ALDOUS HUXLEY AND VISUAL ART

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
CHARLOTTE JANE LeGATES
1974

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

ALDOUS HUXLEY AND VISUAL ART

presented by

Charlotte Jane LeGates

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English

Herbert S. Running
Major professor

Date July 22, 1974

O-7639

ABSTRACT

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By

Charlotte Jane LeGates

The three stages of Aldous Huxley's novelistic development--the social and satiric period, the period of reexamination, and the mystical period--may be examined from the point of view of his relationship with, and use of, visual art in his essays and novels. From his early ambition to become a painter through his lifetime of study and interpretation of art works, Huxley constantly examined art as a conveyor of truths about man. His art essays clearly reflect the change from an exclusively psychological to a psycho-spiritual view of man; and references to, and descriptions of, art works in almost all of Huxley's novels form a strong and consistent reinforcement of his major themes.

By selecting art essays from various chronological periods in Huxley's life, we can clearly see the changes in Huxley's outlook on man. In his early essay on Brueghel, for instance, he is attracted to an artist who sees man as a social and physical being, and who approaches him with combined sympathy and satire. In his middle period, the 1930's and 1940's, in which Huxley underwent a serious spiritual self-examination, he was attracted to artists such as Callot, Piranesi, and Goya, who painted worlds gone mad with suffering, deprivation, and

loneliness. Huxley's third period, the spiritual awakening through mysticism, is reflected in his new approach to artists such El Greco; he sees the mind expanding in mystical awareness and unity through paint.

Huxley's early novels show him both satirizing and attempting to help his society. While most characters in Crome Yellow, Antic Hay, and Point Counter Point fail completely, the visual artists, Gombauld, Gumbril Senior, and Rampion, are partial successes. Each has approached an alternate life style and a reason for living separate from the mindless hedonism of society at large. Through a pursuit of Carravaggio's ideals, Gombauld attempts to reach through society's trappings to eternal truth. Gumbril Senior sees architecture as lifting and ennobling man's spirit, embodying ideals in solid forms. Rampion's own painting conveys his message of the integration of body and mind.

Ultimately, however, Huxley was dissatisfied with the lives of his artists, and became disenchanted with art also. In Those Barren Leaves, Eyeless in Gaza, and After Many a Summer Dies the Swan, art does not have the power to help man out of mindlessness. Instead, it is an ironic comment on life, containing messages from the past which could help the characters if only they could interpret them. The Etruscans whose ruins the Aldwinkle party visits had a vital life style which remains a complete mystery to the group, whose lives are trivial. The passion that produced primitive images of life and death mocks Hugh Ledwidge's impotence. Jo Stoyte's Vermeer is an ironic contrast to the millionaire's emotional disorder.

Huxley's total disenchantment with art did not last, however. In his third, mystical stage, Huxley found that art still could lead

toward truth, even if it could not completely embody truth. In Time Must Have a Stop, Huxley uses visual art masterpieces such as Michelangelo's Medici Chapel sculptures and Fra Angelico's San Marco frescoes to show that time and the decay and despair associated with it can stop if we contemplate the absolute truth beyond daily life. The number of artists who experienced mystical vision and who attempted to show its importance through painting is very large, Huxley discovers in Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell. And in Island, Huxley shows that the mystical vision expressed through art can both demonstrate the concerns of a society and lead outsiders to a more complete understanding of that society's spiritual makeup.

At the end of his life, Huxley's favorite artists were those who, like Rembrandt, showed man as a functioning, spiritual and psychological whole, in command of himself and his world, but still conscious of what lay beyond temporal existence. As Huxley changed, so did his perception of visual art; and we can see the depth in his own life of the changes reflected in his novels by seeing that these changes inform more than one aspect of his intellectual existence.

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Charlotte Jane LeGates

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1974

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CHAPTER I

HUXLEY AND ART: A BIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH

It is impossible to read the novels of Aldous Huxley without noting profound differences between the early novels and the late ones. As has been pointed out by many scholars, Huxley's early novels are the products of post-war disenchantment with society. His chief mode of character development is the satiric; give a character like Lypiatt in Antic Hay or Quarles in Point Counter Point enough rope, and he will hang himself. His tone is bitter: the delicate dreams of an Emily in Antic Hay always lose to the demanding cruelty of a Myra Viveash. But the final novels are constructive and affirmative. In Time Must Have A Stop, Sebastian Barnack works toward a positive overview of life. Island's society holds out hope for us all.

This change in Huxley's outlook has generally been examined from two points of view, the religious and the aesthetic. Critics have concerned themselves with Huxley's personal religious transformation as a cause of the thematic change in the novels, and with the effects of the religious change on the construction, characterization, and general techniques of the novels. Both these approaches are valid and necessary. But there is another approach to Huxley which sheds a great deal of light on both his ideas and his aesthetics. The present study will attempt to explore fully Huxley's relationship with visual art, a

relationship which lasted throughout his life, and which underwent profound changes which can serve as a barometer of Huxley's own psychological and religious development. By concentrating on this relationship, we can see more clearly exactly what, behind the satire, Huxley was searching for in the early novels. We will see how, once he had discovered an answer to the question of the meaning of life, he attempted to bring his own perceptions home to his readers through parallels in visual art.

Just as the development of Huxley's attitude toward life has three distinct stages--the satiric period of the 1920's, the period of reexamination in the 1930's, and the period of religious affirmation of the 1940's and after--so Huxley's ideas on the significance of art have three corresponding stages. During his satiric period, the period in which he felt most devastatingly the hopelessness of his generation, he also felt that the idea of man which Renaissance art expressed could help his despairing compatriots to lift themselves out of their self-created wastelands and work once more toward the Victorian ideal of a better future. Artists are generally admirable characters in the first four novels; and the deeper an understanding a character has of man's noble nature as expressed in visual art, the more Huxley makes him oppose the post-war wreckage.

During his second stage, the period of reexamination, the value of art to modern man fades significantly in Huxley's eyes. Art may well carry the message of perfectibility, but Huxley now felt that it could communicate its message to so few that it could not possibly counteract modern despair. But during the third, affirmative period,

Huxley experienced a resurgence of confidence in art. Although he felt art does not contain the one important truth for mankind--that we can better ourselves, that perfectibility is not just a delusion--it does contain a message which is important and which it can communicate to those with open minds: the existence of profound religious truths about the relationship of man to an Absolute or Supreme Being. Art cannot in itself teach man these religious truths, but the best art points the way toward mystical existence and awakens our senses to a perception of the Absolute in everyday life. It is almost ironic that, during this third stage, when visual art no longer seemed to teach the truth, but was simply a pointer toward or a corrolary of truth, Huxley's insights into total artistic vision and awareness reached their height. His artistic appreciation became universal instead of being limited to the psychologically-oriented painters he had enjoyed in his youth, and he was able to comprehend, at least intellectually, artistic visions he had never personally experienced.

But before we can understand Huxley's use of art in his novels, we must examine his personal relationship with art. A number of writers of the post-World War I era dissected the disillusionment and despair in their societies. Many satirized the Victorian ideal of progress which had been made laughable by a war which reduced men to animals. Many dismissed the beneficent if stern Victorian God, whose existence no longer seemed plausible. But in England only Huxley seems to have turned seriously to visual art as a possible answer to the moral crisis. Only he seems to have believed that contemporary man could find an

alternative life style in the vision of man presented in the greatest art of the past.

The reasons for Huxley's turning to visual art are first of all biographical. His letters show that his involvement with visual art began early. In 1915, for instance, he couched his anti-German sentiments in artistic analysis: "One has but to look at their work to see it. . .the bull necked, browless figures of the Munich painters, nudes with puffy muscles and green flesh tints, stark and ugly."[1] During his travels in Europe, he often judged cities according to their art works[2] and found that "Architecture, sculpture and painting give me, I find, as much pleasure as a perpetual concert."[3]

One of Huxley's ambitions was to be a painter.[4] Naomi Mitchison tells us that this ambition continued even after his difficulties with his sight began: "In some extraordinary way he did the most brilliant drawings, using thick pencil. Once or twice he told me he was going to be a painter as though he had set the horse of his spirit against the most difficult fence."[5] Huxley continued to draw and paint throughout much of his middle life. In his letters of the early 1930's, he refers several times to the seductiveness of painting: "I have developed a passion for painting and that, if I didn't keep it in check, I should spend the whole of every day at it."[6] Although he was almost always dissatisfied with his own paintings,[7] he found painting "the ideal art--involving one in nothing outside itself and having a technique which is a pleasure to employ."[8] He also believed in the humanizing aspect of artistic activity: "In the days before machinery men and women who wanted to amuse themselves were compelled, in their

humble way, to be artists. Now they sit still and permit professionals to entertain them by the aid of machinery. It is difficult to believe that general artistic culture can flourish in this atmosphere of passivity."[9] The creation of art had both a sociological and a psychological value for him: "craftsmanship is something which most men and women find psychologically satisfying. . .craftsmanship is its own reward. . .a society of craftsmen is a society of satisfied individuals; and a society of satisfied individuals tends to be a stable society."[10]

It seems likely that Huxley's difficulties with his eyesight, culminating in a short period of almost total blindness, actually stimulated his interest in visual art. Knowing the harsh deprivation of life without sight, he was all the more eager to explore and appreciate fully what he could see. Painting brings scenes of life up close, where they can be carefully examined by someone whose eyesight precludes full appreciation of these same scenes in the real world. Aided by magnifying glasses, which he took with him to museums, Huxley was able to explore at leisure the alternatives to nothingness which art offered.

While it is a mistake to put too great an emphasis on Huxley's defective sight, it certainly is significant in his involvement with visual art. George Woodcock, a critic who has put considerable emphasis on this point, maintains that, while to a certain extent

> Huxley triumphed over his defects of sight, . . .even in triumphing his perceptions were modified by them. Not only do we perceive the striking gap between the minute and the grand--with none of the intermediate elements of the picture recognized. We also realize that Huxley is really using his intelligence rather than his eye, abstracting from the picture not only its general lines of form, but also the temperament of the artist who created it; that what interests him as much as any purely aesthetic element is the combination of psychological and sociological clues that

> emerge. . . . Significantly, he did not like purely non-representational pictures; there had to be a theme so that the mind's eye could take over where the body's eye surrenders.[11]

Woodcock's analysis of Huxley's artistic preferences is accurate, but to suggest that he could not see well enough to appreciate art on purely aesthetic grounds flies both in the face of Huxley's many comprehensive descriptions of paintings, and of Huxley's whole intellectual turn of mind. Huxley did not dislike Cubism because he could not see it; he did see it and found it lacking in meaning.

Meaning in art was crucial to Huxley. Kenneth Clark reminisces:

> I remember, about thirty years ago, looking at a Seurat with him, and he scrutinized it from the distance of a few inches. I should have supposed that he saw nothing but dots. 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. . . . Aldous had an astonishing faculty for seeing what an artist really meant. This allowed him to follow what I believe is one of the most enlightening of all forms of criticism--the description of the subject of a picture in an artist's own terms.[12]

Huxley's primary interest in visual art was in interpreting its message. Thoroughly grounded in the Arnoldian dicta on the importance of culture, and acting on the assumption that the messages culturally transmitted in art do have relevance in contemporary life, Huxley examined art works for their "literary" content, for the image of human life which the artist attempted to transmit.

In "Music at Night," for instance, Huxley compares Virgins by Piero della Francesca and Tura not simply as representative of two different styles, but also two different truths about life. Piero's shows an orderly acceptance of the world, a conviction of "the greatness of the human spirit," and the knowledge that man is saved by reason.[13] Tura's Virgin, on the other hand, shows a mind overwhelmed by the chaos

of the world, a world which is a fantastic combination of heaven and hell, and in which salvation is possible only through a miracle.[14] Both these paintings illustrate a truth about life, a truth which the artist has translated from raw experience in his own life into paint.

Huxley felt both anger against and contempt for the vast majority of twentieth-century art critics who were unwilling to explore meaning in art, or even to admit that painting had meaning. Most art critics, Huxley felt, were just scholars who happened to have chosen art history as their field; they could detect differences in period, but not in meaning or value.[15] Huxley's contempt for art critics remained constant throughout his life: "Today the intrusion of literature into the plastic arts is regarded almost as a crime," he remarks sarcastically in 1956.[16]

Huxley never held long to one particular definition of art, but his general view is typified by the definition in "Art and the Critic": good art "is the art which most completely satisfies the fundamental needs of the human spirit. . .such as the desire for beauty, for heightened experience, for knowledge of reality, and also for escape from reality."[17] Furthermore, Huxley maintained, "The only prejudice that the ideal art critic should have is against the incompetent, the mentally dishonest and the futile."[18]

These two definitions would seem to set Huxley on the way to universality in art criticism, toward a championship of the best in whatever form or place he found it. For most of his life, however, Huxley was definitely not a universal art critic. He had a distinct prejudice during the 1920's against most of the advances in western art

after 1850, and several extensively developed theories to justify this prejudice.

Art, Huxley held, should be the exposition of the completely integrated soul. To have such a soul, the artist must have "humility towards things as well as a will to subdue them." The artist who is too humble toward life transfers too much chaos into his work; this is the failure of impressionism. But the artist who subdues too harshly to his or her arrogance loses the infinite beauty and variety of nature; this is the failure of cubism.[19] In speaking of the soul, art must speak truth to the souls of the viewers. If the artist, in attempting to remove the literary qualities from his painting or sculpture, attempts to shun the role of truth-teller, he limits himself to a small fraction of man and his existence, and the art becomes meaningless.[20] While abstract art can, occasionally, express essential truths, it is far more difficult for the artist to do so in this medium; and many abstract artists and their critics try deliberately to remove meaning from the works.[21]

We can come closest to understanding Huxley's viewpoint on visual art by examining his thoughts on Piero della Francesca, who Huxley felt had painted "The Best Picture":

> But there does exist, none the less, an absolute standard of artistic merit. And it is a standard which is in the last resort a moral one. Whether a work of art is good or bad depends entirely on the quality of the character which expresses itself in the work.[22]

Virtue and truth are the qualities which the best artists express. They express it, as Piero does, with all the turmoil of actual experience

digested into "a grave intellectual whole,"[23] organizing "chaotic appearance into an orderly and human universe."[24]

Throughout his entire life, Huxley felt very strongly that standards in visual art had to be upheld. Although rare, high quality art, which Huxley personally had no difficulty recognizing, is entirely different from low quality art, in which truth is either lacking or slavishly derivative. Huxley does not inform us--and perhaps no art critic can--of the exact visual conditions which reveal truth. But he was adamant that judgments in quality had to be made, and criticized severely those critics who refused this duty:

> For example, the stained glass windows at Sens are treated by the guide-books as though they were just like all other stained glass of the fourteenth century, when in fact they are unique in boldness and beauty of design. Some very great artist made the series of Bible illustrations at Sens. The Baron [Baedeker] speaks as highly of the competent craftsman's work at Chartres and Canterbury.[25]

Unfortunately for ease of judgment, the quality of the character expressed in the work of art is not always an accurate reflection of the quality of the artist's character in his daily life. As with Haydon, an artist may be sincere in life but paint wholly insincere pictures, or vice versa. "The truth is that sincerity in art is not an affair of will, of a moral choice between honesty and dishonesty. It is mainly an affair of talent. . . . For in matters of art 'being sincere' is synonymous with 'possessing the gifts of psychological understanding and expression.'"[26]

Here we have penetrated to the core of Huxley's understanding of and interest in visual art. Psychological understanding and expression were exactly the qualities which Huxley himself attempted to

achieve in his works, especially the earlier ones. Point Counter Point is a web of psychological motives encountering and reacting to other motives; Those Barren Leaves is a penetration to the core of psychological emptiness in the lives of his characters; Antic Hay is an examination of post-war psychological despair. What Huxley most strongly applauded in visual art was a statement about the mind of man.

During the first phase of Huxley's artistic development (to 1930), his favorite period in art was the Renaissance, a period in which artists regularly portrayed man as noble, aspiring, and perfectible. An agnostic at this time, Huxley was not particularly interested in the means of perfectibility--Christianity--offered by the Renaissance artists. He did not give Roman Catholicism a very large share of the credit for the Renaissance revival of the spirit, but instead noted "the stimulating and liberating action on the spirit of a multiplicity of inventions, discoveries, economic changes and political upheavals."[27]

What attracted Huxley was the fact that the Renaissance artist had looked at the mind of man and had found hope. Huxley himself had looked into man and had found mainly hopelessness. The reason he kept looking to visual art as a possible center of meaning for life is that he had seen hope for perfectibility in its products. By examining the painting and sculpture which grew out of hope, one might be able to find hope oneself. In each of his first four novels, Huxley examines his contemporaries and finds them in desperate need of a reason to exist and of hope for the future. To fill this void, Huxley offers his contemporaries the positive view of man found in Renaissance art, or art with a Renaissance/humanistic spirit. In each novel, the characters reject

this hopeful view. But the fact that Huxley kept offering the idea shows its significance to his thematic development in the 1920's.

In the 1930's during his second phase of development, Huxley lost confidence in the idea that art could help man. He found the majority of his contemporaries insensitive to what he felt were the real messages of art. But after he experienced his own religious transformation, his attraction to art and his belief in its spiritual efficacy for man revived. During the 1940's and 1950's, it was Oriental art rather than Renaissance art which primarily attracted him. Huxley also became open to the ideas and feelings of certain artists who had previously confused or eluded him--Vuillard, Gericault, even some Cubists rose in value as Huxley, too, experienced the same sort of mystical event they described in paint.

But although his interest in particular artists changed, Huxley's basic outlook on art did not. Throughout his life he was interested in art as a conveyor of the truths about man discovered by past generations. But as Huxley's idea of what truth was changed from an almost exclusively psychological perspective to a psycho-religious perspective, with a consequent change in his favorite artists. But Huxley believed throughout his life that man should devote himself to discovering the truth, and that one of the primary ways to discover it was to examine visual art. He did that personally, then used the knowledge he gained in both his essays and his novels to awaken his contemporaries to man's vast potential for spiritual development. During his last years, his new knowledge of the hugeness of man's spirit enabled him to accept artistic visions he had not personally experienced and

that he had previously rejected; thus, his art criticism became as universal as his vision of man.

CHAPTER II

HUXLEY'S ART ESSAYS

It would be plausible for an observer to assume, judging from the regularity of his contributions to the magazines and journals of his day, that Huxley wrote articles on visual art as a kind of hack-work which would support his family, but leave him enough free time in which to write novels. To a certain extent, this is true. Huxley often did not enjoy spending large amounts of time on his articles, we discover from his letters, and was eager to have them printed in as many forms as possible in order to earn the maximum amount from each one. However, it would be a mistake to thus assume that the essays have little worth. On the contrary, Huxley found them so distracting because he devoted a great deal of time and thought to almost all of them. Even more important, he almost always wrote on artists who were important to him as both a writer and a thinker. Thus, the essays are indispensable both to the student of the modern critical essay and to the Huxley scholar.

Huxley's art essays accurately reflect the changes in his ideas and interests over his lifetime. While there is certainly not a single, incontrovertible line of development in the essays, the art essays from the 1920's do reveal Huxley's strong interest in temperament and psychological outlook as means by which truth is revealed. Later essays show Huxley's despair through his striking insights into artists of despair such as Callot and Piranesi. Huxley's awakening mysticism

is reflected first in his growing awareness of Christian vision in painting, then in almost startling new insights into Oriental and French mystical painters.

It would not be productive to examine all of Huxley's art essays in detail. However, representative examples from each period of his development will show us more clearly exactly how Huxley's outlook is reflected in his criticism, and give us clues as to the way his artistic and literary interests interacted.

The 1925 essay on Brueghel is representative of Huxley's first period of development. Although Huxley and Brueghel worked in different media, many of their methods, as well as their concepts of life and art, are similar. In their methods of construction, in their multiple views of life, in their interest in recording the customs and social life of their times, and in their attitudes toward the relative roles of life and art, Huxley and Brueghel are closer than most other artists separated by nearly four hundred years. The result is that the characters the two create are exceptionally close; both artists are approaching the subject matter of social man from the same point of view.

Huxley was strongly attracted to Brueghel's method of artistic construction. In Brueghel's show scenes, for instance,

> a snowy background has the effect of making all dark or coloured objects seen against it appear in the form of very distinct, sharp-edged silhouettes. Breughel does in all his compositions what the snow does in nature. All the objects in his pictures . . .are paperthin silhouettes arranged, plane after plane, like the theatrical scenery in the depth of the stage. Consequently . . .he achieves an almost disquieting degree of fundamental realism.[1]

For Huxley, the inclusion in the works of art of vast numbers of figures

which are individually dissociated but which altogether make up a vast and striking pattern was an exact imitation of life itself.

It is only natural that this type of visual arrangement should have appealed to Huxley because it is essentially the same one he was using in the novels of this period. Point Counter Point is probably Huxley's best example of the revelation of the lives of dissociated groups and individuals which, when juxtaposed, form an overall pattern with implications which go far beyond the novel itself. Spandrell, Quarles, and Rampion in isolation--as they essentially are within the bounds of the novel--seem individuals whose ideas are taking them nowhere and whose lives have meaning only to themselves, but taken together they form a complex view of the eternally battling forces of life. Similarly, the individual encounters with death in Brueghel's "The Triumph of Death" are simple, isolated ends of lives; but taken all together, as Brueghel demands that we take them, they form a picture of horror and destruction which goes far beyond the individual to a grim vision of life itself. On the happier side, the isolated groups of children in "Children's Games" certainly seem to lack significance, but taken together they evoke a feeling for the eternity of childhood, the perennial nature of children and their games.

Huxley also admired Brueghel's multiple vision of life. On the one hand, "Breughel's anthropology is as delightful as his nature poetry. He knew his Flemings and knew them intimately. . . . He exhibits them mostly in those moments of orgiastic gaiety with which they temper the laborious monotony of their daily lives: eating enormously, drinking, uncouthly dancing, indulging in that peculiarly

Flemish scatalogical waggery."[2] On the other hand, Brueghel was "a man profoundly convinced of the reality of evil and of the horrors which this mortal life, not to mention eternity, hold in store for suffering humanity. The world is a horrible place; but in spite of this, or precisely because of this, men and women eat, drink and dance."[3]

Huxley's multiple vision of life is most evident in his earliest novels, such as Antic Hay. Like Brueghel, Huxley shows his characters at moments of orgiastic gaiety: Myra and Gumbril dance lavishly to the tune of "What's he to Hecuba"; Coleman puts on a show, with the aid of his "helpmate" Zoe, basically to amuse his friends; Gumbril acquires a false beard and becomes the Complete Man, ready to seduce every woman to whom he takes a fancy and ready to win battles on the business front by demanding just payment from Boldero for Gumbril's Patent Small Clothes. But again, like Brueghel, Huxley was convinced of the horror and evil of the world. The trauma of World War I hangs over Antic Hay like smoke. Characters like Gumbril, generally sympathetic, are capable of senseless cruelty, as in the betrayal of Emily.

Both Huxley and Brueghel create characters who hide from the tragic side of life in the comic. The London of Antic Hay is hell, as Coleman suggests; but to hide from the facts of outer social and inner personal crumbling, the main characters in the novel must indulge in hilarious, witty, and loud drinking parties, culminating in rides such as the final wild one through London which closes the novel. The only alternatives are Lypiatt's death or Shearwater's senseless, repetitive activity. Similarly, looking at Brueghel's pictures, one often feels that his characters also hide in the comic in the face of the horrors

of life. In "The Magpie on the Gallows," a group of peasants dances beside the dominating scaffold. In "The Misanthrope," the cut-purse assumes, for the viewer, a grotesquely comic pose, as do the pathetic, falling "Blind Men." Both Huxley and Brueghel were well aware of the dark sides of life, but both felt the need to respond to it in a partially comic way rather than to accept a black, existential despair as their philosophy of life.

Huxley was particularly struck by Brueghel's multiple point of view in many of his religious paintings. He writes of "The Ascent to Calvary":

> Of the Crucifixion and the Carrying of the Cross there are hundreds of representations. . . . But of all that I have ever seen, this Calvary of Breughel's is the most suggestive and, dramatically, the most appalling. For all other masters have painted these dreadful scenes from within, so to speak, outwards. For them, Christ is the centre, the divine hero of the tragedy. . . . Breughel, on the other hand, starts from the outside and works inwards. He represents the scene as it would have appeared to any casual spectator on the road to Golgotha on a certain spring morning in the year 33 A.D.[5]

Seen from this perspective, "the tragedy does not purge or uplift; it appalls and makes desperate; or it may even inspire a kind of gruesome mirth."[6]

Again, this is close to Huxley's own method of working. He rarely uses the single point of view or the transforming consciousness in his novels, but instead looks at events from several different points of view, thus preventing any sense of tragedy. When young Phillip Quarles dies from meningitis in Point Counter Point, we do not see the event from the single point of view of his mother, who certainly has a tragic sense of the event. Instead, we see it also from his father's point of view, a father who cannot get wholly involved in the event, as he has been

unable to get really involved in anything else that has happened in his life. We see the death also from the point of view of Spandrell and Illidge; the fortuitousness and perfect timing of the illness allow them to murder Webley. And on the grotesquely comic side, the deaths of both Phil and Webley prevent Elinor from cuckolding her husband.

Huxley uses similar multiple viewpoints in his short story "Happily Ever After." Potentially tragic events, such as George's loss of his leg and Guy's death, never become tragic because they are seen not only from the viewpoints of several different people, but also from different points in time. The amputation turns out to be a good thing, as it prevents George's being killed in the war. Marjorie, as time goes on, has more and more difficulty evoking a tragic feeling about Guy's death, even though she had planned to marry him; and by the end of the story it is clear that she will soon find complete consolation with George. Thus, by portraying events not solely from the point of view of the chief participants, but also as the casual observer might see them, both Brueghel and Huxley create a sardonic atmosphere around pivotal events in their works. Christ's tragedy is the farm-boys' holiday. Elinor's loss is Illidge's gain. In the overall flux of life, is one point of view really more important than the other simply because we want it to be? Both Huxley and Brueghel answer no.

Huxley also responds to Brueghel's desire to record the customs and life of his country:

> The Wedding Feast and the Peasants' Dance, both at Vienna, are superb examples of this anthropological type of painting. Nor must we forget those two curious pictures, the Battle Between Carnival and Lent and the Children's Games. . . . These two pictures are systematic and encyclopaedic. In one he illustrates

> all children's games; in the other all the amusements of carnival, with all the forces arrayed on the side of asceticism. In the same way he represents, in his extraordinary Tower of Babel, all the processes of building. These pictures are handbooks of their respective subjects.[7]

While none of Huxley's novels could rightly be called an anthropological handbook, the author is interested in recording the customs of his time. Thus, he incorporates the children's game of being the first to shout "beaver" on seeing a man with a beard into Antic Hay; he carefully records California's burial laws and customs both in After Many a Summer Dies the Swan and Ape and Essence; he shows the use of the telegraph for social purposes in Crome Yellow and the rejection by some people of the telephone in Point Counter Point. The coming of the Fascist movement to Britain is an essential part of Point Counter Point, though Everard Webley as a portrait of Moseley is a few years ahead of the actual event.

Many of the short stories hinge on a particular social or historical event. The hero of "The Farcical History of Richard Greenow" is plagued by a dual personality, one male and one female. Richard, the dominant half, successfully controls and even exploits his female half until women are given the vote. The female half insists on registering, and Richard is declared a lunatic. "The Giaconda Smile" shows the use of the automobile in conducting illicit sexual affairs. "Half-Holiday" is almost entirely an examination of the relations between the aspiring lower and complacently satisfied upper classes at the beginning of the century. It is through careful use of contemporary detail that Huxley is able to create for the reader the essential feeling of time and place for which his fiction is noted. In the same way, there can

be no doubt of the location and time of Brueghel's pictures, for they are such close recordings of exactly what was going on around him.

A final point on which Brueghel and Huxley are quite similar is their view of the relative positions of life and art. Huxley does not discuss Brueghel's view of art specifically in "Breughel," but he does imply it when he describes Brueghel as "the wonderfully skilful pictorial expounder or suggester of a view of life."[8] Unlike many artists of his time, Brueghel did not pursue classic beauty, nor was he interested in perfecting the techniques of other artists. Instead, his primary interest lay in recording life around him, both openly, in his straightforward views of peasant life, or covertly, in the political protest of his religious paintings. Dvorak describes Brueghel as "interested in the study and description of all aspects of life. . . . He is barely interested in showing man as he ought to be; on the contrary, he represents him as he really is, with a kind of humorous violence, with his defects, his passions and his prejudices, leaving to the spectator the task of drawing a moral from what he paints."[9]

By changing "paints" to "writes," the same passage could apply equally well in the 1920's to Huxley, whose characters, too, are full of flaws and foibles, and whose satire is generally presented without a contrasting "golden mean." Huxley wanted to record life exactly as it was lived, without a shaping sense of beauty or purpose. Consequently, novels such as Crome Yellow and Antic Hay are often accused of shapelessness and diffusion. That is exactly the effect Huxley wanted, for it is exactly the shapelessness and diffusion of life which he was attempting to recreate. Just as Brueghel refused to allow the attention

of all his figures to be arrested by the fall of Icarus, so Huxley refuses to allow all characters to focus on Rosie's desire for excitement, or to be arrested for more than a fleeting moment by the story of Sir Hercules.

Huxley stands in contrast to other British novelists at the beginning of the twentieth century who were far more concerned with art than with an exact recording of life. Ford's The Good Soldier, Joyce's Ulysses, Conrad's Lord Jim are all carefully, artistically shaped experiences whose authors take pride in their ability to control the psychological thrusts of their novels. Huxley, like Brueghel, is more interested in making a record of life as it is going on around him, without losing control and therefore the reader's interest, but at the same time without forcing the experience toward a unified, "artistic" conclusion.

