is the process by which one reconstructs the divine reality out of chaos. Pleasure is one of the mystical roads to union with the infinite - the ecstasies of drinking, dancing, love-making. As for women, I am perpetually assuring myself that they're the broad highway to divinity. And to think that I'm only just beginning to see through the silliness of the whole thing! It's incredible to me that anyone should have escaped these horrors.'³⁶

34. Crome Yellow, p. 68

35. Ibid., p. 124

36. Ibid., p. 23

Antic Hay, Essays and Short Stories.

In his attempt to escape these horrors, Denis's fictional successor, Gumbril Junior of Antic Hay, turns his back on ratiocination and the deadly fascination of words in a meaningless world of verbal magic:-

..... he had studied theology. But if theology and theosophy, then why not theography and theometry, why not theogony, theotrophy, theotomy, theogamy? Why not theophysics and theochemistry? Why not that ingenious toy, the theotrope or wheel of gods? Why not a monumental theodrome?³⁷

According to Sisirkumar Ghose, Huxley may well have drawn on T.S. Eliot's thesis: "Other ages have been blind with ignorance; ours is blind with knowledge."³⁸ To remedy this blindness Huxley presents his characters as swinging towards anti-intellectualism. Yet, in avoiding blindness with knowledge, they become overwhelmed with sensuality, caught up in the agitated, sleazy London night life, much like James Joyce's Bloom, lost in the restlessness of Dublin.³⁹ Gumbril Junior, Coleman, Mercaptan, Myra Viveash, Lypiatt and Rosie Shearwater revel in their destruction and aimlessness: the futility and meaninglessness of their existence evokes a perverse pleasure, voiced thus by Coleman:-

"The real charm about debauchery," said Coleman philosophically, "is its total pointlessness, futility, and above all its incredible tediousness..."⁴⁰

Caught up in a vortex of hedonism, they are sucked in and destroyed, whirled from sensuality to disgust and revulsion which, as Myra Viveash finds, ultimately ends in nihilism:-

Nil, omnipresent nil, world-soul, spiritual informer of all matter. Nil in the shape of a black-breeched moon-basined Toreador. Nil, the man with the greyhound's nose. Nil, as four blackamoors. Nil in the form of a divine tune. Nil, the faces, the faces one ought to know by sight, reflected in the mirrors of the hall. Nil this Gumbril whose arm is round one's waist, whose feet step in and out among one's own. Nothing at all.⁴¹

37. Antic Hay, p. 3

38. T.S. Eliot: Commentary, 'Criterion.' ref. Sisirkumar Ghose: Aldous Huxley A Cynical Salvationist (London: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 9

39. Ulysses was published in 1922, a year before Huxley's Antic Hay and whether or not Huxley read and was influenced by Joyce's work, the two novels reveal a similar atmosphere and preoccupation.

40. Antic Hay, p. 236

41. Ibid., p. 216

In the first chapter Gumbril Junior sets out from the traditionally cloistered and academic setting, its lifelessness mirrored in the "blue and jaundiced and bloody"⁴² stained-glass windows of the school chapel. He finds himself questioning the power of words, of definition and ethical significance:-

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?⁴³

.....
Good; good? It was a word people only used nowadays with a kind of deprecating humorousness. Good. Beyond good and evil? We are all that nowadays. Or merely below them, like earwigs?⁴⁴

He automatically associates values in personal terms, in terms of his mother now dead, in terms of his anti-clerical father. But turning away from the heartache of memories and the meaninglessness of the Reverend's religious mumbo jumbo, he muses over essentially practical matters - how to evolve an inflating cushion to alleviate the discomfort of hard oaken chapel stalls! Back in his lodgings correcting papers, he allows his mind to wander along more pleasureable tracks: visions of treasure-filled villas, seductive women, philanthropic donations to scientific research, public acclaim. And there and then he decides to give up the thankless task of teaching, that democratic principle of mass education which attempts to elevate the minds of dogs to the minds of men.⁴⁵

The break away from school marks the starting point of his picaresque travels among contrasted characters from various generations and walks of life. He finds little contact with the older generation in the form of his father and Mr. Porteous, both of whom have - like Wimbush in Crome Yellow - reverted to the splendours of the past: Porteous through his poetry, and Gumbril Senior through the glories of ancient architecture. Both are stultified by poverty and their inability to adapt to the times. Porteous, "calm, solid and undishevelled as a seated pillar-box"⁴⁶ lives in the world of late Latin poetry, ruffled only by the drunken escapades of his profligate son.

42. Antic Hay, p. 3

43. Ibid., p. 4

44. Ibid., p. 5

45. Ibid., p. 6

46. Ibid., p. 19

Gumbril Senior, more vital than both Porteous and Wimbush, is nevertheless merely "a strangely animated scarecrow"⁴⁶ living appropriately in "a tall narrow-shouldered and rachitic house in a little obscure square not far from Paddington."⁴⁷ He presents a pathetically ecstatic figure whom Huxley catches as in a cameo: his wispy hair blowing over forehead and spectacles, his bony hand tugging the sparse grey beard as he indulges in his favourite evening diversion of watching the starlings settle in a black cloud on his fourteen plane trees! His wild and woolly architectural dreams of palaces and cathedrals are ironically out of keeping with his poverty-stricken situation in the squalid decaying slums of Paddington where he pursues the mundane job of designing workmen's cottages. Like all the characters of the novel, he shows a marked awareness of the squalor and hideousness about him, which he expresses in Swiftian terms:-

"Proportion", he said - "I was just thinking about it, now, as I was walking back. You can't help thinking about it in these London streets, where it doesn't exist. You can't help pining for it. There are some streets..... oh, my God!..... It's like listening to a symphony of cats to walk along them. Senseless discords and a horrible disorder all the way. And the one street that was really like a symphony by Mozart - how busily and gleefully they're pulling it down now! Another year and there'll be nothing left of Regent Street. There'll only be a jumble of huge, hideous buildings at three-quarters of a million apiece. A concert of Brobdingnagian cats. Order has been turned into a disgusting chaos. We need no barbarians from outside; they're on the premises, all the time."⁴⁸

In his own domain - the best bedroom chock-a-block with architectural models - he is a combination of enthusiastic child and passionate dreamer. Ignoring the mundane, practical function of building, which has been degraded to a chaotic and petty level, he turns to architecture as the expression of human dignity and greatness:-

"You can only begin to protest positively and actively when you abandon the petty human scale and build for giants - when you build for the spirit and the imagination of man, not for his little body..."⁴⁹

46. Antic Hay, p. 19

47. Ibid., p. 17

48. Ibid., p. 168

49. Ibid., p. 33

For this reason he abandons his workmen's houses to plan an Utopia, a model of London as it might have been had Wren carried out his plans after the Great Fire, plans for a light, airy and beautiful city. But despite his apparent lack of interest in the world of men - "I'm not good at people,"⁵⁰ he confesses - he finally makes the magnificent gesture of selling his Utopian model to the Victoria and Albert Museum, purely for the sake of his friend Porteous, whose son has landed him deeply in debt.

Lypiatt the artist has much in common with Gumbril Senior since he, too, is a passionate dreamer protesting paradoxically from his equally poverty-stricken situation against the triviality of modern man when compared with the magnificence of the ancient masters:-

"And how small the scale is nowadays!" Lypiatt went on, rhapsodically. "How trivial the conception, how limited the scope! You see no painter-sculptor-poets, like Michelangelo; no scientist-artists, like Leonardo; no mathematician-courtiers, like Boscovitch; no impresario-musicians, like Handel; no geniuses of all trades, like Wren. I have set myself against this abject specialization of ours. I stand alone, opposing it with my example." Lypiatt raised his hand. Like the statue of Liberty, standing colossal and alone.⁵¹

Where Gumbril Senior is modestly content to speculate and amble through his world of architectural models, Lypiatt insists on vehemently foisting his point of view on others. A figure at once "magnificent and pathetic,"⁵² he reflects an element of Gumbril Junior's own self-dramatization and self torture, only exaggerated to the proportions of the mark of Cain. He imagines himself martyred to the cause of Art by the taunts of men. He is "a misunderstood and embittered Prometheus,"⁵³ eaten up by dreams of recapturing past glories in a generation which has: "No dream, no religion, no morality."⁵⁴

Huxley presents in Lypiatt both a development and a decline of the figure of the artist, portrayed in Gombauld of Crome Yellow. (who has youth, glamour, vitality and endless possibilities of success) while Lypiatt, at the age of forty, is clearly a failure and has reached a cul-de-sac which spells suicide. He is caught in a no-man's land, trapped between his ideal and real selves, unable to sustain the ideal - the image of the brooding solitary giant cynically declaiming on the insect world of modern man, or face the real - the "curiously shrunken and deflated"⁵⁵ man, old "peaked and sharp and worn."⁵⁶

50. Antic Hay, p. 29

51. Ibid., p. 46

52. Ibid., p. 47

53. Ibid., p. 88

54. Ibid., p. 54

55. Ibid., p. 97

56. Ibid., p. 98-99

His face mirrors his disintegration: here the fleshless, bony and ascetic conflicts with the sensual, as embodied in the full lips. Seeing him in laughter, Myra Viveash detachedly observes the disintegration, the inhuman expression:-

He looked, Mrs. Viveash thought, peculiarly ugly when he laughed. His face seemed to go all to pieces; not a corner of it but was wrinkled and distorted by the violent grimace of mirth. Even the forehead was ruined when he laughed. Foreheads are generally the human part of people's faces. Let the nose twitch and the mouth grin and the eyes twinkle as monkeyishly as you like; the forehead can still be calm and serene, the forehead still knows how to be human. But when Casimir laughed, his forehead joined in the general disintegrating grimace. And sometimes even when he wasn't laughing, when he was just vivaciously talking, his forehead seemed to lose its calm and would twitch and wrinkle itself in a dreadful kind of agitation.⁵⁷

Ultimately Lypiatt is empty - a big wind - not as he expresses himself in terms of the wind of life and inspiration, but as a bombinating windbag with vacuous, high-flown philosophies about art as "a protest against the horrible inclemency of life,"⁵⁸ the artist as one who "rushes on the world, conquers it, gives it beauty, imposes a moral significance."⁵⁹ "Passionately, I paint passion,"⁶⁰ he declares, yet Lypiatt is dead and mummified, his paintings lifeless:-

That was precisely why his paintings were so bad - she (Myra Viveash) saw now; there was no life in them. Plenty of noise there was, and gesticulation and a violent galvanized twitching; but no life, only the theatrical show of it. There was a flaw in the conduit; somewhere between the man and his work life leaked out. He protested too much. But it was no good; there was no disguising the deadness.⁶¹

A sham both as artist and man, Lypiatt takes refuge in the romantic image of the Artist who:-

..... walked across the world and the mangy dogs ran yelping and snapping behind him. The great wind blew and blew, driving him on; it lifted him and he began to fly.⁶²

57. Antic Hay, p. 92-93

58. Ibid., p. 91

59. Ibid., p. 95

60. Ibid., p. 96

61. Ibid., p. 97

62. Ibid., p. 102

"Magnificent and pathetic old Lypiatt!"⁶³ He faces this inconsistency in the final moments before suicide, analysing the tragedy-comedy of life as in a Swiftian revelation:-

"Every one's a walking farce and a walking tragedy at the same time. The man who slips on a banana-skin and fractures his skull describes against the sky, as he falls, the most richly comical arabesque."⁶⁴

".... I have come to admit everything. That I couldn't paint, I couldn't write, I couldn't make music. That I was a charlatan and a quack. That I was a ridiculous actor of heroic parts who deserved to be laughed at - and was laughed at. But then every man is ludicrous if you look at him from outside, without taking into account what's going on in his heart and mind..... It's a question of the point of view..."⁶⁵

As representative of the world of journalism, Mercaptan - smug, hypocritical and self-satisfied - points forward to Huxley's later creation of the pretentious Burlap in Point Counter Point and looks back to Barbecue-Smith in Crome Yellow, who had found the secret of inspiration and reminded Denis irresistibly of the advertisement for Nestlé's milk:-

..... - the two cats on the wall, under the moon, one black and thin, the other white, sleek, and fat. Before Inspiration and after."⁶⁶

Mercaptan, too, is sleek and comfortable, his taste inimitable, his living refined and highly civilized:-

"What I glory in is the civilized, middle way between stink and asepsis. Give me a little musk, a little intoxicating feminine exhalation, the bouquet of old wine and strawberries, a lavender bag under every pillow and pot-pourri in the corners of the drawing-room. Readable books, amusing conversation, civilized women, graceful art and dry vintage, music, with a quiet life and reasonable comfort - that's all I ask for."⁶⁷

Lypiatt, exhibitionistic and self-glorified as he is, immediately sees through Mercaptan and virulently attacks him, an antagonism between artist and writer transposed by Gumbriel Junior into the animal mode: they are "like bear and mastiff".... like bear and poodle, bear and King Charles's spaniel,"⁶⁸ continually snapping and backbiting. In the Soho restaurant Lypiatt, unable to contain himself, bursts out:-

63. Antic Hay, p. 47

64. Ibid., p. 275

65. Ibid., p. 274-275

66. Crome Yellow, p. 32

67. Antic Hay, p. 55

68. Ibid., p. 301

"You disgust me," said Lypiatt, with rising indignation, and making wider gestures. "You disgust me - you and your odious little sham eighteenth-century civilization; your piddling little poetry; your art for art's sake instead of for God's sake; your nauseating little copulations without love or passion; your heggish materialism; your bestial indifference to all that's unhappy and your yelping hatred of all that's great."⁶⁹

He actually uses canine terms - "yelping hatred" - in keeping with the poodle-spaniel image and his accusation of "nauseating little copulations" is fully substantiated in the incident with Rosie Shearwater in which the scene is set for seduction on "Crébillon", "the vast white satin sofa."⁷⁰ But Mercaptan, true to form, gets his own back at Lypiatt's exhibition where he sides with Myra Viveash and maliciously denounces the paintings as "Italian Vermouth posters."⁷¹ More important, Mercaptan's attitude, like Lypiatt's, reflects certain features of the central character, Gumbril Junior, who pulls himself up sharply one evening while facetiously declaiming French verse: the action suddenly and depressingly reminds him of Mercaptan.⁷²

Where Mercaptan reflects precisely what Gumbril Junior would not like to become, the diabolical Coleman is his ideal. Blond, bearded, his blue eyes bright and piercing, Coleman blatantly attacks the eccentricities of each, topping his sarcastic remarks with the blue-eyed glare which reflects "some nameless and fantastic malice."⁷³ He demolishes each in turn, ironically paying homage to Lypiatt in his "How I recognize my Buonarotti!":⁷⁴ denouncing science as key to the Absolute in a discussion with "Physiological Shearwater",⁷⁵ prodding Mercaptan in the stomach to enquire after his writings as "les tripes",⁷⁶ teasing "Hetaira-Myra"⁷⁷ and "Bumbril-Gumbril"⁷⁸ the pedagogue, and categorizing Zoe as priapagogue. Ultimately supporting the sullen and ferocious Zoe, he declares "there is only one reality.... and that is callipygous."⁷⁹

69. Antic Hay, p. 56

70. Ibid., p. 260

71. Ibid., p. 109

72. Ibid., p. 86

73. Ibid., p. 58

74. Ibid., p. 58

75. Ibid., p. 59

76. Ibid., p. 60

77. Ibid., p. 229

78. Ibid., p. 228

79. Ibid., p. 64

Coleman, in his diabolically accurate assessment of others, shows a development of that awareness of humanity which we see germinating in Denis Stone of Crome Yellow, who discovers with a sense of horror "the vast conscious world of men outside himself."⁸⁰ Taking this consciousness a step further into the horrific, Coleman gleefully pictures millions of people making love, drinking, eating, decaying and dying:-

"Does it occur to you...that at this moment we are walking through the midst of seven million distinct and separate individuals, each with distinct and separate lives and all completely indifferent to our existence? Seven million people, each one of whom thinks himself quite as important as each of us does. Millions of them are now sleeping in an empested atmosphere. Hundreds of thousands of couples are at this moment engaged in mutually caressing one another in a manner too hideous to be thought of, but in no way differing from the manner in which each of us performs, delightfully, passionately and beautifully, his similar work of love. Thousands of women are now in the throes of parturition, and of both sexes thousands are dying of the most diverse and appalling diseases, or simply because they have lived too long. Thousands are drunk, thousands have over-eaten, thousands have not had enough to eat. And they are all alive, all unique and separate and sensitive, like you and me. It's a horrible thought. Ah, if I could lead them all into that great hole of centipedes."⁸¹

Hence his sadistic delight in finding Porteous's drunken son at a night club, a delight in "the spectacle of children tobogganing down into the cesspools."⁸²

The final and unforgettable picture of Coleman is conveyed through Rosie Shearwater who, following Mercaptan's instructions concerning Gumbril's supposed address, finds herself confronted instead by Coleman, dabbing a wound after a violent attack by Zoe. In her eyes he presents himself as a:-

...huge bearded Cossack of a man, who smiled, who looked at her with bright, dangerous eyes, who quoted the Bible and who was bleeding like a pig. There was blood on his shirt, blood on his trousers, blood on his hands, bloody finger-marks on his face; even the blond fringe of his beard, she noticed, was dabbled here and there with blood. It was too much, at first, even for her aristocratic equanimity.⁸³

80. Crome Yellow, p. 137

81. Antic Hay, p. 68

82. Ibid., p. 232

83. Ibid., p. 283

He promptly expounds on love and woman as "a bag of muck",⁸⁴ much like Quentin in The Sound and the Fury:-

Because women so delicate so mysterious
 Father said. Delicate equilibrium of
 periodical filth between two moons balanced.
 Moons he said full and yellow as harvest
 moons her hips thighs. Outside outside of
 them always but. Yellow. Feet soles with
 walking like. Then know that some man that
 all those mysterious and imperious concealed.
 With all that inside of them shapes an out-
 ward suavity waiting for a touch to. Liquid
 putrefaction like drowned things floating
 like pale rubber flabbily filled getting the
 odour of honeysuckle all mixed up.⁸⁵

Encouraged by Rosie's shuddering fascination, Coleman rants on about phallic symbols five hundred feet high. Then, with a whoop of laughter, his blond blood-stained beard prickling her face and neck, he eagerly seduces her. And to top the insult, when interrupted by Gumbril and Myra Viveash, he quips about merely having been "washing in blood of the Lamb."⁸⁶

Gumbril Junior tries hard to take a leaf out of Coleman's book. He affects a magnificent blond beard which instantly transforms him from "Mild and Melancholy" to "the Complete Man",⁸⁷ supremely confident behind "his Gargantuan mask",⁸⁸ temporarily freed from the inhibitions which shackle Denis Stone of Crome Yellow. For the moment he is "the complete Rabelaisian man. Great eater, deep drinker, stout fighter, prodigious lover; clear thinker, creator of beauty, seeker of truth and prophet of heroic grandeurs."⁸⁹ But what freedom in fact does the mask afford him, "a sheep in beaver's clothing?"⁹⁰ To a certain extent it brings the hypocrisy of Mercaptan: refined, sophisticated seduction preluded by witty, facetious conversation. The seduction accomplished, the plot thickens and the affair plunges into the sordid - his beloved is

84. Antic Hay, p. 285

85. W. Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury, (Penguin, 1964), p. 118

86. Antic Hay, p. 306

87. Ibid., p. 120

88. Ibid., p. 121

89. Ibid., p. 118-119

90. Ibid., p. 134

none other than Shearwater's wife playing the part of "the fastidious lady",⁹¹ Eve with a serpentine body, folded in pink kimono! With Emily, the next conquest, Gumbriel is snared by pity for a whimsical orphan who has run away from a brutish, drunken husband. Together, he deludes himself, they have found simplicity and tranquillity, explored the quiet places of country and mind, abandoned themselves to the sensual throb of a symphony concert; and then, in a delicious stupor of love, he has found the form of his beloved's arm to be comparable with a piece of music! They plan to retire into perfect peace in the form of a cottage in Sussex, which Gumbriel imagines complete with "honeysuckles and red ramblers and hollyhocks."⁹² But, on the way to the station, Gumbriel is waylaid by Myra Viveash and exchanges the illusion of a pastoral utopia with the naïve Emily for "a descending spiral tour of hell",⁹³ conducted by the "memento mori",⁹⁴ Mrs. Viveash herself.

With the association of Gumbriel and Myra, the antic hay reaches a peak of frenzy, epitomized in the night club scene with its grotesque pantomime. Gathering momentum, it plunges into a conducted tour of Myra's former lovers, a sadistic survey of the victims destroyed by the mysterious Sphinx. One by one she recalls or observes each in his destruction, from Tony Lamb killed in war, to Coleman swamped by sensuality, Lypiatt on the brink of suicide, Shearwater trying to escape her in a desperate physiological experiment of perspiring to death, and finally to Piers Cotton. Of course Gumbriel, too, forms part of her train of former lovers: she entices him away from Emily to accompany her on a journey towards destruction in an ironically desperate attempt "to give Nil the slip."⁹⁵ And he finds himself drawn into the vacuum of her inner world, "a pre-Adamite empty world"⁹⁶ where boredom, disillusionment and ennui predominate. They become as mirrors, each reflecting the other's state: she looks out on "steppes after steppes of ennui, horizon beyond horizon, for ever the same",⁹⁶ and he sees his future life, deprived of Emily, as a desert:-

Aridly, the desert of sand stretched out with
not a tree and not even a mirage.....⁹⁷
Aridly, the desiccated waste extended.....⁹⁸

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91. Antic Hay, p. 133
92. Ibid., p. 203
93. Ibid., p. 229
94. Ibid., p. 74
95. Ibid., p. 215
96. Ibid., p. 199
97. Ibid., p. 240-241
98. Ibid., p. 242

Nevertheless, by committing himself to Myra, he commits himself to that waste, and humours her as she languishes "from a remote bed of agony",⁹⁹ "that death-bed on which her restless spirit for ever and wearily exerted itself."¹⁰⁰ Theirs becomes a mutual task of self-destruction, with Gumbriel joining Myra in the strain of boring herself "to that ultimate point of fatigue at which she did at last feel ready for repose."¹⁰¹

Myra, with her taunting sensuality and mask-like face, is reminiscent of Anne in Crome Yellow in a more destructive form. Both are assessed through the eyes of the artist: Anne in a painting by Gombauld presenting her figure "melting into a kind of soft decay",¹⁰² her face a "lazy, expressionless mask",¹⁰² and Myra in a sketch by Lypiatt showing arms like "sleek tubes",¹⁰³ her cheek defined by a "bright, metallic polish."¹⁰³ Yet, in the character drawing, Myra is a less realistic figure than Anne. We know little of her physical features, except for the expressionless eyes, "like the pale blue eyes which peer out of the Siamese cat's black velvet mask."¹⁰⁴ Her age, she tells Lypiatt, is "Twenty-five, I should imagine."¹⁰⁵ Huxley deliberately conceives her as a force rather than in a realistic portrait and uses her to crystallize that restless, self-destructive and inhuman spirit which motivates the characters and pervades the atmosphere of Antic Hay. And as time goes by things can only become worse since time, Myra muses, "kills everything, kills desire, kills sorrow, kills in the end the mind that feels them; wrinkles and softens the body while it still lives, rots it like a medlar, kills it too at last."¹⁰⁶ Developing her thought in After Many a Summer, Propter reflects on time as "the raw material of evil",¹⁰⁷ but unlike Myra, poses the alternative of good outside time in the sphere of mystical non-attachment. Since time has prematurely killed Myra's humanity and severed her contact with man, she tries to lose herself in the streets of London and like Eliot's travellers finds herself:-

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- 99. Antic Hay, p. 206
 - 100. Ibid., p. 81
 - 101. Ibid., p. 241
 - 102. Crome Yellow, p. 124
 - 103. Antic Hay, p. 93
 - 104. Ibid., p. 71
 - 105. Ibid., p. 98
 - 106. Ibid., p. 200
 - 107. After Many a Summer, p. 90

Distracted from distraction by distraction
 Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
 Tumid apathy with no concentration
 Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind
 That blows before and after time,
 Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs
 Time before and time after.¹⁰⁸

Life becomes a stage set, as unreal as the grotesque interlude at the Soho night-club where monsters dominate the scene, personifying the sense of love, lust and disgust, which preoccupies Gumbril's circle of friends and which pervades the Circe scene in Joyce's Ulysses. Frail, bent, bandy-legged and tubercular, Huxley's monster sees his "slug-dank tatters of lung"¹⁰⁹ reflected in the external condition of a corrupt city, hidden in a cloud of stench. Yet, like Lypiatt and Gumbril Senior who strive to recapture the ancient glories of art and architecture, the monster's imagination soars to embrace the ideal of Spartan womanhood:-

The young girls of Sparta..... The sun caressed their skins till they were brown and transparent like amber or a flask of olive oil. Their breasts were hard, their bellies flat. They were pure with the chastity of beautiful animals. Their thoughts were clear, their minds cool and untroubled.¹⁰⁹

Humiliated by the avaricious overtures of a prostitute who makes a mockery of his ideal, the monster turns once more to his dream of an harmonious love:-

Somewhere there must be love like music. Love harmonious and ordered: two spirits, two bodies moving contrapuntally together. Somewhere, the stupid brutish act must be made to make sense, must be enriched, must be made significant. Lust, like Diabelli's waltz, a stupid air, turned by a genius into three-and-thirty fabulous variations. Somewhere.....¹¹⁰

Finally he dies in an asylum, consumed and destroyed by his vision of recreating the world through love, of climbing from the "social sewer... through the manhole, out of the manhole, beyond humanity."¹¹¹

Unlike the eccentric and ineffectual Gumbril Senior and the bombastic Lypiatt who dies, not through pursuing his ideal but through his inability to face the dismal reality of his artistic failure, the monster is unique in his concerted attempt to rise above the hideousness of humanity, even though the endeavour proves

108. T.S. Eliot: Four Quartets, 'Burnt Norton', (London: Faber, 1959), p. 17

109. Antic Hay, p. 222

110. Ibid., p. 227

111. Ibid., p. 230

fatal. He provides an ironic comment on the humans - Gumbril Junior, Myra Viveash, Coleman and Mercaptan - who, for the most part, are content to be carried along in the sewer's stream, to dance their antic hay to destruction. It is precisely here that the chief difference arises in the tone and construction of these two early novels. Crome Yellow is essentially static, consisting in the main of discussions between the house guests who are confined to a single setting so that though the topics range widely, they are given a unity of locale which tends to make them more acceptable artistically. Antic Hay, by contrast, moves in a perpetual restlessness, gathering up in its stream of themes, actions and characters, a hotch-potch of politics, art, science, hedonism and nihilism, more marked in variety because of the different settings, from schoolroom to Gumbril Senior in Paddington, the Soho night-club, the apartments of Mercaptan and Coleman, Bojanus the tailor, Boldero the inventor. In Those Barren Leaves published two years after Antic Hay, Huxley returns to the Peacockian setting, this time in the form of the palace of the Cybo Malaspina set in remote splendour on a hill overlooking the village of Vezza. The conversation between the Crome Manor guests is resumed by parallel characters: Calamy as a development of Denis Stone, Falx and Cardan reminiscent of Scogan, Mrs. Aldwinkle who brings to mind Priscilla Wimbush.

It is perhaps through the different locale and technique of these early novels that Huxley is able to point to an opposing philosophy: the aristocratic manor represents an escape from life in a passive, sedentary and ideal existence, the cosmopolitan backdrop to Antic Hay a plunging into the stream of contemporary life, squalid, restless, repulsive. And the characters react accordingly: Denis Stone, satirized by Scogan, dreams of a remote world of art and amour; Calamy escapes to a Wordsworthian existence in a peasant's cottage, "an ancient, instinctive, animally sagacious life;"¹¹² while Cardan nostalgically pictures a Grecian utopia:-

'..... the kingdom of ancient Greece, purged of every historical Greek that ever existed, and colonized out of the imaginations of modern artists, scholars and philosophers. In such a world one might live positively, so to speak - live with the stream, in the direction of the main current - not negatively, as one has to now, in reaction against the general trend of existence.'¹¹³

112. Those Barren Leaves, p. 364

113. Ibid., p. 205-206

By contrast, Gumbriel Junior is denied the ideal, the pastoral utopia with his beloved Emily. His is no longer the hermetically sealed world of the aristocracy with its armchair socialists and retired gentleman historians but a rubbing shoulders with the "'uman 'erd'"¹¹⁴ an active involvement in the sterile socializing of the mass. The genteel distractions of the aristocracy in Crome Yellow and Those Barren Leaves give way to the equally barren pastimes of the democratic mass and the underlying note which emerges from Huxley's early works - novels, short stories and On the Margin essays - is a sense of despair and ennui shared alike by aristocrat and emancipated. Gumbriel Junior finds it impossible to abandon Myra Viveash "before she had bored herself to that ultimate point of fatigue at which she did at last feel ready for repose."¹¹⁵ The narrator of "Two or Three Graces" considers boredom personified in the figures of Herbert Comfrey and his brother-in-law, John Peddley, each of whom clings like a burr to his victim, "stuffs you with his thick and suffocating discourse.... rams his suety personality, like a dumpling, down your throat."¹¹⁶

The bores take on a nightmarish quality and plunge the thinly disguised narrator of "Two or Three Graces", Huxley himself, into a kind of limbo, an oblivion bordering on the hellish. This is the strangely grotesque world of Richard Greenow, caught in a Jekyll and Hyde duality, driven to madness by his roles as conscientious objector, Greenow, and sentimentally patriotic novelist, Pearl Bellairs. The no-man's land is also peopled by the ascetic Lully, haunted by the vision of his beloved's cancerous breast; by the goddess, Cynthia, pursued by the satyr Lykenham. In "Happy Families" we are transported to a tropical setting of curious insectivorous plants much as in Tennessee Williams' Suddenly Last Summer¹¹⁷ to find, looming against the backdrop, the bizarre figure of the lustful Cain who prances round the beautiful Topsy, voicing his lascivious approval in the repeated "Oh, nyum, nyum!"¹¹⁸

114. Antic Hay, p. 114

115. Ibid., p. 241

116. Two or Three Graces, "Two or Three Graces", p. 1

117. Tennessee Williams: Five Plays (Secker & Warburg: London, 1962), 'Garden District', "Suddenly Last Summer", Scene 1, p. 239

118. Limbo, "Happy Families", p. 219

Huxley pursues the grotesquely ironic in the volume Mortal Coils in which he paints the moving picture of a German nun who, in an attempt to convert the wounded criminal Kuno, helps him to escape from the Grauburg hospital. But the wily Kuno, interested in material gain only, abandons her in a shepherd's hut, leaving her to wail hysterically at the loss of her only material possession - a set of perfect, rly false teeth.¹¹⁹ The pattern for all five stories in Mortal Coils remains the same: hopefully the protagonist pursues his illusion only to be cruelly awakened at the end. The art patron, Lord Badgery, eagerly awaits Tillotson, that grand old relic of the nineteenth century, friend of the great artist, Benjamin Robert Haydon, only to find a pathetically senile figure, "a mummy in an absurd suit of evening clothes with a green ribbon across the shirt front."¹²⁰ In adapting the grotesque to the theme of longevity, Huxley anticipates his later novel, After Many a Summer, in which a maniacal Joe Stoyte pursues a monstrous Methuselah in the form of the degenerate, bicentenarian Fifth Earl of Gonister.

In more serious vein Huxley's sense of the grotesque is transformed into a Swiftian disgust for humanity. He compares Gulliver in the box made by the Brobdingnagians with Shearwater the scientist in a heated room, pedalling his exercise bicycle as part of an outlandish experiment to change the composition of the blood by excessive sweating.¹²¹ Or else, through Lypiatt the artist, he comments on the back streets of London with their attics and stables as dwellings for the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos:-

Between the broad double-doors through which the horses passed to their fodder and repose were little narrow human doors - for the Yahoos, Lypiatt used to say in his large allusive way; and when he said it he laughed with the loud and bell-mouthed cynicism of one who sees himself as a misunderstood and embittered Prometheus.¹²²

119. Mortal Coils, "Nuns at Luncheon".

120. Ibid., "The Tillotson Banquet," p. 93

121. Antic Hay, p. 327

122. Ibid., p. 88

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- 119. Mortal Coils, "Nuns at Luncheon".
 - 120. Ibid., "The Tillotson Banquet," p. 93
 - 121. Antic Hay, p. 327
 - 122. Ibid., p. 88

Gloomily contemplating the future in a setting of autumnal despair and melancholy, Huxley is gripped by the horror of contemporary politics as:-

..... the sensations of Gulliver in the paws of the Queen of Brobdingnag's monkey - the sensations of some small and helpless being at the mercy of something monstrous and irresponsible and idiotic. There sits the monkey "on the ridge of a building five hundred yards above the ground, holding us like a baby in one of his fore paws." Will he let go? Will he squeeze us to death? The best we can hope for is to be "let drop on a ridge tile," with only enough bruises to keep one in bed for a fortnight. But it seems very unlikely that some "honest lad will climb up and, putting us in his breeches pocket, bring us down safe."¹²³

By a mere slip of the typewriter, one of those "unconscious deviations into genius,"¹²⁴ Huxley invents "a new portmanteau word.... 'The Human Vomeidy'",¹²⁴ so aptly summing up the age of power politics, sterile distractions, hackneyed art. In On the Margin he contrasts the imbecile pastimes of the twentieth century with the "intelligent pleasures"¹²⁵ of the Elizabethan aristocrat, the lively seasonal rites of the peasant:-

In place of the old pleasures demanding intelligence and personal initiative, we have vast organizations that provide us with ready-made distractions - distractions which demand from pleasure-seekers no personal participation and no intellectual effort of any sort. To the interminable democracies of the world a million cinemas bring the same stale balderdash. There have always been fourth-rate writers and dramatists; but their works, in the past, quickly died without getting beyond the boundaries of the city or the country in which they appeared. Today, the inventions of the scenario-writer go out from Los Angeles across the whole world. Countless audiences soak passively in the tepid bath of nonsense. No mental effort is demanded of them, no participation; they need only sit and keep their eyes open.¹²⁶

123. On the Margin, "How the Days Draw In", p. 102

124. Ibid., "On Deviating into Sense", p. 81

125. Ibid., "Pleasures", p. 47

126. Ibid., p. 48-49

The new world of 1920 presents art in the form of advertisements, folk poetry and lyrics ranging from 'You Made Me love You' to 'My Old Kentucky Home', conjuring up all the stock emotions of love, filial devotion, regret, recollection and national pride. Religion, too, is designed to cater for communal emotion: hence an American idea of "'A Dramatic Service of Community Singing'" which presents Group Personages - Joy, Love, Liberty - as a reaction against the individual.¹²⁷ Even popular taste in beauty is essentially democratic since it idolizes the "soubrette" rather than the aristocrat.¹²⁸ It was the horror of the democratic Lowest Common Denominator coupled with the developments in science and industry which stimulated Huxley's Brave New World: the themes touched on in the early novels and On The Margin essays are isolated and elaborated in the utopian work.

The despair voiced in the essays differs in quality from the futile restlessness of the fiction chiefly because Huxley places his ennui within an historical context. In "Accidie", he traces the demon of "despair and hopeless unbelief"¹²⁹ from spiritual vice of the Thebaid monks to Burton's physiological explanation of spleen, to the eighteenth and nineteenth century metamorphosis of the once-regarded vice to "a literary virtue,"¹³⁰ "an essentially lyrical emotion."¹³¹ He then follows up the sense of universal futility through its intensification during the French Revolution, the advent of industrialism, and finally to the catastrophic World War, the crowning blow to a rapid series of disillusionments and upheavals which inevitably fastened accidie on post-war man as "a state of mind":-

The mal du siècle was an inevitable evil; indeed, we can claim with a certain pride that we have a right to our accidie. With us it is not a sin or a disease of the hypochondries; it is a state of mind which fate has forced upon us.¹³²

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127. On the Margin, "Democratic Art", p. 69
 128. Ibid., "Beauty in 1920", p. 117
 129. Ibid., "Accidie", p. 19
 130. Ibid., p. 21
 131. Ibid., p. 22
 132. Ibid., p. 25

The fate of accidie overwhelms Huxley in the form of futility, despair and doubt about the purpose of writing in a purposeless world.¹³³ Sceptical and indifferent, he voices his attitude in the words of Scogan who attempts to cheer Denis in the midst of his woefully unsuccessful love affair:-

'Worried about the cosmos, eh?' Mr. Scogan patted him on the arm. 'I know the feeling,' he said. 'It's a most distressing symptom. What's the point of it all? All is vanity. What's the good of continuing to function if one's doomed to be snuffed out at last along with everything else?' Yes, yes. I know exactly how you feel. It's most distressing if one allows oneself to be distressed. But then why allow oneself to be distressed? After all, we all know that there's no ultimate point. But what difference does that make?'¹³⁴

Resigned to his fate, Huxley finds a certain uneasy consolation in the works of Swift and Voltaire as reflecting the very mood and attitude of 1922 - the brutal cynicism in the face of human stupidity expressed by Martin in Candide,¹³⁵ the pettiness of polite conversation pointing to the utter lack of communication among men as exposed in Swift's "Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation, according to the most polite mode and method now used at Court and in the Best Companies of England."¹³⁶ Occasionally his sense of despair and melancholy is intensified by the reading of the ancient masters. Fulke Greville's "O Wearisome Condition of Humanity" quoted in 'How the Days Draw In',¹³⁷ becomes the frontispiece for his novel, Point Counter Point, while the monster of doom, misery and privation depicted in Greville's Prologue to "Alaham", sets the tone for the night-club interlude in Antic Hay. In short, Huxley finds in history a backing for his puritanical despair of man, the original sinner, coupled with the revulsion of Swift, the brutal cynicism of Voltaire.

Escaping from those literary figures who so aptly mirror his own mood, he turns back the clock to revel in the blissful, earthy sanity of Chaucer. He rescues him from "the sediment of muddy comment and criticism",¹³⁸ and revives his spirit as summed up in "'God's plenty!'"¹³⁹ the spirit of the humble poet of nature

133. On the Margin, "On Re-reading Candide", p. 17

134. Crome Yellow, p. 166

135. On the Margin, "On Re-reading Candide", p. 12-17

136. Ibid., "Polite Conversation", p. 89

137. Ibid., "How the Days Draw In", p. 103

138. Ibid., "Chaucer", p. 203

139. Ibid., p. 205

who accepts both nature and human nature without horror, without the desire to reform, a far cry from the spirit of gross and thumping violence which characterizes the vigorous Verhaeren who as noble crusader, "glorious with bunting and mounted on a rocking-horse,"¹⁴⁰ is strongly reminiscent of the Point Counter Point character, Webley, leader of the British Freemen. Reasonable, tolerant, humane, imaginative and gently sceptical, Chaucer epitomizes the qualities lacking in Huxley's contemporaries:-

He (Chaucer) looks out on the world with a delight that never grows old or weary. The sights and sounds of daily life, all the lavish beauty of the earth fill him with a pleasure which he can only express by calling it a "joy" or a "haven."¹⁴¹

Edward Thomas is another source of rejuvenation "in the midst of the intolerable turmoil and aridity of daily wage-earning existence."¹⁴² As true nature poet, Huxley defines him as a man who not only feels profoundly the emotions which nature inspires, but also transmits them directly, resisting the temptation to rationalize, analyse or philosophize. In this way, Thomas captures that strange admixture of happiness and "exultant melancholy"¹⁴³ which Huxley regards as the chief emotion induced by man's contact with the natural. Turning to Ben Jonson, he finds consolation in the force of character, firmly and steadfastly pitted against the upheavals of the age - in art, the breakdown of neo-classicism - an age analogous with Huxley's world of chaos and flux. The apotheosis of the sober man, "the Plain Man,"¹⁴⁴ Jonson relied on "those solid qualities of sense, perseverance, and sound judgment which any decent citizen of a decent country may be expected to possess."¹⁴⁴ Jonson channelled his sober classical outlook and logical intellect and aimed at reforming humanity by satirizing man in a universe of Humours to produce grim, heartless comedy, the perfect antidote to modern humanitarianism and sentimentality.

140. On the Margin, "Verhaeren", p. 161

141. Ibid., "Chaucer", p. 213

142. Ibid., "Edward Thomas", p. 149

143. Ibid., p. 150

144. Ibid., "Ben Jonson", p. 193

Huxley thus escapes into the serene world of literature. Like the gentleman historian Wimbush, he believes that "the proper study of mankind is books,"¹⁴⁵ and in The Most Agreeable Vice, he confesses himself to be addicted to the vice of reading which can be "as intoxicating, as reality-destroying as wine."¹⁴⁶ Theoretically, in the figure of Gumbriel Junior, he has quested after involvement, debated the escape from living as cowardly, a disregarding of the facts of contemporary life. Francis Chelifer rebukes Calamy for his hermit-like retreat:-

'But it's cowardice to run away,' Chelifer insisted. 'One has no right to ignore what for ninety-nine out of every hundred human beings is reality - even though it mayn't actually be the real thing. One has no right.'

'Why not?' asked Calamy. 'One has a right to be six foot nine inches high and to take sixteens in boots. One has a right, even though there are not more than three or four in every million like one. Why hasn't one the right to be born with an unusual sort of mind, a mind that can't be content with the surface-life of appearances?'

'But such a mind is irrelevant, a freak,' said Chelifer. 'In real life - or if you prefer it, in the life that we treat as if it were real - it's the other minds that preponderate, that are the rule. The brutish minds. I repeat, you haven't the right to run away from that. If you want to know what human life is, you must be courageous and live as the majority of human beings actually do live. It's singularly revolting, I assure you.'¹⁴⁷

Yet the novels and short stories abound in escapers who form a leit-motif throughout these early works. There is Wimbush of Crome Yellow, "ageless, unchanging",¹⁴⁸ dreaming of a life of "dignified seclusion, surrounded by the delicate attentions of

145. On the Margin, "Accumulations", p. 75

146. The Most Agreeable Vice, p. 6

147. Those Barren Leaves, p. 370-371

148. Crome Yellow, p. 14

silent and graceful machines, and entirely secure from any human intrusion."¹⁴⁹ Porteous and Gumbriel Senior live in a world bound by the glories of late Latin poetry, Roman and Greek architecture. In "Splendour by Numbers", the eccentric Emberlin is concerned exclusively with a remote world of "Philarithmics"¹⁵⁰ or "Art by Numbers".¹⁵¹ Uncle Spencer, living in mental solitude, runs the risk of becoming a pathetically ludicrous figure, so inexperienced in the way of the world that he yearns for the street urchin, Emmy Wendle, as an heroic, innocent, courageous and virtuous figure,¹⁵² much like the pitiful Mr. Topes who yearns for the madonna-like Barbara as an incarnation of Clara d'Ellébeuse.¹⁵³ Among these, the very obvious intellectual hermits, emerges the figure of the young, shy and diffident recluse, painfully aware of his inadequacies: in short, he sees himself as "a pedestrian literary man with quiet tastes... second-rate, physically, morally, mentally."¹⁵⁴ On one hand in the words of Hubert, the recluse may earnestly say:-

"..... one has the world of thought to live in. That, at any rate, is simple and clear and beautiful. One can always live apart from the brutal scramble."¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, he may merely reject this attitude as a pretence:-

..... at that time..... I was taking a very high philosophical line about this sort of thing. I was pretending that people didn't interest me - only books, only ideas. What a fool one can make of oneself at that age!¹⁵⁶

It is not that Huxley entirely condones the attitude of the quietist. In "Two or Three Graces", Kingham, the figure of D.H. Lawrence criticizes the central character, Dick, for his futile, drifting existence, his lack of faith in anything, his "spiritual impotence."¹⁵⁷ Yet the fact remains that, though the escaper is fully and tormentedly aware of his inadequacies, he is unable to change his situation: he is even forced by society into seclusion.

149. Crome Yellow, p. 162

150. Limbo, "Eupompus gave Splendour to Art by Numbers", p. 202

151. Ibid., p. 197

152. Twice Seven, "Uncle Spencer".

153. Mortal Coils, "Green Tunnels".

154. Limbo, "Happily Ever After," p. 143

155. Twice Seven, "Hubert and Minnie", p. 149

156. Ibid., "Little Mexican", p. 122

157. Two or Three Graces, "Two or Three Graces", p. 15

Despite his struggles, there is no place for him in the contemporary world. Denis Stone in Crome Yellow not only fails to find a niche in the Crome Manor society, but is also informed by Scogan that there is no place for him in the future:-

Mr. Scogan looked at him for a moment in silence. 'It's difficult to see where you would fit in,' he said at last, 'You couldn't do manual work; you're too independent and unsuggestible to belong to the larger Herd; you have none of the characteristics required in a Man of Faith. As for the Directing Intelligences, they will have to be marvellously clear and merciless and penetrating.' He paused and shook his head. 'No, I can see no place for you; only the lethal chamber.'¹⁵⁸

Similarly, in a discussion on social hierarchy with Bojanus the tailor, Gumbril Junior realizes that he, too, belongs to no one group or social circle but remains in the unenviable position of a chameleon living on a tartan:-

Mr. Bojanus smiled and shook his head. "You and I, Mr. Gumbril," he said, "we're not the sort of people to be impressed with feathers or even by talking and ordering about. We may not be leaders ourselves. But at any rate we aren't the 'erd."

"Not the main herd, perhaps."

"Not any 'erd," Mr. Bojanus insisted proudly.

Gumbril shook his head dubiously and buttoned up his trousers. He was not sure, now that he came to think of it, that he didn't belong to all the herds - by a sort of honorary membership and temporarily, as occasion offered, as one belongs to the Union at the sister university or to the Naval and Military Club while one's own is having its annual clean-out. Shearwater's herd, Lypiatt's herd, Mr. Mercaptan's herd, Mrs. Viveash's herd, the architectural herd of his father, the educational herd (but that, thank God! was now bleating on distant pastures), the herd of Mr. Bojanus - he belonged to them all a little, to none of them completely. Nobody belonged to his herd. How could they? No chameleon can live with comfort on a tartan.¹⁵⁹

158. Crome Yellow, p. 131

159. Antic Hay, p. 116

In theory, Gumbril's undefined social position affords him considerable variety and potential insight into different cliques, though he makes little use of his opportunities for a detached study of kaleidoscopic mankind. It is left to Philip Quarles to recognize this variety as "the essence of the new way of looking.... multiplicity".¹⁶⁰

160. Point Counter Point, p. 196

II

M U L T I P L I C I T Y

Point Counter Point.

As novelist within the novel, the Huxleyan hero Philip Quarles poses the "musicalization of fiction":-

Not in the symbolist way, by subordinating sense to sound..... But on a large scale, in the construction. Meditate on Beethoven. The changes of moods, the abrupt transitions. (Majesty alternating with a joke, for example, in the first movement of the B flat major quartet. Comedy suddenly hinting at prodigious and tragic solemnities in the scherzo of the C sharp minor quartet). More interesting still the modulations, not merely from one key to another, but from mood to mood. A theme is stated, then developed, pushed out of shape, imperceptibly deformed, until, though still recognizably the same, it has become quite different. In sets of variations the process is carried a step further. Those incredible Diabelli variations, for example. The whole range of thought and feeling, yet all in organic relation to a ridiculous little waltz tune. Get this into a novel. How? The abrupt transitions are easy enough. All you need is a sufficiency of characters and parallel, contrapuntal plots. While Jones is murdering a wife, Smith is wheeling the perambulator in the park. You alternate the themes. More interesting, the modulations and variations are also more difficult. A novelist modulates by reduplicating situations and characters. He shows several people falling in love, or dying, or praying in different ways - dissimilars solving the same problem. Or, vice versa, similar people confronted with dissimilar problems. In this way you can modulate through all the aspects of your theme, you can write variations in any number of different moods.¹

Quarles draws on the musical terms of theme, variation, modulation, harmonization and counterpoint, as in Bach's fugues, and applies these principles to the human fugue through the medium of language and novel writing. The musical metaphor is clarified in the opening chapters of Point Counter Point, during a musical evening at Lady Tantamount's:-

1. Point Counter Point, p. 297-298

II

MULTIPLICITYPoint Counter Point.

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1. Point Counter Point, p. 297-298

In the opening largo John Sebastian had, with the help of Pongileoni's snout and the air column, made a statement: There are grand things in the world, noble things; there are men born kingly; there are real conquerors, intrinsic lords of the earth. But of an earth that is, oh! complex and multitudinous, he had gone on to reflect in the fugal allegro. You seem to have found the truth; clear, definite, unmistakable, it is announced by the violins; you have it, you triumphantly hold it. But it slips out of your grasp to present itself in a new aspect among the cellos and yet again in terms of Pongileoni's vibrating air column. The parts live their separate lives; they touch, their paths cross, they combine for a moment to create a seemingly final and perfected harmony, only to break apart again. Each is always alone and separate and individual. 'I am I,' asserts the violin; 'the world revolves round me.' 'Round me,' calls the cello. 'Round me,' the flute insists. And all are equally right and equally wrong; and none of them will listen to the others.

