EVOLUTION AS METAPHOR
Patterns of Continuity in the Thought and Aesthetic of Aldous Huxley

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ABSTRACT

EVOLUTION AS METAPHOR

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Thought and Aesthetic of Aldous Huxley

By

George Edward Whitesel

The concept of evolution, so closely allied to the Huxley family name, has influenced the thought of Aldous Huxley as well as that of his brother, Julian. The purpose of this dissertation which deals largely with the non-fiction has been to bring out this influence and to show how, as a continuing thread, it links the thought of Huxley's early period with that of his later writings and makes it possible for Huxley to remain an artist while criticising art's limitations.

Huxley's reputation provides the opening to a discussion of whether or not there is continuity in Huxley's thought. The two-career theory is examined as a product of historical as much as literary conditions. Huxley's attitude toward art serves to focus discussion, and the writings of certain critics on Huxley and art are analyzed. Their contentions that the young Huxley was

either a full-fledged aesthete or else a secret enemy of art become the basis for the treatment in the second chapter of Aldous Huxley's family background, early life, and opinions. There is a special emphasis on Huxley's relationship with the aesthetic movement and with nineteenth century intellectual history. The articles Huxley wrote as critic for The Athenaeum and other publications are examined, and the views expressed there are taken as evidence of Huxley's independent attitude. The chapter concludes with an examination of the relationship of art to the important dialectic in Huxley's work between order and chaos.

The third chapter takes up the impact of religious thought on the belief patterns already outlined. The nature of Huxley's conversion is examined, and certain elements of Huxley's view of man's situation, the mind-knowledge problem for example, are taken up with an eye to solving the question of how the later Huxley can be reconciled with the earlier. Huxley's attitude toward diversity is crucial, and the reconciliation of this value with Huxley's religious outlook is explored.

The last chapter deals directly with evolutionism and its impact on the aesthetic of Aldous Huxley. The evolutionary principles of complexity, non-specialization, growth, and wholeness are presented. The principles are traced in the early writings of Julian Huxley, and his

discussion of the relationship of art and evolution is explored. The final portion of the chapter presents the four evolutionary principles as they appear in the writings of Aldous Huxley and direct his attitudes by providing him with a scale of values that appears to remain constant throughout his career.

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By

George Edward Whitesel

A THESIS

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To

My Parents

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CHAPTER I

THE CRITICAL PROBLEM

Overview

> Art arises out of our desire for both beauty and truth and our knowledge that they are not identical.
>
> W. H. Auden

In the paragraph of the essay from which this statement is taken Auden goes on to say that every poem, and for our purposes we may assume that flexible term to mean every work of literature, "shows some sign of rivalry between Ariel and Prospero." Ariel is the structural logic of art which creates the aesthetic space which delights our weary, chaos-afflicted souls. But Prospero, the truth-telling aspect of art that speaks of things "relevant and illuminating" to our "condition," is equally necessary if art is to be taken seriously by mature men: "We want a poem to be beautiful, that is to say, a verbal earthly paradise, a timeless world of pure play, which gives us delight precisely because of its contrast to our historical existence with all its insoluble problems and inescapable suffering; at the same time we want a poem to be true, that is to say, to provide us with some kind of

revelation about our life which will show us what life is really like and free us from self-enchantment and deception. . . ."[1]

The problem which this reader had with Huxley, a reader conditioned by the critics to assume that Huxley's most important book was Brave New World, came from the conviction that Huxley was a Prospero with no use for Ariel, a writer concerned with truth to the exclusion of beauty, a Carlyle of no very distinguished style. For that reader, the publication of Tomorrow, Tomorrow, and Tomorrow and The Collected Essays in the fifties, followed shortly by On Art and Artists in 1960, came as something of a revelation.

The clue, it seemed, lay in Huxley's essay on Mallarmé, "Famagusta or Paphos." Famagusta was reality in all its untidy complexity. Paphos was the "verbal earthly paradise" created by Ariel; it was the interesting, meaningful world of total mental order. Paphos was the place one would rather not visit because it would vanish at a glance; it was best savored in absence. Huxley, it is obvious, knew its charm perhaps only too well. He accepted Famagusta in all its crude vulgarity and depreciated the allure of Paphos; yet, he knew that Paphos existed and marked it clearly on his map.

Huxley apparently felt that if the realist cannot go to Paphos, if he must not attempt to live in that city,

he will nevertheless go into the street and ask a cab driver to take him there, as grateful for the existence of Paphos as he is for the cab driver's refusal to take him. A citizen of neither city, he will take a hotel room in Famagusta and periodically ask a cab driver to take him to Paphos but only at dusk when it is too late. As artist he knows that he must arbitrate the dispute between the two cities, acknowledging that the two have separate rights. He will seek to understand both and be fair to each.

More important than the subject-matter of Huxley's essay, however, is the evidence it provided of an abiding admiration for Mallarmé. The essay was written to "pay my homage to that dedicated denier of reality, that self-mortified saint of letters, whose art enchants me as much today as it did forty years ago when, as an undergraduate, I first discovered it."[2] The fact that Mallarmé was one of Huxley's literary enthusiasms attracted attention by its unexpectedness. Only dimly and with much effort did the reader recall that Huxley had published, early in his career (c. 1917), a translation of "L'Apres-Midi d'un Faun." But once this connection was made, the linkage which the figure of Mallarmé provides between the two ends of Huxley's active life produced its subtle shock. Huxley's relationship to his craft suddenly seemed less simple than previously supposed.

Now Henry James is one thing and H. G. Wells another; but a writer who wishes to be both simultaneously, who pays tribute to both the shaping form and the life that is shaped, seems odd enough to make necessary a re-assessment of earlier judgments. Whatever one's opinion of Huxley's art, it was clear that Huxley's opinions on art were not the one-sided conclusions one had been led to expect. Huxley, apparently, was sensitive as well as knowledgeable in matters that concern art.

The shock produced by a reading of Huxley's essays was the germ of the present study. The initial interest was stimulated further by discussions of Huxley's essays with groups of interested students in various college classes. From these discussions emerged the intriguing observation that Huxley apparently flouted the neoclassical standard of values by preferring the complex to the simple. This insight, in turn, led to the thought that Huxley might be deriving his aesthetic principles from the concept of evolution.

The road from hunch to firm conviction, however, is never easy or short. And, in the process of acquainting myself with Huxley materials, it became clear that much opinion on his work was colored by the historical and political events of an earlier era. And as I struggled to formulate a statement of Huxley's use of the concept of evolution, I became convinced that Huxley's aesthetic

provided a frame through which to obtain a satisfying perspective on the total body of his work, through which one could resolve many of the critical problems concerning his career.

Art and aesthetics, surprisingly yet fittingly enough, turned out to be the key to the achievement of an artist. For, the fact that had come to seem most questionable was Huxley's right to the title of artist. Huxley, defending D. H. Lawrence, another Prospero, from the strictures of Middleton Murry, remarked: "The absurdity of his critical method becomes the more manifest when we reflect that nobody would ever have heard of a Lawrence who was not an artist." Huxley, like Lawrence, was a man whom "the fates had stigmatized 'writer'" (C.E., p. 116).

This study begins with the biographical problem and, then, turns to art and Huxley's attitude toward it for a solution. The theory that Huxley's career is characterized by a drastic dichotomy is traced through the views of previous critics who have attempted to deal with Huxley's relationship to art. This review of scholarship forced a review of the historical record both as to Huxley's public actions as a young man and his published criticism of that period. This section is concluded with an examination of one of the chief paradoxes in Huxley's art criticism, his advocacy of both openness and wholeness. Because the paradox cannot be understood without an

exploration of Huxley's religious views, and because the "conversion" of the thirties is generally taken as marking a split with the outlook of the younger Huxley, it is necessary to show how the opinions of the aesthete are not cancelled but are extended and enriched by the insights of the mystic. The concluding section of the study is intended to serve as an answer to a question that has brooded over the preceding chapters: what was the controlling concept that gave serious purpose to the writing of the young Pyrrhonic aesthete, tempering his aesthetic mysticism and preparing the path for his later religious mysticism?

The answer to the question is, in itself, without its full impact unless the reader has a broad understanding of the dynamics of evolutionary criteria, such as size or complexity, non-specialization, growth, and wholeness, in Huxley's total thought, and it is necessary for him to see the emerging pattern in all its repetitiveness as well as all its fullness in order to appreciate the exact contribution of this theory to our understanding of the corpus of Huxley's writing. For this reason, the format of this essay is designed to emphasize motifs that recur over the almost fifty years of Huxley's career as a published author. Wherever possible passages written in different decades expressing the same idea have been placed side by side. Similarly citations have been dated and chronological sequence indicated wherever it was helpful to do so.

Finally, the virtual exclusion of opinions expressed by characters in Huxley's fiction has been deliberate, since such views might be challenged on the grounds that they represented not Huxley's views but those of a fictional character speaking in a dramatic context.

Although it violates the question and answer structure outlined above, an overview of the thesis of this essay at this point will enable the reader to move with assurance into the following chapters and is, therefore, justified. If a brief outline fails to substantiate the points it makes or to answer the queries it raises, then the reader will have good reason for advancing at once into the body of the essay where the documentation for the views expressed here is given.

Huxley's evolutionism derives both from family tradition and from the mood of the time and British social class into which he was born. He applies the concept of the development and nature of organic individuals as defined by his brother, Julian, to the art object. The scale of values derived from this concept permeates his thinking from the earliest stages onward. It is to be found in his religious and his political writings as well as in his art criticism. This has not been clearly stated before and helps to explain many of the errors critics have made in trying to expound Huxley's thought. In order to make plain the differences between the view put forward

in this essay and that of earlier critics, it would be helpful to include a sketch of Huxley's intellectual position and its relation to the continuity of his career.

In 1920, Huxley was, to the superficial glance, at the point where his grandfather, T. H. Huxley, had been in his Romanes Lecture of 1893; that is to say, he felt order and coherence to belong to the realm of art and culture and not to that of nature. Yet, as a student of Bradley and the various forms of Idealism, there was no doubt in his mind--indeed, it seems to have been an unconscious and uncriticized first principle--that order deriving from the organic wholeness of things ought to be the chief characteristic of cosmic as of mental life. The desirability of such an understanding of reality was never challenged--Huxley thus inherits the conflict between a static and dynamic view of reality that is part and parcel of the tradition of the great chain of being. Huxley's link to eighteenth century Deism is apparent from the beginning. And though Huxley was extremely critical of those who tried, prematurely, to achieve a metaphysical synthesis or order, he admitted to having felt Wordsworthian intuitions of a general order in things and wondered--without much hope--if it might not be possible to discover this order.

The wholeness of art suggested to him how things ought to be perceived, while the random dripping of water drops implied the only vision of reality he could honestly

affirm. Therefore he described himself as being a Pyrrhonic aesthete.[3] His dedication to wholeness and order was, however, final and irrevocable. According to one source, Huxley "refers to himself as . . . an amateur philosopher whose books represent a series of attempts to discover artistic methods for expressing the general idea in the particular instance."[4] One feels sure that Huxley never doubted, as Darwin apparently did,[5] the proposition that the existence of a partial order (as in the general laws of science) must necessarily imply the existence of an ultimate wholeness. He merely thought it unknowable by man. The doctrine of meaninglessness which he claimed to support, as he himself later admitted, was a strategy for exploding established but outworn positions (C.E., p. 366).

The key to Aldous Huxley's life is the importance he placed on the concept of the evolutionary growth of consciousness. Mind and its ability to perceive, its ability to grasp the whole truth ("to see life steadily and see it whole"), is at the center of his thinking. His early work is a critique of limited viewpoints, his later work expounds what he believes to be a comprehensive view of reality. The mind-knowledge problem determines the quality of his early work. Its despair comes from Huxley's bitterness over the mind's inability to know the truth about reality. Its gaiety comes from Huxley's amusement at seeing through the claims of limited viewpoints. He

cannot accept an irrational reality and move from such an acceptance, as Wallace Stevens, Oscar Wilde, and Mallarmé did, to a celebration of man's ability to create order.

If the cosmos or reality is not like the mind, then Huxley must rage against creation:

> If there is a scheme I think it must be something of which we would approve. That is to say, if there is a universal mind, I do not think it can be indifferent to human values and aspirations. It must be a mind something like ours. And I expect the whole problem arises because of our undeveloped consciousness. Very likely the problem does not really exist at all. It is a pseudo-problem and originates merely from the way we think about things.[6]

The nature of the mind, then, its powers to perceive and its drive for value and order, determine what Huxley's stance toward a particular thing will be. From his evolutionist background he derives the hope that an increase in consciousness will display the ultimate order (his later religious view states that such a level of consciousness has been achieved by mystics in the past and can be achieved by us today). From his religious and teleologically oriented ancestors, and from nineteenth century idealism, he inherited the view that an ultimate wholeness exists, and that to rest content with any man-made order which is less than the order of this ultimate reality is self-deception. The world is a whole, it has objective reality, and man's duty is to know this reality.

Huxley's release from anguish came with his belief that the mind did indeed have the power to know an ultimate

and orderly reality through the faculty of mystical vision. Using hindsight, one can say that Huxley's turn to mysticism (1930?-1936) should have been predictable because it is in this type of mental activity that the mind's desire for order finds its most naked expression, an expression which, according to the experts Huxley read, is so uniform as to be almost a constituent factor of mental life itself.[7] Because mysticism was congenial to Huxley's pragmatic and empirical outlook (i.e., it involved an hypothesis to be tested--"But I confess that I am a pragmatist by temperament"),[8] and because it was an aspect of consciousness, the focal point around which Huxley's value system revolved, he was able to adopt it without qualm of conscience. Thus, the only change in Huxley's belief structure, momentous though the change proved to be, was a new conviction, gradually acquired, that faith in the truth of the mystic's intuition of wholeness could be rationally justified.