Huxley's view that life should dominate art did not change during his lifetime, although he did change from a recorder of life to a teacher. Island's primary purpose is to teach us a valuable lesson about life's possibilities, not to entertain or astound us with its art. Brueghel also at times seems to attempt to teach a lesson about life, especially in his illustrations of proverbs. Again, for both artists, life is the dominating force, art simply its tool.

By examining Huxley's similarity to Brueghel, we can answer a question which has puzzled literary critics for years: why did Huxley refuse to create the psychologically profound characters who are of such major importance in the works of other novelists of his time? The answer is that Huxley, like Brueghel, was not so much interested

in man as a unique and isolated being as he was in man's role in society, in the forces which make him similar to, rather than different from, others. Both Huxley and Brueghel create humour characters (in the Jonsonian sense) who live in a tangle of social ties because both artists saw man as dominated by the demands of his body and by the demands of others. Man is inextricably tangled in the social web in the works of both artists, at the mercy of chance and of other people.

It is no simple coincidence, then, that Huxley was strongly attracted to Brueghel's paintings. The two artists had remarkably close views on both the functions and the methods of art. Huxley's essay is helpful in pointing out to us his own artistic temperament and his ability to discern the workings of the mind of an artist far removed from him in time, but similar to him in methodology.

The essay on Brueghel is representative of Huxley's early interest in art as a conveyor of psychological truth. Huxley responded to Brueghel because that artist saw human personality from the same point of view he did. But Huxley did not always approach life from the point of view he held in his early years. As he developed in the 1930's and 1940's, he enjoyed man's psychological quirks and limits less, and he lost what little hope he had had in a rational future. As a consequence, his primary interest in visual art changed from artists like Brueghel, whose worlds were full of psychological excitement, to artists like Callot, Goya, and Piranesi, who were convinced of man's limits and bleak future. Like this latter group of artists, Huxley during this period was interested in what we might call the "dark night of the soul" of visual art. None of these artists has the power to help modern man

out of his troubles.[10] All three show man cut off from eternal benevolence and completely at the mercy of worlds gone mad with suffering, deprivation, and loneliness--the same madness Huxley was writing about in Eyeless in Gaza and After Many a Summer Dies the Swan.

Huxley's discussion of Callot is embedded in his biography Grey Eminence.[11] This study of political intrigue in seventeenth century France uses Callot's etchings Les Misères et les Malheurs de la Guerre to evoke the misery and horror which the machinations of Father Joseph and Richelieu caused in the Thirty Years' War. Huxley describes a number of the etchings in great detail, and goes beyond the present sufferings depicted in the etchings to the future suffering the victims can expect. Not only will the nuns about to be raped suffer in the present and immediate future, but those who survive will end their lives in misery as camp followers:

> Half starved, covered only with a few stinking rags, verminous and syphilitic, with burdens on their back and naked pot-bellied children trailing after them, they will march all summer long behind their masters, they will cower in the rains and frosts of interminable winters, until finally, long before the war is over, the God who has forsaken them once more takes pity and they die, to be eaten by dogs or perhaps by their famished companions.[12]

The devastation of the war is such that there is no choice for the victims except to continue being victims.

Huxley notes several pages before his discussion of Callot that

> art can be almost completely irrelevant to life, and that the study of the masterpieces of painting and poetry and music throws very little light upon the actual character of the age in which they were produced. From a collection of fifteenth-century Italian paintings who could possibly infer the society described by Machiavelli? More often than not, the work of even the most "representative" artists shows at best what their contemporaries

> would have liked to be, not what they were. If such creators as Rubens, say, and Corneille are historically significant, it is not because they tell us anything about the concrete facts of real characters of their time; it is because their pictures and dramas so vividly illustrate certain aspects of the bovaristic dreams by which the seventeenth-century mind was haunted--the dream of superhuman splendour and the dream of superhuman nobility, the desire for a more than Persian magnificence impossibly combined with a more than Spartan heroism.[13]

Huxley is not interested in Callot as an exact recorder of the events about which Huxley himself is writing so much as he is in Callot the psychological artist, painter of nightmarish scenes of torture and death in a spirit of detachment. Callot is one example of the human results of the horrors of war. He has become emotionally detached from a life too terrible to identify with, but he has retained enough reason to argue against the war by drawing the etchings. The only other alternative for Callot would seem to be a reduction of the self to the bestiality of the peasants in the etchings.

Huxley did find an alternative response to the horrors of war in the later works of Goya, but it is not a response which Huxley finds particularly satisfying, even though it is fascinating. Concentrating on Goya's late series of etchings (in his essay "Variations on Goya," On Art and Artists), he sees Goya as supremely aware of "human crime and madness."[14] Goya is "the almost perfect type of the man who knows only sorrow and not the ending of sorrow."[15]

This use of the Buddhist phrase indicates that one of Huxley's criteria for the evaluation of Goya's painting is its religious orientation. And it is his criterion in that he conceives of religion as a psychological state. Huxley sees Goya's paintings as having been produced by a mind whose "only reality. . .was that of the world around

him."[16] Because Goya knew only everyday reality and not transcendental reality, his paintings can reflect only his physical/psychological state rather than a knowledge which would help him transcend the horrors of reality. As a youth, Goya's "animal high spirits went on bubbling up irrepressibly."[17] But when the disasters of the Napoleonic Wars overtook him in a weakened old age, Goya could not retain an optimistic vision, and could see only "the abyss of bestiality and diabolism and suffering."[18]

Unlike Callot, Goya does not maintain a detached attitude toward the suffering and horror of war. He is more deeply involved and, therefore, in a worse position, so far as Huxley is concerned, than Callot. The darker the outlook on life, the harder to achieve the transcendental position Huxley feels is necessary to permanent happiness.

Goya maintains this attitude of involved horror when he portrays social foibles too: "standard eighteenth-century humor often undergoes a sea change into something darker and queerer. . .the unplumbed depths of original sin and original stupidity."[19] Goya goes beyond superficial foibles into "unregenerate human nature" to discover that life signifies nothing. The artist is abandoned in the world of his own psychological horror, giving expression to it in sometimes obscure symbolism, but completely unable to find a way out.[20]

Huxley is attracted to Goya, then, because the two were wrestling with similar problems: the meaning of life, the struggle to understand the horror of the wars of their time, the incomprehensible nature of man's worst character traits. Because Goya did not find his way out, he can perhaps teach us the way not to go, and is thus a

valuable lesson to Huxley. But there is another reason why Huxley is attracted to Goya: as in his relationship with Brueghel, Huxley's method of working is similar to Goya's.

Goya, maintains Huxley, is successful only when he works in terms of "clearly delimited masses standing out from the background,"[21] not when he attempts an "allover" composition. "He lacks almost completely the power which Rubens so conspicuously possessed--the power of filling the entire canvas with figures or details of landscape, and upon the plenum imposing a clear and yet exquisitely subtle three-dimensional order."[22] Huxley, too, works in precisely this fashion during the second period of his development. When we think in terms of the well-wrought novel, we are unlikely to think immediately of these middle works. Huxley was not what he called a "congenital novelist," and he knew it. His purpose in writing, and his talent, lay in the creation of "clearly delineated masses" which silhouetted contemporary man and his problems against the stark background of the modern world. Anthony in Eyeless in Gaza and Mr. Propter in After Many a Summer, though completely different characters, are both carefully delineated silhouettes working against a chaotic background toward a single idea. This method of working is the most effective one if the content of the art is more important than the aesthetics of the work, and content was decidedly more important to Huxley and the later Goya than was totality of aesthetic perception.

A second reason why Huxley the artist was drawn to Goya is a similarity in temperament. Both artists changed constantly. Huxley contrasts Goya, whose style is radically different at the end of his

life from what it was at the beginning, with Wordsworth, who repeated his earlier triumphs throughout his middle and later years. "Goya once drew a picture of an ancient man tottering along under the burden of years, but with the accompanying caption, 'I'm still learning.' That old man was himself."[23] It could also have been Huxley.

With Piranesi, Huxley turns his attention from the outer, physical disasters to which man is subject to the inner, psychological torments brought on by his feeling of solitude in a meaningless universe. In his 1949 introduction to Prisons, Huxley sees Piranesi's series of imaginative etchings done during the artist's early manhood as "variations on a single symbol, whose reference is to things existing in the psysical and metaphysical depths of human souls--to acedia and confusion, to nightmare and angst, to incomprehension and a panic bewilderment."[24] While other critics tend to emphasize the imaginative quality of the etchings, or to note their similarity to stage designs of the time, Huxley sees them as visual representations of man's suffering and defeat.

The chief element of suffering in Piranesi's world is the meaninglessness of the world:

> One is made to feel that the genius of great artists and the labour of innumerable slaves have gone into the creation of these monuments, every detail of which is completely without a purpose. . .the staircases lead nowhere, the vaults support nothing but their own weight.[25]

And the pointlessness is not simply limited to these buildings, but rather "goes on indefinitely, and is co-extensive with the universe."[26]

Huxley feels that Piranesi has penetrated to a psychological truth which was valid not only for the eighteenth century but also for our time. One of the principal causes of psychological despair, Huxley

felt, was the realization of our eternal solitude but at the same time our dependence on others. The few inhabitants of the etchings are undeniably alone, yet not self-sufficient. Whether or not this is the precise idea behind Piranesi's vision--and the point could easily be questioned--it is certain that Piranesi has created a nightmare world which has its basis far more obviously in psychological horror than in reality.

During this period, Huxley, too, was attempting to cope with psychological horror, which he portrayed so vividly in Eustace Barnack's post-mortum thoughts. Both Eustace's thoughts and Piranesi's prisons go on into endless suffering, unable to reach beyond earthly torture to something better, something beyond the enclosed world. In contrast to Blake's vision of hell, which Huxley sees as peopled with figures "vaguely heroic in the corrupt classical manner of the late eighteenth century" and who take "a lively interest in the situations of those around them,"[27] Huxley's and Piranesi's visions of hell reduce man to the animal, without dignity or reason.

Interestingly, the solution to the problem of the torture of meaninglessness which Huxley sees Piranesi as having found is the solution which Huxley had been trying to apply to his own life for so long, but which had failed to satisfy him completely--meaning in humanistic art:

> Piranesi's faith was that of a renaissance humanist, his god was Roman antiquity and his motivating desire was a mixture of the artist's will to beauty, the archaeologist's will to historical truth and the poor man's will to make a living. These, we must assume, were sufficient antidotes to _acedia_ and spiritual confusion. At any rate, he never gave a second expression to the state of mind which had inspired the _Prisons_.[28]

A world of meaning lies in the phrase "we must assume." Huxley is admitting that salvation in humanistic art is not self-evident. It has not been satisfactory for him. Like Piranesi, like Callot and Goya, he has explored the horrors of life to which man is subject, horrors which may be imposed from without or from within, and has found that he needs a more intense antidote to human misery than the one which has satisfied Piranesi. The mystical strain which he feels runs through all major religions is the answer for Huxley, and while finding it did not cause him to reject humanistic art as worthless, it did lead him to put it permanently in a secondary role.

Thus, the first two periods of Huxley's artistic development are reflected in two distinctly different kinds of sensitivities to art. During the first, he responded most strongly to the psychological excitement of a Brueghel; during the second, to the psychological despair of a Callot. And the third period of Huxley's development, the move into mysticism, is also reflected in a change of sensitivity to art. Instead of concentrating on the psychological aspects of art, he began to concentrate on the mystical aspects, and to see mystical aspects in artists he had previously examined from other points of view.

We can see this change in sensitivity quite clearly if we compare Huxley's two essays on El Greco, written before and after his own personal religious change. The first, "Meditation on El Greco," was first published in 1931.[29] "Variations on El Greco" followed almost twenty years later, in 1950.[30] In the first, the emphasis is on the proof El Greco's art gives us of the physiological basis of religion.

In the second, Huxley sees art as merely the outward manifestation of inner mystical experience.

It is from admitted ignorance that Huxley, in "Meditation on El Greco," speculates on the meaning of the "Dream of Philip II."[31] In spite of the picture's admitted mediocrity, Huxley is interested in the subject because "I do not know what the subject is. For this dream of King Philip--what was it? Was it a visionary anticipation of the Last Judgment? A mystical peep into Heaven?"[32] Huxley prefers, for the moment, to indulge in his own fancy concerning the picture.

Had Huxley known the subject, his reponse to the painting probably would not have been greatly changed. According to Paul Guinard, "The picture illustrates a passage from the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians: 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.' In it Christ's monogram alone occupies the place of honor, shining brilliantly amidst the angelic host. The three worlds unfold successively on a single, almost horizontal plane, with Philip II kneeling between the Church Militant and the Jaws of Hell."[33] The picture is now generally known as "The Adoration of the Name of Jesus," and critics regularly speculate that El Greco included Philip in hopes of receiving, by this flattery, royal commissions.

What interests Huxley is not so much the textual basis of the picture, but the interpretation of Hell which El Greco has painted, a visceral interpretation--Hell as the inside of a whale's belly--which Huxley sees as growing throughout El Greco's career until the visceral vision encompasses not only life on earth, but Heaven too. And while

the motif of the Jaws of Hell comes from Byzantine mosaic, the emphasis on the visceral, the enclosed feeling of El Greco's work, must be examined in terms of the artist's psychology, not merely in terms of influences.

El Greco is generally interpreted as attempting to express in forms the spiritual ecstasy of intense religious experiences and of mysticism, an attempt which relates him to Baroque artists such as Bernini. But Huxley realizes in this essay that El Greco is approaching the mystical experience from a different point of view. Bernini, he points out, suggests the mystical experience at its conclusion, the opening up of the spirit to the revelation of the union with God. But such experiences have their origin in the physiological states of the body, in "the primary corporeal facts of numinous experience, not the mental derivatives from them.[34]

Huxley's interpretation of El Greco would seem to be a fairly direct answer to Roger Fry's interpretation in his essay "El Greco."[35] Fry interprets El Greco as being closer to the Baroque spirit than Huxley does, although he too sees El Greco as being more "gloomy" and melodramatic than Bernini, who is radiant and amiable.[36]

Fry rejects the idea that Baroque art is a complete embodiment of the ecstatic religious principle present in mysticism and, to some extent, in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation:

> Some action and reaction between the religious ideas of the time and the artists' conception there may have been, but I think the artists would have elaborated the Baroque idea without this external pressure. For one thing, the idea goes back behind Michelangelo to Signorelli, and in his case, at least, one can see no trace of any preoccupation with those psychological states, but rather a pure passion for a particular kind of rhythmic design.

> Moreover, the general principle of the continued enlargement of the unit of design was bound to occur the moment artists recovered from the debauch of naturalism of the fifteenth century and became conscious again of the demands of abstract design.[37]

Huxley disagrees. To him, the sham of Baroque art in general is a result of the cheapening of religious feeling during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a result of the desire to have "'A John of the Cross in every Home.'"[38] El Greco's art, on the other hand, is an expression of the artist's knowledge that religious feeling is a matter of literal guts, that we must take such Biblical expressions as "'For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ'"[39] literally, not metaphorically.

The element of El Greco's paintings which is most striking to Huxley, the visceral element, is one which has not really been treated adequately by most critics. As Huxley points out, El Greco's paintings are flattened, but not totally in the Byzantine sense, as most critics contend; and they are enclosed in a way that Byzantine art is not. The figures are cut off from open space by layers of cloud which are not light and airy, but which hold together as if they were organically linked. The radiance issuing from the dove in "The Descent of the Holy Ghost" has a tissue-like quality, a quality similar to that of the light which surrounds Christ in the Madrid "Resurrection," making the figure seem to ascend, as Huxley points out, "in a digestive tube."[40] The rocks which surround Christ and the disciples in "Christ at Gethsemane" are not solid forms at all, but more like enclosing wombs. Huxley observes that, as El Greco grows older, his bodies seem increasingly "peptonized," digested, becoming part of the visceral world which surrounds them.[41]

That Huxley saw in El Greco an artist who was illustrating the physiological side of what is generally interpreted as mental experience is hardly surprising in the light of Huxley's own interest in the physiological basis of personality and response. The characters in Huxley's novels are rarely the receptive, free consciousnesses we expect in early twentieth-century authors such as James Joyce or Virginia Woolf. Instead, they are like Brueghel's characters, bound by temperaments which are physiologically based: Marjorie Carling's growing spiritual enlightenment is to a large extent the result of her pregnancy; Bernard Marx cannot reconcile himself to his society because his physical development is abnormal.

Both Huxley and El Greco were closer to the psychology of humours than to the psychology of Freud and Adler. Huxley praises the older psychologists for their recognition of "the reality of the primary visceral consciousness" which "did all a man's feeling for him" while the "four humours of blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy determined his character and imposed his passing moods."[42] The exact physiological attributes were not, of course, scientifically accurate, but the idea was basically valid: ideas and emotions of human beings are inextricably wedded to physiological states.[43]

Huxley returned to El Greco twenty years later in "Variations on El Greco." But now, instead of emphasizing the visceral, interior nature of El Greco's religion, as he did in "Meditation," Huxley emphasizes the mystical aspect: "His aim is to assert the soul's capacity to come, through effort and through grace, to ecstatic union with the divine Spirit."[44] To render the mystical experience is El Greco's

conscious intention in his pictures, but the manner of the painting runs counter to the intent. The enclosed feeling of the pictures, the rendering of space as "neither flat nor fully three-dimensional" in which "there is hardly room to swing a cat"[45] no longer pictorially renders the truth that all feelings, even religious ones, begin with physiological causes. Instead, the enclosed, visceral nature of the paintings runs counter to what Huxley now perceives as true religious experience. To experience mystical union with God or the Absolute is a matter of space, light, and freedom, Huxley now declares. Paintings of mystical experience are completely effective only when, like Oriental landscapes, they suggest infinity. The enclosed spaces and emphasis on the visceral negate El Greco's mystical message.

The question arises as to why Huxley believed El Greco's intent was mystical when the style of his paintings negates mystical feeling. One reason is that the elongation of the figures and their rapt expressions suggest a longing for union with God. A second reason is that the definite frontiers between heaven and earth in the early pictures disappear in the later pictures. Third, one of the few biographical facts we have about El Greco is that he meditated; and to Huxley meditation invariably suggests mysticism.

The fourth and unspoken reason for Huxley's belief is, of course, that Huxley was himself undergoing a religious/mystical awakening at this time. When the younger Huxley believed religion to be primarily a physiological matter, he saw this message in El Greco. When he believed religion to be primarily a matter of mind expansion, he saw this concept in El Greco's paintings. To make this observation is not to

criticize Huxley at all. Almost all critics, if they are honest, will admit that what they see in any work of art is, at least in part, a reflection of themselves. And Huxley never pretended to be writing definitive historical treatises on artists. His essays reflect only how artists--or any other subject--struck him. Huxley's insights into art are often so striking and profound that it is easy for the reader to forget that he does not offer his ideas with historical or pedagogical intent. His perceptions on art change as he changes, and it is a tribute to the power of his mind that he never felt fettered by a previously expressed opinion.

These two essays, then, point out Huxley's changing attitude toward visual art. In the first, art contains an important truth: religious feelings are a function of physiology. In the second, truth lies in mystical religion and art is simply a by-product of that truth, in this case a powerful, but not particularly accurate, by-product. In both essays Huxley looks at the same paintings, but is sensitive to different aspects of them because of the change in himself.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST PHASE: THE ARTISTS IN HUXLEY'S SATIRIC LITERATURE OF THE 1920's

Huxley approached his first literary efforts convinced, first of all, that the upper class combination of mindless pleasure and general malaise was a reflection of deep hopelessness in society at large following World War I, and second that the pursuit of knowledge through visual art was a valuable way of life. As we have seen, Huxley's attraction to art was both personal--it brought scenes of life up close and organized them along appealing aesthetic lines--and intellectual--art regularly taught lessons about the hopeful, perfectible side of man's nature which Huxley felt his own generation could learn from. It was only natural, then, that the social satire of Huxley's first four novels should be tempered with an alternative to contemporary life offered through art. As Denis Stone suffers his adolescent agonies, as Gumbril Junior wanders around London with the emotionally barren Myra, as Philip Quarles suffers in self-imposed isolation, all are offered an alternative to their meaningless lives through the image of the healthy, productive, perfectible man presented in the best art. The alternative is not always clearly focused, and those who try hardest to embrace it are regularly defeated. But the fact that Huxley kept returning to the ideal man in art reveals the importance of art to Huxley.

Huxley first explored the idea that visual art might contain the meaning of life in his poetry. In Sonnet IV of The Defeat of Youth, for instance, Huxley suggests that

Men see their god, an immanence divine,
Smile through the curve of flesh or moulded clay.[1]

In "Minoan Porcelain"[2] he sees a statue as representative of a civilization which was, in at least some respects, better than the present one and, in a sense, an answer to it. And in "Life and Art"[3] Huxley commits himself definitely to the idea that art is better than life, because it distills the best from the mutability of life. Art's

nimble life shall outrun
The circling shadow on the dial,
Outlast the typrannous sun.

Such conclusions are not difficult to understand if we confine ourselves to the very limited aesthetic world of Huxley's poetry. But Huxley himself was not willing to confine his theory, and so tested it in his own social world. Are the truths of the past--discovered by Caravaggio, by Wren, and by Lawrence--applicable to modern life? The answer is that, unfortunately, they are not.

Three of Huxley's first four novels, Crome Yellow[4], Antic Hay, and Point Counter Point,[5] are generally regarded as novels of social satire. They are satires, but, contrary to popular critical opinion, they are also novels in which the possibility of a more productive and happier life is suggested through an artist figure. In Crome, Antic Hay, and Point Counter Point a visual artist expresses the ideal of man's nobility and perfectibility through his art. These artists--

Gombauld, Gumbril Senior, and Rampion--counteract the general tone of the novels. Gombauld is the only character in Crome who believes he is creating something rather than spending his time on triviality. Gumbril Senior stands above the chaos and decadence of Antic Hay. Rampion's ideas about the unity of mind and body as expressed through his art are obviously intended as a counter to Philip's coldness and Walter's mindless, hate-filled lust. Huxley continually toyed with the idea of the artist as savior of mankind even though he was never able to commit himself solidly to this position. As we shall see, each of these three artists is subtly but undeniably undercut within the novel; so that while the artists stand above the others, they cannot become true models for readers.

Crome Yellow, Huxley's first novel, is not just an exploration of the good and bad points of educated, English house-party life, but is also Huxley's first exploration of the problem of the lack of values in modern life and the quest to replace the failed Victorian moral system. As he looks at his own world, Huxley finds that people can no longer believe in God, in the certainty of progress, or in man's superiority. The World War has reduced man to less than an animal. But most people cannot live with the knowledge that there is no hope for a better life in the future, either for themselves or for their offspring. Thus, each character in the novel creates some barrier against this knowledge. Henry uses the history of his home; Priscilla, her astrology; Scogan, a comfortable philosophy of retreat from outer reality into inner artificiality; Mary, a participation in the "new morality." One by one, Huxley explores the barriers these characters have created and,

with a gentle but firm irony, shows them to the reader as empty and false solutions to the problem of living with the reality of man's mediocrity, not because the barriers are harmful in themselves, but because people are incapable of living in isolation. As in a Brueghel painting, each character is isolated in his individual activity; and while there is little in the way of a common pattern to the activities, the combination of individuals creates an overall movement. Although Gombauld seems to rise above the rest for much of the novel, even he is eventually lost in the mass.

If people could always exist, as Denis, early in the novel, believes people do, in "parallel straight lines," never establishing contact with anyone else,[6] then the barriers against real life would never create problems. But people's lives do cross, breaking other's barriers, if only temporarily, but exposing, in the meantime, the emptiness and pointlessness of the characters' lives. Such crossing occurs when Denis discovers Jenny's caricatures of himself; his pretense of living for art is crushed, and he sees himself through her eyes, a vacuous, ineffectual adolescent. Another such crossing occurs in Denis's love for Anne. She is unable to cope with the real, physical aspect of such love, and so puts Denis off with mild ridicule even though, as we see in the final pages of the novel, she really does not want to. Denis, on the other hand, cannot cope in any realistic way with his own feelings, and ultimately withdraws from the scene. Because their lives cross, Anne is unable to keep up entirely the pretense of a cold friendship, and Denis is unable to keep up his pretense that the really

important thing in life is art. They are both unable to deal with each other realistically; neither knows what life is about.

Only one character, as Kieth May has noted, seems to rise above the futility of the others and their barriers. Gombauld, the painter, is almost never presented ironically. Because he looks at both himself and his life honestly (as when he examines closely and thoroughly his feelings about Anne), and because he has discovered a creative outlet through his art, Gombauld comes closest to finding an acceptable way to live, in Huxley's eyes. But we must not let this lack of irony deceive us into thinking that Gombauld has achieved perfection. The lack of overt irony does indicate that Gombauld is the character closest to Huxley's ideal--his combination of realism and creativity is admirable. But before we declare him to be a model of perfection for the young Huxley, we must examine Gombauld in terms of Huxley's ideas on the relationship of art and life in the 1920's and in terms of the muted irony of the novel.

The most relevant of Huxley's ideas for Crome is his certainty that the artist must create art from his own life, not from other art.[8] Art should express truths about man, generalize about his condition, and often inspire him to understand and improve himself. Even at its best--as when Gombauld realizes that his portrait of Anne expresses only one of a number of possible truths about her--Gombauld's painting remains derivative and, thus, not a clear expression of truths arrived at through an artistic understanding of real life.

We can assess the extent of Gombauld's use of other artists by examining his past. Gombauld was formerly like Scogan, a proponent

of the manufactured, inner life. He expressed his philosophy by working in the Cubist mode. At one time, he would have applauded Cubism in terms similar to Scogan's:

> I, for one, without ever having had the slightest appreciation of painting, have always taken particular pleasure in Cubismus. I like to see pictures from which nature has been completely banished, pictures which are exclusively the product of the human mind. . . . Nature, or anything that reminds me of nature, disturbs me; it is too large, too complicated, above all too utterly pointless and incomprehensible. . . . I haven't the courage, and, above all, I haven't the time to start wandering in that labyrinth.[9]

Scogan insists on reducing everything to simple formulas which disregard reality. His ideal state, for instance, has only three kinds of people; and when he realizes that there is no place for people like Denis, he is completely unconcerned. The thought that he might change his state to include a greater variety of people simply does not occur to him, any more than it would occur to the Cubists to include a greater variety of forms in their art, simply because they occur in nature.

Huxley felt strongly that elements of reality must not be excluded from art in this way, that art should be "a device for making sense of the chaos of experience, for imposing order, meaning and a measure of permanence on the incomprehensible flux of our perpetual perishing."[10] The things it communicates to the viewer should be worth communicating; they should be "insights into the nature of man and the universe."[11] Geometrical relationships were not, in Huxley's estimation, insights worth communicating.[12] Thus, he has Gombauld reject Cubism:

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

> cramped and confined within intolerably narrow limitations . He was humiliated to find how few and crude and uninteresting were the forms he could invent; the inventions of nature were without number, inconceivably subtle and elaborate. He had done with cubism.[13]

But Gombauld has not turned from Cubism toward an art embracing all of life in all its natural forms. Instead, he has turned toward the art of Caravaggio, a seventeenth century Italian painter known both for his intense use of chiaroscuro and for his depiction of religious events in a naturalistic rather than idealistic manner.

It is Caravaggio's chiaroscuro which has the most profound impression on Gombauld: "Forms of a breathing, living reality emerged from darkness, built themselves up into compositions as luminously simple and single as a mathematical idea."[14] Caravaggio's composition does not entirely contradict Cubism. He simply uses a single, stark light source to isolate pieces of nature which he is then free to arrange in a pattern on the picture plane. Gombauld is trying to capture the best of both worlds--pure art and nature.

In itself, Gombauld's desire to unearth Caravaggio's "secret" is laudable. Huxley felt that Caravaggio's motive, to discover the truth about humanity, was an excellent one. Even though most artists who deal with truth do not stress naturalistic truth, still naturalism as Caravaggio developed it was definitely truth--"Obvious truth, but then most truths are obvious."[15]

Unfortunately, in pursuing the secret of another artist, rather than his own perception of the secret of life itself, Gombauld ends by imitating Caravaggio instead of building on his art. It has long been recognized[16] that Huxley's description of the painting

Gombauld is working on, the painting of the foreshortened man who has fallen from the white, light-struck horse, is an exact description of Caravaggio's "The Conversion of St. Paul." But critics do not seem to have questioned what such a description is doing here. Surely Huxley did not describe Gombauld as being haunted by "memories of Caravaggio's portentous achievements,"[17] as contemplating several of Caravaggio's compositions and then as painting a picture which had already been painted by Caravaggio, without ironic intent. Since no one in the novel discovers the imitation, the irony remains muted; but it is striking once we recognize the painting's source.

Gombauld ultimately fails as an artist because he has not freed himself enough from the past. He is expressing, in works like the "St. Paul," another artist's truths about life, not his own. Because Gombauld is a sincere participant in visual art, because he aspires to the supremely inspiring expression of truth which art potentially contains, he is the character in the novel closest to finding an acceptable way of life. But because he makes much of his art out of art, instead of expressing his own truths, his painting becomes a barrier against his own real ideas about the life of his time.

Since Gombauld has changed in the past, and for the better, it seems quite possible that he will be able to change in the future. Within the context of the novel, however, he does not. But because he approaches acceptability, Huxley is encouraged to examine further the question of art's being a possible counter to life's meaninglessness.