In the human fugue there are eighteen hundred million parts. The resultant noise means something perhaps to the statistician, nothing to the artist. It is only by considering one or two parts at a time that the artist can understand anything. Here, for example, is one particular part; and John Sebastian puts the case. The Rondeau begins, exquisitely and simply melodious, almost a folk-song. It is a young girl singing to herself of love, in solitude, tenderly mournful. A young girl singing among the hills, with the clouds drifting overhead. But solitary as one of the floating clouds, a poet had been listening to her song. The thoughts that it provoked in him are the Sarabande that follows the Rondeau. His is a slow and lovely meditation on the beauty (in spite of squalor and stupidity), the profound goodness (in spite of all the evil), the oneness (in spite of such bewildering diversity) of the world. It is a beauty, a goodness, a unity that no intellectual research can discover, that analysis dispels, but of whose reality the spirit is from time to time suddenly and overwhelmingly convinced. A girl singing to herself under the clouds suffices to create the certitude. Even a fine morning is enough. Is it illusion or the revelation of profoundest truth? Who knows? Pongileoni blew, the fiddlers drew their rosined horse-hair across the stretched intestines of lambs; through the long Sarabande the poet slowly meditated his lovely and consoling certitude.²

In accordance with the principles of Bach's suite, the counterpointed plots of the novel are meticulously planned to form a kind of polyphonic narrative. The Tantamount musical evening and the gathering

2. Point Counter Point, p. 29-30

at Sbisa's, relics of the Crome Manor house-party and the meetings at the Soho restaurant in Antic Hay, are used as technical devices, to bring the characters together so that individual guests can be singled out for detailed observation, for detached study by Quarles himself. As "zoological novelist",³ he plays with the idea of compiling a modern Bestiary, conceiving human quirks in terms of animal habits. He compares Walter Bidlake in his relationship with Lucy Tantamount to the female angler fishes who carry dwarf parasitic males attached to their bodies,⁴ or else he sees Lucy more dramatically in grotesque laughter, her mouth open, her bloodless tongue and gums reminiscent of the sacred crocodiles in India receiving food from their keepers. The strange and fantastic vision leaves him pondering:-

Everything's incredible, if you can skin off the crust of obviousness our habits put on it. Every object and event contains within itself an infinity of depths within depths. Nothing's in the least like what it seems - or rather it's like several million other things at the same time.⁵

Working on the same principle of depths within depths, of everything being implicit in anything, he muses that the simplest incident, any incident, "a walk from Piccadilly Circus to Charing Cross,"⁶ could contain in essence all the material needed for a novel, all the complexities, the multiplicity, "the astonishingness of the most obvious things."⁶ It was merely a matter of vision:-

'.... the essence of the new way of looking is multiplicity. Multiplicity of eyes and multiplicity of aspects seen. For instance, one person interprets events in terms of bishops; another in terms of the price of flannel camisoles; another, like that young lady from Gulmerg... thinks of it in terms of good times. And then there's the biologist, the chemist, the physicist, the historian. Each sees, professionally, a different aspect of the event, a different layer of reality. What I want to do is to look with all those eyes at once. With religious eyes, scientific eyes, economic eyes, homme moyen sensuel eyes...'⁶

3. Point Counter Point, p. 334

4. Ibid., p. 294

5. Ibid., p. 297

6. Ibid., p. 196

The artist, in Quarles's terms, is to be all-seeing, all-encompassing in his vision so as to assimilate the multiplicities of living in parallel and counterpointed patterns and unities. In his rôle as assimilator, he stands detached, unidentified with the human scene, uncommitted to a single philosophy, loyalty or morality. Like Proteus he can assume any shape or form which, as Quarles realizes, can become a dangerous facility. The self can become too fluid, plastic, shapeless and unmoulded:-

....this question of identity was precisely one of Philip's chronic problems. 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 rôles who was the actor. The amoeba, when it finds a prey, flows round it, incorporates it and oozes on. There was something amoeboid about Philip Quarles's mind. It was like a sea of spiritual protoplasm, capable of flowing in all directions, of engulfing every object in its path, of trickling into every crevice, of filling every mould and, having engulfed, having filled, of flowing on towards other obstacles, other receptacles, leaving the first empty and dry. At different times in his life and even at the same moment he had filled the most various moulds. He had been a cynic and also a mystic, a humanitarian and also a contemptuous misanthrope; he had tried to live the life of detached and stoical reason and another time he had aspired to the unreasonableness of natural and uncivilized existence. The choice of moulds depended at any given moment on the books he was reading, the people he was associating with. Burlap, for example, had redirected the flow of his mind into those mystical channels which it had not filled since he discovered Boehme in his undergraduate days. Then he had seen through Burlap and flowed out again, ready however at any time to let himself trickle back once more, whenever the circumstances seemed to require it. He was trickling back at this moment, the mould was heart-shaped. Where was the self to which he could be loyal?

Not only is Philip in danger of losing his identity, but also of becoming further and further removed from reality in a hierarchy of abstractions - a novelist within a novel, within a novel, within a novel, so that:-

7. Point Counter Point, p. 197-198

At about the tenth remove you might have a novelist telling your story in algebraic symbols or in terms of variations in blood-pressure, pulse, secretion of ductless glands and reaction times.⁸

Returning to Gatterden Manor, Philip tries to put into practice his theories of the whole story of the universe being implicit in any part of it.⁹ He describes the kitchen of the old house, the Tudor casements, the window boxes, the beams, the beachwood chairs, the indomitable old cook, the smells of cookery. Then, moving from the concrete and the sensuously perceived, he aims at throwing the picture into larger relief, opening into vistas of time, space and the cosmos:-

'Summer after summer, from the time when Shakespeare was a boy till now, ten generations of cooks have employed infra-red radiations to break up the protein molecules of spitted ducklings; ("thou wast not born for death, immortal bird," etc.).' One sentence, and I am already involved in history, art and all the sciences.⁹

The attempt at multiple vision, at philosophising launched by considerations of duckling, is at once comic and inappropriate. Philip's attitude recalls the incident in India where the chauffeur runs over a dog in hot pursuit of its mate. The event provokes Philip's reflections on the mating habits of animals, their relationship to the human, and all the moral and psychological implications of the scene.¹⁰ Listening to his theories, Elinor is interested and amused, but horrified. His reaction is inhuman, his intellectualizing grossly out of place. Huxley, tongue in cheek, counterpoints the inhumanity of the multiple vision with its all too human qualities: landing at Port Said, Philip is accosted by a man peddling indecent postcards which, in his ardour to sell, he offers in seventeen different languages - a fine parody of multiple communication!¹¹

8. Point Counter Point, p. 298

9. Ibid., p. 250-251

10. Ibid., p. 85

11. Ibid., p. 234

Philip's problems as novelist, his theories of writing, relate directly to his own personality, his physical disability, his education, his family environment. Introduced to him in Chapter vi, we see him as very tall and slim, hampered in his movement by a clumsy surgical boot. Hampered physically, he finds himself hampered emotionally and socially. Lamed in a cart accident as a child, he was cut off from the ordinary run of social and sporting activities - games, dances, tennis parties. He was vulnerable as a potential target of fun and, rather than risk mocking rejection, he "systematically retired from all personal contacts"¹² into a secure world of the intellect. Here he could hold his own and, in his work, he became impregnable as "a castle on the top of a mountain."¹³ To him this spelt freedom, freedom from claustrophobic personal relations and emotional possession:-

All his life long he had walked in a solitude, in a private void, into which nobody, not his mother, not his friends, not his lovers had ever been permitted to enter.¹⁴

Philip's is a development of Denis Stone's attitude in Crome Yellow: Denis using his intellect as a shield to parry human advances, wanting to establish human contact, though held back by the new and horrifying realization of spheres of consciousness outside his own.¹⁵ Philip, in his maturity, is aware of others and accepts the outside world in so far as it does not interfere with him personally. But, at times, he is caught between the horror of losing his intellectual freedom on one hand, and the desire to break free emotionally on the other, since he is fully aware that his liberty is "in a strange paradoxical way a handicap and a confinement to his spirit."¹⁶ Still, the freedom of intellect justifies his claim that the artist must be sufficiently free and uncommitted to perceive a multiplicity. Corresponding with his fluid personality, a fluidity Edouard experiences in Les Faux-Monnayeurs as a kind of "dépersonnalisation qui me permet d'éprouver comme mienne l'émotion d'autrui",¹⁷ the novel is to be lawless and unrestricted. There is a strong similarity between the theories of Philip Quarles and Edouard, for Huxley was

12. Point Counter Point, p. 232

13. ibid., p. 265

14. Ibid., p. 81

15. Crome Yellow, p. 138

16. Point Counter Point, p. 199

17. A. Gide: Les Faux-Monnayeurs, (Paris: Gallimard, 1925), p. 127

considerably influenced by Gide's conceptions: his correspondence with Lawrence serves as proof of his having read Gide's novel at the time of writing Point Counter Point.¹⁸ These are Édouard's theories on the art of the novel:-

-Est-ce parce que, de tous les genres littéraires, discourait Édouard, le roman reste le plus libre, le plus lawless.... est-ce peut-être pour cela, par peur de cette liberté même (car les artistes qui soupirent le plus après la liberté, sont les plus affolés souvent, dès qu'ils l'obtiennent) que le roman, toujours, s'est si craintivement cramponné à la réalité? Et je ne parle pas seulement du roman français. Tout aussi bien que le roman anglais, le roman russe, si échappé qu'il soit de la contrainte, s'asservit à la ressemblance. Le seul progrès qu'il envisage, c'est de se rapprocher encore plus du naturel.....¹⁹

-Et.....le sujet de ce roman?
.....Mon roman n'a pas de sujet. Oui, je sais bien; ça a l'air stupide ce que je dis là. Mettons si vous préférez qu'il n'y aura pas un sujet..."Une tranche de vie", disait l'école naturaliste. Le grand défaut de cette école, c'est de couper sa tranche toujours dans le même sens; dans le sens du temps, en longueur. Pourquoi pas en largeur? ou en profondeur? Pour moi, je voudrais ne pas couper du tout. Comprenez-moi: je voudrais tout y faire entrer, dans ce roman. Pas de coup de ciseaux pour arrêter, ici plutôt que là, sa substance. Depuis plus d'un an que j'y travaille, il ne m'arrive rien que je n'y verse, et que je n'y veuille faire entrer: ce que je vois, ce que je sais, tout ce que m'apprend la vie des autres et la mienne.....²⁰

-Ce que je voudrais faire, comprenez-moi, c'est quelque chose qui serait comme l'Art de la fugue.²¹

Both Philip and Édouard communicate their artistic theories through the diary which serves as a comment on the respective novels Point Counter Point and Les Faux-Monnayeurs. But, where Philip's jottings and brief and erratic, Édouard's journal forms a substantial part of the novel and bears out more closely

18. D.H. Lawrence: Letters, ed. A. Huxley, "To A. & M. Huxley", Friday, July 1927, (London: Heinemann, 1932), p. 686

19. A. Gide: Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 236

20. Ibid., p. 238

21. Ibid., p. 243

Gide's theory of the novel being a fluid stream of multiple themes without a fixed subject or a definite conclusion. Édouard writes of the conclusion:-

"X soutient que le bon romancier doit, avant de commencer son livre, savoir comment ce livre finira. Pour moi, qui laisse aller le mien à l'aventure, je considère que la vie ne nous propose jamais rien qui, tout autant qu'un aboutissement, ne puisse être considéré comme un nouveau point de départ. "Pourrait être continué..." c'est sur ces mots que je voudrais terminer mes Faux-Monnayeurs.²²

By contrast, Point Counter Point follows a more formal plan; the initial conflicts of the characters, their self-destruction, point toward the final blow of the murder and the novel ends ironically with Burlap's acceptance of the Universe. But however much the novels may differ in practice, they agree in theory. Like Édouard, Philip also upholds the liberty of the novel form, its multiplicity which does not constitute a mere slice of life, but a series of depths within depths, a series of counterpointed themes according to "l'Art de la fugue."²³ Within this flexible mould of the multiple vision he is to pour ("il verse") all his experiences, his observations of himself and of others. The two characters share similar views on the novel of ideas. Édouard, in heated discussion exclaims:-

Les idées., les idées, je vous l'avoue, m'intéressent plus que les hommes; m'intéressent par-dessus tout. Elles vivent; elles combattent; elles agonisent comme les hommes. Naturellement on peut dire que nous ne les connaissons que par les hommes, de même que nous n'avons connaissance du vent que par les roseaux qu'il incline; mais tout de même le vent importe plus que les roseaux.²⁴

This is Philip's analysis:-

Novel of ideas. The character of each personage must be implied, as far as possible, in the ideas of which he is the mouthpiece. In so far as theories are rationalizations of sentiments, instincts, dispositions of soul, this is feasible. The chief defect of the novel of ideas is that you must write about people who have ideas to express - which excludes all but about .01 per cent of the human race. Hence the real, the congenital novelists don't write such books. But then I never pretended to be a congenital novelist.²⁵

22. A. Gide: Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 425

23. Ibid., p. 243

24. Ibid., p. 242

25. Point Counter Point, p. 299

The theories are similar, but the attitude differs. Edouard, though more interested in the world of ideas, does not use this as an excuse to withdraw from the world of men, whereas Philip tends towards a certain intolerance of those not as intellectually endowed as he, as we clearly see in the above extract. He uses the world of ideas and, by extension, the novel of ideas, as a means of withdrawal from personal contacts, from living itself. Through Sidney Quarles, Huxley humorously understates the novelist's task, aiming his barbed irony at Philip:-

....anyone could write a novel. It was just a question of living and then proceeding to record the fact...²⁶

It is precisely just that question of living that thwarts Philip. He cannot just live as father and husband and accept the mundane, the domestic, "filled with small duties and casual human contacts."²⁷ Given the chance to break out and punish his impertinent child, he stifles his emotions and walks away.²⁷ Each situation demanding a human, emotional response leaves him paralysed, embarrassed and inadequate. He is unable to console Elinor, grief-stricken in the face of little Phil's mortal illness, and, on Phil's death, is severely uncomfortable at Spandrell's proffered sympathy which Philip regards as an invasion of privacy, trespassing into a misery which was "private, secret, sacred."²⁸ In yet another human situation, this time faced with his father after the Gladys affair, he is apprehensive and uneasy, once more out of his depth and only too eager to "divert the conversation if only for a moment from personalities to literature."²⁹ In each case, whether it be with family, friends or menials, he does his best to dehumanize the relationship. Conditioned by this life-long habit of withdrawal, his attempts at breaking out are a dismal failure. We see him with Molly d'Exergillod hoping to lose himself in passion, but she rejects his overtures as

26. Point Counter Point, p. 261-262

27. Ibid., p. 312

28. Ibid., p. 427

29. Ibid., p. 380

uncivilized, to offer exactly what he would have given in place of personal contact - "analytical anecdotes and philosophic epigrams."³⁰ He leaves, bitterly amused at the ironic joke, "the spectacle of a biter being bitten":-

Conscious and civilized, he had been defeated by someone even more civilized than himself. The justice was poetic. But what a warning! Parodies and caricatures are the most penetrating of criticisms. In Molly he perceived a kind of Max Beerbohm version of himself. The spectacle was alarming. Having smiled, he became pensive.

'I must be pretty awful,' he thought.³¹

Philip's tragedy is a kind of frustrated self-awareness: he fully realizes his shortcomings but is unable to remedy them. This is his penetrating self-diagnosis, thinly veiled in terms of a fictitious character:-

A man who has always taken pains to encourage his own intellectualist tendencies at the expense of all the others. He avoids personal relationships as much as he can, he observes without participating, doesn't like to give himself away, is always a spectator rather than an actor. Again, he has always been careful not to distinguish one day, one place from another; not to review the past and anticipate the future at the New Year, not to celebrate Christmas or birthdays, not to revisit the scenes of his childhood, not to make pilgrimages to the birthplaces of great men, battlefields, ruins and the like. By this suppression of emotional relationships and natural piety he seems to himself to be achieving freedom - freedom from sentimentality, from the irrational, from passion, from impulse and emotionalism. But in reality, as he gradually discovers, he has only narrowed and desiccated his life; and what's more, has cramped his intellect by the very process he thought would emancipate it. His reason's free, but only to deal with a small fraction of experience. He realizes his psychological defects, and desires, in theory, to change. But it's difficult to break life-long habits; and perhaps the habits are only the expression of an inborn indifference and coldness, which it might be

30. Point Counter Point, p. 331

31. Ibid., p. 332

almost impossible to overcome. And for him at any rate, the merely intellectual life is easier; it's the line of least resistance, because it's the line that avoids other human beings. Among them his wife.....He loves her in his way and she loves him in hers. Which means that he's contented and she's dissatisfied; for love in his way entails the minimum of those warm, confiding human relationships which constitute the essence of love in her way.....³²

In the volume of essays, Do What you Will, Huxley poses that:-

People with strongly marked idiosyncrasies of character have their world-view almost forced upon them by their psychology.³³

In Philip's case, his indifference, reserve and exclusive intellectualizing have contributed to a philosophy of stoicism and of "Pyrrhonian indifference."³⁴ His temperament and philosophy in turn determine his actions and reactions to living. Following the discussion at the club in Chapter xxi, Spandrell suggests "that events come ready-made to fit the people they happen to,"³⁵ and Philip rephrases the postulate by saying: "...it's the individual, with his history and character, who distorts the event into his own likeness,"³⁶ so that, we might add, in the end it would appear that the events come ready-made to fit the people involved. But the degree of distortion depends on the degree of the individual idiosyncrasy: the less bigoted the person, the less distorted his interpretation of living and the more fully he lives, both intellectually and instinctively. Of all his acquaintances, Philip sees Rampion as living the most fully: his is the comprehensive philosophy of the life-worshipper who:-

...accepts all the conflicting facts of human existence and tries to frame a way of life and a philosophy (a necessarily inconsistent way, a realistically self-contradictory philosophy) in accordance with them.³⁷

32. Point Counter Point, p. 345-346

33. Do What You Will, p. 295

34. Point Counter Point, p. 82

35. Ibid., p. 285

36. Ibid., p. 286

37. Do What You Will, p. 235-236

His is the polytheistic vision which embraces the Dionysian, the Pantheistic and the Apollonian; the Orphic and the rational; the Christian, Martial and Venerean; the Phallic, Minervan and the Jehovahistic - embraces all and not merely one of these aspects.³⁸

Huxley expounds the Lawrence-Rampion vision in Do What You Will, published a year after Point Counter Point, the essays acting as a mirror, reflecting in outline the philosophy embodied in the fiction of Point Counter Point. The title itself is revealing, with its emphasis on domination of the will as a limiting and dehumanizing force which puts blinkers on the individual and prevents him from seeing in terms of subtleties and multiplicities, as is the case with the majority of the characters in Point Counter Point - Spandrell's vision is confined to a Baudelaire-like depravity, Burlap reduced to a religious pervert in the image of St. Francis of Assisi.

Lawrence highly approved of Huxley's method in Do What You Will. In March 1928, he writes:-

Your ideas of the grand perverts is excellent. You might begin with a Roman - and go on to St. Francis - Michael Angelo and Leonardo - Goethe or Kant - Jean-Jacques Rousseau or Louis Quatorze. Byron - Baudelaire - Wilde - Proust: they all did the same thing, or tried to: to kick off, or to intellectualise and so utterly falsify the phallic consciousness, which is the basic consciousness, and the thing we mean, in the best sense, by common sense.....But do do a book of the grand orthodox perverts. Back of all of them lies ineffable conceit.³⁹

Having received the volume, he writes in October, 1929:

Aldous's book of essays came - and many thanks. I haven't read them all, but Baudelaire seemed to me very good. All needs saying, badly: Wonder what sort of a press it will get.⁴⁰

38. Do What You Will, p. 51

39. D.H. Lawrence: Letters, ed. by A. Huxley, p. 716

40. Ibid., p. 834

Balanced against the grand perverts, Huxley poses the life worshipper's philosophy, the Laurentian philosophy, which he pictures as a precarious balance of opposites, a Blakean marriage of Heaven and Hell.⁴¹ He mentions Lawrence in person:-

....Mr. D.H. Lawrence's new mythology of nature (new in its expression, but reassuringly old in substance) is a doctrine that seems to me fruitful in possibilities. The 'natural love' which he sets up as a norm is a passion less self-conscious and high-falutin, less obviously and precariously artificial, than that 'natural love' of the romantics, in which Platonic and Christian notions were essential ingredients.....It does not pretend, as the romantic and Christian conflict pretends, to be a battle between a diabolical Lower Self and certain transcendental Absolutes, of which the only thing that philosophy can tell us is that they are absolutely unknowable, and therefore, for our purposes, non-existent. It only claims to be, what in fact it is, a psychological conflict taking place in the more or less known and finite world of human interests.⁴²

This is Huxley's ideal and, by extension, it is Philip Quarles's goal in Point Counter Point. But surely both Huxley and his fictitious character suffer from the very will domination they criticize, building "metaphysical shelters",⁴³ living in a cosy world of ideas and neat philosophies which, cloud-like, change shape from the mystical to the positivistic, the sceptical to the believing. Huxley was drawn to Lawrence, as Philip is to Rampion, precisely because he provided vitality and life worship as a complement to sterile intellectualizing. And Huxley's was not merely the distant admiration for a fellow writer, but part of a close personal association with Lawrence which began in London during World War 1. Then, from 1926 till Lawrence's death in 1930 the two writers spent much time together in Italy and France, the period coinciding with Huxley's writing of Point Counter Point, published in 1928. Even at their first meeting Huxley was struck by Lawrence's rich vitality:-

41. Do What You Will, p. 277 (Rampion voices the same notion in Point Counter Point, p. 108)

42. Do What You Will, p. 139-140

43. Ibid., p. 120

What mattered was always Lawrence himself, was the fire that burned within him, that glowed with so strange and marvellous a radiance in almost all he wrote.⁴⁴

Finding Huxley's admiration transformed into the character of Mark Rampion, Lawrence was highly critical:-

.....your Rampion is the most boring character in the book - a gas-bag. Your attempt at intellectual sympathy! - It's all rather disgusting, and I feel like a badger that has its hole on Wimbledon Common and trying not to be caught.⁴⁵

In a letter to William Gerhardt in 1928, Lawrence pokes fun at the novel and considers launching a magazine with a mocking article - "The Big Toe Points out the Point or Points in Point Counter Point."⁴⁶ He adds:-

No, I refuse to be Rampioned. I am not responsible. Aldous' admiration is only skin-deep, and out of the Mary Mary quite contrary impulse.⁴⁷

According to Brewster Ghiselin, the American poet and friend of Lawrence who writes in 1929:-

Though Lawrence again and again gave evidence of a strong affection for Huxley himself, he was not much pleased with the book (Point Counter Point) and he ridiculed the purported picture in it of himself, Mark Rampion, rejecting it entirely. Remarking upon Huxley's preponderance of intellect and upon what Lawrence considered his deep need for a further scope of instinctive and intuitive awareness, he concluded emphatically, leaning backward and gazing before him thoughtfully as he spoke, "Poor old Aldous.... Poor old Aldous!"⁴⁷

Expressing his mock-indignation in verse, Lawrence writes in the volume, Pansies, "I am in a novel", a brisk colloquial poem in which he humorously sees himself reduced to "Persian cat", "a dog with harrowing fleas", "a funny pup", apt descriptions in the light of Philip Quarles's modern Bestiary:-

44. D.H. Lawrence: Letters, introduction by A. Huxley, p. xxix.

45. Ibid., p. 758

46. D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, ed. E. Nehls, Vol 3, 1925-1930, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), p. 265

47. Ibid., p. 291

I read a novel by a friend of mine
in which one of the characters was me,
the novel it sure was mighty fine
but the funniest thing that could be

was me, or what was supposed for me,
for I had to recognise
a few of the touches, like a low-born jake,
but the rest was a real surprise.

Well damn my eyes! I said to myself.
Well damn my little eyes!
If this is what Archibald thinks I am
he sure thinks a lot of lies.

Well think o' that now, think o' that!
That's what he sees in me!
I'm about as much like a Persian cat,
or a dog with a harrowing flea.

My Lord! a man's friends' ideas of him
would stock a menagerie
with a marvellous outfit! How did Archie see
such a funny pup in me?⁴⁸

Lawrence objected less to the portrait than to the atmosphere of inertia, perverseness and sterility which marked Huxley's novel. He clearly dissociates himself from Huxley and his generation in the following:-

I have read Point Counter Point with a heart sinking through my boot-soles and a rising admiration. I do think you've shown the truth, perhaps the last truth, about you and your generation, with really fine courage. It seems to me it would take ten times the courage to write P. Counter P. that it took to write Lady C.; and if the public knew what it was reading, it would throw a hundred stones at you, to one at me. I do think that art has to reveal the palpitating moment or the state of man as it is. And I think you do that, terribly. But what a moment! and what a state! if you can only palpitate to murder, suicide, and rape, in their various degrees - and you state plainly that it is so - caro, however are we going to live through the days? Preparing still another murder, suicide, and rape? But it becomes of a phantasmal boredom and produces ultimately inertia, inertia, inertia and final atrophy of the feelings. Till, I suppose, comes a final super-war, and murder, suicide, rape sweeps away the

48. The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence, ed. V. de Sola Pinto & W. Roberts, Vol. I, (London: Heinemann, 1964), p. 489

vast bulk of mankind. It is as you say - intellectual appreciation does not amount to so much, it's what you thrill to. And if murder, suicide, rape is what you thrill to, and nothing else, then it's your destiny - and you can't change it mentally. You live by what you thrill to, and there's the end of it. Still for all that it's a perverse courage which makes the man accept the slow suicide of inertia and sterility: the perverseness of a perverse child. - It's amazing how men are like that.....49

Writing to Lady Ottoline Morrell, he openly condemns Huxley's work:-

No, I don't like his books: even if I admire a sort of desperate courage of repulsion and repudiation in them. 50

He felt that Huxley was not doing himself justice, that he was only writing with part of himself, like a "precocious adolescent." 50 In condemning Huxley, Lawrence also criticized James Joyce, Proust and Gide whose Faux-Monnayeurs Huxley had lent him in 1927, only to provoke the comment:-

Faux-Monnayeurs was interesting as a revelation of the modern state of mind - but it's done to shock and surprise, pour épater - and fanfarons de vice! - not real. 51

His main attack was on the sense of physical repulsion as portrayed by these writers, the sincere and open revulsion for mankind:-

The modern novel, the very modern novel, has passed quite away from tragedy.....An English novel like Point Counter Point has gone beyond tragedy into exacerbation, and continuous nervous repulsion. Man is so nervously repulsive to man, so screamingly, nerve-rackingly repulsive! This novel goes one further. Man just smells, offensively and unbearably, not to be borne. The human stink! 52

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49. D.H. Lawrence: Letters, ed. A. Huxley, "To Aldous Huxley", Sunday, 1928, p. 757-758
50. Ibid., "To Lady Ottoline Morrell", 5th February, 1929, p. 783
51. Ibid., "To A. and M. Huxley", Friday, July 1927, p. 686
52. D.H. Lawrence: Selected Literary Criticism, ed. Anthony Beaumont, "Review of Bottom Dogs by Edward Dahlberg," (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 411

Paradoxically, though Lawrence rejected his fictitious portrait, his words ring much like Mark Rampion's, as we find him at Sbisa's expounding on the disease of modern man, his dehumanization, his misanthropy. A fiery vital figure, with piercing blue eyes and flame-like reddish hair, Rampion reveals himself in his very first words:-

'What I complain of,' said Mark Rampion,
'is the horrible unwholesome tameness of
our world.'⁵³

He is as cutting and definite in his views as the angular chin, sharp nose and firm jaw indicate. The main thesis which emerges in discussions and through his paintings, is the one-sidedness, the imbecility and the dehumanization of man in an industrial and scientific society which stresses the life of the intellect to the decay and atrophy of the instincts and emotions. Man is the horrible big gelded cat,⁵³ the lame mechanical puppet which we see in Brave New World. In his contempt and hatred for life, he pursues death in the form of extremes - promiscuity or asceticism - not as a human being but, in the case of Shelley, as "a kind of fairy slug",⁵⁴ boneless and bloodless, idealizing womanhood yet tormenting himself with the schoolboy's "sensual itch",⁵⁴ ignoring the skylark's reality in terms of blood, feathers, nest and appetite for caterpillars and treating it exclusively as a disembodied spirit - a kind of ethereal slug, like Shelley himself. Rampion is quite serious in his views: the very comedy the images evoke tends to stress his point.

Continuing his thesis, Rampion posits that man, in his imbalance of intellect and instinct, is at war against himself, a conflict which will be mirrored by an external, social revolution, beginning in his native region of the coalfields. It will be a war of monsters, rather than men, fighting to a bitter and nihilistic end. Dramatizing the procession of modern-day monsters, he presents in caricature "Fossils of the Past and Fossils of the Future":-

53. Point Counter Point, p. 98

54. Ibid., p. 124

It was in ink touched with coloured washes, extraordinarily brilliant and lively. Curving in a magnificently sweeping S, a grotesque procession of monsters marched diagonally down and across the paper. Dinosaurs, pterodactyls, titanothereiums, diplococuses, ichthyosauruses walked, swam or flew at the tail of the procession; the van was composed of human monsters, huge-headed creatures, without limbs or bodies, creeping slug-like on vaguely slimy extensions of chin and neck. The faces were mostly those of eminent contemporaries. Among the crowd Burlap recognized J.J. Thomson and Lord Edward Tantomount, Bernard Shaw, attended by eunuchs and spinsters, and Sir Oliver Lodge, attended by a sheeted and turnip-headed ghost and a walking cathode tube, Sir Alfred Mond and the head of John D. Rockefeller carried on a barge by a Baptist clergyman, Dr. Frank Crane and Mrs. Eddy wearing haloes, and many others.⁵⁵

Where with the prehistoric monster, the imbalance was in the feet, legs and tail, the modern 'fossil' is disproportionate in the size of his head, indicating the exclusiveness of his mentalizing. Rampion restates his theme in two more caricatures which Burlap recognizes as parables of modern philosophy: they present two Outlines of History, one according to H.G. Wells, depicting the optimistic faith in Darwin's theory of evolution, the other in Rampion's own terms, opposing the evolutionary theory with devolution and degeneration as Huxley himself did in his Brave New World:

The drawing on the left was composed on the lines of a simple crescendo. A very small monkey was succeeded by a very slightly larger pithecanthropus, which was succeeded in its turn by a slightly larger Neanderthal man. Palaeolithic man, neolithic man, bronze-age Egyptian and Babylonian man, iron-age Greek and Roman man - the figures slowly increased in size. By the time Galileo and Newton had appeared on the scene, humanity had grown to quite respectable dimensions. The crescendo continued uninterrupted through Watt and Stephenson, Faraday and Darwin, Bessemer and Edison, Rockefeller and Wanamaker, to come to a contemporary consummation in the figures of Mr. H.G. Wells himself and Sir Alfred Mond. Nor was the future neglected. Through the radiant mist of prophecy the forms of Wells and Mond, growing larger and larger at every repetition, wound away in a triumphant spiral clean off the paper, towards Utopian infinity. The drawing on the right had a less optimistic composition of peaks and declines. The small monkey

55. Point Counter Point, p. 212-213

very soon blossomed into a good-sized bronze-age man, who gave place to a very large Greek and a scarcely smaller Etruscan. The Romans grew smaller again. The monks of the Thebaid were hardly distinguishable from the primeval little monkeys. There followed a number of good-sized Florentines, English, French. They were succeeded by revolting monsters labelled Calvin and Knox, Baxter, and Wesley. The stature of the representative men declined. The Victorians had begun to be dwarfish and misshapen. Their twentieth-century successors were abortions. Through the mists of the future one could see a diminishing company of little gargoyles and fetuses with heads too large for their squelchy bodies, the tails of apes and the faces of our most eminent contemporaries, all biting and scratching and disembowelling one another with that methodical and systematic energy which belongs only to the very highly civilized.⁵⁶

In Chapter xxxiv Rampion's attack is centred on Philip Quarles as representative of the whole intellectualist tradition, living as part man and, as a result, inwardly decaying, degenerating to the infantile. He pinpoints the monsters of "conscious braininess and soulfulness"⁵⁷ in each and every layer of society, all attempting to be more than human, all ending up in self-destruction and death:-

'Christians and moralists and cultured aesthetes, and bright young scientists and Smilesian business men - all the poor little human frogs trying to blow themselves up into bulls of pure spirituality, pure idealism, pure efficiency, pure conscious intelligence, and just going pop, ceasing to be anything but the fragments of a little frog - decaying fragments at that. The whole thing's a huge stupidity, a huge disgusting lie...'⁵⁸

To make up the imbalance in man, Rampion suggests the kind of Jekyll and Hyde existence which Huxley poses in Do What You Will - Dr. Jekyll doing the metaphysical and scientific thinking, transacting business, designing machines, adding up figures, with a natural and spontaneous Mr. Hyde "to do the physical, instinctive living in the intervals of work",⁵⁹ the two aspects unconnected with each other. Rampion proposes a similar idea to that of Philip Quarles as a means of avoiding a nihilistic revolution:-

56. Point Counter Point, p. 213-214

57. Ibid., p. 213

58. Ibid., p. 403

59. Do What You Will, p. 125

The first step would be to make people live dualistically, in two compartments. In one compartment as industrialized workers, in the other as human beings. As idiots and machines for eight hours out of every twenty-four and real human beings for the rest..... Don't mix the two lives together; keep the bulk-heads watertight between them..... You've got to persuade everybody that all this grand industrial civilization is just a bad smell and that the real, significant life can only be lived apart from it.⁶⁰

Under these circumstances man will avoid striving to become more than human which only results in his becoming sub-human. He might attempt to live as a full being, neither angel nor devil, but delicately balanced as on a tightrope, "equilibrated, with mind and consciousness and spirit at one end of his balancing pole and body and instinct and all that's unconscious and earthy and mysterious at the other."⁶¹ Huxley reiterates Lawrence's own philosophy in Women in Love where the idea of equilibrium is extended from the individual to include the relationship between man and woman, balanced or polarized one with the other:-

The man is pure man, the woman pure woman, they are perfectly polarized. But there is no longer any of the horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love. There is only the pure duality of polarization, each one free from any contamination of the other. In each, the individual is primal, sex is subordinate, but perfectly polarized. Each has a single, separate being, with its own laws. The man has his pure freedom, the woman hers. Each acknowledges the perfection of the polarized sex-circuit. Each admits the different nature in the other.⁶²

Rampion's is a Blakean vision, a marriage of Heaven and Hell, Blake being his model of the last civilized man, the last fully-fledged tight-rope walker, balancing reason, feeling, instinct and the life of the body.⁶³ And Rampion arrives at these conclusions, not through inspiration, instinct or intuition, but through a process of revolt, the revolt of the Puritan against his education and religion. The best life-worshippers, Huxley suggests in Do What You Will:-

60. Point Counter Point, p. 304-305

61. Ibid., p. 406

62. D.H. Lawrence: Women in Love, (Penguin, 1963), p. 225

63. Point Counter Point, p. 108

..are probably those who have been strictly educated in Christian or bourgeois morality, in the philosophy of common-sense tempered by religion, and have afterwards revolted against their upbringing. Their balancing-pole is weighted at opposite ends with the good social habits of their education and the anti-social habits of their revolt.⁶⁴

It is also thanks to his wife that Rampion has established this precarious balance. Born of the aristocracy, Mary is paradoxically a peasant in temperament, an "atavismus", "a sort of beserker Diana of the moors",⁶⁵ with great physical energy, health and strength. Rampion, by contrast, is the peasant by birth, the aristocrat in temperament, thin, frail, sensitive and perceptive. During their first years of marriage he was to unlearn his Puritanism, his resentment towards the rich, his moral compulsion to live sparingly and virtuously which entailed shunning the sinful pleasures of fornication, adultery, food, wine, theatre and jollification:-⁶⁶

And yet he was glad that he had not been born a noble savage, like Mary. He was glad that circumstances had compelled him laboriously to learn his noble savagery....

'Living comes to you too easily,' he tried to explain. You live by instinct. You know what to do quite naturally, like an insect when it comes out of the pupa. It's too simple, too simple..... You haven't earned your knowledge; you've never realized the alternatives.'⁶⁶

Having laboriously learnt his savagery, he captures it through the medium of painting which he regards as a more satisfactory means of communication than words:-

'Writing's not much good for saying what I find I want to say now. And what a comfort to escape from words! Words, words, words, they shut one off from the universe. Three-quarters of the time one's never in contact with things, only with the beastly words that stand for them. And often not even with those - only with some poet's damned metaphorical rigmarole about a thing..... Oh, these words! I'm thankful to have escaped from them. It's like getting out of a prison - oh, a very elegant fantastic sort of prison, full of frescoes and tapestries and what not. But one prefers the genuine country outside. Painting, I find, puts you in real touch with it. I can say what I want to say.'⁶⁷

64. Do What You Will, p. 284-285

65. Point Counter Point, p. 107

66. Ibid., p. 117-118

67. Ibid., p. 214-215

In depicting love, "physical love as the source of light and life and beauty",⁶⁸ he paints a dark landscape of trees, crags, rocks and foliage in which a man and woman embracing are the sole sources of light and illumination in the picture. And the light is not confined to them only: it streams out to radiate the flora and fauna, the sea, the clouds and sky. In order to stress the living relationship of man with the rest of the natural world, he portrays, in triangular composition, a woman suckling a child, a man playing with two leopard cubs and a little boy looking on, while behind the mother, is the prominent figure of a cow ruminating. Rampion explains to Quarles that each is in touch with the other:-

'The cow, for example. It's turned away, it's unaware of the human scene. But somehow you feel it's happily in touch with the humans in some milky, cud-chewing, bovine way. And the humans are in touch with it. And also in touch with the leopards, but in a quite different way - a way corresponding to the quick leopardy way the cubs are in touch with them. Yes, I like it.'⁶⁹

Rampion is not merely praising himself: his paintings, as Burlap points out, are parables of modern life, prophetic visions of the future. John Bidlake, the artist, also has his perceptive moments which he usually expresses verbally as caricatures of his acquaintances - Burlap as "St. Anthony of Padua... a card-sharper Lothario and a rapturous devotee,"⁷⁰ Sidney Quarles as a magnificent cathedral façade concealing a "wretched little temple" within.⁷¹ But, unlike Rampion, he uses his art chiefly as an extension of his own ego, as "a branch of sensuality",⁷² to preserve the female flesh for posterity and to remind him of the Don Juanism of his youth. Like Lypiatt in Antic Hay, Bidlake tries to be larger than life - "handsome, huge, exuberant, careless; a great laughter, a great worker, a great eater, drinker,

68. Point Counter Point, p. 211

69. Ibid., p. 306

70. Ibid., p. 66

71. Ibid., p. 254

72. Ibid., p. 26

and taker of virginities",⁷³ but, like Lypiatt, he fails. Having reached a peak of success in his art, he deteriorates and we find him at the age of seventy-three, pathetic, uncreative, wrapped in self-pity and terrified at his impending death through an ulcerated stomach. Bidlake clearly belongs to the stream of bombastic artistic failures which we find developing through Lypiatt, whereas Rampion is the mature and more complex version of Gombauld in Crome Yellow. He, too, uses his paintings as parables, as we see in the sketch of the man subdued by a gigantic horse,⁷⁴ but he is less conscious of the significance of his art, less self-aware than Rampion in his spontaneous, sensuous living. Rampion, in his greater self-awareness and resultant awareness of others, acts as diagnostician in Point Counter Point, judging himself and those around him. During his final appearance in Chapter xxxiv, he condemns Philip, Spandrell and Burlap in turn for their perversions.

Philip is the 'intellectual-aesthetic pervert',⁷⁵ fully aware of his failings. He admires Rampion's noble savagery and, in his persuasive company, is convinced of the validity of heart and body. But their opinions agree in theory only:-

....his (Rampion's) opinions are lived and mine, in the main, only thought. Like him, I mistrust intellectualism, but intellectually I disbelieve in the adequacy of any scientific or philosophical theory, any abstract moral principle, but on scientific, philosophical, and abstract-moral grounds. The problem for me is to transform a detached intellectual scepticism into a way of harmonious all-round living.⁷⁶

Philip feels the gulf between them - he the half-man, Rampion the integral being - and realizes that the "intellectual life is child's play",⁷⁷ a game played by intellectual children and imbeciles as a distraction from and substitute for living.

We see this same infantile intellectualism in the man of science, Lord Edward Tantamount, and in the historian, Sidney Quarles. Tantamount, like Shearwater in Antic Hay, is a child with a scientist's brain:-

73. Point Counter Point, p. 26

74. Crome Yellow, p. 61-62

75. Point Counter Point, p. 409

76. Ibid., p. 322

77. Ibid., p. 323

...a fossil boy preserved in the frame of a very large middle-aged man. Intellectually, in the laboratory, he understood the phenomena of sex. But in practice and emotionally he was a child, a fossil mid-Victorian child, preserved intact, with all the natural childish timidities and all the taboos acquired from the two beloved and very virtuous maiden aunts, who had taken the place of his dead mother, all the amazing principles and prejudices sucked in with the numours of Mr. Pickwick and Micawber.⁷⁸

A wealthy man's indolent son, he had disappointed his father by not entering into politics, by accomplishing nothing at all in any field. Finding himself on the brink of suicide but regarding even death as a bore, he was blessed with an apocalyptic vision, a vision of a sort of pantheistic scientism. He suddenly saw the animals, elements and all organic matter as part of "the total life of the universe".... members of "'the universal concert of things'"⁷⁹ in harmony, counterpoint and modulation. The vision had sustained him for forty years, led to his research on osmosis and involved him in his present studies in physical biology, an unfinished symphony which provided him with an excuse to withdraw from living and, in particular, from his wife's excessive socializing. Huxley, in parodying the scientific approach, describes Lord Edward's reaction to the Bach concerto in physiological terms:-

The shaking air rattled Lord Edward's membrana tympani; the interlocked malleus, incus and stirrup bones were set in motion so as to agitate the membrane of the oval window and raise an infinitesimal storm in the fluid of the labyrinth. The hairy endings of the auditory nerve shuddered like weeds in a rough sea; a vast number of obscure miracles were performed in the brain, and Lord Edward ecstatically whispered 'Bach!'⁸⁰

Like "the bear whom the smell of molasses constrains in spite of all his fears to visit the hunters' camp,"⁸¹ he lumbers down into the hall to enter like "a visitor from another intellectual planet",⁸² huge, bent, "pipe-smoking and tweed-jacketed,"⁸² a skeleton broken loose from his ancestral cupboard.

78. Point Counter Point, p. 26

79. Ibid., p. 34-35

80. Ibid., p. 38

81. Ibid., p. 40

82. Ibid., p. 39

As relic of the past, Lord Edward falls into the category of Gumbriel Senior and Porteous, members of the older generation who have been unable to move with the times and who live in a dream world of past glories, abstractions and theories. Lucy cuttingly depicts them in terms of "an Arab tea party"⁸³ formal, old fashioned, shocked at short skirts and emancipated womanhood. Their enthusiasm is aroused only by high-flown solutions to universal problems: Lord Gattenden eagerly summons his brother Edward to discuss his jubilant discovery of mathematical proof of God's existence. Watching the two men, the crippled Gattenden in his donkey-drawn bath chair, Lord Edward walking alongside immersed in the debate of the Divine, Philip remarks:-

'Poor old creatures!..... What else have they got to talk about? Too old to want to talk about love - too old and much too good. Too rich to want to talk about money. Too highbrow to talk about people and too hermit-like to know any people to talk about. Too shy to talk about themselves, too blankly inexperienced to talk about life or even literature. What is there left for the poor old wretches to talk about? Nothing - only God.'⁸⁴

And Elinor pungently and prophetically adds:-

'And at the present rate of progress..... you'll be exactly like them ten years from now.'⁸⁴

Significantly, Philip's own father, Sidney Quarles, also behaves like a middle-aged child. He, too, like Lord Edward, has been a failure in public life, unable to follow the aristocratic family tradition in Parliament or commercial enterprise, though tactful handling by his wife saved him from total failure. Like Edward, he, too, had his vision: seeing himself as a publicist, he decided to undertake a life's work on the principles of democracy, another unfinished symphony and excuse for withdrawing from public life. But where Lord Edward has some ability in his scientific research, Sidney is merely a farce and a sham. As John Bidlake succinctly remarked:-

83. Point Counter Point, p. 138

84. Ibid., p. 253

....he was like one of those baroque Italian churches with sham facades. High, impressive, bristling with classical orders, broken pediments and statuary, the facade seems to belong to a great cathedral. But look more closely and you discover that it is only a screen. Behind the enormous and elaborate front there crouches a wretched little temple of brick and rubble and scabby plaster. And warming to his simile, John Bidlake would describe the unshaven priest gabbling the office, the snotty little acolyte in his unwashed surplice, the congregation of goitrous peasant women and their brats, the cretin begging at the door, the tin crowns on the images, the dirt on the floor, the stale smell of generations of pious humanity.⁸⁵

In keeping with the magnificent baroque exterior, Sidney surrounds himself in his Herculean labours with impressive paraphernalia: card indices, steel filing cabinets, a large roll top desk, three typewriters, "portable, polyglottic, calculating",⁸⁶ a fountain pen which could write six thousand words without refilling, a dictaphone and, as the latest acquisition, a part-time secretary. True to Bidlake's simile, secreted behind the elaborate facade is the squalid temple. Sidney spends his time on crossword puzzles or indulges in a sordid little affair with his secretary, Gladys, his work providing the excuse to go to London to see her, the latest addition to his humble train of kitchen maid and gamekeeper's daughter. He takes a delight in slumming, in impressing the underprivileged with his money and social status, though in their company he lavishes as little of his wealth as possible. Unlike the others, Gladys refuses to be impressed. She is amused at his "loud haw-haw and lahdy da",⁸⁷ his pomposity, his influential pulling strings, voicing complaints in letters to The Times and underneath it all, his lust for her. Antagonized by his stinginess, the cheap seats, meals at Lyons, desperate in the knowledge of her pregnancy, she bursts into Gattenden and savagely accosts him, her gutter cockney in ironic contrast with his languid Oxonian drawl.

Sidney's immediate reaction is to withdraw from the unpleasantness in a show of deathly illness. He is a martyr to his fate, predestined to leave his massive work unfinished. He clings to his last resources and records his final words on the dictaphone, producing a hotch-potch of philosophising on love, politics and crossword puzzles! Seeing his father in this farcical act, Philip

85. Point Counter Point, p. 254

86. Ibid., p. 262

87. Ibid., p. 269

is angry and contemptuous. This, after all, is the man responsible for determining his character, so that, in the light of Quarles's sham as well as his erratic interest in his children, Philips's shortcomings are, perhaps, justifiable:-

Shall I ever have the strength of mind to break myself of these indolent habits of intellectualism and devote my energies to the more serious and difficult task of living integrally? And even if I did try to break these habits, shouldn't I find that heredity was at the bottom of them and that I was congenitally incapable of living wholly and harmoniously?⁸⁸

We turn to Spandrell, the "morality-philosophy pervert"⁸⁹ to find that, though he does not fall into the category of the older generation, the Arab tea party formality,⁹⁰ he shares its infantility. He is a man-child, a sort of "Peter Pan à la Dostoevsky-cum-de Musset-cum-the-Nineties-cum-Bunyan-cum-Byron and the Marquis de Sade."⁹¹ Preoccupied with love at its most corrupt and tormenting, he could well echo de Musset's words which Huxley quotes in Do What You Will:-

'J'aime et je veux pâlir; j'aime et je veux souffrir,' says Musset, with his usual hysterically masochistic emphasis.⁹²

And Spandrell quotes Baudelaire at his most "necrophilous":-

'E. pourtant vous serez semblable à cette ordure,
A cette horrible infection,
Étoile de mes yeux, soleil de ma nature,
Vous, mon ange et ma passion!