Huxley's interest in Lawrence derived from his recognition that Lawrence was driving toward an enlarged awareness of reality, of mind's place in nature. His break with Lawrence resulted from his conviction that this particular enlargement of awareness did not solve the chief problems of placing man in a correct relation to an orderly, ultimate reality, that while broadening Huxley's consciousness it did not elevate it. In his most critical

moments he would probably have expressed the belief that Lawrence had committed the cardinal sin of narrowing the range of consciousness, of reversing the upward, expansive, evolutionary thrust of consciousness. Huxley felt that Lawrence supplied a corrective balance to his own outlook, but that Lawrence taken alone was a negative rather than a positive force. Lawrence's solution did not take into account all the factors. Finally, Gerald Heard's vision of an evolution of consciousness toward an all-inclusive, higher state as a result of the practice of the disciplines of the mystic proved more compatible because it did not violate Huxley's value system and deeply held beliefs.

Huxley found the thought of Gerald Heard congenial. And, though the newly published Letters[9] provide ample evidence that he had reservations about the soundness of Heard's work (Heard himself indicates that in the early phases of their relationship it was Huxley who did the talking!),[10] it was undoubtedly the evolutionary aspect of Heard's thought which appealed to him. The development of the simple into the complex, the inclusion of diverse elements within a unified whole, these were concepts which acted as a generative force in Huxley's work throughout his life.

This summary of the development of Huxley's thought is not an evaluation of his belief system. Like the essay as a whole, it seeks merely to place the

discussion of Huxley on a new plane, to achieve an angle of vision from which his thought can be better comprehended, in order that the man who loved aesthetic harmony to the point of mystical ecstasy can be reconciled to the man who loved truth to the point of prophesy, since what is obviously needed is that both should be better understood than they have in the past.

Huxley elected not to be one of literature's Ariels despite an obsessive love of order, what Stephen Spender has called his "longing for unobtainable consistencies."[11] The reason was his even more obsessive desire to be true to the particular, his passionate honesty to experience. To quote Auden's essay again: "Ariel, as Shakespeare has told us, has no passions. That is his glory and his limitation. The earthly paradise is a beautiful place but nothing of serious importance can occur in it." Auden's remark helps us to see the creative dilemma as Huxley saw it. Huxley is a Prospero because he perceived that ". . . a poet cannot bring us any truth without introducing into his poetry the problematic, the painful, the disorderly, the ugly." And as a Prospero, he suffered willingly the fate of all such writers: ". . . Prospero is capable of graver errors than just being ridiculous; since he is trying to say something which is true, if he fails, the result can be worse than trivial. It can be false. . . ."[12] Huxley recognized

the danger that the materials he worked with would be judged by a stricter standard and would prove more mutable than those of the pure artist. Huxley lived, as an artist, in a state of painful tension between truth and beauty. He never rejected the claims of either of literature's twin deities. In terms of the metaphor from the essay on Mallarmé, one could say that Huxley deliberately chose to live in Famagusta out of a sense of moral duty as well as religious conviction, but he went every day to put his question about Paphos to the cab driver. Finally, Huxley showed himself to have shared the conviction of artists of the past by his belief that in some mysterious, ultimately unthinkable way the two cities, at least in great art (as in the mystic's consciousness or the eye of God), are one.

Huxley's Reputation and the Two-Career Theory

Aldous Huxley is a difficult writer for critics to deal with in much the same way that Byron is. The biographical element in the aesthetic equation keeps obtruding itself and usually ends by upsetting the logical process. Yet in the case of Huxley, unlike that of Byron, it is not a dominant personality that interferes with the aesthetic analysis. Huxley's personality, that of a kind, pleasant man with an apparently conventional private life, does not produce difficulty. Huxley's biography presents

problems because of the intellectual positions he adopted. Huxley must bear part of the blame for this; yet the chief villain would seem to be the cultural presuppositions of the critics themselves who react to Huxley more strongly than perhaps they themselves realize.

The literary career of Aldous Huxley is that of a man who entered the vacuum of talent created by the First World War and made a reputation for himself by writing the shocking, iconoclastic novels that seemed to embody the sense of difference felt by members of the post-war generation. Aldous Huxley's role in the England of the twenties was similar to that of Tennessee Williams in the America of the fifties. Sir Isaiah Berlin describes this Huxley as: "the earlier, 'cynical,' God-denying Huxley, the object of fear and disapproval to parents and schoolmasters, the wicked nihilist whose sincere and sweetly sentimental passages--especially about music--were swallowed whole, and with delight by those young readers who supposed themselves to be indulging in one of the most dangerous and exotic vices of those iconoclastic post-war times. He was one of the great culture heroes of our youth" (A.H., p. 145).

Yet Huxley lived on and did not continue to provide the same diet for his readers. His problem was complicated by the fact that he was a man who dealt in ideas at a time when the world was desperately looking for

answers. Thus the crucial biographical problem in connection with Aldous Huxley concerns the intellectual positions he took in the two decades between 1925 and 1945. It is in this context, half submerged in the memory, that one finds the conditions which color all discussion of his work. The later controversy over his advocacy of the use of the drug L.S.D. does not change the direction or thrust of the argument but merely lends it new force.

Critics speak of the early and the late Huxley, of the despairing sceptic of the early years and the otherworldly mystic of the later years. The period of transition is placed at various dates between 1926 and 1936 with the dramatic migration in 1937 from a war-fearful Europe to a still tranquil America marking the final blossoming of the second phase. This concept of the life of Aldous Huxley is an oversimplification, in large part a piece of journalistic shorthand; but because of the important influence it has had on Huxley's reputation, it is worthwhile examining this tradition of Huxley biography.

Time Magazine utilized the dichotomy in a recent book review when it stated that at his death Huxley "could have met with no stranger ghost . . . than his younger self." The article presents the contrast in black and white. "To his contemporaries in the 1920s, young Aldous Huxley had been a legend for his 'lack of charity.' He

was seen as 'a walking encyclopedia,' alive only from the neck up. . . . To the alienated of a latter-day generation, Huxley was all heart: pacifist, passionate pioneer of mind-blowing drugs, hippie blood brother in Oriental mysticism."[13] Journalese though this may be, Time's review has behind it the weight of opinions expressed by academic critics as well as Huxley's fellow writers.

G. S. Fraser, in his book The Modern Writer and His World, contrasts the author who in his early novels "displays very amusingly various types of intellectual pretension" with the writer who since Point Counter Point has "sought salvation in a mystical attitude."[14] Seeing value only in the early Huxley, Fraser does not bother to discuss work done after Brave New World. Similarly Frederick Karl and Marvin Magalaner in their book, A Reader's Guide to Great Twentieth Century English Novels, close their account of Huxley's career with Eyeless in Gaza, saying: "Through several additional novels it has become increasingly clear that Huxley's inability to develop characters and situations and his failure to dramatize his ideas in fictional terms have diminished his stature as a serious novelist . . . ."[15] Sean O'Faolain, in the first chapter of his valuable study of the modern novel, The Vanishing Hero, contrasts the "sad young" man of "great courage" who "looked coldly enough at life, and then had the courage to handle its unattractive, apparently

unmalleable material, to create, to give birth in days of famine," with the Huxley who, "retired to the desert and mysticism," resembled "a marooned pirate throwing out endless bottles of invective from his sandy shore."[16] William York Tindall, a more slashing critic, is entertaining on the subject of Huxley's change of position, viewing it, in his Forces in Modern British Literature, as an event of cultural significance though not one of literary import. Huxley is treated as a Twentieth Century Arthur Hugh Clough who has floundered into the bog of intellectual absurdity in search of spiritual certainties. Huxley, "an apparent cynic," when first encountered by D. H. Lawrence, manages to write a few good satires before the influence of Lawrence, and later of Gerald Heard, proves fatal to the artist in him.[17] Fraser, at least, notes that Huxley "did not become an anti-rationalist."[18] Tindall, intent on telling a good story, does not seem to have noticed.

The decline in Huxley's reputation since the thirties, a decline that both resulted from and gave support to the two-career theory, has political and social as well as purely literary significance and should be studied with reference to the mood of the time and the belief systems of those who have attacked his character and work most bitterly. Thus, on the one hand, Marxist critics, socialists, and those liberals who urged direct action against

fascism in the thirties criticized Huxley's advocacy of pacifism as a retreat from social responsibility, as a Chamberlain-like appeasement of the Axis powers, as a further evidence of the impotence of the upper-middle class and those intellectuals who served it. On the other hand, the adherents of rationalism were offended by his advocacy of mysticism, especially at a time when they felt that the attack on rationalism with its concomitant, the cult of the primitive, had brought Western civilization to its darkest hour.

Huxley was accused of a wide variety of intellectual sins. Prominent among them was the charge of a _failure of nerve_ in connection with his famous "conversion" to a religious outlook. It was felt that there must be some emotional failing in a man who having been, in William James's phrase "tough minded" became "tender." In England, the issue of intellectual nerve was linked to the bitterly resented physical defection to America. Harold Nicolson reports that at a party in 1940 he was asked to write a _Spectator_ article attacking Huxley, Auden, and Isherwood.[19] A little over a year later Nicolson had a conversation on the same subject with Aneurin Bevin:

> He says that we intellectuals are in a difficult position. Our tastes attract us to the past, our reason to the future. Hitherto we have been able to appease this conflict since our tastes were still able to find their outlets, whereas our reason could indulge in the picture of the shape of things to come. Now, however, the future is becoming very imminent and we are faced

> with the fact that our tastes can no longer be indulged. Gone are ease and income and travel and elegance. There is a tendency therefore for the weaker souls to escape into mysticism. Their reason tells them that the future is right, but it is agony for them to lose the past. This is what has happened to Aldous Huxley and Joad. I pray to God that it will not happen to me. "I don't think it will, Harold," says Aneurin, "your intellectual courage is great."[20]

In America, especially after the United States entered the war, Huxley also came under attack, perhaps all the more bitter because he was an intellectual outsider. In the March-April issue of Partisan Review for 1943, Richard Chase published an article, "The Huxley-Heard Paradise," in which Huxley's friendship with Gerald Heard was used to discredit him as a thinker.[21] Published in the issue following that in which Sidney Hook castigated various intellectuals for their "failure of nerve" (a phrase borrowed from Gilbert Murray's analysis of the state of mind in the classical world at the time of the founding of Christianity), its meaning was clear.[22]

In picturing Aldous Huxley as the slavish follower of Gerald Heard, the quack cultist, Chase was following the lead of William York Tindall, the Columbia University scholar-critic, whose article, "The Trouble with Aldous Huxley," had appeared the previous autumn in American Scholar.[23] But Tindall had fired a double blast. He had also contributed an essay to the book, The Asian Legacy and American Life, edited by Arthur E. Christy. Discussing modern transcendentalism, Tindall dealt with Mme. Blavatsky

and theosophy, a world view that influenced Yeats and Lawrence, before turning to Huxley and his "pseudo-Oriental system" which Tindall termed a "somewhat more respectable synthesis."[24] But by linking, in the introductory portion of his essay, irrationality, Emerson's Oversoul, Bergson's metaphysics, the music of Wagner (discussed in connection with Hitler's remark that this was his religion), and the Herrenvolk, Tindall was hinting, not too subtly, at an accusation that others were more explicit about.

If not actually a fascist, the critics muttered, Huxley was at least a fellow traveler. His praise of Pareto in the twenties was well known. Huxley's friendship with Drieu la Rochelle was also remembered. Drieu la Rochelle, a talented French author whom Huxley met on one of his first visits to Paris, was, in addition to being a student of oriental mysticism, a recognized fascist sympathizer and collaborateur. He was discussed in an article published in the Antioch Review (Spring 1942).[25] In the same issue that year, Edwin B. Burgum wrote: ". . . it is clear that Huxley is now advising . . . spiritual appeasement of fascism." Huxley's mysticism, Burgum stated:

> . . . permits him to continue a not altogether spiritual contact with the world through the writing of books. It does not obligate him to renounce physical comfort; only to take his attention alike from the miseries of the poor and his own prosperity. His books, indeed, become propaganda for the creation of disciples among the well-to-do by justifying in them

> a similar indifference to the sufferings of others. They thus leave the road free for the extended dominion of a fascism which is bound sooner or later to invade whatever temporary security the new doctrine may have afforded its adherents.[26]

In view of Huxley's condemnation of the Nazis in Beyond the Mexique Bay (1934) such charges seem unduly harsh. Calling the Nazi movement "a rebellion against Western civilization" Huxley further indicated his strong philosophic antagonism to the beliefs of this party by remarking: "Homogeneity is being forced on a people that was enjoying the blessings of variety. . . . The duty of all Germans is, in Hitler's own words, 'not to seek out objective truth in so far as it may be favourable to others, but uninterruptedly to serve one's own truth.'"[27] In Eyeless in Gaza (1936) Huxley presented sympathetically the portrait of a communist refugee from Nazi tyranny; and in After Many a Summer Dies the Swan (1939), the character most receptive to the wisdom of Propter is Peter Boone, a young American volunteer just back from fighting for the Republic in Spain.

The emotion in the attacks on Huxley suggests they were generated more by war-time politics and by the spectacle of an admired culture hero, a rationalist and sceptic, a principal heir of the nineteenth century agnostic tradition, apparently deserting the ranks of reason than by a careful reading of Huxley's works. It would seem that the adherents to the outlook represented by Hume in the

eighteenth century and Mill in the nineteenth, an intellectual position examined in detail in Franklin L. Baumer's book, Religion and the Rise of Scepticism,[28] felt a sense of outrage totally unlike that aroused by the virtually simultaneous "conversion" of W. H. Auden, a communist fellow traveler, who, strikingly enough, had also been greatly influenced by Gerald Heard. (Heard, it should be noted, attracted a large following of avant gard intellectuals during the thirties, including G. Lowes Dickinson, Roger Fry, and Brian Howard. Joseph Warren Beach describes Heard in The Making of the Auden Canon as a "speculative humanist philosopher.")[29]

Exactly what it was that Huxley had "converted" to seemed hardly to matter, though the unconventional and non-Western nature of his new faith served to make it all the more ridiculous and contemptible. Huxley seemed to be literally sitting at the feet of that stock figure of ridicule Rebecca West had once identified as the "Los Angeles Yogi."[30] One feels that a basic mistake on Huxley's part was to adhere to a low caste philosophy. To many intellectuals Huxley had gone native. But certainly the message being preached by Heard and others of the Vedanta circle was not one which would have much appeal in the early forties even to those who bothered to listen:

> Now most people do not believe that there is a reality "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," a reality quite different from that of common sense.