Architecture, an art form both beautiful and functional, seems to have been to Huxley, for a time at least, a human activity

proving the value of human life in spite of the dehumanization of war and industrialization. What Huxley chiefly admired in architecture was its ability to blend beauty and function, intellectuality and reason with purpose. Art as expressed in architecture could not possibly be divorced from the real daily needs of mankind, as so much visual art could, because architecture was first and foremost a functional art, enabling man to survive inclement weather. In addition, the best architecture combined utilitarian function with beauty, symbolizing the best of man's aspirations and inspiring in him an appreciation of his own potential. Huxley was drawn most strongly to the architecture of the Late Renaissance and Baroque periods, periods which drew on the classic Greek for their basic forms, but which used these forms to express the Renaissance ideal of perfectible man, man who could form his life in the image of the gods using his tools of intellect and reason.[18]

Architecture as an art form makes a brief appearance in Crome Yellow; the relationship of architecture to nature is cursorily debated. Scogan insists that, in Crome itself, architecture is "so unmistakably and aggressively a work of art. It makes no compromise with nature but affronts it and rebels against it."[19] To Scogan, architecture, like Cubism, supports the importance of man's life as an entity separate from Nature. Scogan's assertions are ironically undercut, of course, by Henry's revelation that the architecture of Crome had a great deal to do with nature; the towers were constructed as the containers of the privies. Later in the novel, the intimate relationship between architecture and nature is revealed in one of the most effective scenic descriptions in the novel:

> Under the level evening light the architecture of the land revealed itself. The deep shadows, the bright contrasting lights gave the hills a new solidity. Irregularities of the surface, unsuspected before, were picked out with light and shade. The grass, the corn, the foliage of trees were stippled with intricate shadows. The surface of things had taken on a marvellous enrichment.[20]

In Crome, this relationship between architecture and nature, which might have been developed as a counter to the theme of painting as a barrier against reality, is only fleetingly suggested. But in Antic Hay the theme is elaborately developed, to the extent that architecture and its relationship with human nature do seem, however briefly, to have countered satisfactorily the pointless frivolity of Myra Viveash and her real-life counterparts.

In Antic Hay, an even more vigorous Brueghelian social analysis than Crome, the post-war lack of values and the development of hedonistic barriers against knowledge of life's meaninglessness is exposed and attacked forcefully. Although it is true that Huxley was to some extent attracted by the cafe society of Myra and her companions, such frivolous pleasures are ultimately anathema to him. A society in which Gumbril Junior can sacrifice Emily's tender psychological needs to a bantering luncheon with the emotionally dead Myra is a society which must be condemned. And Huxley does condemn it. By the end of the novel, Shearwater's scientific experiments are revealed as simply an escape from life's real problems; Lypiatt is near suicide as a result of finally comprehending his own failures; the young Porteous has financially ruined both himself and his father.

Above this general wreckage only one character rises. Only Gumbril Senior, the artist, has arrived at psychological completeness.

Only he avoids wallowing in the triviality of the others. Only he has achieved an admirable way of life. And he has arrived at his understanding of life through his devotion to the best in architecture.[21]

To Gumbril Senior, architecture combines acceptance of the austere inhumanity of nature with the humanly beautiful. It is "the expression of human dignity and greatness, which is man's protest, not his miserable acquiescence";[22] but it also takes into consideration nature's demands when it selects a site and materials. The architect must have a broad scale on which to work: "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."[23] Architecture, especially buildings in sunny countries, where there is little need for windows, protects man from the "dirty world,"[24] and thus lets him develop his mind to its fullest extent. And the designer of this paradise, the architect, must be "a man of sense, a man who knows how to think and to profit by experience."[25] It amazes Gumbril Senior that so few people are sensitive to the "senseless discords"[26] of modern city architecture, which grows up with no unifying vision behind it.

In expressing his admiration for Wren, Gumbril Senior follows, to a very large extent, the outlines of Huxley's essay on Wren, first published in 1923. Here Huxley praises Wren's sense of harmonious mass and proportion, his ability to create a masterpiece of rhythmic dignity on a difficult site while using inexpensive materials, and his expression of the nobility and perfectibility of man in artistic form:

> For Wren was a great gentleman: one who valued dignity and restraint and who, respecting himself, respected also humanity; one who desired that men and women should live with the dignity, even the grandeur, befitting their proud human title; one who despised meanness and oddity as much as vulgar ostentation; one who admired reason and order, who distrusted all extravagance and excess. A gentleman, the finished product of an old and ordered civilization.[27]

Like Huxley and Wren, Gumbril Senior believes that order, harmony, and proportion are the hallmarks of good architecture. And since these were also the principles of Christopher Wren, it is not surprising that Gumbril Senior should be strongly drawn to his architecture. Gumbril Senior has built a model of London as Wren envisioned it after the Great Fire of London in 1666, and deplores the fact that Wren's plan was never put into effect:

> Wren offered them open spaces and broad streets; he offered them sunlight and air and cleanliness; he offered them beauty, order and grandeur. He offered to build for the imagination and the ambitious spirit of man, so that even the most bestial, vaguely and remotely, as they walked those streets, might feel that they were of the same race--or very nearly--as Michelangelo; that they too might feel themselves, in spirit at least, magnificent, strong and free. He offered them all these things; he drew a plan for them, walking in peril among the still smouldering ruins. But they preferred to re-erect the old intricate squalor; . . . they preferred the wretched human scale, the scale of the sickly body, not of the mind.[28]

Gumbril Senior identifies with Wren. He, too, wants to build for the betterment of man's soul; instead he receives commissions to design humble cottages for workmen, cottages which have only to be cheap and warm, and which allow no room at all for the beautiful.

Gumbril Senior's description of Wren's ideal London is very close to Wren's actual plan, drawn up and submitted to the King only a few days after the London fire had been put out.[29] But Gumbril Senior is perhaps too severe a critic of the seventeenth-century Londoners for

not adopting Wren's plan. The reason the plan was not adopted was not simply that architects "offer us reason and beauty; but we will have none of them, because they don't happen to square with the notions that were grafted into our souls in youth."[30] Nor was it simply that the people felt that the dirt and inconvenience of the city were "necessary, right and belonging inevitably to the order of things."[31] There were other, more humanitarian, reasons. In order to replan London, it was necessary to adjust property rights; and since private ownership of land had long been established in England, each piece of property, some thousands of individual holdings, had to be individually adjusted. And all the while, ten thousand people were homeless, eager to rebuild as soon as possible. If they were to alleviate human suffering, it was impossible for the King and his counselors to wait the several years it would surely have taken to adjust property rights, before they gave permission for people to begin rebuilding. Wren's was only one of several notable plans rejected because of humanitarian reasons. His effect on London was, thus, confined to public buildings and churches.

Undoubtedly, Huxley was aware of the reasons behind the rejection of Wren's plan. He does not have Gumbril Senior take note of them because that would have de-emphasized the potential for architecture which Huxley is attempting to assert. Gumbril Senior and his architectural models are an island of sanity in the charnelhouse of post-war London, contrasting sharply with Gumbril Junior's pretenses, Myra Viveash's bored sensuality, and especially with Casimir Lypiatt's emotionally vibrant failures.

The other visual artist in the novel, Lypiatt, is, as Woodcock has noted,[32] an obvious foil to Gumbril Senior. He does not negate what the architect stands for, but he does demonstrate that visual art per se is not the center to life which Huxley is seeking. Lypiatt is, instead, an exaggerated Gombauld--older, more emotional, and more aware of his own failure, but still an artist who, in seeking perfection, finds emptiness.

Lypiatt is convinced of his own greatness, sure of his talent, positive that posterity will vindicate him, and a failure. He sees himself as a mighty force in the art world, but in fact his talent is almost non-existent. For most of the novel the reader, like the characters in the novel, laughs at Lypiatt's vermouth advertisements, which he takes for art worthy of international recognition. (The extent to which our judgments of the characters are influenced by the lack of seriousness of all the characters except Gumbril Senior becomes more evident when we read Huxley's essay "B. R. Haydon."[33] Haydon is the model for Lypiatt--a proud, vain, ambitious nineteenth-century British painter, convinced of his own greatness, but with "absolutely no artistic talent."[34] In the essay, Huxley treats Haydon at least partially sympathetically: "Haydon was something more than a bad and deservedly unsuccessful painter. He was a great personality to begin with. And in the second place he was, as I like to think, a born writer who wasted his life making absurd pictures when he might have been making excellent books."[35]) Not until Lypiatt begins his evaluation at the end of the novel does he assume a greater importance in the reader's mind. We begin to compare him with Gumbril Senior; and the

message Huxley obviously intends is that while art may be a creative activity which ennobles man, may show us a way to live with full cognizance of both beauty and humanistic values, it can also be a trap. Creating art or architecture may be a way to express man's highest aspirations for some, but not for all; and architecture has a greater potential for becoming this expressive center to life since it must unite beauty and human needs at its inception.

Huxley is not ready to confirm any one way of life as the best in, or the central core of, his world, or as a real alternative to the emptiness of life in post-war Britain. For at the end of the novel, artistic idealism is sacrificed; Gumbril Senior sells his beloved model of London to the Victoria and Albert in order to repurchase some of the books his best friend has been forced to sell to pay his son's gambling debts. Until this event, the two worlds of the frivolous young and the idealistic old have not really come into close conjunction. We know that Porteous's son is sowing his wild oats and running up debts he cannot pay, but the possibility that this will seriously affect the older generation is not fully anticipated by the reader. The loss of the model is symbolic; Gumbril Senior could make another one. But the effect the sale produces on the reader is total dismay. Architecture as an ideal combination of beauty and necessity crumbles. We see that such idealism is irrelevant in this disintegrating world. The kind of solution it offers can never be accepted by the young. Ironically, the act which raises Gumbril Senior in the reader's estimation--living up to the noble inspiration of his architecture, he is capable of deep

friendship to the point of sacrifice--also negates what Gumbril Senior stands for, the potential of architecture as a solution for the modern emptiness of life.

Huxley tries again to establish an artist as the one character with an answer to the question of how to live without frivolity in Point Counter Point. Like Gumbril Senior, Rampion attempts to express man's nobility and perfectibility, his ability to rise above decadence and triviality, through art. Like Gumbril Senior, Rampion succeeds in the reader's mind to a considerable extent. His ideas are convincingly presented, and he is by far the most admirable male character in the novel. But again, like Gumbril Senior, the message of his art is undercut by the presence of another artist in the novel. Both Lypiatt and John Bidlake prove that a life redeemed through the ideals of artists is not a universally applicable idea, that indeed when it is attempted even under auspicious circumstances, it is likely to fail to meet man's inmost psychological needs.

The world of Point Counter Point is similar to that of Antic Hay, but the despair is far more devastating because most of the characters recognize the futility of the social and sexual barriers they have erected against nothingness. Walter Bidlake is fully cognizant of the horror of his unswervable attraction toward Lucy. Philip recognizes the cruelty in the emotional shell he uses for protection against even his own wife and child. Spandrell understands the desperation behind his affirmation of evil. As meaningless conversation is followed by meaningless sexual encounter is followed by meaningless political assassination is followed by meaningless childhood suffering and death,

the characters seem to be on endlessly descending spirals, recognizing their misery but unable to help themselves.

One of the few positive notes in this despairing world is Rampion's ideas as expressed both verbally and in his art. Once again, Huxley explores the possibility that man can save himself by understanding the positive vision of man presented in the best art and by ordering his own life in terms of this vision. This time, however, the artistic vision of previous generations, which seemed to have value in the earlier novels, is replaced by contemporary art expressive of the humanistic ideals of D. H. Lawrence.

In background, appearance, and ideas, Rampion closely resembles Lawrence, and Huxley freely admitted the parallel. Huxley was profoundly impressed by Lawrence's ideas during the few years of their friendship immediately preceding Lawrence's death. After writing three novels of progressively disintegrating society, in which the lack of some belief or force which makes life worth living becomes progressively more painfully felt, Huxley seems to have felt the need for a standard more sharply defined than the inspiration of Renaissance art and architecture.

Lawrence's ideas offered Huxley an ethical standard; and Point Counter Point is Huxley's greatest artistic achievement simply because, using this standard, Huxley is able to add depth to characters, to focus their perversities. Rampion's is the point which most of the other characters counter; and the depth of the modern world's destructive instinct can be accurately measured by Rampion's hope for man.

The extent to which Huxley was actually able to embrace Rampion's ideas in Point Counter Point has been a question of critical debate. To some, such as Meckier, Watts, and Woodcock, Rampion is the only balanced man in the novel, and speaks for Huxley. Rampion holds out real hope for "reconciliation and adjustment among the confused parts of human life."[36] If he is not effective in the world of the novel, it is only because the world is too far gone to be called back.[37] But others have maintained that Huxley's acceptance of Lawrence's ideas was only partial. Dyson maintains Rampion is not big enough to contain the whole novel.[38] May feels that Rampion was "never calculated even to cancel out, still less to overwhelm, the negative elements."[39] Lawrence himself felt Rampion was "the most boring character in the book--a gas-bag."[40] Critics often seem to have a general, vague feeling that, since Rampion does not live entirely the life he advocates, Huxley does not think he is the complete answer to the world's ills.

Rampion is not the entire answer, Huxley feels. But the proof of this within the novel has been generally overlooked. It becomes obvious, however, when we look carefully at both of the artists in the novel: John Bidlake is extremely close to Rampion's ideal man, and Bidlake ultimately fails.

Bidlake has not generally been regarded as a criticism of Rampion's ideals. Most critics regard him as a lecher, relegate him to the death-motif of the novel, see him solely as a portrait of the British painter Augustus John, or ignore him altogether.[41] But by creating only two painters in the novel, and by describing their paintings extensively, Huxley almost forces the reader to compare the two

characters. And since Rampion's ideas bear such a strong resemblance to Bidlake's actual life, it is impossible not to judge each by the other.

Rampion pays lip-service to balance in his creation of the ideal man. He describes him as "a creature on a tightrope, 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."[42] One of his paintings, his own version of the "Outline of History," shows Greek, Etruscan, and Renaissance men as having achieved the highest evolution; in these civilizations, men knew how to achieve a balance between body and mind. But when Rampion discusses his ideal and the ills of civilization with his friends, he almost never talks about achieving balance. Instead, he discusses almost exclusively the extremely important place the body must occupy in the life of the ideal man.

When we first meet Rampion, he is discussing the numbing effects the over-emphasis on the intellect is having on modern civilization. Even World War I was intellectually domesticated: "People didn't go and fight because their blood was up. They went because they were told to."[43] Later he comments: "I'm so tired of all this rubbish about the higher life and moral and intellectual progress and living for ideals and all the rest of it. It all leads to death."[44] He denounces Philip Quarles as being a pervert of the will: "Everything must be <u>expressément voulue</u> all the time. And life must be lived, not as though it were life in a world of living people, but as though it were solitary recollection and fancy and meditation. An endless masturbation."[45]

Rampion's other acquaintances fare equally badly, for all have emphasized their intellects and perverted their bodily functions by intellectualizing and "spiritualizing" them, or by "disparag[ing] them after the event."[46] The intellect leads man to try to become "more than you are by nature," but in the process "you kill something in yourself and become much less."[47] The final blow to man is the seeking after mystical or religious truth: "this damned abstract soul--it's like a kind of cancer, eating up the real, human, natural reality spreading and spreading at its expense."[48]

In Rampion's mind, once the soul is introduced, it automatically consumes the body; but obviously, if the soul is reduced or excluded from influence, a person cannot be balanced. Rampion is willing to admit that there are times when we must choose between mental and physical activity, and the choice must always fall, in his opinion, on the side of the physical:

> The fruits of golf are either non-existent, harmless, or positively beneficial. A healthy liver, for example--that's a very fine fruit. Whereas the fruits of intellectualism--my God. . . . Look at them. The whole of our industrial civilization--that's their fruit. The morning paper, the radio. . . . Tanks and trinitrotoluol; Rockefeller and Mond. . .the ruining and befouling and degrading of a whole world.[49]

Rampion's paintings also emphasize the physical, generally excluding the intellectual. He shows Burlap a picture of a man and woman embracing in a sensuous, green landscape which illustrates "Love, <u>physical</u> love, as the source of light and life and beauty."[50] He shows Philip a family scene in which there is a subtle but decided relationship between man and beast.[51] Rampion's drawings are often caricatures, such as the "Fossils of the Past and Fossils of the Present," a type of

art work which does make an intellectual judgment on subject matter. But Rampion despises this side of himself. He is not his own ideal simply because he cannot stop teaching and preaching, both through art and through speech. He calls himself "A pedagogue pervert. A Jeremiah pervert. . .a gibber pervert."[52]

It is only natural that Rampion should emphasize the physical almost to the exclusion of the mental; he is attempting to overcome the modern over-emphasis on the mental. As a teacher, he seems to try to emphasize modern shortcomings so that people can become aware of them, and perhaps achieve a balance on their own. Rampion really does not discuss balance; he almost always refuses to talk about a role for the intellect. Neither is he an example of balance. He recognizes the dominant intellect in himself, and can offer only excuses: "that's the trouble: when you're up against non-human things and people, you inevitably become non-human yourself."[53]

But there is in the novel an example of exactly the sort of man Rampion says is his ideal, and that example is John Bidlake. Bidlake is the only character in the novel who knows the beauty and importance of pure, unintellectualized physical sensation, and he puts this sensation into his pictures. "Painting's a branch of sensuality," he asserts.[54] "Nobody can paint a nude who hasn't learnt the human body by heart with his hands and his lips and his own body."[55] Bidlake has learned it, through three wives and several mistresses. His paintings, such as the "Bathers," celebrate the glory of the human body.

Bidlake as originally presented at Lady Tantamount's musical party seems a complete sensualist, as distorted on the side of the body

as his son, Walter, is on the side of the intellect. But as he develops in the novel, his seeming lechery loses its unattractive aspects, and Bidlake takes on a more balanced appearance. According to Rampion, one discovers the whole of human truth "by living--living completely, with the whole man."[56] This is exactly what Bidlake, in retrospect, has done. He has explored his senses fully, and he has used his intellect to immortalize his sensations in paint. The intellect has controlled sensation to create balance and order, but it has not dominated to the point of spiritualizing the bodily sensations. When Bidlake paints Jenny, the beautiful but stupid and vulgar model, as simply beautiful, he is using his intellect to choose in an individual the best she has to offer.

Bidlake does not allow his intellect to dominate, which would mean he would either paint the model as despicable, or worship the stupid and vulgar. Similarly, in the matter of family arrangements, he refuses to follow the demands of the intellect--demands which might have kept him chained to his first wife long after he had begun to hate her and their children, or to the memory of his dead second wife. He is able to maintain a satisfactory arrangement with Janet Bidlake because he does not force himself to explain intellectually the relationship which exists; and she does not demand such an explanation. Bidlake simply lives, constantly and fully, in the present. The emphasis in his daily life is on the body and its sensations, but the intellect has its outlet in creating the painting.

It is significant that Rampion never criticizes Bidlake, while he criticizes almost every other acquaintance. From Rampion's philosophical point of view, there is really nothing to criticize. But

Bidlake is not a wholly admirable character from the point of view of the reader. First, he has abandoned his children to the often peculiar ministrations of his wives. If the reader has any sense at all of parental responsibility, then he must blame Bidlake at least in part for Walter's mistaken spirituality in his relationship with Marjorie, and then his violent rebound into the destructive sexual relationship with Lucy. Bidlake has refused to take the time to teach Walter to understand his own urges and feelings. Second, and even more important, Bidlake has nothing to fall back on when he discovers that the bodily life is about to end. Bidlake is outraged, furious at life for abandoning him to death. He submerges himself in self-pity and superstition, rarely allowing himself to be either entertained or agreeable, lashing out at little Phil simply because the child will, he believes, be able to go on living long after he, Bidlake, is dead.

Neither Bidlake nor Rampion's philosophy is able to cope with the problem of death. If there is, as Rampion maintains, only human truth to be discovered, and if it is to be discovered, as Bidlake has done, by living and refusing to spiritualize life, then there is nothing after death. Bidlake cannot accept the inevitable annihilation he knows is coming; but there is no alternative. The best he can do is forget his troubles for a few hours in painting.[57] But when little Phil dies, even painting cannot wipe out the knowledge of approaching death.

We must ask whether or not Huxley consciously intended Bidlake as an example of Rampion's ideal man and as a criticism of this ideal. The answer is that he probably did not. Bidlake is too purely sensual at the beginning of the novel; it seems fairly obvious that Huxley

intended Bidlake to be an example of bodily perversion to contrast with the intellectual perversion of almost all the other characters. It seems obvious too--and most critics agree--that the novel itself started in part as a conscious tribute to Lawrence's philosophy. But it is also obvious that Lawrence's fairly narrow and anti-intellectual prescription for man's salvation could not possibly satisfy someone so intellectually complex and so eager for all points of view as was Huxley. The development of Bidlake as a major and sympathetic character, and then as a disintegrating figure, does show both the strength and the weakness of Rampion's ideas. Although Huxley probably did not mean Bidlake to be a conscious incarnation of Rampion's ideas, he does fulfill them. And the extent to which Bidlake fails is the extent to which Huxley, for all his conscious intentions, could not accept Lawrence's adulation of the body and disparagement of the mind.

In three of his first four novels, Huxley creates at least one character who is both closely allied with visual art and satirized far less than the other characters in the novels. In each of these novels, Huxley suggests that contemporaries can find a solution to their discontent and consequent indulgence in meaningless frivolities by examining the attitude toward life found in the best visual art. In Crome, Gombauld's art moves away from the sterile toward the humanistic. In Antic Hay, Gumbril Senior's architecture inspires a belief in man's nobility and the worth of his aspirations. In Point Counter Point, Rampion's art illustrates the vital role of the body in a complete existence. But none of these three artist figures provides a complete, sustained answer to modern problems. In each novel Huxley

proposes that the vision of life in the best art can help us better our own lives, and then shows the defeat of this proposition. There is a vision of a better life in art, but man cannot apply this vision toward bettering his own life because he is generally cut off from art's message by his own nature. In each of these three novels, the number of characters in honest communication with art, able to apply the messages to their own lives, is small. Gombauld, Gumbril Senior, Rampion, and Bidlake are overwhelmed numerically by other characters, and consequently their islands of sanity, by no means unmarred, do not convince the reader of their complete acceptability as alternatives to frivolity. The islands are available to too few.

We cannot say exactly what mental make-up this juxtaposition of hope and the defeat of that hope indicates in Huxley, but we can narrow the possibilities to two. Huxley seems to have held--as in Fitzgerald's definition of genius--two opposing views at the same time. On the one hand, Huxley felt the world was falling apart, that life was a waste of meaningless despair which was bearable only through the mindless hedonism of a Myra or a Gumbril Junior. On the other hand, Huxley felt that man really did have potential for a better, more satisfactory, more productive life. He personified this second idea in his artist figures in the three novels so far discussed. But in the last analysis, the first idea overbalances the second without destroying it. Thus, Huxley was either indulging in hopes and then mocking them; or he simply and sincerely held two conflicting views of man, and saw the stronger evidence for the negative view.

It is not vital to our understanding of Huxley that we decide whether or not he was mocking his hopes. What is important is that we see these two points of view in the novels, and note that the Brueghelian view, the view of the world as a psychological morass with pattern but without spiritual meaning, did prevail during the initial phase of Huxley's development.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND PHASE: ART AS AN IRONIC COMMENT ON LIFE

In three of his first four novels, Huxley explored the possibility that a life lived in conjunction with visual art could be a life filled with hope and meaning, and could contrast with the meaningless lives of the majority. In all three, the possibility failed. And because art failed to provide hope for man, Huxley entered a period of intense exploration to find something else, a period often punctuated by despair. During this, the second period of his intellectual development, Huxley was, as we have seen, drawn to artists who also reflected despair about man. But because art had failed to provide the reason for living which Huxley was seeking, he tended at times to turn on art, and to satirize severely characters involved with it. While art itself may contain messages which are worthwhile, Huxley's characters of this period tend to be completely unable to interpret or use them. In Those Barren Leaves, characters use art for social status only. In Eyeless in Gaza, the only character seriously involved in art, Hugh Ledwidge, hides from life in museums. In After Many a Summer, there is an unbreachable gulf between the calm and beauty of art and the chaos of those who collect it to exhibit their wealth.

As mentioned previously, Those Barren Leaves,[1] though the third of Huxley's four novels of the twenties, does not fit into the

explorations of hope through art which characterized that period. Instead, it began a period of sharper, almost despairing satire which characterized Huxley's presentations of the world during the 1930's. The Brueghelian vision, chaotic but vigorous, was replaced by visions of Hell--the hells of Piranesi and Goya. And, although there is hope in these novels, it is from a source quite different from art, and much less thoroughly worked into the fabric of the novels. The vague something Calamy longs for, Miller's pacifism, and Propter's self-sufficient approach to spiritual peace are all roads to truth which are farther outside common human experience than is art, and therefore far more difficult to examine in the context of the novel. While art becomes part of the world that has failed in these novels, Huxley's spiritual insight begins to take shape.

In Those Barren Leaves, art has lost any power Huxley might once have thought it had to save man from himself. Instead, it is only a superficial coating which characters put on to disguise, they hope, their own trivial natures.

Mrs. Aldwinkle, the character most intimately involved with visual art, is also the most ridiculous. She has a "large and indistinct enthusiasm evoked in her by every masterpiece of art,"[2] an enthusiasm based not on real artistic appreciation, but instead on the feeling that artistic knowledge and ownership impresses one's acquaintances favorably. Along with the Malaspina palace at Vezza which she has purchased, she has also bought proprietary interest in the palace paintings and in the view. She is positive that she alone really knows how to appreciate these items, and psychologically needs the opportunity to impress her

guests with her superior appreciation. Thus, even though Miss Thriplow has already shown Calamy around the palace, Mrs. Aldwinkle insists on showing him again: "She was sure that he had not really seen the beauty of the view, that he had not understood it, not known how to analyze it into its component charms."[3] Mrs. Aldwinkle's "artistic temperament," which she is positive she possesses in spite of her undeniable lack of artistic talent,[4] is, according to her, the most valuable of possessions, and therefore deserves to dominate both her life and the lives of her guests.

The only possible alternative for her guests to prostrating themselves before her superior appreciation is, according to Mrs. Aldwinkle, to fall in love--with her, of course. Occasionally, Mrs. Aldwinkle manages to combine these two paths of art and love, as when she imagines herself the main figure in a romantic painting by Augustus John:

> She saw herself standing there on the beach between sea and sky, and with the mountains in the middle distance, looking like one of those wonderfully romantic figures who, in the paintings of Augustus John, stand poised in a meditative and passionate ecstasy against a cosmic background. She saw herself--a John down even to her flame-coloured tunic and her emerald-green parasol. And at her feet, like Shelley, like Leander washed up on the sands of Abydos, lay the young poet, pale, naked and dead. And she had bent over him, had called him back to life.[5]

Chelifer is, of course, Leander, and Mrs. Aldwinkle falls in love with him strictly because he fits into this romantic painting, not because of anything in Chelifer's person or character. Mrs. Aldwinkle is also highly appreciative of artists such as Filippo Lippi who also combined interest in art with interests in sex.[6]

The shallowness of Mrs. Aldwinkle's artistic understanding is most evident in her musings on the great achievements which supposedly have taken place in the palace she now owns. She reduces all the artists and philosophers of Renaissance Italy to Cardans, mere hangers-on who communicate their intellectual and artistic inspirations in a dinner-party atmosphere:

> Aquinas, here, had confided to an early Malaspina his secret doubt on the predicability (sic) of rollations, had twitted the robber marquess, over a goblet of wine, with the feebleness of his synderesis. Dante had insisted on the advantages of having a Platonic mistress whom one never met and who could, when necessary, be identified with Theology. . . . Pico dilla Mirandola, over the boar's head, quoted the kaballa in support of the doctrine of the Trinity.[7]

She puts Michelangelo's achievements on a level with those of Luca Giordano, who earned the nickname "Fa-Presto" as a result of the extreme rapidity with which he painted, and whose facility of execution prevented him from achieving anything really worthwhile in his medium.

If we were to examine only the evidence above, it might be possible to interpret Mrs. Aldwinkle as a pitiable but harmless character. But Huxley does not allow us to do this. His comments about her are often ironic: the busts of the Malaspinas, of whom she is so fond, show their descent from sheer cruelty to downright imbecility;[8] her careless makeup is more Impressionistic than Pre-Raphaelite.[9] Often Huxley exhibits more bitter irony: "On the two hundred and seventy thousand pounds of Mrs. Aldwinkle's capital the sun never set. People worked; Mrs. Aldwinkle led the higher life. She for art only, they--albeit unconscious of the privilege--for art in her."[10] And by the end of the novel, Huxley presents Mrs. Aldwinkle as grotesque when she reveals, in her final scene with Irene, her willingness to destroy

another's happiness for her own self-gratification. Mrs. Aldwinkle feels throughout the novel that she is missing something, that the fateful words which would reveal the secret of life are just about to be spoken, or are now being spoken out of her hearing. What she never realizes is that she can never learn the "mystery" of life because she has buried her own real life and covered it over with an impenetrable layer of artistic "appreciation."