Alors, ô ma beauté, dites à la vermine
Qui vous mangera de baisers.....'⁹³

Spandrell's essential depravity is reflected in the essay on Baudelaire in Do What You Will. As satanist and debauchee he is somewhat ridiculous in his madness, out of touch with reality and, like Baudelaire, inhumanly rigid in his 'idée fixe.' This is a

88. Point Counter Point, p. 324

89. Ibid., p. 409

90. Ibid., p. 138

91. Ibid., p. 137

92. Do What You Will, p. 139

93. Point Counter Point, p. 135

conscious, willed madness, a calculated mental licentiousness. Hence Spandrell's tragedy, like the tragedies of Dostoevsky's characters:-

... are fundamentally ludicrous and idiotic. They are the absurdly unnecessary tragedies of self-made madmen. We suffer in sympathy, but against our will; afterwards we must laugh. For these tragedies are nothing but stupid farces that have been carried too far.⁹⁴

Spandrell's face mirrors the inner man: a sinister gargoyle, tragic and gaunt, skull-like beneath the tightly-drawn skin, the grey eyes sunken. His fleshy mouth is the only indication of tormenting life - "a wide mouth, with lips that stood out from the skin like two thick weals."⁹⁵ Like John Bidlake, he assumes the role of the theatrical lover, though Bidlake is epitomized in the image of the "genial satyr",⁹⁶ the "yawning serpent",⁹⁷ jagan and carefree, where Spandrell is diabolical, the sensualist with a tormenting Christian conscience. He was like Baudelaire:-

... a puritan inside out. Instead of asceticism and respectability he practised debauchery. The means he used were the opposite of those employed by the puritans; but his motives and theirs, the ends that he and they achieved, were the same. He hated life as much as they did, and was as successful in destroying it.⁹⁸

He expounds his decadent views impressively, cynically, bitterly; his aim is to lure his prey through "perfect ingenuousness to the most astonishing pitch of depravity."⁹⁹ Rampion sees his devilish amusement as a vengeance on womanhood, a means of venting his hatred for the feminine which is part of a self-hatred, a self-destruction. Even his protracted visit to the restaurant is a form of self-torture. He insists on seeing through the night to its final decay amid empty bottles, cigarette ends, corpse-like people and desire exhausted to the point of disgust,¹⁰⁰ much like Myra Viveash in Antic Hay, boring himself "to that ultimate point of fatigue at which she did at last feel ready for repose."¹⁰¹

94. Do What You Will, p. 174

95. Point Counter Point, p. 100

96. Ibid., p. 26

97. Ibid., p. 49

98. Do What You Will, p. 193

99. Point Counter Point, p. 120

100. Ibid., p. 149

101. Antic Hay, p. 241

He goes from squalor to squalor: leaving the restaurant, he returns to his lodgings to wallow in the grime, dust, cobwebs, soot, mildew and slime which penetrate to his very soul. As diabolical creature of the night, he sleeps by day to awaken unshaven and hang-overish, his cassock-like gown consistent with his role of ascetic:-

(The monastic note was studied; he liked to remind himself of the ascetics. He liked, rather childishly, to play the part of the anchorite of diabolism).¹⁰²

Ironically the devil has an achilles heel, his mother, the epitome of pedestalled womanhood who remarried after his father's death and caused his whole Oedipus-like world to crumble, as was the case with Baudelaire. He refused to distract his mind with work and, with his progressive disillusionment, first after his mother's second marriage and then in war, he turned to sensuality as a kind of forbidden fruit which produced a perverse thrill, a masochistic torment like a mental flagellation. But the thrill soon waned, the humiliation and abasement were petty, trivial and insipidly pornographic. Boredom set in together with a spiritual paralysis which he could not make the effort to break. In the end he accepted his state as inevitable as fate:-

'Because I'm committed to it. Because in some way it's my destiny. Because that's what life finally is - hateful and boring; that's what human beings are, when they're left to themselves - hateful and boring again. Because, once one's damned, one ought to damn oneself doubly. Because.... yes, because I really like hating and being bored.'¹⁰³

A mess of perversions, neuroses and self-inflicted tortures, Spandrell spells death to himself and to others and, not surprisingly, incites Illidge to kill Everard Webley as the epitome of his opposite - the man of action, vitality and firm ideals. The murder which promises yet another sadistic thrill of the forbidden, produces only a sense of unpleasantness and ludicrous comedy. The death is not tragic, but grotesque, tiresome and absurd, filled with mundane domestic detail: scrubbing the floor like a housewife to remove the blood, finding a waterproof to tie up the corpse so as to fit it into the car:-

102. Point Counter Point, p. 180

103. Ibid., p. 224

'We might be at the circus', he said, 'It was not only not tragic; it was a clownery.'¹⁰⁴

After the murder Spandrell makes a final grand attempt to evade the mundane horror of life. He watches a crumpled cigarette packet, a piece of orange peel carried down the drain,¹⁰⁵ much as described in Swift's "City Shower":-

Sweepings from Butchers' Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood,
Drown'd Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench'd in Mud,
Dead Cats and Turnip-Tops come tumbling down the Flood.¹⁰⁶

and is determined, in the face of this squalor, to prove the Divine. Sending an anonymous note to the Freeman, he simultaneously invites Rampion to witness the Divine in the form of Beethoven's last symphony, the "heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart".¹⁰⁷ Like an uncertain child, he is eager for Rampion's approval in his last moment, but Rampion criticizes the eunuch-like quality of the music, its bloodlessness, the cancer of the soul, though in the end he is convinced of its beauty and ironically adds:-

'Not human. If it lasted, you'd cease to be a man. You'd die.'¹⁰⁸

At this moment there is a knock at the door and Spandrell dies at the bullets of the avenging Freeman amid the celestial melody, followed, as if in mockery, by the scratching of the needle as the record ends.

Like Spandrell, Burlap is caught between the ascetic and the sensual, as indicated physically in the paradox of natural tonsure and wide, full-lipped mouth. He is the "pure little Jesus pervert",¹⁰⁹ or, rather, the adolescent St. Hugh of Lincoln:-

'Dear little St. Hugh! How prettily he toddles to the bedroom, and what a darling boyish way he has of snuggling down between the sheets.'¹¹⁰

104. Point Counter Point, p. 394

105. Ibid., p. 429

106. The London Book of Verse, ed. H. Read & B. Dobrée, "Description of a City Shower," (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953), p. 326

107. Point Counter Point, p. 428

108. Ibid., p. 433

109. Ibid., p. 409

110. Ibid., p. 212

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108. Ibid., p. 433

109. Ibid., p. 409

110. Ibid., p. 212

And how accurately Rampion sums up his attitude which we see in relation to Beatrice Gilray and in his reported marriage to Susan, the Katherine Mansfield of reality!:-

His ardours were those of a child for its mother (a rather incestuous child, it is true; but how tactfully and delicately the little Oedipus!); his love was at once babyish and maternal; his passion was a kind of passive snuggling. Frail, squeamish, less than fully alive and therefore less than adult, permanently under-aged, she (Susan) adored him as a superior and almost holy lover. Burlap in return adored his private phantom, adored his beautifully Christian conception of matrimony, adored his own adorable husbandliness.¹¹¹

At the same time he was quite content to indulge in extra-marital affairs, justified by his "pure, childlike, and platonic way of going to bed with women".¹¹¹ Following Susan's death, he lashed himself into an orgy of regrets, confessions, self-abasement, calculated to lure yet another female victim into his sensual web. But the rigidly moral Ethel Cobbett, a close friend of Susan, would not succumb and, to add insult to injury, refused to give up her job on the Literary World. He had to be content with veiled advances towards his literary contributors, one Miss Romola Saville who, to Burlap's dismay, proved to be two women, neither young nor attractive, writing in a Jekyll and Hyde conspiracy. At least he could console himself with the faithful worship of Beatrice Gilray, who worked on his staff and provided him with board and lodging, together with all the maternal solitudes.

Burlap is much like Sidney Quarles in his hypocrisy and sham, revealed in action at the Tantamount party where he regurgitates an article for the Literary World, passing it off as brilliant improvisation. He is the epitome of all that is insincere and pretentious in the world of journalism, as is Barbecue-Smith in Crome Yellow, both figures being caricatures of Middleton Murry whom Huxley knew as a member of the Lawrence circle and from his work on the Athenaeum, edited by Murry. Walter Bidlake finds himself uneasy before Burlap's magnificent belief in Life, his mystical thumping and ardent enthu-

111. Point Counter Point, p. 171

siasm, doubly ironical in the face of the literary offal submitted to the magazine, and in relation to his penny-pinching, for he refuses to raise Walter's inadequate salary and pays Rampion the very minimum for his brilliant caricatures.

Unlike Barbecue-Smith, his fictional predecessor, whose hypocrisy is portrayed in terms of his career only, Burlap's sham is carried over into his personal relationships, intensifying the revulsion he evokes. His technique in the art of love is as calculated as Spandrell's: playing on Beatrice's sympathy by sad references to his dead wife, he gradually breaks down her horny, pecking, efficient facade¹¹² to reveal the "soft quivering little girl"¹¹³ beneath. Then, confined to bed under the pretext of a cough, he plays the child, helpless in the hands of a solicitous mother. Finally the confiding child turns lover and seduces her with the utmost delicacy, with the disembodied caresses of a "spirit hand".¹¹⁴ And we leave them at the end of the novel, bathing and childishly splashing together, their gaiety ironically juxtaposed with Spandrell's newly-accomplished murder.

As "superannuated virgin"¹¹⁵ Beatrice counterpoints the wanton Lucy Tantamount, "the hard, ruthless amusement-hunter."¹¹⁶ As the cruel goddess, Cybele, she brings to mind the characters of Anne in Crome Yellow who torments the reserved, self-tormented Denis Stone, and Myra Viveash in Antic Hay who victimizes a whole series of lovers, from Piers Cotton to Gumbriel Junior. An older and more diabolical version, Lucy is clearly an ill-omen, a medley of black and white, indicating both her bloodlessness and her diabolism. Caught up like Myra Viveash in the immorality of post-war London, she scoffs at the older generation's belief in "God and morals".¹¹⁷ She is "'damned, destroyed, irrevocably corrupted'"¹¹⁸ a "'refined and perfumed imitation of a savage or an animal'"¹¹⁸ More than this, she is inhuman, fae-like, a "leprechaun"¹¹⁹ inflicting subtle torture on her victims whom she studies with her father's

112. Point Counter Point, p. 130

113. Ibid., p. 132

114. Ibid., p. 413

115. Ibid., p. 129

116. Ibid., p. 202

117. Ibid., p. 138

118. Ibid., p. 60

119. Ibid., p. 94

"detached scientific curiosity."¹²⁰ Afraid of loneliness and needing a constant train of servile lovers to boost her morale, she whips them into abjection and, like the goddess of Love in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, exults over her triumph:-

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,
Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,
Till either gorge be stuff'd or prey be gone;
Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,
And where she ends she doth anew begin.

Forc'd to content, but never to obey,
Lusting he lies, and breatheth in her face;
She feedeth on the steam, as on a prey,
And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace;
Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,
So they were dew'd with such distilling showers.¹²¹

Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,
And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth;
Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
Paying what ransom the insulter willeth;
Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,
That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry.¹²²

Lucy shamelessly destroys her victim lovers, yet, paradoxically, is revolted by their whipped expressions. In subjecting an already subdued Walter, she taunts him with provocative remarks and draws out the agony before finally succumbing. Driven to the point of self-destruction by desire when interrupted by Lucy's appointment with Illidge, Philip leaves Tantamount House, as furious and thwarted as Philip in his rejection by Molly d'Exergillod.

Like Spandrell, Lucy leaves a path of destruction in her wake and herself emerges empty and destroyed. We find her at Shisa's surrounded by empty glass, dirty ashtray and bottle, symbols of her dissipation, her mental vacuum. In her profound boredom she is distracted by an all-consuming sadism and masochism, her correspondence with Walter being a form of delicate, whimsically inflicted torture. By drawing attention to her misery, described in physical detail, by stressing her boredom and, as a final blow, referring to a French lover, she calculates to arouse in turn his passion, sympathy and frustrated anger. Then, intensifying the torture, she

120. Point Counter Point, p. 87

121. Shakespeare: Complete Works, ed. W.J. Craig, (Oxford University Press, 1954), 'Venus and Adonis', l. 55-66, p. 1074

122. Ibid., l. 547-552, p. 1079

compares Walter unfavourably with the Frenchman, taunts him with memories of their own passion and invites him to spend a blood-thirsty holiday of "sadistic frissons"¹²³ in Spain. Finally, having whetted his appetite, she promptly forbids him to come and capriciously decides against going to Spain. Walter, in his agony, is left with a vision of Lucy in the act of love—"that look of grave and attentive suffering, as though the agonizing pleasure were a profound and difficult truth only to be grasped by intense concentration."¹²⁴

Walter finds himself in a no-man's land, caught between the counterpointed characters, Lucy Tantamount and Marjorie Carling. Huxley pictures Lucy as the professional siren, seductive in pink dressing gown to match the tulips in the vase, reclining on a grey couch amid grey silk curtains and rose-coloured carpet. She lies in a gilded cage, much like her pet parrot, it, too, a medley of pink and grey, and her gardenia perfume conjures up a "tropical and sultry sweetness."¹²⁵ Marjorie, as though in mocking antithesis, is pale and insipid, ugly and tired in her unwanted pregnancy, her eyes dully grey, her face hollow and fleshless, wearing the martyred expression which fills Walter with remorse and resentment. Both women are partly inhuman: Lucy in her sadism and Marjorie in her over-refinement:-

....Lucy was mad and shameful, but Marjorie was bloodless and half dead.¹²⁶

Caught between the two, Walter suffers much like Philip Quarles in a conflict between the spirituality inherited from his mother and the sensuality of his father. Ironically, Philip is the very one who criticizes Walter for living too closely in imitation of art, in a world, distilled, abstracted and "unadulterated with all the irrelevancies of real life."¹²⁷ Their discussion is developed later on in Philip's conversation at the club:-

123. Point Counter Point, p. 318

124. Ibid., p. 361

125. Ibid., p. 175

126. Ibid., p. 15

127. Ibid., p. 13

'Art before life; Romeo and Juliet and filthy stories before marriage or its equivalents. Hence all young modern literature is disillusioned. Inevitably. In the good old days poets began by losing their virginity; and then, with a complete knowledge of the real thing and just where and how it was unpoetical, deliberately set to work to idealize and beautify it. We start with the poetical and proceed to the unpoetical. If boys and girls lost their virginities as early as they did in Shakespeare's day, there'd be a revival of the Elizabethan love lyric.' 128

In the end Walter, in "trying to make love after high poetic models," 128 is deserted by both women: Lucy rejects him sadistically while Marjorie withdraws into a martyred acceptance, influenced by Rachael Quarles who inspires her to rise from the Slough of Despond. Yet Marjorie's revival of faith is merely a gesture, an illusion in an overwhelming situation of despair, futility and accidie, characteristic, too, of the early novels and expressed in the volume of essays, On the Margin. The tone is set by the apostle of gloom, Fulke Greville:-

Oh, wearisome condition of humanity,
Born under one law, to another bound,
Vainly begot and yet forbidden vanity,
Created sick, commanded to be sound.
What meaneth nature by these diverse laws,
Passion and reason, self-division's cause? 129 & 130

Sick and self-divided, the Point Counter Point characters also oppose one another in terms of the intellectual, refined, bloodless and reserved against the destructive, passionate and sensual. Each, though often bound to his or her twin - Marjorie to Walter, Philip to Elinor - is attracted to the opposite: Elinor, passive and lifeless, to Webley, the man of action; Walter to Lucy; Sidney Quarles to Gladys. But the categorizing of intellectual and sensualist is only partly true since the traits are often modified and hybridized to form a spectrum of varying degrees of passion and spirituality, various admixtures of sham and sincerity. The characters' one-sidedness is offset by Rampion who represents the complete man living in a delicate balance of mind and body, angel and devil, though even he, as life worshipper, is in danger of infection from those around him: "A plague-pit is not the healthiest place to worship life in." 131

128. Point Counter Point, p. 288

129. Ibid., frontispiece, p. 5

130. On the Margin, "How the Days Draw In", p. 103

131. Do What You Will, p. 268

The striking feature of Huxley's characters is that, though involved in self-torment and in conflict with others, they remain essentially static, fixed against a background of ideas and associations: Spandrell, his face a sinister gargoyle, fixed in his setting of filth, squalor and equally sordid philosophizing; Sidney Quarles at Chamford, absorbed in his crossword puzzles, surrounded by filing cabinets, dictaphone, typewriters, notebooks and card indices. As a result they are intrinsically unsuited to drama and dramatic action: hence the weakness of Campbell Dixon's dramatic adaptation of Point Counter Point in This Way to Paradise, first staged in 1930. In his preface to the play, Huxley confessed himself at first:-

..... somewhat appalled by the mere reading of a dramatization which, while preserving so much that I had put into my book, seemed at the same time so ruthlessly to mangle the narrative original..... seemed only a kind of partial and distorted reflection of what I had written.¹³²

The text reveals ample proof of Huxley's criticism: of Spandrell simplified to absurdity in trite dialogue, followed by the melodramatic exchange between Webley and Elinor Quarles:-

Spandrell (meaningly to Illidge as he goes off).
Oh Illidge, you needn't hurry. Elinor, would you mind awfully if I leave you to Mr. Webley? I have a great desire for brandy and Lucy's conversation - particularly for brandy. (Exits)

Elinor. Are you going to take me down to supper or shall we wait for Philip?

Webley. You can have your supper later. I want to talk to you.

Elinor (smiling). As a matter of fact I've had supper. But I suppose it would be all the same if I hadn't. Are you always so masterful? So sure of what you want?

Webley. Yes.

Elinor. And of getting it?

Webley. Why not?

Elinor. Aren't you ever afraid of being disappointed?

132. Campbell Dixon: This Way to Paradise, Preface by Aldous Huxley (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930).

Webley. No. I believe in taking what I want.
(Looks at her significantly) No matter
what it is.....
.....
I know that soon you'll come to me. I
love you. I need you.

Elinor. And Philip?

Webley. (impatiently). That philosophical robot!
That theorising machine!
Philip can never make you
happy.

Elinor. Oh, he does love me - in his fashion.

Webley. As he loves his books and his theories.
He's just an idea in pants.
.....

Elinor. Oh, Everard, you mustn't be unfair.
Philip's not unkind or anything like
that. It's just that we've drifted
somehow.... and now there's a wall and
neither of us can pass it.

Webley (fiercely). I believe you love the fellow
still.

Elinor (wearily). Perhaps. Or I should if he
weren't so -

Webley (with subdued passion)! Chuck it! Chuck it
and come to me! 133

Nevertheless, Huxley was to revise his views on this mangled copy of the original for having seen the play produced, he assessed it more sympathetically as "a transcription in another artistic mode."¹³⁴ However much one may be at a disadvantage in not seeing the live performance, the play still leaves an impression far inferior to the novel. Much of the philosophizing is omitted, the complex system of counterpointing broken down to the extent that the spirit and intention of Point Counter Point are irrevocably lost. But for the meagre consolation of the selections from Beethoven's Heilige Dankgesang played in the final act as a prelude to Spandrell's murder, Huxley, in the long run, was forced to admit the play's weakness which he discusses in the essay, "The Rest is Silence" from the volume Music at Night:-

133. Campbell Dixon: This Way to Paradise, Act 1, p. 17-18

134. Ibid., Preface by Aldous Huxley

From the abbreviated play it was necessary to omit almost all the implied or specified 'counter' which, in the novel, tempered, or at least was intended to temper, the harshness of the 'points'. The play, as a whole, was curiously hard and brutal. Bursting suddenly into this world of almost unmitigated harshness, the Heilige Dankgesang seemed like the manifestation of something supernatural. It was as though a god had really and visibly descended, awful and yet reassuring, mysteriously wrapped in the peace that passes all understanding, divinely beautiful.¹³⁵

Essays and Short Stories.

The music as "a counterpoint of serenities"¹³⁶ may have revived some vestige of the original Point Counter Point, though it cannot be said to represent it in entirety. After all, Rampion criticizes Beethoven's symphony as too unearthly, as "the art of a man who's lost his body."¹³⁶ It is in "the simultaneously scientific and aesthetic account"¹³⁷ of Bach's suite that the essence of Point Counter Point lies. Bach's music is adapted to the human fugue, to a vision of multiplicity which marks Huxley's development from the early works, so that the accidie which predominates at first, is woven into an infinitely more complex pattern of human harmonies and discords, of man as "multifarious, inconsistent, self-contradictory."¹³⁸ We see how Huxley's interest in music which germinates in the early works¹³⁹ is developed here to become part of a literary technique, a philosophy of life and art. And the same applies to painting: not only is the figure of the artist carried over from the early novels to the sensual Bidlake, the prophetic Rampion, but their artistic mode becomes part and parcel of the 'multiple vision.'

".... the essence of the new way of looking is multiplicity."¹⁴⁰ Philip Quarles's thesis which forms the nucleus of the novel, is discussed in various shapes and forms in the essays of the period - Do What You Will,¹⁴¹ Music at Night, Vulgarity in Literature and, to a certain extent in the later volume, The Olive Tree. In "Tragedy and the Whole Truth", Huxley supports the range

135. Music at Night, "The Rest is Silence", p. 21-22

136. Point Counter Point, p. 431

137. Music at Night, "'And Wanton Optics Roll the Melting Eye'", p. 40

138. Do What You Will, "Spinoza's Worm", p. 81

139. Refer description of Mozart's G minor Quintet, Antic Hay, p. 190-192

140. Point Counter Point, p. 196

141. Refer thesis, p. 44, 51, 59.

of human experience, tragic, comic, quotidian, physical, spiritual - indeed, the "Whole Truth"¹⁴² as against the distilled and chemically pure mode of tragedy. Using the Scylla incident from Homer's Odyssey as representative of the "Whole Truth"¹⁴² he recalls the sailors looking on with desperate helplessness while their companions are devoured. Later they go ashore to prepare their supper and, having satisfied their hunger and thirst, they grieve once more for their companions before gently falling asleep:-

We are now in a position to explain what we mean when we say that Homer is a writer who tells the Whole Truth. We mean that the experiences he records correspond fairly closely with our own actual or potential experiences - and correspond with our experiences not on a single limited sector, but all along the line of our physical and spiritual being. And we also mean that Homer records these experiences with a penetrative artistic force that makes them seem peculiarly acceptable and convincing.¹⁴³

If Homer had isolated the catastrophic event, the destruction and sorrow, the incident would have been wholly tragic and necessarily limited in scope. Huxley pits these confines of tragedy, that "arbitrarily isolated eddy on the surface of a vast river..."¹⁴⁴ against, what is to him and what must have been to Homer, the superior value of "Wholly-Truthful art"¹⁴⁴ in overflowing the limits of tragedy "to imply the existence of the entire river as well as of the eddy."¹⁴⁴ He also poses "Wholly-Truthful art"¹⁴⁴ as more stable than the violent and apocalyptic catharsis of tragedy. Besides, he feels the mode to be more compatible with the mercurial nature of the contemporary world.

Touching on the same theme in Vulgarity in Literature, Huxley objects to the label of neo-classical writer on the same grounds: the confines of classicism essentially oppose multiplicity and the Whole Truth:-

142. Music At Night, "Tragedy and the Whole Truth", p. 6

143. Ibid., p. 14

144. Vulgarity in Literature, p. 18-21

.... I have never had the swallest ambition to be a Classic of any kind, whether Neo, Palaeo, Proto or Eo. Not at any price. For, to begin with, I have a taste for the lively, the mixed and the incomplete in art, preferring it to the universal and the chemically pure. In the second place, I regard the classical discipline, with its insistence on elimination, concentration, simplification, as being, for all the formal difficulties it imposes on the writer, essentially an escape from, a getting out of, the greatest difficulty - which is to render adequately, in terms of literature, that infinitely complex and mysterious thing, actual reality.....

..... It is the business of the non-classical naturalistic writer to discover. His ambition is to render, in literary terms, the quality of immediate experience - in other words, to express the finally inexpressible. To come anywhere near achieving this impossibility is much more difficult, it seems to me, than, by eliminating and simplifying, to achieve the perfectly realizable classical ideal. The cutting out of all the complex particularities of a situation..... strikes me as mere artistic shirking.....

Literature is also philosophy, is also science. In terms of beauty it enunciates truths. The beauty-truths of the best classical works possess, as we have seen, a certain algebraic universality of significance. Naturalistic works contain the more detailed beauty-truths of particular observation. These beauty-truths of art are truly scientific..... By nature a natural historian, I am ambitious to add my quota to the sum of particularized beauty-truths about man and his relations with the world about him.... I do not want to be a Classical, or even a Neo-Classical, eliminator and generalizer. 144

Huxley's definition is significant. He is a 'non-classical naturalistic writer' enunciating "beauty-truths" which are "truly scientific." 144 Another facet of 'the multiple vision' emerges. By working on a broad plane of the "Whole Truth", 145 the naturalistic writer necessarily encompasses all the considerations of his age, in which science plays a prominent part. The theme dominates Huxley's works, fictional and discursive over a period of forty years from On the Margin (1923) to Literature and Science (1963). In On the Margin, it appears in the form of an appeal to widen the range of subject matter in poetry, a problem touched on by Wordsworth in his preface to Lyrical Ballads:-

144. Vulgarity in Literature, p. 18-21

145. Music at Night, "Tragedy and the Whole Truth", p. 6

"The remotest discoveries of the chemist, the botanist, or mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any upon which he is now employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings." 146

In other words, the abstractions of science are to be imbued with emotional significance before they can become incorporated into the body of poetic vision. This was Donne's achievement:-

He was a poet-philosopher-man-of-action whose passionate curiosity about facts enabled him to make poetry out of the most unlikely aspects of material life, and whose passionate apprehension of ideas enabled him to extend the bounds of poetry beyond the frontiers of common life and its emotions into the void of intellectual abstraction. He put the whole life and the whole mind of his age into poetry. 147

And Huxley claims that though the twentieth century is theoretically free to emulate Donne, nothing has been achieved, no contemporary poet has pointed the way. Writing in Literature and Science more than forty years later, he assesses the situation as unchanged: the subject matter of poetry remains confined, the progress of science and technology neglected, unabsorbed into the poetic vision. 148

But how can the marriage of literature and science be achieved? Extending Wordsworth's thesis, Huxley poses that poetry can be fashioned from science "only when the contemplation of scientific facts has modified the pattern, not only of the poet's intellectual beliefs, but of his spiritual existence as a whole." 149 In effect, he reiterates the theories expounded in 1909 by C. Hamilton who sees the literary artist as combining ideally the rôles of scientist and philosopher to involve him in a "triple mental process (of scientific discovery, philosophic understanding, and artistic expression)..." 150 For Huxley, once poetry has assimilated science and the philosophy of science, it becomes "a modifier

146. On the Margin, "Subject-Matter of Poetry", p. 27

147. Ibid., p. 36

148. Literature and Science, p. 52-53

149. Music at Night, "'And Wanton Optics Roll the Melting Eye'", p. 33

150. C. Hamilton: Materials and Methods of Fiction, "The Purpose of Fiction", (London: Grant Richards, 1909), p. 4

of existence-patterns."¹⁵¹ The artist can also deliberately juxtapose instead of assimilate the scientific and the poetic to create irony:-

Juxtapose two accounts of the same human event, one in terms of pure science, the other in terms of religion, aesthetics, passion, even common sense: their discord will set up the most disquieting reverberations in the mind. Juxtapose, for example, physiology and mysticism (Mme. Guyon's ecstasies were most frequent and most spiritually significant in the fourth month of her pregnancies); juxtapose acoustics and the music of Bach (perhaps I may be permitted to refer to the simultaneously scientific and aesthetic account of a concert in my novel, Point Counter Point); juxtapose chemistry and the soul (the ductless glands secrete among other things our moods, our aspirations, our philosophy of life).¹⁵²

There are many such examples in Point Counter Point - the physiological account of the mechanism of hearing juxtaposed with Lord Edward's ecstatic reaction to Bach;¹⁵³ the scientific precision with which Spandrell binds Webley's corpse, offset by his sense of the grotesque, the tiresome, the absurd, together with Illidge's trembling horror;¹⁵⁴ Philip Quarles as "zoological novelist",¹⁵⁵ juxtaposing the human and the animal. All these serve to reveal the various aspects of experience, to "break down the bulkheads between the compartments and so give us a simultaneous view of two or more of them at a time."¹⁵⁶

Huxley is also careful to consider the dangers and disadvantages of science in literature, in particular the rapid outdating of scientific theory which might negate the value of the work as a whole. Since Dante, for instance, draws on the obsolete Ptolemaic system, is his Divine Comedy to be dismissed as ridiculous? Huxley poses as criterion the impressiveness and grandeur of Dante's world picture, regardless of the outdated scientific fact from which he draws. Yet by 1963 he had modified his views:

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- 151. Music at Night, "'And Wanton Optics Roll the Melting Eye'", p. 33
 - 152. Ibid., p. 40
 - 153. Point Counter Point, p. 38
 - 154. Ibid., p. 394
 - 155. Ibid., p. 334
 - 156. Music at Night, "'And Wanton Optics Roll the Melting Eye'", p. 41

once again using Dante as example, he concedes the magnificence of his "poetic shorthand",¹⁵⁷ but points to the utter incomprehensibility of the scientific allusions and adds that "the more precise the references to obsolete science, the more grotesque will they seem to readers of a later and, scientifically speaking, more enlightened age."¹⁵⁸ In short, the explicit scientific reference negates the grandeur of the world picture by reducing it to a "sublime absurdity,"¹⁵⁹ unlike Shakespeare who, by using science implicitly, subordinating it to the poetic, avoids the danger of obsolescence. But what of Huxley's own case, of the possibility of the scientific theories in Point Counter Point becoming outdated and incomprehensible to future generations? In Literature and Science, Huxley covers this eventuality in the belief that, where Dante's universe differed in kind from the modern conceptions, the theories of the future will differ only in degree and detail from our own. He regards the mediaeval beliefs as having been doomed to extinction, built as they were on tenuous and unsubstantiated theories, whereas modern scientific theory has been tested, tried and validated and hence must remain true to future generations. We may turn to Point Counter Point, to the physiological account of the mechanism of hearing juxtaposed with Lord Edward's ecstatic reaction to Bach,¹⁵⁹ and pose that if, for instance, the scientific theory of hearing were modified or even outdated, its impact on the character of Lord Edward would not be diminished. The irony would remain - that of a scientist described scientifically, reacting passionately, then stumbling into a social gathering, the figure of the socially inadequate academic, at home only in the hermetically sealed world of new reactions.

"Science is soon out of date, art is not."¹⁶⁰ Huxley returns to the problem of scientific obsolescence in his assessment of his grandfather, T.H. Huxley as a literary man. He considers the dual function of language in providing information and communicating emotion, to inform and, more important, to move, particularly through "a certain luxury feeling, to which we give the name of the aesthetic emotion."¹⁶¹ He regards T.H. Huxley as a literary man in the sense

157. Literature and Science, p. 44

158. Ibid., p. 45

159. Point Counter Point, p. 38

160. The Olive Tree, "T.H. Huxley as a Literary Man", p. 49

161. Ibid., p. 53

that both "his pure scientific and his emotive statements arouse aesthetic feelings."¹⁶² If the information is doomed to oblivion, the literary craft remains and "may continue to give pleasure and to excite admiration for an indefinite period."¹⁶³ Huxley goes on to quote various examples of his ancestor's literary gift which was determined chiefly by his passion for clarity and veracity:-

To literary beginners, Huxley's advice was: 'Say that which has to be said in such language that you can stand cross-examination on each word.' And again: 'Be clear, though you may be convicted of error. If you are clearly wrong, you will run up against a fact sometime and get set right. If you shuffle with your subject and study chiefly to use language which will give you a loophole of escape either way, there is no hope for you.' 'Veracity,' he said on another occasion, 'is the heart of morality.' It was also the heart of his literary style.¹⁶⁴

But the marriage of science and literature, science and poetry, is not the only means to multiplicity:-

Human life is lived simultaneously on many levels and has many meanings. Literature is a device for reporting the multifarious facts and expressing their various significances. When the literary artist undertakes to give a purer sense to the words of his tribe, he does so with the express purpose of creating a language capable of conveying, not the single meaning of some particular science, but the multiple significance of human experience, on its most private as well as on its more public levels. He purifies, not by simplifying and jargonizing, but by deepening and extending, by enriching with allusive harmonics, with overtones of association and undertones of sonorous magic.¹⁶⁵

The "overtones of association and undertones of sonorous magic"¹⁶⁵ lead us to the Laurentian vision which Huxley so much admired and strove to emulate in the figure of Rampion in Point Counter Point. Now, Huxley was fully aware of Lawrence's passionate and unreasonable antipathy towards science and disinterested scientific intellect which he felt "diminished men's sense of wonder and blunted their sensitiveness to the great mystery."¹⁶⁶ It was not that

162. The Olive Tree, "T.H. Huxley as a Literary Man", p. 59

163. Ibid., p. 49

164. Ibid., p. 61-62

165. Literature and Science, p. 14

166. The Olive Tree, "D.H. Lawrence", p. 208

Lawrence was incapable of understanding the scientific but he rejected it as incompatible with his gift - "the immediate perception and artistic rendering of divine otherness."¹⁶⁷

The attraction was two-fold: as "'cerebrotonic'"¹⁶⁸ cut off from immediate perception by theoretical knowledge, Huxley was drawn to Lawrence's vitalism, his theory of art as "wholly spontaneous, and, like the artist, imperfect, limited and transient."¹⁶⁹ flowering from "an immediate impulse towards self-expression or communication."¹⁷⁰ and withering "with the passing of the impulse."¹⁷⁰

To be with Lawrence was a kind of adventure, a voyage of discovery into newness and otherness. For, being himself of a different order, he inhabited a different universe from that of common men - a brighter and intenser world, of which, while he spoke, he would make you free. He looked at things with the eyes, so it seemed, of a man who had been at the brink of death and to whom, as he emerges from the darkness, the world reveals itself as unfathomably beautiful and mysterious. For Lawrence, existence was one continuous convalescence; it was as though he were newly reborn from a mortal illness every day of his life. What these convalescent eyes saw, his most casual speech would reveal. A walk with him in the country was a walk through that marvellously rich and significant landscape which is at once the background and the principal personage of all his novels. He seemed to know, by personal experience, what it was like to be a tree or a daisy or a breaking wave or even the mysterious moon itself. He could get inside the skin of an animal and tell you in the most convincing detail how it felt and how, dimly, inhumanly, it thought.¹⁷¹

Lawrence also appealed to Huxley's mystical sense, the spell of the intangible and the numinous woven by Beethoven's Heilige Dankgesang in the climax to Point Counter Point. Where Huxley was to unite science and mysticism by showing that the mystical trance could be chemically induced by mescaline, Lawrence subscribed to a kind of "mystical materialism",¹⁷² empirically validated by pseudo-scientific formulae. Lawrence ignored, for instance, the purely materialistic explanation of the moon as nothing but a stone and insisted on its

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167. The Olive Tree, "D.H. Lawrence", p. 209
 168. Ends and Means, p. 166
 169. The Olive Tree, "D.H. Lawrence", p. 210
 170. Ibid., p. 211
 171. Ibid., p. 232-233
 172. Ibid., p. 217

material properties as "radium or phosphorous, coagulated upon a vivid pole of energy,"¹⁷³ as far more in keeping with its moving spiritual effects. In "Meditation on the Moon", Huxley explains that:-

Lawrence was angry (and he did well to be angry) with the nothing-but philosophers who insist that the moon is only a stone. He knew that it was something more; he had the empirical certainty of its deep significance and importance. But he tried to explain this empirically established fact of its significance in the wrong terms - in terms of matter and not of spirit. To say that the moon is made of radium is nonsense. But to say, with Socrates, that it is made of god-stuff is strictly accurate. For there is nothing, of course, to prevent the moon from being both a stone and a god.¹⁷⁴

But if Huxley criticized Lawrence on the score of pseudo-scientism, where did his admiration lie and how was it linked with the technique of multiplicity? In considering Lawrence's "mystical materialism"¹⁷⁵ together with his theory of art as spontaneous and transient, Huxley sees Lawrence's works as based on a variety of intuitive perceptions which Lawrence himself expressed metaphorically in terms of elements and compounds:-

'(Like as diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon. The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond - but I say. "Diamond, what! This is carbon." And my diamond might be coal or soot, and my theme is carbon.)'¹⁷⁶

Lawrence's versatility and multiplicity lay in the rejection of ideals and fixed principles to capture instead the richness and variety of the fleeting, intuitive moment. This was no deliberately chosen artistic method. To Lawrence there was no alternative since he felt no absolute, no unifying principle to exist:-

173. The Olive Tree, "D.H. Lawrence", p. 216

174. Music at Night, "Meditation on the Moon", p. 76

175. The Olive Tree, "D.H. Lawrence", p. 217

176. Ibid., p. 219

'..... it comes to this, that the oneness of mankind is destroyed in me (by the war). I am I, and you are you, and all heaven and hell lie in the chasm between....' 177

He felt himself "torn off from the body of mankind", 177 living in perpetual exile and restless searching, caught between the desire to establish contact through social responsibility and the need to be alone and solitary, like the prophet crying in "the wilderness of his own isolation." 178 Huxley pictures Lawrence's life as a strange odyssey, both a search for and a flight from human solidarity, from the nightmare of the modern industrialized world.

Ultimately Huxley came to reject Lawrence since he went against the grain of his own scientific interest and, more important, Lawrence's spontaneity and sensual intensity seemed to him to become claustrophobic. His Dark God was no representative of the existential night but of a visceral darkness like that experienced by Jonas in the whale. In "Meditation on El Greco", Huxley analyses this visceral horror in terms of El Greco's Dream of Philip II, in which figures a whale, gigantically yawning and swallowing a steady stream of the human damned. Each soul is destroyed, "not by dissolving it out into universal infinity, but by drawing it down and drowning it in the warm, pulsating, tremulous darkness of the body." 179 It is probable that Huxley had the same painting in mind when he wrote to Victoria Ocampo on the subject of Lady Chatterley's Lover, in which he describes the characters of this "'livre-baleine'" 180 as moving towards "'une nuit viscérale, sous-personnelle, comme un Jonas dans sa baleine....'" 180

Curiously, Huxley seems to have anticipated his rejection of Lawrence as early as 1926 (two years before the publication of Point Counter Point) when he created the Laurentian figure of Kingham in "Two or Three Graces", a man of burning passions, quick temper, perverse and blinkered judgments:-

177. The Olive Tree, "D.H. Lawrence", p. 223

178. Ibid., p. 225

179. Music at Night, "Meditation on El Greco", p. 67

180. Aldous Huxley 1894-1933: A Memorial Volume, p. 73

The truth was that Kingham liked scenes. He loved to flounder in emotion - his own and other people's. He was exhilarated by these baths of passion; he felt that he really lived, that he was more than a man, while he splashed about in them. And the intoxication was so delicious that he indulged in it without considering the consequences - or perhaps it would be truer to say that he considered the consequences (for intellectually no man could be clearer-sighted than Kingham) but deliberately ignored them.

When I say that he had a great facility for making scenes, I do not mean to imply that he ever simulated an emotion. He felt genuinely and strongly, but too easily. And he took pleasure in cultivating and working up his emotions. For instance, what in other men would have been a passing irritation, held in check by self-control, to be modified very likely by subsequent impressions, was converted by Kingham, almost deliberately, into a wild fury which no second thoughts were allowed to assuage. Often these passions were the result of mere mistakes on the part of those who had provoked them. But once emotionally committed, Kingham would never admit a mistake - unless, of course, his passion for self-humiliation happened at the moment to be stronger than his passion for self-assertion. Often, too, he would take up unchanging emotional attitudes towards people. A single powerful impression would be allowed to dominate all other impressions. His intellect was put into blinkers, the most manifest facts were ignored; and until further orders the individual in question produced in Kingham only one particular set of reactions.¹⁸¹

But this was only one side of the coin. However critical of Kingham, the narrator of "Two or Three Graces" confesses his admiration in a moment of self-analysis:-

..... I am forced to the conclusion that I myself was in some manner in love with him (Kingham). For why should I, who knew him so well and how insufferable he could be and, indeed, generally was, why should I put up with him, in spite of everything? The only explanation is that, like all those who did not loathe him, I was somehow in love with Kingham. He was in some way important for me, deeply significant and necessary. In his presence I felt that my being expanded. There was suddenly, so to speak, a high tide

181. Two or Three Graces, "Two or Three Graces", p. 11-12

within me; along dry, sand-silted, desolate channels of my being life strongly, sparklingly flowed. And Kington was the moon that drew it up across the desert..... There was a glow, a vividness, a brilliance about the man. He could charm you even when he was saying things with which you disagreed or doing things which you disapproved. Even his enemies admitted the existence and the power of his brilliant charm.¹⁸²

Huxley may well have remained perpetually caught up in the attraction towards and revulsion from Lawrence had it not been for his growing interest in pacifism and mysticism which led him to reject the Rampion ideal of "life-worshipper"¹⁸³ and strive, instead, towards the ideal of the contemplative, supremely non-attached man who dominates the successive novels from Miller and his disciple Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, to Propter in After Many a Summer, Rontini and his disciple Sebastian Barnack in Time Must Have a Stop.

182. Two or Three Graces, "Two or Three Graces", p. 128-130

183. Do What You Will, p. 309

III
UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Eyeless in Gaza.

Long before the publication of Eyeless in Gaza, perhaps before Huxley had even seriously considered writing a novel to expound the principles of mysticism, he saw the comic potential of the mystical vision and proceeded to dramatize it with all its hocus-pocus - séances, pseudo-scientific observations, quack media - in The World of Light. Aside from the humour, the play anticipates much of the material for Eyeless in Gaza: the central character Hugo, "unattractive, ... and shy, and frightened,"¹ enjoying his misery and deliberately chosen dreariness, is persuaded in a fit of drunken abandon to accompany the adventurous Bill Hamblin to Guiana, the event a foretaste of Beavis's journey to South America, accompanied by Mark Staithes. The men vanish. Hugo's father, professional accountant and amateur spiritualist, communicates with his son, reported dead, through the psychic medium Hubert Capes, and his enthusiasm leads him to write a book on spiritualism based on his observations during those séances in which Capes conjured up Hugo in that eternal "'world of light.'"² In the midst of a séance, Hugo makes an untimely personal appearance, very much alive and accompanied by Hamblin, now blind as a result of falling face first into a cactus bush! (The grotesque accident recalls Staithes' amputation in South America). Poor Mr. Wendham, forerunner of the ineffectual and pedantic John Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, is left to decide whether or not he should publicly announce the return of his son and thus debunk his book. Capes is denounced as fraud though Hugo supports him with the assertion that clairvoyance and telepathy are facts, regardless of whether one chooses to interpret them in terms of ghosts or scientific theory. Finally, embarrassed by the uproar he has caused, Hugo escapes quietly and unobserved.

Despite the absurdities and inconsistencies inherent in the mystical vision and dramatized in The World of Light, Huxley was to write seriously on the subject. There is no obvious humour in

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1. Verses and a Comedy, "The World of Light", p. 172
 2. Ibid., p. 210

Eyeless in Gaza and, at times, Beavis runs the risk of ridicule, so earnestly does he take himself and his high falutin theories. The challenge to parody was irresistible, at least to Cyril Connolly who in his "Told in Gath" satirizes Anthony Beavis in the figure of the self-conscious Giles Pentateuch who converses learnedly and pretentiously with the Groyne manor gathering - the yogi, Luke Snarthes, Reggie Ringworm, Mr. Encolpius, Roland Narthex, Minnie Rhomboid. Connolly pokes fun at the whole gamut of Huxleyan pet theories and characteristics from his debate of ends and means, to the mystic's contemplative exercises, the farcial séance in which Snarthes faints and crashes to the floor with "Ixionic impact."³ He concludes on the note of psychological determinism:-

Giles began again: "It was at Groyne, during one of Minnie Rhomboid's most succulent week-ends, that it all happened, happened because it had to happen, because it was in the very nature of Luke Snarthes and Mary Pippin that exactly such things should happen, just as it was character not destiny, character that was destiny, that caused Napoleon....."

However much in jest, Connolly underlines the very problem which overwhelms the Huxleyan hero who is destined to indifference, reserve, inhibition, excessive and sterile intellectualizing. From Denis Stone to Philip Quarles, the hero realizes ideally what he would like to become and continually tries to change his fate, to live as the complete man in a harmony of mind and body. But the means to that end are always inadequate and contradictory, whether the hero be knowingly self-destructive through excessive inhibition, as with Denis Stone, or irresponsibly sensual as with Gumbriel Junior. Anthony Beavis crystallizes the predicament in Eyeless in Gaza:-

Five words sum up every biography. Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor. Like all other human beings, I know what I ought to do, but continue to do what I know I oughtn't to do.⁵

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3. Cyril Connolly: The Condemned Playground. Essays: 1927-1944, "Told in Gath", (London: Routledge, 1946), p. 134
 4. Ibid., p. 135
 5. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 12

In the philosophical consideration of Ends and Means (1937), Huxley goes a step beyond the Laurentian ideal embodied in Mark Rampion of Point Counter Point - man as "a creature on a tight-rope, walking delicately, equilibrated, with mind and consciousness and spirit at one end of his balancing pole and body and instinct and all that's unconscious and earthy and mysterious at the other"⁶ - and poses the ideal of non-attachment:-

The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possessions. Non-attached to the objects of these various desires. Non-attached to his anger and hatred; non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, social position. Non-attached even to science, art, speculation, philanthropy. Yes, non-attached even to these. For..... 'they are not enough.' Non-attachment to self and to what are called 'the things of this world' has always been associated in the teachings of the philosophers and the founders of religions with attachment to an ultimate reality greater and more significant than the self. Greater and more significant than even the best things that this world has to offer.⁷

Briefly, non-attachment spells freedom to arrive "through direct insight into the real nature of ultimate reality."⁷ Huxley transposes the philosophy of Ends and Means to Eyeless in Gaza through the character, Anthony Beavis, who tastes this freedom in a mystical experience. Sitting at Gerry Watchett's party, holding a glass of champagne, Anthony finds himself transported into another world, "extraordinarily beautiful and precious and significant."⁸ Each mundane object before him is transformed amid a glow of colour into a shining gem. The noise around him is transfigured and arrested:-

The apples and the oranges in the silver bowl were like enormous gems. Each glass, under the candles, contained, not wine, but a great yellow beryl, solid and translucent. The roses had the glossy texture of satin and the shining hardness and distinctness of form belonging to metal or glass. Even sound was frozen and crystalline.....⁸

6. Point Counter Point, p. 406

7. Ends and Means, p. 3-4

8. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 88

The party scene becomes "an illuminated aquarium",⁹ his inner self a "divine fish-soul.... poised in its alien element, gazing, gazing through huge eyes that perceived everything, understood everything, but having no part in what it saw."⁹ Poised, enchanted, serenely detached, Anthony experiences the perfect harmony of Being:-

I am not my body, I am not my sensations,
I am not even my mind; I am that I am.
I om that I om. The sacred word OM represents Him. God is not limited by time.
For the One is not absent from anything,
and yet is separated from all things....⁹

Helen Amberley, carried away in the rhythm of the dance, experiences a similar non-attachment - heaven as "an illumination... a harmony..... a dance":-¹⁰

Dancing, she lost her life in order to save it; lost her identity and became something greater than herself; lost perplexities and self-hatreds in a bright harmonious certitude; lost her bad character and was made perfect; lost the regretted past, the apprehended future, and gained a timeless present of consummate happiness. She who could not paint, could not write, could not even sing in tune, became while she danced an artist; no, more than an artist; became a god, the creator of a new heaven and a new earth, a creator rejoicing in his creation and finding it good.¹¹

Both Helen and Anthony find themselves, if only for a moment, completely fulfilled. This is the ultimate freedom which eludes Philip Quarles who abuses the means towards non-attachment by transforming them into an end. He cuts himself off from personal ties, sentimentality, memories, passion, impulse and rationality and confines his activities to "The Search for Truth"¹² which merely serves as an amusement, a distraction from the ultimate reality of mystical being. After all, the "Truth-Searcher"¹² or "Higher Lifer"¹³ is, as Anthony comes to realize, a substitute for the "Higher Shirker"¹³ who escapes into a world:-

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- 9. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 89
 - 10. Ibid., p. 158
 - 11. Ibid., p. 160
 - 12. Point Counter Point, p. 324
 - 13. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 113

.....where there's no risk to health and the minimum of responsibilities and tortures. A world, what's more, that tradition regards as actually superior to the world of responsible living - higher. The Higher Shirker can fairly wallow in his good conscience. For how easy to find in the life of scholarship and research equivalents for all the moral virtues! Some, of course, are not equivalent, but identical: perseverance, patience, self-forgetfulness and the like. Good means to ends that may be bad.¹³

Philip Quarles is blinded by his search for Truth, which becomes a desire for knowledge rather than being. He sees no way out of his intellectual prison, a prison of words ultimately constructed out of the nonsensical ravings of a lunatic:-

'An the bee-what in the tee-mother of the trothodoodoo, to majoram or that emidrate, eni eni krastrei, mestreit to ketra totombreidei, to ra from treido as that kekritest.' Marvellous! Philip said to himself as he copied down the last word. What style! what majestic beauty! The richness and sonority of the opening phrase! 'An the bee-what in the tee-mother of the trothodoodoo.' He repeated it to himself. 'I shall print it on the title-page of my next novel,' he wrote in his notebook. 'The epigraph the text of the whole sermon.' Shakespeare only talked about tales told by an idiot. But here was the idiot actually speaking - Shakespeareanly, what was more. 'The final word about life,' he added in pencil.¹⁴

The spiritual quest is continued by Anthony who, like Samson, "'Eyeless in Gaza at the Mill with slaves'",¹⁵ arrives at an inner sight, a revelation of himself, though where Samson is destroyed by the divine revelation and dies among the temple ruins, Anthony, threatened by an anonymous letter, is left at the end of the novel to prove the strength of his beliefs at a pacifist meeting. Huxley's choice of Samson Agonistes is hardly co-incidental. Not only does he try to raise Beavis to a Miltonic level but he also seems to have felt some kinship with the incomparable Milton and hoped, perhaps, to

13. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 113

14. Point Counter Point, p. 395

15. Eyeless in Gaza, frontispiece

emulate him. Both writers suffered from a visual handicap which led them towards a freedom of introspection, a spiritual insight. For them, vision was transformed from the physical act of seeing to an imaginative and prophetic insight. According to his brother Julian, Aldous's blindness was "a help instead of a hindrance":-16

It forced him to rely more on himself and less on books, to cultivate his memory and the art of quick and intense perception. As with blind Milton, it fostered and focused the immaterial light of his spirit so that it could -

Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse -

and so attain a full inner vision.16

On the subject of this intense perception, Kenneth Clark, British art historian, comments on Huxley's insight into painting:-

Of Aldous Huxley's many marvellous gifts the most surprising was the gift of sight. Nothing could show more clearly the difference between two divisions of sight - if I may be excused such amateur physiology - the efficient functioning of the physical organ in carrying messages to the brain, and the reception of those messages by a prepared intelligence. As we all know, Aldous Huxley's eyes were physical organs of extreme fragility. For some years he was actually blind, and even when he could see enough for practical purposes, he was painfully far from normal vision..... And yet, the fact remains, that what he wrote about painting proves him to have been one of the most discerning lookers of our time....17

Since Huxley's struggle had begun far earlier than Milton's, he was forced to accept his handicap without the accompanying bitterness which Milton experienced at the age of forty-four. He had contracted keratitis, an inflammation of the cornea, at Eton and within a few months, finding himself almost totally blind, he learnt to type and read books and music in Braille, his courage doubly difficult in

16. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 22

17. Ibid., p. 15

view of his mother's recent death in 1908. By 1913 when his one eye had recovered sufficiently to allow him to read with a magnifying glass, he went to Oxford, but, his original intention to study medicine thwarted by his sight, he was obliged to turn to literature. Looking back on the change of career, Huxley was both grateful and regretful:-

Providence is sometimes kind even when it seems to be harsh. My temporary blindness also preserved me from becoming a doctor, for which I am also grateful. For seeing that I nearly died of overwork as a journalist, I should infallibly have killed myself in the much more strenuous profession of medicine. On the other hand, I very much regret the scientific training which my blindness made me miss. It is ludicrous to live in the twentieth century equipped with an elegant literary training eminently suitable to the seventeenth.¹⁸

When the war broke out in 1914, his eyesight barred him from military service and at the same time he suffered the blow of his brother's suicide, dramatized in the story of Brian Foxe in Eyeless in Gaza. The war years were spent in government service and in teaching at Eton which, according to his former pupil Steven Runciman, must have proved a dreary task:-

For those who lack a special sense of vocation it must be a tedious job to try to teach schoolboys. I cannot think that Aldous Huxley possessed that sense. Certainly the early pages of Antic Hay suggest that he found schoolmastering to be a dreary, irritating and rather lonely profession; and when in later years I asked him about his experiences as a master at Eton, proudly boasting that I had sat at his feet, he dismissed them as having formed an unimportant episode in his life; and he thought none the better of me for having been one of his victims.¹⁹

Yet, despite Huxley's handicap, Runciman recalls him as an impressive figure:-

18. Living Authors, ed. Dilly Tante, (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1931), p. 191

19. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 27

....that long, thin body, with a face that was far younger than most of our masters' and yet seemed somehow ageless, and, usually hidden by an infinite variety of spectacles, eyes that were almost sightless and yet almost uncomfortably observant. He stood there, looking something of a martyr but at the same time extraordinarily distinguished.²⁰

In the course of his war-time visits to Garsington, he came into contact with the conscientious objectors, Philip Morrell himself, Bertrand Russell and Gerald Shove who, in all probability, influenced a latent pacifism, crystallized in 1937 in Ends and Means and reflected in the novel Eyeless in Gaza (1936). For, as visionary, it was consistent that he should practise non-violence as the only means to mystical contemplation. In 1937 just after the publication of Eyeless in Gaza, he settled in California, drawn by its facilities for eye-training according to the Bates method which he outlined in The Art of Seeing (1942). The method was more than a mechanical training: it was a means towards freedom in mastering a disability instead of becoming enslaved to it. Commenting on his handicap, Huxley remarks:-

"The most important single event in my life was unquestionably the onset of eye trouble. This had the effect of isolating me during my years of adolescence and of forcing me to live very largely on my own inner resources. In recent months the discovery of a method whereby, through properly directed conscious effort, the disability can be remedied has been for me of the highest significance and importance, as demonstrating, in one particular sphere, the possibility of becoming the master of one's circumstances instead of their slave. The problem of freedom, in the psychological rather than the political sense of the word, is in large measure a technical problem. It is not enough to wish to become the master, it is not even enough to work hard at achieving such mastery. Correct knowledge as to the best means of achieving mastery is also essential. In one limited field of human disability, Dr. Bates has proved such knowledge. Similar techniques for controlling unfavourable circumstances in other isolated fields have been independently developed

20. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 27

and are available for anyone who cares to learn them. All these techniques, however, are secondary and, so to say, peripheral, to a great central technique. This central technique, which teaches the art of obtaining freedom from the fundamental human disability of egotism, has been repeatedly described by the mystics of all ages and countries. It is with the problem of personal, psychological freedom that I now find myself predominantly concerned."²¹

Stephen Spender, who met Huxley in the late 1920's, felt he was representative of a "freedom from":-

.....freedom from all sorts of things such as conventional orthodoxies, officious humbug, sexual taboos, respect for establishments. In addition to this one sometimes felt present in his work and his personality the kind of longing for unattainable consistencies which is expressed in some of Shakespeare's sonnets, or painted perhaps on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel: the longing for the mind to be beautiful if the body is so, the artist to be as truthful in his personality as in his art, the scientist to be as benevolent as are the potentialities of his science.²²

It is this idealistic "freedom from" which preoccupies Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza. He is the focus for all Huxley's own concern with time, death, old age, personality and intellect, transcended through non-attachment in the form of pacifism, and leading ultimately to the supra-personal love felt in the mystical experience of Being. In Ends and Means, Huxley works deductively, from the general to the particular, posing as the goal of the rational idealist, "freedom, justice and peaceful co-operation between non-attached, yet active and responsible individuals."²³ He then proceeds to demonstrate the validity of this reform, beginning with the individual and extended to include groups, societies, nations and finally the world, penetrating to the spheres of government, religion, education and ethics.