> The religious should however have known that that was so. Because they lost their vision, its authenticity had to be vouched for by the artists--not the clerics.
>
> If then there is such a state of being, not in a future life (though there it may be also) but here and now, then the mystic is the realist. He maintains that there is such a state, that anyone may experience it who chooses to undergo the arduous training and athleticism of spirit to gain that insight, and that it was to attain that state that man was created, or to use our vernacular, the end of evolution is not the creation of bigger and more complicated societies and more elaborate economic structures but the attainment of a higher and intenser form of consciousness, a consciousness as much above that of the average man today as that is above the animals.[31]

As Auden's case suggests, a conversion by a Marxist living in New York to a respectable, if reactionary, brand of Christianity was preferable.

Without regard to the facts, Huxley was decried as an anti-rationalist, a lost leader. His previously acclaimed intelligence was pronounded fake. In England, a critic of the Leavis circle questioned this aspect of Huxley's reputation.[32] In America, echoing this earlier attack in Scrutiny, Edmund Wilson wrote:

> It used to be fashionable to call him "intelligent," but he was never particularly intelligent. His habit of reading the Encyclopedia Britannica gives the quality of his appetite for facts and ideas; his interest in the great intellectual movements that were bringing most light in his own time was on exactly the same level as his interest in a twelfth-century heresy, a queer species of carnivorous plant, a special variety of Romanesque architecture or a Greek poet surviving in fragments. Freud, Lenin, Einstein, Joyce--he sometimes expressed about them, in his casual essays, opinions as obtuse and philistine as those of the ordinary Fleet Street journalist. The new paths that they opened, the new hopes that they woke, were not opened or awakened for Huxley.[33]

Huxley, the critics asserted, was a writer whose good work, such as it was, had been done, like Wordsworth's, in his youth. Huxley's later work could be most charitably overlooked, since it was marred beyond cure by the preaching of an anti-rationalist, dogmatic brand of pseudo-oriental mysticism.

Proof that the view of Huxley defined largely by New York-based critics in the late thirties and early forties was still alive in the sixties came with the publication of Huxley's last novel, Island. Reviewing the book in the Partisan Review, Frank Kermode concluded his remarks by observing: "I have never felt free to join those who profess an easy contempt for this writer; anybody who can dispose of his amount of information does us a favor by showing how little we use our heads. And if he is essentially philosophe rather than novelist, that makes his good novels remarkable as testimony to what can be done by intelligence and information in the absence of original talent."[34]

Five years after Huxley's death the critical position was restated in the pages of the Scientific American. Robert M. Adams, noted scholar and Joyce critic, published in the issue for October 1968 an article entitled, " T. H. Huxley and his Clan."[35] Adams' article is noteworthy for the vehemence with which it upholds the established position. Adams is willing to deny Huxley a role as an

artistic force even in the twenties. Speaking of the early novels (Crome Yellow, 1921; Anti Hay, 1923; Those Barren Leaves, 1925; and Point Counter Point, 1928), Adams asserts: "As imaginative achievements these novels seem never to have been taken with excessive seriousness." Adams feels that the "muscle-bound intellection" of Philip Quarles in Point Counter Point "mirrors dilemmas intimate to Huxley himself." The two-career theory is brought into play as Adams summarily dismisses Huxley's later work, including Brave New World: "Aldous Huxley was just 34 when Point Counter Point appeared. Although it was not his last novel, it was his last major effort in the form, and his last real attempt at a synthesis in the shape of fiction. He continued to write, and write brilliantly in a number of genres, but there is an inescapable sense of the scrappy and disparate about the last 35 years of his life." The cause of the decline is ascribed to his anti-rationalism: ". . . being a Huxley, that is a priest of the free intelligence, was not enough for him . . . ." "Huxley," says Adams, "thirsted for the anonymous dark of the subconscious . . . ." Finally, most damning of all, Huxley ". . . did not carry forward, he directly rejected his grandfather's hard-bitten rationalism."

Huxley's artistic sins of the early period are defined: "Clever, cool and meticulously informed about an

enormous number of specific details, he could bring together themes and perspectives of amazing diversity, but out of the collocation emerged little except disorder, despair, isolation, and a sense of the bizarre. Friends remember as characteristic of him a drawling, intense phrase: 'How extraordinary!' It is not bad as a response to the highest achievements of his prose fiction." Disorder and lack of wholeness also characterize the later work. The eclectic quality of Huxley's mind that made him a great conversationalist vitiated his efforts. These later books were "cluttered and incoherent." They must be viewed as "a collection of fossilized literary curiosities." Adams remarks that, "It was a special quality of T. H. Huxley to be avid after the meaning of a particular, insistent on knowing its relation to a schema; in his grandson Aldous the opposite quality was carried to almost parodic lengths."

The conclusion to Adams' essay is worth quoting in toto because of its suggestion that the emotional problems of Huxley's private life, if completely known, would provide the necessary clue to what Adams has asserted to be Huxley's failure as an artist. (This popular line of speculation is discussed in connection with the opinions of the critics examined in the following section of the present chapter.) Having begun his remarks on Aldous Huxley by stating that Aldous was "less of a success" than his brother Julian, Adams concludes by observing:

> We have had lately, in the biography of Lytton Strachey, a partial revelation of the dark and tragically twisting rivers flowing beneath the too civilized landscape of the Bloomsbury group. This is not to say, "Aha, the pious old frauds, now it comes out that they were really all monsters." It is to suggest that civilized, imaginative man often lives several different lives at once, and that a formal account of what happened to him in the public forum may be less than half of his real biography. Someday perhaps we shall have such a biography of the Huxleys, and if some of them emerge from it seeming a little less like Kewpie dolls and a little more like vampire bats, that fact may well heighten rather than diminish our sense of their accomplishment.

Remarking on Aldous Huxley specifically, Adams states: "Every dynasty is bound to come on some of its members sometimes as not simply a privilege but a burden."

To those who have read widely in Huxley's work the difficulties with the Partisan Review-Tindall-Adams approach are soon apparent. Few would wish, like Adams, to dismiss the entire body of Huxley's work, and the two-career theory does not provide an adequate frame for a serious discussion of Huxley's achievement as a novelist. The merits of the early decadent novels are neither so transcendent nor those of the later redeemed novels so slight as to permit of a division along chronological lines. One can expect with some confidence that a reappraisal of Huxley's work in the light of more generous standards of literary type will redress somewhat the black and white balance between the two periods of his career.

Indeed, the process has already begun. The decade of the sixties which saw the publication of Huxley's

Letters and two biographical works also witnessed the publication or republication of no less than seven book-length critical studies of Huxley's art and thought.[36] Three of these critics, Meckier, Bowering, and Watts, find considerable merit in some of the late works, particularly in Time Must Have a Stop, the book that Thomas Mann said would place Huxley in the front rank of contemporary novelists.[37] In various places Christopher Isherwood has recorded his admiration for After Many a Summer Dies the Swan.[38] Even that step-child of Huxley's production, Island, has found an able defender, Wayne Booth.

In an article published in the Yale Review, Wayne Booth uses Huxley's novel as the occasion for criticizing the narrow concept of the novel which has prevailed since the early decades of this century.[39] Booth notes: "Professor Leavis recently accused C. P. Snow of not having the slightest idea of what the novel is." Booth comments: ". . . I find myself envying Leavis his confidence." Turning to Huxley, he observes: "Island is 'late Huxley,' another amalgam of narrative and undisguised ideas; it will be easy to show, once more, that he hasn't written a true novel since Antic Hay--or has he, in fact, ever written one? And that takes care of Huxley." But does it? Booth feels that such a judgment is an evasion of the critical task. Island, in particular, represents a test of the adequacy of our definitions of genre: "Properly

placed within that other, non-Leavisonian 'great tradition'--works like Gulliver's Travels, Candide, Rasselas, Erewhon, using fictional devices to provoke thought--Island can command full attention and respect . . . ." What matters in this type of literary work is "the synthesis of ideas." Judged by Booth's criteria, Island is a success, if only a "qualified success." Booth concludes: "Perhaps somebody will someday give as much thought to the artistic problems raised by this nameless and tricky genre--the term Utopia conceals more than it clarifies--as has been given to the James-Leavis kind of thing. Until then, lacking for myself any clear standard of how to relate my notions of overall weakness with my experience of particular strengths, I can only report that this one carried me through to the end, arguing with Huxley all the way."

In summary, then, it is possible to say that there exist two schools of thought about Huxley: one still dominates critical opinion, the other is not in favour at court. It is waiting in the wings. At present with regard to Huxley's future reputation, it is certain only that, whatever the outcome of the debate over the literary values involved, a better understanding of Huxley's artistic aims and, consequently, of his artistic achievement, an understanding freed of the inherited controversy over the supposed content--political and religious--of his beliefs, will be a necessary preliminary to clear thinking on the subject.

Three Critics on Huxley and Art

If a new approach to Huxley's writing is to be obtained, then the critic must admit the possibility that there may exist in Huxley's work, other critics' views notwithstanding, an underlying set of mind, one which concerns itself not with particular attitudes toward individual issues but with general problems and provides a thread of continuity that links these attitudes together. The general, however, must be sought through an examination of the particular. In order to substantiate the position outlined above, a particular issue must be found which benefits from the new approach. It should show that much data has not been accounted for by the older theory, and that many facts have been distorted in the effort to make them fit the older theory--thus lending support to the new hypothesis. In Huxley's case, such an issue is art. By way of preliminary, a discussion of what critics have said about Aldous Huxley's concept of art and of his role as an artist will be helpful by serving to make evident the type of misconception which clouds discussion of Huxley's literary efforts. Chapters II and III will document the existence of continuous elements in Huxley's work and will bring the discussion to a point at which it is possible to ask how these continuous elements fit into a philosophical framework.

Critics adopting the two-career theory of Huxley's development find that young Huxley the artist contrasts neatly with old Huxley the sage and mystic, a dichotomy given apparent sanction by Huxley's own, after-the-fact statements. But it is always dangerous to accept unexamined an author's comments about his outlook during a previous period, and the critics who follow Huxley in this, often enlarging upon what he has written, tend to disregard or minimize evidence which when brought forward raises forcibly the question of Huxley's underlying set of mind, of the probable existence of ordering conceptions that, however modified, did remain essentially the same throughout Huxley's career. Three critics have written on Huxley's attitude toward art in a way that makes their comments pertinent here. In his article, "Aldous Huxley: Art and Mysticism,"[40] Charles I. Glicksberg presents the view that the artist in Huxley was killed by the mystic, a view adopted and further developed by John Atkins in his book Aldous Huxley.[41] A third critic, Charles M. Holmes, gives the theory a different twist in his article, "Aldous Huxley's Struggle with Art,"[42] by ostensibly abandoning the theory while remaining loyal to it in spirit.

Charles I. Glicksberg's article begins by setting forth the two-career theory. During the twenties Huxley was one of a number of writers, such as D. H. Lawrence, Hemingway, Joyce, and T. S. Eliot, who espoused a

" futilitarian philosophy," who "did not believe in the life of action and tended to separate art from morality." But Huxley, spurred on by "his essentially puritan conscience," felt the need to advance beyond this negative position: "Unfortunately, when Huxley came to the parting of the ways, the artist was swallowed up by the prophet and the saint . . . ."

Huxley's concern with man's final end, with the relationship of man to eternity, necessarily defeats his efforts as a writer to create art. "It is saddening to behold this spectacle of a novelist, highly gifted in some ways, who has gone astray." All this contrasts sharply with the young Huxley, "The prose poet celebrating the spiritual decay of modern society." Glicksberg praises this Huxley, saying: "If Huxley's novels immediately took hold and made themselves felt, it was because he did not shirk the obligation of the novelist to master his refractory material and achieve an austere integration of form."

Glicksberg bases his analysis of Huxley's career as a novelist on two premises. He assumes that Huxley's adoption of a religious point of view: (1) marked a sharp break with an earlier position; and (2) meant that he could no longer function as an artist. He quotes Huxley's "Minimum Working Hypothesis" from Time Must Have a Stop and follows it with the statement: "But there is also a Dharma which dictates that the beginning of righteousness is the end of art."

In view of his premises, it is highly significant that Glicksberg gives eloquent expression at several points in his article to a strong sense of continuity in Huxley's work. Thus Glicksberg admits the later novels have some merits. Of Time Must Have a Stop he writes: "Fortunately, Huxley is still possessed of sufficient creative resourcefulness and indubitable talent to make even the most abstract and barren theme seem fruitful and convincing . . . ." Yet he feels the double purpose he sees at work destroys their artistic integrity: "Each of his novels after Eyeless in Gaza is both a work of art and a spiritual catharsis, a creative expression and a mystical experience." Glicksberg concludes his article by saying, "Since he is striving so single-mindedly to reach the Nirvana of non-attachment, there is no reason on earth why he should devote his energy to the art of fiction."

In his book, Aldous Huxley, John Atkins presents at even greater length the position set forth by Glicksberg. In Chapter Five, "Art--and Then Nature," and the Preface to the new edition, Atkins shows Huxley beginning as an aesthete only to end as a disillusioned sage with little use for art. The use of literary models rather than direct observation of nature, the reliance on the classics and classical mythology, the interest in the French symbolist poets such as Mallarmé whose poem, "L'Apres-Midi d'un Faune," Huxley translated, all prove

that the Huxley of the early twenties "is already a full fledged aesthete." Yet Atkins mentions in another chapter that, "Huxley's literary tastes at this time were fully in accord with his scientific leanings. He most of all appreciated the rational, the pragmatic, the common-sensical, the worldly and earthly. High flights of fancy, ecstasy, decoration, mannerism and verbosity were not to his liking."