Huxley identified Mrs. Aldwinkle with the life of his own time when he wrote in 1931:

> Most of us are also art-snobs. . . . Platonic art-snobs merely take an interest in art. Unplatonic art-snobs go further and actually buy art. . . . A collection of works of art is a collection of culture-symbols, and culture-symbols still carry social prestige. It is also a collection of wealth-symbols. For an art collection can represent money more effectively than a whole fleet of motor cars.[11]

Cardan, the second character in the novel intimately involved with art, is more jaded than Mrs. Aldwinkle, but he is also more sympathetic because he realizes the meaninglessness of his life, the materialism of his desires; and he simply does not care. Unlike the others, he does not need to invent a persona to cover his own personality. He is perfectly willing to acknowledge to himself that he is marrying Grace Elver for her money, and that he exchanges conversations on art with Mrs. Aldwinkle for free room and board. He is always willing to uphold his end of the bargain, going on at great length, during the visit to the Etruscan remains, about the relationship between Etruscan art and the probable civilization it represents. Not surprisingly, his chattering about the murals prevents any other character from getting

involved with the paintings, which are strange and exciting, and still not fully "understood" by modern critics.[12]

Art is important to Cardan solely because of its value as an amusement[13] or its monetary value (the search for the grocer's brother's statue). And since life for Cardan has no value other than amusement or money, art is an essential part of his life. If at times Cardan indicates there is something more to art than amusement--as he does to Miss Thriplow when he tells her that art should awaken an emotion in the viewer--it is because such sentiments are expected from an aesthetic critic, not because Cardan really feels the need to be moved. Interestingly enough, Huxley has placed many of his own views on art in Cardan's mouth; but in the context of the novel, these ideas do nothing to alleviate the reader's sense of the barrenness of Cardan's life.

The main satiric thrust of the novel, then, is to shatter the pretentious world of forced emotional attachments and forced appreciation of art in which the wealthy and leisured characters live. The only really sympathetic character in the novel, Irene Aldwinkle, is the one who is completely impervious to the distractions of art. She can sit in her room, surrounded by frescoes, and think of nothing but her sewing, for which she has both love and talent. She takes up drawing solely to please her aunt; and when the drawings, done with so much pain and effort, fail to please her aunt any longer, she gives them up with a sigh of relief. Irene is sympathetic not only because she makes no pretentions about aesthetic appreciation of art, but also because, as the Lawrentian answer to the barren world of most of the novel, she is the only character (besides Hovenden) who pays attention to her actual

feelings. When Mrs. Aldwinkle, for purely selfish reasons, opposes her marriage, Irene is torn by her conscious love away from Hovenden and toward her aunt. But, unlike the others, she is aware of something deeper than consciousness in herself:

> In that first moment of agonised sympathy and self-reproach, Irene was on the point of declaring that she would give up Hovenden, that she would spend her life with her Aunt Lillian. But something held her back. Obscurely she was certain that it wouldn't do, that it was impossible, that it would even be wrong. She loved Aunt Lillian and she loved Hovenden. In a way she loved Aunt Lillian more than Hovenden, now. But something in her that looked prophetically forward, something that had come through innumerable lives, out of the obscure depths of time, to dwell within her, held her back. The conscious and individual part of her spirit inclined towards Aunt Lillian. But consciousness and individuality--how precariously, how irrelevantly almost, they flowered out of that ancient root of life planted in the darkness of her being! The flower was for Aunt Lillian, the root for Hovenden.[14]

It is not Irene's rejection of art, as opposed to the acceptance of the other characters, that Huxley is applauding here. As the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly obvious that Huxley is not criticizing art at all, but those who use artistic knowledge for personal aggrandizement or as a personal retreat, instead of learning from art, and leading lives in accordance with its ideals. In the novel, Huxley comments in Freudian terms on works of Giotto and Cimabue "anal-eroticism is a frequent concomitant of incestuous homosexuality."[15] But he is not criticizing art even here, only the interpretation of art by twentieth-century boors. What disgusts Huxley is not art at its best, but degenerating art (the rococco period) and degenerating criticism, which has replaced true artistic appreciation in both the novelistic and the real worlds.

A second indication that Huxley is not condemning art per se is his own use of art in descriptions of the countryside. As the group of characters travels from Rome toward Vezza, Huxley describes the scenery ironically at first: "Sabine--how wildly the mere word deviated the machine from its course! . . . And the Sabine women! Only Rubens knew what they looked like and how they ought to be raped. How large and blonde they were! What glossy satin dresses th ey had on, what pearls! And their Roman ravishers. . .they fairly dived into the foaming sea of female flesh that splashed and wildly undulated around them."[16] There is ironical discrepancy here between what really happened at Sabine and the artificial, voluptuous scene as painted by Rubens. Mrs. Aldwinkle constantly looks at life through just this kind of art, making out of life something artificial and controlled. But as Huxley continues to describe the scene in terms of art, he moves from paintings of artificial life to paintings of scenery and, consequently, away from irony toward the appreciation of beauty which good art can enhance. He discovers that the painters who passed this way before (Rosa da Tivoli, Piranesi, Poussin) did not simply make up the scenes of their paintings, but instead used the beauty that they actually found in this region of Italy. If we cannot look at the livestock without thinking of Rosa da Tivoli, if we cannot look at the Tiber and the Campagna without thinking of Poussin, this is not a criticism of art, but a sincere appreciation of it. Because artists have passed this way before and have seen what we see now, we can appreciate the scene both with our senses and with our intellect. Art here is not preventing an appreciation of our actual

experience, as it does so often for Mrs. Aldwinkle, but instead enhances our experience.

The answer Huxley posits to the barrenness of Mrs. Aldwinkle's world in Those Barren Leaves is, finally, not a more genuine response to art, which Huxley provides in his commentary, and not the Lawrentian ignoring of art which is Irene's solution. The final answer lies in the philosophical contemplation which Calamy is seeking at the end of the novel. Throughout the novel, Calamy has been lamenting the Aldwinklian existence which he leads even though he hates it:

> I have every opportunity for doing exactly what I like--and I consistently do what I don't like. . . . I don't like running after women, I don't like wasting my time in futile social intercourse, or in the pursuit of what is technically known as pleasure. And yet, for some reason, and quite against my will, I find myself passing the greater part of my time immersed in precisely these occupations. . . . And what's the most depressing of all. . .is the feeling that one will go on like this for ever, in the teeth of every effort to stop.[17]

Calamy leaves the Aldwinkle residence for a more aescetic and contemplative life in the mountains. At the end of the novel, he has found no answers to his questions, nor any alternatives to his Aldwinklian existence; but he is willing to try. As in the traditional education-novel, Calamy has learned at least how not to live, and is open to possibilities for the future.

Art has no place in Calamy's future, nor has the gratification of the senses. Calamy tentatively chooses the life to which, later, Anthony Beavis and Sebastian Barnack devote themselves, the life of semi-mystical meditation, free of the encroachments of ordinary life, which Huxley, to the end of his own life, saw as at least one solution for the predicament of modern man. The world of value in art is no

longer being considered as a possible salvation for man; for although the values are still there, man cannot reach out to them. Instead, the pursuit of art has, in this novel, become a parallel to Cardan's search for the statue: after a long and distracting struggle, we find at the end of our journey a piece of Victorian trash.

Point Counter Point, which followed Those Barren Leaves, is a sincere but temporary recovery of hope for man through art. But the mood of Those Barren Leaves was the one to prevail in following works. The disenchantment with art's potential is clearly reflected in Huxley's 1929 volume of poetry, Arabia Infelix and Other Poems. Here he criticizes art for making the horrors of life seem beautiful and aesthetically inspiring, and thus for insulating viewers from life's reality. In "Picture by Goya: A Highway Robber,"[18] he describes the scene of murder as "elegant," and notes, in a bitterly ironic vein:

> Bandits angelical and you, rich corpses!
> Truth is your sister, Goodness your spouse.
> Towering skies lean down and tall, tall trees
> Impose their pale arsenical benediction,
> Making all seem exquisitely remote
> And small and silent. . .

Goya has falsified the scene, Huxley charges, and encouraged people to go on dancing away in their "little vault/ Of smoky gold," "Gods of a home-made universe."[19]

Huxley uses the same ironic tone in another poem in this volume, "Nero and Sporus: or the Triumph of Art."[20] Here Nero, the artist, sees and becomes only beautiful things. Art's monuments cut

man off from humiliation, shame, and agony which he should, Huxley suggests, feel at the sight of his appalling deeds. The greatest agony, Huxley feels, is that the falsification of life which art yields convinces man that there is a God:

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

Published the following year, "Apennine"[21] continues the rejection of art, though not in so ironic a tone. Here art is seen as a product of the fancy, which is cut off from the needs and events of real life. Therefore, we can find no answers to the problems of everyday life in art:

No quenching flows but in the humble streams
Whose source is earth, is earth, and not our dreams.

The failure of art to raise man from his morass is reflected in the three novels of the 1930's. Visual art does not appear at all in Brave New World; having failed to influence humanity in the past, it is now considered a product of social instability. When visual art does appear in the novels of this period, its presence is ironic. In both Eyeless in Gaza[22] and After Many a Summer Dies the Swan, the characters can see in art only reflections of their own trivial or base desires. The real messages of the art works, which Huxley strongly implies authorially, are completely outside the characters' understandings.

In Eyeless in Gaza, most of the characters see in art only a reflection of their own moods, erotic drives, and social needs. When

Helen visits the Basel art gallery, she sees in all the pictures, from mermaids to the torturings of saints, only a reflection of her own light-heartedness. Anthony compares Helen's naked body to a Gauguin,[24] and sees in her distorted face during lovemaking an ecstasy similar to "one of Van der Weyden's holy women at the foot of the Cross."[25] He compares Mrs. Fox to "St. Monica by Ary Scheffer,"[26] not because the comparison is just, but because he wants to amuse and, thus, ingratiate himself with Mary. Mary buys Pascin nudes to arouse her lovers. Gerry sees in the Pascins only a reflection of his own cruel desires to use and humiliate women, and then discard them.[27] And Ekki sees only the will of the artist to forget the machine age and to ignore his moral duty toward the proletariat.[28]

Two characters attempt a deeper relationship with art; but in doing so, they hide from life instead of coming to terms with it. Mr. Croyland, a minor character who seems to have stepped directly from the pages of Those Barren Leaves, furnishes his "high universe" with "the Watteaus at Dresden, and Bellini's Transfiguration, and those Raphael portraits at the Pitti. Buttresses to shore up the soul."[29] Croyland's cultural and philosophical understanding--as separate from simple knowledge--is all but non-existent. He uses visual art, and all western culture, simply as cocktail-party conversation.

The situation of Hugh Ledwidge, the second character who attempts a deeper relationship, is pitiful. Throughout his life, Hugh had been unable to form a realistic and close relationship with another person. His psychological withdrawal is nurtured by his relationship with the minor artists he favors. Instead of feeling emotions fully,

he withdraws from them by refining them into artistic experiences. Thus, when Helen praises his unselfishness, he denies that she really understands the nature of his feeling: "The unselfishness was there, but melted down, as it were, in contemplation, refined into something aesthetic. Unselfishness in a picture. Unselfishness by Watteau, by Cima da Conegliano."[30] Ironically, Hugh is completely insensitive to art which expresses genuine, fully-experienced emotion. He reads Helen's letter of proposal in a museum, surrounded by primitive art which explores death through the stark image of the skull and Papuan shrunken heads, divinity through masks that raise the wearer to the position of the gods, and life and sex through the "image of a Negress holding her long pointed breasts in her two hands. . . . Her belly was tattooed, her navel projected in a little cone."[31] This art, could he see its message, calls to him to give up his life of aesthetic withdrawal and to start to experience the whole of his mind and body in the present. Hugh looks with blind eyes. There is not the remotest possibility of his understanding the message, much less of acting on it. He will always find such vibrant art merely "rather interesting."[32]

Even characters who are sensitive to meanings in art are left unsatisfied by it. Mark Staithes criticizes the greatest artists because:

> they give you just a taste of the next world, then let you fall back, flop, into the mud. . . . They used to be an escape and a support. But now. . .I find myself wanting something more, something heavenlier, something less human. . . . Painting, music, literature, thought--they're not enough.[33]

Visual art as an entry into a higher life does nothing toward sustaining

him. And by suggesting that a better world is possible, without showing exactly how to achieve it, art simply frustrates man.

Thus, something more than art is needed for the twin reasons that most people are completely insensitive to the messages of art; and that art, even at its best, can only suggest that something better exists, but not show how to achieve it. By suggesting a possible better way of life which man cannot possibly emulate, or even understand, art has become merely an ironic comment on life. Thus, the answer to the meaninglessness of life in Eyeless in Gaza is not art, but Miller and his philosophy of pacifism, an applied philosophy which is actively seeking to bring out the best in man's nature and to avoid interminable war.

Huxley duplicates the Eyeless in Gaza art-humanity relationship in his third novel of the 1930's, After Many a Summer Dies the Swan. Here again art contains truths to which the characters are completely insensitive, and again something more forceful is needed as an antidote to personal and political disorder.

Art works in After Many a Summer are used for two main purposes: to create a sense of the cultural disorientation of southern California in the late 1930's; and to provide a mean of order and sense with which the main characters are unable to communicate, a mean from which to satirize them. The jumble of art works and imitations to which Jeremy Pordage is exposed as he rides through Los Angeles and is taken through Jo Stoyte's castle means only cacophony to him. But Huxley has chosen the art works in the castle carefully, providing explanations for the reader which indicate to us that they come from a world having

a perfection and meaning which mocks the disordered decadence of the castle.

Jeremy's first impression of California is of a place in which imitations of the best architectural triumphs are so mingled with the worst originals that the only possible reaction is amazement at the lack of taste. Methodist churches are built "in the style of Cartuja at Granada, Catholic churches like the Canterbury Cathedral, synagogues disguised as Hagia Sophia, Christian Science churches with pillars and pediments, like banks."[34] None of these has any more dignity than the restaurant "zoomorphs" or the billboard pictures and slogans with which they are mingled. Housing architecture presents the same jumble: "elegant and witty pastiches of Lutyens manor houses, of Little Trianons, of Monticellos; light-hearted parodies of Le Corbusier's solemn machines-for-living-in; fantastic adaptations of Mexican haciendas and New England farms."[35] Jeremy compares Los Angeles to an "endless international exhibition,"[36] but it is without the educational purpose that such an exhibition would have. Everything is imitation for the sake of imitation. There is no cultural heritage in this place which could unify the outward forms, and no directing intelligence which could be used for town planning. Those who design homes and churches and those who select the designs act on whim alone. That architecture might express something other than fancy, as Huxley has shown it can in Antic Hay, seems never to have occurred to them. Here architecture mocks man by reflecting his own purposelessness and disorganization.

More significant than the architectural jumble indicating a cultural abyss is the attitude toward death indicated by the art works

at the Beverly Pantheon. While the attitude is largely a reflection of Jo's ideas, its immense popularity indicates that Jo has struck a responsive chord in Southern Californians. The statuary at the Pantheon has been selected to promote the idea that "there is no death." But this is a physical, not a spiritual, revelation. The statues, all nude females and reminiscent of "a high-class brothel in Rio de Janeiro,"[37] assure the viewer of the permanence of youth and flesh. Death is swallowed by the victory of the body, "the well-fed body, forever youthful, immortally athletic, indefatigably sexy."[38] This is the absurd kind of immortality which Jo and millions like him want, an immortality which, ironically, can be achieved only in art, not in flesh. Art mocks men; only Mr. Propter's vision can help him.

The most elaborate assemblage of artwork is at Jo's castle. Jo has not purchased these masterpieces of the past out of any love for art, but rather because "he expresses his superiority to talent and education by means of possession."[39] Many of them seem to have been selected, like the Pantheon statues, for their pornographic value; Ingres' nudes in the traditional pornography spot in the bar, or Boucher's "La Petite Morphil" in the morning room seem calculated, like Dr. Obispo's hormone injections, to arouse Jo to his desired state of sexual excitement. Others seem to have been selected--by Huxley in the role of interior decorator--to fit in with the activities of various rooms. Sert's frescoes are in the Rumpus Room, and what could raise more rumpus than an elephant? The mathematical precision of Vermeer complements the scientific precision vital in an elevator. In Virginia's boudoir, Lancret's eighteenth-century idealized visions of the lives

of the idle rich are direct forerunners of Virginia's life. In a more ironic mood, the mythical interior decorator has put "thirteenth-century stained glass in the eleventh-floor W. C.,"[40] contrasting the highest religious aspirations of medieval man with man's basest earthly necessities.

For some time after Jeremy arrives at the castle, he questions the meaning of this jumble of art. "With what intention" have the art works been executed? "To express, symbolically, what truths about the nature of things?"[41] Jeremy cannot find a meaning, but Huxley provides one for us in his authorial comments on the paintings: there is an order and beauty in life which is a viable alternative to the miserable, disordered, sheer emotionalism of Jo and those around him.

This message about the lack of communication between art and man is most obvious with regard to the Vermeer[42] in the elevator. The "Dutch lady in blue satin" sits "at the very heart of an equation, in a world where beauty and logic, painting and analytical geometry, had become one."[43] All the elements of the painting are mathematically precise: "the distance of her left eye from the left side of the picture was its distance from the right side as one is to the square root of two minus one; and the distance of the same eye from the bottom of the picture was equal to its distance from the left side."[44] The figure is held in the colored planes of the painting "like a piece of steel between two magnets of opposite sign."[45] And most significant, the perfection and stillness within the frame "was not the mere immobility of old paint and canvas; it was also the spirited repose of consummated perfection."[46]

Contrast this with what takes place in the elevator. Jo, in a jealous rage which he seems almost deliberately to prolong, is frantically hunting on various floors for the gun with which to kill a completely innocent man. The lady in the picture looks "out through the window of the picture frame into that other universe in which Mr. Stoyte and his fellow creatures had their ugly and untidy being."[47] Jo has only to look in through the window to perceive that order and stillness are attainable; but he is emotionally incapable of this kind of perception. Art is an antidote to Jo's fear and rage, but he will never see it.

Jo is similarly oblivious to the other messages his art works hold for him. As Obispo is going through the fake examination in order to have an excuse to drug Jo at night, Jo sees "the inhabitants of Watteau's mournful paradise as they prepared to set sail for some other paradise doubtless yet more heartbreaking."[48] But Jo sees only the painting, not the interpretation. If he could interpret it, he might be able to compare it with his own life; moving up the social scale, he has become constantly more fearful and consequently more demanding. His paradises have constantly improved physically, while deteriorating emotionally. At this moment he is about to leave the physically pleasurable but meaningless paradise of Virginia's company and embark to a more mournful paradise of drug-induced oblivion. Later he will find the most mournful paradise of all: eternal life via carp entrails, while he turns into an ape.

Jo is equally blind to the messages of the Rubens and the El Greco which face each other in the elaborate entry hall. Jeremy suggests

that the two pictures do have meanings, but he cannot decipher them either.[49] Here Huxley gives us very little direct authorial aid in interpretation. But there is indirect help:

> Jeremy looked from one to the other--from the ectoplasm of the inverted saint to the unequivocal skin and fat and muscle which Rubens had so loved to see and touch; from unearthly flesh tints of green-white ochre and carmine, shadowed with transparent black, to the creams and warm pinks, the nacreous blues and greens of Flemish nudity.[50]

The Rubens portrait of Hélène Fourment signifies everything that Jo wants: youth, beauty, muscular sexuality. The "Crucifixion of St. Peter" is everything of which Jo is (or wants to be) unaware: sacrifice for a cause higher than physical comfort. Both the pictures represent two realities about life. But if we take the first step of recognizing that the Rubens represents reality, then we are forced to consider that other pictures might represent other realities. Jo cannot admit to himself that there are realities other than youth and sex, so he does not take that first step of recognizing the meaning, however limited, of the Rubens.[51]

Art in this novel, then, exists on a plane entirely separate from the characters. No communication seems possible. Only Jeremy even considers the meaning of the art works, and he consistently arrives at the conclusion that they mean nothing at all. Living in the castle is like living in the mind of an idiot with a no-track mind, Jeremy maintains. It is "positively stuffed with the best that has been thought and said. . . . And every item is perfectly irrelevant to every other item."[52] Jeremy imagines himself as going:

> 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. . .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 coziness of issueless thoughts. . .of hermetically bottled art and learning, of culture for its own sake, . . .of impassable dilemmas and moral questions sufficiently answered by the circumambient idiocy.[53]

Art is hermetically sealed away from man. The messages it had in and for the past are no longer accessible. Man needs something else as an antidote to his despair and confusion, and that something else is the transcendental contemplation, the attempt to get into harmony with the world, offered by Propter.

Propter's message is that man should get in touch with his spiritual essence, which is the vital spirit of the universe. The way in which one should accomplish this is not detailed in the novel; Huxley's purpose is simply to awaken the reader to the need to pursue, and the desirability of pursuing, spiritual truth. Many of the artists whose works Jo possesses have been in touch with spiritual truth, but Huxley has found that they are unable, in most cases, to communicate their truth to the viewer. The truth, the meaning, the center of life which Huxley searched for throughout his first novels was there, but it was unsatisfactory because it could not affect the lives of the people most in need of help. Denis, Gumbril Junior, Quarles--all have been insensitive to the message of art.

Huxley himself has been partially insensitive to the message of art. He, along with his characters, needed something other than art to awaken him to spiritual life and truth. We all need a Propter, a teacher, who calls us to a direct confrontation with our own spiritual possibilities, Huxley feels. The spiritual call in art works is too indirect, too easy to ignore or misinterpret.

Because of his own religious transformation, which has taken place apart from art, Huxley is eager to awaken the reader to the new spirituality he has found. Novels as they are traditionally conceived are awkward to use as vehicles for spiritual awakening; plot and drama are quite different from mystical contemplation. And so Huxley, to the despair of many of his critics, developed the expository chapter embedded in a reinforcing plot. Propter's involved conversations and speeches are the heart of After Many a Summer, and the failure of all of the characters to respond to the messages the better art works contain underscores the distinct need for these chapters. Without the spiritual understanding which results from a Propter-like self-discovery, the only way the vast majority of us will ever be able to respond to art is as Jo and Dr. Obispo do at the end of the novel: spotting a replica of the Medici Venus in the underground tunnels at the Hauberk estate, they see it only as a symbol of earthly youth and vitality and sex. They follow the tunnel it marks to the horrible, bestial figures which are what eternal life in earthly terms really means, forever incapable of perceiving that there is some other end to life.

In the novels and poems of Huxley's second period, the period of reexamination punctuated frequently by the despair of a Callot or a Piranesi, he gives up entirely the idea that man can better his life through a close relationship with art. The messages art contains may be positive, but in Those Barren Leaves, Eyeless, and After Many a Summer, characters are completely unable to interpret or apply them. Art has failed Huxley, and he is angry at it for its failure, reducing it in After Many a Summer to a tasteless jumble. Art is a distraction

which stands in the way of spiritual understanding. Those who pursue art may become, like Cardan and Jo Stoyte, involved in illusions from which they cannot escape. Truth lies in a mysticism completely uninvolved in the material expressions of visual art.

CHAPTER V

ART AS AN APPROACH TO MYSTICISM

By 1940, Huxley was still interested in art, but he was disillusioned with its possibilities for saving man. Unfortunately, some literary critics have been too eager to accept this stage of disillusion with art as Huxley's final attitude. John Atkins, for example, maintains that "After Eyeless in Gaza there are not many good words to be said for art. It is viewed as a pleasant and relatively harmless drug."[1] He goes on, "The final stage is the condemnation of all art. . . . In Time Must Have a Stop, Sebastian Barnack reflected that 'even the best play or narrative is merely glorified gossip and artistically disciplined day-dreaming.'"[2] To thus isolate Huxley's few splenetic comments and to believe them representative of his overall view of art is to miss entirely the final stage of Huxley's relationship with visual art: the understanding that art can have a key role in opening our minds to mystical reality.

Huxley's "conversion" to mysticism took place gradually, beginning with his interest in pacifism in the 1930's, as reflected in Eyeless in Gaza, and progressing through an involvement with the Vedanta movement, a study of Eastern mystics, and some experimentation with mind-expanding drugs. Huxley, according to his own letters and comments, never experienced full mystical awareness and vision. His mind seems to have been too bound to the rational, orderly procedures he had

followed all his life to leap into total mystical awareness. He did, however, make a thorough intellectual study of mysticism. Convinced of its value in helping man discover a reason to live, he attempted mystical contemplation, aided in some instances by drugs.

The effect of the pursuit of mystical understanding on Huxley's literary productions after 1940 is striking. Huxley completely abandoned the despair and bitter irony of After Many a Summer, and moved instead toward a positive view of man's potential, far more positive than the tentative explorations of the artist figures in the early works. Although most people do not attain mystical awareness, Huxley points out, the attainment is possible, and can lead to combined psychological and spiritual health.

Most striking to the student of Huxley's relationship with art is that art emerges from its position as an ironic comment on life to a far more important position, as one way into the mystical experience. Because of his new understanding of mystical experience, Huxley is now far more open to visual expressions of mysticism than previously. This new awareness combined with his continuing intellectual interest in art and led to a new and more secure evaluation of art's worth to man. Although art does not function as the supplier of life's meaning--the idea rejected in Huxley's first phase of development--it is able to introduce us or lead us to the existence of mysticism. Art points the way to mystical experience. It excites the senses and makes us want to discover more about mysticism so that we can participate in the visions of the artists.

Huxley uses art as a road toward mysticism in two important ways in Time Must Have a Stop.[3] First, art amplifies character. The reactions of the characters to art range from the superficial--Mrs. Gamble's seeing only the hard cash which works of art represent--to the very intense--Eustace's extensive aesthetic pleasure at the sight of art objects. In general, Huxley raises or lowers the opinion of the reader toward a character by showing us a greater or lesser understanding of the meaning behind art works on the part of the character. And the closer a character is to the best art, the closer he is to mystical understanding. Second, art amplifies the theme of the novel. By contrasting the art of Michelangelo and Degas, Huxley emphasizes the need to press beyond the earth-bound limits of most of man's achievements into the mystical Absolute.

Almost all of the characters in Time express their feelings about art at some point in the novel. The least sympathetic characters see art only as a material possession. Somewhat sympathetic characters use art for ironic commentary or as a distraction. And the characters who achieve the greatest understanding of life achieve it along with, or as a corrolary to, an intense insight into the greatest art.

On the lowest end of the scale, Mrs. Gamble values Eustace's art collection only for the money it will bring when it is sold. "'I'd sell the whole lot, if I were you, Daisy,'" she advises Eustace's heir, "'Sell 'em for cash and buy yourself a Rolls. It's an economy in the end.'"[4] Mrs. Gamble is nearly blind, so her lack of appreciation of art would have to be forgiven. But the only things she does value in life are her own comfort and physical well-being. Her selfishness is

complete; she is unable to tolerate anyone's doing something pleasurable except herself. Thus, she thwarts Veronica Thwale's desire to lunch in town with Eustace, even though it would be no particular loss to herself. Since she is unable to thwart Eustace's pleasures, as he is financially independent, she is forced to content herself with issuing dire warnings about his habits; and the fact that these warnings do prove correct does not make them any more palatable. Art has no value to Mrs. Gamble because it neither worships and depends on her, like her succession of dogs, nor does it increase her physical comfort, as a luxurious car would. Mrs. Gamble lacks completely an aesthetic sense which would be encouraged and nourished by the contemplation of good works of art.

M. Weyl's response to art is not very far removed from Mrs. Gamble's, despite the fact that he is an art dealer, and never loses an opportunity to expound on the glories of art. Weyl's chief interest in art is as a valuable commodity. The vocabulary with which he describes the paintings he is trying to sell, and which he has taught his wife to use--full of "four-dimensional volumes," "couleur d'éternité," and "plastic polyphony"[5]--is simply nonsense, as Eustace recognizes. Fancy phrases make the unwary buyer think he is getting something which will increase his own cultural stock.

Weyl knows how to change his approach depending on the level of sophistication and the particular tastes of his customer. Thus, when selling Eustace the Degas drawings, he does not try to intimidate Eustace with his vocabulary, but instead appeals to Eustace's sensuality: "he was silent for a moment, then changing his expression to the libidinous leer of a slave dealer peddling Circassions to an ageing pasha, he

started to undo the strings of the portfolio."[6] And Weyl has chosen his approach well, for Eustace does succumb both to the appeal of the drawings, as Weyl knows he will, and to the fact that they are a bargain which comes at a time when he has just unexpectedly made more than enough money on the monetary exchange.

That Weyl is a simple miser who loves art instead of gold is evident both in his buying one of the drawings back from Sebastian at a third of its value, and even more in the war scene which the dead Eustace sees in the future. There, Weyl is trying to save as much of his treasure as possible by wheeling along a green perambulator full of canvases, silver, and a statue. He is deaf to the pleadings of his exhausted wife; and when the family is hit by a truck, his tears are only for the broken statue, not for his dead and mutilated wife. That Eustace chooses to become the son of such a man, even though he understands thoroughly the man's absurdity, shows clearly the tremendous power that life, as we know it, as opposed to life as a part of the silent light of the world beyond, has over Eustace.

Mr. Tendring, though scarcely developed as a full character, serves as an ironic echo to M. Weyl. Tendring has accompanied Daisy Ockham to Florence to help her settle the estate, and his interest in art is also as a possession. However, he does not try to disguise his real interest, as Weyl does, behind the gushing vocabulary of art appreciation. Instead, he does exactly what Weyl would like to do in the face of an art work: he inventories it. Of course, Tendring does not have Weyl's superficial knowledge of art, and so makes comic mistakes. He identifies Piero's "Venus and Adonis" in his inventory book as "Oil

Painting: Antony and Cleopatra. Antique. 41 ins. x 20½ ins. Framed."[7] But basically Tendring and Weyl are the same kind of person, before and after a six-month study of art history. Both see only the money involved.