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- 21. Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary, ed. Kunitz & Haycraft, (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1942), p. 698
 - 22. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 19
 - 23. Ends and Means, p. 62

The reverse applies to Eyeless in Gaza in which Huxley adapts his philosophy to the dramatic method of character growth. Anthony Beavis works inductively and moves in a series of inner revelations towards the ultimate goal of non-attachment. Drawing on the technique of Point Counter Point, Huxley develops a multiplicity of themes from violence, revolution, love and personality to time, old age and death, welding these into a unity not present in the earlier novel. In short, the multiple vision of Point Counter Point has been channelled into the search for unity in diversity:-

Unity of mankind, unity of life, all being even.

Physical unity, first of all. Unity even in diversity, even in separation. Separate patterns, but everywhere alike. Everywhere the same constellations of the ultimate units of energy.....

The unity of life. Unity demonstrated even in the destruction of one life by another. Life and all being are one. Otherwise no living thing could ever derive sustenance from another or from the unliving substances around it. One even in destruction one in spite of separation. Each organism is unique. Unique and yet united with all other organisms in the sameness of its ultimate parts; unique above a substratum of physical identity.

And minds - minds also are unique, but unique above a substratum of mental identity. Identity and interchangeableness of love, trust, courage. Fearless affection restores the lunatic to sanity, transforms the hostile savage into a friend, tames the wild animal. The mental pattern of love can be transferred from one mind to another and still retain its virtue, just as the physical pattern of a hormone can be transferred, with all its effectiveness, from one body to another.....

One, one, one, he repeated; but one in division; united and yet separate.²⁴

Unity and diversity are reconciled, as are love and hate, destruction and preservation. The opposites move together in the contact of two cones which, unlike Yeats's interacting gyres, meet at the tips, the focal point from which peace radiates:-

24. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 395-396

.....from a single, focal point, peace expands and expands towards a base immeasurably distant and so wide that its circle is the ground and source of all life, all being..... Cone reversed into cone upright. Passage from wide stormy light to the still focus of darkness; and thence, beyond the focus, through widening darkness into another light. From storm to calm and on through yet profounder and intenser peace to the final consummation, the ultimate light that is the source and substance of all things; source of the darkness, the void, the submarine night of living calm; source finally of the waves and the frenzy of the spray - forgotten now. 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.....²⁵

Before Anthony can reach this harmonious unity of being, he is involved in the struggle against indifference, sloth, irresponsible casualty and an overall sense of meaninglessness. Like Philip C. ... caught in a prison of words, he lives snugly in a burrow ... intermittent adulteries and ideas about societies,²⁶ looking out from his private box and making comments.²⁷ As child and adult, he remains essentially vulnerable, "at the mercy of the world",²⁸ so that the burrow provides a means of defence against external contacts. Mrs. Foxe, who sees Anthony as an eleven year old shortly after his mother's death, observes the vulnerability of the broad sensitive forehead, "those almost tremulously sensitive lips....that slight, unforceful chin"²⁸ - hence his school nick-name, "baby-faced Bengier".²⁹ And thirty-one years later, Helen Ledwidge notes the same childish helplessness and defencelessness:-

Under the thick dark hair the forehead was beautifully smooth and serene, like the forehead of a meditative child. Childish too, in a more comical way, was the short, slightly tilted nose. Between their narrowed lids the eyes were alive with inner laughter, and there was a smile also about the corners of the lips - a faint ironic smile that in some sort contradicted what the lips seemed in their form to express. They were full lips, finely cut;

25. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 400

26. Ibid., p. 303

27. Ibid., p. 394

28. Ibid., p. 68

29. Ibid., p. 42

voluptuous and at the same time grave, sad, almost tremulously sensitive. Lips as though naked in their brooding sensuality; without defence of their own and abandoned to their helplessness by the small, unaggressive chin beneath.³⁰

Despite his knowingly destructive behaviour, which includes the seduction of Brian Foxe's beloved Joan Thurley and Brian's resultant suicide, his passion of "aimed and accurate greed"³¹ for Helen, Anthony has never suffered the consequences of his deeds. Yet he feels himself enslaved by his acts: in mock-serious debate with Helen,³² he suggests that the envious gods will take vengeance on his run of good fortune, as happened to Polycrates, both patron of art and literature and a successful pirate controlling the eastern Mediterranean seas. Hoping to appease the envy of the gods, Polycrates threw his ring into the sea but within a few days, the gift was returned in a fish presented to him by a local fisherman. Shortly afterwards, Polycrates, caught symbolically in the circle of the ring, the circle of his misdeeds, was trapped and crucified for his piracy. Similarly, Anthony feels the evil circle closing in on him, feels himself destroyed by self-division:-

Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor.
Like all other human beings, I know what I ought to do, but continue to do what I know I oughtn't to do.³³

This is echoed by Mary Amberley, unconsciously ironical in a situation in which Anthony has forced himself to see her, however much against his will:-

'One's always doing things one doesn't want - stupidly, out of sheer perversity. One chooses the worse just because it is the worse. Hyperion to a satyr - and therefore the satyr.'³⁴

With his journal as a record of self-analysis, Anthony strives towards a solution of the "video meliora proboque" problem

30. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 8

31. Ibid., p. 105

32. Ibid., p. 62

33. Ibid., p. 12

34. Ibid., p. 287

which haunts almost every Huxleyan character: Denis Stone in Crome Yellow; Gumbril Junior and Myra Viveash in Antic Hay; the Brave New Worldian Bernard Marx, forced by the dictates of state to go against himself; Philip and Elinor Quarles; Walter Bidlake and Spandrell in Point Counter Point and, in Eyeless in Gaza, the characters, Mary Amberley and her daughter Helen. Anthony is the first to make a concerted effort towards finding "a technique for translating good intentions into acts, for being sure of doing what one knows one ought to do."³⁵ It is only by an effort of will that he can break out of the vicious circle of self-destruction:-

Our human world is composed of an endless series of vicious circles, from which it is possible to escape only by an act, or rather a succession of acts, of intelligently directed will.³⁶

The effort of will entails re-education and reconditioning which Anthony raises from the psychological level of Freud, Pavlov and the behaviourists to interpret as a restatement of the doctrine of free will.

In the course of his self re-education, his first object is to "inhibit all improper uses of the self,"³⁷ not by force and violence but in a gradually increasing awareness which brings increased control. He begins at ground level with the consciousness of the mundane activities of walking, sitting, eating and sleeping, and aims at correcting bad physical use which inevitably gives rise to a correction of mental habits. The good habits of body and mind acquired by control and inhibition become self-perpetuating and it becomes progressively easier to put good intentions into practice, to be "patient, good-tempered, kind, unrapacious, chaste."³⁸

This progress from within can also be extended to the external in the progress of a citizen, a society. Anthony, as sociologist, considers the History of Man recorded by Acton as "a History of the Idea of Freedom"³⁹ which he rejects on the grounds

35. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 15

36. Ends and Means, p. 210

37. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 214

38. Ibid., p. 216

39. Ibid., p. 107

that man has proved exactly the reverse. Man historically has been doomed to slavery; slavery to nature in the form of hunger and bad seasons, slavery to institutions through increased social organization and technical development. As the institutions become increasingly outworn, so the individual becomes increasingly enslaved. Revolt against the institution brings anarchy and a brief period of relief, "a kind of joyful honeymoon",⁴⁰ which gradually deteriorates to a new slavery, more violence, new institutions. In the end, freedom exists, in part, for a few individuals only, the law givers and the prosperous who enjoy their liberty "on the condition of some form of general slavery."⁴¹

Developing Anthony's thoughts in Ends and Means, Huxley poses that in the course of political and economic change, progressiveness has always been associated with aggressiveness.⁴² Change spells violence and "a violent revolution cannot have anything except the inevitable results of violence, which are as old as the hills."⁴³ In short, violence can never be the means to peace, progress or freedom. Yet, since the modern world is essentially militaristic in its concern with power politics and rearmament, the vicious circle of war begetting more war continues and, despite the dictators' sophistic argument of fatalism and "'historical' inevitableness",⁴⁴ nevertheless, on empirical evidence, Huxley maintains there is nothing in nature, in the conflicts of animals, birds and insects to suggest the purely human phenomenon of war: "Man is unique in organizing the mass murder of his own species."⁴⁵

In Eyeless in Gaza, the debate on war, violence and the destruction of man, leads Anthony toward the opposing force of love which he first analyses in relation to himself:-

The problem is: how to love? (Once more the word is suspect - greasy from being fingered by generations of Stigginses). There ought to be some way of dry-cleaning and disinfecting words. Love, purity, goodness, spirit - a pile of dirty linen waiting for the laundress. How, then, to - not 'love', since it's an unwashed handkerchief - feel, say, persistent affectionate interest in people?⁴⁶

40. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 108

41. Ibid., p. 109

42. Ends and Means, p. 23

43. Ibid., p. 25

44. Ibid., p. 67

45. Ibid., p. 89

46. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 13-14

Anthony's inability to love is tied up with his reserve and cultivated indifference which Huxley dramatizes in a series of flash-backs as germinating in his youth. Faced with his mother's death, then, returning to school isolated in his grief, he stifles his emotions until overcome by the painfully stammered condolences of Brian Foxe, his resistance melts and he dissolves into tears. But from then onwards he armours himself against pain and conditions himself to invulnerability simply by cutting off his emotions in order to escape them, rather than face them. Since contacts with people are the chief source of pain, he strives to avoid personal relations and confidences, "dangerous... entangling... like fly-paper."⁴⁷ We see him ten years later at Oxford, still battling for escape from pain by freedom from commitment, freedom from association with others. He rejects a threatening intimacy with Brian Foxe for the freedom of "going native"⁴⁸ among the rich set, led by Gerry Watchett though he realizes that he is merely exchanging one prison for another - his own prison of self-justification and "middle-class prudence"⁴⁹ for the prison of aristocratic indulgence, "the intoxications of wine and sensuality".⁴⁸ Paradoxically, in trying to avoid pain, he deliberately allows himself to be tormented by Gerry's sharp and humiliating tongue, so that his freedom becomes a kind of masochism. In Watchett's company he has to pay the price of playing the "high-class buffoon" to "the lordly young barbarians".⁴⁹

Meeting Mary Amberley again, nine years after his mother's funeral, Anthony is impressed by her daring, her unconventionality, the same qualities which once drew him to Watchett's circle. Their initial conversation revolves around love, parental and marital. Mary reminisces about her own parents who possessed, oppressed and crippled her with affection and she muses on the unaccountable happiness of oddly assorted couples as against the misery of the apparently compatible. Simultaneously, she draws and attracts Anthony into a web of intimacy, an awareness of her as woman, despite the gulf of nine years between them. He, in turn, feels strong, exultant, masterful but equally at a loss before her frank gaze, her immoral

47. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 61

48. Ibid., p. 87

49. Ibid., p. 88

philosophy. Like Lucy Tantamount in Point Counter Point, who tantalizes Walter to abject devotion, Mary Amberley lures Anthony as her victim lover to serve her, as he once served Watchett, in the rôle of high-class buffoon.

Fully conscious of his role, Anthony entertains her with a supply of coarse stories, told with Rabelaisian wit and enjoyed in the same way as Spandrell's in Point Counter Point⁵⁰ they are forbidden fruit, titillations of the unmentionable. He proceeds to dissect his friends, distorting the mundane solely for the pleasure of entertaining Mary with a story "at once amusing and psychologically profound; a smoking-room story that should also be a library story, a laboratory story."⁵¹ In this way he assumes the right of Philip Quarles in Point Counter Point to observe as "zoological novelist",⁵² and distorts it to become "the right of the enlightened and scientific vivisector, to anatomize and examine."⁵¹ But the ring of Polycrates is returned. The gods take vengeance. In his anxiety to please Mary, he wantonly distorts the love affair of Brian Foxe and Joan Thurley, caricaturing Brian's obsessive code of chastity. One he has roused Mary's virulent contempt, he is challenged to save Joan by seducing her himself. Though humiliated and ashamed at his slander, Anthony is forced to take up the glove and be blackmailed into doing obeisance to the cruel goddess for fear of losing her love. And Mary, flattered in her boredom by Anthony's devotion, though careful to avoid the nuisance of his asserting his rights, taunts him with "'Joan's treatment'"⁵³ and reinforces her challenge by referring the story, in "deliberate bad taste,"⁵⁴ to the barrister, Sidney Gattick. Here is the cultivated social blunder which Lady Edward Tantamount indulges in by pretending total unconcern, innocence or even forgetfulness of tramping on another's toes. Mary then offers a material bribe of five pounds to one if he seduces Joan within a month and she maliciously threatens never to speak to him again if the deed is not accomplished:-

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- 50. Point Counter Point, p. 119-120
 - 51. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 248-249
 - 52. Point Counter Point, p. 334
 - 53. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 260
 - 54. Ibid., p. 262

For a few seconds they looked at one another in silence. Anthony had gone very pale. Close-lipped and crookedly, Mary was smiling; between the half-closed lids, her eyes were bright with malicious laughter.

Why did she have to be so horrible to him, he wondered, so absolutely beastly? He hated her, hated her all the more because of his desire for her, because of the memory of the anticipation of those pleasures, because of her liberating wit and knowledge, because of everything, in a word, that made it inevitable for him to do exactly what she wanted. Even though he knew it was stupid and wrong.

Watching him, Mary saw the rebellious hatred in his eyes, and when at last he dropped them, the sign of her own triumph.

'Never again,' she repeated. 'I mean it.'⁵⁵

Anthony is bombarded into playing the rôle of villain, of betraying Brian as Iago betrayed the Moorish general for, significantly, before the seduction, he takes Joan to a production of Othello. Her moved response and naive enthusiasm for the performance make him feel doubly angry with himself and with everyone concerned with the "present insufferable situation":-

...with Mary for having pushed him into it; with himself for having allowed her to push him in; with Joan for being the subject of that monstrous bet; with Brian because he was ultimately responsible for the whole thing; with Shakespeare, even, and the actors and this jostling crowd...⁵⁶

The seduction accomplished, Anthony takes the news to Mary who is perplexed at his depression in the face of victory. After all, he has won the bet and is now entitled to serve her. Anthony can find no justification for his deed and feels intensely ashamed that "a detached, a momentary sensuality"⁵⁷ should be interpreted by Joan as true love. He is now faced with an even greater problem than before - the consequences of his act which torment him incessantly, but which he tries desperately to evade:-

55. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 264-265

56. Ibid., p. 275

57. Ibid., p. 281

He couldn't face it. And why should he face it, after all? He could borrow on his securities - enough to get out of the country and stay away; for six months, for a year if necessary. And while the midlands streamed past the window, he leaned back with closed eyes, picturing himself in Italy or, if Italy wasn't far enough from England, in Greece, in Egypt, even in India, Malaya, Java. With Mary; for of course Mary would have to come too, at least for part of the time..... In imagination he sailed from island to island in the Aegean; smoked hashish in the slums of Cairo, ate bhang in Benares; did a slight Joseph Conrad in the East Indies, a slight Loti even, in spite of the chromolithograph style, among the copper-coloured girls and the gardenias, and, though he still found it impossible to like the man as much as Mary did, a slight Gauguin in the South Seas. These future and hypothetical escapes were escapes also here and now, so that for a long time in his corner of the compartment he quite forgot the reason for his projected flight into the exotic.⁵⁸

.....
He hated suffering, and looked forward with dread to what the next few days and weeks held in store for him. But his fear of suffering was less than his fear of action. He found it easier to accept passively what came than to make a decisive choice and act upon it.⁵⁹

The thoughts travel through his mind on the way to meet Brian at Langdale for a pre-arranged holiday which he could not cancel. Faced with Brian in person, his friend's gaunt, emaciated face in itself provides an excuse not to endanger his health further by telling him the truth. He lies automatically and cannot find the courage to speak. Tormented yet impotent in his cowardice, he procrastinates both that day and the next, tries to write a letter of explanation to Joan but angrily throws aside his repeated efforts and vents his indignation and guilt on Mary, whom he now regards as solely responsible for his predicament:-

'Deliberate malice.....' 'Shameless explicit-
ation of my love for you.....' 'Treating me
as though I were some sort of animal you could
torment for your private amusement...' The
phrases flowed from his pen. 'This is good-bye,'

58. Eyeless in Gaza, o. 296

59. Ibid., p. 297

he concluded, and, with half his mind, believed in what he was dramatically writing. 'I never want to see you again. Never.' But a quarrel, the other half of his mind was reflecting, can always be made up: he would give her this lesson: then, perhaps, if she behaved well, if he felt he simply couldn't do without her....⁶⁰

Anthony characteristically provides himself with an escape valve, shying from commitment in the glib hopes of re-establishing contact with Mary. He even tries to justify his act by the persuasion that it was only natural for him to assuage Joan's sensual thirst. Having stalled for yet another day, he comes down to breakfast to see Brian guiltily secreting a letter which he guesses to be from Joan. Once again he cannot muster the courage to confess, and while Brian is out walking, he resolves to turn tail and flee to London. In the course of packing, he finds Brian's suicide notes, letters to himself, Mrs. Foxe and Joan which he promptly burns, leaving no trace of his part in the death pact. The villagers find the body next day at the foot of a cliff, the face mangled and unrecognizable, the body buzzing with flies.

Anthony feels physically ill. In one sense, he is forced to suffer for his deed by breaking contact with Mary Amberley, for fear that she will worm out the truth. For the rest, he is tormented by memories of the event. That of all people he should have betrayed Brian, so inherently good, even at school, "so awfully decent. Too decent, even"⁶¹ and who always had the courage of his convictions which Anthony feels to be a comment on his own cowardice:-

It was just because he liked Horse-Face so much that he now hated him. Or, rather, because there were so many reasons why he should like him - so few reasons, on the contrary, why Horse-Face should return the liking. Horse-Face was rich with all sorts of fine qualities that he himself either lacked completely or else, which was worse, possessed, but somehow was incapable of manifesting.⁶²

60. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 327-328

61. Ibid., p. 44

62. Ibid., p. 56

Brian's suicide note reveals the same Christian forbearance which he had practised throughout his life. He criticizes Anthony's betrayal as unworthy of Anthony himself, something he would never have done and ends with a magnanimous gesture:-

I was angry with you when I began to write
this letter, I hated you; but now I find
I don't hate you any longer. God bless
you...⁶³

Brian's hatred is fully justifiable as an abhorrence of Anthony's evil, where Anthony hated "Horse-Face"⁶² for precisely the reverse - his Christian forgiveness which predominates even in the moment of anguish and crisis. There is also Joan to consider in his guilt: the rector's daughter, graceful and naive, both frank and timid, thwarted in her love for Brian by his mother's vampiric affection and by Brian's own rigid theories of chastity, his conflict of mind and body, his criminal remorse at even thinking in terms of sensuality. Despite his faults, Brian is her only means of escape from the claustrophobic atmosphere of the Gothic-style vicarage, with its "faint smell of steamed pudding flavoured with cabbage",⁶⁴ escape from a hypocritical and calculating mother, and a violent, dogmatic father. And Anthony is responsible for denying her that freedom.

Regardless of their destructiveness, Anthony continues to indulge in his moments of irresponsible sensuality. Though he once suffered from Mary Amberley's vicious and malicious challenge, he is still curious to see her again when, twelve years after Brian's suicide, he receives "her reconciliatory invitation."⁶⁵ Half expecting, half hoping to see her moulted and middle-aged, he finds her at forty-three slim and agile, almost deliberately kittenish as defiant proof of her youth. She is as fascinating as before, even more so in the bloom of middle-age, her faintly husky voice both "aphrodisiac and comic."⁶⁶ At the same time she has become even more avaricious and calculating in love, compulsively indulgent in her present affair with none other than Anthony's former university acquaintance, Gerry Watchett. Nevertheless, Anthony finds he can look upon the relationship with scientific detachment:-

63. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 352

64. Ibid., p. 165

65. Ibid., p. 100

66. Ibid., p. 117

'These dismal compulsions! Like cuckoos in August. Like stags in October.'.....

'Fascinating, the way these aristocrats can behave!' 67

Mary's depravity emerges that same evening in a show-down with Gerry who has neglected her for her eighteen year old daughter, Helen. Though she loathes the sight of him, his huge coarse, insensitive hands, she perversely enjoys wallowing in his brutality:-

'Hideous hands,' Mary thought as she looked at them, 'odious hands!' All the more odious now, because it was by their very ugliness and brutality that she had first been attracted, was even at this very moment being attracted, shamefully, in spite of all the reasons she had for hating him. 68

Her complaints voiced, he callously seduces her and she experiences the same mixture of degradation and ecstasy which Spandrell feels in his own depraved affairs. She enjoys being treated as an animal, a prostitute:-

Still struggling, she gave herself up to the knowledge, to the direct physical intuition that this intolerable degradation was the accomplishment of an old desire, was a revelation marvellous as well as horrible, was the Apocalypse, the Apocalypse at once angel and beast, plague, lamb and whore in a single divine, revolting, overwhelming experience... 69

Anthony falls back on his old habits of 'going native' among the aristocracy and continues to see Mary. Months later when he finds her bedridden, poverty-stricken and addicted to morphia, he forces himself to help her, revolted as he is by her ravaged face and body, the hollow cheeks, the lines around the mouth, "those discoloured pouches of skin beneath the eyes", 70 the dyed henna-coloured hair, greasy and dishevelled, the shapeless smear of lipstick, the withered throat emerging from the torn, soiled nightgown, the stained

67. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 181

68. Ibid., p. 183

69. Ibid., p. 184

70. Ibid., p. 283

bedclothes. Ironically it is her former lover, Gerry Watchett, who has swindled her out of her money. Mary, left to wallow in self-pity at her financially embarrassed state, deceives herself with plans of research into the French novel and with the consolation of a supposed host of eager lovers. As a drowning woman who, like Lucy Tantamount in Point Counter Point, prolongs her parties and regards "each successive departure of a guest as the death of a fragment of her own being",⁷¹ Mary anxiously tries to stall Anthony's leave-taking, but he flees from the mask of death and misery, a 'memento mori' like Chawdron's beloved Sybil, destroyed by numerous affairs, brandy and cocaine.⁷² Mary is left to her morphia, which she craves as violently as she once craved sensuality, malevolently threatening to kill her daughter if deprived of the drug. The female vampire developing from Anne in Crome Yellow, Myra Viveash in Antic Hay and Lucy Tantamount in Point Counter Point reaches her ultimate and just degradation in Mary Amberley, old, squalid, destroyed by her own craving, her greed and her sadistic diversions in the midst of a chronic boredom.

Anthony remains caught in the Amberley spell and continues his association this time in an affair with Mary's daughter Helen, who shares her mother's immoral, dare-devil philosophy. As "vivisector"⁷³ of humanity, she also has much in common with Anthony himself since both destroy others by preying on their emotions: Helen uses Hugh Ledwidge as a mere chair, a solid, stable, reliable foundation while Anthony uses Helen herself in moments of irresponsible sensuality. Both are revolted by physical death - the raw, stinking flesh which haunts Anthony in the memory of Brian's body huddled at the foot of the cliff and which torments Helen in the course of her systematic theft during a round of shopping. Accompanied by her maddeningly sensible and prudent sister Joyce, Helen defiantly decides to steal something from each shop they visit: a slab of chocolate, a couple of oranges and finally a kidney which "slithered obscenely between her gloved fingers."⁷⁴ Overcome with intense disgust at the thought of eating it raw, she rushes out of the shop, tearful, hysterical:-

71. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 175

72. Brief Candles, "Chawdron", p. 20-21

73. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 178

74. Ibid., p. 37

'Oh!' Helen started and cried out as though she had been stung by a wasp. An expression of agonized repugnance wrinkled up her face. 'Oh, too filthy, too filthy,' she repeated, looking at her fingers. And setting her basket down on the pavement, she unbuttoned the glove, stripped it off her hand, and, with a violent gesture, flung it away from her into the gutter.⁷⁵

The theft brings to mind Gide's L'Immoraliste in which the central character Michel, convalescing in Biskra, derives an immense satisfaction from the spontaneous immorality of Moktir, the Tunisian boy, whom he sees in the act of stealing a pair of scissors. Michel curiously watches his movements reflected in a mirror and is profoundly moved both by the theft and more so by the fact of his not wanting to stop the boy's immorality. This in itself is a kind of approval of the act:-

Une curiosité que je ne m'expliquais pas bien me faisait surveiller ses gestes. Moktir ne se savait pas observé et me croyait plongé dans la lecture. Je le vis s'approcher sans bruit d'une table où Marceline avait posé, près d'un ouvrage, une paire de petits ciseaux, s'en emparer furtivement, et d'un coup les engouffrer dans son burnous. Mon coeur battit avec force un instant, mais les plus sages raisonnements ne purent faire aboutir en moi le moindre sentiment de révolte. Bien plus! je ne parvins pas à me prouver que le sentiment qui m'emplit alors fût autre chose que de l'amusement, de la joie. Quand j'eus laissé à Moktir tout le temps de me bien voler, je me tournai de nouveau vers lui et lui parlai comme si rien ne s'était passé. Marceline aimait beaucoup cet enfant; pourtant ce ne fut pas, je crois, la peur de la peiner que me fit, quand je la revis, plutôt que dénoncer Moktir, imaginer je ne sais quelle fable pour expliquer la perte des ciseaux. A partir de ce jour, Moktir devint mon préféré.⁷⁶

In a more positive sense, Anthony and Helen share an awareness of non-attachment: Anthony's mystical experience during Gerry Watchett's party is paralleled by Helen's similar experience during her mother's soirée. But apart from these apocalyptic

75. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 37

76. A. Gide: L'Immoraliste, (Paris: Mercure de France, 1954), p. 72-73

moments, their lives are empty, drifting and irresponsible. Helen is seduced by her mother's lover Gerry Watchett, only to suffer the agonies of an abortion during which she imagines herself in a nightmarish scene of grotesquely perverted maternity.⁷⁷ The abortion as a theft of life brings to mind the stolen kidney, the dying kitten, once comic, exquisite and absurd, now "a limp unclean little rag of living refuse."⁷⁸ She mistakenly believes Hugh to be her saviour from a frivolous and meaningless existence, its futility intensified after the abortion, and marries him, seventeen years her senior, but finds no happiness. Instead, she taunts him with his inadequacies, his refusal to accept her in the flesh by regarding her as an "Ariel...a being of another order, beyond good and evil."⁷⁹ Unable to express his feelings to her in person, Hugh records them in a novel, The Invisible Lover, hailed by the critics as "the story of Dante and Beatrice told by Hans Anderson..."⁸⁰ The very thought provokes Helen's mocking laughter and again, like her mother and like the "enfant terrible",⁸¹ Lady Edward Tantamount, she indulges in the deliberate social blunder, publicly taunting Hugh on the eve of his celebrations by reading the letter of her 'invisible lover', Anthony, to the company.

Meanwhile Anthony, deserted by Helen, left alone in his idyllic French villa, is tormented by a revelation of love. Till now, love has played no part in their relationship: each is cut off in his own private world - she in the hell of her grotesque marriage, he escaping from emotion and responsibility by diverting himself with his sociological research:-

His work came first. Suppressing his curiosity, he went on stubbornly playing the part he had long since assigned himself - the part of the detached philosopher, of the preoccupied man of science who doesn't see the things that to everyone else are obvious. He acted as if he could detect in her (Helen's) face nothing but its external beauties of form and texture. Whereas, of course, flesh is never wholly opaque; the soul shows through the walls of its receptacle.

77. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 314

78. Ibid., p. 223

79. Ibid., p. 334

80. Ibid., p. 190

81. Point Counter Point, p. 42

Those clear grey eyes of hers, that mouth with its delicately lifted upper lip, were hard and almost ugly with a resentful sadness.⁸²

Since he deliberately avoids "a Grand Passion",⁸³ Helen has no choice but to accept his conditions, however embittered and rebellious she once felt. It is either this or the alternative of Hugh's company, and she chooses the better of two evils, acting with "a reckless and deliberate gaiety."⁸⁴ Like Anthony, she flippantly brushes off their affair as "'just a bit of fun'".⁸⁵ Still, despite their self-deception and lack of contact, they find a partial happiness in the exquisite Mediterranean setting, the flawless sky, the blazing noon sun which shines with a "strange, violent, flamy life from outer space.....to permeate and transmute the flesh beneath, till the whole body was a thing of alien sun-stuff and the very soul felt itself melting out of its proper identity and becoming something else, something of a different, an other-than-human kind."⁸⁶

The scene holds the potential of fulfilment in the Laurentian sense of losing identity in the dark, mysteriously throbbing act of love. Helen, at first suffering and tormented, her face like "one of Van der Weyden's holy women at the foot of the Cross",⁸⁷ gives herself up to the sun, to desire fulfilled which leaves her serenely and rapturously happy. She is transformed into a sumptuous Gauguin, transported into another world as an escape from "her ordinary hell of emptiness and drought and discontent."⁸⁷ But even now as he sees Helen in the midst of fulfilment, Anthony is reminded of Brian's death:-

He frowned to himself; this past of his was becoming importunate! But when, in order to escape from it, he bent down to kiss Helen's shoulder, he found the sun-warmed skin impregnated with a faint yet penetrating smell, at once salty and smoky, a smell that transported him instantaneously to a great chalk pit in the flank of the Chilterns, where, in Brian Foxe's

82. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 7

83. Ibid., p. 8

84. Ibid., p. 11

85. Ibid., p. 9

86. Ibid., p. 16

87. Ibid., p. 17

company, he had spent an inexplicably pleasurable hour striking two flints together and sniffing, voluptuously, at the place where the spark had left its characteristic tank of marine combustion.....

.... Nothing was safe. Even this skin had the scent of smoke under the sea. This living skin, this present skin; but it was nearly twenty years since Brian's death.....

.....And what if that absurd childish game with the flints had had a point, a profound purpose, which was simply to be recollected here on this blazing roof, now as his lips made contact with Helen's sun-warmed flesh? 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 - died for, another image suddenly reminded him, at the foot of just such a cliff as that beneath which they had played as children in the chalk pit. Yes, even Brian's suicide, he now realized with horror, even the poor huddled body on the rocks, was mysteriously implicit in this hot skin.⁸⁸

In a moment of self-examination, he recalls with regret his detached sensuality and sterilized ideas, but holds back from communicating with Helen, just as she, too, thinking back on her self-deception in her marriage to Hugh, withholds her thoughts from Anthony. They fall into a relaxed torpor to be interrupted suddenly by the roar of a plane and simultaneously a dog falls from the skies, splashing each from head to foot in blood. It is a prophetic moment in which Huxley compares Anthony and Helen with the adulterous David and Bathsheba. The blood is an obvious symbol of their guilt: Helen stands like Lady Macbeth, smeared and marked by her foul deeds. For her the event is a self-revelation, and for Anthony the sight of Helen in her intense suffering and hurt which acts as a revelation to himself. She weeps and he finds himself compelled to comfort her:

Pity stirred within him, and then an almost violent movement of love for this hurt and suffering woman, this person, yes, this person whom he had ignored, deliberately, as though she had no existence except in the

88. Eyelass in Gaza, p. 18-19

context of pleasure. Now, as she knelt there sobbing, all the tenderness he had ever felt for her body, all the affection implicit in their sensualities and never expressed, seemed suddenly to discharge themselves, in a kind of lightning flash of accumulated feeling, upon this person, this embodied spirit, weeping in solitude behind concealing hands.⁸⁹

Blind to his awakening, Helen rejects his compassion and Anthony is left to suffer his just reward. After all, having constantly evaded personal contact, he can hardly expect her to accept his sudden change of heart. Unable to persuade her to stay, he accompanies her to the villa gate and finds even the butterfly rifling the flowers of their sweetness to be a comment on his own "tireless concupiscence".⁹⁰ After her departure, his first impulse is to drown himself in his work but then he is forced to face reality in burying the dog, holding the spade "as though he were obstinately competing in some hideous egg-and-spoon race."⁹¹ He spends a sleepless night, haunted by confused memories of his mother, Mary Amberley and Brian's corpse, somehow inextricably linked with the dead dog.

From then onwards his metamorphosis takes place. The scene on the rooftop is a source of inspiration, a conversion to a new way of thinking and acting, of taking human beings into consideration by establishing personal and individual contact. Though Helen rejects his new love as expressed in the letter, he channels it into a greater and more universal force as the love for humanity. Meeting her long after the conversion, he tries to communicate his new belief in a philosophy of pacifism, the universal love:-

'One of the first discoveries... one of the very first one makes, is that organized hatred and violence aren't the best means for securing justice and peace. All men are capable of love for all other men. But we've artificially restricted our love. By means of conventions of hatred and violence. Restricted it within families and clans, within classes and nations..⁹²

89. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 102

90. Ibid., p. 115

91. Ibid., p. 109

92. Ibid., p. 391

She leaves him once more, undecided whether to indulge in further irresponsible sensualities and continue working towards Communist aggression with Ekki's circle or, alternatively, to be converted to the 'greater love' of pacifism by attending Anthony's meeting.

Together with his search for a means to love, for love itself, Anthony investigates the concept of personality:-

'Cogito ergo sum', he read. 'But why not caco ergo sum? Eructo ergo sum? Or, escaping solipsism, why not futuo ergo sumus? Ribald questions. But what is "personality"?⁹³

He begins with the Cartesian, "I think, therefore I am," and then considers MacTaggart, Hume and Bradley, systematically rejecting each. In the end, he views personality in the sense of the Greek 'persona' or mask which implies both the public impression made by a man and, more important, man's personal assessment of himself. Personality by definition relates to the personal, the individual:-

My "personality", in the present conventional sense of the word, is what I think and feel - or, rather, what I confess to thinking and feeling. Caco, eructo, futuo - I never admit that the first person singular of such verbs is really me. Only when, for any reason, they palpably affect my feelings and thinking do the processes they stand for come within the bounds of my "personality".⁹⁴

If experience consists of a mass of atoms, then personality is that particular selection from these atoms, transformed into the personal by feeling, thought or the reverberations of memory.

Using the same historical sense employed in tracing the history of man's slavery,⁹⁵ Anthony follows fashions in personality, ranging from the Red Indian ideal of the crazy egotist; to the Pueblo Indian goal of the gregarious, ordinary man; to the Proustian introvert; to the humorous man depicted by Jonson; to man as a succession of states according to Blake and D.H. Lawrence. Anthony rejects these explanations as simplified and reductive and, using Hamlet as his touchstone, proposes that, though the body may remain

93. Eyeless in Gaza p. 92

94. Ibid., p. 93

95. Ibid., p. 107-109

intact, personality is ephemeral, complex, variable from minute to minute, from experience to experience:-

Indeed, Hamlet's personality is so indefinite that critics have devoted thousands of pages to the discussion of what it really was. In fact, of course, 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.⁹⁶

Hence Anthony defines personality:-

'So what is personality? And what is it not?
'It is not our total experience. It is not the psychological atom or instant. It is not sense impressions as such, nor vegetative life as such.
'It is experience in the lump and by the hour. It is feeling and thought.⁹⁷

This is epitomized in Hamlet whose personality becomes a succession of states, unrelated to the body which "is still intact, unatomized, macroscopically present to the senses."⁹⁶ From here, Anthony launches an attack on the Laurentian philosophy with its stress on the body, tangible and perpetually there, needing no moral justification, demanding no individual responsibility:-

How agreeable! Each man a succession of states enclosed in the flesh of his own side. And if any other principle of coherence were needed, there was always some absorbing and delightful intellectual interest, like sociology, for example, to supplement the persisting body.⁹⁸

However tempting the thought, Anthony finds himself obliged to condemn the Laurentian amorality by rejecting the philosophy which Philip Quarles had so ardently admired in the figure of Mark Rampion.

96. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 98

97. Ibid., p. 97

98. Ibid., p. 99

Just as Lawrence condemned Huxley's work for its repulsive anti-human quality,⁹⁹ so Huxley, communicating through Anthony Beavis, attacks Lawrence's claustrophobic philosophy. He rejects his view of personality as being sub-personal instead of supra-personal, moving away from the light of mysticism to a visceral darkness, "une nuit viscérale, sous-personnelle, comme un Jonas dans sa baleine."¹⁰⁰ In Eyeless in Gaza, Anthony refutes Lawrence's theory of the Dark God on the grounds that it did not take into consideration the nightmarish vision of microscopic life, "an ultimate Dark God, much darker, stranger, and more violent than any that Lawrence imagined."¹⁰¹ Lawrence's god was incomplete, a means to an end, not an end in itself. Life symbolized in the cicadas and the cock depicted in The Man Who Died, was insignificant in view of the vehement, irrepressible life under a microscope:-

For Lawrence, the animal purpose had seemed sufficient and satisfactory. The cock, crowing, fighting, mating - anonymously; and man anonymous like the cock. Better such mindless anonymity, he had insisted, than the squalid relationships of human beings advanced half-way to consciousness, still only partially civilized.

But Lawrence had never looked through a microscope, never seen biological energy in its basic undifferentiated state. He hadn't wanted to look, had disapproved on principle of microscopes, fearing what they might reveal; had been right to fear. Those depths beneath depths of namelessness, crawling irrepressibly - they would have horrified him. He had insisted that the raw material should be worked up - but worked only to a certain pitch and no further; the primal crawling energy should be used for the relatively higher purposes of animal existence, but for no existence beyond the animal. Arbitrarily, illogically. For the other, ulterior purposes and organizations existed and were not to be ignored. Moving through space and time, the human animal discovered them on his path, unequivocally present and real.¹⁰²

99. D.H. Lawrence: Selected Literary Criticism, ed. Anthony Beal, "Review of Bottom Dogs by Edward Dahlberg," (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 411

100. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 73

101. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 316

102. Ibid., p. 235

Anthony's criticism coincides with Huxley's breaking free from the Laurentian spell, retaining an admiration for his spontaneous "poetic response to nature, but utterly rejecting his anti-scientific philosophy."¹⁰³ Lawrence's view proved ultimately incompatible with Huxley's particular temperament which he describes in Ends and Means as phlegmatic or, in Sheldon's terms, "cerebrotonic".¹⁰⁴ Lawrence, by contrast, was emotional and "viscerotonic",¹⁰⁴ incomprehensible to the cerebral man:-

My own nature, as it happens, is on the whole phlegmatic, and, in consequence, I have the greatest difficulty in entering into the experiences of those whose emotions are easily and violently aroused. Before such works of art as Werther, for example, or Women in Love, or the Prophetic Books of William Blake I stand admiring, but bewildered. I don't know why people should be shaken by such tempests of emotion on provocations, to my mind, so slight.¹⁰⁵

As cerebrotonic, thinking in terms of mind rather than body, Anthony takes his argument of personality to its conclusion by posing the supra-personal experience of the mystic. Once he has intensely experienced the personal in the revelation of Helen, he can go beyond this to the impersonality of being, the Nirvana. Once again Ends and Means mirrors his preoccupation:-

They (the mystics) made it clear that what seemed to be the ultimate fact of personality was in reality not an ultimate fact, and that it was possible for individuals to transcend the limitations of personality and to merge their private consciousness into a greater, impersonal consciousness underlying the personal mind.¹⁰⁶

The development of personality may be regarded as an end in itself or, alternatively, as a means towards an ulterior end - the transcendence of personality through immediate cognition of ultimate reality and through moral

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103. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 136
 104. Ends and Means, p. 165
 105. Ibid., p. 166-167
 106. Ibid., p. 295

action towards fellow individuals, action that is inspired and directed by this immediate cognition. Where personality is developed for its own sake, and not in order that it may be transcended, there tends to be a raising of the barriers of separateness and an increase of egotism.¹⁰⁷

Voicing Huxley's viewpoint, Anthony also makes it clear that his philosophy is determined by temperament, a significant attitude in view of Huxley's final novel Island, in which mysticism is adopted not so much as a philosophical truth but as a sound psychology, "a means for effecting desirable changes in the personality and mode of existence":-¹⁰⁸

God - a person or not a person? Quién sabe? Only revelation can decide such metaphysical questions. And revelation isn't playing the game - is equivalent to pulling three aces of trumps from up your sleeve.

Of more significance is the practical question. Which gives a man more power to realize goodness - belief in a personal or an impersonal God? Answer: it depends. Some minds work one way, some another. Mine, as it happens, finds no need, indeed, finds it impossible to think of the world in terms of personality. Patanjali says you may believe in a personal God, or not, according to taste. The psychological results will be the same in either case.¹⁰⁹

But both Eyeless in Gaza and Ends and Means pose an ultimate criticism of the Christian doctrine "of personal salvation at the hands of a personal deity,"¹¹⁰ since it exalts personality, and brings excessive preoccupation with self, resultant separateness from others, disunity, and war. The Buddhists, by contrast, do not exalt personality:-

..... they try to transcend it. They don't imagine that God can be angry; when they're unenlightened, they think he's compassionate, and when they're enlightened, they think he doesn't exist, except as an impersonal mind of the universe. Hence they don't offer petitionary prayer; they meditate - or, in other words,

107. Ends and Means, p. 326-327

108. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 326

109. Ibid., p. 364

110. Ends and Means, p. 327

try to merge their own minds in the universal mind. Finally, they don't believe in special providences for individuals; they believe in a moral order, where every event has its cause and produces its effect - where the card's forced upon you by the conjurer, but only because your previous actions have forced the conjurer to force it upon you. What worlds away from Jehovah and God the Father and everlasting, individual souls!¹¹¹

We continually return to the same point. Anthony's self-analysis along the roads of violence, love and personality converge on the goal of mystical contemplation. But he still has further fields to explore:-

Query: 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? How to be simultaneously dispassionate and not indifferent, serene like an old man and active like a young one?¹¹²

He examines the examples of old age before him: his father, Uncle James and Mrs. Foxe, and finds that his father plays the rôle of old age, the "lean and slippered pantaloons",¹¹² feeding on memories of the past, sunk in self-pity and asserting himself by increasing demands for sympathy. With the grave in sight, his wife dead, he lives in a perpetual state of low tide, neither feeling too strongly nor involving himself too intensely in the activities around him. At first, he wallows in memories of his wife and indulges in an evening ritual of opening her wardrobe to recapture her presence in the still lingering perfume of orris root, commemorating the anniversary of her death from month to month, almost forcing himself to suffer an agony of masochistic torment, much like Burlap in Point Counter Point who wallows in excruciating memories of his wife Susan.¹¹³ Mrs. Foxe diagnoses John Beavis's suffering as false and feels him to be among the "cripples of the spirit,"¹¹⁴ his emotions "lame and rickety,"¹¹⁴ destroyed (Huxley seems to suggest) by his

111. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 358-359

112. Ibid., p. 58-59

113. Point Counter Point, p. 170-173

114. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 67

exclusive preoccupation with the world of philosophy. Emotionally sterile, he cannot communicate with his son, though he futilely tries to bridge the gap between them in age and attitude by deliberately using schoolboys' slang which the sensitive Anthony suffers in silence.

Lonely and dissatisfied with the evening ritual, the "sacrament of communion",¹¹⁵ John Beavis is drawn to his plump young student Pauline Gannett, whom he marries despite the disparity in age. From then onwards he lives comfortably in a "subterranean burrow"¹¹⁶ of sensuality and incest, treating Pauline with "sportive mock-fatherliness,"¹¹⁷ educating his offspring in etymology and settling back comfortably to connubiality and "self-destroying childishness."¹¹⁸ Seeing him in his old age, Anthony rejects his father who epitomizes all he abhors in a false serenity, an escape from reality, an inability to face death.

Next Anthony turns to his Uncle James to consider a man obsessed by Time, "that mystical ulcer for ever gnawing at his consciousness."¹¹⁹ His is the sceptical, inhuman world of dates and figures, used as a defence against personal contacts and, in particular, female frivolity:-

Women cackling like hens round the tea-table.
James Beavis frowned with angry contempt. He
hated women - was disgusted by them. All
those soft bulges of their bodies. Horrible.
And the stupidity, the brainlessness.¹²⁰

Like Mary Amberley's acquaintance Beppo, James Beavis is doomed to becoming thwarted and embittered by his homosexuality, an "ingrowing pederasty"¹²¹ which poisons his system and which, Anthony feels, prevented him from reaching the ideal state of non-attachment. His forbidden love is as sterile as Anthony's intermittent

115. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 127

116. Ibid., p. 136

117. Ibid., p. 137

118. Ibid., p. 303

119. Ibid., p. 23

120. Ibid., p. 27

121. Ibid., p. 228

acts of irresponsible sensuality. Faced with death, James Beavis capitulates and turns papist as a meagre consolation which brings a kind of serenity, but not the dispassionate peace Anthony is striving for.

He also rejects the example of Mrs. Foxe who like his father and uncle, has only lived in part to arrive at an incomplete serenity, expressed in her smile of suffering, enjoyment, seriousness and "determined purity."¹²² Hers is the serenity of self-denial rather than fulfilment: stifling her emotions after an unsuitable match, she sacrifices her life to the care of the underprivileged and to finding compensation for her loveless marriage in Brian. Her purity and possessiveness prove as destructive as John Beavis's indifference, as James's homosexuality and are directly responsible for Brian's inhibitions in his affair with Joan.