Admissions such as these, somewhat damaging to the image of Huxley as a "full fledged aesthete," are followed by more documentation of the same anti-aesthetic strain in Huxley's early work. Atkins reluctantly concedes that "Quite early Huxley recognized the dangers of extreme aestheticism." Thus, summing up his impression of the early poetry, Atkins says that, as an aesthete, "Huxley was not writing with passion; he was doing his best to make poetry out of a formula." The reader concludes that if Huxley was ever the "full fledged aesthete" Atkins believes him to have been, it must have been at some time prior to the beginning of his career as a published writer. Yet Atkins maintains his exposition of the two-career theory despite the fact that the period of transition is now so extended that it becomes virtually worthless as an aid to critical judgment. (Thus Atkins himself points out that the theme treated fictionally in the story of 1916, "Eupompus Gave Splendor to Art by Numbers," is treated abstractly in an essay of the fifties.)

The fact of a crisis in Huxley's development is dwelt upon. Jumping back and forth in time between 1919 and 1936, Atkins cites without any apparent order derogatory comments about intellectual poseurs and overly literary descriptions of nature. Atkins affirms, "It was a crisis of a kind, and it was necessary to take some kind of action. But at this stage Huxley was in the position of knowing what he ought to do but being unable to do it . . . he should have enjoyed Nature as Nature, been content with flower and landscape for their own sakes." However, Huxley fell short of this: "In his outlook on the world every external object and every internal feeling was a reflection of an ideal. Later he managed to reverse the relationship, but he could not do it in one step . . . ." Huxley's "crisis" of the thirties, one concludes from this, was merely a deepening of Huxley's life-long pragmatic orientation and general distrust of abstractions. It must be viewed, on the evidence provided by Atkins, as extending from the teens onward. As Atkins points out, "By another route Huxley was discovering the need to look at the world with unprejudiced eyes, only he was doing it much earlier than he is usually given credit for." Yet Atkins maintains that the thirties marked a "new state of disillusion with Art and alienation from Nature" while reporting, honestly enough, that "There is little reflection of what was going on in the work of the early thirties."

In the Preface added to the 1967 edition of his book, Atkins took up again the theme of Huxley's "condemnation of all art"--this time with reference to Huxley's last book, Island. Huxley's achievement was not artistic but moral:

> In the failure of Island Huxley realized, paradoxically, his greatness as a man. No modern author had shown a more intuitive grasp of artistic truth . . . . And yet, at the end of his life, he announced that man must be prepared to give up this faculty, and the marvellous heritage that it had created, or at best relegate it to an inferior position such as that now enjoyed by basketwork or embroidery. Through Ends and Means and The Perennial Philosophy and his readings of Eastern mystics and the Hindu Gita he slowly yet remorselessly came to this, for him, appalling conclusion: that the life of great art was inimical to the life of goodness.

At another point Atkins writes, "It must have been the greatest sacrifice of Huxley's life to decide that the good life cannot produce great art."

Atkins finds that the nature of Huxley's ideal society precludes the creation of great art. Pala, like the society of Brave New World in this respect, has a monistic social order. "It is the monistic nature of society that destroys the art." The reason for this lies in the fact that "Art requires conflict--one branch of it, drama, is named conflict--and neither Brave New World nor Pala encourage conflict." Atkins feels that an entry in Old Raja's Notes on What's What is definitive: "Dualism . . . Without it there can hardly be good literature. With it, there most certainly can be no good life." Thus

the goal Huxley seeks can be achieved only at the expense of the genius that brought him his fame because, says Atkins, "The spirit of Pala is too good to allow free play for the passions that art thrives on."

An article of equal interest though for different reasons is Charles M. Holmes's essay, "Aldous Huxley's Struggle with Art." Representing a continuation of the attack on Huxley's artistry, it asserts that Huxley failed as an artist because he was never sincere in his dedication to art, was never a man who believed in the value of art. This article by Holmes makes it necessary to ask not only what set of conditions would lead a critic to take such a position (a question whose answer has been partially suggested above), but also how such a view can be maintained in the face of the dichotomy of artist and mystic, the theory of the split between the early and later years, put forward by Glicksberg and others without denying it, and without, implicitly at least, urging the existence of continuous elements in Huxley's position.

Holmes begins his article by talking of "Huxley's life-long questioning of the very value of art . . . . He maintains that Huxley ". . . claimed explicitly that art is unimportant." This last statement is unsupported by a citation from Huxley's writings but may be a conclusion based on a later discussion of opinions expressed by Francis Chelifer, the poet in Those Barren Leaves. Most

important for our purposes here, however, is Holmes' use of the words "life-long." Unlike Glicksberg and Atkins, Holmes apparently feels that Huxley's attitude towart Art did not change greatly over the years. Though he prefers the early work to the later novels, this sense of a continuity in Huxley's effort strikes a new note and marks the first break with two-career theory of the forties and fifties. It should not be overlooked, however, that Glicksberg, too, noted in passing that, "a man is all of a piece," and both he and Atkins pointed out parallels between the ideas of the early and late Huxley. Yet Holmes, determined though he is to tie Huxley's artistic shortcomings to a negative view of Art, is the only one of the three critics to deny the split and assert the existence of a unified outlook.

Holmes divides his article into three parts. The first section attempts to substantiate his original charge while the second and third parts are a further elaboration of Glicksberg's analysis of Huxley's psychology, discussed below, and concern the psychological reasons for Huxley's supposed attitude toward art. Since the second and third parts assume the validity of the two-career hypothesis while asserting that Huxley's attitude toward Art is somehow an exception to the rule, they weaken Holmes's case. Nevertheless, because they are linked to the matter at hand, they will be discussed at a later point along with

the relevant parts of Glicksberg's essay. First, however, it is worth examining the examples adduced in part one as support for Holmes's view that Huxley never valued art highly.

Holmes comments on six novels and one book length essay, Vulgarity in Literature. Three samples of his observations must suffice. Antic Hay provides Holmes with his chronological starting point. In it he detects Huxley's "ambivalent attitude . . . in his ironic treatment of several artists and their critics." Boldero's mispronunciation of Picasso's name is taken to mean that for Huxley, apparently, "one name for an artist is as good as any other." The satire of the would-be artist, Lypiatt, and the supercilious critic, Mercaptain, is taken as evidence of Huxley's "struggle with art." Vulgarity in Literature, published in 1930, is considered by Holmes to be "a startling admission, and example, of this creative ambivalence." When Huxley, in this essay, proclaims himself a romantic and refuses a French professor's "Neo-Classical" label, Holmes relates this not to a consideration of closed versus open form in literature as he properly should have done but rather to his preoccupation with what he asserts is Huxley's hatred of art. Because Huxley, writing at a time when the influence of D. H. Lawrence was greatest, wants a form capable of assimilating the spontaneous and extraneous, Holmes feels that Huxley

has given full rein to a desire for the "artistically irrelevant." By turning his back on a purist like Flaubert, Huxley has rejected all artistic control. From Huxley's 1955 novel, The Genius and the Goddess, Holmes selects the opening comments of John Rivers. The view enunciated by Rivers, that art because it selects from and orders reality is less than reality, becomes, in Holmes' rephrasing, "an acceptance of fiction for successfully hiding the truth."

Holmes essay is a critical judgment erected on a series of conjectures. He first notes that Huxley is currently in bad odor with the critics. He then assumes that the quality of Huxley's writing is responsible. He further hypothesizes that Huxley's aesthetic is responsible for the quality of the work he produces, and he infers that Huxley's aesthetic is the product of his psychology. He therefore proceeds to seek in the private life of the author the cause of a state of affairs which has many causes. In turning to Huxley's character for an answer to the decline of Huxley's reputation, Holmes is following Glicksberg's example.

Glicksberg asserts that Huxley was wracked by internal conflicts "between sense and sensibility, intellect and instinct, reason and intuition." This positive state of creative tension was maintained during the twenties, according to Glicksberg, by the belief in the "idea of

futility," a belief shared by Lawrence, Hemingway, Joyce, and Eliot, writers who, however, exempted art from the list of futile endeavors. (It is not clear whether Glicksberg is asserting that Huxley, like the others, thought art alone had meaning--though whether all the other writers did feel this way is debatable--or whether he is merely saying that Huxley believed in the futility of life.) Glicksberg holds that Huxley matured, progressing beyond this shallow view of life. But in the process of achieving psychic integration, Huxley found himself no longer interested in art. Healed of his wound, Philoctetes lost his bow, and the sick artist died that the healthy man might live. Fulfilled by a religious view of life, Huxley became a paopagandist and ceased to be a novelist.

Representing a general view of artistic creativity, and coinciding with what was felt to be a turning away from fiction on Huxley's part, Glicksberg's thesis has never been challenged directly. It represents a view of creativity apparently shared by many artists. Tennessee Williams is said to have given up psychoanalysis because he feared that it would destroy the source of his creativity by healing him of his emotional conflicts. Yet there is much that remains puzzling about Huxley's work if he is seen as a classic example of neurosis and artistic genius. Huxley's productivity remained constant and high, while various critics have praised highly books written after

the middle thirties. And if Dr. Johnson's criteria still carry weight, it is worth noting that Huxley never lost his popularity with the common reader.

Holmes adopts Glicksberg's technique of analyzing Huxley's psychological make-up in parts two and three of his article. Section two begins: "Huxley's ambivalent attitude about the very value of art is only one symptom of severe, protracted inner conflict. It is one part of a fictional 'syndrome,' which appears in almost every novel . . . ." Holmes differs from Glicksberg in two important ways. He sees no permanent resolution of the conflict during the thirties, and he sees no aesthetic value in the tension it produced. On the first point he observes: "Huxley's attitude toward the external world has, probably, greatly changed since the early years of Limbo, Crome Yellow, and Antic Hay. The inner man, however, from the evidence of his fiction, has only recently, if at all, been freed from mental and spiritual turmoil." On the second he states: "Although every writer, like every person, experiences inner conflict, he must transcend it, or transform it, if he is to produce effective work."

Holmes describes the conflict. Some of its characteristics are, "dissatisfaction, discomfort, extreme obsession, or pain." It appears in the novels as "a concern about excessive shyness or detachment; an obsession

with sex and the problems it can create; a resultant yearning for some kind of ascetic escape; a sense of guilt about intellectual over-indulgence; and a persistent ambivalence about the value of art." The conflict affects the quality of Huxley's art. "The emotional excesses, the so-called hatred of humanity, the defects of structure, the inconsistencies of tone--qualities too easily found in Huxley's novels--are not simply the results of bad taste or faulty technique. They are evidence of a man at the mercy of inner conflict, unable or unwilling to transform it into art."

Though Holmes sees no value for the artist in the conflict, he is conventional enough in preferring the early to the later work. Crome Yellow and Brave New World are Huxley's two successes. "In Crome Yellow (1921), for example, all the themes which evidence such strain in later work have been shaped into a perfectly wrought, urbane light comic novel." "In Brave New World (1932), however, conflict is transformed into a carefully polished work . . . . By objectifying earlier symptoms . . . Huxley produced in Brave New World an arresting, irritating book, the product of sudden faith in a critical and detached but always conscious art." The influence of the two-career theory lingers in Holmes statement that, "Since Brave New World, however, Huxley has not written a single aesthetically pleasing novel." Eyeless in Gaza is read as a

resolution of "the old psychic symptoms." It is "a pledge of allegiance to active support of Sheppard's pacifism" and, interestingly enough, "a declaration of faith in a new artistic ideal." (It is not clear whether this new faith is the same faith mentioned in connection with Brave New World or is yet another variety.) The resolution of the conflict is embodied in Anthony Beavis. "Yet the Anthony who finally accepts himself, the universe, and his work, and is convinced he must be able to love the rest of humanity, is apparently the embodiment of a fragil state of Huxley's mind." The resolution of the conflict does not, it seems, produce good art! This novel, like Point Counter Point, is "an intricate, stylized transformation of inner conflict." And this is not enough. Likewise The Genius and the Goddess, "though masking a man who seems to have calmed his inner conflict," is not a good novel. Yet it is the conflict in full force which accounts for the badness of After Many a Summer Dies the Swan, "the bitter, tortured, diatribe on mankind," and Ape and Essence, an unfortunate book with its "emphasis on lust and its resolution in romance."

Holmes, it would seem, is uncertain as to the way in which Huxley's personal concerns interacted with his creative powers; and his thesis that the cause is to be found in Huxley's emotional life, specifically in his attitude toward art, is undermined by his own marshalling

of evidence. The proper conclusion would seem to be that Huxley sometimes used these emotional materials successfully and sometimes didn't. "Huxley's production . . . is . . . a record of failure mixed with success." Perhaps Holmes chief contribution to the on-going discussion of Huxley's work is his statement that ". . . although on aesthetic grounds the novels must be attacked, they are for this reason significant masks of inner struggle, images of a mind trying to understand itself and seeking a stable external truth." The continuity of Huxley's artistic effort may be capable of a more precise formulation, but certainly the search, through art, for "a stable external truth" is an aspect of it. Huxley's novels, like all fiction, all art, can be viewed in one sense as "images of a mind trying to understand itself."

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

[1]W. H. Auden, The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays (New York, 1962), pp. 337-338.

[2]Aldous Huxley, The Collected Essays (New York, 1958), p. 133. Hereafter cited as C.E. Throughout the essay abbreviations will be used for frequently cited works after the original citation. Such abbreviated citations will be in the text when clear and convenient.

[3]Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (New York, 1946), p. viii. Hereafter cited as Brave.

[4]Edward R. Murrow, ed., This I Believe (New York, 1952), p. 82.

[5]William Irvine, Apes, Angels, and Victorians (New York, 1955), pp. 110-111.

[6]Ronald W. Clark, The Huxleys (New York, 1968), p. 234.

[7]Aldous Huxley, The Perennial Philosophy (New York, 1945), pp. 303-306. Hereafter cited as P.P. Mysticism Sacred and Profane (New York, 1961) by R. C. Zaehner contains in the Introduction a discussion of the standard authorities.

[8]Clark, p. 234.

[9]Aldous Huxley, Letters of Aldous Huxley, ed. Grover Smith (London, 1969). Hereafter cited as L.

[10]Gerald Heard, "The Poignant Prophet," KR, XXVII (Winter 1965), p. 55.

[11]Stephen Spender in Aldous Huxley 1894-1963, A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley (New York, 1965), p. 19. Hereafter cited as A.H.