Only slightly above Weyl in the reader's estimation is John Barnack. Like Weyl, he fails in his duty toward his family because of his selfishness; and if we feel he has more merit than Weyl, it is only because his selfishness is intimately connected with his genuine desire for a better, more equitable world. John's wife has left him, we gather, because of his coldness and inability to enjoy life. Pretty and fun-loving, she ran away with another man, leaving behind her son, Sebastian, to take the punishment for her sins. John's refusal to understand Sebastian's adolescent longings, such as his desire for a dress suit, is based to a large degree on his desire to punish his wife, whom he sees again in Sebastian, and whom he remembers especially as having dressed for a ball as Lady Caroline Lamb. When Sebastian pleads for the suit, John's words and thoughts are not identical:

> "Oh, you've been asked to a party," said Mr. Barnack; and he recalled the ecstatic tone in which Rosie used to pronounce that hated word; he remembered the brightening of her eyes as she heard the music and the confused roaring of the crowd, the all but frenzy of her wild gaiety as the evening progressed. . . . "My dear Alice," said John Barnack in the tone of a courteous but absolutely determined debater, "it isn't a question of whether I can afford to buy the boy his fancy dress." (The words evoked an image of the red velvet breeches of Lady Caroline Lamb as Byron's--as young Tom Hilliard's--page.) "The point at issue is whether it's right to do so."[8]

John uses his principles to disguise the selfishness in his asceticism. His unfavorable reaction to art is only to be expected. When his guest, Professor Cacciaguida, confesses his taste for architectural detail in homes ("Much dust, no doubt, in the moldings. And

all that sculptured wood! . . . But what warmth, what wealth!"[9]), John must deliberately misinterpret to uphold his principles: "But whose pockets did the wealth come out of?"[10] John sees art only as a non-utilitarian appendage of the upper classes, an excuse which the rich use to preserve the status quo, and therefore as something which must be gotten rid of in the millenium. To John, there is no difference whatsoever between a masterpiece of painting and Sebastian's fancy dress.

Daisy Ockham also tends toward the ascetic, but she is a far more likable character than John because her asceticism is simply part of her nature. It is not selfish, and she does not try to impose it on others, as John does. Instead, she combines it with a sense of humor to which Sebastian readily responds.[11] In her desire to reach out to Sebastian, she makes an attempt to understand--or at least to accept--art, listening attentively to Sebastian's repetition of Eustace's comments on the "affinity between mid-Victorian English and Italian Primitive."[12] The main obstacle in the way of Daisy's appreciating art is that she connects it almost entirely with sex, an aspect of life for which she has not had much enthusiasm. While contemplating Piero's "Venus and Adonis," for instance, she thinks:

> She hadn't bothered--except, of course, negatively, inasmuch as she'd always felt that the whole business was profoundly unpleasant. And, in spite of her mother's vague but fearful warnings about the male sex, her darling Francis had really bothered very little. So why did other people find it necessary to think and talk so much about it, to write all those books and poems, to paint such pictures as this thing they were now looking at? Pictures which, if they weren't Great Art, one would never dream of tolerating in a decent house, where innocent boys like Frankie, like Sebastian here. . ."[13]

As John would in her place, Daisy will sell Eustace's art collection, but not on principle, because she thinks it is immoral to have such

trappings of wealth in her possession. Instead, she will sell it out of generosity, because "she could use the money to help her poor girls"[14] and also because she can give some of the money to Sebastian, to bribe him to let her love him in place of the son she has lost. She needs other people, and she wants them to be happy; and if her own self-interest is involved in the distribution of her money, it is such a gentle selfishness that it is immediately forgiven.

Veronica Thwale is at once an attractive and a horrifying character. To some critics (Woodcock, for instance) she is despicable, a Circean figure; and she does have a rather surgical attitude toward sex. But she is more sympathetic in light of her background. As a child, she has led a life of moral stricture to which she was by nature unsuited. Her parents have used "moral blackmail" to force her to do the good deeds she secretly hates. It is certainly no wonder that she rebels at every opportunity, first secretly drawing, an activity her parents regard as morally shaky, then marrying as soon as she can. When her husband is killed, she attaches herself as a high-class servant to Mrs. Gamble rather than return to the "goodness" of her family. The reader is wholly on Veronica's side through this; Huxley has never presented excessive goodness as attractive in the least.

Veronica sees life's irony and essential hideousness, and illustrates them in her drawings. "Daisy Ockham, Dotty Freebody, Yvonne Graves--the Holy Women. One fat, two scraggy. She had once drawn a picture of them squatting at the foot of the cross on which her father was being crucified by a troop of Boy Scouts."[15] Her parents were so disturbed by the discovery of their daughter's sketch book and the

revelation of her ironic vision that her mother "had gone to bed for three days with a migrane headache."[16] "There's an awful prayer at the beginning of the Communion Service," Veronica tells Eustace. "You know the one. 'Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid.' Really awful! I used to make drawings about it. Those were the ones that seemed to upset my mother most of all."[17] The drawing which Veronica shows Eustace is cynical:

> 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 magnet so curved and rounded as to suggest a pair of thighs tapering down to the knees. 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 worm-like 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.[18]

The woman in the drawing is, of course, Veronica herself; and the magnet, her own sexuality which she disguises beneath a socially correct veneer. The magnet is currently dragging Paul De Vries from his chosen path of pure devotion to science and into a role she wants for him as security against the possibility of having to return to her family. (Mrs. Gamble, she clearly realizes, is not going to live forever.) If she is not prepared to become the model wife, at least she is honest enough to admit exactly what she is offering Paul, and exactly what she plans to get from him.

Veronica uses art as part of an ironic game again the morning after she has seduced Sebastian. Sebastian is far too embarrassed to refer to the events of the night before, much less to act as if he

expected a repetition. Veronica is thoroughly amused by his embarrassment. She advises him, "I'd make it a point to go to San Marco and look at the Fra Angelicos."[19] The comment is pointed, for Fra Angelico is one of the most spiritual of painters. His figures have little weight or body, but are instead as close to pure, non-sexual spirit as it is possible for a fundamentally representative painter to achieve.

Veronica does have a more corrupt side, one which she still regards as amusing, but which both the reader and Sebastian can see as having destructive consequences. When one of the Degas drawings is found missing, she accuses the servants' child of having taken it, even though she strongly suspects that Sebastian is responsible for the disappearance. Veronica invites Sebastian to participate in corruption with her by agreeing to the suggestion, and thus perpetrating what she has previously described as an "outrage," a punishment delivered on a wholly unsuspecting and entirely innocent person for no real reason or benefit. In this instance, Veronica's ironic approach to life fails to amuse the reader, for her action persuades Sebastian to deny his own responsibility in the matter, and leads to eventual disaster for Bruno Rontini.

Eustace describes Veronica as "an Ingres madonna. . . . Smooth and serene almost to the point of impersonality, and yet with all the sex left in--and perhaps even a little added."[20] The comparison is an intriguing one, for, to Ingres, as well as to many of his admirers, his madonnas were studies in "inner peace and serenity."[21] To many others, however, Ingres' Virgins seem similar to his odalisques: "Indeed

the Virgin's downward, heavy-lidded gaze and full, rouged lips are saturated with Ingres's boudoir sensuality, announcing that strange amalgam of would-be inoocence and an innate voluptuousness which was vulgarized in so much official religious art of the nineteenth century."[22] To many observer-characters, such as Paul De Vries, Veronica does seem pure and virtuous, full of "inner serenity." But others, such as Eustace, are able to perceive the irony behind her lofty sentiments of love. An ironic figure in life, Veronica is constantly connected with ironies in art.

The character most intimately connected with art is, of course, Eustace. As Meckier notes, Eustace "holds many opinions similar to Huxley's and is not a bad conjectural portrait of the mental attitude that might have been Huxley's own had the cynical elements in Antic Hay and Those Barren Leaves not yielded substantially to those novels' equally strong religious overtones."[23] This is especially true of Eustace's attitudes toward art, and Huxley has chosen very carefully the art with which he is connected in order to add depth to his characters. The drawings Eustace buys are by Degas not simply by chance or simply because, historically, Degas' drawings were prominent on the art market during the fifteen years following his death in 1917, but because there is a striking similarity between Degas' point of view towards life and Eustace's. It is this point of view which propels Eustace back toward life on earth rather than toward life as part of infinity.

Both Degas and Eustace are drawn toward life equally by its beauty and by its ugliness. Degas paints, for instance, ballerinas both on stage, at the highest moments of their airy beauty ("The Close of an

Arabesque," "Stars of the Ballet") and backstage, at moments of exhaustion and twisted ugliness ("Dancing-Girls Behind the Framework of a Flat," "Waiting," "Dancing-Girls at Rest"). In Degas' most striking pictures (and this is especially true of most of the nude-in-the-bath scenes, of which Eustace buys two, as well as many of the ballet scenes), he manages to combine both beauty and ugliness. He shows not only the attractive curves of the body, but also the distortions brought about both by the odd, unstudied positions people assume when they are not conscious of being watched, and by the restrictive clothing popular with women at the turn of the century. In combining beauty and ugliness in his pictures, Degas is not attempting to satirize the human being, showing us at once what we could be and then again what we are. Instead, he is assuming the point of view of an interested realist. He wants to show the body as it is, in all of its unidealized aspects, in order to show the power of the combined beauty and ugliness of life itself.

The power this combination had over Degas seems to have sprung, at least in part, from his

> enigmatic feeling towards women. One side of him adored women; he was in love with all that was charming, frivolous, and feminine in their behavior. . . . But there was another, less human streak in his character. He liked to reveal woman in her nakedness, stripped of her fripperies. There is something disdainful and more than half cruel in the way he pulls out a tautened leg or twists a torso.[24]

In several of his essays, Huxley quotes Degas' famous quip that so many of the women in his paintings are ugly because, in general, women are ugly (cf. "Art and Life" and "Doodles in the Dictionary").

Eustace, too, loves the combined beauty and ugliness of life, and he is able to see this point of view when it is presented in art:

"He and Degas--they knew the same secret--the beauty of ugliness, the comedy of holiness."[25] "He" here refers to Chaucer, but it could just as easily refer to Eustace himself, for the love of combined beauty and ugliness pervades Eustace's life while he is alive and calls him back to life after he is dead. Eustace's feelings about Laurine, for instance, are an equal combination of worship for the beauty she once had and horror over the crippled wreckage she has become. He does not satirize her because of her present misery, as Swift would have, but instead pays her his somewhat forced social respects, simply as a part of what life intrinsically is. His enjoyment of cigars is in no way lessened by the knowledge that they are killing him. He accepts as part of sex what others might find degrading; in his relations with Mimi he simply enjoys, he does not judge either himself or her. Instead, he is open to everything and anything that life on earth has to offer. Degas might almost have been describing Eustace when, in a letter to Lorentz Frölich in 1872, he wrote that the artist must put himself "in espalier; like a wall-tree one must remain all one's life, with extended arms and open mouth, so as to assimilate that which passes bye and is around one, and live thereon."[26]

In addition to the two Degas drawings, Eustace possesses a number of other art works, a few of which are mentioned. He has works by Guardi, Magnasco, Seurat,[27] Domenichino, and Rose da Tivoli,[28] and a collection of Chinese bronzes. Eustace also describes elaborately his "Venus and Adonis" by Piero di Cosimo and the primitive "St. Sebastian." Huxley has carefully chosen all these artists and paintings to emphasize

Eustace's attachment to the world as it is inhabited by man and as it is seen in daily life.

Guardi, Domenichino, and Magnasco all painted Italian landscape as it has been transformed by man. Guardi is best known for his many architectural paintings: panoramas of Venice, scenes of architectural ruins, and his often inventive architectural fantasies. Both Domenichino and Magnasco celebrated luxuriant landscape, but landscape dominated by people and their activities. In both these artists, landscapes are often romantically intense and rhythmic, but never seem beyond man's comprehension. Magnasco, in addition, painted a number of musical and musical-banquet scenes in which the style of painting seems a rhythmic overflow of the physical pleasure of music. Huxley found him lacking in that "his inventions are always pleasing, but always, one feels, without any deep or abiding significance--things created voluntarily on one of the higher levels of consciousness, somewhere near the top of a very whimsical and accomplished head."[29]

Rose da Tivoli (Philipp Peter Roos) fits easily into the Guardi-Magnasco-Domenichino group, for this fairly obscure seventeenth-century artist was so interested in an exact reproduction of nature that he kept a menagerie of animals at Tivoli for concentrated study. Both he and the landscape artists wanted to celebrate life on earth as it was lived and seen every day.

Seurat worked in such a completely different style as to make his works seem out of place in this group, but his pointillism does not hide the fact that he, too, was celebrating life as it was experienced every day. Like the others, his landscapes are tame ones, under man's

domination or reduced to man's scale. And his figures, though much more static and stylized than Domenichino's voluptuous ones, still are rational and decorative rather than spiritual. In one of his essays, Huxley writes that Seurat's pointillism "permitted him to render empty space as no other painter has ever done, and to impose, through color, an unprecedented degree of unity. . . . The emptiness which is the symbol of infinity is of the same substance as the finite forms it contains."[30] To a character like Eustace, this unity of finite and infinite would not suggest the infinity in all finite forms, but instead the fact that infinity can be thought of in exactly the same terms as one thinks about the everyday world. After he dies, Eustace actively refuses to think about infinity in any terms but those of everyday reality.

Most Chinese bronzes, which were generally used as ritual vessels in religious ceremonies honoring ancestors, are decoratively stylized in a manner similar to Seurat's. While it may be hazardous to generalize about an art form which lasted over three thousand years, it is not difficult to see that the Chinese bronzes are not meant to inspire the viewer to spiritual contemplation, as Christian sculpture often is, but rather were decorated with stylized animals and geometric motifs simply in honor of the dead and because they were used on important occasions. They are aesthetic rather than spiritual creations, and are owned by an aesthete, not a spiritualist.

Sebastian is the best critic of Piero's "Venus and Adonis":[31]

> "The incandescent copulations of the gods," Sebastian said to himself as he gazed enchanted at the picture. Other phrases began to come to him. "Bright with divine lust." "The pure lascivious innocence of heaven." But what made this particular incandescence so delightful was the fact that it was rendered

> with a touch of irony, a hint (subtly conveyed by the two white rabbits in the left-foreground, the bullfinch among the oak leaves overhead, the three pelicans and the centaur on the distant beach) that it was all a tiny bit absurd.[32]

Eustace responds favorably to the voluptuous lust of the picture, even though he recognizes that "real love-making. . .is seldom quite so pretty as Piero di Cosimo's idea of it."[33] Still, the picture celebrates an entirely earthly sensation, and in an ironic light, two factors Eustace looks for in art work as in life. As for the St. Sebastian, which Eustace describes as "charming rubbish,"[34] the picture seems to be a minor, non-convincing representation of a horrible martyrdom. It is precisely because it is not convincing that Eustace likes it; he does not want to be reminded of suffering, especially suffering undertaken for spiritual reasons. Instead, he prefers what the twentieth century would call the "camp" version of the Italian primitive.

Almost all of the art works with which Eustace is connected, then, are representations of earthy, sensation-filled life as it is perceived through the eye rather than through the transcendental spirit of the artist. Eustace loves art because it is a celebration of the life he loves and to which he is "completely adapted."[35] It is not surprising, then, that the remembrance of art works is one of the factors which calls Eustace back to earthly existence after he is dead. As his memory is restored, he rediscovers art: "And here was the Maize God from Copan, and the 'Last Communion of St. Jerome.' And that thing of Constable's at the Victoria and Albert, and--yes--'Susanna and the Elders.'"[36]

Not all of these works are immediately identifiable. The Catalogue of the Constable Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum contains four hundred fifteen reproductions. There are two well-known versions of the "Last Communion of St. Jerome," one by Botticelli and one by Domenichino. Of the two, the Botticelli is fairly spiritual, while the Domenichino is more concerned with earthly suffering and psychological attitudes of earth-bound people. Since Eustace does own another Domenichino, perhaps it would be safe to guess that Eustace is here referring to the Domenichino version. Certainly the Constable, the Tintoretto, and the Maize God are intimately connected with a celebration of earthly life. Constable is, of course, known almost exclusively as a landscape painter; and like the landscapes of Guardi and Domenichino, his are those tamed by man. Both of Tintoretto's versions of "Susannah and the Elders" (Imperial Gallery, Vienna, and the Louvre, Paris) show heavy, sensual, earthy figures; and Eustace blends the representations in his mind with the memory of the body of his own mistress, Mimi. Of the Maize God from Copan, Huxley has written elsewhere: "The beauty of most Mayan sculpture is felt by us to be profoundly, incommensurably alien. But with [the Maize God] from Copan one feels suddenly at home, on familiar emotional ground. The mind of the man, or men, who made [it] seems to have been gifted with the same kind of sensibilities as ours."[37] Its beauty too is earth-bound, comprehensible to the sensual man.

The call of this art is an invitation to return to the sensuality of earth, and Eustace accepts the invitation even though, for the first time, he experiences fully and emotionally, rather than simply

intellectually, the horrors of life. While alive, Eustace knew, in his mind, that life was ugly; but like Degas, he blended ugliness with beauty into a love of realistic life. After death, though, the horror of living becomes intense and real. He sees "the unutterable ugliness of his own opaque and fragmentary being. . .his thoughts were like lumps of excrement, like the noise of vomiting."[38] He is unable to put out of his mind the horrors of sex and the horrors which the St. Sebastian artist has intellectualized and aestheticized into non-existence:

> The bleeding face, the horror of the bayonets, but all somehow mixed up with Mimi in her claret-colored dressing gown. Adesso comincia la torture--and then the dandling, the fumbling, the fondling. And at the same time the stamping, the stabbing. With St. Sebastian among the Victorian flowers, and poor deaf Amy, tremulous before the Kensington Registrar, and Laurina at Monte Carlo. Ave verum corpus, the true body, the prim Victorian mouth, the brown, blind breast-eyes. And while the bayonets stabbed and stabbed, there was the shameful irrelevance of a pleasure that dies at last into a cold reiterated friction, automatic and compulsory. And all the time the yelping and the bassoons, the iron teeth, combing and carding the very substance of his being. For every and ever, excruciatingly.[39]

Yet he chooses them again rather than commit the suicide he feels the light is demanding. Once he is safely on earth again, he too will, like the St. Sebastian artist, be able to put away the horror of life into his intellect, he will be able to recapture Degas' ironic sense of life as combined beauty and ugliness.

Eustace has chosen the type of art he is involved with in accordance with his own view of life; but Huxley would probably add that the art with which he has surrounded himself has had a bad effect on Eustace, too. In "The Pierian Spring,"[40] Huxley derided the cult of the "amusing," a cult in which Eustace participates when he gets such a

great deal of pleasure from the combination of the St. Sebastian with the Victorian papier-maché and waxed flowers:

> All bad art, whose badness is a positive and not a merely negative quality of respectable dulness, may be said to be amusing. . . . Amusingness has even come to have a commercial value; dealers find that they can get good prices for the papier maché furniture of the eighteen-fifties, for the wax flowers and statuettes of the age of Louis-Phillipe. The people who collect these objects appear to derive as much satisfaction from them--for a time at any rate--as they would from the most austerely graceful Heppelwhite or the choicest fourteenth-century ivories. And there is no reason, of course, why they should not, provided that they continue to recognize the fact that Heppelwhite is better than Victorian papier maché. . . . But the trouble is that this recognition is not always so complete or so prompt as it should be. That is the great danger attendant on the cult of the amusing; it makes its votaries forget that there are such things as the beautiful and the sublime. In the end Erasmus Darwin comes to be preferred to Wordsworth, Longhi to Giotto.[41]

That is exactly what has happened to Eustace. His own sensuality, reinforced by the art works he has chosen, has tied him to a life whose horror he understands, but which he cannot do without.

The idea that present, bodily earth and its pleasures cannot fulfill man's life is not an entirely new one in Huxley's work. Even though we may feel that it is Huxley himself speaking in the "Ninth Philosopher's Song"[42] when he says:

> But I, too rational by half
> To live but where I bodily am,
> Can only do my best to laugh,
> Can only sip my misery dram by dram.

there have been searchers for the more-than-earthly already in Huxley's works, especially Calamy. But Calamy did not find anything within Those Barren Leaves; he merely searched. And the other notable seeker in the novels, Anthony Beavis, finds his answer in pacifism, a human endeavor

attainable in strictly human terms. What does seem to be new in Time Must Have a Stop is the idea that the center of man's existence must be a religious one. But surprisingly, this idea does occur at the very beginning of Huxley's work, in a poem, "Doors of the Temple,"[43] which creates a portrait of Eustace and then rejects it on religious grounds:

> And these are the gates that God decreed
> Should lead to his house:--kisses and wine,
> Cool depths of thought, youth without rest,
> And calm old age, prayer and desire,
> The lover's and the mother's breast,
> The fire of sense and the poet's fire.

However, the person who "worships the gates alone,/ Forgetting the shrine beyond" will find:

> not God's radiant throne,
> But the fires of wrath and agony.

Eustace has worshipped at all these gates, and is unable to stop worshipping at them even when he recognizes their horror. But there does seem to be a difference between the religious affirmations of the early poems in The Burning Wheel and the religious affirmation of Time. In the poems, Huxley seems to be working with received or traditional ideas about religion, ideas which he respects, but which, he tells us in "Darkness,"[44] he has never really experienced. They are the religious beliefs of childhood, accepted because unquestioned, and easily shed in the face of other evidence. Huxley did shed them in the Defeat of Youth poems, and in his satiric views of society in the early novels. But now, having explored every other alternative which seemed reasonable

to him, especially art as man's salvation, he has come back to the religious position of his youth. Experience without religion has convinced him that he, and probably most others, cannot live without a center to life which is beyond what man can accomplish on earth.

A second early rejection of Eustace occurs in Proper Studies, in which Huxley finds it "impossible to understand except theoretically" the "pronounced extrovert" who exists "for sensations rather than for ideas and emotions":

> The interesting specimen of this type is the refined and conscious aesthete, who is intelligent enough to have the desire and the power to rationalize his love of sensations into a philosophy. Morality for this exquisite sensationalist is a branch of aesthetics. Actions are good because they are elegant. Religion he admires only for its trappings. . . . Art is robbed of its philosophical and moral significance and reduced to a matter of pure aesthetics; he exalts it nevertheless as the most important of human activities.[45]

Huxley deplores the separation of art from religion, and notes that when art is worshipped purely aesthetically, "the most horrible putrefaction is apt to set in. The lives of the aesthetes are the far from edifying commentary on the religion of beauty."

Huxley's interest in religion in Proper Studies seems based in ethics; he was still an agnostic in 1927. But by 1944, religion has taken a more definite shape in Huxley's mind, and the religious experience is the one experience on earth really worth pursuing. Art can assist in this pursuit, for while the art which attracts Eustace is sensual art, resting on the pleasure of physiology, art at its best can call the viewer toward the experience of eternity. Eustace suggests the existence of this other kind of art when, as he rides through

Florence, he tells Sebastian, "The Medici tonbs are up there. . . . Talk about the Sublime! I can't look at them now. Donatello's my limit these days. But of course it's quite true: the damned things are the greatest sculptures in the world."[47]

Donatello's sculpture is, of course, noted for its sensuality. The sculptor was not completely satisfied with the classic-heroic forms of Greek sculpture which dominated Renaissance thinking, but wanted instead to create sculpture infused with a more humanly realistic, less idealized spirit. Both of Donatello's marble and bronze Davids contain a rhythmic sensuality which contrasts markedly with Michelangelo's more god-like David. Most of Donatello's statues of saints, such as the "St. Mark" at San Michele in Florence or "John the Baptist" in the Florence Cathedral have vividly human, energetic expressions which combine with the intricate energies of their draperies and beards to create a sense of rapid, earth-bound movement. Eustace describes the spirit of Donatello's sculptures as: "Nobility without affectation. Serenity combined with passionate energy. Dignity wedded to grace."[48] These qualities are all earthly ones, toward which the earthly human being might aspire, and Eustace does: "it would have been nice. . .if one's life had had the quality of those statues."[49] Eustace's life has not, and he knows it has not, but comments that "being a Donatello would have been altogether too strenuous for his taste."[50] Still, the kind of life Donatello portrays is an idealized earthly life, which is in sharp contrast with the kind of life Michelangelo portrays in his Medici Chapel sculptures.

After Eustace's death, Sebastian visits the Medici Chapel with Bruno Rontini, and the visit is one of the awakening experiences for Sebastian's spirit:

> Blissfully, in a mood of effortless alertness and passivity, like a wide-eyed somnambulist, who sees, but with senses somehow not his own, who feels and thinks, but with emotions that no longer have a personal reference, a mind entirely free and unconditioned, he moved through the actual radience around him, through the memories of what he had so lately seen and heard--the huge, smooth marbles, . . .the words that Bruno had spoken as they came out of the Medici Chapel.
>
> "Michelangelo and Fra Angelico--apotheosis and deification. Apotheosis--the personality exalted and intensified to the point where the person ceases to be mere man or woman and becomes god-like, one of the Olympians, like that passionately pensive warrior, like those great titanesses brooding, naked, above the sarcophagi. And over against apotheosis, deification--personality annihilated in charity, in union, so that at last the man or woman can say, 'Not I, but God in me.'"[51]

Michelangelo's Medici Chapel sculptures, it is important to note, are profoundly different from almost all his other works in the spirit which informs them. Statues such as Moses, David, or the late, unfinished Slaves, seem to show us the power and magnificence of the human body, the force which man can exert on his surroundings, the grandeur of being alive. The Slaves, which are also located in Florence, have always affected viewers profoundly because of the seeming struggle of the physical man to free himself from the bonds which hold him back. They represent the emerging triumph of life. But the sculptures in the Medici Chapel are altogether different. There is a general mood of lethargy, impotence, and despair. Giuliano de Medici's hands are loose around his baton, and the coins seem about to slip from his grasp. Lorenzo de Medici is purely pensive; he is dressed for battle, but his mind is far away from earthly power or desires. The four statues of

the times of day, which could have been represented as modulating from hope to achievement to satisfied rest, are informed instead by "inertia and grief. . . . The Aurora mourns in pain, the Crepuscolo in hopeless resignation, the Giorno in rebellion, and the Notte in unfulfilled desire."[52] Dawn, for instance, the traditionally hopeful time of day, is shown as

> awakened, and. . .making the first unconscious movements, but psychic lassitude seems to paralyze her. Her head sinks back, her hands bend at the wrist, falling passively in purposeless gestures. Hopelessness is written in the straight lines of her contracted eyebrows, and a groan seems to come from her slightly parted lips. . . . It is the tossing of the body in psychic torment; it is the awakening of someone who is aware of the futility of existence and of the trials which await him at the new day.[53]

Michelangelo explained the concept behind the statues thus:

> The heavens and the earth. . .Night and Day are speaking and saying, We have with our swift course brought to death the Duke Giuliano; it is just that he take revenge upon us as he does, and the revenge is this: that we having slain him, he thus dead has taken the light from us and with closed eyes has fastened ours so that they may shine forth no more upon the earth. What would he have done with us then while he lived?[54]

In other words, the pensive Medicis have escaped from time and thus conquered it. For them, time has had a stop, and in that stop, in their pensive gazes directed toward the statue of the nursing Virgin, they have become greater than they ever could have been in life, they have become part of the world of the infinite. Unlike most other funerary statuary of the time, the statues in the Medici Chapel do not suggest that death is an eternal sleep. Instead, death leads to a lessening of concern with the corporal and temporal, and an induction into the world of the spirit, what Bruno describes as "apotheosis and deification."

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The San Marco frescos of Fra Angelico are the other set of art works which heighten Sebastian's sense of the transcendent at this time. And although he uses a completely different artistic form and concept from Michelangelo, the idea which Fra Angelico wished to awaken in the viewer is fundamentally the same as Michelangelo's--that life is not wholly, or even most importantly, what is lived on a day to day basis on this earth. Instead it consists of the religious or mystical essence, the presence of God, which lies beyond fundamental reality. Like Michelangelo, Fra Angelico embodied this ideal in human forms; but while Michelangelo's forms are solid and inescapably real bodies whose poses and expressions alone suggest their informing spirits, Angelico's bodies are themselves ethereal, weightless, in poses which are symbolic rather than substantially real. In the Chapter House "Crucifixion," for instance, the saint who is supporting Mary could not realistically be bearing the weight of another person, any more than the weight of Christ's body is supported by the nails in his hands and feet. The Virgin in the "Annunciation" in one of the convent cells cannot realistically be either kneeling or standing; her drapery covers no real legs. She seems instead to drift forward and upward, unrestrained by an earthly body. Similarly, Fra Angelico is not restricted by a realistic sense of time. Any number of Catholic saints, most especially St. Dominic (San Marco is a Dominican monastery) are added to scenes of the Crucifixion, although they could not realistically have been there.

The weightlessness and timelessness, as well as the lack of realistic background of most of the frescos, shows us that Fra Angelico was not interested in portraying earthly life while disguising it with

a religious veneer. On the contrary, the whole import of the frescos is religious or mystical. They are intended to call the viewer into a meditation on the Christian mysteries, to invite him to contemplate the world beyond the temporal one, a world in which light emanates not from an external source but from the inner souls of the blessed. Like Sebastian's description of Bruno, one of Fra Angelico's saints is "a kind of thin transparent shell, enclosing something incommensurably other than himself--an unearthly beauty of peace and power and knowledge."[55]

The transcendental qualities of Fra Angelico's San Marco frescos are obvious to even the most casual observer, and have been extensively commented on by art critics. Of "Christ on the Cross Adored by St. Dominic," one critic notes

> a severe admonition to penitence and meditation and to obedience to the Dominican religious teaching. The completely barren earth and uniformly blue sky. . .convey a sense of transcendental sublimation which invests with gentle philosophical resignation even the Crucifix beneath which St. Domini kneels. . . . The pure colours enhance the symbolic value of the work: the cosmic blue, the red of warm blood and martyrdom, the immaculate white; yet, in contrast to the Crucifixions of Masaccio, over-emphasis on realism is avoided and there are no sharp contrasts as would be provided by a heavy chiaroscuro.[56]

On "The Adoration of the Magi," another writes:

> But as if to remind faltering spirits that once within the convent walls, they have left the world behind them for good, he painted a bitter landscape of burnt-out mountains before the picturesque procession of figures, a landscape livid under a white, gritty light. This is the earth which, to lay eyes, is a garden-place in springtime; it is but dust and stone to those who embrace the Dominican rule of life; 'Every pleasure has its source in God. There is no pleasure that comes not from him.'[57]

At times, Fra Angelico is almost completely symbolic. In "The Derision of Christ," for example, the disembodied hands and head do not inflict

real suffering on a real body; and the saints in the foreground are not contemplating human suffering, but instead gazing off from the representation into the mysteries beyond.