In the end, Anthony finds the epitome of serene old age and youthful vitality in the anthropologist-pacifist Miller whom he encounters on the way to the Mexican Revolution:-

He was an elderly little man, short and spare, but with a fine upright carriage that lent him a certain dignity. The face was curiously proportioned, with a short nose and an upper lip unusually long above a wide, tightly shut mouth. A mouth like an inquisitor's. But the inquisitor had forgotten himself and learned to smile; there were the potentialities of laughter in the deep folds of skin which separated the quivering sensitive corners of the mouth from the cheeks. And round the bright inquiring eyes those intricate lines seemed the traces and hieroglyphic symbols of a constantly repeated movement of humorous kindness. A queer face, Anthony decided, but charming.¹²³

Miller radiates a serene love for humanity and uses his anthropology as "applied scientific religion"¹²⁴ to establish, like the missionary, peaceful contact among men. His rôle as social anthropologist is significant in the context of Huxley's preoccupation - "The Proper Study of Mankind is Man"¹²⁵ which replaces his earlier belief

122. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 66

123. Ibid., p. 354-355

124. Ibid., p. 374

125. Proper Studies, frontispiece.

that "the proper study of mankind is books."¹²⁶ He accords man human status, unlike Mark Staitnes who sees man as insect material through the eyes of entomologist. Mark's view must inevitably lead to violence:-

'Anthropologists may get killed; but anthropology goes on; and in the long run it can't fail to succeed. Whereas your entomological approach.... It may succeed at the beginning; you can generally frighten and overawe people into submission. That's to say that, by treating them as bugs, you can generally make them behave like bugs - crawl and scuttle to cover. But the moment they have the opportunity, they'll turn on you.'¹²⁷

Mark effectively offsets Miller's viewpoint in providing the contrast between destruction and preservation. Not only is his entomological view of humanity a negative one, but he thrives on violence: hence his ambition to help Jorge Fuentes' revolution. He himself is only semi-human: the jeering bully at school, he becomes in his maturity, a "savage and fanatical hermit,"¹²⁸ his gaunt face like a "flayed statue"¹²⁹ twisted in mirth into an excruciating and agonized grimace. The self-destruction clearly visible in his features brings to mind Spandrell in Point Counter Point, who strives after the inhuman or the less than human in painting, music, literature, yet rubs in the hideousness of life by deliberately living in unrelieved ugliness and squalor, purposely associating with the old and ugly - Spandrell with the grotesque prostitute. Connie; Mark with the "disquietingly human old hag",¹³⁰ Miss Pendle. As misanthrope, appropriately reading Timon of Athens on the way to the revolution, Mark sardonically reduces human activity to its lowest level. Vice is summed up pithily, symbolically, artistically as:-

'Two rubber breasts between the beer mugs - that's what vice ought to be. And when that was what it actually was - well, it felt as though something had clicked into place. Inevitably, beautifully. Yes, beautifully,' he repeated. 'Beautifully revolting.'¹³¹

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126. On the Margin, "Accumulations", p. 75
 127. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 373
 128. Ibid., p. 152
 129. Ibid., p. 153
 130. Ibid., p. 209
 131. Ibid., p. 154

He also takes delight in pricking Mary Amberley's bubble of flirtatious enthusiasm by forcing her to realize that her perfumed aura, that tantalizing civet, is merely the excrement of polecats:-

'...Forcing humans to be fully, verbally conscious of their own and other people's disgustingness. That's the beauty of this kind of advertising. It shakes them into awareness..... Breaking down your protective convention....that's the real fun. Leaving you defenceless against the full consciousness of the fact that you can't do without your fellow humans, and that, when you're with them, they make you sick.'¹³²

Dissatisfied with the less than human as represented in literature, painting and music, Mark turns to death, epitome of the superhuman, as his goal. He lures Anthony to join him in a battle against Death in the form of the Mexican revolution and Anthony agrees, caught at a vulnerable moment when he is rebuking himself for his timidity, withdrawal and indifference. Mark explains:-

'Death,' said Mark Staithes. 'It's the only thing we haven't succeeded in completely vulgarizing.....We're like dogs on an acropolis. Trotting round with inexhaustible bladders and only too anxious to lift a leg against every statue. And mostly we succeed. Art, religion, heroism, love - we've left our visiting-card on all of them. But death - death remains out of reach. We haven't been able to defile that statue. Not yet, at any rate.'¹³³

They leave, Mark eager to pit his strength against the superhuman and get as much out of it as possible, Anthony using the escapade as a means of proving himself. They ride through hellish villages, partially destroyed by earthquakes and through bare desert, harsh under the "blistering sunshine...across the frontier of the world out into nothingness, into an infinite expanse of hot and dusty negation."¹³⁴ First Anthony suffers from dysentery, then Mark

132. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 161

133. Ibid., p. 266

134. Ibid., p. 340

injures his knee but rides on, straight and rigid, his profile "marbly in its fixed pallor - the statue of a stoic, flayed, but still alive and silently supporting his agony."¹³⁵ In the end, the only reward for his self-torture is the further agony of amputation and, ignoring Miller, he resolves to wait for his end, "huddled in dirt."¹³⁶

Despite Mark's jeering, Anthony determines to follow Miller who in his own quaint way, diagnoses him physically and temperamentally - his sallowness indicates chronic intestinal poisoning which in turn determines his negativity, his dualism of mind and body, his vulnerability to fascism and communism as a means of violently shaking him out of his indifference towards further violence. Under his guidance, Anthony rejects war and destruction, denounces the war intoxications of freedom and honour according to the Rupert Brooke Idealism, criticizes Helen's communism as being the means to violence and turns to pacifism as the only way to social justice and peace for the individual. The reform begins with the individual, the patient, who is to find a means of modifying his character, riddled as it is with self-torture, prejudiced through nationalism. The core to that means is love which Anthony bases on empirical fact:-

One. We are capable of love for other human beings.

Two. We impose limitations on that love.

Three. We can transcend all these limitations - if we choose to.....

Four. Love expressing itself in good treatment breeds love. Hate expressing itself in bad treatment breeds hate.

In the light of these facts, it's obvious what interpersonal, interclass and international policies should be. But, again, knowledge cuts little ice. We all know; we almost all fail to do. It is a question, as usual, of the best methods of implementing intentions. Among other things, peace propaganda must be a set of instructions in the art of modifying character.¹³⁷

135. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 342-343

136. Ibid., p. 376

137. Ibid., p. 150-151

Just as force denies the unity of man, so love unites and simultaneously is "self-energizing".¹³⁸ The practical task is to find a series of techniques of contemplation:-

....it might be possible to establish a complete and definite Ars Contemplativa. A series of techniques, adapted to every type of mind. Techniques for meditating on, communicating with and contemplating goodness. Ends in themselves and at the same time means for realizing some of that goodness in practice.¹³⁹

Anthony himself is struck with the practical problem of finding a technique for translating good intentions into acts. At times he falls into the habit of mere talk, into a purely passive and negative pacifism, a mere hole in the mind waiting to be filled.¹⁴⁰ He is tempted to fall back on his old habits of indifference and withdrawal. After all, rather than address an anonymous, unthinking crowd punctuated by hostile hecklers, how much easier to revert to the misanthropy and scepticism of Mark Staithes:-

A senseless world, where nothing whatever can be done - how satisfactory! One can go off and (seeing that there's nothing else to do) compile one's treatise on sociology - the science of human senselessness...¹⁴¹

The voice of doubt poses and questions:-

...'why do you go and saddle yourself with convictions and philosophies? And why put yourself in the position of being able to betray anyone? Why not go back to doing what nature meant you to do - to looking on from your private box and making comments? What does it matter, after all? And even if it matters, what can you do? Why not quietly resign yourself to the inevitable, and in the interval get on with the job you can do best?'¹⁴²

Besides, there are also the dangers inherent in pacifism itself to consider:-

138. Eveless in Gaza, p. 324

139. Ibid., p. 365

140. Ibid., p. 338

141. Ibid., p. 112

142. Ibid., p. 394

Reflect that we all have.... bolt-holes from unpleasant reality. The danger, as Miller is always insisting, of meditation becoming such a bolt-hole. Quietism can be mere self-indulgence. Charismata like masturbations. Masturbations, however, that are dignified, by the amateur mystics who practise them, with all the most sacred names of religion and philosophy. 'The contemplative life.' It can be made a kind of high-brow substitute for Marlene Dietrich: a subject for erotic musings in the twilight. Meditation - valuable, not as a pleasurable end; only as a means for effecting desirable changes in the personality and mode of existence...¹⁴³

Yet he stills his doubt and determines to find a means to a positive pacifism, whose spirit he first experiences in meditation, "without words, without images, undiscursively, as a single, simple entity."¹⁴⁴ Then he sees Miller at a pacifist meeting, affirming his beliefs by enduring the blow of a heckler and, by not fighting back, reducing the man to total impotence. Inspired by his example, he resolves at the end of the novel to affirm his own beliefs by addressing a meeting, despite the threat of an anonymous letter. He poses the question:-

Problem: to build really solid logical bridges between given facts and philosophical inferences. All but insoluble. No bullet-proof arguments for any of the main cosmological theories. What, then, shall we do? Stick, as far as possible, to the empirical facts - always remembering that these are modifiable by anyone who chooses to modify the perceiving mechanism. So that one can see, for example, either irremediable senselessness and turpitude, or else actualizable potentialities for good - whichever one likes; it is a question of choice.¹⁴⁵

Anthony is left on the brink of solving his problem by rejecting "senselessness and turpitude" for the "actualizable potentialities for good"¹⁴⁵ contained in his pacifist philosophy.

143. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 326

144. Ibid., p. 325

145. Ibid., p. 332

Having constructed the bridge between theory and practice, he is left to prove its solidity at a pacifist gathering. We are left to ask whether in fact he has progressed through irresponsibility to genuine personal contact culminating in the pacifist's universal love, or merely substituted that earlier passive indifference for the equally escapist philosophy of pacifism and mystical contemplation. After all, that mid-stage of personal contact bridging irresponsibility and pacifism is purely fleeting and momentary. The moment with Helen on the roof top stimulates "an almost violent movement of love for this hurt and suffering woman, this person, yes, this person whom he had ignored, deliberately, as though she had no existence except in the context of pleasure."¹⁴⁶ Helen rejects personal contact and Anthony gives himself no chance to establish any other lasting personal relationship. The revelation plunges him straight into pacifism, that greater love for humanity which he finds difficult to foster amid the bristling hostility of an imbecilic audience.

Essays.

Despite Anthony's distaste for the mass he is to convert to pacifism, he is by no means shaken from his conviction, and this is less inconsistent than it may first appear when we consider that Huxley was writing his novel amid the unrest preceding World War II. Though faced with inevitable violence, Huxley firmly took his stance as conscientious objector and extended his pacifist philosophy in documentary form in What are you going to do about it? The Case for Constructive Peace (1936), Ends and Means, An Enquiry into the Nature of Ideals and into the Methods Employed for their Realization (1937), and An Encyclopedia of Pacifism (1937).

In posing pacifism as "the only practical, the only realistic policy that there is,"¹⁴⁷ Huxley breaks down the heckler's war cry on the basis that war is not "'a law of nature'"¹⁴⁷ or "'the method by which nature selects the fittest human beings,'"¹⁴⁸ nor

146. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 102

147. What are you going to do about it? p. 4

148. Ibid., p. 6

is it a good "instrument of policy",¹⁴⁹ a "sanction of social order."¹⁵⁰ Its causes are not primarily economic but may involve religion, prestige or malicious destruction. As practical alternative, pacifism takes the form of either preventative or non-violent resistance. Governments may either anticipate violence by summoning "a preventative conference"¹⁵¹ or, in the event of war breaking out, counter violence by an act of reparation, applying "a policy of truth and generosity"¹⁵² in order that it may evoke similar qualities in the militarists. Only when violence is answered by truth, generosity, courage, patience, devotion and disinterestedness will man break the "malevolently charmed circle of suspicion, hatred and fear"¹⁵³ in which the nations of the world live. In summing up the philosophy of Constructive Peace as a personal ethic, Huxley attacks the Marxian revolutionary as evading individual responsibility by regarding war and violence exclusively in terms of economic change:-

The whole philosophy of Constructive Peace is based on a consideration of the facts of personal relationship between man and man. Hence it is impossible that Constructive Pacifism should be merely a large-scale and, so to speak, abstract policy..... Constructive Peace must be first of all a personal ethic, a way of life for individuals; only on that condition will it come to be embodied, permanently and securely, in forms of social and international organization.¹⁵⁴

While the Marxian puts the whole blame for the present state of the world on the existing economic system and on those who profit by that system, the pacifist is prepared to admit that he also may be to some extent responsible. The pacifist does not believe that the Kingdom of God can be imposed on mankind from without, by means of a change of organization. He believes that, if the Kingdom is to be realized, he himself must work for it, and work for it not only as a public figure, but also in his private life.¹⁵⁵

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149. What are you going to do about it? p. 7
 150. Ibid., p. 8
 151. Ibid., p. 29
 152. Ibid., p. 26
 153. Ibid., p. 29-30
 154. Ibid., p. 35
 155. Ibid., p. 22

We return to Beavis's tenet:¹⁵⁶ the starting point for Constructive Peace is the individual who by prayer and meditation will attain the moral strength and training necessary in the endless struggle against evil and violence. From the individual, the philosophy is extended, ideally, to society, the nation, the world.

Inevitably Huxley's viewpoint aroused violent opposition from the Marxists, left wingers and social reformers. We're not going to do nothing was C. Day Lewis's reply to Huxley's Case for Constructive Peace, that "policy of final inactivity" which "constructs nothing more solid than a great, big, beautiful idealist bubble - lovely to look at, no doubt; charming to live in, perhaps; but with little reference to the real facts and inadequate protection against a four-engined bomber."¹⁵⁷

Lewis's premises are in direct opposition. Where Huxley poses reform from within in the belief that the "ultimate realities of the human world are individual men and women,"¹⁵⁸ spiritually united by an unchanging principle, a perennial philosophy, Lewis argues in terms of mass relationships, reform from without by the organization of public opinion which is "more important for us to save than our own individual souls."¹⁵⁹ Besides, these mass relationships are primarily determined by economic factors, class war having originated in the division of society into "a class that owns the instruments of production and a class which owns nothing but its own labour-power."¹⁶⁰ Class war is extended to national conflict in which the economically stable or satiated powers are opposed by the unstable, thwarted and hungry nations. Both civil and international conflict are inevitable since economic development implies and necessitates change in the need for new markets, the striving for capitalistic monopoly, so that no class or nation can be permanently satiated. Lewis thus demolishes Huxley's unMarxian approach and denies the fact of war having other than economics as its primary cause.

Violence, too, is considered in relation to the mass and not simply decried under all and any circumstances:-

156. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 215, 365-366

157. We're not going to do nothing, (London: The Left Review, 1936), p. 3

158. An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism, ed. A. Huxley, p. 100

159. We're not going to do nothing, p. 31

160. Ibid., p. 15

There is violence and violence: there are wars and wars, just as there are thefts and thefts. When judging any action.... we must take into consideration both motive and circumstance: for motive and circumstance, like means and ends, are not two separate entities, but are the two inseparable factors in a dialectical unity. The question we should ask ourselves is not: "Is violence justified?" but "Will the use of violence in this particular, concrete situation benefit the majority of persons concerned?"¹⁶¹

Lewis proceeds to attack Huxley's theory of non-violence as inconsistent and fallacious. Though Huxley decries the soldier's violence, he upholds police discipline, law and order which, Lewis suggests, may be violently enforced. Police action may be limited to "restraint"¹⁶² but, says Lewis sarcastically, "perhaps, when the police whang you over the head with batons and frog-march you to the nearest station, that is not violence."¹⁶³ Huxley's is thus a compromising situation which advocates total non-violence, yet poses the minimum of police action to be justifiable under certain circumstances. Pithily summing up the inconsistency, Lewis quotes "the servant girl's celebrated excuse for her illegitimate baby: 'Please, mum, it's only a very small one.'"¹⁶³

Lewis reaches the crux of the Constructive Peace attack in a single query: supposing peace, love and trust win in the long run, "the point is, what are you going to do when you have not got a 'long run'?"¹⁶⁴ It is here in considering the immediate dangers that Lewis scores. Reading Huxley's pamphlet, What are you going to do about it?, we cannot but be struck by his naïveté in the very teeth of a World War, his airily optimistic belief "that by behaving well to other people you can always, in the long run, induce other people to behave well to you..¹⁶⁵ Lewis delves deeper to interpret Huxley's doctrine of apparent optimism as a doctrine of despair proclaimed by "the Prophet of Disgust",¹⁶⁶ a figure strongly reminiscent of the Huxleyan characters, Spandrell of Point Counter Point and Anthony Beavis of Eyeless in Gaza:-

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- 161. We're not going to do nothing, p. 10
 - 162. What are you going to do about it? p. 10
 - 163. We're not going to do nothing, p. 7
 - 164. Ibid., p. 20
 - 165. What are you going to do about it? p. 26
 - 166. We're not going to do nothing, p. 25

Aldous Huxley's own sensibilities are so exquisite that, together with his great talent in writing, they have made him one of the prophets of our time - the Prophet of Disgust. He feels so keenly the discrepancy between the fact and the ideal that he seems like some miserable figure, standing with face averted from the ruin and filth that surround him; though every now and then, half in fascination, half in disgust, he directs an exceedingly sharp glance at what so much appalls him. Now it looks as though he is turning his back on us for ever. Looking away from us, he has a 'profound insight into ethical truth,' and we are still stewing in the same juice. Might we venture to beg him to turn right about and risk looking contemporary humanity in the face? There would be much there to hate and much to be disgusted at, but there would also be something which, without any 'expressions of fine feeling,' could be loved and supported.¹⁶⁷

As alternative to the Huxleyan passivity and lack of involvement, the decrying of violence and the sitting back "uncontaminated" to save one's "spiritual skin,"¹⁶⁸ Lewis proposes an immediate, active stance in the defence of democracy against Fascist aggression. And for the less immediate future, he advocates economic adjustment in the breakdown of capitalistic monopoly and the establishment of "a world union of Socialist states, whose economic policy is based on production for use, not for profit....,"¹⁶⁹ this being the "final goal at which every lover of peace should be aiming."¹⁶⁹ It is not that the final goal spells perfect Peace and Justice since Lewis denies the very existence of absolutes, but that noncompetitive socialist economy will eliminate the danger of war and facilitate a relative peace and security.

The Indian writer Shelvankar continues the barrage against Huxley in his Ends are Means: A critique of Social Values, the cutting reply to Huxley's Ends and Means as the work of a solitary thinker bogged down in intellectual confusions. Like Lewis, Shelvankar's premises involve a Marxian consideration of society in

167. We're not going to do nothing, p. 25

168. Ibid., p. 27

169. Ibid., p. 28

mass within the framework of economic change, a far cry from Huxley's individualism and stress on the inner life within a metaphysical, spiritual framework. Where Huxley assumes a universal goal based on mystical union with an impersonal God, Shelvankar claims equally exclusive attention for his viewpoint, since it represents not the solitary individual but the collective 'we'. Being our philosophy, the philosophy of the mass, it is the only legitimate attitude. And since he ignores the Lowest Common Denominator for the Highest Common Factor (the rudiments of the "Perennial Philosophy"), Huxley is dismissed not only as presumptuous individualist, solitary thinker, museum piece, but as inferior, cowardly, even effeminate in his pacifist escapism:-

"Je trouve l'attitude d'un Lenine risquant sa vie et l'infamie ou les malédictions pour arracher à leur enfer des millions d'opprimés non seulement plus virile, mais même plus véritablement aimante et conforme à la loi intérieure du sacrifice pour le service de l'humanité que les non-violents, quiètement installés dans leur passivité et protestant négligemment du bout des lèvres, sans compromettre rien de leur bonne situation bourgeoise."

Romain Rolland¹⁷⁰

Though their attitudes remain the same, Shelvankar's criticisms are often elaborate, even heavy-handed, as against Lewis's pithy, concise and humorous attack. In rejecting the psychological motivation for violence propounded by Huxley - the excitement and licence war affords in the midst of man's tedious daily routine - Shelvankar propounds the economic origin of war, connected in the West with the expansion of capitalistic monopoly. He attacks Huxley's suggestions as to the prevention and cure of violence by questioning the efficacy of the League of Nations to establish peace, since the decision of a preventative conference would be determined by "political and economic circumstances lying wholly beyond its control."¹⁷¹ Similarly, the cure to violence in an act of reparation would be determined by power politics and not according to a moral or

170. K.S. Shelvankar: Ends are Means, Part 1, frontispiece, (London: Lindsay Drummond Ltd., 1938)

171. Ibid., p. 17

ethical system. He further breaks down Huxley's Case for Constructive Peace by pointing to the ineffectual twenty year struggle of the pacifist Gandhi. Shelvankar argues that it is not simply a question of abolishing war by eliminating the spiritual defects of the militarists, but of economic adjustment leading to the breakdown of capitalistic monopoly, that monopoly which brings all the Fascist evils in its wake - centralized government, violent nationalism and resultant aggression.

Shelvankar's goal is no fixed, unchanging absolute but a continual striving towards social perfectibility in the Hegelian thesis, antithesis, synthesis. He posits war, the antithesis, to be inevitable as a dynamic means towards a goal of relative economic stability. Once the means to that end are realized, the end, in turn, becomes the means to a further synthesis on the spiral of Progress. Turning to Huxley, he rejects the undynamic Ends and Means on the basis that, since the end is spiritual, static and unchanging, the means to that end are equally inert so that ultimately ends and means are reduced to the tautological:-

This, then, is the proposition we reach: Individuals who have attained union with God are the means by which the end of decentralisation is attained - which is the means to the Just Society, which, in turn, is nothing but a collective noun for a number of individuals who have attained union with God. In short, the end is union with God; the means, too, are union with God. Where ends and means are reduced to identity in this manner, the very conception of "ideals and the nature of the methods employed to realise them" is reduced to nonsense. Whether we call violence and charity and non-attachment, decentralisation, the "model community" and the Just Society - whether we call any of these an end or a means is of no consequence whatever. It is merely a matter of dogmatic classification.

Since means and ends are thus mechanically united and separated in Mr. Huxley's philosophy, there is a denial in it as well of what we have described as the essentially contradictory and intermediate character of the means; of the obvious fact that the need for means is a need

for effective agencies wherewith to overcome the gulf between a certain starting-point and a certain end. To say that violence can only produce violence, goodness goodness, and so on is of course to say that the means must be identical in quality with the end. It is to say that there is no real transition involved, no process of change at all, only a sequence of repeated discontinuities.¹⁷²

Shelvrkar concludes by asserting that Huxley merely uses the metaphysical and religious "Mumbo Jumbo"¹⁷³ as an excuse to perpetuate the conservative in religion and politics, to support the militarist, millionaire and dictator in defending the present organization of society:-

In all its aspects... Mr. Huxley's philosophy - whatever his own hopes and wishes - tends unmistakably to strengthen the conservative and reactionary influences at work to-day and to weaken the forces which are striving for a more democratic and equitable order by misleading them as to the actual issues involved and exhorting them to take a course which, in relation to these issues, amounts to inaction. Stripped of its fine phrases, its pretensions to eternal truth and its ostentatious rectitude, the philosophy of idealism is seen once more, as in every past age, to safeguard the interests of the ruling class and paralyse the energies of its opponents; to defend the lords of the money-bags and the machine-guns who are driving us all towards death and unspeakable degradation.¹⁷⁴

Shelvankar's attack on Huxley as pacifist and idealist remains essentially one-sided since Huxley's ideals by no means blinded him to the all too obvious realities of man's imperfect, time-bound existence. Time and mortality haunt him in the words of the novelist, Fanning:-

It was as though he had suddenly lifted his head out of the sand and seen time bleeding away - like the stabbed bull at the end of a bull-fight, swaying on his legs and soundlessly spouting the red blood from his nostrils - bleeding, bleeding away staunchlessly into the darkness.¹⁷⁵

172. Ends are Means, p. 38-39

173. Ibid., p. 89

174. Ibid., Part 1, p. 68

175. Brief Candles, "After the Fireworks", p. 117

In Eyeless in Gaza, Anthony pictures time and memory more repulsively as associated with old age. This is his Proustian vision:-

'How I hate old Proust! Really detest him.' And with a richly comic eloquence he proceeded to evoke the vision of that asthmatic seeker of lost time squatting, horribly white and flabby, with breasts almost female but fledged with long black hairs, for ever squatting in the tepid bath of his remembered past. And all the stale soapsuds of countless previous washings floated around him, all the accumulated dirt of years lay crusty on the sides of the tub or hung in dark suspension in the water. And there he sat, a pale repellent invalid, taking up spongefuls of his own thick soup and squeezing it over his face, scooping up cupfuls of it and appreciatively rolling the grey and gritty liquor round his mouth, gargling, rinsing his nostrils with it, like a pious Hindu in the Ganges....¹⁷⁶

On his forty-second birthday, Anthony muses that in the mental landscape, Time has no chronology but is controlled by a lunatic who "shuffled a pack of snapshots and dealt them out at random."¹⁷⁷ And Huxley bears out Anthony's theory in the non-chronological structure of Eyeless in Gaza which, far from being a mere technical eccentricity, clearly illustrates his philosophical preoccupation with the quirks of time and memory:-

Particles of thought, desire, and feeling moving at random among particles of time, coming into casual contact and as casually parting. A casino, an asylum, a zoo; but also, in a corner, a library and someone thinking. Someone largely at the mercy of the croupiers, at the mercy of the idiots and the animals; but still irrepressible and indefatigable.¹⁷⁸

If one were to group the events of the novel chronologically, they would follow the sequence of Anthony's schooling and the death of his mother, his days at Oxford, his affair with Mary Amberley, Brian's suicide, the relationship with Helen, the Mexican

176. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 9-10

177. Ibid., p. 18

178. Ibid., p. 20

Revolution and the encounter with Miller together with his conversion to pacifism. But to reduce the work to sequence would be to lose the subtleties of the interaction of events, regardless of time, the constant bubbling up of memories at odd and unaccountable moments, the ultimate relativity of time. James Beavis clearly represents the man obsessed by time and thus unable to rise above it. He gives way to Jo Stoyte in After Many a Summer who is equally preoccupied with time in the form of death, to Eustace Barnack who dies, only to return as a disembodied spirit to take part in the activities of the earthly, time-bound world. Despite his bawdy wit he feels time as poignantly as Faustus in his last damned moment:-

'Half-past ten,' Eustace proclaimed. '"Time, time and half a time. The innocent and the beautiful have no enemy but time.'" He gave vent to a belch. 'That's what I like about champagne - it makes one so poetical. All the lovely refuse of fifty years of indiscriminate reading comes floating to the surface. O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!' 179

Sebastian sees time in terms of the Shakespearean:-

I keep thinking, for example, of those two and a half lines in which the dying Hotspur casually summarizes an epistemology, an ethic and a metaphysic.
But thought's the slave of time, and life's time's fool,
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop. 180

Propter anticipates Sebastian's thesis in his consideration of time as "the raw material of evil." 181 He propounds "liberation from time and craving, liberation into union with God," 182 and thus paves the way for The Perennial Philosophy.

179. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 129

180. Ibid., p. 290

181. After Many a Summer, p. 90

182. Ibid., p. 92

IV

THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY

After Many a Summer.

Moving away from the intricacies of Point Counter Point, centred round the insoluble problems of Philip Quarles, to the spiritual evolution of Anthony Beavis towards pacifism and mystical non-attachment, Huxley next breaks down his themes in After Many a Summer into a few bold strokes of caricature, farce and comedy, combining the fantastic of Brave New World with the grotesque of Wimbush's tales in Crome Yellow.

The novel plunges us into the Stoyte mansion, "Gothic, mediaeval, baronial":-

... - doubly baronial, Gothic with a Gothicity raised, so to speak, to a higher power, more mediaeval than any building of the thirteenth century. For this.... this Object.... was mediaeval, not out of vulgar historical necessity, like Coucy, say, or Alnwick, but out of pure fun and wantonness, platonically, one might say. It was mediaeval as only a witty and irresponsible modern architect would wish to be mediaeval, as only the most competent modern engineers are technically equipped to be.¹

Stoyte's twentieth-century castle contrasts ironically with the truly aristocratic dwelling, Crome Manor, its bastion-like terrace wall creating "the almost menacing aspect of a fortification,"² the interior like "a dead and deserted Pompeii",³ with Italian primitives, Chinese sculptures, Venetian chairs and rococo tables, a library "rich in portentous folios",³ the dining-room "solidly, portwinily English, with its great mahogany table, its eighteenth-century chairs and sideboard, its eighteenth-century pictures.." ³

1. After Many a Summer, p. 19

2. Crome Yellow, p. 14

3. Ibid., p. 8

Each affords Huxley considerable amusement in reflecting the eccentricities of the owner: of Wimbush, aristocrat and historian evading the present by retiring into his sterile monument to antiquity; of Stoyte in democratic America, posing as overlord in a dream of mediaevalism raised to its bigger and better American proportions.

Stoyte's anachronism is appropriately set within a country of gross paradoxes, contrasts, juxtapositions: slums side by side with the skyscrapers of Big Business; churches alongside filling stations, vacant lots, shops and offices; advertisements for nut-burgers together with billboards for inexpensive funerals, super gas, cash loans, astrology, numerology and psychic readings, "CLASSY EATS. MILE HIGH CONES. JESUS SAVES. HAMBURGERS"⁴ - all viewed by a wide-eyed Jeremy Pordage, Englis' scholar and gentleman, destined for the Stoyte castle to translate and catalogue those rare manuscripts, the Hauberk papers. And the chaos of the outside world is mirrored equally in the magnate's dwelling, the interior like "the mind of a lunatic...a no-track mind"⁵ with a conglomeration of:-

'Greece, Mexico, backsides, crucifixions, machinery, George IV, Amida Buddha, science, Christian Science, Turkish baths - anything you like to mention. And every item is perfectly irrelevant to every other item.'⁵

On arrival, Jeremy lunches amid Regency style furnishings from Brighton Pavilion - red lacquered table supported by gilded dragons, scarlet and gold chairs, paintings by Etty and Fra Angelico. The company itself forms a heterogeneous gathering: there is the young Virginia Maunciple who occupies the castle's French styled boudoir, complete with soda fountain and niche containing the figure of Our Lady. She is courted by the twentieth-century knight in the form of the inarticulate research scientist Pete Boone, indulged by the fatherly and incestuous Jo Stoyte, seduced by the Freudian, Sigmund Obispo and admired from a distance by the timid and reserved Jeremy.

4. After Many a Summer, p. 13

5. Ibid., p. 126

But Virginia is by no means the focal point among the characters. For the first time in the Huxleyan novel, the central figure, potentially Jeremy as foreigner and detached onlooker, is subordinated to the thematic opposition between non-attachment represented by the philosopher Propter, and excessive preoccupation with time and death as represented by Jo Stoyte. Each member of Jo's household is drawn into his obsession with longevity: Obispo, aided by Boone in his research into prolonging human life by a study of the long-lived carp; Virginia as the epitome of youth and beauty; Pordage in his revealing of the Fifth Earl's discovery of the elixir. However weighty the material, the characters do not pretend to realism in this hilarious, hideous farce. They themselves are both a source of comedy and a comment on human absurdity - Propter criticizing with gentle and humorous serenity, Obispo with biting cynicism.

The material itself, the themes of pacifism and non-attachment propounded by Miller and Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, are perpetuated in the figure of Propter. Huxley demonstrates the validity of his philosophy in the very contrast between the serene and non-attached Propter and the restless, supremely attached Jo. Like Brian Foxe and Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, Propter and Stoyte are drawn together from their schooldays by an attraction of opposites. Anthony is drawn to Brian's Christian forgiveness and courageous upholding of his principles, Jo to Propter's tolerance and friendship, much needed at a time when he was continually mocked as "the local fat-boy", nicknamed "Slob" or "Jelly-Belly."⁶ Embarrassed by his appearance, over-anxious to succeed financially and later obsessed by time, old age and death, Stoyte becomes totally dependent on his 'Prop', building his castle in the very valley in which Propter chose to settle.

The other characters, too, are drawn to the "Propter-Object",⁷ an imposing, prophetic figure whom Jeremy admires and envies for his supreme intellectual coherence, his mind "full of all kinds of oddments... pigeon-holed in apple-pie order."⁷

6. After Many a Summer, p. 22

7. Ibid., p. 155

Describing him at their first meeting, Jeremy sees:-

..... a large man, broad-shouldered, but rather stooping, with brown hair turning grey and a face, Jeremy thought, like the face of one of those statues which Gothic sculptors carved for a place high up on a West front - a face of sudden prominence and deeply shadowed folds and hollows, emphatically rough-hewn so as to be expressive even at a distance. But this particular face, he went on to notice, was not merely emphatic, not only for the distance; it was a face also for the near point, also for intimacy, a subtle face, in which there were the signs of sensibility and intelligence as well as of power, of a gentle and humorous serenity no less than of energy and strength.⁸

Jo Stoyte, on the other hand, emerges from the magnificent nail-studded doors of the entrance porch "as though propelled by a hurricane",⁹ his first words to Jeremy betraying his concern with age:-

.... a small, thick-set man, with a red face and a mass of snow-white hair, darted out on to the terrace and bore down upon Jeremy. His expression, as he advanced, did not change. The face wore that shut, unsmiling mask which American workmen tend to put on in their dealing with strangers - in order to prove, by not making the ingratiating grimaces of courtesy, that theirs is a free country and you're not going to come it over them.....
'Mr. Pordage?' said the stranger in a harsh, barking voice. 'Pleased to meet you. My name's Stoyte.' As they shook hands, he peered, still unsmiling, into Jeremy's face. 'You're older than I thought,' he added.⁹

He promptly rushes Jeremy off on a guided tour of the castle, from Miss Maunciple's Louis XV boudoir to the "Rumpus Room",¹⁰ the library with no book in sight, two dining-rooms, ball room, outdoor and indoor swimming pools, the Second Empire Bar, two gymnasiums, a Christian Science Reading Room, a dentist's office, Turkish bath, cellars containing laboratory, safe-deposit vaults, power-house, air-conditioning plant, well and pumping station. Next, Jeremy is

8. After Many a Summer, p. 20-21

9. Ibid., p. 25

10. Ibid., p. 30

whirled off to the Stoyte Children's Hospital in which Jo figures as a magnanimous Father Christmas, bestowing candy, bubble gum, balloons or musical instruments. A brief, underhand business transaction with his agent, Clancy, a swim before lunch and the morning ends with Jeremy breathless and confused.

Propter, in ironic contrast, lives simply, serenely and austerely in his small white-washed bungalow with its home-made furniture. Entirely self-sufficient, he has an independent supply of electricity, contraption for utilizing solar energy, electric mill, loom, carpentry shed, vegetable plot, greenhouses and cabins constructed for the transients during orange picking season. Opposing Jo's dictatorial big business which determines his contemptuous treatment of his verminous subordinates, Propter proposes the building of townships, completely independent and self-supporting, organized along the lines of Jeffersonian democracy. Here are Jefferson's views as recorded by the philosopher John Dewey:-

As Cato.... concluded every speech with the words "Carthago delenda est", so do I every opinion with the injunction "Divide the counties into wards."¹¹

Each ward would... be a small republic within itself, and every man in the state would thus become an acting member of the common government, transacting in person a great portion of its rights and duties, subordinate indeed, yet important, and entirely within his competence. The wit of man cannot devise a more solid basis for a free, durable and well-administered republic.¹²

Propter adapts Jefferson's beliefs to his particular brand of mysticism. Though Pete Boone criticizes his plan as being on too small and ineffective a scale, Propter persists in realizing his ideals by establishing a township at the foot of Jo's castle, convinced that a world-wide plan would be as impractical and idiotic as that of "a man who installed a vacuum pump in a fifty-foot well."¹³ Within a small group of individuals, he poses the integration of manual

11. The Living Thoughts of Thomas Jefferson, presented by John Dewey, (London: Cassell, 1941), p. 44

12. Ibid., p. 37

13. After Many a Summer, p. 196

work and "moral craftsmanship."¹⁴ Here, in germ, are the ideals developed in Huxley's final novel Island, in which he reveals himself in the uneasy rôle of rational idealist who has assumed the garb of mysticism. East and West, the mystical and the rational are to meet ideally in the island Pala, which forms a small-scale township, an ideal democracy, its inhabitants properly educated in mind and body, receiving "simultaneously a training in perceiving and imagining, a training in applied physiology and psychology, a training in practical ethics and practical religion, a training in the proper use of language, and a training in self-knowledge."¹⁵

Propter's philosophy, like St. Paul's embraces the levels of animal, human and divine, three quite separate and distinct layers which have no point of contact:-

"Oírás y leerás el hombre racional estas espirituales materias, pero no llegarás, dice San Pablo, a comprenderlas: Animalis homo non percipit ea quae sunt spiritus." And not merely animalis homo, Mr. Propter commented. 'Also humanus homo. Indeed, above all humanus homo. And you might even add that humanus homo non percipit ea quae sunt animalis. In so far as we think as strictly human beings, we fail to understand what is below us no less than what is above.'¹⁶

Humanity is at once comic and pitiful in its affiliation with the animal or, alternatively, its striving towards the superhuman, the divine. Man, as Propter sees him, is caught in a no man's land between animal and spiritual:-

..... between the animal below and the spirit above there is nothing on the human level except a swarm of constellated impulses and sentiments and notions; a swarm brought together by the accidents of heredity and language; a swarm of incongruous and often contradictory thoughts and desires. Memory

14. After Many a Summer, p. 197

15. Island, p. 208

16. After Many a Summer, p. 129

and the slowly changing body constitute a kind of spatio-temporal cage, within which the swarm is enclosed. To talk of it as though it were a coherent and enduring 'soul' is madness. On the strictly human level there is no such thing as a soul.¹⁷

Humanity lives in an imperfect world dominated by time, evil and the craving of personality which conditions all human activities, whether in the fields of love, science, business, religion or politics. Love on the human level is neither purely instinctive nor purely divine, but self-conscious, "dominated by words.... the past and the future, the actual and the fantastic; regret and anticipation; good and evil; the creditable and the discreditable; the beautiful and the ugly."¹⁸ Science, in pursuing an ideal, is merely "the projection, on an enormously enlarged scale, of some aspect of personality,"¹⁹ and nationalism, too, is the extension of a leader's ego which aggressively imposes itself on a nation in a vicious circle of war and destruction, an echo from Ends and Means. The revolutionary, according to Propter, is inevitably romanti, living in an illusory world suspended between animal and spiritual, a world of self-interest and self-love which becomes the basis of morality. The ego creates, conquers and destroys, each city or nation being:-

... part machine, part sub-human organism, part nightmare-huge projection and embodiment of men's passions and insanities - their avarice, their pride, their lust for power, their obsession with meaningless words, their worship of lunatic ideals.....

..... the prosperity of human societies is a continual process of gradual or catastrophic falling. Those who build up the structures of civilization are the same as those who undermine the structures of civilization. Men are their own termites, and must remain their own termites for just so long as they persist in being only men.....

On the plane of the absence of God, men can do nothing else except destroy what they have built - destroy even while they build - build with the elements of destruction.²⁰

17. After Many a Summer, p. 218

18. Ibid., p. 184-185

19. Ibid., p. 91

20. Ibid., p. 217

There is no escape on the human level, whether in action or language, the latter inadequate to express a non-human reality, leaving the alternative of inventing a new language, "a calculus of eternity... a special algebra of spiritual experience",²¹ unintelligible to all but the inventor, or else using the existing tools of communication without recognizing their inadequacies: talking about 'love', 'ecstasy', 'infused contemplation', 'union with God' as though these could be equated with the facts of experience.²² In the end man is trapped in his own ego: "Doomed to perpetual imprisonment..... doomed to be a personality in a world of personalities; and a world of personalities is this world, the world of greed and fear and hatred, of war and capitalism and dictatorship and slavery."²³ This is the world epitomized by Jo Stoyte who lives in a swarm of passions and opinions which reach a frenzied climax in his resolve to murder Obispo for his seduction of Virginia. His emotions border on the insane for, having refused to recognize the inappropriateness of his relationship with Virginia, he nevertheless insists on twisting the facts to his own advantage. Unlike Propter, he cannot see beyond his "temporal and spatial cage",²⁴ and being conditioned by it, he wants to serve an indefinite term of imprisonment, channelling all his energies into the pursuit of longevity. Contrasted as he may be with the timid and scholarly Jeremy, both are doomed to confinement, Jo in "the cage of flesh and memory",²⁵ Jeremy in an hermetically sealed prison of culture. The interior of Stoyte's castle with its heterogeneous assortment of treasures finds its ideal counterpart in Jeremy's "idiot-universe"²⁶ containing "a patchwork of mutually irrelevant words and bits of information."²⁷ Jeremy thus finds himself quite at home in the magnate's dwelling as not far removed from the Englishman's spiritual home:-

21. After Many a Summer, p. 132

22. Ibid., p. 132-135

23. Ibid., p. 97

24. Ibid., p. 219

25. Ibid., p. 218

26. Ibid., p. 127

27. Ibid., p. 126

An Englishman's home is his castle; and, curiously enough, an American's castle, as he had discovered after the first shock began to wear off, was turning out to be this particular Englishman's home. His spiritual home. Because it was the embodiment of an imbecile's no track mind. Because there were no issues and nothing led anywhere and the dilemmas had an infinity of horns and you went round and round, like Fabre's caterpillars, in a closed universe of utter cosiness - round and round among the Hauberk Papers, from St. Peter to La Petite Morphil to Giambologna to the gilded Bodhisattvas in the cellar to the baboons to the Marquis de Sade to St. Francois de Sales to Félicia and round again in due course to St. Peter. Round and round, like caterpillars inside the mind of an imbecile; round and round in an infinite cosiness of issueless thoughts and feelings and actions, of hermetically bottled art and learning, of culture for its own sake, of self-sufficient little decencies and indecencies, of impassable dilemmas and moral questions sufficiently answered by the circumambient idiosyncrasy.²⁸

Each reacts with puppet-like and mechanical predictability: Jo like a bulldog on the rampage, barking orders, growling his contempt; Jeremy fluty-voiced, rabbit-faced, like "a self-deprecatory mannequin",²⁹ constantly exhibiting his physical and social shortcomings in a masochistic torment. As Propter points out, they balance each other in their rôles of low-brow and high-brow, victimizer and victimized, Stoyte the bully and Jeremy the "murderer... the sort of person that invites persecution."³⁰ Neither is able to break the rigid mould of personality or even recognize Propter's ideal of liberation through mystical non-attachment. Jeremy, in particular, shies away from direct, unmediated experience, much like Philip Quarles in Point Counter Point, interpreting events exclusively in literary terms: "Life became safe, things assumed meaning, only when they had been translated into words and confined between the covers of a book."³¹ Propter's philosophy unnerves him, forcing him to recognize the irresponsibility and squalor of his own life which consists of:-

28. After Many a Summer, p. 140

29. Ibid., p. 9

30. Ibid., p. 22

31. Ibid., p. 24

Breakfast at nine, lunch at one-thirty, tea at five. And conversation. And the daily walk with Mr. Gladstone, the Yorkshire terrier. And the library; the Works of Voltaire in eighty-three volumes; the inexhaustible treasure of Horace Walpole; and for a change the Divine Comedy; and then, in case you might be tempted to take the Middle Ages too seriously, Salimbene's autobiography and the Miller's Tale. And sometimes calls in the afternoon the Rector, Lady Fredegond with her ear-trumpet, Mr. Veal. And political discussions - except that in these last months, since the Anschluss and Munich, one had found that political discussion was one of the unpleasant things it was wise to avoid. And the weekly journey to London, with lunch at the Reform, and always dinner with old Thrupp of the British Museum; and a chat with one's poor brother Tom at the Foreign Office (only that too was rapidly becoming one of the things to be avoided). And then, of course, the London Library; the Vespers at Westminster Cathedral, if they happened to be singing Palestrina; and every alternate week, between five and six-thirty, an hour and a half with Mae or Doris in Maïda Vale. Infinite squalor in a little room, as he liked to call it; abysmally delightful. Those were the things that came; why couldn't they (the Propters of this world) take them, quietly and sensibly? But no, they had to gibber about eternity and all the rest.³²

Jeremy is left to console himself with "the negative criterion of harmlessness":-

One scratched like a baboon, he concluded; one lived, at fifty-four, in the security of one's mother's shadow; one's sexual life was simultaneously infantile and corrupt; by no stretch of the imagination could one's work be described as useful or important. But when one compared oneself with other people, with Tom, for example, or even with the eminent and august, with cabinet ministers and steel-magnates and bishops and celebrated novelists - well, really, one didn't come out so badly after all. Judged by the negative criterion of harmlessness, one even came out extremely well. So that, taking all things into consideration, there was really no reason why one should do anything much about anything. Having decided which, it was time to get back to the Hauberks.³³

32. After Many a Summer, p. 88-89

33. Ibid., p. 160

Recognizing the futility of any attempt to reform the passive Jeremy, Propter turns to Jo, attacking his obsession with prolonging life as likely to bring a retardation rather than a development of human faculties. Besides, he feels that to prolong life is merely to prolong the evils of time and craving. In a discussion with Boone, he proposes a way out of the egotistical prison by the fight for good on either animal or divine levels:-

'Then where ought we to fight for good?'

'Where good is.'

'But where is it?'

'On the level below the human and on the level above. On the animal level and on the level...well, you can take your choice of names: the level of eternity; the level, if you don't object, of God; the level of the spirit - only that happens to be about the most ambiguous word in the language. On the lower level, good exists as the proper functioning of the organism in accordance with the laws of its own being. On the higher level, it exists in the form of a knowledge of the world without desire or aversion; it exists as the experience of eternity, as the transcendence of personality, the extension of consciousness beyond the limits imposed by the ego...' 34

In transcending the human to the supra-personal, Propter, like Anthony Beavis, rejects a personal deity, "dispenser of forgiveness," 35 as part of the illusion of personality. He poses a merging with a more than personal consciousness in a direct, intuitive, unmediated participation which he himself experiences in much the same way as Beavis and Helen Amberley. 36 It is an experience of peace, serenity and harmony: "The busy nothingness of his being experienced itself as transcended in the felt capacity for peace and purity, for the withdrawal from revulsion and desires, for the blissful freedom from personality..." 37

Propter then defines man and the divine in terms most appropriate to his philosophy: man in the words of Cardinal Bérulle as "'A nothingness surrounded by God, indigent and capable of God, filled with God, if he so desires,'" 38 and God in the words of

34. After Many a Summer, p. 99

35. Ibid., p. 81

36. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 88-89 & p. 158

37. After Many a Summer, p. 83

38. Ibid., p. 76

John Tauler as "'a being withdrawn from creatures, a free power, a pure working.'"³⁹ Continuing his argument against the interpretation of a personal deity, he quotes Molinos: "'Ame a Dios... como es en sí y no como se lo dice y forma su imaginacion,'"⁴⁰ and adds that "'Dios en sí'" is :-

'Unknowable by the personal human mind.... because personalit is self-will, and self-will is the negation of reality, the denial of God.....Dios en sí can't be comprehended by a consciousness dominated by an ego. But now suppose there were some way of eliminating the ego from consciousness. If you could do this, you'd get close to reality, you'd be in a position to comprehend Dios en sí. Now, the interesting thing is that, as a matter of brute fact, this thing can be done, has been done again and again...⁴⁰

Significantly Obispo, on reading the Hauberk Papers, spots the same passage by Molinos but reacts quite differently, rejecting the religious text as meaningless drivel, the equivalent of saying "'hiccough a hiccough como es en hiccough!'"⁴¹ Though poles apart in their philosophy, he and Propter share a mutual cynicism - Propter's being directed towards the egotistical ideals of man, Obispo's towards the suspect humanity of man which he reduces to its prime physiological level with ruthless scientific detachment. Their satirical vision which sets out to debunk human activities, diverges in goal. Propter aims at the salvation of man through the superhuman, the mystical; Obispo delights in man's degeneration by posing the sub-human as goal, so that ultimately theirs is an opposition of angel and ape.

"'From the monkey cage to the Propter paddock...and from the Propter paddock back to the Stoyte house and the Maunciple kennel,'"⁴² Obispo revels in the human menagerie which provokes him to peals of brazen and "metallic laughter."⁴³ Each is ruthlessly revealed: Jo is an old "gut-sack"⁴⁴ or, as Mulge sees him, a gorilla, "not easily domesticated, deeply suspicious, alternately bored and bad-tempered;"⁴⁵ Virginia Maunciple is the equivalent of hormone treatment; Jeremy Pordage a walking example of senility,

39. After Many a Summer, p. 76

40. Ibid., p. 128

41. Ibid., p. 50

42. Ibid., p. 70

43. Ibid., p. 49

44. Ibid., p. 113

45. Ibid., p. 65

middle-aged, bald, long-sighted, short-winded, Oedipus-complexed. And the human bestiary is as grotesque as the animal: Virginia's maternal concern for 'Uncle Jo', her "Florence Nightingale ... Gold Star Mother"⁴⁶ attitude as unrealistic as the baboon mother's refusal to accept the death of her young by clinging to the withered corpse, affectionately licking the decayed greenish fur. Ironically, it is the romantic, love-struck Pete who points to the link between Virginia and the apes: "Indeed, in some obscure way, the rejuvenation of the baboons and Virginia's adorableness seemed to him to have a profound connexion..."⁴⁷ She herself on seeing the baboons copulating, exclaims delightedly: "'Aren't they cute!... Aren't they human!'"⁴⁸

"Dark-haired and dapper, glossily rosy-tinted,"⁴⁹ Obispo sadistically exerts control over his caged animals, in particular Jo and Virginia. Jo despises him for his facetiousness, his parodied bedside manner, yet realizes that he is an indispensable evil, the last straw to which he as drowning man clings in the final hope of rejuvenation. And Obispo, knowing full well that he cracks the whip, uses his power with malignant contempt, yielding it with a delicate and exquisite bite:-

Dr. Obispo, meanwhile, had sterilized his needle, filed the top off a glass ampoule, filled his syringe. His movements, as he worked, were characterized by a certain studied exquisiteness, by a florid and self-conscious precision. It was as though the man were simultaneously his own ballet and his own audience - a sophisticated and highly critical audience, it was true; but then, what a ballet! Nijinsky, Karsavina, Pavlova, Massine - all on a single stage. However terrific the applause it was always merited.