[12]Auden, pp. 340, 338, 341.

[13]"Evolution of a Cynic," Time, July 19, 1968, p. 72.

[14]G. S. Fraser, The Modern Writer and his World, Rev. Ed. (Baltimore, 1964), pp. 119-120.

[15]Frederick R. Karl and Marvin Magalaner, A Reader's Guide to Great Twentieth-Century English Novels (New York, 1959), p. 284.

[16]Sean O'Faolain, The Vanishing Hero: Studies in Novelists of the Twenties (London, 1956), pp. 28-29.

[17]William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature 1885-1956 (New York, 1956), pp. 172-175.

[18]Fraser, p. 120.

[19]Harold Nicolson, The Diary and Letters of Harold Nicolson, ed. Nigel Nicolson (New York, 1967), II: The War Years, p. 65.

[20]Nicolson, II, pp. 192-193.

[21]Richard Chase, "The Huxley-Heard Paradise," PR, X (March-April, 1943), pp. 143-158.

[22]Sidney Hook, "The New Failure of Nerve," PR, X (January-February, 1943), pp. 2-23.

[23]William York Tindall, "The Trouble With Aldous Huxley," Am Scholar, XI (Autumn 1942), pp. 452-456.

[24]William York Tindall, "Transcendentalism in Contemporary Literature," in Arthus E. Christy, ed., The Asian Legacy and American Life (New York, 1945), p. 177.

[25]Jacques Lefranc, "French Literature Under the Nazi Heel," AR, II (Spring 1942), p. 141. Mr. Lefranc writes: La Nouvelle Revue Francaise was unexcelled before the war by any monthly anywhere. It is still published in Paris. The Germans apparently have no intention of molesting the literary range of the magazine so long as it remains strictly literary. It was impossible for Jean Paulhan, its distinguished editor, to oblige. Both he and André Gide resigned. Drieu la Rochelle runs it now. For those who have observed his position previous to the glorious era of Abetz, Weber, Sieburg and Company, the behavior of the new editor holds no surprises.

[26]Edwin B. Burgum, "Aldous Huxley and His Dying Swan," AR, II (Spring, 1942), p. 63.

[27]Aldous Huxley, Beyond the Mexique Bay, A Traveller's Journal (London, 1950), pp. 179-180.

[28]Franklin L. Baumer, Religion and the Rise of Scepticism (New York, 1960). Baumer's book which surveys the outlook of the last two centuries concludes with a discussion of Huxley and other writers considered to be typical of the present day conflict between the sceptical and the religious outlook.

[29]Joseph Warren Beach, The Making of the Auden Canon (Minneapolis, 1957), p. 118.

[30]Rebecca West, "Uncle Bennett," in The Strange Necessity (New York, 1926), p. 219.

[31]Gerald Heard, "Is Mysticism Escapism," in Vedanta for the Western World, ed. Christopher Isherwood (New York, 1945), p. 31.

[32]"Mr. Aldous Huxley," (anon. rev.), Scrutiny, V (September 1936), pp. 179-183.

[33]Edmund Wilson, "Aldous Huxley in the World Beyond Time," in Classics and Commercials (New York, 1950), pp. 211-212.

[34]Frank Kermode, "Fiction Chronicle," PR, XXIX (Summer 1962), pp. 472-473.

[35]Robert M. Adams, "T. H. Huxley and his Clan," Sci Am, CCIXX (October 1968), pp. 135-139, passim.

[36]The two biographical works of Huxley are Ronald W. Clark's The Huxleys cited above and Laura Archera Huxley's This Timeless Moment: A Personal View of Aldous Huxley (New York, 1968). Sir Julian Huxley is responsible for two works valuable to students of Aldous Huxley's biography: Aldous Huxley 1894-1963, A Memorial Volume cited above and his own autobiography, Memories. (This last work appeared after this study was completed, and I have not had an opportunity to examine it or to secure complete bibliographical information concerning its date and place of publication.) The novelist Sybil Bedford is reported by Sir Julian Huxley (in private correspondence to the author) to be at work on a full length biography. The critical works are in two groups. The republished books include: John Atkins, Aldous Huxley (New York, 1967); and Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley (New York, 1964). The new works are: Peter Bowering, Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels (London, 1968); Sirsirkumar Ghose, Aldous Huxley: A Cynical Salvationist (London, 1962); D.V. Jog, Aldous Huxley: The Novelist (Bombay, N.D.); Jerome Meckier, Aldous Huxley: Satire and Structure (London, 1969); Harold H. Watts, Aldous Huxley

(New York, 1969). Meckier's admirable study of the novels lends support to the general positions taken up in this study. It came to my attention only after the completion of my essay. Nevertheless, I have tried to take account of Meckier's work through footnote references. Meckier does not deal with evolution specifically and confines his comments to the fiction. His treatment, however, balances the rather narrower aim of this essay.

[37]Thomas Mann, The Story of a Novel: The Genesis of Doctor Faustus, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1961), p. 96.

[38]Christopher Isherwood, Exhumations: Stories, Articles, Verses (New York, 1966), p. 161. See Isherwood, A Single Man (New York, 1964), pp. 62-75. See also A.H., p. 154.

[39]Wayne C. Booth, "Yes, But Are They Really Novels?," YR, LI (June 1962), pp. 630-632, passim.

[40]Charles I. Glicksberg, "Aldous Huxley: Art and Mysticism," PrS, XXVII (Winter, 1953), pp. 344-353, passim.

[41]John Atkins, Aldous Huxley: A Literary Study, 2nd ed. (New York, 1967), pp. 55-63, 20-21, xxxi-xxxv, et passim.

[42]Charles M. Holmes, "Aldous Huxley's Struggle With Art," WHR, XV (Spring, 1961), pp. 149-156, passim.

CHAPTER II

BEFORE CONVERSION: HUXLEY AND AESTHETICISM

The preceding chapter has attempted to show the tangle of opinions with which the critic of Huxley's writings is confronted. If the foregoing pages have any value, it is to show how difficult the task of interpreting correctly the development of Huxley's outlook can be. The differences of the critics are evidence that theirs is not a wholly satisfactory accounting and gives license, or at least courage, to those wanting to attempt a different approach. But before attempting such an approach, it would be well to prepare the ground by examining Huxley's relationship with aestheticism and religion.

Several questions emerge from the theorizing of the critics. This chapter and the next will deal with these by attacking the images of Huxley put forward by the different critics, examining their limits by a review of Huxley's life, thought, and published views. This chapter will examine Atkins' view of young Huxley as the full-fledged aesthete through an examination of family background and relations with aesthetic circles. It will

also take up Holmes's description of Huxley as the artist who doubted the value of art. Chapter III will concentrate on Glicksberg's charge that Huxley became the hair-shirted prophet of renunciation. The final chapter will draw on material presented earlier and, assuming the ground to have been sufficiently cleared, will discuss the true Huxley aesthetic under the heading, evolution as metaphor.

We have seen that Glicksberg and Atkins would like to view at least the young Huxley as a Bloomsbury aesthete, a pure artist. Huxley described himself, in a 1946 preface to Brave New World, as having been at that time a Pyrrhonic aesthete. Similarly in 1945 he wrote a correspondent, Jean E. Hare, that ". . . it was through the aesthetic that I came to the spiritual--having begun by rejecting the spiritual in favour of the aesthetic and by identifying it with the aesthetic, making the part include the whole" (L, p.538). Holmes, of course, rejects this view of Huxley. To what extent was Huxley a legitimate child of the yellow nineties? What were the views of the young Huxley regarding literature and art?

Fortunately, it is possible to give answers to questions like these because Huxley, working as a reviewer for Middleton Murry, set down his views on art and literature at length in the columns of the Athenaeum in 1919 and 1920. When these reviews are linked with thoughts expressed in some of the early essays published elsehwere,

we have a fairly complete picture of his views on these subjects during the years immediately preceding and following the appearance of Crome Yellow, his first published novel. One result of surveying this material is the conclusion that the view of Glicksberg and Atkins is an outgrowth of Huxley's actions and literary friendships rather than his writings. There is the young Huxley of legend and the young Huxley of the printed word. In order to substantiate this assertion, however, it will be necessary to review Huxley's family background and intellectual heritage as well as his early life as a young poet and man-about-town before turning to the record of his published views.

Huxley's Family Background

By reason of being born into the British, upper-middle class intelligensia, Huxley was an heir to the Romantics in much the same way that Arnold was, the classical Greek tradition being filtered through a Teutonic mist. His was the Public School, Victorian, Pre-Raphaelite romanticism of Ruskin, Morris, and Meredith, the dense, somewhat Germanic, self-consciously healthy romanticism that was cherished by many English intellectuals until the First World War. Shot through with gleams of the Sublime and Nature Worship, it urged people, arrayed in knickerbockers, open shirts, and rucksacks, into the open, into

the out-of-doors and onto mountain peaks. It appreciated simple idyls with innocent village Gretchens and made pilgrimages to Bayreuth to applaud Wagner's turgid music-dramas. It was robust, earnest, and soulful. Theodore Roosevelt was to speak of it as the strenuous life.

Conservative in matters of morality, the thoughtful members of this generation were unconventional in other respects. Aldous Huxley has contrasted two strains in the intellectual life of the period in his short story, "The Claxtons." The one, represented by the girl, Martha Postgate, is a quest for spirituality and involves discovering "William Morris and Mrs. Besant . . . Tolstoy and Rodin and Folk Dancing and Lao-Tzse." Martha's sister, Judith, also drawn to "Art and Higher Thought" discovers "French literature . . . Manet and Daumier . . . Matisse and Cézanne." Contrasting with the two girls and their pursuit of spirituality and art is Herbert Claxton, the man Martha marries, whose tradition is "socialism" and "anti-clericalism."[1] Some of these interests can be seen in the lives of Aldous Huxley's two impressive aunts, Mrs. Humphrey Ward and Mrs. Ethel Collier. Mrs. Ward, niece of Matthew Arnold, novelist, worker for social causes, and student of religion, interested herself in the Catholic Modernism of Father George Tyrrell and the mysticism of Krishnamourti.[2] Mrs. Collier, daughter of T. H. Huxley, an artist and the wife of an artist, held

rationalist-humanist views and once remarked to a girl marrying into the family: "You are marrying into one of the great atheist families . . . I know you are an atheist now; but will you be able to keep it up until you die?"[3]

The fact that Aldous Huxley satirized this way of life need not be taken as a contradiction since it was his own family that supplied him with details, and since, as his later development showed, his emancipation was less complete than usually supposed. Indeed, much that he satirized as a young man came to seem sensible to him as he grew older. His attitude to mountain climbing is instructive in this regard. A depreciatory tone characterizes the opening of an essay written when he was twenty: "Many there are who write the glory of mountains--mountains of youth, health, wealth, happiness, mountains of grandeur, mountains of truth, no doubt; yet who remains but I, a voice crying in the wilderness, a blind stay-at-home mole, to proclaim the glory of the staircase?"[4] Almost half a century later in his last novel, Island, Huxley has dropped his gently mocking tone. He proposes mountain climbing as one of the two best ways for young people to get into direct contact with reality. It is: "An ordeal . . . which is the first stage of their initiation out of childhood into adolescence. An ordeal that helps them to understand the world they'll have to live in, helps them to realize the omnipresence of death, the essential

precariousness of all existence."[5] The rebels of yesterday often seem closer to their fathers than their sons when viewed in the long perspective of time.

It is possible to see in Huxley's attitudes the retention of a basic set of mind. Several intellectual influences from his family background can be noted: nineteenth century romanticism with its Faustian Streben nach dem Unendlichen; Hegelian dialecticism; organicism with its concept of the necessary wholeness of things; evolu=tionism, providing both a rationale for avoiding specialization and a preference for the complex over the simple; Matthew Arnold's ideal of self-realization; and finally, the heroic image of the Promethian truth seeker, the secular, Protestant, intellectual iconoclast, impressed on Huxley by the legend of his grandfather.

There are few elements in Aldous Huxley's writings of those of his brother which cannot be related to the intellectual controversies of the late nineteenth century. One need not read far in such works as Gertrude Himmelfarb's Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution, William Irvine's Apes, Angels, and Victorians, Noel Annan's Leslie Stephen, A. O. J. Cockshut's The Unbelievers, or Philip P. Wiener's Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism to see that many ideas that energized Huxley's thought in the twenties were present, at least partially, in the nineteenth century. Similarly, theories about growth and development based on evolution,

such as that of Teilhard de Chardin, which seem modern and enjoy popularity among intellectuals now, do so because the public has a short memory. Ernst Benz, in his book, Evolution and Christian Hope, devotes a chapter to the forgotten story of the late Victorian Protestant theologians in England and America who did so much to shape the world of ideas in which Aldous Huxley grew up.

Julian B. Kaye's Bernard Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Tradition shows how Shaw carried over into the first part of this century much of the work of Victorian thinkers. The Huxley brothers, in their own way, are part of this process. Julian Huxley, as a biologist, has dealt most directly with the relationship of man and culture to the concept of evolution. Noel Annan notes: "Stephen, Spencer, Sorley and T. H. Huxley have bred successors in A. G. Keller, C. J. Waddington, and Julian Huxley . . . . ."[6] In Julian Huxley's Romanes Lecture at Oxford which was published under one cover with a reprint of his grandfather's famous Romanes Lecture, one sees public acknowledgment of his role as exponent of this tradition.[7] And if one reads the analysis of the thought of Julian Huxley by the English philosopher, C. D. Broad, an analysis which links Julian Huxley's beliefs at several points to the Victorians, parallels with the work of Aldous Huxley become immediately apparent.[8]

Basic to Aldous Huxley's intellectual heritage was a faith in the value of growth, especially mental growth, the growth of consciousness. At its core is an inclusive rather than an exclusive attitude. Integrated growth, the enlargement of possibilities, the abandonment of immature postures, what Julian Huxley describes as "the bed-rock questions of biology--the old problems of ordered growth and purposeful working,"[9] these lend Huxley's thought its expansionist quality, a quality that might be best summed up, perhaps, by the word developmentalism.