Fra Angelico does succeed with Sebastian, who is awakened to a sense, however temporary, of something beyond himself, beyond the temporal. Along with Michelangelo, he supports the idea that time can indeed stop.

But however great the artist, art must not, in Huxley's view, be an end in itself. What Michelangelo and Fra Angelico are doing in the Medici Chapel and in San Marco is pointing the way toward another realm of life. They attempt to lead the viewer to contemplate what is beyond the earthly. The art itself is not the essence of awareness. Sebastian recalls Bruno's having said that art "turned out to be only a glorious blind alley. Under triumphal arches, along an avenue of statuary and fountains, you marched in pomp towards an ultimate frustration--solemnly and heroically, full tilt into the insurmountable dead end of your own selfhood. And the dead end was solid marble, of course, and adorned with the colossal monuments of your power, magnanimity and wisdom, but no less a wall than the most grotesquely hideous of vices down there in your old, all too human prison."[58] Art is, after all, a production of the temporal, earthly man; the best it can do is to point the way toward something else, even though art can never become that something else itself. An older, more philosophical Sebastian writes:

> beauty is intrinsically edifying; gossip, daydreaming and mere self-expression, intrinsically unedifying. In most works of art, these positive and negative elements cancel out. But occasionally the anecdotes and the daydreams are thought of in such a way that the intervals between their component elements create

> some new unprecedented kind of beauty. When this happens, the possibilities of edification are fully realized, and the gratuitous grace of a talent finds its justification.[59]

Art can edify, but it cannot substitute for God:

> To the surprise of Humanists and Liberal Churchmen, the abolition of God left a perceptible void. But Nature abhors a vacuum. Nation, Class and Party, Culture and Art have rushed in to fill the empty niche.[60]

But they are mere superstitions which, when regarded dispassionately, seem "unutterably odd, silly and satanic."[61]

At one time, Eustace had aspirations above the temporal, although they were awakened not by art of the higher sort, but by love for Laurina. When Eustace calls her to make his excuses, she quotes to him from his own love letters to her: "'You have the power of arousing desires that are infinite and, being infinite, can never be assuaged by the possession of a merely finite body and personal mind.'"[62] He has described his love as being "born again into another and intenser kind of life"[63] and has declared, "So it looks, Laurina, as though the only cure for being in love with you were to become a Sufi or a John of the Cross. God alone is commensurate with the cravings you inspire."[64] How sincere these emotions were, we cannot be sure; but it seems certain that at one time Eustace wanted something beyond what the pleasures of life had to offer. There was a time, we know, when he could look at the Michelangelos in the Medici Chapel with pleasure. But instead, he has gone down Sebastian's "dead end," he has retained his selfhood and, like his despised brother, John, he thus remains a "self-stunted dwarf" who has "succeeded in consummating his own spiritual abortion."[65]

Concentration on the temporal--political or artistic--leads invariably to the destruction of the inner self.

Both the middle-aged Sebastian and Bruno manage to transcend the artistic conception of the universe and enter into a mystical/philosophical relationship with God. As a youth, Sebastian passes through all the stages of relationship to art that we have noticed in the other characters. Like Veronica, he appreciates the irony in art, as when he invents his rhyme to go with the Degas drawings he is looking at with Eustace:

> To make a picture, others need
> All Ovid and the Nicene Creed;
> Degas succeeds with one tin tub,
> Two buttocks and a pendulous bub.[66]

Later, like Mrs. Gamble, Mr. Tendring, and M. Weyl, he sees in art simply the money it will bring. He sells the Degas so that he can buy the evening suit he needs to maintain his social acceptability. And, like Daisy Ockham, he is capable of responding merely to the sexual implications of art, as he does when he pictures Veronica in the attitude of Boucher's "Petite Morphil"[67] or imagines himself as Adonis in the Piero.[68]

Art is at times to Sebastian what it is to Eustace, an exciting aesthetic experience. This seems to be what the perception of the Primitive Methodist Chapel when lit at night is to Sebastian; it awakens his emotions, makes him feel the beauty and significance of life. And ultimately, of course, art is to Sebastian what it is to Bruno, something to be experienced but then seen through into the world beyond.

Huxley uses art for two closely related purposes in Time Must Have a Stop. First, art is used to help the reader judge the relative merits of the characters. Second, it is an invitation to the viewer to contemplate the deeper mysteries of life. The deeper the artistic understanding of a character and the greater the art to which he is attracted--as judged by Huxley's authorial comments--the closer that character is to a true understanding of what Huxley calls the Absolute, the underlying First Principle of the universe. If we open ourselves to all the truths of art, we open ourselves also to knowledge of the mysteries of life, Huxley is saying. Art is not the ultimate end or goal in life; this was the mistake which most of the artist characters in the first four novels tended to make, and the reason they failed. But at its best, art can express the knowledge that the Absolute does exist, and it can open the viewer's mind to this knowledge. In Time art has lost some of its importance as compared with its role in the first novels in that it is not life's center. Still, art does not fail man here in its new role as an accompaniment or invitation to new universal understanding, and is thus assured a permanent place in valuable cultural heritage.

CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL PHASE: ART AND MYSTICISM

In Time Must Have a Stop, art's position in the human value system rises from a true but incomprehensible commentary on life, as it was in After Many a Summer, or from a merely interesting comment on human psychology, as it was in the art essays of the 1940's, to an often comprehensible invitation to man to see beyond immediate experience into the reality which lies beyond temporal events, beyond rationality, and beyond man-made ethical and moral systems.[1] Now, in the final two major essays, The Doors of Perception,[2] and Heaven and Hell,[3] and the final novel, Island,[4] art takes a firm place in Huxley's ultimate value system. During this final phase, Huxley elaborates on the role he has established for art in Time Must Have a Stop. Art does not contain the essence of life, but neither is it divorced from man. Instead, it opens our eyes and minds to an awareness of the reality of mystical vision. What was strongly suggested in Time becomes an established, vital fact in these final works: artistic exploration and awareness is the closest the non-mystical mind can get to mysticism, and thus art serves as a vital channel through which the sensitive mind is led to spiritual truth.

What is especially striking about this final incorporation of art into mysticism is that Huxley's own artistic sensitivities have expanded well beyond his ideas in the 1920's. One might think that, at

a time when Huxley was attempting to make art the center of existence, his sensitivity to art would be at its highest level. Such is not the case. On the contrary, during the early period, Huxley limited his investigations to artists who explored man psychologically. He valued religious painting almost exclusively for its psychological truth, and was antipathetic to abstractionists, expressionists, and mystics in art. But now that art no longer has to carry the burden--which it could not bear--of providing the whole meaning to life, now that life's center lies in mysticism and art is simply a way to approach the center, Huxley's aesthetic appreciation expands remarkably. Artists he once condemned now have new, exciting meaning in Huxley's eyes. And while he by no means lost his appreciation for the psychological artists like Brueghel, his artistic understanding now included the Cubists and Vuillard. His descriptions of art, too, are more intense and exciting than his earlier descriptions; he is not explaining so much as participating in an experience, and he makes the reader participate too.

Doors and Heaven deal with Huxley's initiation into mysticism via the ingestion of mind-altering drugs, which enables him to have "direct experience on the plane of the senses."[5] For most of his life, Huxley lived in the rational, intellectual world of the educated British elite, an essentially sane existence full of essentially sane loves and friendships and sane pursuits such as reading, travel, and explorations of art. Through his contact with Christopher Isherwood and the Vedanta movement in southern California, Huxley had his eyes opened to a whole new realm of experience; but until he took drugs, he understood mysticism

only from the outside, rationally, as an interested observer. In Doors he reports:

> until this morning I had known contemplation only in its humbler, its more ordinary forms--as discursive thinking; as a rapt absorption in poetry or painting or music; as a patient waiting upon those inspirations, without which even the prosiest writer cannot hope to accomplish anything; as occasional glimpses, in Nature, of Wordsworth's "something far more deeply interfused"; as systematic silence leading, sometimes, to hints of an "obscure knowledge."[6]

The drug experience, as Huxley describes it, is not completely alien to non-drug experience, but is simply an amplification of a certain aspect of it.

Art plays a crucial role in Huxley's descriptions of the drug experience, for it is through art that Huxley attempts to involve the reader most directly in what he is saying. Huxley needs this artistic aid because, as he remarks in Ends and Means, there is no established intellectual method or established vocabulary which can be used to discuss "non-measurable, purely qualitative aspects of reality."[7] Huxley assumes that his readers have not just seen art works, but have experienced them directly at some point, just as he had before taking drugs. Obviously, this assumption is not true for all readers; but Huxley must make it because, he discovers, art is the prosaic experience closest to the visionary experience, an "analogue of the mystical experience, bringing with it insight as well as rapture."[8]

In Doors, Huxley describes looking at art works while under the influence of mescalin. The experience is not a particularly positive one. Huxley is far more interested in the transformations in his surroundings than he is in looking at reproductions of paintings, which

are, he concludes, only another person's representations of what he is now, for the first time, really seeing on his own. He speculates:

> It would be interesting. . .to make a study of the works of art available to the great knowers of Suchness. What sort of pictures did Eckhart look at? . . . I strongly suspect that most of the great knowers. . .paid very little attention to art--some refusing to have anything to do with it at all, others being content with what a critical eye would regard as second-rate, or even, tenth-rate works. . . . Art, I suppose, is only for beginners, or else for those resolute dead-enders, who have made up their minds to be content with the ersatz of Suchness, with symbols rather than with what they signify, with the elegantly composed recipe in lieu of actual dinner.[9]

This sounds as if Huxley were abandoning the artistic experience altogether in favor of direct apprehension; but the great portion of both books which is devoted to art proves that this is not really the case. Huxley discovers that, for many of his visions, he can describe them in no terms except comparisons with art works. Thus, within a few pages of this seeming rejection of art, he is describing his seeing a table, chair, and desk in terms of Cubist painting, and seeing in the long, pleated skirt of Botticelli's "Judith" a representation of his own vision earlier in the day of the folds in his trousers.

In Time, Huxley realized that it is possible for the best art to point beyond the immediate human experience to an understanding of what lies beyond rational, everyday life. But the Michelangelo and Fra Angelico works which are described in that novel as pointing to something else are basically symbols or representations of the need for contemplation and the interest of the artists in contemplation. In Time, Huxley does not see the art works as representing contemplation in themselves, or as the works of artists under the influence of visionary or ecstatic experience. Instead, they are products of artists who, during other

periods of their lives, had contemplative experiences, and who then wanted to help others see the value of such experiences. The art works in Time are the equivalent of the Doors and Heaven essays.

But after actually taking drugs and thus experiencing what he describes as a corrolary of mysticism, Huxley sees that many art works do not simply point the way toward a vision of the Absolute, are not rational invitations to contemplation, but are actually direct representations of what the artists saw while under the influence of visionary experience. As he explains in The Perennial Philosophy, the great artist puts himself into an obedient relationship with the Absolute Being of his medium.[10]

> The artist's inspiration may be either a human or a spiritual grace, or a mixture of both. High artistic achievement is impossible without at least those forms of intellectual, emotional and physical mortification appropriate to the kind of art which is being practiced. Over and above this. . .some artists have practiced the kind of self-naughting which is the indispensable pre-condition of the unitive knowledge of the divine Ground."[11]

Thus, the art of Fra Angelico, the Taoist artists, and others leads the viewer toward divine understanding because it is a part of divinity.

The art works discussed in the two books are almost all discussed in both, and similarly. Huxley's comments on art fall into five main areas: the submergence in a single personality of non-representational art; the negative mysticism of artists such as Géricault; the positive view of personality in artists like Latour and Vuillard; the positive view of inanimate objects of the Cubists; and the positive and often nearly total transportation into the world of the not-self in certain Oriental and Western landscape painters. All of these artistic

areas have direct counterparts in the world of vision which Huxley experienced under drugs.

Huxley had been opposed throughout most of his life to the productions of non-representational artists, as has been discussed previously. Toward the end of his life, his opposition to most non-representational art did not diminish, although his reasons for disliking it did. Previously Huxley had felt that non-representational art cut itself off from all possible meaning which a viewer might see in a picture, and thus could communicate no message other than pure visual sensation. Traditional art, on the other hand, could communicate both visual sensation and meaning, and was thus a more complete and worthwhile experience. After taking drugs, Huxley saw that the non-representational artist was indeed sending a message, the message Kandinsky, de Kooning, Pollock, and others of the New York School had always maintained they were sending--the message of the exploration of their own personalities. Under drugs, Huxley too experienced in visual terms the exploration of the personality, but to him it was basically not worth exploring. He describes the personal subconscious as "a mental world more squalid and more tightly closed than even the world of conscious personality," as a "contraption of tin and highly colored plastic."[12] In Heaven, he still hopes fervently for the early demise of non-representational art.[13] Huxley felt that the visions he was seeing under the influence of drugs were generally not a manifestation of the personal subconscious which now was released to bring itself into the conscious world. Instead, he interpreted his visions as the "Mind-at-Large" manifesting itself in the human consciousness. While drugs could

induce an exploration of the human subconscious, Huxley felt that these explorations were, while not part of the Hell of the drug experience, at least "cheap" and "trivial," as if "one were below decks in. . .a five-and-ten-cent ship."[14] The reason one needs a guide while under the influence of drugs, Huxley believed, is to help one away from these cramped and cheap images of the subconscious toward a state of receptivity to the Mind-at-Large. In art, then, Huxley applauded those artists who also rejected the cramped, tin universe of the subconscious and opened themselves and their art toward a transmission of the Absolute.

But even if the artist does transmit the Absolute, there is no guarantee that it will not be absolute horror rather than absolute beauty. This is Géricault's problem, the problem of being able to see through surface reality to the essential horror below. Géricault's primary vision was ghastly death. He studied corpses not, as Renaissance painters and sculptors did, in order to paint the living body with more scientific knowledge, but instead to be able to paint the dead and moribund. As Huxley notes in Heaven, Géricault's masterpiece, "The Raft of the Medusa," was painted directly from corpses and the terminally ill. Almost all of Géricault's works exhibit this same preoccupation with death and destruction, even when he is painting people and animals at the height of their powers. "La Monte," for example, contains only the horror of animal coupling. The expressions on the faces of the horses--Géricault is famous for the physiognomical appearance of his animals and even of his inanimate objects--goes beyond fear and despair into the essence of horror. Charles Clement, Géricault's biographer, supports what is only too obvious from the paintings, that meditation

on absolute suffering and the inspiration he received from it was a habit of mind with Géricault, a passion that ruled his brief life.[15] Both Clement and a later critic, Klaus Berger, agree that "Il n'est pas un réaliste dans le sens grossier de ce mot; il est le peintre et il est aussi le poëte de la réalité."[16] (He isn't a realist in the common sense of the word; he is the painter and also the poet of reality.) What Géricault's critics despised as a lack of dignity and abandonment of the "Beau Ideal," Huxley praises in the painter. For while Huxley cannot promote this vision of life as one which everyone should have, he cannot deny its validity after having seen this same world for himself under the influence of drugs:

> For the healthy visionary, the perception of the infinite in a finite particular is a revelation of divine immanence; for Renée, it was a revelation of what she calls "the System," the vast cosmic mechanism which exists only to grind out guilt and punishment, solitude and unreality. . .the universe is transfigured--but for the worse. Everything in it, from the stars in the sky to the dust under their feet, is unspeakably sinister or disgusting; every event is charged with a hateful significance; every object manifests the presence of an Indwelling Horror, infinite, all-powerful, eternal.[17]

Géricault looks at the body and sees it in agony ("Nude Being Tortured"). He looks at history and sees "L'Ouverture des portes de l'Inquisition." He looks at people on the brink of death and sees only "l'égoïsme a sa dernière heure."[18] Huxley has seen this reality, too.

Fortunately, it was not essential that a look into the human personality produce the negative views of the non-representationalists and Géricault. It is quite possible for the visionary artist to penetrate through individual human personality to a perception of the universal soul, the "Mind-at-Large" which was manifested in the individual.

Huxley refers extensively to the works of two such positive visionaries, George de Latour and Edouard Vuillard.

Latour, a little-known seventeenth century French painter, was profoundly influenced by the mystical Christianity for which his century is still well remembered. His purpose in painting was to reveal the inner, holy light inherent in all who had penetrated to the most profound religious truths. Unlike Fra Angelico, who painted the same inner light, Latour did not distort reality in any way; technically, his painting is completely realistic. But it is also completely contemplative. To have to identify his saints by putting haloes on them would have been a travesty to Latour. The nature of his saints and the perception of the Absolute of which almost all his figures are aware is shown through painting techniques such as complete facial repose, eye position, shadow, and enclosure. In "The Adoration of the Shepherds," for instance, the facial muscles of all of the figures are rigidly calm. All but Jesus have open eyes, but none looks directly at another. Instead they glance or stare into the spaces. Even the rearmost shepherd, who at first seems to be looking at Jesus, is actually looking behind the baby. The light which emanates only from the child catches and emphasizes only certain features of the faces above, with the result that the faces seem out of the ordinary, in a different realm. They are. All are disregarding outward events and are concentrating instead on what is really deep within themselves: the meaning of the child with a face like a contemplative Buddha.

All of Latour's faces, although naturally illuminated by a stark, single-source light, are actually illuminated from within. His

faces are like Jesus's hand in "Joseph the Carpenter," totally natural, yet defined by an inner light which shows through the realistic outlines. And the flat, unadorned walls surrounding the figures concentrate both inner and outer light into intensity.

Huxley described Latour's painting as "profoundly religious," but "without religiosity."[19] "His personages are essentially static. They never do anything; they are simply there. . . . And the single candle is used, in every case, to stress this intense but unexcited, impersonal thereness."[20] It is the "thereness" that "reveals, with unexampled intensity, the divine omnipresence."[21]

A second artist who was able to look through the immediate personality to the Absolute beyond was Edouard Vuillard. Coming over two hundred years after Latour, and using entirely different painting techniques, he was still able to evoke the essence of infinity which both he and Huxley knew lay beneath every immediate object. Huxley described Vuillard's painting as "unforgettable splendid pictures of the Dharma-Body manifested in a bourgeois bedroom, of the Absolute blazing away in the midst of some stockbroker's family in a suburban garden, taking tea."[22] Vuillard's figures constantly find themselves "in the Garden of Eden, in an Other World which is yet essentially the same as this world, but transfigured and therefore transporting."[23]

Vuillard's painting techniques are completely different from Latour's. Where Latour is faithful to anatomy, Vuillard veers toward abstraction. Where Latour uses a single light source, Vuillard lets diffused light play over his subject and bring out infinitely small but significant color gradations. Where Latour's brushwork is, in the

manner of his century, hidden within form, Vuillard's is emphatic. While Latour achieved the suggestion of the Absolute through the repose and facial expressions of his figures, Vuillard achieves the same suggestion through color and brushwork. A few examples will make this clearer.

Most of Vuillard's paintings are dominated by one color used both for figures and for inanimate objects. "Child in a Room" is built on white; and the white of the child's face, hair, and dress are similar to the white of the bed, draperies, wallpaper, and right-hand chair. Thus, the child becomes a part of the inanimate room surrounding her, while the objects take on a certain sense of life for being so like the child. Vuillard uses this technique constantly. In "In the Park at Les Clayes" one figure blends with the blue of the upper half of the picture, while the other figure is the same russet as the ground. The juxtaposition of age and youth, earth and sky, suggests a cyclic unity, as well as the unity of person and surroundings.

Vuillard also uses unifying brushstroke for the same purpose as unifying color. In "At the Opera" it is not only color that unites figure and background, but also the thin verticles of the skirt which suggest the paving stones and the mottled round strokes of the hat and fur which suggest the jointures of the stones. The brushwork of the face is almost identical to that of the arch of light, though in a different key. In "An Outspoken Dinner Party" the brushwork of the faces is almost identical to that of various parts of the wall, the clothes, and the bread.

But a description of Vuillard's techniques does not give a complete understanding of the effect his paintings have on the viewer. Most critics agree that Vuillard achieves a distillation of the essence of his subject matter, that he manages to capture "the essential perfume of intimate objects."[24] "The thrill which he communicates goes under the skin," another notes,[25] but it is a thrill that is contemplative rather than sensual. "It excludes the disorder of passion.[26] Vuillard was not interested in individual psychology, but in the relation of man and eternity. To achieve insights into this relationship, he attempted to relax his own will and to become the perfect receiver. "I was never more than a spectator," he once said;[27] and since "everything must be summoned forth from one's own inmost being" in painting,[28] it was essential to have eternity reflected there.

In Doors, Huxley describes art works in order to illustrate his drug-induced visions. He draws parallels between what he has seen under drugs and what he has seen in art. When, under the influence of mescalin, he describes the configuration of desk, table, and chair in his home as "a composition that was something by Braque or Juan Gris, a still life recognizably related to the objective world, but rendered without depth, without any attempt at photographic realism,"[29] he is describing this positive vision of inanimate objects in terms of Cubism, so that we who have not taken drugs will understand his vision. Huxley uses Vuillard for an identical purpose. Vuillard, too, has seen what Huxley has seen, and has been able to record his vision for others.

But in Heaven, the emphasis changes from art's recording visions to art's being able to induce visions too. The artists who

have recorded visions can, if we let them, induce in us a receptive, visionary state something like--though not as strong as--the visionary state induced by drugs. Many arts are capable of inducing visions: glasswork, metalwork, polished stonework, as well as the painted visions of artists like Vuillard and Latour.[30]

Huxley felt that the most sophisticated and effective form of vision-inducing art was landscape painting, both Oriental and Western. He did not allow himself to be hampered by generally-held theories of landscape painting which maintained that the spirits behind Oriental and Western landscapes were opposite:

> the feeling expressed in an Oriental landscape is not the individualistic and deeply emotional one of the Romantics, but rather a Taoist pantheism where the figure, far from emphasizing his individuality, seeks to negate it by merging himself with the serenity of nature.[31]

Huxley found that both types of landscapes, especially when they portrayed scenes either very close to the viewer or very far away, could induce the same visionary state. A Sung painting, for example, reminds him

> of the crags, the boundless expanses of plain, the luminous skies and seas of the mind's antipodes. And those disappearances into mist and cloud, those sudden emergences of some strange, intensely definite form, a weathered rock, for example, an ancient pine tree twisted by years of struggle with the wind--these too, are transporting. For they remind me, consciously or unconsciously, of the Other World's essential alienness and unaccountability.[32]

He finds Rousseau's close-ups equally transporting:

> I look at those leaves with their architecture of veins, their stripes and mottlings, I peer into the depths of interlacing greenery, and something in me is reminded of those living patterns, so characteristic of the visionary world, of those endless births and proliferations of geometrical forms that turn into objects, of things that are forever being transmuted into other things.

> This painting close-up of a jungle is what, in one of its aspects, the Other World is like, and so it transports me, it makes me see with eyes that transfigure a work of art into something else, something beyond art.[33]

In both close-up and distance, the artist must adopt a non-human point of view which can put the viewer in touch with his own non-human, visionary side.

As Huxley notes,[34] the idea of transporting the viewer was almost always in the conscious minds of artists of the Sung Dynasty (tenth to twelfth centuries) and the principles of obtaining a vision of the Absolute through artistic rendering of nature were explored much earlier. In the fourth century, one of Hsieh Ho's Six Principles was, "through a vitalizing spirit, a painting should possess the movement of life."[35] The painter was not simply to imitate nature, but to pierce through it and grasp the cosmic spirit which informed all of nature. Much later the Sung painter, Kuo Hsi, elaborated the ideas of the best landscape painters of his time in an essay, "Comment on Landscape," in which he stressed concentration on the essential, the essence of nature, rather than on outward forms only. If the painter captures the essence and moods of his subject--mountains, for instance--the viewer experiences:

> exactly corresponding moods. It is as if he were actually in those mountains. They exist as if they were real and not painted. The blue haze and white path arouse a longing to walk there; the sunset on a quiet stream arouses a longing to gaze upon it; the sight of hermits and ascetics arouses a longing to saunter among them. The contemplation of good paintings nourished this longing. The places become real, and the meaning of these pictures is wonderful.[36]

Western landscape artists did not always work with such a vision-inducing principle in mind, though they often painted with the idea of glorifying God through nature:

> Constable chose his subjects with a sense of their moral grandeur, and worked on them to make them nobler and more dramatic. Corot had no such protestant preoccupation with morals, but was confident that if he submitted with sincere humility to his sensations, le bon Dieu would do the rest.[37]

Huxley found that they achieved the same end as the Sung masters. If we allow our eyes to wander among Constable's hills and Corot's misty trees, we can experience that transportation to another world which Huxley experienced under drugs, which the transcendentalist experiences in nature, and which the mystic experiences in his mind.[38]

Under drugs, then, Huxley visited another world which he attempted to describe to his readers by comparing it to the world of art. After taking drugs, Huxley found himself able to appreciate many artists to whom he had previously been indifferent or hostile. In his youth, he had found Baroque artists completely uninspiring;[39] now he found that their delight in painting the folds and twists of clothing was precisely akin to his own delight in seeing the folds in his trousers under the influence of mescalin. Previously he had been hostile to Cubism; now he found himself experiencing the same magically distorted perceptions.[40] The best art, Huxley maintains, has the power to transport the viewer to the world of the Absolute.[41]

Huxley uses many of the new insights into art in his last novel, Island, in which he creates a rational, sensible utopia which allows its people to function in an atmosphere of honesty and personal fulfillment, while providing for spiritual needs through a judicious combination of mystical religion and drugs. Will Farnaby, the outsider introduced into the Palanese utopia, has many reactions to art which are very similar to Huxley's reactions as described in Doors and Heaven.

As in many of the other novels in which art is used, the art works Will thinks of and looks at amplify the development of his psychological outlook, his growing awareness that life on earth is not a simple pursuit of money and transient pleasure, but an opportunity to get in touch with the Absolute both through an exploration of our own minds and through positive relationships with others.

When we are first introduced to the half-dead Will, just after he has washed up on Pala, we are struck far more by the psychological quirks which have resulted from his disastrous personal life than we are by his previous academic education. That visual art has been an important part of this education emerges gradually. Will's first references to art emphasize the cynicism and desperation which are his chief characteristics. The buttresses of the beech-like trees remind him of the "congealed ectoplasm" of an early Dali.[42] Dali, of course, began his career in the Dada school of art, the post-World-War-I movement which attempted to make art reflect the emptiness and absurdity of life by creating preposterous machines and constructions from household garbage. From there, Dali went on almost immediately to Surrealism, the art of the dream, the vision of something--usually still preposterous--beyond daily life. Both of these movements are essentially rejections of life as it is, here and now; and Will is aware of figures like Dali because they reflect his own rejection of life.

Will is capable of visionary experience; he has had it already, but in the negative, death-affirming way of Géricault:

> I was waiting for a bus to take me home from Fleet Street. Thousands upon thousands of people, all on the move, and each of them unique, each of them the center of the universe. Then

> the sun came out from behind a cloud. Everything was extraordinarily bright and clear; and suddenly, with an almost audible click, they were all maggots.
>
> . . .Not even real maggots--just the ghosts of maggots, just the illusion of maggots. And I was the illusion of a spectator of maggots. I lived in that maggot world for months.[43]

He is rescued by Molly who, although she is a maggot too, has a face like a holy woman in a Flemish crucifixion,[44] and thus suggests something beyond daily reality. She fails to restore Will to psychological health, however. Just as the rejection of the reality of the present by the detached women at the Crucifixion leads to a general disregard for present life in the Christian religion, so Molly's own rejection of her own needs and her sacrifice of herself to Will fail to help Will get in touch with the beauty and importance of his own life. Will's need to get in touch with reality finds partial satisfaction in his affair with Babs; although he does not understand his irresistible need for her, it is clear that in the joys of sex with her he is fulfilling at least some of his deepest, non-verbal needs.

At the beginning of the novel, Will prides himself on being a total cynic, the man who never takes yes for an answer. But towards the end of the novel he reveals that in aesthetics he has always basically wanted to take yes for an answer, to participate in the affirmative nature of art. However,

> all the time he had been denying, by the mere fact of being himself, all the beauty and meaning he so passionately longed to say yes to. William Asquith Farnaby was nothing but a muddy filter on the hither side of which. . .even his beloved art had emerged bedimmed and bemired. . .the ingrained stupidities with which, like every self, the poor idiot, who wouldn't (and in art plainly couldn't) take yes for an answer, had overlaid the gifts of immediate experience.[45]

Will's "self" as a filter distorting positive artistic appreciation is exactly what the Palanese educators try to--and almost always do--get rid of. They do it through a series of activities alternated with moments of contemplation which are focused on a positive experience happening now.