'Ready,' he called at last.

Obediently and in silence, like a trained elephant, Mr. Stoyte rolled over on to his stomach.⁵⁰

Obispo brazenly admits to Jeremy with a touch of "wolfish good-humour"⁵¹ that Stoyte was an economic godsend, liberating him from the tediousness of chronic patients to a carefree life of research

46. After Many a Summer, p. 114

47. Ibid., p. 73

48. Ibid., p. 70

49. Ibid., p. 44

50. Ibid., p. 46-47

51. Ibid., p. 51

into the racket of longevity, complete with Jo as guinea pig. He is in his element in the impersonal laboratory setting, the smell of mice and alcohol, the subject of carp, cholesterol and intestinal flora, the writings of the Russian physiologist, Voronoff, who propounded a theory connecting glandular secretions with senility.

As confirmed Freudian and follower of the French physiologist, Claude Bernard, Obispo finds his studies in senility inevitably linked with sensuality, so readily available in the form of Virginia Maunciple. She becomes both guinea pig and pawn, used scientifically in an observation of sensual reactions: maliciously, to thwart Jo, and hedonistically, not only for his own pleasure but as a means of obtaining power in a prolonged and delicious conquest, much like those ancient victories of the Fifth Earl of Gonister. The scene for seduction is set with the reading of the Fifth Earl's favourite sadistic tome, Les Cent Vingt Jours de Sodome but like Paulo and Francesca reading the Lancelot romance when accosted by an incensed Gianciotto, Obispo and Virginia are interrupted by a jealous and suspicious Jo, the comedy of the scene heightened by the Dantesque parallel drawn by Obispo himself. Virginia adds a further touch of absurdity consistent with her limited frame of reference: she sees herself as Daisy Mae in the comic strip rescued in the nick of time by Little Abner!⁵²

Not to be daunted, Obispo bides his time. That same evening Virginia, having done obeisance at the shrine of Our Lady, set in a niche in her bedroom, the figure cutely dressed in silk, gold and pearls,⁵³ proceeds to the ritual of nail varnishing when Obispo enters after eliminating a potentially interfering Jo with an overdose of Nembutal. The scientist outlines his aims which consist of a gradual stripping of Virginia's mask of civilization and religion to arrive at love unadorned:-

It was a branch of applied physiology; he was an expert, a specialist. The Claude Bernard of the subject. And talk of imposing one's will! You began by forcing the girl to accept a thesis that was in flat contradiction to all the ideas she had been brought up with, all the dreams-come-true rigmarole of popular

52. After Many a Summer, p. 137

53. Ibid., p. 143-144

ideology. Quite a pleasant little victory, to be sure. But it was only when you got down to the applied physiology that the series of really satisfying triumphs began. You took an ordinarily rational human being, a good hundred-per-cent American with a background, a position in society, a set of conventions, a code of ethics, a religion (Catholic in the present instance, Dr. Obispo remembered parenthetically); you took this good citizen, with rights fully and formally guaranteed by the Constitution, you took her... and you proceeded, systematically and scientifically, to reduce this unique personality to a mere epileptic body, moaning and gibbering under the excruciations of a pleasure for which you, the Claude Bernard of the subject, were responsible and of which you remained the enjoying, but always detached, always ironically amused, spectator.⁵⁴

Here is a perfection of Spandrell's technique in Point Counter Point, only raised to a more aesthetic, a more destructive and diabolical pitch, refined to an art. Virginia resists, then submits only to find, to her horror, that the Virgin has witnessed the scene: she has forgotten to close the curtains of the shrine! The incident irresistibly brings to mind the copulation of the young baboons in the presence of "a formidable old male, leather-snouted, with the grey bobbed hair of a seventeenth-century Anglican divine."⁵⁵

Paradoxically, Obispo, rather than destroy Virginia through sensuality, is a means to her liberation. She is tired of Jo's restrictions, of not being allowed "to tell the truth about herself, even if she had wanted to."⁵⁶ Beneath the religious fervour lies the strip tease girl of the Congo Club, as she was before Jo's intervention. Ironically sensuality, instead of reducing her to the baboon, raises her in Jeremy's eyes to the "exquisitely spiritual and pre-Raphaelitish."⁵⁷ She walks about "in a state of perpetual samadhi,"⁵⁷ emerging each morning as if "newly emerged from the valley of the shadow,"⁵⁸ so that, as Propter

54. After Many a Summer, p. 116

55. Ibid., p. 70

56. Ibid., p. 137

57. Ibid., p. 154

58. Ibid., p. 161

experiences blissful oblivion in mystical contemplation, so she, too, feels a similar mode of unindividualized consciousness on the level of pure sensuality. But Virginia cannot sustain the intensity and to Obispo's amusement vacillates between Priapus and the Virgin Mary, caught between animal and divine in that world of illusion as described by Propter. She lives in a world of paradoxes, enchanted by the baboons' love play yet revolted by the fountain with "Giambologna's nymph... indefatigably spouting from her polished breasts."⁵⁹ Like Lenina Crowne in Brave New World, she is:-

A child of her age, which was the age, in this context, of bottle-feeding and contraception, she felt herself outraged by this monstrous piece of indelicacy from an earlier time. It was just horrible; that was all that could be said about it..⁵⁹

Yet she indulges in an incestuous relationship with the fatherly Jo, happily living in material luxury which, as Propter points out, is merely "dirt served out in sterile containers,"⁶⁰ and, rigidly moral as she pretends, she feels no compunction in betraying 'Uncle Jo' in her affair with Obispo. Before long, Jo senses an estrangement: he is in danger of losing the epitome of youth and daughterly innocence embodied in that smooth form, "the wide-set eyes....small, straight, impudent nose"⁶¹ and irresistible mouth, its short upper lip childish and appealing. She evokes something of the cultivated naïveté and ingenuousness of Mary Thriplow in Those Barren Leaves, who plays the part of "the obscure little person in the simple black frock,"⁶² modest and demure, chaste and mousey as the head girl of a convent school, a perfect target for the sensual Calamy who, like Obispo, reduces his love victim to a trembling, tortured, quivering mass.

Faced with the full implications of the loss of Virginia, Jo is desperately reminded of his misery:-

59. After Many a Summer, p. 74

60. Ibid., p. 118

61. Ibid., p. 41

62. Those Barren Leaves, p. 32

.... what could millions do to allay his miseries? The miseries of an old, tired, empty man; of a man who had no end in life but himself, no philosophy, no knowledge but of his own interests, no appreciations, not even any friends - only a daughter-mistress, a concubine-child, frantically desired, cherished to the point of idolatry. And now this being, on whom he had relied to give significance to his life, had begun to fail him..... The sense was going out of his life and he could do nothing; for he was in a situation with which he did not know how to deal, hopelessly bewildered. And always, in the background of his mind, there floated an image of that circular marble room, with Rodin's image of desire at the centre, and that white slab in the pavement at its base - the slab that would some day have his name engraved upon it..... And along with that inscription went another, in orange letters on a coal-black ground: 'It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' And meanwhile here was Clancy, conspiratorially announcing victory. Good news! Good news! A year or two from now he would be richer by another million. But the millions were in one world and the old, unhappy, frightened man was in another, and there was no communication between the two.⁶³

He is once again overwhelmed by the terror of death, however much he has tried to camouflage it in sensuality, the principle applied to his cemetery, the Beverley Pantheon which glorifies, not spirit but body, "the well-fed body, for ever youthful, immortally athletic, indefatigably sexy."⁶⁴ The policy of injecting sex-appeal into death is Stoyte's distortion of 'God is love', but, alone and deserted, he is haunted by the childhood sampler of his puritanical forbears: "'IT IS A TERRIBLE THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD.'" ⁶⁵

Fear motivates him to recover Virginia at any cost and, ironically, Obispo's Dantesque prophecy comes true, comically twisted. Finding Virginia and Obispo together, Stoyte, bent on murder, gropes for his revolver, only to find that he has mislaid it. He rushes to the castle elevator, his "ugly and untidy being"⁶⁶ in ironic contrast with the perfection and geometrical harmony of

63. After Many a Summer, p. 172

64. Ibid., p. 17

65. Ibid., p. 36

66. Ibid., p. 214

the Vermeer painting covering the left wall. Twilight having descended, Stoyte's revolver recovered, the crowning stroke of farce falls in Jo's mistaking Pete for Obispo, shooting him and, on realizing his error, being reduced to a trembling mass of fear. Once again Obispo cracks the whip. Slim, meticulously dressed, totally unruffled in the midst of the chaos and bloodshed, Virginia's terrified religious gibber and intermittent retching, he ignores Jo's pathetic attempts to staunch the blood with a pocket handkerchief and succeeds in blackmailing him for a legalized death certificate to the tune of two hundred dollars in cash as well as fifty-five hundred acres of land in the San Felipe Valley. And the novel ends with a wild goose chase to England to track down the bi-centenarian Fifth Earl whom they find in the company of his housekeeper, both degenerated to the level of foetal apes. Huxley's final touch is an elaboration of the Swiftian Struldbruggs. In the silence between Obispo's ferocious laughter, Virginia's horrified exclamations, the housekeeper's yelps and shrill screams, the Fifth Earl's "stertorous growling",⁶⁷ Stoyte hesitantly enquires:-

'How long do you figure it would take before a person went like that?.... I mean, it wouldn't happen at once... there'd be a long time while a person... well, you know; while he wouldn't change any. And once you get over the first shock - well, they look like they were having a pretty good time. I mean in their own way, of course. Don't you think so, Obispo?' he insisted.

Dr. Obispo went on looking at him in silence; then threw back his head and started to laugh again.⁶⁸

Time Must Have a Stop.

From Obispo's peals of ferocious and metallic laughter, Huxley moves in Time Must Have a Stop to a crescendo of "universal derision,"⁶⁹ "a huge, autonomous hysteria."⁷⁰ In "paroxysm after cosmic paroxysm",⁷⁰ the universe heaves in an "uncontrollable lacerating derision"⁷¹ provoked by man as part of the grotesque

67. After Many a Summer, p. 250

68. Ibid., p. 250-251

69. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 190

70. Ibid., p. 227

71. Ibid., p. 230

"Human Vomey." 72 The Swiftian disgust expressed in the earlier novels modulates to the Voltairean yelp, the Rabelaisian boom, in which the dead and disembodied Eustace Barnack has a share:-

Yes, the whole universe was laughing with him. Laughing cosmically at the cosmic joke of its own self-frustration, guffawing from pole to pole at the world-wide, age-old slapstick of disaster following on the heels of good intention. A counterpoint of innumerable hilarities - Voltairean voices, yelping in sharp shrill triumph over the bewildered agonies of stupidity and silliness; vast Rabelaisian voices, like bassoons and double basses, rejoicing in guts and excrement and copulation, rumbling delightedly at the spectacle of grossness, of inescapable animality. 73

The pain and the howling of laughter subside to an amused indulgence of earthly vanity and Eustace is transported into a paradise of "blue shining stillness... Delicate, unutterably beautiful..... tender, yearning, supplicatory." 74 The time-bound world comes to an end and he is absorbed into "the shining of the silence" 75 to achieve the mystical union expounded by Miller in Eyeless in Gaza and Propter in After Many a Summer. Eustace's posthumous musings bring to mind Chaucer's Troilus who looks down from "the holynesse of the eighte spere" 76 and laughs at "this false worldes brotelnesse": 77

And down from thennes faste gan he avise
This litel spot of erthe that with the see
Enbraced is, and fully gan despise
This wrecched world, and held al vanite
To respect of the pleyne felicite
That is in hevne above. And at the laste,
Ther he was slayn his loking down he caste,

72. On the Margin, "On Deviating into Sense", p. 81

73. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 226-227

74. Ibid., p. 257

75. Ibid., p. 261

76. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde", Book v, I. 1809, ed. A. Pollard (London: Macmillan, 1932), p. 557

77. Ibid., Book v, l. 1832, p. 557

And in himself he lough right at the wo
 Of hem that wepen for his deth so faste,
 And dampned al our werk, that folwen so
 The blinde lust the which that may not laste,
 And sholden al our herte on hevne caste.
 And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
 Ther-as Mercúrie sorted him to dwelle.

Swich fyn hath lo this Troilus for love!
 Swich fyn hath al his grete worthinesse!
 Swich fyn hath his estat réal above!
 Swich fyn his lust, swich fyn hath his noblesse!
 Swich fyn, this false worldes brotelnesse! -
 And thus bigan his loving of Criseyde
 As I have told, and in this wise he deyde.

- O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
 In whiche ey love up-groweth with your age,
 Repeireth how fro worldly vanité!
 And of your herte up-casteth the viságe
 To th'ilke God that after his imáge
 You made; and thinketh al n'is but a faire
 This world, that passeth sone as floures faire!

And loveth Him, the whiche that right for love
 Upon a cros, our soules for to beje,
 First starf, and roos, and sit in hevne above;
 For He n'il falsen no wight, dar I seye,
 That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye!
 And sin He best to love us, and most meke:
 What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?⁷⁸

Re-interpreting the Troilus incident, Huxley substitutes for the traditional mediaeval faith his own particular brand of mysticism: Troilus's God incarnated in Christ becomes Eustace's merging with a supra-personal force to attain the oriental Nirvana.

But before deliverance from the time-bound world can take place, man is forced to associate in the "human barnyard"⁷⁹ the menagerie in which Eustace assumes Philip Quarles's role as collector of specimens. Detached as he is from the human scene, Eustace is by no means exempt from classification in the bestiary which he dominates by sheer physical size:-

78. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," Book V, I. 1814-1848, p. 557

79. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 92

In that expanse of flabby face the little eyes...were like an elephant's. An elegant little elephant in a double-breasted black coat and pale-grey check trousers. Oh, and even a monocle on the end of a string to make him look still more like the elderly dandy on the musical comedy stage.⁸⁰

Among the most remarkable specimens in Eustace's collection is his mother-in-law, Mrs. Gamble, "a fossil scorpion out of the Carboniferous",⁸¹ asserting her authority with harsh "nutmeg-grater voice".⁸² Following as if in procession after the Queen Mother are Eustace's brother-in-law, Fred Poulshot, "grey, lugubrious, long-faced like a horse";⁸³ John Barnack, his habitually domineering and self-righteous talk punctuated by short, explosive brays of laughter; Daisy Ockham, a sentimental pug, like "blancmange with Jesus sauce";⁸⁴ and the intellectuals - Bruno Montini, his beaked skull constantly bent over a book; Carlo Malighi, the "young ram-face";⁸⁵ Professor Cacciaguida, like a half-developed larva and Paul de Vries, the physicist, reduced to a subjectively sentimental dog in his yearning for Veronika's smile.

The universal laughter guffawing in a "counterpoint of innumerable hilarities"⁸⁶ finds its parallel in the braying, yelping and cackling of the human menagerie, a multiplicity of voices ranging from Dr. Pfeiffer's "medievally robust"⁸⁷ boom provoked by the spectacle of "the liddle genius"⁸⁷ Puck-Ariel-Sebastian; to the Edwardian humour, the Punch brand of wit indulged in by Alice Poulshot; the ferocious and sarcastic laughter of

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80. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 40
 81. Ibid., p. 68
 82. Ibid., p. 177
 83. Ibid., p. 41
 84. Ibid., p. 200
 85. Ibid., p. 81
 86. Ibid., p. 227
 87. Ibid., p. 10

the crippled Laurina Acciaiuoli; the "odd little snorting stertorous laugh"⁸⁸ of Veronica Thwale. There is the Chaucerian "comedy of holiness"⁸⁹ as perceived by the young Sebastian, and finally the mature Sebastian's appraisal of the "three deliciously comic characters,"⁹⁰ Alice Poulshot, her daughter Susan, her son-in-law Kenneth, stolid, middle-class, of "absolutely sterling goodness, but limited by an impenetrable ignorance of the end and purpose of existence."⁹⁰ True to the pattern of the animal kingdom, the humans fall into a hierarchy of predators and victims: Fred Poulshot preys on his family by a gloomy and martyred patience which is merely an expression of his will to power; John Barnack victimizes his tender-hearted and sensitive son Sebastian who is protected in turn by the motherly Susan Poulshot and Daisy Ockham. The aristocrats victimize the menials, the fascists hunt down the anti-fascists till total chaos results and man indulges in the legalized victimization of a second World War. Escape from this vicious circle of destruction comes to a chosen few - Rontini and his disciple Sebastian.

In the main, each character in the novel finds its counterpart in the earlier works, so that ultimately Time Must Have a Stop may be considered as a rag-bag of pet Huxleyan theories, masks, types and attitudes. Alice Poulshot has something of the long-suffering attitude of Elinor Quarles, Susan Poulshot the naivety of Mary in Crome Yellow and Irene in Those Barren Leaves. Laurina Acciaiuoli is reminiscent of the aged, degenerate and drug-addicted Mary Amberley. Veronica Thwale combines the artistic vision of Rampion with the ruthless scientific detachment of Obispo and the tantalizing cruelty of Anne in Crome Yellow, Myra Viveash and Lucy Tantamount; Eustace Barnack the sensuality of John Bidlake with the depravity of Spandrell. Bruno Rontini recalls Miller in Eyeless in Gaza and Propter in After Many a Summer; John Barnack's twin is the self-righteous John Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza and the persecuted Sebastian combines a succession of characters, from Denis Stone to Walter Bidlake, Philip Quarles, Anthony Beavis, Jeremy Pordage.

88. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 116

89. Ibid., p. 124

90. Ibid., p. 273

As central character, Sebastian alone escapes classification in the human barnyard, saved from animality by his essential purity, "a kind of lovely and supernatural innocence... seraphic naïveté"⁹¹ and guilelessness. Like the saint of old, he is "the predestined target, the delicate and radiant butt of God alone knew what ulterior flights of arrows - piercing enjoyments, successes poisoned with praise and barbed to stick; and then, if Providence was merciful enough to send an antidote, pains and humiliations and defeats..."⁹¹ He invites persecution, not through the self-deprecatory pose of Walter Bidlake and Jeremy Pordage, but because of that divine spark, that essential purity which makes him vulnerable within a society of human predators. Rontini sees Sebastian as "a seraph out of heaven, deprived of the beatific vision, unaware, indeed, of the very existence of God,"⁹¹ and the "Della Robbia angel"⁹² shows himself, at times, as the all too human seventeen year old, timid, painfully self-conscious often to the point of humiliating incoherence. In company he is a "Don Juan without the courage of his conversation,"⁹³ as inhibited as Denis Stone of Crome Yellow who, for all his twenty-three years, reacts in much the same inarticulate and adolescent way. Unable to break free from their imprisoning self-consciousness, both Denis and Sebastian withdraw into a private world which becomes a means of protection against the swarming mass of humanity. Plunging into Crome Fair, Denis descends "from the serene empyrean of words into the actual vortex",⁹⁴ only to feel his whole being shrink and retract:-

His soul was a tenuous, tremulous, pale membrane. He would keep its sensibility intact and virgin as long as he could. Cautiously he crept out by a side door and made his way down towards the park. His soul fluttered as he approached the noise and movement of the fair. He paused for a moment on the brink, then stepped in and was engulfed.

Hundreds of people, each with his own private face and all of them real, separate, alive: the thought was disquieting. He paid twopence and saw the Tattooed Woman;

91. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 242

92. Ibid., p. 2

93. Ibid., p. 18

94. Crome Yellow, p. 149

twopence more, the Largest Rat in the World. From the home of the Rat he emerged just in time to see a hydrogen-filled balloon break loose for home. A child howled up after it; but calmly, a perfect sphere of flushed opal, it mounted, mounted. Denis followed it with his eyes until it became lost in the blinding sunlight. If he could but send his soul to follow it!....⁹⁵

Sebastian, too, shrinks from the human herd, experiencing at the same time a sense of disgust and revulsion which recalls Coleman's reaction in Antic Hay.⁹⁶ Walking home in the foggy London twilight, he muses:-

'Millions and millions,' he whispered to himself; and the enormity of the evil seemed to grow with every repetition of the word. All over the world, millions of men and women lying in pain; millions dying, at this very moment; millions more grieving over their faces distorted, ... the tears running down their cheeks. And millions starving, millions frightened, and sick, and anxious. Millions being cursed and kicked and beaten by other brutal millions. And everywhere the stink of garbage and drink and washed bodies, everywhere the blight of stupidity and ugliness. The horror was always there, even when one happened to be feeling well and happy - always there, just round the corner and behind almost every door.⁹⁷

Where Denis simply escapes into "the serene empyrean of words",⁹⁵ Sebastian transforms his sense of horror into "a vast impersonal sadness"⁹⁷ which he tries to express in poetry at once passionate, ironical and erotic:-

Ignore the stale figs, the weevils and the whippings,
The old men scared of dying, the women in cages.
In a chronic June, what highbrow heavyweights
Surround the beard of wisdom! Hark, near by,
The twangling and the flutes. Before, behind,
Gyre after gyre, what orbbed resiliences,
The last veil loosened, uneclipse their moons!

95. Crome Yellow, p. 149-150

96. Antic Hay, p. 68

97. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 3

Tragical on stilts, bawling sublimities
through a tortured mouth-hole....
And all the while, dazzling upon a thousand
islands in the hyacinthine sea,
what bulls, what boys, what frenzy of swans and nipplers,
what radiant lusts, like a red forge panting up
from fire to purer fire, to light itself -
The incandescent copulation of Gods.⁹⁹

He repeats the words with relish. To him poetic creation involves a sensual act of compressing and expressing: "Squeeze all the voluptuous images into a lump and, in the act, squeeze out of them a liqueur-glassful of verbal juice, at once astringent and heady, tart and aphrodisiac."⁹⁹ Like Coleman, he believes in the world of the Callipyge, only his is a purely poetic appreciation. Confronted with the reality of sensual experience, he is repelled by womanhood and vows to take vengeance on the female sex in a portrayal of "a whole zoo of ferocious and undomesticable girls, a deafening aviary of dowagers."¹⁰⁰

The world of poetry intersects with the world of fantasy. Sebastian's "precocious and feverishly imaginative mind"¹⁰¹ fabricates a series of tales told to his cousin Susan, open-mouthed with admiration at stories of the Larniman ogres, the detective hero, the Trotskyan revolutionary, the Odyssean adventurer who becomes progressively involved in erotic encounters, "repulsively fascinating, disgustingly attractive."¹⁰² Then, remembering his nauseating experience with the prostitute, "that rubber corset... her body, as unresponsive as its carapace... the bored perfunctory kisses and the breath that stank of beer and caries and onions,"¹⁰³ he retreats into the fiction of Mrs. Esdaile: "Exquisite, cultured, wildly voluptuous Esdaile in the arms of her triumphant young lover - the reverse of that medal whose other, real face bore the image of the girl in blue and a nauseated child, abject and blubbing."¹⁰⁴

It was all very well to imagine a beautiful Mary Esdaile woven into a story which would "modulate from God Flat Minor to Sex Major and Squalor Natural,"¹⁰⁵ but faced with Veronica Thwale, the

98. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 4-7

99. Ibid., p. 6

100. Ibid., p. 4-5

101. Ibid., p. 14

102. Ibid., p. 16

103. Ibid., p. 25

104. Ibid., p. 27

105. Ibid., p. 135

very incarnation of Mrs. Esdaille, he finds himself embarrassed and uneasy before her steady scrutiny. Little does he know that the serene, demure exterior conceals an essential shamelessness, that Veronica delights in playing the acrobat, jumping perilously from "elegant decency"¹⁰⁶ to obscenity, from appearance to essence:-

Shamelessness at the core; but on the surface Brunelleschi and Michelangelo, good manners and Lanvin clothes, art and science and religion. And the charm of life consisted precisely in the inconsistency between essence and appearance, and the art of living in a delicate acrobacy of sauts périlleux from one world to the other, in a prestidigitization that could always discover the obscenity of rabbits at the bottom of even the glossiest high hat and, conversely, the elegant decency of a hat to conceal even the most pregnant and lascivious of rodents.¹⁰⁶

Having suffered through a poverty-stricken childhood in much the same way as Joan Thurley in Eyeless in Gaza, Veronica, the oval-faced, madonna-like daughter of Canon Cresswell, enters the Eustace Barnack household as opportunist and detached observer. She looks on from "her private box at the comedy"¹⁰⁷ revelling in De Vries's abject but ardent declarations of love and subsequent proposal. As artist, she pictures him in a Rampion-like parable, with herself trailing a magnet, attracting the philosophic eye, De Vries, to succumb to life's "essential shamelessness":-¹⁰⁸

The drawing represented a woman, dressed in the severest and most correctly fashionable of tailor-made suits, walking, prayer-book in hand, up the aisle of a church. Behind her, at the end of a string, she trailed a horseshoe magnet - but a horseshoe magnet so curved and rounded as to suggest a pair of thighs tapering down to the knees.

106. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 184

107. Ibid., p. 224

108. Ibid., p. 223

On the ground, a little way behind the woman, lay an enormous eyeball, as big as a pumpkin, its pupil staring wildly at the retreating magnet. From the sides of the eye sprouted two wormlike arms, ending in a pair of huge hooked hands that clawed at the floor. So strong had been the attraction and so desperate the futile effort to resist, that the dragging fingers had scored long grooves in the flagstones.¹⁰⁹

More shameless yet, she resolves upon an outrageous scientific experiment - the seduction of Sebastian on the very night of De Vries's proposal. Obispo's experiment with Virginia is re-enacted as a variation on a theme: Veronica takes the lead as probing scientific investigator, a hobby she confesses to in a conversation with Eustace:-

'And you feel you'd like to bring out enormities?'

Mrs. Thwale nodded.

'I'd have been a good scientist,' she said.

'What's that got to do with it?'

'But can't you see?' she said impatiently.

'Can't you see? Cutting bits off frogs and mice, grafting cancer into rabbits, boiling things together in test-tubes - just to see what'll happen, just for the fun of the thing. Wantonly committing enormities - that's all science is.'

'And you'd enjoy it outside the laboratory?'

'Not in public, of course.'

'But if you were ambushed behind a screen, where the Good couldn't see you...' ¹¹⁰

Like Lucy Tantamount who plays the part of a cruel Venus subjecting a vulnerable Adonis in the form of Walter Bidlake, Veronica, too, plans to devour her defenceless prey. Ironically, Sebastian has already identified her with the Venus in his uncle Eustace's painting and he dreamily contemplates "the incandescent copulation of a goddess,"¹¹¹ quite unaware that the myth is to be transformed into reality. The experiment goes according to plan and Sebastian is shocked to the core by "that almost surgical research of the essential shamelessness,"¹¹² which takes the place

109. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 74

110. Ibid., p. 75

111. Ibid., p. 136

112. Ibid., p. 223

of the anticipated ecstasy and "wittily cultured lasciviousness."¹¹³ Yet he is fascinated by the image of "'Twin cannibals in bedlam....'... devouring their own identity and one another's; ravaging up reason and decency; obliterating the most rudimentary conventions of civilization,"¹¹³ and for the first time he feels more willing to accept the reality of sensual experience. Just as Obispo unwittingly transfigures rather than destroys Virginia through his ruthless experiment, so Veronica renders a service to Sebastian in forcing him out of his world of erotic fantasy. But like Virginia, Sebastian cannot sustain the break-through and when reality weighs too heavily, he is only too happy to fall back on the consolation of maternal affection so amply supplied by Daisy Ockham. Inheriting something of the childishness and defencelessness of Anthony Beavis, he habitually exploits a kind of motherly love which, early on in the novel, is provided by his cousin, Susan Poulshot. Boosting his ego by her obvious adoration, Susan is bewitched by him as a being of another order, extraordinarily imaginative, fae-like, his pale hair "like an aureole of tousled flame."¹¹⁴ More important, she is touched by his frailty and helplessness, his inadequacy in the face of a pitiful and dogmatic father. Watching him leave to plead for a much needed suit of evening clothes, she sees him "marching with such desperate resolution towards inevitable failure."¹¹⁴ John Barnack refuses with sarcastic mirth and Susan, overwhelmed with a heady maternal bliss, comforts and consoles the sobbing boy.

As Susan's successor, Daisy Ockham, too, feels compelled to take the poor motherless boy under her wing. Her very first meeting with him as total stranger arouses her yearning maternal impulses: she refers brokenly to her dead son, the fourteen year old Frankie, and almost blackmails Sebastian into accepting the box of chocolates as a gesture of affection by

113. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 223

114. Ibid., p. 27

arousing in him an obscure sense of guilt for her loss. Then, as if by the hand of Fate, they meet again, only to discover that they are by way of being related: Daisy is Eustace Barnack's step-daughter. From then onwards, Daisy eats her way into his confidence, showering him with gifts from Eustace's library, offering bribes of theatre and concerts. Veronica, having refused maternal solicitude, looks on with intense amusement: it is partly Daisy's "mother-craving"¹¹⁵ which challenges her to lure Sebastian into her own web of lust:-

From between the curtains of her spiritual private box, Mrs. Thwale observed it all and was delighted with the play. The Holy Woman was fairly itching with unsatisfied motherhood. But the boy, not unnaturally, didn't much relish being made the victim of that particular brand of concupiscence. So poor old Holy-Poly had to offer bribes. Theatres and concerts to induce him to become her gigolo-baby, to submit to being the instrument of her maternal lust. But, after all, there were other forms of the essential shamelessness - forms that an adolescent would find more attractive than mother-craving; there were magnets, she flattered herself, considerably more powerful than Daisy's pug-like face, Daisy's chaste but abundant bosom. It might be amusing perhaps, it might be an interesting scientific experiment.... She smiled to herself.¹¹⁵

Veronica aside, Sebastian finds himself expansive under Daisy's open admiration - "all she asked was to be allowed to be the adoring means of your glorification."¹¹⁶ His shyness vanishes and he takes the floor in endless conversation, playing in turn on her sympathies by painting the picture of a harsh father bullying his sensitive, unhappy child. Touched by his misery, Daisy insists on presenting him with the evening clothes, much to Sebastian's dismay for he has already ordered a suit with the money obtained by secretly selling the Degas sketch, promised to him by Eustace on the eve of his uncle's death. As Rontini predicted, that guilelessness camouflaging his deceit proves to be his undoing. No

115. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 214

116. Ibid., p. 203

one would dream of associating the Della Robbia angel with the disappearance of the painting. Like Anthony Beavis who precipitates Brian's suicide by concealing the fact of Joan's seduction, so Sebastian finds himself morally weak and unable to confess to the sale of the painting. In the end events become so involved that it is too late to tell the truth, short of disillusioning Daisy and the whole Barnack household with the exception of the sardonically amused Veronica, who invents excuses on his behalf, becoming his unacknowledged partner in crime. Mrs. Gamble points an accusing finger at the villa servants, who suffer the indignity of a cross-examination, and retaliate by killing her pet Foxy-Woxy; Bruno Rontini, who recovers the painting from the fascist Weyl, is promptly taken political prisoner.

The offence has unexpected ramifications. Waiting for Rontini, Sebastian traces its genealogy, then promptly transforms his guilt into an abstract, poetic expression, going off at a tangent to consider the pattern of human behaviour, of betrayals and broken promises stemming from "the lingering Judas kiss."¹¹⁷ Rontini, returning with the sketch, gently rebukes him for his escape into the world of writing as an evasion from "acting or being,"¹¹⁸ and by the time Sebastian leaves, he is resolved "To live with people and real events and not so exclusively with words."¹¹⁹ But despite his promises, the truth is never told. Weyl, gloating over the deceased Eustace's treasures, now available for sale, covers up for the boy and the others, relieved at the recovery of the sketch, are only too willing to accept his story. With some slight hesitation Sebastian dismisses Rontini's advice. After all:-

Who was Bruno Rontini anyhow? Just an amiable old ass, too decent, by all accounts, to be sarcastic or censorious, and too completely a stranger, for all his vague cousinship, to have the right to say unpleasant things, even if he wanted to.¹²⁰

117. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 241

118. Ibid., p. 246

119. Ibid., p. 250

120. Ibid., p. 231

Ten years later, his offence confronts him in the form of that "irrepressible Lazarus",¹²¹ Rontini himself, now emaciated, old and dying after years of imprisonment and exile:-

Speechless with a kind of terror, he took the dry skeleton hand that was held out to him. This was his doing! And what made it worse was the fact that, all these years, he had done everything he could to obliterate the consciousness of his offence. It had begun with excuses and alibis. He had been a child; and after all, who was there who didn't tell an occasional fib? And his fib, remember, had been told out of mere weakness, not from interest or malice. Nobody would have dreamed of making a fuss about it, if it hadn't been for that unfortunate accident. And, obviously, Bruno had it coming to him; Bruno had been on their bad books for years. That wretched little business of the drawing happened to have been made the pretext of an action which would have been taken anyhow, sooner or later. By no stretch of the imagination could he, Sebastian, be held responsible..... The incident slipped away into insignificance. And now suddenly, out of the grave of his oblivion, this old dying man with the blue eyes had risen like some irrepressible Lazarus - for what purpose? To reproach, to judge, to condemn?¹²¹

Panic-stricken and overwhelmed with a gnawing sense of guilt, Sebastian tries to atone for his sin by finding a house and nursing the dying man, mortally suffering from cancer of the throat. A macabre piece of autobiography enters here: Huxley himself died from cancer of the tongue, the extreme pathos of his condition conveyed by Christopher Isherwood:-

Aldous looked like a withered old man, grey-faced, with dull blank eyes. He spoke in a low, hoarse voice which was hard to understand. I had to sit directly facing him because it hurt him to turn his head. And yet - seeing what I saw and knowing what I knew - I could still almost forget about his condition while we talked, because his mind was functioning so well.....

121. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 279

Laura had told me that Aldous did not realize how sick he was. But now he began to speak about old age, and I couldn't help suspecting that this was a kind of metaphor, a way of referring to his own death. He spoke of it almost with petulance, as a wretched hindrance which prevented you from working. He told me that he did not think he would ever write another novel. "I feel more and more out of touch with people." And he added that when one is old one is absolutely cut off from the outside world. I told him, quite sincerely, that I have the impression that, as I grow older, my character gets worse and worse. This made him laugh a lot - not, I think, because he disbelieved me but because he found the statement somehow reassuring. We parted almost cheerfully. I had hoped to see him at least once or twice again, but even the surgeon's prognosis was an over-estimate. Aldous died that same month, on the 22nd, not knowing that Kennedy had been shot that morning.¹²²

Perhaps in some obscure way, Huxley prophesied the manner of his own death in the character of Rontini, though there is an ironic contrast in their attitude to dying - Huxley petulant, isolated, preoccupied with old age; Rontini in the company of his disciple, Sebastian, serene, triumphant, joyful, having attained that self-transcendence which Huxley so ardently expounded in many of his works.

The dying man communicates in semi-audible whispers, then by written comments and advice, which Sebastian later incorporates into a journal, tacked on in the Epilogue instead of forming a substantial part of the novel, as does Anthony's diary in Eyeless in Gaza. Rejecting the counterpointed technique of the earlier novel, Huxley telescopes Sebastian's conversion into one brief chapter so that Beavis's gradual salvation through the pacifist Miller becomes Sebastian's melodramatic conversion at Rontini's death-bed. However different the artistic technique of the two novels, the subject matter remains essentially the same. Beavis's preoccupation with love, time, personality and the sacrifice of self-will are re-iterated in the Epilogue of Time

122. Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley, p. 161-162

Must Have a Stop and in Rontini's earlier talks with Sebastian. In escaping the purely human level, Rontini proposes the blind alley of apotheosis, the exultation of personality as against the less attractive but more promising road of deification - "personality annihilated in charity, in union, so that at last the man or woman can say, "Not I, but God in me." 123 With cynical realism, he breaks down Sebastian's ideal of "heroic altruism" 124 as an obstacle to "redemptive sacrifice.... the sacrifice of self-will to make room for the knowledge of God," 124 and he adds:-

'Don't try to act somebody else's part.
Find out how to become your inner not-
self in God while remaining your outer
self in the world.....

.....
'Performing miracles in a crisis - so
much easier than loving God selflessly
every moment of the day! Which is why
most crises arise - because people find
it so hard to behave properly at ordinary
times.' 125

From Rontini's death onwards, Sebastian undertakes the task of self-reform which he begins by squarely facing himself and his vices. Fifteen years have elapsed since the incident of the painting, a gap filled by a period at Oxford, marriage and the death of his wife, a succession of amorous adventures, a career as playwright and finally the shattering experience of war. Admittedly he has escaped the lust for power and wealth: "But when it comes to the subtler forms of vanity and pride, when it comes to indifference, negative cruelty and the lack of charity, when it comes to being afraid and telling lies, when it comes to sensuality..." 126 Like Anthony Beavis, he recalls his irresponsible affairs, his affair with Veronica De Vries conducted under his wife's very nose and which he sees now as a means of self-alienation, much like that untainted world of words into which he habitually escaped:-

123. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 248

124. Ibid., p. 282

125. Ibid., p. 282-283

126. Ibid., p. 276

... I was without responsibility for what was happening in the world. But the habit of sensuality and pure aestheticism is a process of God-proofing. To indulge in it is to become a spiritual mackintosh, shielding the little corner of time, of which one is the centre, from the least drop of eternal reality. But the only hope for the world of time lies in being constantly drenched by that which lies beyond time. Guaranteed God-proof, we exclude from our surroundings the only influence that 's able to neutralize the destructive energies of ambition, covetousness and the love of power. Our responsibility may be less spectacularly obvious than theirs; but it is no less real. 127

Rontini's philosophy is not forgotten and the purpose of that "irrepressible Lazarus" 128 is revealed - not to reproach, to judge, to condemn but to awaken in Sebastian a self-reproach, self-judgment, self-condemnation which serve to liberate him into that divine and timeless silence:-

Today there was an almost effortless achievement of silence - silence of intellect, silence of will, silence even of secret and subconscious cravings. Then a passage through these silences into the intensely active tranquillity of the living and eternal Silence.

Or else I could use another set of inadequate verbal signs and say that it was a kind of fusion with the harmonizing interval that creates and constitutes beauty. But whereas any particular manifestation of beauty - in art, in thought, in action, in nature - is always a relationship between existences not in themselves intrinsically beautiful, this was a perception of, an actual participation in, the paradox of Relationship as such, apart from anything related; the direct experience of pure interval and the principle of harmony, apart from the things which, in this or that concrete instance, are separated and harmonized. And somewhere, somehow, the participation and the experience persist even now as I write. Persist in spite of the infernal racket of guns, in spite of my memories and fears and preoccupations. If they could persist always.... 129

127. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 284-285

128. Ibid., p. 279

129. Ibid., p. 294-295

Turning to Eustace Barnack, we find that where in life he dismisses Rontini as a mere "Gaseous Vertebrate",¹³⁰ in death Eustace achieves that self-transcendence which the philosopher constantly preached. It is almost as though Huxley were conducting a pseudo-scientific experiment, however deliberately absurd and ludicrous, in order to demonstrate the workings of mystical non-attachment, Eustace's posthumous musings covering a full six chapters of the novel. In life, Eustace is the sensual John Bidlake, the depraved Spandrell, wedded to epicureanism, to life as a fine art, a harmless philosophy which he pits against Christianity and power politics, inevitably trailing war, violence, bullying and abuse in their wake. Opposing the political crusader epitomized in his brother, John Barnack, he demolishes the ideal of "Inevitable Progress"¹³¹ as "a step backwards and downwards"¹³¹ and his brother promptly returns the attack by accusing him of "cynical realism...the intelligent man's best excuse for doing nothing in an intolerable situation."¹³² Unlike Rontini, it may well be that Eustace uses cynicism as well as sensuality as an escape from action: Rontini sees him as living in a sepulchre "built of the same sloths and sensualities as he had known within himself, and still knew, still had to beg God to forgive him."¹³³ Yet Eustace is by no means reconciled to a life of "cosy and domestic squalors."¹³⁴ Like Spandrell, he yearns for perfection, for the superhuman which he finds incarnate in the bronze and marble Donatello statues and he tries to create a world of eternal beauty in his villa, rich in "porcelain and silver, turned wood and sculptured bronze and ivory."¹³⁵ Lured by the perfume of potpourri, Sebastian enters the villa to find himself in a world apart:-

Mountains of glazed chintz, enormous armchairs and sofas alternated with the elaborately carved and gaily painted discomfort of eighteenth-century Venetian furniture. Underfoot, a yellow Chinese carpet lay like an expanse of soft and ancient sunshine. On the walls, the picture-

130. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 42

131. Ibid., p. 130

132. Ibid., p. 52

133. Ibid., p. 102

134. Ibid., p. 78

135. Ibid., p. 113

frames were doorways leading into other worlds. The first he looked into was a strange, bright universe, intensely alive and yet static, definitive and serene - a world in which everything was made of innumerable dots of pure colour, and the men wore stove-pipe hats and women's bustles were monumental like Egyptian granite. And next to it was the opening into another, a Venetian world, where a party of ladies in a gondola trailed their pink satins against the complementary jade of the Grand Canal. And here, over the mantelpiece, in a maniac's universe of candlelight and brown bituminous shadows, a company of elongated monks sat feasting under the vaults of a cathedral...136

A delectable meal, a champagne of well-known vintage followed by brandy and a Romeo and Juliet cigar, Eustace waxes eloquent, finding a soul-mate in Sebastian who shares his taste for the refinements of living and, besides, possesses that pre-fall purity which touches Eustace so profoundly and corresponds with his experience of Mozart's Ave Verum Corpus:-

They were sitting in that church at Nice, and the choir was singing Mozart's Ave Verum Corpus - the men's voices filling all the hollow darkness with a passion of grief and yearning, and the boyish trebles passing back and forth between them, harmonious but beautifully irrelevant with the virginal otherness of things before the Fall, before the discovery of good and evil. Effortlessly, the music moved on from loveliness to loveliness. There was the knowledge of perfection, ecstatically blissful and at the same time sad, sad to the point of despair. Ave Verum, Verum Corpus. Before the motet was half over, the tears were streaming down his cheeks.137

The after-dinner conversation reveals Eustace's schizophrenia: on one hand the squalor and disappointments of real life in which he wallows, on the other the "mental world-substitute"¹³⁸ of art, poetry, literature. Sebastian, intimidated by his uncle's learned talk, is nevertheless quick to observe his essential immaturity, betrayed, oddly enough, by his ritualistic cigar smoking:-

136. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 113

137. Ibid., p. 156-157

138. Ibid., p. 128

Fascinated, Sebastian looked on, while his Uncle Eustace lighted the massive Romeo and Juliet.... First the ritual of piercing; then, as he raised the cigar to his mouth, the smile of happy anticipation. Damply, lovingly, the lips closed over the butt; the match was ignited; he pulled at the flame. And suddenly Sebastian was reminded of his cousin Marjorie's baby, nuzzling with blind concupiscence for the nipple, seizing it at last between the soft prehensile flaps of its little mouth and working away, working away in a noiseless frenzy of enjoyment.¹³⁹

Indeed, the spectacle of the perennial Peter Pan amply bears out Rontini's remark that "the adolescent can be quite as inept as the old",¹⁴⁰ a frailty which draws together the seventeen year old Sebastian and the fifty-three year old Eustace. Sebastian's eroticism is counterpointed in Eustace's gloating over his adolescent affairs, once involving the young and beautiful Laurina Acciaiuoli whom Eustace perversely regarded as the "Ave Verum Corpus." She was the true body. Now a haggard and arthritic cripple, Laurina weighs on his conscience like a second Mary Amberley, drug-addicted and unlovely before an equally conscience-stricken Anthony Beavis. Temporarily finding an antidote in the unaffectedly vulgar young Mimi, Eustace tries to evade Laurina, the symbol of age, disease and impending death, just as he tries to escape the grotesque reality of his own degenerate state as indicated by "the broad sagging face, with its pouchy eyes and its loosely smiling, unsmiled lips."¹⁴¹ He deliberately deludes himself by refusing to face the reality of death, finding consolation in the "magic of triviality" and "the lovely refuse of fifty years of indiscriminate reading."¹⁴² "O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!"¹⁴² Faustus's poignant cry comes spontaneously to his lips as an ironical prelude to his own death. Totally unprepared, he is overcome by a mortal stroke of pain, "obscene as well as agonizing",¹⁴³ and he dies unceremoniously on the tiled floor of the lavatory, Huxley minutely

139. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 51

140. Ibid., p. 246

141. Ibid., p. 101

142. Ibid., p. 129

143. Ibid., p. 132

recording each reaction with the morbid curiosity of a Jacobean dramatist, a Webster or a Tourneur, prolonging the death throws in order to conduct a scientific investigation.

Once removed to that shadowy realm of the haunted dead "to survive in the form of a squeaking and gibbering shade,"¹⁴⁴ Eustace experiences the agony and the ecstasy of severing the umbilical cord which ties him to earth and to sensuous experience, thus liberating him to enter into the divine stillness. Again Huxley minutely traces his sensations in language which is of necessity vague and abstract. Recognizing the inadequacies of words to communicate a world beyond the grave, he nevertheless attempts the impossible and pictures Eustace caught initially between two awarenesses, a feeling of privation, isolation and absence at the wrench from earth together with a joyful and growing awareness of a shining presence:-

An unhappy dust of nothingness, a poor little harmless clot of mere privation, crushed from without, scattered from within, but still resisting, still refusing, in spite of the anguish, to give up its right to a separate existence.

Abruptly, there was a new and overwhelming flash of participation in the light, in the agonizing knowledge that there was no such right as a right to separate existence, that this clotted and disintegrated absence was shameful and must be denied, must be annihilated - held up unflinchingly to the radiance of that invading knowledge and utterly annihilated, dissolved in the beauty of that impossible incandescence.

For an immense duration the two awarenesses hung as though balanced - the knowledge that knew itself separate, knew its own right to separateness, and the knowledge that knew the shameful absence and the necessity for its agonizing annihilation in the light.

As though balanced, as though on a knife-edge between an impossible intensity of beauty and an impossible intensity of pain and shame, between a hunger for opacity and separateness and absence and a hunger for a yet more total participation in the brightness.¹⁴⁵

144. Music at Night, "Squeak and Gibber", p. 108

145. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 140

Past, present and future come together in a sudden telescoping of time. "'Backwards and downwards'" ¹⁴⁶ he goes to retrieve the "excremental clots of old experience and the condemnation they imposed." ¹⁴⁷ All the ugliness and squalor of his youth and maturity clamour and compel him to sit in judgment. (In mystical terms, Eustace experiences the "Bardo state" ¹⁴⁸ described in The Tibetan Book of the Dead as "the 'intermediate state' immediately following death, in which the soul is judged - or rather judges itself by choosing, in accord with the character formed during its life on earth, what sort of an after-life it shall have.") ¹⁴⁸ Then, along with "these recovered fragments of himself", ¹⁴⁹ he recalls the one moment of blissful self-transcendence when, as schoolboy, lying sleepily in the long grass under a blue summer sky, he suddenly finds a new dimension of experience revealed. But the event is so extraordinary and disconcerting that he dismisses it and returns with a sense of relief to the secure and familiar everyday world:-

Something had broken through the crust of customary appearance. 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 that revolutionary difference in the world.

'What about going down town when the game's over?'

He looked up. It was Timmy Williams - but even Timmy Williams, he suddenly perceived, was something other, better, more significant than the ferret-faced creature he enjoyed talking literature and smut with.

'Something rather queer happened to me this afternoon,' he was confiding, half an hour later, as they sat at the confectioner's, eating strawberries and cream.

But when the story was told Timmy merely laughed and said that everybody had spots in front of their eyes sometimes. It was probably constipation.

It wasn't true, of course. But now that the shattered world had come together again, now that the curtain had fallen into place and the lava gush had flowed back to where it had come from, how nice and comfortable everything was!

146. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 154

147. Ibid., p. 171

148. The Perennial Philosophy, "The Nature of the Ground", p. 32

149. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 156

Better to leave well enough alone. Better to go on behaving as one had always behaved, not risk having to do anything strange or uncomfortable. After a moment's hesitation, he joined in the laughter.¹⁵⁰

Gradually Eustace's memories fade and are replaced by a set of bodily sensations, vivid and precious, experienced as contrapuntal to the voices from the human world, communicated in the course of Mrs. Gamble's séance:-

..... there were the muffled rhythms of blood and breathing, the uninterrupted stream of messages from this temporary body of his. Warmths and pressures, moistures and titillations, a score of little aches and stiffnesses, of obscure visceral discontents and satisfactions. Treasures of physiological reality, directly experienced and so intrinsically fascinating that there was no need to bother about other people, no point in thinking or trying to communicate. It was enough just to have this feeling of space and time and the processes of life. Nothing else was required. This alone was paradise.¹⁵¹

He clings to these familiar sensations, comforted, too, by his link with the humans - the sweet familiarity of "the Queen Mother's nutmeg-grater voice"¹⁵² - but his disjointed and ironic comments, filtered through the medium, become tame and unrecognizable.