Even Huxley's life had an expansionist quality. It is possible to view the total thrust of Huxley's career, whether consciously so in all respects or not, as one of emancipation from limitations. Like Joyce he broke with family, country, and church. By progressive steps he removed himself to ever greater distances from the tight world of upper-middle class England. He challenged himself to meet on their own terms the societies of Italy, France, and the United States. Huxley's life, which included the early death of a much loved mother, the suicide of a much loved brother, his own near blindness, and a family role as fulfiller of the dreams of a frustrated but ambitious father,[10] suggests reasons why this concept should have had deep emotional significance for him. But the theme of transcending limitations has a positive as well as a negative aspect, a general as well as a personal

significance. The public, intellectual history of his family and society discussed above suggests reasons why this theme assumed the prominence it did in his writing. Huxley had made it part of his world view. Though Huxley's incessant harping on the failings and shortcomings of practically everyone and everything caused him to be labeled a satirist, it would seem proper to observe that the satire sprang as much from intellectual conviction as from Huxley's private emotional needs.

Huxley's youth was the period of the Georgian poets as well as that of Shaw, Galsworthy, and H. G. Wells, the period of cautious, insular, intellectual retrenchment, of watered-down rural wholesomeness spoken of by one critic as twenty years of "beer and Sussex."[11] The zest and earnestness with which Huxley rebelled against this tradition can be best understood if it is viewed not merely in terms of the generation gap, family difficulties (Huxley seems never to have gotten on well with his father),[12] or the Sitwellian revival of decadence with its desire to épatant les bourgeois, but also in terms of an expansionist desire to reach out toward whatever was remote from himself, to familiarize himself with the unknown. When Huxley agreed with Victoria Ocampo that the key to the character of their mutual friend, Drieu la Rochelle, was "a tendency to be strongly attracted by things or ideas that were unlike him" (A.H., p. 81) and labeled this "bovarysm," he was identifying an aspect of his own character.

Perhaps the principal motif in Huxley's criticisms of other authors and artists which relates to his family background was the view that in some respect they were limited. These writers, in William James's phrase, had been guilty of "a premature closing of . . . accounts with reality."[13] If one surveys the body of Huxley's essays over the years, the conclusion is inescapable that the enemy to be attacked is complacency, intellectual sloth, all the things that the metaphor of inclosure (note the use of the word cosy)[14] signifies in Huxley's writing. One must be ready to attack one's cherished notions, to pick up one's roots and move on. There can be no stopping place in this world of time and illusion.

Though Aldous Huxley, as a satirist, is often discussed in connection with the Augustan writers of Queen Anne's day, writers that he, like Lytton Strachey and the aesthetes, did so much to popularize, his debt to the great nineteenth century writers who viewed life as a ceaseless quest is great. This debt is as great or greater than the more publicized debt owed to eighteenth or twentieth century authors. Fully as important as his debt to Swift or André Gide is his debt to Wordsworth, Browning, and Shelley. One can see Huxley's intention as a satirist, his positive conception of satire as a necessary prelude to further growth, clearly stated in the conclusion to his essay on Ben Jonson:

> A little ruthless laughter clears the air as nothing else can do; it is good for us, every now and then, to see our ideals laughed at, our conception of nobility caricatured; it is good for solemnity's nose to be tweaked, it is good for human pomposity to be made to look mean and ridiculous. It should be the great social function--as Marinetti has pointed out--of the music halls, to provide this cruel and unsparing laughter, to make a buffoonery of all the solemnly accepted grandeurs and nobilities. A good dose of this mockery, administered twice a year at the equinoxes, should purge our minds of much waste matter, make nimble our spirits and brighten the eye to look more clearly and truthfully on the world about us.[15]

Huxley was thoroughly romantic in his fascination with the little known, the obscure, the repugnant, the unorthodox. All must be included in if wholeness were to be achieved. To admit that something lay outside one's purview was a condemnation of one's position--not of the thing excluded. One must always dare to do the forbidden. That was the heroic stance of a T. H. Huxley abstracted from its special context and used to justify quite different results.

Aldous Huxley, by a return to religion, would seem to have set himself apart from the family heritage of Victorian agnosticism, from those thinkers discussed by Baumer in Religion and the Rise of Scepticism.[16] Yet the distance separating the two positions may be less great than it first seems. Huxley's God, described in such terms as ultimate reality, ground of being, and The Nature of Things, seems fairly vacuous and remote.[17] Impersonal, this God is imaged in his novels as a white radiance:

"Brightness beyond the limits of the possible, and then a yet intenser, nearer incandescence, pressing from without, disintegrating from within."[18] If, in addition, one considers the undogmatic, anti-metaphysical nature of his religion, its reliance on the inner light, one is left with the feeling that Huxley's mysticism has not taken him very far from the vaguely pantheistic nature worship of the Victorian followers of Wordsworth, not taken him too far from Herbert Spencer's Unknowable: "a Transcendent Power, a mode of Being higher than human intelligence and will. . . . an Immanent Substance into which our consciousness lapsed when we died."[19]

One can find even in the work of his Huxley grandfather hints suggestive of the direction in which Aldous Huxley's thought was to go. The shadow of a god lingered in the Biblical phraseology of T. H. Huxley and in his admission that to him pantheism was almost as acceptable an explanation of the working of the universe as materialism.[20] His image of the vast sea of ignorance on the shores of which man stands[21] was a trumpet call to explore the unknown, though the methods of those who took up his challenge might well have appalled him. The purpose of Aldous Huxley's effort remained the same as that of his grandfather--to expose the mind to facts--but his definition of facts was greatly enlarged to cover a wider range of phenomena than Thomas Henry Huxley would have acknowledged.

Indeed in Aldous Huxley the sceptical, anti-clerical attitude was to turn on itself and devour its young. Science itself was to be accused of narrowness and an unwillingness to explore new facts. Aldous Huxley followed to their logical conclusion premises implicit, but often overlooked, in scientific materialism. The basis of Aldous Huxley's quarrel with science was the spirit of authority ascribed to it by its adherents. Like Whitehead in his Science and the Modern World and Burtt in his Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science, Huxley did not wish to deny the achievements of science so much as to remind scientists of the limits of the method they were using. Scientists were guilty of condemning out of hand approaches to knowledge other than their own and of refusing, through professional timidity, to investigate phenomena which might legitimately be treated by the scientific method.

The anger aroused by Huxley's growing interest in religion, hypnotism, extra-sensory perception, and mind-changing drugs suggested to him that institutionalized science (rationalism), like institutionalized religion before it, had lost its flexibility and openness to new ideas. Gerald Heard suggests that Huxley's interest in these subjects was greatly stimulated by the "emotional negativism" of the scientists and describes an encounter in the twenties between Huxley and Lord Rothschild:

> Victor Rothschild held that the statistical departure from chance (for example, in the records made of "card guessing" at the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University) was not sufficient for warranting the assumption that the human mind was exhibiting an unrecognized faculty. Huxley maintained with vigour that the deviation from chance (that is, of more than one in five guesses being maintained as a statistical average over a long series of runs) must indicate the presence and operation of a force other than pure randomness.
>
> "Why," he asked, "have the Life Insurance Companies been able--using such statistical tables--to calculate mortality probabilities so accurately that for two hundred years they have shown a steady and substantial profit?" (A.H., pp. 102-103)

The scientist, like the priest, had tried to limit truth, had tried to hypostatize his way into the Way.

Much of Huxley's later writing is an attempt to show how the riddle of existence cannot be solved by any one approach whether it be that of science, religion, art, or direct experience. The Old Raja's Notes on What's What in Huxley's last novel, Island, states this idea clearly: "'PATRIOTISM IS NOT ENOUGH.' BUT NEITHER IS ANYTHING else. Science is not enough, religion is not enough, art is not enough, politics and economics are not enough, nor is love, nor is duty, nor is action however disinterested, nor, however sublime is contemplation. Nothing short of everything will really do."[22] All modes of knowledge have their place though they only prove the limits of man's ability to know the totality. If mysticism and direct experience seem finally best, they do not deny or exclude the other methods. Obviously Huxley believes that

one must try to get it all in, but this is impossible. And the rest? The rest is always a populous silence, remaining as a challenge to evolving consciousness. For Huxley, romanticism has provided an impulse to the gradual transcendence--not repudiation--of the tradition into which he was born.

Huxley and the Role of Aesthete

The aesthetic tradition, a very special social-literary phenomenon in England, underwent a revival during the twenties, and Huxley undeniably felt that this tradition and the persons associated with it were the best hope of young intellectuals with a way to make in the world. His debt to it was immediately obvious. His objections to it and divergence from it were not.

The decadent movement in France and England had many easily distinguishable trademarks. The aesthetes took to heart any object remote enough in time or space to be untainted by the bourgeois. When Madame Desoyes began selling oriental objects d'art in the rue de Rivoli she soon found her shop a center for decadent artists like Baudelaire and the Goncourts who came to admire her fabulous 'blue' china, the Chinese porcelain of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[23] The aesthetes also admired early French verse forms and French art of the eighteenth century. Their liking for the sensual in

religion, the lush music and decadent imagery of Swinburne's verse, the figures of the eighteenth century comedia dell'arte (especially Pierrot), appears in the writings of poets, such as Dowson, Symons, and Wilde.

When Oscar Wilde was discredited, forcing the aesthetic movement underground, there followed twenty years of self-consciously hearty extroversion on the part of the intelligensia.[24] (Huxley provides a satiric treatment of this era in his portrait of Francis Chelifer's youth in Those Barren Leaves.) The movement was reborn during the teens and twenties in the baroque writings of Connolly's "Mandarins,"[25] but the pure artists of the new movement were more dignified than their predecessors, and they emphasized craftsmanship rather than the exotic; wit and good manners, though as highly prized as ever, were considered to be more for private use rather than public consumption. Extravagant as some of their pranks were, they did not make a fetish of them. Whistler and Pater were more admired as aestheticians than Wilde.

The Sitwells, on the other hand, were not conservative in their public statements. Though younger than most members of the Bloomsbury group, they were, in many ways, historically more orthodox than the other members of London's literary circles. They continued to admire Wilde greatly and shared the ideas and enthusiasms of the decadents. This difference in method and emphasis was one

which set the Sitwells apart from most of their contemporaries. And thus, while Ronald Firbank and the Sitwells were collecting 'blue' china and reading Waley's translations of Chinese poems, other London literati were cultivating different tastes. The nineties' Baudelarian facination with strange sins was replaced for the latter by an equally strong facination with new concepts of time, psychology, and primitive man. Virginia Woolf was demonstrating an awareness of Bergson's theories in her treatment of the stream of consciousness, and Lawrence and Eliot were using materials discovered by anthropologists to give further meaning to their work. Psychology, especially Freudian psychology, though less influential at this time in poetry, was being widely utilized by prose writers.

The serious intellectual interests of such English writers as Forster, Woolf, and Lawrence indicated a general outlook identified by Richard Ellmann as a belief "that the transcendent is immanent in the earthy, that to go down far enough is to go up." This belief linked them to the wider community of experimental writers that included not only James, Conrad, and Joyce but also Shaw and Wells, a community of writers that "bore down hard on the importance of unity" in their aesthetic theories. Ellmann adds that these novelists "point to their works as microcosms characterized by the intense apprehension of the organic

unity of all things." Ellmann sees the search for unity in the novel paralleled in the treatment of psychology and history. These writers desired "to see human life in a synthesis."[26] The Sitwells were less ambitious and more traditional.

Huxley had a foot in both camps. A man of serious intellectual interests like the writers of Bloomsbury, a man with a solid university education in literature and philosophy, he outwardly adopted much of the stance of the Sitwells and allowed his name to be linked with theirs in several publicity stunts. Many of his interests formed a bridge between the two groups. Among his enthusiasms was a love of French literature. His interest in nineteenth century French poets could be shared with both Edith Sitwell and T. S. Eliot. His interest in the French novel would be appreciated equally by Sacheverell Sitwell and Virginia Woolf. With Lytton Strachey, of course, Huxley could range the entire field of French history and literature in a way that was perhaps not possible with any of the Sitwells; yet he did not, therefore, reject the Sitwells. They offered their aid in the battle to secure an audience, and he accepted it.[27]

Huxley's association with French literature, symbolizing, as it does, his outward allegiance to the aesthetic movement, deserves a closer look. Ruth Z. Temple, whose book The Critic's Alchemy traces the route by which

an awareness of French literature entered the English literary scene, has published a lengthy article detailing the nature and extent of Huxley's debt to French writers.[28] It is not necessary to review this material here except to note that the article, which does not award Huxley a particularly high place in the tradition Professor Temple is tracing, overlooks the way Huxley's tastes would be regarded by the general reading public.

The reading public of the teens and twenties were heirs to the Victorian view that France was the source of dangerous thoughts and literature, especially in sexual matters. Those whose fathers had been discomforted by Flaubert and Zola were not reassured by Gide and Proust. Thus an interest in French literature was almost a union card in the intellectual circles opposed to the pre-war status quo in literature and morality. French eighteenth century literature, in particular, had been the badge of the aesthetic movement since the nineteenth century and the publication of such works as Verlaine's Les Fêtes galantes (1869). As Huxley noted, the period had been regarded "by the Beardsleyites of the nineties, as an epoch of deliciously depraved frivolity, of futile and therefore truly aesthetic elegance." The twentieth century rebels found it as effective a stick to beat the bourgeois with as their fathers had:

> The fact that we have chosen to recreate a whole historical epoch in the image of this intellectually free and morally licentious dix-huitième throws some light on our own problems, our own twentieth century bugbears, our own desires. For a certain section of contemporary society the terms "modern" and "eighteenth century" are almost synonymous. Like our ancestors, we too are in revolt against intellectual authority and moral "prejudices." Perhaps the chief difference between them and us is that they believed in pure reason as well as extra-conjugal love; we Bergsonians do not (O.A.A., p. 160).

Huxley's essay on the eighteenth century French novelist, Crébillon the Younger, as well as his use of that writer as a leit motiv for the character of Mercaptain in Antic Hay, undoubtedly convinced many of his wholehearted allegiance to a point of view which, in point of fact, he was often critical of.