For the Palanese, artistic awareness is a crucial step on the way to transcendent, divine awareness. When children are taught botany, for instance, they begin with basic terminology and the understanding of biological functions in the same way as Western students learn botany. But they do not stop there, for the Palanese desire not only scientific knowledge but also a thorough appreciation of the divine otherness of the objects that inhabit the earth. Thus, students first draw a biologically accurate illustration of a flower; then, after some suggestions toward the concept that it is possible to see a flower other than biologically, they are told to "look at it alertly, but passively, receptively, without labeling or judging or comparing. And as you look at it, inhale its mystery, breathe in the spirit of sense, the smell of the wisdom of the Other Shore."[46] After the period of receptivity, the students are asked to close their eyes, then open them and draw what they have seen: "Draw whatever it may have been--something vague or vivid, something like the flower itself or something entirely different. Draw what you saw or even what you didn't see, draw it and color it with your paints or crayons."[47] This is the flower "as the artist sees it" and it is, educatively, an essential link between the flower "as a botanical specimen" and the "even more miraculous" flower "seen by the Buddha and Mahakasyapa."[48]

Although art is a step on the way to eternal vision, the Old Raja, author of Notes on What's What, feels that Palanese art may be "less moving, perhaps less satisfying aesthetically, than the tragic or compensatory symbols created by victims of frustration and ignorance."[49] The idea that great art arises from neurosis is a Freudian one, and one which has been debated by later psychologists. Within the novel, Huxley repudiates this notion by creating a landscape by a Palanese master, Gobind Singh, which is great and which has arisen from health, not sickness. Singh's landscape, vibrant with color, light, and shadow, is placed in a meditation room so that the viewers can "perform an act of self-knowing."[50] In addition, the distance represented in the landscape "reminds us that there are mental spaces inside our skulls as enormous as the spaces out there. The experience of distance, of inner distance and outer distance. . .it's the first and fundamental religious experience" which proves "man's capacity to accept all the deaths in life, all the yawning absences surrounding every presence."[51] To Vijaya, who is obviously Huxley's mouthpiece here, it is the two-dimensionality, and thus the lack of suggestive distance, which is the most damning features of western non-representational art, for while the viewer may find a "glorified Rorschach inkblot" in which to see "a symbolic expression of his own fears, lusts, hatreds, and daydreams," he can never discover anything "more than human" in it.[52]

Obviously, Vihaya's discourse on Singh's landscape is a direct restatement of Huxley's ideas on landscape as a vision-inducing art in Heaven and Hell: "A Sung painting of faraway mountains, clouds, and

torrents is transporting. . .I am reminded of the crags, the boundless expanses of plain, the luminous skies and seas of the mind's antipodes."[53] The artist of this landscape must adopt a "non-human point of view"[54] and thus reveal wilderness "living its own life according to the laws of its own being."[55] Seeing this, we are reminded of "that inner world where no account is taken of our personal wishes or even of the enduring concerns of man in general."[56] Combining the Sung vision with Vuillard's influence, Sung's painting takes the mind through immediate experience to the Absolute which is what the painting really represents, but without ignoring the facts of the superficial, daily existence.

Occasionally, artistic representations of religious figures can also open the mind to eternal suggestion. Will notes that the small smiling Buddha in Vijaya's house "gives one an inkling of what the Beatific Vision must be like."[57] But there is an opposite use of religious figures in Pala too. The scarecrows--puppets on tall sticks moved by strings the children pull--are dressed as "a Future Buddha" and "a delightfully gay, East Indian version of God the Father as one sees him in the Sistine Chapel."[58] They teach a contrasting lesson, "that all gods are homemade, and that it's we who pull their strings and so give them the power to pull ours."[59]

Will's final experience with art in the novel, after he takes the moksha-medicine, duplicates many of Huxley's own drug-induced artistic experiences as recounted in Doors of Perception. Both are impressed profoundly by the glowing colors of books. Both experience the feeling of infinity and the total lack of interest in temporal existence. Both are reluctant to face others in the room. Both experience horror as

well as delight. Like Huxley, Will experiences a fresh appreciation of Cubist art as he looks at a table and sees it in Cubistic planes: "This breathing apocalypse called 'table' might be thought of as a picture by some mystical Cubist, some inspired Juan Gris with the soul of Traherne and a gift for painting miracles."[60] He is also able, as Huxley was, to appreciate the vision behind even a bad piece of art, to use it to experience "the union of his own being with the being of God,"[61] and then to experience simultaneously the beauty of its vision and the vulgarity of its execution.[62] As Huxley noted in Doors, the artistic rank of a picture as it would be evaluated by a critic has little to do with the reactions of a person undergoing a drug experience.[63]

In Island, then, as in many of the novels, the pattern of art references parallels the development of character and thus enhances our appreciation of the theme of the novel. Will's thoughts on art change from remembrances of artists who reject life "here and now," as he does when he first arrives on Pala, to a new perception of and interest in art which grow from a positive appreciation of life and its mystical significance. By the end of the novel, Will and Huxley are at exactly the same point in artistic appreciation. Both now see a great deal of the art of the past as a representation of mystical vision. For both, "art is not enough."[64] But it is an important manifestation of man's ability to reach through life to the Absolute beyond.

> The world, like an ore-bearing mountain, is veined with every possible significance. We are all miners and quarrymen, tunneling, cutting, extracting. An artist is a man equipped with better tools than those of common men. . . . He opens our eyes for us, and we follow in a kind of gold rush. . . . What was empty of significance becomes, after his passage, suddenly full--and full of his significance. Nature. . .is always imitating art. . . . How dim, before Constable, was English pastoral landscape![65]

Huxley probably would have agreed with this statement, which he made in 1932, throughout his entire career. He always felt that the position of the artist, especially the visual artist, was supremely important. What changed for Huxley was the significance which the best artists discovered and made known to common people, and the relative ease with which viewers could discern the significance. From the early novels, in which it seemed possible that art held a moral authority lacking in modern life, through the middle period, in which the ethical messages of the paintings could not communicate themselves to the viewers, to the final novels and essays, in which art led the viewer into a state of self-transcendence analogous to the self-transcendence of mysticism, visual art is central to Huxley's thought and outlook.

At the end of his life, Huxley, like Goya, was still changing. After a number of years' experience with transcendental religion, Huxley seems to have been moving toward a theory of psychological wholeness which also encompassed the more routine and the more rational aspects of human life. There are two strong indications of this development: Huxley's interest in the therapeutic value of artistic creation; and his growing response to Rembrandt.

Huxley's idea that the participation of all members of society in creative artwork or craftsmanship is positive actually began in

Beyond the Mexique Bay, when he noted that he personally derived a great deal of psychological satisfaction from painting, even though his productions were far from masterpieces.[66] This idea assumed ever greater importance as Huxley considered the state of the modern world. War, on the political level, and boredom, discontent, destructive aggressiveness, or withdrawal, on the personal level, are all signs of modern man's failure to order himself within the context of the universe. Art has the potential to alleviate these problems because "art is also a method of self-discovery and self-expression; an untier of knots, an unscrambler of confusions; a safely valve for blowing off emotional steam; a cathartic. . .for purging the system of the products of the ego's constant autointoxication."[67] Machinery and the mass-production of objects which previously would have been individually crafted and decorated lead only to a passive, unstable population which can be too easily controlled by the industrialists.[68]

Art, then, must have a place in a psychologically sound society. Huxley does not feel that mysticism, which traditionally involves almost full-time withdrawal from daily concerns and the outside world, can be the complete answer for the vast majority of mankind. Although deeply interested in mysticism, it was not the complete answer for Huxley either; he continued his deep friendships and family ties, his writing, and his intellectual concerns throughout his life. But mysticism had given depth to daily existence; and Huxley maintains that the practice of art can give depth too, a depth which will lead to a more complete and stable life for all.

Huxley's interest in Rembrandt as the artist of the complete, psychologically whole human being is evident both in Heaven and Hell and Island. Laura Archera Huxley tells us that Huxley thought Rembrandt "the greatest of all painters"[69] and that "The Polish Rider" was one of Huxley's favorite pictures. He was particularly struck by "the great confidence of the man."[70] Rembrandt's figures are wholly in their worlds, and wholly in control of them. They seem capable of achieving whatever worthwhile things life has to offer, and of existing with awareness of both self and others. Ultimately, this is also Huxley's vision of the ideal life. Eager to experience everything, to miss nothing, Huxley used his own life to explore every mode of living which seemed to have positive potential. He used his art to reveal some of his observations to a wider audience, to tell his audience, in the same way in which Rembrandt tells his, that direct experience is the greatest mode of living.

> I have mainly lived in the world of intellectual life and art. But the world of knowing-about-things is unsatisfactory. It's no good knowing about the taste of strawberries out of a book. The more I think of art I realize that, though artists do establish some contact with spiritual reality, they establish it unconsciously. Beauty is imprisoned, as it were, within the white spaces between the lines of a poem. . .in the apertures between groups of sculpture. . . . But one wants to go further. One wants to have a conscious taste of these holes between the strings of the net.[71]

Huxley found those holes to be both spiritual and sensual, and his strongest attractions in visual art were toward those artists who knew these secrets of experience too. Now, no longer cut off from any form of artistic expression involving psychologically and spiritually valid perceptions, Huxley has developed a complete and satisfactory picture

of man's potential, a potential in which artistic awareness is, although not the center, a vital part.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE PLACE OF HUXLEY'S ESSAY ON BRUEGHEL IN ART CRITICISM

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THE PLACE OF HUXLEY'S ESSAY ON BRUEGHEL IN ART CRITICISM

Jacob Israel Zeitlin has written in praise of Huxley's art criticism:

> If I had never known him personally, if I had read nothing else of his, I would still be his ardent champion for what he wrote of Pieter Brueghel the Elder in 1925. It was then still fashionable to look upon Brueghel with disdain. The Künstler-doktors of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with their reigning doctrines of formalism had dismissed him with scant courtesy. Formalism, as Huxley pointed out, is important. But it is not the whole of the consideration which should be brought to the appreciation of an artist's works.[1]

Perhaps the occasional nature of the essay excuses the overstatement, for Zeitlin gives us the impression that Huxley's opinions on Brueghel were quite different from those of the art critics of 1925, when Huxley's essay, "Breughel," appeared in Along the Road. While Huxley's essay is important in the mainstream of Brueghel criticism, it is not quite revolutionary as Zeitlin suggests.

Huxley begins "Breughel" with an extensive complaint against art critics. Estimates of a painting change, over the years, according to the particular critical theory which happens to be in fashion at the time. If an artist has painted in a style which never agrees with the critical theory of a period, then his pictures are never given their

due. This is what has happened to Brueghel. For even though his formal construction is striking and exciting, and the current critical theory rests on formalism, still Brueghel has made his philosophic statements about man too prominent in his painting for the formalist critic to ignore, or to forgive.

Huxley rejects the idea that the literary content of a painting should have to be forgiven. Instead, he feels (as probably most critics do today) that a painter should be evaluated on his own terms. Huxley then proceeds to analyze a number of Brueghel's paintings both as to their formal construction and as to their literary meaning. Huxley points out Brueghel's desires to record the peasant life which surrounded him, to show both the light comic and the grotesque, despairing sides of life, and to give a sense of reality to scenes which had previously been seen from a predominantly religious point of view.

In spite of Huxley's rejection of other literary critics and despite Zeitlin's comment, Huxley's essay fits easily into the dominant trend of Brueghel criticism. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Brueghel was esteemed merely for his humor, it is true. Lampsonius's comment in Artistic Garland (1572) is typical: "Honor to you, Peter, as your work is honorable, since for the humorous inventions of your art, full of wit, in the manner of the old masters, you are no less worthy of fame and praise than any other artist."[2] But Brueghel's use of the comic lowered him in the opinion of eighteenth and nineteenth century critics, such as G. F. Waagen, who wrote: "His mode of viewing . . .is always clever but coarse, and even sometimes vulgar."[3] Similarly, Sinet wrote in the Biographie Nationale (1872) that Brueghel was "an

artist of originality rather than greatness. . . . In short, he is a painter whom it is very interesting to study because basically one finds in him all the qualities and all the faults of the peasant school, of which he is in effect the head."[4]

But by the end of the nineteenth century, critical opinion on Brueghel had started to undergo great changes. Henry Hymans was perhaps the most important force behind this critical revaluation. In his 1890 article, "Pierre Breughel le Vieux," in Gazette des Beaux Arts,[5] he praises Brueghel as "l'eloquent traducteur de l'esprit populaire de son époque"[6] (the very eloquent translator of the popular spirit of his time), as an "observateur profond, humoriste intarissable"[7] (profound observer, inexhaustible humorist), and for "la profondeur de l'étude des réalités ambiantes. . .dans sa poursuite de la vérité" (the profoundness of the study of surrounding reality. . .in his pursuit of truth). Other important early twentieth century critics followed Hymans in his extensive praise of Brueghel's art, especially after the appearance of Van Bastelaer and Hulin de Loo's catalogue of Brueghel's work in 1907. André Michel's Histoire de l'Art[9], in contrast to the late Victorian Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings, devotes far more space to Pieter Brueghel than to either of his sons, and praises him as having "un don prodigieux de vie, une mémoire d'observateur dont à peine trouverait-on l'égale dans la peinture"[10] (a prodigious gift of life, an observing mind the equal of which is rarely found in painting). Four years before Huxley's essay appeared, Sir Martin Conway's The Van Eycks and their Followers[11] gave an extensive laudatory description of Brueghel's paintings and drawings.

Whether or not Huxley knew any one of these works in particular, it would seem impossible that a man so extensively read as he could possibly be unaware of the revaluation of Brueghel which was going on during his lifetime. And Huxley does not claim to be the rediscoverer of Brueghel, a claim only Zeitlin makes for him. However, like almost all the other art critics involved in the revaluation of Brueghel, Huxley felt it necessary to reject the older, Victorian opinion concerning Brueghel's comedy and vulgarity. He notes, for instance, that the author of the Encyclopaedia Britannica article which dismissed Brueghel as a low comedian can never have taken the trouble to look at Brueghel's paintings. But more importantly, Huxley rejects the revaluators of his own time for too great an emphasis on Brueghel's formal, aesthetic relationships to the exclusion of his meaning. Although Huxley does not specify these critics who see only the formal qualities in works of art, which they "abstract and call essential,"[12] he could well have had in mind comments such as Conway's on "The Nest-Robbers": "The meaning of the picture is immaterial, nor do we care much what the fellow has to say. The proverb in the background is of no account. The picture appeals to us directly, as it was intended to appeal, to the eye, and like music fills the heart with delight."[13] At least Conway was willing to admire Brueghel, though by stating that the moral content or meaning of the painting did not matter. But this was not true of all the art critics of Huxley's time. Roger Fry, for instance, writing two years after Huxley, dismissed Brueghel as "essentially an illustrator rather than an artist" because "his designs are the outcome of a moral and psychological, not of a visual inspiration. . . . His eye is the eye

of a caricaturist picking out from appearance just those telling contours which give character, those moments that express states of mind."[14]

The chief excellence of Huxley's art criticism is that he was willing to evaluate an artist on his own terms, without having to exclude from consideration any of the elements of a painting. Huxley is in the best tradition of critics of Brueghel, attempting to find in the painting exactly what Brueghel put there. In spirit he is closer to Brueghel critics of our own time, such as Glück and Shipp, who are willing to include in their criticism a personal response and an attempt to show the artist in relation to the historic events of his own time, in addition to the formal evaluation and the influence-hunting which were the prevalent modes of art criticism at the beginning of the century.

Perhaps the chief importance of Huxley's comments on Brueghel as art history was discerned by Kenneth Clark: "Brueghel, Callot, Piranese, Goya, Caravaggio, we think of them differently now from what we did in 1925, and many of us who, understandably, do not care to read art-criticism, may owe that change very largely to Aldous."[15] Huxley made the revaluation of Brueghel available to a large literate British and American public which was willing to read fairly entertaining essays, but which was not willing to delve into the more scholarly tomes of contemporary art critics. In addition, Huxley brought to this wider reading public a sure sense of the correctness of the personal, literary response to a work of art, something the dabbler in art criticism might have missed, due to the prominence of the formalist critics.

APPENDIX II

HUXLEY ON ARCHITECTURE

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Huxley wrote four important non-fictional discussions of architecture. His first major architectural essay, "Sir Christopher Wren," (discussed in the text) appeared in On the Margin in 1923. Much of Jesting Pilate, describing Huxley's travels through India, is spent on the good and bad points of Moslem and Hindu architecture in that country. In 1927, Huxley turned his attention toward Italian architecture ("Rimini and Alberti" in Essays New and Old) and in 1930 concluded the major period of architectural commentary with praise for Erich Mendelsohn, who refused to follow the ever-growing trend of "Puritanism in Art."[16]

It is because it blends inspirational beauty with function that Huxley is so deeply moved by the Rimini architecture of Alberti, especially the church of St. Francis of Assisi, which Malatesta had had Alberti rebuild as a pagan monument to the former. Huxley praises it as a hymn to intellectual beauty.

> Grave, restrained, and intellectual, Alberti's classical facade seems to deplore the naiveté of the first St. Francis and the intolerant enthusiasms of the second, and, praising Malatesta's intelligence, to rebuke him for his lusts and excesses.[17]

Alberti achieves this feeling through precision, balance, and rhythm in his placing of mass and in the alternation of mass and space. Everything is controlled and orderly; there is no excess or irrelevancy. "What

renders them the more remarkable is that they were without precedent in his age. Alberti was one of the reinventors of the style,"[18] and later Renaissance architects imitated him rather than the more linear, spidery manner of Alberti's contemporary, Brunelleschi.

Against this Renaissance architecture of combined function and inspiration, Huxley set the architecture of the Victorians and of his own time. Huxley despised Ruskin's neo-Gothic for disregarding the people who were to live in it. In "Farcical History of Richard Greenow," Huxley describes Canteloup College as "the most frightful building in Oxford" because

> The New Buildings contained a great number of rooms, each served by a separate and almost perpendicular staircase; and if nearly half of them were so dark as to make it necessary to light them artificially for all but three hours out of the twenty-four, this slight defect was wholly outweighed by the striking beauty, from outside, of the Neo-Byzantine loopholes by which they were, euphemistically, "lighted."[19]

As for the contemporary architecture of Le Corbusier, Huxley felt strongly that man was not related to the machine in any way, and the less he was surrounded by evidence of the machine age, the better. Huxley condemned Le Corbusier's concept of the house as a machine for living in as an unreasonable puritanism which had the effect of reducing man's spirit rather than inspiring it. Huxley was lavish in his praise of the German architect, Erich Mendelsohn, because he managed to use contemporary materials and techniques without giving into the negative, sterile qualities of the machine age:

> Thus, when the circumstances demand a certain baroque grandiosity (and the department store, the popular restaurant, the cinema, those modern equivalents of the palazzo and the counter-reformation church <u>must</u> be grandiose and baroque), Herr Mendelsohn knows no fear. . . . His big shops, with their bold alternation of planes

> and sweeping curves, their square and stream-lined towers, their insistent striation--stripe above horizontal stripe--of iron and glass, are as spectacular, in their utterly different style, as seventeenth century churches.[21]

Huxley felt that the human spirit demanded, in its domestic architecture especially, a certain snugness, intimacy, and even "a reasonable amount of dirt"[22] to maintain health of both body and mind.

But Huxley was adamant that inspiration and lavishness not be divorced from function. He did not appreciate in the least the architecture of the Taj Mahal and of the Indian mosques because he felt their decoration was applied regardless of the basic structures underneath. Huxley felt strongly that decoration had to reinforce function in order to be truly beautiful. In this he is wholly a Renaissance man, for the concept of art in the Renaissance was that it must demonstrate the perfect combination of beauty and truth; it must be rooted in the perfection of nature, and also inspire the viewer to see beyond the outer forms of nature into the divine and eternal truths. Art which springs solely from the fancy, as Huxley felt much Indian art did, could not be truly beautiful because it did not have its root in truth or reason.

APPENDIX III

WREN'S PLAN FOR LONDON COMPARED WITH GUMBRIL SENIOR'S COMMENTS

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WREN'S PLAN FOR LONDON COMPARED WITH GUMBRIL SENIOR'S COMMENTS

Gumbril Senior's comments on Wren's London plan show a close study of the original.[23] However, the elaborate descriptions of the fountains and statues seem to have been largely manufactured by Huxley. Wren submitted his plan to the King only six days after the fire was put out. Certainly, he would have eventually incorporated fountains and statues into the city, but he made no definite plans for them on such short notice. In the same way, Wren did not submit church plans with this original street plan; Gumbril Senior's description of

> Spire out of dome; octagon on octagon diminishing upwards; cylinder on cylinder; round lanterns, lanterns of many sides; towers with airy pinnacles; clusters of pillars linked by incurving cornices, and above them four more clusters and above once more; square towers pierced with pointed windows; spires uplifted on flying buttresses; spires bulbous at the base[24]

is based on churches Wren later designed and built. Gumbril Senior is probably correct in assuming that, although the actual churches built were not all Wren's ideals, as he was limited by site and by lack of funds, still the characteristic steeples were as close to Wren's ideals as he could achieve.

When we examine Wren's writings on architecture, we see that Gumbril Senior's interpretations of Wren's aims are very close to Wren's own interpretations. "Architecture aims at Eternity; and therefore the only Thing uncapable of Modes and Fashions in its Principals the Orders,"

Wren writes;[25] and Gumbril Senior echoes this when he maintains that architecture should uplift the eternal spirit of man. Wren also felt that geometric figures were part of nature, and therefore naturally beautiful. The duty of the architect is to bring the eye of the populace back to natural beauty and to avoid the eccentric.[26] Gumbril Senior is echoing the sentiment when he equates order and reason with beauty. On this point, Huxley, Gumbril Senior, and Wren all oppose Ruskin and his followers, who maintained that beauty lay in the irregularity and human disorder of the Gothic.

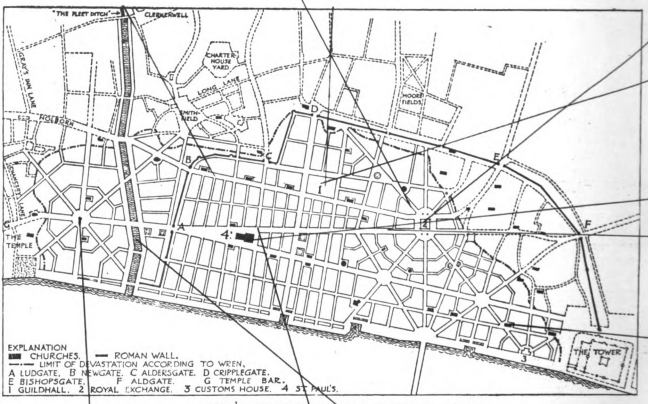
Wren's ideal of the union of beauty with human needs and aspirations is very evident in Wren's letter on church-building.[27] Here Wren gives careful consideration to matters of church sanitation and to the size of the main structure not simply in relation to visual effect but also in relation to the maximum size of a room in which all present could still hear the preacher with clarity.

LHP
from here
on

Wren's Design and Gumbril

Senior's Description

"Ten streets give on to the Piazza." (p. 188)



WREN'S DESIGN FOR REBUILDING THE CITY OF LONDON

"a round circus, a little to the east of Temple Bar, from which in a pair of diagonally superimposed crosses eight roads radiate; three northwards towards Holborn, three from the opposite arc towards the river, one eastward to the City, and one past Lincoln's Inn Fields to the West." (pp. 189-190)

"Fleet Ditch--widened now into a noble canal, on whose paved banks the barges unload their freights of country stuff." (p. 189) This plan of Wren's was implemented, but a companion plan for warehouses on the banks of the Ditch was not.

"Two master roads of ninety feet from wall to wall run westwards from the Exchange." (p. 188) This was Wren's desired width.

"In the middle, there, of that great elliptical Piazza at the eastern end of the new City, stands, four-square, the Royal Exchange." (p. 187)

"The Guildhall and the halls of the twelve City Companies in their livery of rose-red brick. . .lend to the street an air of domestic and comfortable splendour." (p. 188) It was Wren's idea to put the buildings of all the companies together. Brick, of course, was to be used as an anti-fire measure, and that idea was one of the ones implemented in the actual rebuilding.

"And there at the end of the street, at the base of a triangular space formed by the coming together of this with another master street that runs eastwards to Tower Hill, there stands the Cathedral." (p. 189)

"The other master street that goes westward from the Piazza of the Exchange slants down towards it." (p. 189)

"And every two or three hundred paces the line of the houses is broken and in the indentation of a square recess there rises, conspicuous and insular, the fantastic tower of a parish church." (p. 188) Wren was instrumental in rebuilding the churches, but they were rebuilt on their old sites.

APPENDIX IV

COMPARISON OF JOHN BIDLAKE'S PAINTING TO AUGUSTUS JOHN'S

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Critics have long since recognized Augustus John as the source for John Bidlake. While Huxley does not describe actual pictures painted by John in Point Counter Point, the pictures by Bidlake which Huxley does describe have very obvious bases in real pictures. For instance, Huxley describes Bidlake's "Bathers":

> Eight plump and pearly bathers grouped themselves in the water and on the banks of a stream so as to form with their moving bodies and limbs a kind of garland (completed above by the foliage of a tree) round the central point of the canvas. Through this wreath of nacreous flesh. . .the eye travelled on toward a pale bright landscape of softly swelling downland and clouds.[28]

By changing the number of bathers from eight to ten, this description could fit John's "Lyric Fantasy" perfectly.

Bidlake is also described as having great skill as a portrait painter and as painting portraits of the leading artists of his day, such as Verlaine.[29] John's portraits are remarkable in their vigor and intensity; and the list of artists who were painted by him is lengthy--Yeats, Hardy, Shaw, Thomas and Joyce are only a few.

The favorite subject matter of both Bidlake and John is Woman, especially uninhibited, physically vigorous, rhythmically shaped Woman. John was especially fond of gypsies, seeing in their wandering freedom a joy in life missing from most civilized people. Bidlake paints this

same freedom and joy, although he is forced to dissociate what his models represent to him from what they are in reality. Jenny naked, immortalized in paint, is not at all the real-life Jenny of mindless conversation and hideous hats.

While Huxley admired John's vigor, he was not a completely devoted fan of the artist:

> Another contemporary artist who has been immensely influential, in England at any rate, is Augustus John. His influence was at its height some years ago, when he positively called into being the young woman from Chelsea. Mr. John is a most admirable painter; but he is also responsible for short hair, brilliantly coloured jumpers, a certain floppiness and untidiness against cosmic backgrounds on the top of hills or by the sea. The "arty" young lady, who was once a living Rossetti, is now a John.[30]

These negative thoughts do not seem to have heavily influenced Huxley's portrait of Bidlake, although they do have some bearing on Mrs. Aldwinkle's thoughts of herself as a John portrait in Those Barren Leaves.

APPENDIX V

COMPARISON OF RAMPION'S PAINTING TO LAWRENCE'S

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While Rampion's ideas are greatly scaled down and simplified when compared with Lawrence's entire body of thought, his art works, conversely, are more varied than Lawrence's own. The paintings themselves are similar in style and subject matter. Lawrence was fond of painting nudes, male and female together, in lush natural landscapes. Both Rampion and Lawrence sometimes use the Etruscan convention of painting female figures white and male figures reddish-brown; Lawrence was strongly attracted to Etruscan art as an outward manifestation of a vital, balanced civilization.

Just as Rampion's paintings seem pornographic to Burlap, so Lawrence's paintings seemed pornographic to the British bureaucracy of his time. When Lawrence attempted to exhibit his painting in London, thirteen of them were confiscated by the police and just barely rescued from being burned. (Huxley wrote an article denouncing the confiscation and the Grundy-ism which inspired it.)

Both Rampion's and Lawrence's paintings are full of the joy and excitement of physical love. Lawrence's "North Sea," and "Spring," for instance, demonstrate the same freedom in and importance of love as Rampion's painting of the embracing couple whose physical love is the only source of illumination in the painting.[31]

Lawrence's paintings suffered from the fact that he was something of a prude, and could never bring himself to study the nude in detail, or to paint from live nude models.[32] Many of Lawrence's friends, such as Maria Huxley, noted his prudery, which extended to speech, as a contradiction of his basic philosophy of the glorification of the physical and the instinctive. Neither Huxley nor any of the characters in the novel offers any comment on the exact quality of Rampion's representation, so we cannot really tell if Rampion's nudes, like Lawrence's, suffered from rather amateurish lack of verisimilitude. But Huxley does introduce Rampion's prudery elsewhere. As Mary, his wife, thinks back on their mutual past, she remembers her husband's puritan streak in the matter of getting up in the morning. Even though he knows his own feelings are ridiculous--"'One oughtn't to feel like that,' he reflected. 'Imagine a Greek feeling like that'"--he is unable to stop following custom.

Rampion's allegorical drawings have a parallel in some of Lawrence's paintings, such as "Flight Back Into Paradise." Here Eve, tied to a crudely-drawn, Futuristic city, struggles to flee into the golden light of Paradise, inhabited by two male figures. The foremost one is evidently about to cut the ties. But among the paintings, none is so pointedly satiric as Rampion's caricatures, "Outline of History" and "Fossils of the Past and Fossils of the Future." As Meckier points out, Rampion's drawings "usually stress the importance of a body-mind balance, of being no more or less than fully human. Lawrence's actual paintings, although equally allegorical, stressed the physical or natural."[34]

APPENDIX VI

ART AND HUMOR

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Throughout most of his life and work, Huxley responded to art works and their messages very seriously. But he was far too cosmopolitan to limit his responses deliberately to any particular vein. Thus, there is a second, though very minor, set of responses to visual art in Huxley's work in which Huxley takes note of the humor produced in visual art as a result of the disparity between the chief subject matter and the manner of treatment.