Present is superceded by future. In a nightmarish vision in which the universe heaves with uncontrollable laughter, Eustace sees before him the destruction of the Second World War: Japanese corpses, dark and distorted and, amid a trampling mob, his nephew Jim Poulshot, wounded and screaming, his face bashed in by a laughing Japanese. The art dealer, Weyl, having joined the séance, Eustace sees him, the fascist, as becoming tremendously significant, even epoch-making. Another prophetic glimpse

150. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 157-158

151. Ibid., p. 257

152. Ibid., p. 177

reveals the evacuation, with Weyl pushing a perambulator of art treasures, accompanied by his wife and son. A swelling noise heralds the approach of a fast-moving convoy and, next minute, panic-stricken, Mme. Weyl is crushed under a lorry under the very eyes of her agonized son:-

The little boy crouched there, his face in his hands, his body trembling and shaken by sobs. And suddenly it was no longer from the outside that he was thought about. The agony of that grief and terror were known directly, by an identifying experience of them - not as his, but mine. Eustace Barnack's awareness of the child had become one with the child's awareness of himself; it was that awareness.¹⁵³

Having borne the superhuman weight of the future, Eustace transcends time and is delivered into the divine light.

Pitted against the intuitive knowledge of Eustace in the after-life, of Rontini and Sebastian, is the laboured intellectualism of Cacciaguida, De Vries and John Barnack. Appearing only briefly in the novel, the Italian professor is a replica of one of Rampion's cerebrotonics, presented in a parabolical sketch as "a diminishing company of little gargoyles and foetuses with heads too large for their squelchy bodies, the tails of apes and the faces of our most eminent contemporaries, all biting and scratching and disembowelling one another with that methodical and systematic energy which belongs only to the very highly civilized."¹⁵⁴ Sebastian observes Cacciaguida's deformity, without possessing Rampion's maturity in diagnosing the disease as a phenomena of modern intellectualism:-

But how strangely, Sebastian went on to reflect as they climbed the final flight, how pathologically even, the stranger's body fell away from that commanding head!

153. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 261

154. Point Counter Point, p. 214

The emperor-genius declined into the narrow chest and shoulders of a boy, then, incongruously, into the belly and wide hips almost of a middle-aged woman, and finally into a pair of thin little legs and the tiniest of patent-leather button-boots. Like some sort of larva that had started to develop and then got stuck, with only the front end of the organism fully adult and the rest hardly more than a tadpole.¹⁵⁵

Watching the meticulous John Barnack amid bleak and aseptic surroundings, Carciaguida talks rhapsodically of "the rational and hygienic future",¹⁵⁶ ironically unaware of its inevitability in view of the fact that both he and his host represent the ideal, spiritually sterile "Brave New World" puppets.

Another glimpse into Brave New World is provided by the physicist Paul De Vries who, though satirized by Huxley, nevertheless reveals something of the author's own quest as rationalist and aspiring mystic. De Vries predicts the replacement of "Individualistic Man" by "Social Man",¹⁵⁷ an ideal unit in an integrated society, and he crusades at the world's leading universities to spread the word of his heroic project - "the setting up of an international clearing house of ideas, the creation of a general staff of scientific-religious-philosophic synthesis for the entire planet."¹⁵⁸ He humbly undertakes the task of bridge-builder, liaison officer, negotiating between the various fields and compartments of knowledge, a task tackled by Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, only De Vries becomes so involved in his theories that he has no time for actual experience. Confronted with the tempting reality of Veronica Thwale, he is inadequate and floundering in the world of emotions, impulsively driven to propose to her, however much she has led him astray from his ideals of celibacy and the abolition of family life for the good of society. The towering intellectual is reduced to an abjectly sentimental dog and Veronica's essential shamelessness triumphs over the philosophic eye as predicted in her sketch.¹⁵⁹ Once married, De Vries becomes the age-old cuckold through none other than

155. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 33

156. Ibid., p. 34

157. Ibid., p. 88

158. Ibid., p. 87

159. Ibid., p. 74

Sebastian, but he continues to pursue his bridge-building ideals. Meeting him at the outbreak of the war, Sebastian finds his interest suddenly caught by De Vries's additional theory - the bridging of art, science and religion through a process of mortification:-

Mortification of prejudice, cocksureness and even common sense, for the sake of objectivity in science; mortification of the desire to own or exploit, for the sake of contemplating an existing beauty or creating a new one; mortification of the passions, for the sake of an ideal of rationality and virtue; mortification of the self in all its aspects, for the sake of liberation, of union with God. He had listened, Sebastian remembered, with a good deal of interest - but patronizingly, as one listens to a very clever man who is also a fool, and with whose wife, moreover, one happens, the previous evening, to have committed adultery.¹⁶⁰

Through mortification, man may enter "the all-embracing field - the Brahma of Sankara, the One of Plotinus, the Ground of Eckhart and Boehme...",¹⁶¹ but since he is unable to put his theories into practice, De Vries, in the end, presents a mere parody of the 'perennial philosophy' and comes dangerously close to Huxley's own assumption of mysticism as an intellectual conviction rather than a fervent belief.

Among the most pitiful of the cerebrotonics is Sebastian's father John Barnack, martyred to the cause of socialism and economics. Like De Vries, he becomes inhuman in the course of pursuing his pet theories, "dominating and righteous, hard on others because even harder on himself."¹⁶² As adolescent, Sebastian is intimidated by his father's brilliant legal argument, the metallic laughter, the all-embracing efficiency:-

Yes, that was the trouble, Sebastian reflected. And not only a great cook (though he had the utmost contempt for those who cared about food for its own sake), but also a great desk-tidier,

160. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 277

161. Ibid., p. 92

162. Ibid., p. 29

a great mountain-climber, a great account-maker, a great botanizer and bird-watcher, a great letter-answerer, a great socialist, a great four-mile-an-hour walker, teetotaler and non-smoker, a great report-reader and statistics-knower, a great everything, in short, that was tiresome, efficient, meritorious, healthful, social-minded. If only he'd take a rest sometimes! If only his armour had a few chinks in it! 163

Unable to cope with the emotion which overwhelms him at the sight of Sebastian, so like his dead wife, John Barnack takes refuge in a facade of impassivity, his harsh treatment of his son in ironic contrast with his professed humanitarian ideals. Years later, Sebastian assesses his father with a detachment lacking at the age of seventeen: he listens to a summary of world politics, outbursts on overpopulation (another of Huxley's pet themes discussed at length in Brave New World Revisited), and feels a certain compassion for the old, tired and bitter man, now aged sixty-five and a walking example of Rontini's statement: "'The adolescent can be quite as inept as the old.'" 164 In fact, Sebastian sees him as growing down instead of growing up, as a Peter Pan, a "monstrosity of arrested development." 165 Ironically though the brothers, John and Eustace, are diametrically opposed in philosophy as ascetic against hedonist, in the end they are both reduced to aged foetuses, the one through political idealism, the other through sensuality.

Sebastian, contemplating the "self-stunted dwarf who had succeeded in consummating his own spiritual abortion," 166 posits a way out of his father's time-bound world in the stranglehold of famine, war and the horrors of industrialization. The solution does not lie in establishing a temporary truce between nations, as John Barnack suggests, but in striving towards a metaphysic of peace, a transcendent reality attained by direct intuition. Then, realizing that his father would not want to understand Rontini's philosophy, Sebastian leaves him to his all-absorbing interest in

163. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 36

164. Ibid., p. 246

165. Ibid., p. 299

166. Ibid., p. 302-303

politics and world news, while he himself persists in the metaphysic of peace, of self-transcending awareness. Active research and investigation into religion lead him to the following working hypothesis:-

That there is a Godhead or Ground, which is the unmanifested principle of all manifestation.

That the Ground is transcendent and immanent.

That it is possible for human beings to love, know and..... to become actually identified with the Ground.

That to achieve this unitive knowledge, to realize this supreme identity, is the final end and purpose of human existence.

That there is a Law or Dharma, which must be obeyed, a Tao or Way, which must be followed, if men are to achieve their final end.

That the more there is of I, me, mine, the less there is of the Ground; and that consequently the Tao is a Way of humility and compassion, the Dharma a Law of mortification and self-transcending awareness. Which accounts, of course, for the facts of human history. People love their egos and don't wish to mortify them, don't wish to see why they shouldn't 'express their personalities' and 'have a good time.' They get their good times; but also and inevitably they get wars and syphilis and revolution and alcoholism, tyranny and, in default of an adequate religious hypothesis, the choice between some lunatic idolatry, like nationalism, and a sense of complete futility and despair. Unutterable miseries! But throughout recorded history most men and women have preferred the risks, the positive certainty, of such disasters to the laborious whole-time job of trying to get to know the Divine Ground of all being. In the long run we get exactly what we ask for. 167

Sebastian concludes with the words of the dying Hotspur which point to the essence of true religion - "the givenness of the timeless.":- 168

But thought's the slave of life, and life's time's fool,
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop. 169

167. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 289-290

168. Ibid., p. 292

169. Ibid., p. 290

.... Kotspur's summary has a final clause: time must have a stop. And not only must, as an ethical imperative and an eschatological hope, but also does have a stop, in the indicative tense, as a matter of brute experience. It is only by taking the fact of eternity into account that we can deliver thought from its slavery to life. And it is only by deliberately paying our attention and our primary allegiance to eternity that we can prevent time from turning our lives into a pointless or diabolic foolery. The divine Ground is a timeless reality. Seek it first, and all the rest - everything from an adequate interpretation of life to a release from compulsory self-destruction - will be added.¹⁷⁰

The foundation is laid for "The Perennial Philosophy", a "shared theology" and "one of the indispensable conditions of peace."¹⁷¹

The Perennial Philosophy.

Crystallizing the ideals voiced by Miller, Propter and Rontini, Hixley summed up his ethic in 1945 in The Perennial Philosophy which he defines as the "Highest Common Factor"¹⁷² in theology, a religion at once immanent and transcendent leading to "unitive knowledge of the divine Ground."¹⁷³ This he poses as the sole antidote to nationalistic idolatry, war, tyranny, or the dehumanized society represented in Brave New World and Ape and Essence.

The considerations raised by The Perennial Philosophy include a definition of the philosophy itself, its advantages in the twentieth century and the problems of language in communicating an essentially non-verbal experience, linguistic difficulties raised in the novels by Propter and Sebastian Barnack, expanded in the essays, Adonis and the Alphabet, Words and their Meanings, Literature and Science, and touched on in the historical biography, The Devils of Loudun.

170. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 192

171. Ibid., p. 293

172. The Perennial Philosophy, Introduction, p. iv

173. Ibid., p. 21

'It's extraordinary the way the whole quality of our existence can be changed by altering the words in which we think and talk about it. We float in language like icebergs - four-fifths under the surface and only one-fifth of us projecting into the open air of immediate, non-linguistic experience.' 174

Developing Propter's thesis in "The Education of an Amphibian", Huxley points to the dichotomy between the conceptual world and the sphere of immediate experience. Yet language is essential to knowledge, to the formulation of religious and ethical codes which express a theory of man and the universe. Ideally, there should be a balance between knowledge, the world of concepts and notions, and understanding, the sphere of direct, unmediated experience:-

Whether we like it or not, we are amphibians, living simultaneously in the world of experience and the world of notions, in the world of direct apprehension of Nature, God and ourselves, and the world of abstract, verbalized knowledge about these primary facts. Our business as human beings is to make the best of both these worlds. 175

Ultimately, knowledge and understanding fuse and are transformed into "the genuine knowledge beyond mere theory and book learning... a transforming participation in that which was known," 176 that which was and is known being the "universal Not-Self... the Holy Spirit, the Atman-Brahman, the Clear Light, Suchness." 177 Language serves its purpose as a reminder of the universal truth and as a means to evoke in others a similar understanding of the "Clear Light." 177 However inaccurate and imperfect, language becomes a spiritual guide, a symbolic map "indispensably useful as indicating the direction in which the traveller should set out and the roads which he must take." 178 The function of poet or literary artist in Huxley's eyes is to illustrate this Universal Truth: moving in a world of "multiple amphibiousness... cosmic and cultural, inward and outward," 179 the artist purifies

174. After Many a Summer, p. 230

175. Adonis and the Alphabet, "The Education of an Amphibian", p. 14-15

176. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 295

177. Adonis and the Alphabet, "The Education of an Amphibian", p. 18

178. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 134

179. Literature and Science, p. 17

language, striving towards the not juste in expressing the private, the inexpressible, to arrive at "the most private of all private experiences - infused contemplation, samadhi, satori." ¹⁸⁰ The artist thus channels his literary and spiritual energies into the search for unity in diversity which forms the crux of The Perennial Philosophy as developed from the theme of Eyeless in Gaza:-

One in all and all in One; samsara and nirvana are the same; multiplicity is unity, and unity is not so much one as not-two; all things are void, and yet all things are the Dharma-Body of the Buddha...¹⁸¹

Language becomes "a virtual philosophy, a source of ontological postulates, a conditioner of thought and even perception, a moulder of sentiments, a creator of behaviour-patterns."¹⁸² If the west were to adopt the Indian semantic system of "nama-rupa, 'name-and-form'" ¹⁸² denoting "the whole world, subjective and objective," ¹⁸² the poet would run less risk of using language one-sidedly as mere aesthetic delight, as a tool for propaganda and doctrine. By abusing language, he ignores its function as "moral discipline," ¹⁸³ and deflects it from the path of "Right speech" ¹⁸⁴ as a means towards the Universal Truth. And not only poet but also the man of religion may distort the ultimate reality by excessive preoccupation with concepts and verbal abstractions, a case in point being that of the Jesuit, Surin, sent to Loudun to intercede in the heresy trial of Urbain Grandier. When Grandier was grotesquely tormented and burnt, Surin found himself broken and self-destroyed, conscience-stricken by the injustice of Grandier's death but consoled by a system of verbal and theoretical justification:-

To be mad with lucidity and in complete possession of one's intellectual faculties - this, surely, must be one of the most terrible of experiences. Unimpaired, Surin's reason looked on helplessly, while his imagination, his emotions and his autonomic

180. Literature and Science, p. 65

181. Adonis and the Alphabet, "Knowledge and Understanding", p. 71

182. Ibid., "Adonis and the Alphabet", p. 187

183. Words and their Meanings, p. 27

184. Ibid., p. 10

nervous system comported themselves like an alliance of criminal maniacs, bent on his destruction. It was a struggle, in the last analysis, between the active person and the victim of suggestion, between Surin the realist, doing his best to cope with actual facts, and Surin the verbalist, converting words into hideous pseudo-realities.....

Surin's was merely an extreme case of the universal human predicament. "In the beginning was the word." So far as human history is concerned, the statement is perfectly true. Language is the instrument of man's progress out of animality, and language is the cause of man's deviation from animal innocence and animal conformity to the nature of things into madness and diabolism. Words are at once indispensable and fatal. 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 behaviour.¹⁸⁵

Abused in this way, words become a sort of metaphysical prison in which man wanders, lost and destroyed in a "sub-human pointlessness... a labyrinthine emptiness."¹⁸⁶ In communicating the Universal Truth, the poet-seer clearly tries to avoid this confinement but, since mystical experience is different in degree and kind from the temporal, he inevitably finds language an inadequate mode of expression. In the end, he has to be content with paradox, verbal extravagance, sometimes even seeming blasphemy:-

Nobody has yet invented a Spiritual Calculus, in terms of which we may talk coherently about the divine Ground and of the world conceived as its manifestation. For the present, therefore, we must be patient with the linguistic eccentricities of those who are compelled to describe one order of experience in terms of a symbol-system, whose relevance is to the facts of another and quite different order.

185. The Devils of Loudun, p. 347-348

186. Themes and Variations, "Variations on The Prisons", p. 207

So far, then, as a fully adequate expression of the Perennial Philosophy is concerned, there exists a problem in semantics that is finally insoluble. The fact is one which must be steadily borne in mind by all who read its formulations. Only in this way shall we be able to understand even remotely what is being talked about.¹⁸⁷

Huxley thus warns the reader that "words are not the same as things and that a knowledge of words about facts is in no sense equivalent to a direct and immediate apprehension of the facts themselves."¹⁸⁸ Hence, when reading the exponents of the Perennial Philosophy, we must neither under nor over-estimate their value either by rejecting them as nonsensical because removed from the empirical world, or by assuming that their words are identical with the facts to which they refer. The problem is succinctly set forth by the Hindu philosopher, Sankara:-

"The purpose of all words is to illustrate the meaning of an object. When they are heard, they should enable the hearer to understand this meaning, and this according to the four categories of substance, of activity, of quality and of relationship. For example cow and horse belong to the category of substance. He cooks or he prays belongs to the category of activity. White and black belong to the category of quality. Having money or possessing cows belongs to the category of relationship. Now there is no class of substance to which the Brahman belongs, no common genus. It cannot therefore be denoted by words which, like 'being' in the ordinary sense, signify a category of things. Nor can it be denoted by quality, for it is without qualities; nor yet by activity because it is without activity - 'at rest, without parts or activity,' according to the Scriptures. Neither can it be denoted by relationship, for it is 'without a second' and is not the object of anything but its own self. Therefore it cannot be defined by word or idea; as the Scripture says, it is the One 'before whom words recoil.'¹⁸⁹

187. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 35

188. Ibid., p. 126

189. Ibid., p. 24

Throughout The Perennial Philosophy, Huxley is careful not to become a victim of words: each term is appraised semantically, defined within its mystical context. Paradox and inconsistency are ever present, not only because of the inexpressible nature of the mystical experience, but because the field covered is so vast. The tools of expression range from parable to Platonic dialogue, the discursive to the theoretical. The text includes quotations from the Buddhists, Hindus and Sufis; Plotinus and Dionysus the Areopagite; St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa and the Catholic mystics of the Middle Ages; the sixteenth century Protestants, Denck, Franck and Castellio; William Law; the Quakers, including John Fox. Huxley links these exponents of the Perennial Philosophy so as to produce a tremendous feat of religious synthesis. The very fact of its appearing again and again in the course of history testifies to the validity of this philosophy. Besides, Huxley puts forth a psychological justification for the Perennial Philosophy in the fact of man's "urge to self-transcendence an agonizing desire to go beyond the insulated ego,"¹⁹⁰ in the obscure belief that there exists a greater reality, timeless and infinite. Of course, the escape from personality in an "upward self-transcendence"¹⁹¹ may be substituted by "merely human surrogates for Grace"¹⁹¹ - alcohol, narcotics, crowd delirium, sexuality, though these abuses do not mitigate the truth of man's urge to go beyond himself.

Turning to a definition of the Perennial Philosophy, the elusive mystical experience being essentially alien to systematization, Huxley does not attempt to codify the philosophy but presents and illustrates its various facets, commenting at the same time on its pressing need in an age of unrest, violence, materialism. The fundamentals are summed up in Huxley's preface to the translation of the Bhagavad-Gita:-

At the core of the Perennial Philosophy we find four fundamental doctrines.

First: the phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness - the world of things and animals and men and even gods -

190. The Devils of Loudun, p. 78

191. Ibid., p. 85

is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent.

Second: human beings are capable not merely of knowing about the Divine Ground by inference; they can also realize its existence by a direct intuition, superior to discursive reasoning. This immediate knowledge unites the knower with that which is known.

Third: man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. It is possible for a man, if he so desires, to identify himself with the spirit and therefore with the Divine Ground, which is of the same or like nature with the spirit.

Fourth: man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground.¹⁹²

The first two principles which point to a religion at once immanent and transcendent are outlined in the opening chapters of The Perennial Philosophy. God may be realized by contemplation or "dying to self",¹⁹³ by a recognition of the divine existing outside himself, or by approaching the Ultimate from within and without "so that he comes to realize God experimentally as at once the principle of his own thou and of all other thous, animate and inanimate."¹⁹³ To realize God, "immanent as well as transcendent, supra-personal as well as personal,"¹⁹⁴ is to arrive at "unitive knowledge of the divine Ground"¹⁹⁵ which reconciles all paradoxes - Samsara and Nirvana, time and eternity, appearance and reality, nature and grace. The unitive knowledge is thus all-embracing, a "spiritual Knowledge in its fulness as well as in its heights,"¹⁹⁶ achieved by union and "union can be achieved only by the annihilation of the self-regarding ego, which is the barrier separating the 'thou' from the 'That'".¹⁹⁷

192. Bhagavad-Gita, the Song of God, Introduction by Aldous Huxley, (London: Phoenix House, 1960), p. 7

193. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 4

194. Ibid., p. 23

195. Ibid., p. 21

196. Ibid., p. 62

197. Ibid., p. 35

The annihilation of self brings us to the third fundamental of the Perennial Philosophy, concerning the double nature of man who possesses "a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul."¹⁹⁸ The problems of love and personality raised in the novels by Anthony Beavis, Miller, Propter, Rontini and Sebastian Barnack, are resolved here in the proposition that personality or selfness, instead of being exalted to its egotistical level, must be annihilated and humbled before the Divine. Selflessness in its highest form is that of the saint who is self-sacrificing in every circumstance of life, unlike the hero who, in a moment of crisis, temporarily forgets his own particular personality and then promptly returns to the confines of his own ego. By abandoning selfness, "God-eclipsing and anti-spiritual,"¹⁹⁹ every human being can become "an Avatar by adoption, but not by his unaided efforts."²⁰⁰ In order to receive divine grace, man must practise the way of the Avatar which is the way of self-knowledge, charity, mortification, prayer and spiritual exercises, perseverance, regularity and faith.

Self-knowledge is the prerequisite to the selflessness which characterizes all these qualities from charity to faith. Without self-knowledge, "there can be no true humility, therefore no effective self-naughting, therefore no unitive knowledge of the divine Ground underlying the self and ordinarily eclipsed by it."²⁰¹ Clinging stubbornly to its individuality, that illusory world thwart by fear and anxiety, the ego is unable to submit to "the timeless now of the divine Spirit."²⁰² Man is left to the mercy of his own fear-torn ego and to that of "time-philosophers"²⁰³ who justify the exploitation of humanity through revolution, war and violence for the sake of a "progressive social apocalypse,"²⁰⁴

198. Bhagavad-Gita, the Song of God, Introduction by Aldous Huxley, p. 7

199. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 36

200. Ibid., p. 56

201. Ibid., p. 162

202. Ibid., p. 184

203. Ibid., p. 193

204. Ibid., p. 194

an ultimate good in time to come.

The path towards enlightenment is also the path of charity, "disinterested, seeking no reward, nor allowing itself to be diminished by any return of evil for its good."²⁰⁵ Charity "begins as an act of the will and is consummated as a purely spiritual awareness, a unitive love-knowledge of the essence of its object."²⁰⁶ We must distinguish this "unitive love-knowledge" achieved through humility or "total self-naughting"²⁰⁷ from the inferior love-knowledge, personal and emotional. The Taoist philosopher, Chuang Tzu, depicts these in terms of the slime of personal and emotional love as against the eternal waters of the kingdom of God:-

"Those men who in a special way regard Heaven as Father and have, as it were, a personal love for it, how much more should they love what is above Heaven as Father! Other men in a special way regard their rulers as better than themselves and they, as it were, personally die for them. How much more should they die for what is truer than a ruler! When the springs dry up, the fish are all together on dry land. They then moisten each other with their dampness and keep each other wet with their slime. But this is not to be compared with forgetting each other in a river or lake."²⁰⁸

Reiterating Propter's view of Jeffersonian democracy,²⁰⁹ Huxley emphasizes that temptation against charity may be largely eliminated by social and political organization, by decentralization, private ownership of land, production on a small scale.²¹⁰

The selfless man is the man who practises mortification though not as severe physical austerity which often jeopardizes health and may end by strengthening the ego which glorifies in its own asceticism as an end in itself, instead of as a means to selflessness. Balancing precariously between "the Scylla of egocentric austerity"²¹¹ and "the Charybdis of an uncaring

205. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 83

206. Ibid., p. 85

207. Ibid., p. 88

208. Ibid., p. 90-91

209. After Many a Summer, p. 108-110

210. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 95-96

211. Ibid., p. 104

quietism,"²¹² the truly mortified man cultivates a kind of "holy indifference,"²¹² an active resignation to God alone, in which the devotee divorces himself from family ties and cultural activities, from "knowing, thinking, feeling and fancying."²¹³ Like charity, mortification brings a childlike simplicity and spontaneity, a joyful intoxication which can only be achieved under propitious circumstances. Soldier, tycoon, power politician are doomed to spiritual darkness whereas he who denies himself personal gain and temporal power may enter into the Divine Light.

Liberation from selflessness is also achieved through prayer, its highest form being private devotion or contemplation as the state of union with the divine Ground. This is an essentially passive state, being a total submission to God and it is for this reason that the soul or cosmic mystery is often symbolized in the passive, the feminine, the Great Mother, the Buddha Womb. Prayer brings "silence of the mouth, silence of the mind and silence of the will,"²¹⁴ an almost impossible achievement, Huxley suggests, in the light of our Age of Noise, with the hourly emotional enemas of radio broadcasts, music, advertisements, the craving for which becomes the greatest obstacle to unitive knowledge of the divine Ground.

Once liberated and enlightened, the soul is delivered into a state of beatitude and may, according to the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation, be granted the opportunity of another embodiment to bring it a step further on the road to ultimate perfection. At this point Huxley poses that not all men are intrinsically suited to the way of mystical non-attachment, varieties of temperament determining the individual way to salvation. He draws on the somewhat oversimplified Sheldonic classification of human differences in which physical constitution accounts for temperamental peculiarities: the endomorphic man is viscerotonic by temperament, fat, jovial, sociable, emotional; the mesomorph is a somatotonic, being muscular, active, aggressive, dominating and lusting for power; while the ectomorph, slender

212. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 104

213. Ibid., p. 109

214. Ibid., p. 218

often puny and weak in physique is the super-sensitive, imaginative, withdrawn, nervous, inhibited, moody cerebrotonic. Being passionately concerned with privacy and naturally drawn to thought, contemplation and self-analysis, the cerebrotonic is the ideal adherent to the Perennial Philosophy. Yet in the contemporary world he has been ousted by the "'somatotonic revolution'"²¹⁵ in which the muscle man takes the lead, aggressively imposing himself on society to the detriment and exclusion of the nonconformist ectomorph. As extravert, the somatotonic is instinctively drawn to a religion of outward show, ritual and ceremony: his is a public devotion as against the private worship of the cerebrotonic or contemplative mystic. Since he is constantly looking "outward on the world as a place where he can exercise power, where he can bend people to his will and shape things to his heart's desire,"²¹⁶ the somatotonic furthurs his own ends by political or technological idolatry or else by worship through emotionalism in revivalist sermons, song, dance and religious frenzy. These are forms of psycholog'cal idolatry in which God is identified with the ego and emotion becomes an end in itself.

But the cerebrotonic is not necessarily and exclusively the contemplative. His potential towards mysticism may be hybridized or modified to become, as with the Capucin friar, Father Joseph, a strange admixture of the Perennial Philosophy expounded by Father Menet of Canfield, his pupils, Cardinal Bérulle and Mme. Acarie together with the power politics of Richelieu and its court intrigue and international diplomacy. Grey Eminence was diverted from the road of mystical perfection by identifying "the cause of God and the cause of France,"²¹⁷ mistakenly believing that his political ambition was designed to further the religious cause. Paradoxically, by practising the selfless "'holy indifference'"²¹⁸ he could rise above his political actions, however incompatible they were with the divine way. Huxley also cites examples of cerebrotonics who just missed their mystical calling through quirks of temperament, through rigid adherence to the

215. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 159

216. Ibid., p. 151

217. Grey Eminence, p. 134

218. Ibid., p. 137-138

traditional. The French philosopher Maine de Biran, preoccupied as he was with his physical disorders, with the workings of his "'machine'"²¹⁹ became so wrapped up in his own ego that he was unable to achieve mystical non-attachment. On one occasion he felt the timeless intensity of the mystical experience, much like that of the fictional characters, Helen Amberley, Anthony Beavis and Propter:-

... here is what he writes on a spring day in 1816. The weather has suddenly changed for the better. "I feel another man... In the air one breathes at this season of the year there is something spiritual, which seems to draw the soul towards another region, and to give it a strength sufficient to overcome all organic resistances." Gone are the obstacles placed by a malign fatum in the way of moral virtue and intellectual lucidity. "It is not my ideas that grow clearer - a thing which ordinarily happens when I fix my attention and apply my active faculties; it is my inner light that becomes brighter and more striking, so that the heart and mind are suddenly illumined by it. I have often detected in myself these sudden and spontaneous illuminations, where the truth emerges from behind a cloud; it seems that our material organization, which was the obstacle in the way of inward intuition, ceases to be resistant and that the spirit has nothing to do but receive the light which is appropriate to it."²²⁰

According to Huxley, Biran tottered on the brink of existentialism, believing man to be "an incarnate spirit and that it is as an incarnate spirit that he must live and, if possible, be 'saved,' 'liberated,' 'illumined.'"²²¹ But prematurely old and ill, too weary to take into consideration the religious implications of contemporary experiments on extra-sensory perception or animal magnetism, he swung towards Platonism, equating good with the spirit and evil with the body, his mistrust of the body arising from his own physical disorders. In this way he, like Grey Eminence, was distracted from the goal of mystical union and on his deathbed underwent a dramatic conversion to Catholicism as a gesture of faith in the face of the abysmal void of death. Similarly, El Greco absorbed as he was in the mysticism of Dionysus the Areopagite, was confined by tradition in art to a discipline

219. Themes and Variations, "Variations on a Philosopher", p. 68

220. Ibid., p. 108-109

221. Ibid., p. 135

incompatible with the mystical ideal. Once in Venice, he combined the non-realistic, two dimensional style of Byzantium with the Venetian backdrop of distant landscapes to produce paintings which are neither flat nor fully three dimensional but centripetal, turning in on themselves to convey "movement in a narrow room... agitation in prison."²²² In the end his "conscious purpose.. to affirm man's capacity for union with the divine,"²²³ was overruled by his artistic technique which concentrated, instead, on "the low-level organic",²²⁴ on "visceral forms and cramped spaces."²²⁵

Despite possible failings and abuses, the mystic nevertheless plays the most significant role in society as sole possessor of "direct, experimental knowledge of reality."²²⁶ Inevitably working on the margin of society, he provides an antidote to "the poison injected into the body politic by the statesmen, financiers, industrialists, ecclesiastics and all the undistinguished millions who fill the lower ranks of the social hierarchy."²²⁷ Huxley reaffirms his views in the words of Al-Ghazzali:-

.... who regards the mystics not only as the ultimate source of our knowledge of the soul and its capacities and defects, but as the salt which preserves human societies from decay. "In the time of the philosophers," he writes, "as at every other period, there existed some of these fervent mystics. God does not deprive this world of them, for they are its sustainers." It is they who, dying to themselves, become capable of perpetual inspiration and so are made the instruments through which divine grace is mediated to those whose unregenerate nature is impervious to the delicate touches of the Spirit.²²⁸

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222. Themes and Variations, "Variations on El Greco", p. 181
 223. Ibid., p. 191
 224. Ibid., p. 190
 225. Grey Eminence, p. 247
 226. Ibid., p. 255
 227. The Perennial Philosophy, p. 301

EPILOGUE

From Denis Stone of Crome Yellow to Sebastian Barnack of Time Must Have a Stop, the hero remains the focus for Huxley's own spiritual quest which is set in the troubled post and pre-war years of 1921 to 1945 and developed in the essays and short stories of that period. Not content with the contemporary, Huxley as visionary extended his quest into the future and embodied his searching interest in science, politics and religion in the utopian works where the emphasis lies not so much on the heroes themselves - Marx and the Savage of Brave New World, Dr. Poole of Ape and Essence, Will Farnaby of Island - but on the ideas, theories and possible conditions for the future generations. Despite the obvious differences in technique, the realistic and utopian works complement one another in mood and spirit: the scepticism of Crome Yellow and Antic Hay finds its counterpart in the satirical anti-utopian Brave New World and Ape and Essence, while the renewed faith indicated towards the end of Eyeless in Gaza and further developed in After Many a Summer and Time Must Have a Stop is crystallized in the utopian novel, Island.

Turning to Brave New World and Ape and Essence, we find Huxley chiefly concerned with the interrelated problems of over-population, the threat of totalitarianism and the possible abuses of science and technology. There is evidence of the pessimistic influence of Malthus whose "... Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and other Writers,"¹ spells only disaster to world society, in which population increases disproportionate to the rate of food production. The earth's "under-nourished and proliferating billions"² inevitably bring disease and war, with the result that the starving over-populated country is forced to invade another in its urgent need for 'lebensraum.' The horror of an "Age of Overpopulation"² was to haunt and obsess Huxley throughout his life. It appears at first as a revulsion from humanity

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1. referred to in Harrison Brown: The Challenge of Man's Future, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1954), p. 5
 2. Brave New World Revisited, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), p. 18

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in mass: the crowds at Piccadilly Circus representing "the external world and the horrible reality of its consciousness and its intelligence;"³ the teeming mass of London population, sleeping, eating, decaying, dying, "millions starving, millions frightened, and sick, and anxious."⁴ In more detached mood, his personal revulsion is transformed into an assessment of the political and social implications of overpopulation, that impersonal force which negates democracy, destroys the freedom of the individual.

..... this fantastically rapid doubling of our numbers will be taking place on a planet whose most desirable and productive areas are already densely populated, whose soils are being eroded by the frantic efforts of bad farmers to raise more food, and whose easily available mineral capital is being squandered with the reckless extravagance of a drunken sailor getting rid of his accumulated pay.⁵

Huxley turns to "the forecasts made by sober and well-informed men of science"⁶ - the physicist, Charles Darwin, the American chemist, Harrison Brown. Drawing too on Malthusian principles, Darwin underplays the clergyman's pessimism by posing that, once man has squandered the rich mineral resources of the planet, he will move into an age of solar energy. Hence the age of industrialism will continue to flourish. Harrison Brown in The Challenge of Man's Future, predicts one of three possibilities:-

The first and by far the most likely pattern is a reversion to agrarian existence. This is the pattern which will almost certainly emerge unless man is able to abolish war, unless he is able to make the transition involving the utilization of new energy sources, and unless he is able to stabilize populations.

In spite of the difficulties that confront industrial civilization, there is a possibility that stabilization can be achieved, that war can be avoided, and that the resource transition can be successfully negotiated. In that event, mankind will be confronted with a pattern which looms on the horizon of events as the second most likely possibility - the completely controlled, collectivized industrial society.

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3. Crome Yellow, p. 138
 4. Time Must Have a Stop, p. 3
 5. Brave New World Revisited, p. 17
 6. Adonis and the Alphabet, "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow," p. 137

The third possibility confronting mankind is that of the world-wide free industrial society in which human beings can live in reasonable harmony with their environment. It is unlikely that such a pattern can ever exist for long. It certainly will be difficult to achieve, and it clearly will be difficult to maintain once it is established. Nevertheless, we have seen that man has it within his power to create such a society and to devise ways and means of perpetuating it on a stable basis. In view of the existence of this power, the possibility that the third pattern may eventually emerge cannot be ignored, although the probability of such an emergence, as judged from existing trends, may appear to be extremely low.⁷

The first two possibilities presented by Harrison Brown are dramatized in Brave New World in the composition between the Savage Reservation and the New World, the agrarian and the collectivized side by side and mutually incompatible. The world of the Savage is one of disease, starvation, dirt, disorder and decay, of primitive ritual, bloodshed and torture, the mysteries of birth and death in an untidy, tragic, commonplace, sordid and heroic existence. The New World caters for stability, comfort and happiness in a highly organized, mechanical society, its population rigidly controlled and produced in test-tubes, the inhabitants conditioned from birth to form part of a fixed hierarchy from worker to controller. Once the great god Science has enabled man to combat the nightmare of overpopulation, it creates a further problem in the nightmare of overorganization. Huxley equates the methods of pure science with politics and poses that the scientific "reduction of diversity to identity"⁸ when applied to the problem of human society as a "process of simplification is a process, inevitably, of restraint and regimentation, of curtailment of liberty and denial of individual rights."⁸ In Brave New World Revisited, he restates the abuse in even stronger terms:-

In the course of evolution nature has gone to endless trouble to see that every individual is unlike every other individual. We reproduce our kind by bringing the father's genes into contact with the mother's. These hereditary factors may be combined in an almost infinite

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7. Harrison Brown: The Challenge of Man's Future (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), p. 264-265
 8. Science, Liberty and Peace, p. 27

number of ways. Physically and mentally, each one of us is unique. Any culture which, in the interests of efficiency or in the name of some political or religious dogma, seeks to standardize the human individual, commits an outrage against man's biological nature.⁹

Man, dehumanized and suffocated, is reduced to the ideal of "termitary."¹⁰ Through the methods of applied science and "the improved techniques of inquisition and coercion,"¹¹ man is pulverized by propaganda, brain-washing and hypnopaedia, demoralized by drugs such as the Brave New World 'soma'. As traditional religion is gradually ousted by the advance in technology, so the emphasis is shifted to the "vast and monstrous caricatures of God... State, Nation and Party."¹² The prophet Efficiency has heralded "the power of the Big Shepherd and his oligarchy of bureaucratic dogs..."¹³ Totalitarianism as predicted by George Orwell lies just around the corner in the year 1984. Incredibly, further degradation may lie in store for mankind with the advance in nuclear science:-

Procrustes in modern dress, the nuclear scientist will prepare the bed on which mankind must lie; and if mankind doesn't fit - well, that will be just too bad for mankind. There will have to be some stretchings and a bit of amputation - the same sort of stretchings and amputations as have been going on ever since applied science really got into its stride, only this time they will be a good deal more drastic than the past.¹⁴

In Ape and Essence, Huxley portrays the sole survivors of a nuclear Third World War as a bunch of prurient apes living in the "Metrolpolis"¹⁵ of Los Angeles, bowed in worship to the almighty Belial. The remnants of scientific theory linger in the enforcement of birth control, essential in eradicating the deformed and monstrous products of a second Hiroshima. Hare-lipped Mongolian idiots, children with ten fingers and toes, without arms or legs are eliminated at the Purification Rites which, as compensation, are followed by a period of riotous bacchanalian revels.

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9. Brave New World Revisited, p. 36
 10. Ibid., p. 39
 11. Themes and Variations, "Variations on a Philosopher", p. 81
 12. Ibid., p. 46
 13. Ibid., p. 55
 14. Brave New World, foreword (1946), p. 11
 15. Ape and Essence, p. 45

Yet in his preface to Brave New World, Huxley posed an alternative to the primitivism of the Savage Reservation (or Ape and Essence) and the regimentation of the New World:-

The Savage is offered only two alternatives, an insane life in Utopia, or the life of a primitive in an Indian village, a life more human in some respects, but in others hardly less queer and abnormal. At the time the book was written this idea, that human beings are given free will in order to choose between insanity on the one hand and lunacy on the other, was one that I found amusing and regarded as quite possibly true.

Today I feel no wish to demonstrate that sanity is impossible. On the contrary, though I remain no less sadly certain than in the past that sanity is a rather rare phenomenon, I am convinced that it can be achieved and would like to see more of it.

..... If I were now to rewrite the book, I would offer the Savage a third alternative. Between the utopian and the primitive horns of his dilemma would lie the possibility of sanity - a possibility already actualized, to some extent, in a community of exiles and refugees from the Brave New World, living within the borders of the Reservation. In this community economics would be decentralist and Henry-Georgian, politics Kropotkinesque and cooperative. Science and technology would be used as though, like the Sabbath, they had been made for man, not (as at present and still more so in the Brave New World) as though man were to be adapted and enslaved to them. Religion would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of man's Final End, the unitive knowledge of the immanent Tao or Logos, the transcendent God-head of Brahman. And the prevailing philosophy of life would be a kind of Higher Utilitarianism, in which the Greatest Happiness principle would be secondary to the Final End principle - the first question to be asked and answered in every contingency of life being: 'How will this thought or action contribute to, or interfere with, the achievement, by me and the greatest possible number of other individuals, of man's Final End?'

Brought up among the primitives, the Savage (in this hypothetical new version of the book) would not be transported to Utopia until he had had an opportunity of learning something at first hand about the nature of a society composed of freely cooperating individuals devoted to the pursuit of sanity. Thus altered, Brave New World would possess an artistic and (if it is permissible to use so large a word in connexion with a work of fiction) a philosophical completeness, which in its present form it evidently lacks.¹⁶

16. Brave New World, foreword (1946), p. 7-9

The third alternative is hinted at in Brave New World Revisited which contains a naive plea for Faith, Hope and Charity. Huxley suggests:-

.....the enunciation of a set of generally acceptable values based upon a solid foundation of facts. The value, first of all, of individual freedom, based upon the facts of human diversity and genetic uniqueness; the value of charity and compassion, based upon the old familiar fact, lately rediscovered by modern psychiatry - the fact that, whatever their mental and physical diversity, love is as necessary to human beings as food and shelter; and finally the value of intelligence, without which love is impotent and freedom unattainable.¹⁷

From this vague outline, he moves to a technical and scientific proposal for the improved future. On the "level of political and economic crisis,"¹⁸ he suggests the adaptation of a plan "to check this rake's progress towards human and planetary bankruptcy"¹⁹ by restoring damage done to cultivated lands, by evolving less destructive methods of farming and forestry, by discovering and developing new sources of fuel and energy, by the control of population. On the spiritual level, he proposes the evolving of a cosmic ethic, the "Perennial Philosophy," as a basis for future monotheism. The key to this cosmic ethic lies in the combination of mysticism and mescaline, that ideal intoxicant which would "abolish our solitude as individuals, atone us with our fellows in a glowing exaltation of affection and make life in all its aspects seem not only worth living, but divinely beautiful and significant...."²⁰ A passing prediction in 1930 was to become a reality by 1954 when Huxley experimented with mescaline under the observation of the psychiatrist, Humphry Osmond. Here was "a gratuitous grace",²¹ a means to "the realization of the end and ultimate purpose of human life: Enlightenment, the Beatific Vision."²¹ As aspiring mystic, Huxley turned for technical help to the specialists - "in pharmacology, in biochemistry, in physiology and neurology, in psychology and psychiatry and parapsychology"²² - and combined all these considerations in the novel, Island, published a year before his death. Pala represents a "tiny oasis of humanity" in the midst of the "world-wide wilderness of monkeys."²³ All the problems of overpopulation, overorganization

17. Brave New World Revisited, p. 149

18. Themes and Variations, "The Double Crisis", p. 225

19. Ibid., p. 250

20. Music at Night, "Wanted, a New Pleasure", p. 255

21. The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, p. 58

22. Ibid., p. 128

23. Island, p. 117

and lack of food which Huxley points to in Brave New World Revisited have been solved following research done by the Palanese Experimental Station: here "pure experimental science" is linked with "pure experimental mysticism"²⁴ in a marriage of Pavlov and Tantrik Buddhism. The "moksha-medicine"²⁵ (mescaline) plays an important rôle as "reality-revealer, the truth-and-beauty pill."²⁵ At last, Huxley had found the recipe for Utopia, outlined mock-seriously by the Palanese, Susila MacPhail:-

As though reading instructions from a cookery book, "Take one sexually inept wage-slave," she went on, "one dissatisfied female, two or (if preferred) three small television-addicts; marinate in a mixture of Freudism and dilute Christianity; then bottle up tightly in a four-room flat and stew for fifteen years in their own juice." Our recipe is rather different. 'Take twenty sexually satisfied couples and their offspring; add science, intuition and humour in equal quantities; steep in Tantrik Buddhism and simmer indefinitely in an open pan in the open air over a brisk flame of affection.'²⁶

Brave New World.

Les utopies apparaissent comme bien plus réalisables qu'on ne le croyait autrefois. Et nous trouvons actuellement devant une question bien autrement angoissante: Comment éviter leur réalisation définitive?.....Les utopies sont réalisables. La vie marche vers les utopies. Et peut-être un siècle nouveau commence-t-il, un siècle où les intellectuels et la classe cultivée rêveront aux moyens d'éviter les utopies et de retourner à une société non utopique, moins 'parfaite' et plus libre.

Nicolas Berdiaeff.²⁷

Berdiaeff's remarks may be regarded as a comment on the stream of optimistic utopian works from Plato's Republic and Thomas More's Utopia to the vision of progressive scientific evolution proposed by Winwood Rade and Julian Huxley. With the Russian philosopher as springboard, Huxley points to the horrifying implications

24. Island, p. 113

25. Ibid., p. 136

26. Ibid., p. 90

27. Brave New World, frontispiece

of so-called evolution towards man-made perfection and freedom. He refocusses More's idealism in terms of satire, so that what the Elizabethan naively praises, Huxley viciously attacks. Neglecting to consider its possible abuses, More points to the advantages of standardization on the island, Utopia:-

There be in the island fifty-four large and fair cities, or shire towns, agreeing all together in one tongue, in like manners, institutions and laws. They be all set and situate alike, and in all points fashioned alike, as far forth as the place or plot suffereth.²⁸

He lauds the working day of the Utopian, which is strictly mapped out in terms of work, dinner, rest, organized games and lectures. Their lives and homes are common property: each house has two doors which are never locked: "Whose will, may go in, for there is nothing within the houses that is private, or any man's own."²⁹ In Brave New World, the inhabitants also follow a standardized procedure, not as ideal utopian citizens, but as dehumanized dummies doing the rounds of Obstacle Golf, the 'feelies', the Community Sings, and working according to their castes, which range from alpha to epsilon. Again, it is left to Huxley to reveal the horrors of a lack of privacy where "everyone belongs to everyone else,"³⁰ and the most intimate affairs are discussed publicly with clinical detachment.

The one startling innovation which sets Huxley's Brave New World apart from all the utopian novels, both serious and satirical, is the breakdown of family life with its "suffocating intimacies... dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between the members of the family group."³¹ In the new world, mothers are dismissed as viviparous, 'father' becomes a dirty word and humanity is propagated in test tubes. By contrast, Thomas More who could not foresee future scientific development, could not conceive of a society without a strict family life. In his ideal state, matrimony is "never broken, but by death"³² - a direct thrust at Henry VIII whose divorce from Katherine of Aragon he strongly

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28. Thomas More: The "Utopia" and the History of Edward V (London: Scott Library, 1890), p. 118
29. Ibid., p. 122
30. Brave New World, p. 45
31. Ibid., p. 40
32. Thomas More: The "Utopia" and the History of Edward V (London: Scott Library, 1890), p. 160

criticized. And the family set the pattern for the rest of society: each Utopian 'household' consisted of forty men and women, with every thirty farms or families under a head ruler or "'philarch'",³³ himself a type of father figure: "So the whole island is as it were one family, or household."³⁴ Even Samuel Butler, bound by the Victorian tradition, would not have dreamed of any other than domestic order among his race of Erewhonians who, nevertheless, reveal something of Brave New World in their obsession with physical beauty. In Erewhon, science as liberating force in a man-made utopia is considered and rejected. Machines have been banned in the belief that they were "ultimately destined to supplant the race of man."³⁵ The Erewhonians are content to revert to the mediaeval civilization of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Butler apart, the great god, Science, dominates the scene of the utopian visionaries like Winwood Reade and Julian Huxley. They optimistically pictured science as the instrument of human progress in evolutionary utopias peopled by supermen. Drawing the parallel with Hegel's theory of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, they saw human progress as eternal and inevitable. Man was drunk with "the quasi-religious belief in the miraculous power of unlimited evolutionary progress."³⁶ The unbelievers were vehemently attacked - Julian Huxley demolished the pessimistic philosophy of his brother and publicly denounced Aldous's attitude as illogical.³⁷ But Huxley persisted in radically questioning this dogma of progress. What is the belief in progress but:-

.... the wishful dream that one can get something for nothing. Its underlying assumption is that gains in one field do not have to be paid for by losses in other fields.³⁸

And he adds laconically:-

So intense is our faith in the dogma of inevitable progress that it has survived two world wars and still remains flourishing in spite of totalitarianism and the revival of slavery, concentration camps and saturation bombing.³⁹

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33. Thomas More: The "Utopia" and the History of Edward V (London: Scott Library, 1890), p. 119
34. Ibid., p. 137
35. Samuel Butler: Erewhon and Erewhon Revisited (New York: The Modern Library, 1927), p. 81
36. Richard Gerber: Utopian Fantasy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), p. xii
37. T.H. Huxley & Julian Huxley: Evolution and Ethics 1893-1943 (London: Pilot Press, 1947), p. 190-194
38. Aldous Huxley: Science, Liberty and Peace, p. 25
39. Ibid., p. 26

Huxley's view finds support in George Orwell. He, too, could neither blind himself with enthusiasm for evolutionary progress nor reject the machine as did Butler. Both Huxley and he were faced with all the implications of a "technocracy,"⁴⁰ which reduced the toplan superman to subman, a cog in the machine, an unidentifiable part of the mass. The standard motto in Brave New World is "COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY"⁴¹ or in Orwell's terms, "WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH,"⁴² an embodiment of the State's system of "doublethink"⁴³ which substitutes and perverts the old Aristotelian and Platonic goal of Truth. Under these conditions, the individual ceases to exist. He represents Collective Man who is "filled with the party, the state":-⁴⁴

If the individual is not swept away by the dynamic force of collective fear, as in 1984, he is mass-conditioned to the static tranquillity of collective happiness, as in Brave New World.⁴⁵

The problem, simply and sweepingly, is now to stay human. Orwell's Winston Smith sees this clearly in considering the proletariat:-

The proles had stayed human. They had not become hardened inside. They had held on to the primitive emotions which he himself had to re-learn by conscious effort..... the object was not to stay alive but to stay human....⁴⁶

Huxley's Brave New Worldians, Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson, indirectly express the same view: they have not formulated this desire to stay human, but find themselves dissatisfied with existing conditions which restrict their individuality. According to both Huxley and Orwell, there is no alternative to this state of affairs: it is axiomatic and inevitable that the individual will be ousted from a scientifically geared, psychologically conditioned society. Besides, he is a threat to its stability and must constantly be watched by spies and telescreen, punished under the offence of "crimethink"⁴⁷ for even thinking subversively.