The school system through which Huxley passed was one which made Huxley's adoption of the role of aesthete virtually inevitable. In the Public Schools, such as Eton which Huxley attended, the split between athlete and intellectual was accentuated by the pressures of the class structure, scholarship boys and middle class boys with a way to make in the world being, of necessity, more intellectual than the sons of the fox hunting upper classes.[29] Huxley's physique and family background alone would have brought him into contact with other kindred spirits rebelling against the overly hearty, aggressively healthy, anti-intellectual tone of English school life. The only tradition available to those who wished to protest in an

effective and visible way was the self-consciously arty way popularized by Oscar Wilde in the previous century.

At Oxford, Huxley attended Balliol College as his father had before him; he completed a year of study before the pattern of the old way of life was broken by the First World War. Majoring in English literature, Huxley had as tutor Sir Walter Raleigh, an uncle by marriage of Lytton Strachey. The decision to study literature, however, came only after a period of blindness had put an end to Huxley's previous ambition to become a doctor. Thus fate conspired through health, education, temperament, and social contacts to make Huxley an aesthete. T. S. Eliot's memorial essay on Huxley gives a glimpse of him at Oxford:

> My earliest memory of Aldous Huxley dates from 1914 or 1915. I spent that academic year at Merton College, on a travelling scholarship from Harvard. The last able-bodied British undergraduates were passing from the O.T.C. to the trenches, and beyond the Rhodes scholars from America and the Commonwealth there were hardly any left except those who, like Aldous, were wholly unfit for military service. But one enterprising undergraduate, whose identity has vanished from my memory, organized a "Nineties Club"--surely the final tribute to that literary epoch!--and those convened for the first meeting assembled on the lawn of one of the colleges: I believe that it was Balliol, Aldous's own college. The convener, I remember, had sought to enliven the occasion by sporting a red ribbon on his pince-nez eyeglasses. I do not remember that Aldous was very active in this society, but I remember his being pointed out to me on that occasion (A.H., p. 30).

While still at Oxford, Huxley was introduced into the social circle centered around Lady Ottoline Morrell at Garsington Manor. Desmond MacCarthy, according to Juliette

Huxley, was the one who brought him there shortly after the Morrells purchased it in 1915. He was accepted into the social set that included the elite of Bloomsbury society: ". . . he often came to Garsington for week-ends, together with the great variety of people which Ottoline drew round herself--Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Bertrand Russell, D. H. Lawrence and Frieda, Katherine Mansfield and Middleton Murry; artists like Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, young students from the Slade like Dorothy Brett, Carrington, Mark Gertler; and many others" (A.H., p. 40). These people were serious intellectuals, and they regarded Huxley as one of themselves. "He was the perfect, pure, uncompromising highbrow," wrote Leonard Woolf years afterward; he defined the word in terms of a concern for quality: "The highbrow, being an intellectual, uses his intellect and puts a high value on the products of intelligence and reason in the realms of thought whatever the subject of thinking may be. He sets a very high value on works of art, but here his standards of value are also extremely high; the pictures, books, music with which he is concerned must be 'serious' and of the highest quality" (A.H., p. 37).

Huxley's seriousness was not as apparent at first as it was to become later, but it was his sober curiosity about all things intellectual, his "passion" for and patience with "the long, slow, intricate journeys" (A.H.,

p. 37) of the mind in its pursuit of truth, that separated him from the members of another literary circle with which his name has been associated, the Sitwell family. Little interested in abstract theories of time or the scientific probing of the mind, Edith Sitwell, a devotee of Blake, soon identified the Sitwell name with the anti-intellectual search for a lost happiness, a primitive purity. (Huxley could have little sympathy with this.) And with an acuteness deriving from the decadent tradition, she focused her poetry on the theme of loss and disillusionment. In a manner strangely reminiscent of Wordsworth, she recalled an "ancient time of our primeval innocence" when:

> . . . the most primitive and roughest
> and uncouthest shapes did live
> Knowing the memory of before their birth
> And their soul's life before this uncouth
> earth.[30]

Sacheverell Sitwell shared his sister's interest in a golden age and thought "The primitive mind . . . nearest to creation . . . ."[31] But whereas Edith, a lyric poet, concentrated on the pain resulting from the loss of childish dreams, when Sacheverell spoke of ". . . the Dawn, the steep-foot redhot Day . . ." he was reminded that ". . . there were warriors, then, and dark blood in the vines."[32] More characteristically, he thought of the "Hard polished brilliance of the leaves and pebbles close to each other, all alive and separate, dwelling apart, as in a world of their own . . . ."[33] The sanctity of the self, and the

regaining of a privitive manhood, these were themes that interested Sacheverell. Any scholarly insights into primitivism seem outside Sacheverell Sitwell's area of interest. When he wrote Primitive Scenes and Festivals, for example, he showed a dislike of abstract theorizing by presenting a completely visual reconstruction of native life.[34] It is noteworthy that none of the famous British anthropological studies are among the many works which he lists as sources for his book.

The contrast between the aesthetic Sitwells and serious Bloomsbury is neatly illustrated by the differing aspects of Huxley which they chose to remember. On the one hand Osbert Sitwell remembered "discourse of . . . erudite and impersonal scandals, such as the incestuous mating of melons, the elaborate love-making of lepidoptera, or the curious amorous habits of cuttlefish."[35] Similarly Edith Sitwell recalled, "The animal and vegetable world became endowed, under the spell of his talk, with human characteristics, usually of a rather scandalous nature. I remember one monologue of this description on the subject of the morals of the octopus tribe--the tribe in question being, according to Aldous, conversant with Ovid's theory of love."[36] On the other hand Leonard Woolf chose to remember two occasions of a very different nature. One, in the early twenties, was "the only occasion on which we found ourselves in disagreement on a major political

question: I was in favour and he was very much against sanctions in a collective security system for the League of Nations" (A.H., p. 34). The other incident in the thirties involved the organizing of London intellectuals to prevent the deportation of a German Jewish woman.

The heyday of the Sitwells came in the nineteen twenties. Although both Edith and Osbert had written during the war years it was in the early post-war period that the vogue of The Sitwells began. Doing a post-mortem on the period Cyril Connolly tried to account for the phenomenonal success of the Sitwells and the Bloomsbury writers by relating it to the public's reaction against the drabness of the war period. "After the post-war disillusion they offered a religion of beauty, a cult of words, of meanings understood only by the initiated at a time when people were craving such initiations."[37] It was a protest against the military's suppression of the personal element, the war-time loss of individuality. But whether it was for this or for some other reason, the Sitwells attracted a devoted crowd of followers who "went to the ballet in white ties and began their sentences with the lingering sibilance: 'I must say I do definitely think . . . .'"[38] Blatantly decadent, Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell capered and quipped their way through the decade fighting for their right to be heard and acclaimed. Edith affected the clothes of a Norman noblewoman. Osbert, miffed at being

uninvited to a party, ascended a nearby rooftop, megaphone in hand, to heckle the arriving guests.

In these actions the Sitwells were following Arthur Symons' advice to the young aesthetes of the nineties.[39] The public, lacking good taste was to be tricked into accepting Art. The diffident bourgeois attracted by a smoke of Fleet Street sensationalism would find himself, at last, financially supporting the neglected artist. And in this effort to catch the eye of the public, fantastic tricks and garbs were to be considered part of the game. The Sitwells were only the brash and successful heirs to a long line of artistic exiles who, in Balzac's phrase, had desires "d'être célèbre et d'être aimé."[40]

Huxley was a willing accomplice in several of these stunts. Thus when the Sitwells decided to honour the opera star, Madame Tetrazzini, upon her return to England, Huxley helped compose the speech read the next day by Sacheverell Sitwell when he presented the prima donna with a wreath of bay and myrtle from the "young writers of England." And Huxley was present, standing just behind Sacheverell, when the journalists and photographers gathered to record the grand occasion. Osbert Sitwell has described the scene:

> . . . the bedroom door was flung open, and the famous prima donna entered. Short, fat, ageing, wearing an over-elaborate brown crêpe dress, with much lace attached to it, she nevertheless had a captivating air of kindness and good-nature, and walked as one used to

> receiving acclamation. She advanced slowly, making a conventional theatrical gesture of greeting and pleasure, with her right hand to the poets, drawn up in a line, and with her left hand to the camera-man, up his ladder ready to pull the trigger, and to the journalists, their pencils poised . . . . Slowly, very slowly, she continued to move toward us. The camera-man was just giving the signal, when suddenly the great singer caught her foot in a rug and fell flat![41]

In costume as well as action Huxley must have seemed to the English public to be a perfect example of the aesthete. Naomi Mitchison remembered his yellow tie and white socks (A.H., p. 54). (He recommended that her wedding trousseau include black satin bed sheets!) And at one time he sported a sombrero.[42] At Garsington, Juliette Huxley was also impressed by his clothes. "Wearing straw-coloured jodhpurs and pale stockings, with a dark-brown corduroy jacket, he looked absent-mindedly but absurdly romantic and beautiful" (A.H., p. 40).

On certain intellectual issues, too, Huxley took the line popular in Bloomsbury intellectual and artistic circles. During the later part of the war he became a pacifist though his brother Julian as well as his two best friends, Lewis Gielgud and his cousin Gervas Huxley, were soldiers. The fact is not so well known that, "Though he hated the war, Aldous felt he must do more for his country and returned to London to work in a governmental office" (A.H., p. 43).

In politics as in support for the war, Huxley's position may have seemed one thing in public while being,

in private, something more complex. Conservatism and anti-democratic sentiments had been part of the English aesthetic tradition as it developed in the late nineteenth century. The contempt felt for the public by the English writers of the nineties was to a large extent a class affair. Belonging by birth or education almost entirely to the upper-middle class, these sensitive men used the aesthetic pose to give vent to their feelings of frustration when changing social conditions closed many traditional sources of patronage and publication. The newspapers and journals intent upon winning a share of the new mass audience created by popular education had little use for the leisurely essays of the literary gentleman down from Oxford or Cambridge. Once isolated from the public, the embittered young men often were willing to adopt the extravagances of aestheticism along with its admiration of the aristocracy and scorn for a public unable to choose between good and bad, a "prey to sensations and cheap appeals." They would have heartily concurred with Trevelyan's sober judgment that ". . . both literature and journalism have been to a large extent debased since 1870 . . . ."[43] And so, the aesthetic movement, which had been allied with the rise of liberalism in France, became staunchly conservative in England.[44]

Huxley, whose intellectual development had benefited so greatly from exposure to the minds and talents

gathered at Garsington, wrote several articles for the Athenaeum which attempted to make a case for the cultural importance of the aristocracy as protectors of minority viewpoints. Because aristocrats were often eccentric themselves and felt no awe before the dogmas of the middle class, they could generally be counted on to make common cause with artists and intellectuals in need of protection and economic aid:

> The system of direct patronage of artists is dead, but a tradition lingers on, rather vaguely and dimly, in the aristocratic mind that artists ought in some sort to be under aristocratic protection. This old tradition affirming the rightness of a relation between artist and aristocrat is reinforced by the aristocrat's native tolerance and liking for eccentricity. The principle glory of the English aristocracy has always been its profound eccentricity. True to their traditional je-m'en-fiche-iste attitude, English gentry with peculiar tastes have always carried them to their logical conclusions in practice, without caring what the vulgar might think. Their hereditary security renders them immune from criticism. . . . Eccentric themselves, the aristocrats are prepared to go some way in tolerating eccentricity in others. The bourgeois takes alarm at the first hint of novelty and unorthodoxy. The aristocrat, though he may not understand the meaning of the new phenomenon, is generally much more ready to tolerate it. He has a friendly feeling towards the odd folk who fichent themselves of the crowd as thoroughly as he does himself.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Among the savages in the Reservation the artist finds a certain sympathy and a certain security to work as he pleases, which would certainly be denied him by the Colonials outside. An entirely burgess land, where there is no privileged class, secure by birth and breeding--where no one affronts public opinion without danger, and new and unorthodox opinions are therefore fearful, suspicious and odious things--a land without Reservations, is not a particularly cheerful home for artists.[45]

This charitable view of English aristocrats, of wealth and privilege, is only an aspect of Huxley's total view, but it is one that he chose to show the public at this time. And it is one that helped to place him in the public mind.

It is important to see Huxley in his pose as an aesthete because at this distance in time it is difficult to understand why one would adopt such a role if it had not won his whole-hearted allegiance. The mood of the times has been so completely lost that it needs an effort of the imagination to reconstruct the climate of public opinion in which young intellectuals were forced to operate. Describing the position of the poets accepted as spokesmen by the English middle class during the decade preceding 1919, critic C. K. Stead writes that they were "forced more and more to treat complex problems as though their solutions were simple to all but the dull-witted."[46] At another point he remarks that ". . . poetry was only another vehicle on which opinion and prejudice could be trundled into the drawing-room."[47]

It is true the openness to the new and unusual which Huxley had praised in the aristocracy was not to be found in all cases and represented, in all probability, a hope on his part as much as a fact of life. Osbert Sitwell's autobiography, Left Hand, Right Hand!, shows the reality. The unusual circumstances of Garsington had colored Huxley's view. But the obtuseness of the middle class

reading public made his desperate wish understandable. Arnold Bennett has written of that public's "gigantic temperamental dullness," its "lack of humour," and its "heavy and half honest stupidity."[48] Huxley would, doubtless, have concurred.

To sum up, Huxley was regarded by the public in the early twenties and late teens as an aesthete, a view for which, as we have seen, his actions, political opinions, dress, and circle of friends were largely responsible. Yet when one turns to the criticism written at this time, it becomes apparent that Huxley was following a different drummer, that rejecting the orthodox viewpoint he did not accept at any stage a pure art-for-art's-sake doctrine. He cut for himself a path that passed between both camps and took from each what he considered to be the most vital elements.

The Early Writings

There is another side, of course, to Huxley which this account of Huxley playing the role of aesthete has deliberately suppressed. With that in mind, however, it might be well to review Huxley's normal boyhood and boyhood ambitions before examining the record of the published criticism. Various friends and relatives writing about him have emphasized non-aesthetic traits in order to right the balance between the popular image and the historical reality. Yet an approach which stresses either Huxley's aestheticism or his departure from that position creates

merely confusion, a balancing off of items on the two sides of the ledger, unless it is understood that Huxley's position is something other than either "decadent" or "healthy," other than Bloomsbury or Fleet Street.