Huxley responded to this form of humor whenever he saw it. In his essay "Conceits" he describes a fifteenth century German painting in which an angel collects Christ's blood:

> only when, in a positive torrent, it has run through an elaborate system of gutters and drain pipes which discharge it, several feet below the platform on which the Savior stands, through a large guilt spout. The picture illustrates only too well that disastrous tendency to over-emphasize and protest too much, which is the bane of all German art, from the Middle Ages to the present day. It also confirms. . .the incompatibility of plumbing with higher feelings.[35]

He chooses this example not simply because he wants to point out the limits of German painting, but because the subject of Christ contrasts so wrenchingly with the plumbing system that the only possible feeling for the viewer is a comic one.

Even more humorous are Huxley's imaginary paintings described in Grey Eminence and Ape and Essence. In the first, Huxley describes

the painting Rubens would have executed if Richelieu's application of sacred relics to his haemorrhoids had resulted in a miraculous cure. In the second, the narrator in the frame section of the book reacts to his companion's tale that Lublin, the studio head, on being asked for a raise, maintained that "in this Studio, at this time, not even Jesus Christ himself could get a raise."[36] He imagined "Christ Before Lublin" as painted by Rembrandt, by Brueghel, and by Piero della Francesca.

These flights of fancy have no particularly great intellectual import. They are sophisticated games, and reveal another aspect of Huxley's complex mind.

NOTES

Chapter I

[1]Ellipsis is Huxley's. Letters of Aldous Huxley, ed. Grover Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 80.

[2]Letters, p. 201.

[3]Letters, p. 204.

[4]Gerald Heard, "The Poignant Prophet," Kenyon Review, 27:52.

[5]Aldous Huxley, 1894-1963, ed. Julian Huxley (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), pp. 52-53. Hereafter cited as Memorial.

[6]Letters, p. 35.

[7]Aldous Huxley, Beyond the Mexique Bay (New York: Harper, 1934), p. 133.

[8]Letters, p. 373.

[9]Aldous Huxley, America and the Future (New York: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1970), p. 11.

[10]Beyond, pp. 266-267.

[11]Dawn and the Darkest Hour (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), p. 43.

[12]Memorial, p. 15.

[13]Aldous Huxley, Music At Night (London: Chatto & Windus, 1931), p. 49.

[14]Music, p. 50.

[15]"Art and the Critic," Vanity Fair, 32 (August, 1929), 59.

[16]"Gesualdo," Adonis and the Alphabet (London: Chatto & Windus, 1956), p. 171.

[17]"Art and the Critic," p. 59.

[18]"Breughel," Essays New and Old (New York: Doran, 1927), p. 61.

[19]"Francis and Grigory or the Two Humilities," Do What You Will (Garden City, New York: Doran & Co., Inc., 1929).

[20]"Art and the Obvious," Music.

[21]"Music at Night," Music.

[22]Essays New and Old, p. 282.

[23]Essays New and Old, p. 285.

[24]Jesting Pilate, An Intellectual Holiday (New York: Doran, 1926), p. 91

[25]"Guide-Books," Along the Road (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1925), pp. 43-44.

[26]"Sincerity in Art," Essays New and Old, p. 303.

[27]Proper Studies (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), p. xvi. First published 1927.

Chapter II

[1]Along the Road, p. 151.

[2]Along the Road, pp. 153-154.

[3]Along the Road, p. 155.

[4]Antic Hay (New York: Modern Library, 1923), p. 247.

[5]Along the Road, pp. 155-156.

[6]Along the Road, p. 158.

[7]Along the Road, p. 154.

[8]Along the Road, p. 150.

[9]A History of Art as a History of the Spirit, 1924. Quoted in Valentin Denis, All the Paintings of Pieter Brueghel, trans. Paul Colacicchio (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1961), p. 49.

[10]In "Art and Letters: War and Peace" (Art News 42 (1943) 9), Huxley maintains that, even though Callot and Goya did create anti-war art, still "art and letters cannot do much by direct propaganda for the cause of enduring peace" because artists are far from unanimously against war, and because even if they were, others would turn against and repress them.

[11]London: Chatto & Windus, 1956. First published 1941. All references are to this edition.

[12]Grey Eminence, p. 238.

[13]Grey Eminence, pp. 249-250. Of course, Huxley did not hold consistently to this theory. In "Pascal" he describes the years of the philosopher's life as "years, for Europe, of more than ordinary restlessness and misery. Germany was being devastated by the most bloodthirsty of religious wars. In England the Parliament was fighting with the king. France was agitated by the pointless skirmishing of the Fronde. It was the Europe, in a word, of Callot's etchings" (Do What You Will, 270).

[14]On Art and Artists, ed. Morris Philipson (New York: Harper, 1960), p. 216.

[15]On Art, p. 217.

[16]On Art, p. 217.

[17]On Art, p. 217.

[18]On Art, p. 220.

[19]On Art, p. 222.

[20]On Art, pp. 222-223.

[21]On Art, p. 224.

[22]On Art, p. 224.

[23]On Art, p. 223.

[24]Prisons: With the "Carceri" Etchings (London: The Trianon Press, 1949), p. 21.

[25]Prisons, pp. 21-22.

[26]Prisons, p. 22.

[27]Prisons, p. 26.

[28]Prisons, p. 24.

[29]In the Saturday Review. Page references here are to the version which appears in Music.

[30]References are to On Art, pp. 226-238.

[31]The signed version owned at the time by General Archibald Stirling was included in the Exhibition of Spanish Art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1928 (Frank Rutter, El Greco (New York: E. Weyhe, 1930), p. 41). Huxley had also seen the original in Spain.

[32]Music, p. 55.

[33]El Greco, trans. James Emmons (Lausanne: Skira, 1956), pp. 93-95.

[34]Music, pp. 63-64.

[35]Huxley certainly knew this essay, since Fry was a personal friend, since it was published in Athaeneum in 1920, during the period Huxley wrote for the magazine, and since it was subsequently included in Fry's Vision and Design, an extremely widely-known book of essays which has enjoyed numerous reprintings and editions since its first appearance in 1920.

[36]Vision and Design (London: Chatto & Windus, 1920), p. 209.

[37]Vision, p. 211.

[38]Music, p. 63.

[39]Music, p. 65.

[40]Music, p. 59.

[41]This is indeed a unique interpretation of El Greco, but one which seems accurate when we examine pictures such as "Laocoon." The bodies, treated in a more painterly fashion than El Greco's earlier figures, are dissolving, the extremely pronounced muscles seem to have been flayed. This is especially evident now that the painting has been cleaned.

[42]Music, p. 66. Huxley also strongly supported humour psychology in Eyeless in Gaza (New York: Bantam, 1936), pp. 99-102.

[43]In Ends and Means, Huxley used Dr. Sheldon's physiological classifications of human beings (cerebrotonic, viscerotonic, and somatotonic) to explain people's reactions to war and to pacifism. And he gave his most complete fictional expression to the idea of the physiological basis of emotion in The Genius and the Goddess, in Rivers' analysis of Ruth's budding love:

> How impossibly crude our language is! If you don't mention the physiological correlates of emotion, you're being false to the given facts. But if you do mention them, it sounds as though you were trying to be gross and cynical. . .love is always accompanied by events in the nerve endings, the skin, the mucous membranes, the glandular and erectile tissues. Those who don't say so are liars. Those who do are labeled as pornographers. . . . What we need is another set of words. Words that can express the natural togetherness of things. Mucospiritual, for example, or dermatocharity . . . . How hard it is, without those still nonexistent words, to discuss even so simple and obvious a case as Ruth's! The best one can do is to flounder about in metaphors. A saturated solution of feelings, which can be crystallized either from the outside or the inside. Words and events that fall into the psychophysical soup and make it clot into action-producing lumps of emotion and sentiment. Then come the glandular changes, and the appearance of those charming little zoological specimens which the child carries around with so much pride and embarrassment. The thrill-solution is enriched by a new kind of sensibility that radiates from the nipples, through the skin and the nerve ends, into the soul, the subconscious, the superconscious, the spirit. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), pp. 69-70.

Thus, the adolescent falls in love because of her body, not because of divine inspiration or simply because of the experience of meeting someone new.

[44] On Art, p. 230.

[45] On Art, p. 231.

Chapter III

[1] The Collected Poetry of Aldous Huxley, ed. Donald Watt (London: Chatto & Windus, 1971), p. 42. Poem first published in 1948.

[2] Poetry, p. 66.

[3] Poetry, p. 104. First published in 1920.

[4] New York: George H. Doran Co., 1922. All references are to this edition.

[5] New York: Avon Publications, Inc., 1928. All references are to this edition.

[6] Crome, p. 35.

[7] Aldous Huxley (London: Elek, 1972), p. 29.

[8]"The Cry for a Messiah in the Arts," Vanity Fair 17 (Jan., 1922), 57.

[9]Crome, pp. 239-240.

[10]"Liberty, Quality, Machinery," Adonis and the Alphabet, p. 112.

[11]Ibid.

[12]He makes this point even more emphatically in his early short story "Eupompus Gave Splendour to Art By Numbers."

[13]Crome, pp. 110-111. These sentiments are very close to Huxley's non-fictional writing:

> Reacting against impressionism on the one hand and a conventionally realistic literariness on the other, the most self-consciously talented of modern painters deliberately transformed their art into a branch of geometry. The possibilities of cubism in its strictest form were, however, soon exhausted. There has been a general return to representation--but to a representation still much too arrogantly geometrical in its studied omissions and distortions. Art is still insufficiently humble before its subject matter. Painters insist on subjecting the outer world too completely to their abstracting and geometrizing intellects. A kind of aesthetic asceticism prevents them from enjoying whole-heartedly and without afterthought the loveliness so profusely offered by the world about them. . . . Tyranically, they impose their will on things; they substitute arbitrary forms of their own fabrication for the almost invariably much subtler and lovelier forms with which their direct experience presents them. ("Francis and Grigory or the Two Humilities," Do What You Will, p. 185.)

Huxley saw Cubism as the artistic expression of Bolshevism, a movement which, in his mind, attempted to rid mankind of "all the spiritual and individual values which give significance to individual life. . . . A Cubist picture is one from which everything that might appeal to the individual soul, as a soul, has been omitted" ("The New Romanticism," Music, p. 216). Cubism "despises the soul and solitude and nature" ("Art and the Obvious," Music, 30).

[14]Crome, p. 111.

[15]"Art and The Obvious," Music, p. 31.

[16]By Kenneth Clark (Memorial, p. 16). Clark feels that few people in the early 1920's could have recognized the picture, as Caravaggio had not yet been thoroughly rediscovered for the twentieth century.

[17]Crome, p. 111.

[18]For a complete discussion of the essays from which the generalization is derived, see Appendix II.

[19]Crome, p. 101.

[20]Crome, p. 153.

[21]Philip Thody assigns a similar role to Gumbril Senior in Aldous Huxley (London: Studio Vista, 1973), pp. 30-31.

[22]Antic, p. 39.

[23]Antic, p. 40.

[24]Antic, p. 38.

[25]Antic, p. 183.

[26]Antic, p. 182.

[27]Antic, p. 276.

[28]Antic, p. 185.

[29]See Appendix III for a detailed analysis of the similarities.

[30]Antic, p. 186.

[31]Antic, p. 187.

[32]Dawn and the Darkest Hour, p. 104.

[33]The Olive Tree (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932). This essay was originally published as an introduction to Haydon's autobiography.

[34]Olive, p. 244.

[35]Olive, pp. 260-261. Huxley does not completely ridicule Haydon in the essay, as later Haydon critics have charged (Eric George, The Life and Death of Benjamin Robert Haydon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 391). Huxley's criticism is tempered with some amount of understanding. But when Huxley transforms Haydon into Lypiatt, he does ridicule. No one in the world of the novel can be taken truly seriously because no one really thinks or evaluates his life and work except Gumbril Senior.

[36]Harold Watts, Aldous Huxley (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 68.

[37]Watts, p. 67.

[38]Aldous Huxley and the Two Nothings," Critical Quarterly, Winter, 1961.

[39]Kieth May, Aldous Huxley (London: Elek, 1972), p. 81.

[40]The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence, II, ed. Harry T. Moore (New York: Viking Press, 1962), p. 1096.

[41]For an examination of the similarities between Bidlake and John, see Appendix V.

[42]Point, p. 414.

[43]Point, p. 101.

[44]Point, p. 410.

[45]Point, p. 411.

[46]Point, p. 410.

[47]Point, p. 410.

[48]Point, p. 441.

[49]Point, p. 408.

[50]Point, pp. 217-218.

[51]Point, pp. 313-314.

[52]Point, p. 417.

[53]Point, p. 417.

[54]Point, p. 27.

[55]Point, p. 27.

[56]Point, p. 409.

[57]Point, p. 428.

Chapter IV

[1]New York: George H. Doran, 1925. All references are to this edition.

[2]Leaves, p. 45.

[3]Leaves, p. 25.

[4]Leaves, p. 66.

[5]Leaves, pp. 191-192.

[6]Leaves, p. 305.

[7]Leaves, p. 30.

[8]Leaves, p. 31.

[9]Leaves, p. 23.

[10]Leaves, p. 69.

[11]"Selected Snobberies," Music, p. 225.

[12]In describing the Tarquini tomb on 322-323, Huxley has actually combined murals from three of the existing tombs in this ancient ruin: the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, the Tomb of the Leopards, and the Tomb of the Argus. In doing so, Huxley manages to get a more complete picture of the Etruscan civilization into a short space, and to make the contrast between the ancient civilization, with its simple, vigorous pleasures, and the modern civilization, with its sophisticated shallowness, clearer.

[13]Leaves, p. 311.

[14]Leaves, p. 375.

[15]Leaves, p. 304.

[16]Leaves, p. 306.

[17]Leaves, pp. 79-80.

[18]Poetry, pp. 135-136.

[19]Hermann Clay Bowersox makes a similar point in his unpublished doctoral dissertation "Aldoux Huxley: The Defeat of Youth," University of Chicago, 1946, p. 8.

[20]Poetry, pp. 137-139.

[21]Poetry, pp. 157-158.

[22]New York: Bantam, 1936. All references are to this edition.

[23]New York: Harper & Row, 1939. All references are to this edition.

[24]Gaza, p. 14.

[25]Gaza, p. 13.

[26]Gaza, p. 262.

[27]Gaza, p. 190.

[28]Gaza, p. 320.

[29]Gaza, p. 205.

[30]Gaza, p. 351.

[31]Gaza, p. 353.

[32]Gaza, p. 353.

[33]Gaza, p. 207.

[34]Swan, pp. 4-5.

[35]Swan, p. 9.

[36]Swan, p. 9.

[37]Swan, p. 11.

[38]Swan, p. 12.

[39]Swan, p. 146.

[40]Swan, p. 24.

[41]Swan, p. 31.

[42]"Lady Seated at the Virginals," not an imaginary Vermeer, as both Zeitlin (Memorial, p. 130) and Bowering (Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels (London: The Althone Press, 1968), p. 13) maintain.

[43]Swan, p. 31.

[44]Swan, p. 206.

[45]Swan, p. 206.

[46]Swan, p. 206.

[47]Swan, pp. 204-205.

[48]Swan, p. 106. Possibly a reference to Watteau's "L'Embarquement pour Cythère."

[49]Swan, p. 31.

[50]Swan, p. 31.

[51]Other interpretations are, of course, possible. Peter Bowering sees the juxtaposition of the two paintings as symbolizing the war of the spirit and passion, and as indicating the desire of most Americans to enjoy the best of both worlds (p. 144).

[52]Swan, p. 118.

[53]Swan, p. 132.

Chapter V

[1]Aldous Huxley (New York: The Orion Press, 1967), p. 61.

[2]Atkins, p. 62.

[3]New York: Harper & Row, 1944. All references are to this edition.

[4]Time, p. 231.

[5]Time, p. 71.

[6]Time, p. 72.

[7]Time, p. 185.

[8]Time, p. 53.

[9]Time, p. 34.

[10]Time, p. 34.

[11]Time, p. 154.

[12]Time, p. 185.

[13]Time, p. 185.

[14]Time, p. 230.

[15]Time, p. 65.

[16]Time, p. 68.

[17]Time, p. 68.

[18]Time, p. 69.

[19]Time, p. 204.

[20]Time, p. 61.

[21]Quoted by Georges Wildenstein, Ingres (London: Phaidon Press, 1954), p. 8.

[22]Robert Rosenblum, Ingres (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), p. 126.

[23]Jerome Meckier, Aldous Huxley: Satire and Structure (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 166.

[24]Daniel Catton Rich, Degas (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1951), p. 24.

[25]Time, p. 114.

[26]Quoted in Camille Mauclair, Degas (Paris: Hyperion Press, 1937), p. 20.

[27]Time, p. 116.

[28]Time, p. 110.

[29]Prisons, p. 21.

[30]"Variations on El Greco," Collected Essays (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 156.

[31]Actually, he is the only possible critic. According to the most complete catalog of Piero di Cosimo's work, the artist did not paint a painting which corresponds either in title or in subject matter to Huxley's description of "Venus and Adonis." S. C. Kaines Smith in An Outline History of Painting (New York: William Farquhar Payson, n.d.), does reproduce a painting he calls "Venus and Adonis," but it is called "Venus and Mars" by almost all other critics. It does not match Huxley's description of the painting, although it is in the same style. Perhaps Huxley did have "Venus and Mars" at least vaguely in mind, for he described that painting in 1932 as "the perfect, the completely acceptable vision of the earthly paradise" (Texts and Pretexts, 74).

[32]Time, p. 113.

[33]Time, p. 113.

[34]Time, p. 105.

[35]Time, p. 117.

[36]Time, p. 153.

[37]Beyond, pp. 207-208.

[38]Time, p. 155.

[39]Time, p. 209.

[40]Along the Road.

[41]Along the Road, pp. 207-208. Huxley is even harder on papier-maché in Texts and Pretexts: "Dorset's conception of an artistic badness so extreme that it comes round full circle. . .serves to explain. . .why we like the papier-maché furniture of 1850 (p. 218).

[42]Poetry, pp. 107-108.

[43]Poetry, p. 16. First published in 1916.

[44]Poetry, p. 17.

[45]Proper Studies (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Doran, 1928), pp. 52-53.

[46]Proper Studies, p. 218.

[47]Time, p. 100.

[48]Time, p. 74.

[49]Time, p. 74.

[50]Time, p. 74.

[51]Time, p. 225.

[52]Charles de Tolnay, The Medici Chapel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), p. 67.

[53]de Tolnay, p. 66.

[54]Quoted in Frederick Hartt, Michelangelo, The Complete Sculpture (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), p. 173.

[55]Time, p. 277.

[56]Luciano Berti, Fra Angelico, trans. Pearl Sanders (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), p. 25.

[57]Giulo Carlo Argan, Fra Angelico, trans. James Emmons (Lausanne: Skira, n.d.), p. 92.

[58]Time, pp. 226-227.

[59]Time, p. 261.

[60]Time, pp. 259-260.

[61]Time, p. 260.

[62]Time, p. 89.

[63]Time, p. 90.

[64]Time, p. 90.

[65]Time, p. 275.

[66]Time, p. 115.

[67]Time, p. 146.

[68]Time, p. 124.

Chapter VI

[1]Huxley uses other, perhaps more helpful, terms for this new function of art when, in The Devils of Loudun, he discusses self-transcendence above the starting point (religion), below the starting point (drugs) and horizontally (a hobby, love for another human being, intellectual research, education, art) (New York: Harper & Row, 1952, 325-327). Art helps us into mystical reality because it can be a first step in self-transcendence, and thus can lead gradually from horizontal to upward self-transcendence.

[2]New York: Harper & Row, 1954. All references are to this edition.

[3]New York: Harper & Row, 1955. All references are to this edition.

[4]New York: Harper Brothers, 1962. All references are to this edition.

[5]Letters, p. 523.

[6]Doors, p. 41.

[7]Ends and Means, An Enquiry Into the Nature of Ideals and Into the Methods Employed for their Realization (New York: Harper, 1937), p. 268.

[8]Themes and Variations (New York: Harper, 1950), p. 142.

[9]Doors, pp. 29-30.

[10]The Perennial Philosophy (New York: Harper, 1945), p. 117.

[11]Philosophy, pp. 170-171.

[12]Doors, p. 49.

[13]Heaven, p. 75.

[14]Doors, p. 44.

[15]Géricault (Paris: Didier & Cie., 1868), p. 161.

[16]Clement, p. 162.

[17]Heaven, p. 45.

[18]Review of "The Raft of the Medusa" by O'Mahony in Le Conservateur. Quoted in Denise Aimé-Azam, La Passion de Géricault (Paris: Fayard, 1970).

[19]Heaven, p. 80.

[20]Heaven, p. 80.

[21]Heaven, p. 81. Other critics have described this constant awareness of divinity in more traditionally religious terms:

> Dans votre univers, strict, ordonné, vous ouvrez toujours la porte sur l'infini; dans vos ténèbres vous nous ramenez toujours vers le feu et vers la lumière. Mystique de l'instant, vous assumez toutes les grandes espérances que les saints fondateurs d'ordres monastiques ont traduit en accord avec les pasteurs chargés de paitre les brebis. La véhémente affirmation d'unité que se manifeste dans l'ensemble comme dans chacune des pages de votre Bible n'est que l'écho sans cesse répercute du grand désir "qu'ils soient un, un seul troupeau, un seul pasteur." (Charles Maurras, Musique intérieure. Quoted in A. M. Bougier, Georges de La Tour. N.p.: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963), p. 219).
>
> In your universe, strict, ordered, you always open the door on infinity; in your darkness, you take us toward fire and light. Momentary mystic, you take on all the great hopes which the saintly founders of monastic orders have translated like shepherds charged with feeding their sheep. The vehement affirmation of unity which

manifests itself in the figures in your paintings as if your paintings were pages of a Bible is only the echo, with unceasing reverberations, of the great desire "that they become one, a single herd, with a single shepherd."

[22]Doors, p. 40.

[23]Heaven, p. 41.

[24]Andrew Carndiff Ritchie, Edouard Vuillard (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1954), p. 13.

[25]Claude Roger Marx, Vuillard, His Life and Work (New York: Editions de la Maison Française, 1946), p. 198.

[26]Marx, p. 200.

[27]Quoted in Marx, p. 202.

[28]Letter from Vuillard to Maurice Denis, rpt. in Vuillard, ed. John Russell (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971), p. 64.

[29]Doors, p. 21.

[30]We can understand better how art can induce a visionary state if we look, for example, at Vuillard's "The Landing, rue de Miromesnil." The subject matter is deliberately simple, for what Vuillard is trying to do is to lead us through the everyday realities of household objects to a vision of the Absolute beyond. Thus, the predominantly vertical brushstrokes are cut off at the top and bottom by lighter patches of horizontal brushstrokes, so that the eye of the viewer does not travel out of the picture. Instead, the eye is led up and down in the picture and back from the lighter edges to the darker center. It is the dark center, in which brushstroke disappears into pure black, that is the focus of the painting. We go from the activity (both stroke and color) of the walls to the emptiness which lies beyond it. But the blackness, set off as it is by light streaks, is not really empty. As we stare into the painting, the blackness begins to assume greater importance. If we let it, it begins to dominate us too, in a positive way. What lies at the core of everyday reality is not nothingness but a new, exciting, distinctly non-verbal experience.

[31]Hugo Munsterberg, The Landscape Painting of China and Japan (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1955), p. 53.

[32]Heaven, p. 39.

[33]Heaven, pp. 39-40.

[34]Heaven, p. 83.

[35]The Spirit of the Brush, trans. Shio Sakanishi (London: John Murray, 1939), p. 50.

[36]Kuo Hsi, An Essay on Landscape Painting, trans. Shio Sakanishi (London: John Murray, 1935), pp. 38-39.

[37]Kenneth Clark, Landscape Into Art (London: John Murray, 1949), p. 84.

[38]As Milton Birnbaum has noted, Huxley's ability to appreciate Oriental art "did not develop until he embraced mysticism. Earlier, he had found Oriental art lacking in credibility" (Aldous Huxley's Quest for Values. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1971, p. 82). In Jesting Pilate, for example, Huxley criticized Hindu art theory for maintaining that "the human is not enough. It tells the artist that it is his business to express symbolically the superhuman, the spiritual, the pure metaphysical idea" (Jesting, 90), and this leads the artists to try "to express in terms of form what can only be expressed--and not very clearly at that, for it is difficult to speak lucidly about things of which one knows nothing--in words" (Jesting, 91). After his religious conversion, Huxley realizes that not only is it possible to speak about the spiritual in visual art, it is mandatory for the best art to do so.

[39]See Ends and Means, p. 243.

[40]Once awakened to the Cubistic vision, Huxley continued to speculate about it, as in a letter to his son and daughter-in-law:

> One would like to find out, first of all, why, as a matter of historical fact, so many cubists and other abstractionists used forms which are identical with those obtained by photographing reflections in curved surfaces. Did the suggestion actually come from hub caps and the backs of spoons? Or is there a tendency in certain minds to perform the imaginative equivalent of projection on a curved surface? Then there is the question of duration, of change in time. Can a merely static art of distortion ever convey anything like the rich significance of a dynamic art in time? The question, oddly enough, hardly arises in relation to representational art. One would never think of complaining because the Piers "Nativity" or Rembrandt's "Polish Rider," is not a movie. And they wouldn't be improved if they became movies. Whereas, after seeing Thompson's film, one feels very definitely that lots of Picassos, Juan Grises and the like would be greatly improved if they were animated and had a development according to the laws of the optics of curved surfaces. (Letters, 716.)

Interestingly enough, Picasso's pictures were later animated and used as part of a movie, "The Picasso Summer." Unreleased to theaters, it was sold to television.

[41]George Woodcock has a more far-reaching though speculative theory on Huxley's great emphasis on art works in these two essays:

> One has the impression--and there are enough oblique remarks to confirm it--that Huxley came to regard literature as a lesser art: that he felt that words, and especially words presented in an alphabetic as distinct from a pictographic language, emphasized the separateness of things and tended not to increase man's knowledge but to diminish his understanding whereas in painting it was easier for an artist to see things as they are, shining in their own essential nature and to render them according to their proper rhythms. (Woodcock, 266-267.)

[42] Island, p. 6.

[43] Island, p. 113.

[44] Island, p. 115.

[45] Island, p. 312.

[46] Island, p. 225.

[47] Island, p. 257.

[48] Island, p. 255. Huxley gives credit to Florence Cane's The Artist In Each of Us for some of these pedagogical theories in his Letters, p. 656. He also supports the idea of disciplining the fancy though representational artistic undertakings as an aid to mental health in a letter to Hubert Benoit in 1950 (Letters, 617).

[49] Island, p. 201.

[50] Island, p. 212.

[51] Island, p. 213.

[52] Island, p. 214.

[53] Heaven, p. 39.

[54] Heaven, p. 40.

[55] Heaven, p. 40.

[56] Heaven, pp. 40-41.

[57] Island, p. 224. This is similar to the function of the Medici Chapel sculpture in Time Must Have a Stop.

[58] Island, p. 233.

[59] Island, p. 324.

[60]Island, p. 317.

[61]Island, p. 319.

[62]Island, p. 319.

[63]Doors, p. 29.

[64]Island, p. 152.

[65]Texts and Pretexts, pp. 49-50.

[66]Beyond the Mexique Bay, pp. 265-267.

[67]Adonis and the Alphabet, p. 112.

[68]America and the Future, p. 11

[69]This Timeless Moment (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Girous, 1968), p. 184.

[70]Moment, p. 253.

[71]Memorial, p. 158.

Appendices

[1]Memorial, p. 132.

[2]Quoted in Denis, p. 48.

[3]Handbook of Painting. The German, Flemish and Dutch Schools. Quoted in Robert Hughes & Piero Bianconi, The Complete Paintings of Brueghel (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1967), p. 10.

[4]Quoted in Hughes, p. 10.

[5]Series 3, vol. 3, pp. 361-375; vol. 4, pp. 361-373; vol. 5, pp. 20-40.

[6]Vol. 3, p. 362.

[7]Vol. 3, p. 372.

[8]Vol. 5, p. 20.

[9]Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1913.

[10]Vol. 5, p. 858.

[11]New York: Dutton & Co., 1921.

[12]Along the Road, p. 140.

[13]Conway, p. 506.

[14]Flemish Art (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927) pp. 35-36.

[15]Memorial, p. 15.

[16]Creative Art 6 (March, 1930), pp. 200-202.

[17]On Art, p. 268.

[18]On Art, p. 270.

[19]Limbo (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), pp. 27-28. First published in 1920.

[20]"Puritanism," p. 200.

[21]"Puritanism," p. 201.

[22]"Puritanism," p. 201.

[23]After a copy in Martin S. Briggs, Wren the Incomparable (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1953), p. 51.

[24]On Art, pp. 188-189.

[25]Quoted in Briggs, p. 265.

[26]Briggs, p. 265.

[27]Quoted in Christopher Wren, Parantalia, 1750.

[28]Point, p. 51.

[29]Point, p. 322.

[30]"Art and Life," Vanity Fair 23 (February, 1925), p. 82.

[31]Point, p. 217.

[32]Paintings of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Mervyn Levy (New York: Viking Press, 1964).

[33]Point, p. 217.

[34]Meckier, p. 109.

[35]*Texts and Pretexts*, p. 194.

[36]*Ape and Essence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1948), p. 4.

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Typed and Printed in the U.S.A.
Professional Thesis Preparation
Cliff and Paula Haughey
144 Maplewood Drive
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
Telephone (517) 337-1527