40. Richard Gerber: Utopian Fantasy, p. 55

41. Brave New World, p. 15

42. G. Orwell: 1984 (Penguin, 1963), p. 7

43. Ibid., p. 250

44. R. Gerber: Utopian Fantasy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), p. 73

45. Ibid., p. 76

46. G. Orwell: 1984, p. 135-136

47. Ibid., p. 245

The sardonic and disillusioned mood of 1932 accompanied Huxley's preoccupation with the advance of science as it affected human individuals - advance in the fields of biology, physiology and psychology which threatened to achieve social security by infant conditioning and by a rigid economic and social hierarchy, and to "standardize the human product" by "a foolproof system of eugenics."⁴⁸ Scientific discoveries could also provide a holiday from reality in the form of drugs or "soma" tablets. Using these hypotheses, Huxley set out to weave his Brave New World fable.

It all began with Ford and Freud. The new era opened with the introduction of Our Ford's first T-model. Simultaneously Christianity came to an end and God was symbolically decapitated: "All crosses had their tops cut and became T's."⁴⁹ The hero of the day was Our Ford or Our Freud, "as, for some inscrutable reason, he chose to call himself whenever he spoke of psychological matters!"⁵⁰ He had exposed the dangers of family life from sadism to the Oedipus complex and therefore, according to the perverse logic of the new leaders, pointed the way to a total abolition of family life and its miseries. As the alternative, man was to be propagated in test-tubes so that, in effect, civilization became sterilization.⁵¹

From the first pages of Brave New World, we are led into an efficient but sterile society, cold, harsh and bleak, epitomized ironically in the centre of propagation, the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, where:-

.... a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose-flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse-coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead, a ghost.⁵²

From here we are taken on a guided tour of the entire process of scientifically planned human development, beginning at the incubating room with its racks of numbered test-tubes containing ova

48. Brave New World, foreword, p. 13

49. Ibid., p. 52

50. Ibid., p. 41

51. Ibid., p. 92

52. Ibid., p. 15

kept alive in an ovary removed in a voluntary operation, undergone for the good of society and carrying a substantial reward! 53
Popular opinion as expressed in recent newspaper articles, confirms the reality of similar research:-

Dr. R.G. Edwards, of the Physiological Laboratory at Cambridge University...has succeeded, for the first time, in obtaining hundreds of human ova by a method that opens up an important field of research.

He obtained ovaries or parts of ovaries that had been removed from women as a matter of necessity during operations. These he placed in a tissue culture medium and watched them develop until they were right for fertilization, with fully mature ova.

Experiments reminiscent of Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" are feasible once there is a plentiful supply of Ova....54

The pressing problem of overpopulation in India is threatening towards a system of state controlled reproduction, the first step in the direction of Brave New World's test tube propagation. At a recent conference in India, delegates suggested sterilization for the good of the overpopulated society - with material reward!:-

Facilities be provided in gaols for convicts who have at least three children to be sterilized, with a reduction in the prison sentence by 15 days for having the operation.....

All women undergoing the sterilization operation be given a cash allowance of 150 rupees (R13.30).55

In Canada and the United States biologists suggest that:-

Society will eventually have to decide who will be allowed to reproduce.....
"Individual families must be convinced that reproductive limitations are in their own best interests," said Dr. Schull. Once this objective has been understood and then attained, he added, a course of action must be charted.
"It is then that we shall have to face squarely decisions regarding who is to reproduce."
"We shall have held before us the brave new world of biological engineering. We shall be subtly tempted to take into our own hands our evolutionary destiny." 56

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- 53. Brave New World, p. 16
 - 54. "Baby by Proxy: Sex in Advance", The Cape Times, November 8, 1965, p.1
 - 55. "Indian Call For Sterilization", The Cape Times, January 4, 1967, p. 3
 - 56. "Baby Permits May be a Must in New World", The Star, October 24, 1966, p. 2
(Dr. W.J. Schull is Professor of Human Genetics at the University of Michigan Medical School).

As we continue through Brave New World and learn of Bokanovsky's Process whereby ninety-six identical twins are produced from a single egg, we find Huxley's prophecies once more confirmed:-

It may soon be possible to propagate people in much the same way as we now propagate roses - by taking the equivalent of cuttings.

According to the Nobel prize-winning geneticist, Professor Joshua Lederberg, writing in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, we should consider the implications of this now, since it would offer the possibility of making dozens or hundreds of genetically identical individuals like multiplied identical twins.

Biologists are agreed that such techniques are likely to come; the main uncertainty is when? Professor Lederberg suggests it is more likely to be in "a few years rather than decades."

.....
The possibilities will raise in an acute form the question of what we understand by human identity and individuality.....57

Both here and in Brave New World the whole process of human propagation is described with clinical detachment: These are not individual human lives but statistical figures related to an abstract process of multiplication which, in turn, enforces social stability. And Huxley makes this scientific attitude ironically clear: from Incubating Room, we continue to Bottling Room which epitomizes the atmosphere of an efficient conveyor belt system, mechanically churning out human produce, packaged, stamped and labelled:-

Heredity, date of fertilization, membership of Bokanovsky Group - details were transferred from test-tube to bottle. No longer anonymous, but named, identified, the procession marched slowly on; on through an opening in the wall, slowly on into the Social Predestination Room.⁵⁸

Still moving in the atmosphere of a bottling factory, the tour interspersed with reams of statistics and the diabolical laughter of the Director and Mr. Foster, we proceed to the Embryo Store where sex is determined and each tube labelled accordingly:-

.... a T for the males, a circle for the females and for those who were destined to become free-martins a question mark, black on a white ground. 'For of course,' said Mr. Foster, 'in the vast majority of cases, fertility is merely a nuisance. One fertile ovary in twelve hundred - that would really be quite sufficient for our purposes. But we want to have a good choice.'

57. "Einsteins out of a Test-Tube?", The Cape Times Week-end Magazine, December 17, 1966, p. 3

58. Brave New World, p. 20

And of course one must always leave an enormous margin of safety. So we allow as many as thirty per cent of the female embryos to develop normally. The others get a dose of male sex-hormone every twenty-four metres for the rest of the course. Result: they're decanted as freemartins - structurally quite normal.. but sterile. Guaranteed sterile. Which brings us at last,' continued Mr. Foster, 'out of the realm of mere slavish imitation of nature into the much more interesting world of human invention.'⁵⁹

The scientist's attitude is comically crystallized - fertility dismissed as merely a "nuisance", a certain amount of normal development allowed, hybrids produced as merely interesting phenomena, a fact which causes Foster to rub his hands in glee. Humans are marshalled into a neat pattern of "functional hierarchies",⁶⁰ from the controlling alphas to the working class epsilons, and then conditioned accordingly: the workers in the tropics are conditioned to heat; rocket plane engineers to "topsy-turvydom",⁶¹ the embryos rotated to improve their sense of balance. Eternally and inescapably they follow their lot and, knowing no other way, are happy with it:-

'And that,' put in the Director sententiously, 'that is the secret of happiness and virtue - liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny.'⁶²

But the horrors have hardly begun. Once the embryo has been "decanted" (instead of that obsolete term, "born"), its mind is moulded and twisted like so much clay into a pattern of suggestions and standardized reactions. At the age of a few months, it undergoes a wordless conditioning: set in ironic contrast with the aseptic neo-pavlovian conditioning room are gay picture books and lush blossoms, "ripe-blown and silkily smooth, like the cheeks of innumerable little cherubs..⁶³ The babies move towards them, uttering 'little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure.'⁶⁴ and on touching them, are subjected to violent noise and a mild electric shock. This soon kills their gratuitous love of nature and turns their minds to more useful occupations.

59. Brave New World, p. 22

60. R. Gerber: Utopian Fantasy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), p. 67

61. Brave New World, p. 25

62. Ibid., p. 24

63. Ibid., p. 27

64. Ibid., p. 28

After all: "A love of nature keeps no factories busy."⁶⁵ The lesson is constantly repeated until the association becomes permanent. Once again, nature and instinct have been overruled: "What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder."⁶⁵ The conditioning continues in verbal form through sleep teaching or hypnopaedia, the endless parroting of propaganda, from elementary sex to elementary Class Consciousness. Who could withstand the direct and subjective appeal of "the soft, insinuating, indefatigable voice"⁶⁶ inculcating a permanent class hatred and prejudice?:-

'Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then
'Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then

This is the voice of hypnopaedia, the "'greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time,"⁶⁷ and the voice is always triumphant, slowly and steadily dropping suggestions which congeal on the mind like "drops of liquid sealing-wax":-⁶⁶

'Till at last 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. The mind that judges and desires and decides - made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions! The Director almost shouted in his triumph. 'Suggestions from the State.' He banged the nearest table..⁶⁶

The individual has been successfully destroyed. Reality, as Orwell expresses it through his character, O'Brien, is "'only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal":-

'Whatever the Party holds to be truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. That is the fact that you have got to relearn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction, an effort of the will. You must humble yourself before you can become sane.'⁶⁸

65. Brave New World, p. 29

66. Ibid., p. 34

67. Ibid., p. 33

68. G. Orwell: 1984, p. 200

Among the so-called individuals we meet in Brave New World - Bernard Marx from the Psychology Bureau, Lenina Crowne from the Conditioning Centre, Helmholtz Watson from Emotional Engineering - none is convincing as a rounded character. This is no shortcoming on Huxley's part but a deliberate portrayal of dehumanized beings, products of a scientific civilization. Lenina is the typical Brave New World female, pearly, pretty, pneumatic. She shares the same surname as her friend, Fanny, a standardized name for a standard product, and the two girls discuss "Pregnancy Substitutes",⁶⁹ sexual licentiousness and Malthusian Belts with the casualness of conventional social gossip. Their conversation is simultaneously echoed and offset by the dialogue between Bernard and Henry Foster who comments on Lenina's "pneumatic"⁷⁰ abilities, and by Mustapha Mond's review of the new world's development from "Family, monogamy, romance"⁷¹ to the sort of licentiousness discussed at that same moment by Lenina and Fanny. Though they do not realize it, this, in fact, is the only 'freedom' left to them, for, as Hux indicates:-

As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase. And the dictator...will do well to encourage that freedom....it will help to reconcile his subjects to the servitude which is their fate.⁷²

Orwell's 1984 presents the opposite extreme, where sexual freedom is non-existent since it represents a sign of individual life and, therefore, revolt against the State. And so the sex instinct is more usefully channelled, sublimated into Party enthusiasm, "transformed into war-fever and leader-worship".⁷³ It is either this or Huxley's alternative of complete freedom, which reduces sexuality to a mere free-for-all in which sexual licentiousness becomes a substitute for sex.

The one individual who attempts to break away from all this is Bernard Marx. He insists on retaining a reserve in personal affairs and is highly embarrassed when Lenina flirtatiously accosts him in the lift,⁷⁴ even though, according to Brave New World topsy-

69. Brave New World, p. 41

70. Ibid., p. 45

71. Ibid., p. 42

72. Ibid., foreword, p. 13-14

73. G. Orwell: 1984, p. 109

74. Brave New World, p. 55-56

turvydom, he knows she is behaving "as any healthy and virtuous English girl ought to behave!"⁷⁵ He yearns to be alone, away from the contemptible puppet-like mass with its communal entertainment, free from his enslaving conditioning. In effect, he claims the right to suffer and suffer alone, though ironically this is condemned as an abnormal, even blasphemous desire which does not conform to the "proper standard of infantile decorum."⁷⁶ Society has explained away his 'otherness' by callous physiological reasoning:-

'They say somebody made a mistake when he was still in the bottle - thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood-surrogate. That's why he's so stunted.'⁷⁷

In his isolation, he seeks out the company of Helmholtz Watson, another of the rare Brave New Worldians conscious of his own individuality which he feels as a sort of "'extra power.'"⁷⁸ Though in his own way as Emotional Engineer, he is a specialist in words. he finds his verbal system inadequate to convey his inmost feelings:-

'I'm thinking of a queer feeling I sometimes get, a feeling that I've got something important to say and the power to say it - only I don't know what it is, and I can't make any use of the power. If there was some different way of writing.... Or something else to write about....'⁷⁸

As language specialists, Watson as well as Winston Smith in 1984, point to a striking limitation of utopian living - that their very way of life has limited the range of human thought and language, preventing them from expressing their total and individual selves. Winston sets out to write a diary recording his personal experiences, but finds he has both lost the power of expression and forgotten what he wanted to say. His verbal medium has been influenced by the confines of Newspeak, the whole aim of which "is to narrow the range of thought."⁷⁹ As Syme, the philologist, explains:-

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75. Brave New World, p. 59
 76. Ibid., p. 83
 77. Ibid., p. 47
 78. Ibid., p. 63
 79. G. Orwell: 1984, p. 45

'In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten.... Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller...' 80

(Huxley develops the notion in Brave New World Revisited in which he suggests that the present language system with its key words of "adjustment", "adaptation", "socially orientated behaviour", "belongingness", "acquisition of social skills", "team work", "group living", "group loyalty", "group dynamics", "group thinking", "group creativity", 81 all point to the dominance of the abstraction, Society, and the resultant destruction of the individual). Moreover, in order to further limit the utopian citizens' mental scope, past literature has been banned. In Brave New World, only Mustapha Mond, the Controller, is acquainted with Shakespeare, the Bible, William James and "other pornographic old books." 82 Besides, given the opportunity, the mass could only interpret these works through the blinkered vision of their conditioning, as we see in Watson's reaction to the Savage quoting Romeo and Juliet - "'what a superb piece of emotional engineering!'" 83

In the long run, it is Bernard Marx who, being apparently the most self-aware, is given the chance to go back intime to a world where children are born, where there are:-

'....families...no conditioning...monstrous superstitions...Christianity and totemism and ancestor worship...extinct languages.... pumas, porcupines, and other ferocious animals...infectious diseases...priests... venomous lizards..' 84

Lenina accompanies him to this world, epitomized in the Savage Reservation, Bernard wondering whether he will be able to withstand the ordeal, "(soma-less and with nothing but his own inward resources to rely on.)" 84 Meeting the Savage, son of Linda, an ex-Brave New Worldian, Bernard brings them both back to the new world, but

80. G. Orwell: 1984, p. 45

81. Brave New World Revisited, p. 4C

82. Brave New World, p. 180

83. Ibid., p. 146

84. Ibid., p. 87-88

finds he cannot cope. The savage becomes a symbol of his prestige, though he does not fully understand this relic of the primitive. The two worlds - old and new - clash and Bernard's final 'reward' for his experiment is exile to Iceland, a sentence which leaves him grovelling and pleading before the World Controller.

Bernard's role is eclipsed by the Savage who, from about midway through the novel, dominates the scene. We see him in his natural setting in the Reservation, then uprooted and plunged into the Brave New World where his idealism swings to disgust and revulsion which ends in his suicide. To him, the Reservation represents a universe of warm and throbbing mystery, austere beauty, terrifying and bloody sacrifices. It is also a world of suffering: since his mother is an alien, he, too, is treated as an outcast. His existential revelation comes at the all-important puberty rites. Ousted from the ceremony, cut and bleeding, he stumbles alone into the night and sits at the edge of a precipice:-

The moon was behind him; he looked down into the black shadow of the mesa, into the black shadow of death. He had only to take one step, one little jump....He held out his right hand in the moonlight. From the cut on his wrist the blood was still oozing. Every few seconds a drop fell, dark, almost colourless in the dead light. Drop, drop, drop. Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.....

He had discovered Time and Death and God.⁸⁵

At this point, the Savage has claimed the right to be unhappy, the right to live nobly, heroically, tragically, miserably, which as Mond diabolically remarks, is also the right to:-

'...grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.'⁸⁶

The Savage enters Brave New World filled with the idealism which wells up in him on first seeing the beautiful Lenina:-

85. *Brave New World*, p. 112

86. *Ibid.*, p. 187

'O wonder!How many goodly creatures are
there here! How beauteous mankind is!
O brave new world.'⁸⁷

The words re-echo mockingly and maliciously when he sees the new world in its reality: the stunted Gamma-Plus dwarfs, the Epsilon Semi-Morons:-

'O brave new world....'...By some malice
of his memory the Savage found himself repeat-
ing Miranda's words. 'O brave new world that
has such people in it.'⁸⁸

He does not fit in with convention, refuses to take soma, is disillusioned by Lenina's wanton advances and finally thrown completely off balance by his mother's death amid swarms of crawling, maggotty Deltas:-

He woke once more to external reality, looked round him, knew what he saw - knew it, with a sinking sense of horror and disgust, for the recurrent delirium of his days and nights, the nightmare of swarming indistinguishable sameness. Twins, twins...Like maggots they had swarmed defilingly over the mystery of Linda's death. Maggots again, but larger, full grown, they now crawled across his grief and his repentance.....'How many goodly creatures are there here!' The singing words mocked him derisively. 'How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world...'⁸⁹

He watches the mass of twins lining up for soma rations and once more Miranda's words deride him, torment him in a grotesque nightmare. He is driven to challenge the new world in an attempt to transform "even the nightmare into something fine and noble."⁹⁰ As a result, he disastrously tries to stop the soma rationing but the ensuing chaos is quickly suppressed by the police spraying soma vapour into the air, calming the crowd with the "Synthetic Music Box," the "Synthetic Anti-Riot Speech Number Two (Medium Strength)."⁹¹

The Savage's active revolt is over. Open antagonism is replaced by rational argument with Mustapha Mond who proceeds to explain the Brave New World system in relation to life in the Reser-

87. Brave New World, p. 113-114

88. Ibid., p. 129

89. Ibid., p. 165

90. Ibid., p. 166

91. Ibid., p. 169

vation. The stable new world has no place for liberty, unhappiness, tragedy and nobility: "you can't make tragedies without social instability."⁹² And Winston Smith puts forward the same notion in 1984:-

Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason. His mother's memory tore at his heart because she had died loving him, when he was too young and selfish to love her in return, and because somehow, he did not remember how, she had sacrificed herself to a conception of loyalty that was private and unalterable. Such things, he saw, could not happen to-day. To-day there was fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows.⁹³

The Savage's sense of Time and Death and God is equally ousted from the new world. God, freedom and creativity have been replaced by chemically induced euphoria, produced by soma:-

Religion, Karl Marx declared, is the opium of the people. In the Brave New World this situation was reversed. Opium, or rather Soma, was the people's religion.⁹⁴

The soma-taking ritual in Brave New World takes the form of an erotic Panic rite, the "Orgy-Porgy",⁹⁵ itself a kind of conditioning calculated to indoctrinate the utopian citizens by effacing individuality or unorthodox ideas. William Sargant, discussing the effects of ritual and ceremony in his Battle for the Mind, stresses the importance of the dance in tribal initiation, and the same could be said for the Brave New World "Orgy-Porgy", in which the dancers feel themselves merged in the Greater Being:-

'The prime factor here is the dance, a dance anything but static; rather suggestive in its uniformity....Round the tree the novices dance slowly with bowed heads. Now the booming wooden drums have taken up the accompaniment. Without a pause, slow and uniform, the

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- 92. Brave New World p. 173
 - 93. G. Orwell: 1984, p. 27-28
 - 94. Brave New World Revisited, p. 100
 - 95. Brave New World, p. 71-74

dance continues hour after hour. In the end the novices are only semi-conscious, treading mechanically in the same everlasting rhythm. They are no longer on earth - they have become merged in the unity of the mighty forest demon and feel spiritually uplifted.'⁹⁶

Even the sceptical Bernard finds himself inexorably drawn into the hypnotic rhythm of the tom-toms, the dance, the liturgical refrain. Then, drained of their pent-up emotions, consummated and ecstatic, the Brave New Worldians happily return, puppet-like and mechanical, to their everyday lives. Further emotions like the anxiety of death are successfully destroyed by conditioning, and fear and rage are substituted by a treatment of "'Violent Passion Surrogate'"⁹⁷ which stimulates the adrenals and produces: "'All the tonic effects of murdering De Lons and being murdered by Othello, without any of the inconvenience.'"⁹⁸

During the discussion with the Controller, Mond, caricature of the industrialist and politician Alfred Mond, the Savage finds himself unable to reason. Poisoned by civilization, he escapes to a lonely lighthouse where he tries to repent of his entry into Brave New World by penance in the form of flagellation and a voluntary crucifixion. The Press track him down: he becomes a public spectacle, a curiosity in the zoo. To answer for humanity, he hangs himself.

The style and technique of Brave New World are inevitably of minor consideration in the light of the unique theme. Nevertheless, the novel is carefully planned in terms of a time pattern:-

The main narrative line can be pictured as a horizontal in a utopian present which is intersected by vertical excursions into the past.⁹⁸

At first we are plunged into the present - the horrifying implications of scientifically planned propagation. Then present and past alternate in the conversation between Lenina and Fanny, Mustapha

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- 96. William Sargant: Battle for the Mind (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1959), p. 98
 - 97. Brave New World, p. 187
 - 98. R. Gerber: Utopian Fantasy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), p. 23

Mond and students. Mond reviews the new world from its inception and promptly negates the past in the words of Henry Ford: "History is bunk."⁹⁹ The utopia is cut off from the past and eternally lodged in the present. But the past re-emerges as we enter the Reservation through Bernard Marx who is dissatisfied with his present condition. As the Savage enters Brave New World, past and present clash: the Savage is pitted against the conditioned mob and then against the World Controller himself, but the past is not permitted to survive and is symbolically killed in the death of the Savage. The present triumphs though, in fact, time no longer exists since the utopian nowhere is traditionally removed from both time and place. This is in theory only for the whole impact of Brave New World depends on its geographical situation, the setting of London in the year 632 A.F. (After Ford), plausible in terms of location, fantastic in terms of time: "..... the location of the imaginary state is the more plausible, the less we can disprove its existence."¹⁰⁰ In other words, we are drawn into Brave New World because it has its roots in a particular and knowable place, knowable to us and, therefore, all the more horrifying in its implications.

The pattern of time and place is also related to various points of view. The 'Brave New World', happily accepted by its inhabitants, is refocussed as nightmarish in the eyes of the Savage. Similarly, Bernard and Lenina review the Savage Reservation through their particular conditioned vision. In this way, we are able to analyse and assess the two worlds in counterpoint, while constantly entertained by comedy and irony, mild, sardonic and biting, which partly prevent us from becoming subjectively involved in the horror of the scenes. We watch detachedly as the characters react much like puppets in the style of Henri Bergson's "Du mécanique plaqué sur du vivant."¹⁰¹ Yet we are involved in a kind of "fantastic realism":¹⁰² the scientific detail may seem fantastic though, at the same time, there is a strong probability of the theories materializing.¹⁰³

99. Brave New World, p. 38

100. R. Gerber: Utopian Fantasy, p. 94

101. H. Bergson: Le Rire: Essai Sur La Signification du Comique (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1920), p. 39

102. R. Gerber: Utopian Fantasy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), p. 91

103. Refer newspaper articles quoted thesis p. 201-202

Ironically, the critics of 1932 refused to accept the plausibility of Brave New World's scientific nightmare:-

"'Brave New World' is successful as a novel and as a satire; but one need not accept all its apparent implications." 104

"The trouble with Mr. Huxley's satire is that it is not easy to become interested in the scientifically imagined details of life in this mechanical Utopia...." 105

Blatantly choosing to ignore Huxley and Orwell as prophets of doom, various United States schools have banned both Brave New World and 1984. In his documentary on the invasion of individual privacy in America, Vance Packard hastens to point to this shortsightedness:-

It is worth noting that Mr. Huxley's prophetic book, Brave New World, written way back in the thirties about a technological society living in doped-up bliss under a watchful tyrant six centuries from now, has been banned from several U.S. schools. Also among the banned is George Orwell's 1984, depicting life under the ever-present electronic eye and ear of a tyrannical Big Brother a bare two decades from now. When the U.S. Commissioner of Education was asked about the banning of these two classics from a Miami high school, he declined to comment because he said he had never heard of either of the books! 106

Ape and Essence.

In Brave New World Revisited or Tyranny Over the Mind (1958), Huxley posits that:-

The prophecies made in 1931 are coming true much sooner than I thought they would..... Brave New World was written before the rise of Hitler to supreme power in Germany and when the Russian tyrant had not yet got into his stride. In 1931 systematic terrorism was

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104. Henry Hazlitt, Review of Brave New World, The Nation, No. 134, February 17, 1932, p. 204 (Kaler Book Review Digest 1932, p. 474).
105. ----- Review of Brave New World, The Times Literary Supplement, February 4, 1932, p. 73 (Kaler Book Review Digest 1932, p. 474-475).
106. Vance Packard: The Naked Society (London: Longmans, 1964), p. 13-14

not the obsessive contemporary fact which it had become in 1948, and the future dictatorship of my imaginary world was a good deal less brutal than the future dictatorship so brilliantly portrayed by Orwell.¹⁰⁷

The Hitler regime, Russian tyranny and the destruction of hopes for future peace in the symbolic assassination of Mahatma Gandhi left Huxley at his most keenly misanthropic. His most cherished hopes in a doctrine of universal pacifism had been shattered by the death of Gandhi, which he regarded as a parable, a prophetic rejection of the only possible means to world peace. The narrator voices Huxley's disillusionment in the prologue to Ape and Essence:-

.....I was thinking that the dream of Order begets tyranny, the dream of Beauty, monster and violence. Athena, the patroness of the arts, is also the goddess of scientific warfare, the heavenly Chief of every General Staff. We killed him (Gandhi) because, after having briefly (and fatally) played the political game, he refused any longer to go on dreaming our dream of a national Order, a social and economic Beauty; because he tried to bring us back to the concrete and cosmic facts of real people and the inner Light.

The headlines I had seen that morning were parables; the event they recorded, an allegory and a prophecy. In that symbolic act, we who so longed for peace had rejected the only possible means to peace and had issued a warning to all who, in the future, might advocate any courses but those which lead inevitably to war.¹⁰⁸

As if in retaliation against the shattering of his hopes for a pacifist future, a cosmic ethic based on the 'Perennial Philosophy', Huxley attacks mankind in the guise of William Tallis, a Timon of Athens protesting from the solitude of the Californian desert against the "ape-chosen"¹⁰⁹ ends of man:-

The leech's kiss, the squid's embrace,
The prurient ape's defiling touch:
And do you like the human race?
No, not much.¹¹⁰

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107. Brave New World Revisited, p. 11-12
108. Ape and Essence, p. 7
109. Ibid., p. 32
110. Ibid., p. 14

The Brave New World idols of psychology and industry, Freud and Ford, have been replaced by Belial and Beelzebub, the sign of the 'T' has given way to the sign of the horns. Man in his "Higher Ignorance"¹¹¹ is skewered on the horns of the devil, caught in a dilemma which the Arch-Vicar of Belial explains as a dualism of Progress and Destruction:-

'From the very beginning of the industrial revolution He (Belial) foresaw that men would be made so overwhelmingly bumpous by the miracles of their own technology that they would soon lose all sense of reality. And that's precisely what happened. These wretched slaves of wheels and ledgers began to congratulate themselves on being the Conquerors of Nature. Conquerors of Nature, indeed! In actual fact, of course, they had merely upset the equilibrium of Nature and were about to suffer the consequences. Just consider what they were up to.... Fouling the rivers, killing off the wild animals, destroying the forests, washing the topsoil into the sea.... An orgy of criminal imbecility. And they called it Progress. Progress,' he repeats, 'Progress! I tell you, that was too rare an invention to have been the product of any merely human mind - too fiendishly ironical! There had to be Outside Help for that. There had to be the Grace of Belial...' ¹¹²

By conquering nature and human nature, man has denied the fact of his "glassy essence",¹¹³ denied "Love, Joy and Peace... the fruits of the spirit."¹¹⁴ He is left, instead, with "the fruits of the ape-mind, the fruits of the monkey's presumption and revolt" which are "hate and unceasing restlessness and a chronic misery tempered only by frenzies more horrible than itself."¹¹⁴

The monkey's revolt begins with the destruction of scientific intellect in the capture of Pasteur, the shooting of Einstein to the accompaniment of 'Onward Christian Soldiers.' Faraday's destruction takes place in a colourful pageant in which a young female baboon, powdered, lipsticked, masked and voluptuously swaying, leads the chained and collared Faraday, crawling on all fours.

111. Ape and Essence, p. 26

112. Ibid., p. 93

113. Ibid., p. 25

114. Ibid., p. 142

He is the "captive intellect",¹¹⁵ she, singing in "an expiring bedroom contralto,"¹¹⁶ the epitome of unrestrained lust. Like the Brave New World "Orgy-porgy",¹¹⁷ lasciviousness is used in the ape kingdom as a tool for propaganda, a means of luring the baboons into submission by a delectable bait - only their lust is forcibly regulated and limited to the orgiastic two weeks following the celebrations of Belial. Man is left among the ruins of the Los Angeles "Metrollopolis"¹¹⁸ to live as grave digger, plundering the glories of Forest Lawn Memorial Park, unearthing all "the buried remains of le confort moderne"¹¹⁹ - diamond rings, nylon stockings, expensive suits which spoils, according to the law of Democracy, automatically go to the State! For the rest, they live as in the Savage Reservation of Brave New World, drawing water, weaving on primitive looms, fashioning cups from skulls, baking in communal ovens, the fuel for which is provided by the public library near by. "In goes The Phenomenology of Spirit, out comes the corn bread..."¹²⁰ in a process whereby culture is sacrificed to the necessity of filling one's belly. As for education, the illiterate inhabitants are subjected to a verbal conditioning which enunciates the truth of Belial as a grotesque parody of traditional religion.

From the sanctum of the "Unholy of Unholies",¹²¹ Alfred Poole, traditional visitor to Utopia from the outside world, is initiated into the secrets of the Blowfly: his conversation with the Arch-Vicar parallels that of the Savage and Mustapha Mond in Brave New World. As incarnation of spiritual authority, the Arch-Vicar represents:-

Church and State,
Greed and Hate:-
Two baboon-persons
In one Supreme Gorilla.¹²²

Between mouthfuls of pig's trotters, swigs of wine, the Arch-Vicar waxes eloquent about history as a record of "'Man pitting himself

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- 115. Ape and Essence, p. 27
 - 116. Ibid., p. 25
 - 117. Brave New World, p. 73
 - 118. Ape and Essence, p. 45
 - 119. Ibid., p. 50
 - 120. Ibid., p. 67
 - 121. Ibid., p. 87
 - 122. Ibid., p. 77

against Nature, the Ego against the Order of Things, Belial."¹²³ Gradually by "the Grace of Belial",¹²⁴ overpopulation, soil erosion, hunger, the Higher Hunger of industrial consumption, the ideologies of Progress and Nationalism combined to herald war and the triumphal march of Belial across the world. Through the Arch-Vicar, Huxley voices his aversion to Progress and Nationalism, ironically presented as evidence of Belial's "Guiding Hand":-

'..... Progress - the theory that you can get something for nothing; the theory that you can gain in one field without paying for your gain in another; the theory that you alone understand the meaning of history; the theory that you know what's going to happen fifty years from now; the theory that, in the teeth of all experience, you can foresee all the consequences of your present actions; the theory that Utopia lies just ahead and that, since ideal ends justify the most abominable means, it is your privilege and duty to rob, swindle, torture, enslave and murder all those who, in your opinion (which is, by definition, infallible), obstruct the onward march to the earthly paradise. Remember that phrase of Karl Marx's: "Force is the midwife of Progress"? He might have added - but, of course, Belial didn't want to let the cat out of the bag at that early stage of the proceedings - that Progress is the midwife of Force..... And then there was Nationalism - the theory that the state you happen to be subject to is the only true god, and that all other states are false gods; that all these gods, true as well as false, have the mentality of juvenile delinquents; and that every conflict over prestige, power or money is a crusade for the Good, the True and the Beautiful. The fact that such theories came, at a given moment of history, to be universally accepted is the best proof of Belial's existence.....'¹²⁵

'....He (Belial) persuaded each side to take only the worst the other had to offer. So the East takes Western nationalism, Western armaments, Western movies and Western Marxism; the West takes Eastern despotism, Eastern superstitions and Eastern indifference to individual life. In a word, He saw to it that mankind should make the worst of both worlds.'¹²⁶

123. Ape and Essence, p. 90

124. Ibid., p. 93

125. Ibid., p. 93-94

126. Ibid., p. 138

Once Belial has effected the miraculous degradation of man, reduced him through fear to "a lacerated animal, screaming and struggling in the trap,"¹²⁷ he demands continual sacrifice, provided in the ape kingdom by ritualistic purges. Mothers of monsters, mongolian idiots and other miserable deformities are herded to the High Altar where, to the accompaniment of antiphonal chant climaxed in the swelling cry for blood, the Inquisitor impales the deformed child and spills its blood on the altar as a gesture of washing in the blood of the Lamb. The slaughter is followed by a scene of satyrs and nymphs:-

Sentenced by craving,

 That monsters may be begotten.

 That you may all be lost forever.¹²⁸

Love is reduced to "chemical compulsion"¹²⁹ and for two weeks the corybantic worshippers revel until order is once more restored by the Public Morals Department.

While detached from the ape community, Dr. Poole finds himself intellectually stimulated by the Arch-Vicar's reasoning but, like the Savage in Brave New World who becomes involved with Lenina, Poole in his concern for Loola, finds his curiosity transformed into revulsion for the diabolical state. His love for Loola, a romantic, monogamous, soulful emotion, leaves him an outcast, and the couple escape at the end to the "'Hots'",¹³⁰ a small rebel society which has broken away from the ape kingdom to reaffirm the truth of man's essence.

Island.

Theoretically, Huxley had affirmed the truth of man's essence in The Perennial Philosophy but it was not till twelve years after the publication of Ape and Essence that he could validate 'essence' experimentally, under the influence of the hallucinogen,

127. Ape and Essence, p. 37

128. Ibid., p. 107-108

129. Ibid., p. 111

130. Ibid., p. 120

mescaline. The experiment of 1953 was to bring to the forefront the prophet of hope who looked towards man's future as one of heightened intensity, aesthetic and moral awareness, periodic glimpses of eternity - all effected by the miraculous mescaline which stimulates the adrenal glands "to cause profound changes in consciousness."¹³¹ In The Doors of Perception, Huxley describes his own reaction to the drug:-

I took my pill at eleven. An hour and half later I was sitting in my study, looking intently at a small glass vase. The vase contained only three flowers - a full-blown Belle of Portugal rose, shell pink with a hint at every petal's base of a hotter, flamer hue; a large magenta and cream-coloured carnation; and, pale purple at the end of its broken stalk, the bold heraldic blossom of an iris. Fortuitous and provisional, the little nosegay broke all the rules of traditional good taste. At breakfast that morning I had been struck by the lively dissonance of its colours. But that was no longer the point. I was not looking now at an unusual flower arrangement. I was seeing what Adam had seen on the morning of his creation - the miracle, moment by moment, of naked existence.....

I continued to look at the flowers, and in their living light I seemed to detect the qualitative equivalent of breathing - but of a breathing without returns to a starting-point, with no recurrent ebbs but only a repeated flow from beauty to heightened beauty, from deeper to ever deeper meaning. Words like Grace and Transfiguration came to my mind, and this of course was what, among other things, they stood for. My eyes travelled from the rose to the carnation, and from that feathery incandescence to the smooth scrolls of sentient amethyst which were the iris. The Beatific Vision, Sat Chit Ananda, Being-Awareness-Bliss - for the first time I understood, not on the verbal level, not by inchoate hints or at a distance, but precisely and completely what those prodigious syllables referred to.¹³²

Briefly he sums up the general effects of mescaline:-

(1) The ability to remember and to 'think straight' is little if at all reduced. (Listening to the recordings of my conversation under the influence of the drug, I cannot discover that I was then any stupider than I am at ordinary times.)

131. The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, p. 7

132. Ibid., p. 11-13

(2) Visual impressions are greatly intensified and the eye recovers some of the perceptual innocence of childhood, when the sensum was not immediately and automatically subordinated to the concept. Interest in space is diminished and interest in time falls almost to zero.

(3) Though the intellect remains unimpaired and though perception is enormously improved, the will suffers a profound change for the worse. The mescaline taker sees no reason for doing anything in particular and finds most of the causes for which, at ordinary times, he was prepared to act and suffer, profoundly uninteresting. He can't be bothered with them, for the good reason that he has better things to think about.

(4) These better things may be experienced (as I experienced them) 'out there,' or 'in here,' or in both worlds, the inner and the outer, simultaneously or successively. That they are better seems to be self-evident to all mescaline takers who come to the drug with a sound liver and an untroubled mind.¹³³

The visionary experience with its accompanying intensification of colour, perception of mass, position and dimension led Huxley to consider its significance as translated into art. He contemplates the transformation of the chair on which he was sitting, its legs "miraculous" in their tubularity, "supernatural" in their polished smoothness,¹³⁴ and for the first time can understand the greatness of Van Gogh's 'The Chair' as an "astounding portrait of a Ding an Sich."¹³⁵ Similarly, he sees the folds of his trousers as "a labyrinth of endlessly significant complexity.... the texture of the grey flannel - how rich, how deeply, mysteriously sumptuous,"¹³⁶ easily comparable with the draperies painted by Piero della Francesca, Watteau, Botticelli. Music, too, imbues him with new understanding, expressed in Island by Will Farnaby who hears Bach's Fourth Brandenburg Concerto as "a manifestation at one remove of the luminous bliss,"¹³⁷ an expression of Eternity revealed as in "a multitudinous fountain":-

Stream within stream - the stream of the solo violin, the streams of the two recorders, the manifold streams of the harpsichord and the

132. The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, p. 18-19

134. Ibid., p. 15

135. Ibid., p. 21

136. Ibid., p. 23

137. Island, p. 266

little orchestra of assorted strings. Separate, distinct, individual - and yet each of the streams was a function of all the rest, each was itself in virtue of its relationship to the whole of which it was a component.¹³⁸

Huxley then turns to the interpretation of the visionary experience in terms of theology, to the compatibility of Christianity and mescaline. He suggests an attempt "to convert the drug to Christianity, or to sacramentalize its use,"¹³⁹ but does not equate the heightened perception stimulated by mescaline with the ultimate Reality:-

I am not so foolish as to equate what happens under the influence of mescaline or of any other drug, prepared or in the future preparable, with the realization of the end and ultimate purpose of human life: Enlightenment, the Beatific Vision. All I am suggesting is that the mescaline experience is what Catholic theologians call 'a gratuitous grace,' not necessary to salvation but potentially helpful and to be accepted thankfully, if made available.¹⁴⁰

Yet Huxley does seem to identify the mescaline taker's enlightenment with the infused contemplation of the mystic and it is here that R.C. Zaehner pulls him short by posing a distinction between mysticism sacred and profane. The first involves a genuinely religious experience based on orthodox beliefs, the other a sort of "free-lance"¹⁴¹ mysticism, independent of belief and in which "the state of the drug-taker's consciousness bears at least a superficial resemblance to that of the religious mystic in that time and space appear to be transcended..."¹⁴² In Huxley's case, this close resemblance was understandable psychologically since, before taking mescaline, he was soaked in the religious system of India and so his vision was affected accordingly for, says Zaehner, in the words of Baudelaire: "... drugs can add nothing new to a man, but can only raise to a higher power what is already within him."¹⁴³ Zaehner contends that Huxley was no true mystic. He was

138. Island, p. 267

139. The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, p. 54

140. Ibid., p. 58

141. R.C. Zaehner: Mysticism Sacred and Profane (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), introduction, p. xi

142. Ibid., p. x

143. Ibid., p. 3

converted to the 'Perennial Philosophy' on "purely intellectual grounds",¹⁴⁴ and then used the philosophy as a means of working off his animosities against society. He traces Huxley's spiritual quest as "preconditioned by his intellectualism":¹⁴⁵ his initial revolt against the established mores of society led to a further revolt "against and from himself,"¹⁴⁵ as a revolt into meaninglessness. Nauseated by the material world which continually "enmeshed and entangled"¹⁴⁵ him, unable to remain in a vacuous, undefined position, he was "predisposed... to conversion to a type of religion that would provide him with a way of escape from a world into which he had found it so extraordinarily difficult to fit himself."¹⁴⁶

But Huxley was not to be dissuaded from his new conviction. He could clearly imagine an ideal society, an island universe,¹⁴⁷ superior in "the art of adequately experiencing,"¹⁴⁸ an art facilitated by the "moksha-medicine"¹⁴⁸ (mescaline) which brings periodic glimpses of enlightenment and grace. As defiant testimony to "a place where the Fall was an exploded doctrine,"¹⁴⁹ he created the novel, *Island*, as a little paradise of sanity "completely surrounded by twenty-nine hundred million mental cases."¹⁵⁰ It is a co-operative society which, like the Jeffersonian democracy outlined by Propter in *After Many a Summer*,¹⁵¹ consists of "a federation of self-governing units, geographical units, professional units, economic units..."¹⁵² In defiance of Malthusian pessimism according to which population increases disproportionate to the rate of food production, food is plentiful on the island, Pala, and the population stabilized, not by coercion and contraceptive campaigns, but according to the ancient, aesthetic practice of "maithuna" or "Male Continence."¹⁵³ To avoid the risk of genetic degeneracy due to inbreeding among the small community, the Palanese have developed techniques of artificial insemination and "Deep Freeze",¹⁵⁴ so that a family may, of choice, be enriched with "an

144. R.C. Zaehner: *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 15

145. *Ibid.*, p. 16

146. *Ibid.*, p. 17

147. *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell*, p. 8

148. *Island*, p. 172

149. *Ibid.*, p. 213

150. *Ibid.*, p. 68

151. *After Many a Summer*, p. 108-110

152. *Island*, p. 146

153. *Ibid.*, p. 77

154. *Ibid.*, p. 187

entirely new physique and temperament."¹⁵⁵ Besides, the children themselves are by no means forced under one roof: in terms of the "Mutual Adoption Club",¹⁵⁶ they are allowed to migrate to one of twenty different homes so as to bring: "Hybridization of micro-cultures..... Healthier relationships in more responsible groups, wider sympathies and deeper understandings."¹⁵⁷ Incest, Oedipus complexes, suffocating domestic ties are things of the past, as is brought home forcibly to Will Farnaby, traditional visitor from the outside world, who sees the marionette show, "Oedipus in Pala"¹⁵⁸ in which Oedipus is dissuaded from blinding himself, Jocasta from committing suicide. After all, their problems were avoidable - in the naively humorous words of the young Mary MacPhail: "'But of course poor old Oedipus never had an MAC. (Mutual Adoption Club).'"¹⁵⁹

Huxley constantly pits the abuses of contemporary civilization against the virtues of his island universe. In education, the indiscriminate brain washing and parroting of fact is replaced by a technique of "'Self Determination'" or "'Destiny Control'"¹⁶⁰ in which the child is helped to control his own fate according to his particular temperament and abilities. For the teachers, the task is one of painstaking observation of these individualities:-

"We begin..... by assessing the differences. Precisely who or what, anatomically, biochemically and psychologically, is this child? In the organic hierarchy, which takes precedence - his gut, his muscles, or his nervous system? How near does he stand to the three polar extremes? How harmonious or how disharmonious is the mixture of his component elements, physical and mental? How great is his inborn wish to dominate, or to be sociable, or to retreat into his inner world? And how does he do his thinking and perceiving and remembering? Is he a visualizer or a non-visualizer? Does his mind work with images or with words, with both at once, or with neither? How close to the surface is his story-telling faculty? Does he see the world as Wordsworth and Traherne saw it when they were children? And, if so, what can be done to prevent the glory and the freshness from fading into the light of common day? Or, in more general terms, how can we educate children on the conceptual level without killing their capacity for intense non-verbal experience? How can we reconcile analysis with vision?"¹⁶¹

155. Island, p. 187

156. Ibid., p. 90

157. Ibid., p. 91

158. Ibid., p. 243

159. Ibid., p. 244

160. Ibid., p. 95

161. Ibid., p. 202-203

The children are grouped according to the aggressive "Muscle Men",¹⁶² the shy, introverted "Peter Pans",¹⁶² and the indiscriminately sociable, these "three polar extremes"¹⁶³ being gradually brought into harmonious contact. As for formal education, the conventional sequence of practical application leading towards general principles is reversed, and the children are taught logic and structure in the form of games and puzzles - "Evolutionary Snakes and Ladders.... Mendelian Happy Families,"¹⁶⁴ with the stress constantly on the sciences of life, on biology and psychology.

The emphasis on individuality in Elementary School forms the basis for the transcendence of that individuality at Secondary School level. At this point, the Palanese adolescent is initiated into the secrets of the "moksha-medicine"¹⁶⁵ in an ecstatic ritual and obeisance to the god, "Shiva-Nataraja," the Lord of the Dance, who "dances the dance of endless becoming and passing away."¹⁶⁶ Will Farnaby experiences the cosmic dance in a "moksha-medicine"¹⁶⁵ experiment, his experiences based on those recorded by Huxley in The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell. His vision is at once heavenly and hellish; the grotesqueness appropriately ushers in a new era - the invasion of Pala by the imperialists and industrialists.

Published in 1962, the novel provoked a string of adverse criticisms. It was condemned as a fatuous tale in which "the novelist's sharpness of perception seems... to have evaporated into some bland transcendental haze."¹⁶⁷ Huxley was accused of having turned pedagogue to produce "a disconcerting mishmash of mystical doctrine and a variety of Huxleyan fads,"¹⁶⁸ a succinct criticism of Huxley's encyclopaedic mind seen at its most disconcerting.

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- 162. Island, p. 153
 - 163. Ibid., p. 202-203
 - 164. Ibid., p. 210
 - 165. Ibid., p. 136
 - 166. Ibid., p. 167
 - 167. William Barrett, Review of Island, Atlantic, No. 209, April, 1962, p. 155 (Refer Book Review Digest 1962, p. 591)
 - 168. C.J. Reio, Review of Island, New York Herald Tribune Books, March 25, 1962, p. 4 (Refer Book Review Digest 1962, p. 592)

Greek history, Polynesian anthropology, translations from Sanskrit and Chinese of Buddhist texts, scientific papers on pharmacology, neurophysiology, psychology and education, together with novels, poems, critical essays, travel books, political commentaries and conversations with all kinds of people, from philosophers to actresses, from patients in mental hospitals to tycoons in Rolls-Royces - everything went into the hopper and became grist for my Utopian mill.¹⁶⁹

Huxley himself thus outlined the vast field covered in Island, seemingly unaware of its unwieldy bulk and convinced of the probability of such a society coming into being:-

In framing an ideal we may assume what we wish, but should avoid impossibilities.

Aristotle.¹⁷⁰

Nevertheless, he had not come to the ideal end of his spiritual quest as symbolized by the invasion of Pala, according to which the fight against man as ape, power-seeking and aggressive, was to reassert itself in the endless cycle of war and violence. Ironically, he died on the very day the American president, John Kennedy, was assassinated.

169. Laura Huxley: You Are Not the Target (London: Heinemann, 1964), foreword by Aldous Huxley, p. xii

170. Island, frontispiece.

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S U M M A R Y

The Spiritual Quest in the Writings of
Aldous Huxley

by Pamela Heller

Written over a period of more than forty years, Aldous Huxley's writings cover an almost incredible range of fields from science, technology, politics, art, literature, music, architecture, travel and journalism to history, psychology, anthropology, pacifism and mysticism. This study attempts to trace his spiritual quest from the sceptical post-war years to the culminating vision of utopia in the novel, Island.

Chapters I to IV trace Huxley's quest chiefly in terms of the fictional heroes. Additional light is thrown on the hero's quest by the essays and short stories of the relevant period. Following this pattern, Chapter I traces the theme of accidia as revealed by the heroes, Denis Stone and Gumbriel Junior, and elaborated in the short stories from Two or Three Graces, Limbo, Mortal Coils, Twice Seven and the On the Margin essays.

Chapter II traces the theme of multiplicity in the novel, Point Counter Point, centring round the problems of the novelist, Philip Quarles, a figure reminiscent of the novelist, Édouard, in Gide's Les Faux-Monnayeurs. The ideal of multiplicity is further developed in the essays, Do What You Will, Vulgarity in Literature, Music at Night, The Olive Tree. The chapter also stresses Huxley's preoccupation with D.H. Lawrence in the figure of Mark Rampion of Point Counter Point and Kingham of Two or Three Graces.

Chapter III is concerned with Anthony Beavis's search for unity in diversity as traced in the novel, Eyeless in Gaza. Huxley's pacifist beliefs are extended in the philosophical treatise, Ends and Means, An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism and What are you going to do about it? The chapter concludes with an attack on Huxley's pacifism by C. Day Lewis and the Indian philosopher, Shrivankar.

Chapter IV marks the climax to Huxley's preoccupation with mysticism as expounded in The Perennial Philosophy. Side by side with the themes of time and mortality, which dominate After Many a Summer and Time Must Have a Stop, is the transcendence of time through mystics' non-attachment as practised by Propter in After

Many a Summer, Rontini and Sebastian Bernack in Time Must Have a Stop. The epilogue crystallizes Huxley's spiritual quest in terms of the utopian vision, at once despairing and hopeful. Juxtaposed with the pessimism of Brave New World and Ape and Essence is the spiritual affirmation of The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell and of his final novel, Island.

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