Huxley's Boyhood and Ambitions

As a boy with normal eyesight, Huxley enjoyed the out-of-doors. If not good at sports he at least took part in them without much difficulty. He and his brothers were a rowdy crew delighting in practical jokes. Roger Eckersley recorded one such joke:

> The Huxley boys had tempers. . . . I can recall one of these furies which broke loose when we were staying with them at Sea view, Isle of Wight. I suppose we must have quarrelled badly over something--but I must have thought it was all over, as I was sitting peacefully at the bottom of a stone balustrade leading up to the front door--when I heard a rumble like thunder behind me. I turned round to see that one of them had loosened one of those big round stone balls which stand as ornaments at the top of the stonework, and it was practically on top of me before I got out of its way. Table knives were occasionally aimed at one, too, and this habit was reciprocated.[49]

They wandered the countryside and sea shore. Trev Huxley wrote of how they spent:

> As much of the day as the day left possible in altering in every conceivable manner, by dams, diversions or channels, the geography of a wet strip of sand, which the tide in its next advance would restore to its old configuration. Sometimes operations, more ambitious in the durability of their materials, were begun in a stream inland; pools were made, and the stream diverted into a new, or perhaps a long disused, channel. Sometimes, too, a part of us would explore along a stream to its source, which we rarely reached, since even small streams are apt to extend farther than childish

> zeal will endure, though fired by the ambition of finding a real spring, entrancing to the dwellers among sluggish south-country rivers.[50]

They climbed mountains. Ronald W. Clark describes a period in the Swiss Alps:

> There was the day when they started at six in the morning with a couple of mules, breasted the Great Scheidegg to see a new world before them, dropped down to Grindelwald and returned in the cool of the evening--finding on the top of the pass that the milk in the donkey-panniers had turned to butter and needed Oriana's long hat-pins to disengage it. There was the day when Julian was taken on his first climb, an ascent of the near-by Dossenhorn, by his father, John Collier and a guide. And there were the days, as some of the children later remembered, when Leonard would stand and speculate, gazing at the mountains with reminiscent eye and thinking aloud of things past. He enjoyed his soliloquies, and among some of his nephews "doing an Uncle Leonard" became a recognized diversion when the holidays were over.[51]

Huxley's first ambition was to become a doctor, and he began a course of study at Eton intended to prepare him for this career but eye problems forced him to give it up. At this time, as later, he was interested in facts, hard information which could be put to use. What has been called his encyclopedism was already apparent. But even though, in one article for the Athenaeum,[52] he was to praise, with heavy irony, the non-utilitarian nature, the uselessness, of literary notes, the compiling of facts for the sake of compiling facts was always abhorrent to him. Another Athenaeum essay entitled, "Bibliophily," expresses his disgust with the growth of useless knowledge.[53] One need only trace the image of the card index through his

essays and fiction to see that useless knowledge was always one of his bêtes noires.

Huxley rejected even in his earliest writings an ostrich attitude to material realities, the economic facts of life. He condemned the middle-class writers who knew nothing of how other people lived: "We are delicate explorers of every fold in about half-a-dozen craniums, and the rest of mankind--business men, engineers, scientists, saints, East-End Jews--is a blur to us. If we can succeed in talking on level terms with a coal-miner for half an hour, we feel singularly pleased with ourselves."[54] Huxley's 1926 short story, "The Monocle," carried this criticism a step further and, while displaying Huxley's own grasp of economic facts, attacked those who, knowing the facts, do not act upon them (C.S.S., pp. 271-289).

Huxley could condemn the public taste with as much feeling as any aesthete. (In an Athenaeum article he wrote: "'Flee from the press,' in every sense of that last word, is the moral we draw from 'Clerambault.' Keep clear of the crowd of mediocrity and from the newspaper opinion which is its guide and its voice. Those who have the strength to be free must keep their freedom, whatever the pressure of the crowd.")[55] And he rejected the type of writing the public wanted writers to serve up. But Huxley was realistic in his idealism and turned his talents to the task of writing journalism he would not have to disown

later on. He was fascinated with the problem posed by the advertisement and wrote an essay on the advertisement as a genre. Even in Huxley's own literary tastes he appreciated the healthy, popular, and familiar fully as much as the obscure, the shocking, and the offbeat--he praised Fielding--("Fielding, like Homer, admits all the facts, shirks nothing")[56] as highly as Baudelaire; Chaucer--("The body of his poetry may have grown old, but its spirit is still young and immortal")[57] as much as Mallarmé.

Criticism and Poetry

When one turns to Huxley's criticism, one is able to see clearly that he was not the typical aesthete, though it is equally clear that he was not a supporter of the literary status quo. (Two of his best pieces for the Athenaeum are criticisms of Alfred Noyes and William Watson.)[58] The word, aesthete, used loosely as it is when applied to Aldous Huxley, suggests several rather different things. It will be helpful if these are discriminated and examined one by one. There is, first of all, the historic movement represented by Oscar Wilde and his circle of friends. Second is the pose (either of the dandy or the aesthete) assumed first by Baudelaire in France and the Pre-Raphaelites in England and inherited from them by Wilde, Beerbohm, Lytton Strachey, and Harold Acton. Third is the role of the alienated artist, the opponent of

utilitarianism in art, the exponent of "uselessness" and non-involvement in political and social causes. Fourth is the stylist, the artist with a preference for form over content. The last two aspects of aestheticism point toward the dilemma central to discussions of art since the Romantic period: the division of subject and form. The relationship of this problem to an understanding of Huxley's life and work will be examined in the next chapters.

The first two aspects of aestheticism are best seen displayed in Huxley's life and letters rather than in his published essays. The early criticism of Huxley published in the Athenaeum and in Ward's anthology, The English Poets, consisting as it does of book reviews, capsule introductions, and light essays, gives us little information about his view of the nineties or its life style. An article on John Davidson, as well as two on Ernest Dowson, suggest a condescending and detached attitude toward the poets of the period. These articles will be examined below. Various additional Athenaeum reviews, such as the one of The Collected Poems of Lord Alfred Douglas (December 12, 1919, pp. 1334-1335), also contained reference to aesthetic attitudes and ideals.

There is an interesting poem on Villiers de l'Isle Adam which suggests that, at this time, aestheticism's negative attitude toward industrialism was not uncongenial to him. But from 1930 we have a further discussion of

Villiers de l'Isle Adam that contradicts this impression somewhat. While this material may be suspect as representing a later and changed view of the nineties, it may, nevertheless, be used to supplement earlier materials if the time gap is kept in mind, and if it is possible to show evidence that the views expressed in 1930 were not alien to the young critic writing in the 'teens.

A final word of caution must be that the early articles, written as they were for a conservative public, may have been influenced by this consideration. Huxley's editors may even have had a policy as to the approach to be taken toward the writers of the aesthetic movement. But until this can be proven--and the evidence may be hard to come by at this date--it is sensible to assume that the stance taken in these articles is representative of Huxley's views at this time.

John Davidson, being less the aesthete than most poets of the nineties, may be the proper point to begin. Critic A. E. Rodway remarks that Davidson "is obviously influenced by both parties [the aesthetes and Henley's 'healthy' poets], and even more obviously unassimilable to either."[59] With this in mind, it is interesting to note that Huxley in his introduction to Davidson comments on Davidson's healthy tendencies and ignores his aesthetic traits. Davidson's poetry "is a criticism of life, a series of essays in human values." Furthermore, "The

greater part of Davidson's work is frankly didactic." "Davidson is a moralist, not a psychologist." This last comment is noteworthy in view of the fact that Huxley apparently felt that much aesthetic verse could be characterized as being overly refined analyses of mental or emotional states. Davidson's "philosophy" is summarized as "strenuous romanticism, combining as it does the creeds of individualistic anarchy and moral earnestness." Considering Huxley's dislike of muscular Christians, a title some might wish to apply to Huxley's own strenuous do-goodism, it is significant when he remarks: "Davidson's anarchic individual has a touch of the muscular Christian about him." Having designated Davidson as a didactic poet, Huxley makes him appear even more palatable to conservative readers by adding the further lable of "nature-poet." Huxley remarks: "His natural descriptions display a very genuine appreciation and are often beautiful, though he is apt to bring nature into his poems in order to enforce the somewhat hackneyed moral, 'God made the country and man made the town.'" Huxley's conclusion balances considerations of form against those of subject-matter with a neatness that suggests he had an eye on the conservative reader:

> Davidson possesses the Art of Rising as well as the Art of Sinking. The merits which, at the crest of his achievement, he displays are among the cardinal poetic virtues. The terse expression of concentrated thought, imaginative boldness, beauty as well of imagery as of diction--these are qualities of Davidson's poetry at its best. Add to this his earnest moral purpose, and

> even the critic who still retains the conception of poetry as a "sugared pill" of doctrine made palatable by fancy, will subscribe to the judgment which allows Davidson a place among the poets.[60]

Of the two articles on Dowson the Athenaeum article is more descriptive of Dowson as a public figure and the aesthetic movement generally than the introduction to Dowson's poetry published in Ward's The English Poets. Both articles discuss in detail the special quality of Dowson's poetry and the poetic means by which his nostalgic effects were achieved. For the Athenaeum Huxley adopted a tone of good humored condescension. The decadent atmosphere is compared to a blend of tea: "There used to be, and perhaps there still is, a kind of tea, of which the advertisements affirmed 'that it recalled the delicious blends of forty years ago.' This little volume from 'The Modern Library of the World's Best Books' recalls blends of slightly more recent concoction, but no less delicious --the literary alcohol and haschich (for we will not insult the nineties by likening their productions to tea) of only thirty years gone by." Yet Huxley's tolerant, worldly pleasure in something unusual does not blind him to his duty: ". . . we are in danger of dwelling sentimentally on what we may call the eheu! fugacity of things instead of asking the question which it is the critic's business to ask: What right have Dowson's poems to figure among the World's Best Books?" Nor is Huxley reassured by the

presence of other nineties authors in the same list: "But perhaps we should not take the title of this series of reprints too seriously, for we note that among the World's Best Authors are to be found Ellen Key, Oscar Wilde, Lord Dunsany and Woodrow Wilson."

Huxley grants Dowson a small perfection but notes other less attractive qualities: "Dowson was a sentimentalist of the school of Verlaine, the English apostle of nostalgia." "Dowson was as incapable of writing folk songs as of writing symphonies; he did not possess the spontaneous life or the mental capacity to do either." "The images and metaphors are old, the technical devices are old, the whole thing is immensely artificial." He concludes that, nevertheless:

> . . . the lines are moving. Dowson has found the perfect expression for his own artificial emotion. He has discovered the elaborate "dying fall" that descends through the heart-breaking, discord-enriched dominant to a tonic diapason of pure silence--for it all ends in nothing, nothing at all.
> . . . . . .
> There are moods in which these variations on a non-existent theme are all that the mind desires or deserves: moments of physical fatigue and mental lassitude, the true parents of sentimentality, when Verlaine's nostalgia is too subtly vaporous and Laforgue's too intellectual to be appreciated, and when Dowson, with his dying falls, his slow elaborate rhythms, his restful absence of any serious significance, is the only poet.[61]

In his introduction to Dowson's poetry for Ward's The English Poets, Huxley praises Dowson because ". . . out of his life's ugliness and pain he created beauty,

. . ." and because he "generalized no world-philosophy out of his experiences." Yet Huxley notes, not with approval one suspects, that Dowson is anti-life:

> Because life wearied him he did not, like Byron or Leopardi, postulate a universal ennui, did not rise in titanic curses against the Creator of a world where life was only supportable by illusions. Dowson did not see in his own misfortunes the Promethean symbol of persecuted but indomitable humanity. His poetry is the poetry of resignation, not of rebellion. He suffers, and records the fact. That is enough; he draws no universal conclusions, he does not rail on fate; he is content to suffer and be sad.

Dowson "reproduces the negative emotions of spent passion."[62]

Escapism

Huxley's poem on Villiers de l'Isle Adam (1916) suggests that he may have felt a sense of fellow feeling for a man of distinguished family who found the world a difficult place.

> Up from the darkness on the laughing stage
> A sudden trap-door shot you unawares,
> Incarnate Tragedy, with your strange airs
> Of courteous sadness. Nothing could assuage
> The secular grief that was your heritage,
> Passed down the long line to the last that bears
> The name, a gift of yearnings and despairs
> Too greatly noble for this iron age.
>
> Time moved for you not in quotidian beats,
> But in the long slow rhythm the ages keep
> In their immortal symphony. You taught
> That not in the harsh turmoil of the streets
> Does life consist; you bade the soul drink deep
> Of infinite things, saying: "The rest is naught."[63]

Huxley's praise of Villiers' unworldliness, however, must be placed in a context of views expressed elsewhere. In

the Athenaeum on June 13, 1919, he wrote: "The minor poet is interesting if he is content to describe what he sees from his own windows, even if nothing but cabbages and potatoes flourish in his garden. He is insufferable if he talks to us of the marble terraces, the roses and fountains and pagodas which are not there. From the desire of bad poets to conquer all poetry at a blow have sprung, in every age, the horrors of conventionalized diction and thought." At another point in the same article Huxley comments; ". . . Mr. Shanks is one of the imperialists of verse; he has learned to think poetically instead of in terms of himself." It is Huxley's view that,

> The commonest fault of bad poetry, when it is not simply prose, is to be too poetical. Like the imperially-minded statesman who, forgetting that the world is made up of people with back-gardens and so many shillings a week, intoxicates himself with dreams of milliards and continents, the bad poet learns to think poetically; he neglects the shillings and the back-gardens of personal experience to plan a conquest of the sublime and the beautiful, not realizing, that these dazzling imperial regions of poetry exist only because they were the back-gardens of greater minds . . . .[64]

The man who would prefer personal experience, even of back-gardens and cabbages, to marble terraces at second hand is not a typical aesthete.

Like most idealistic young men, Huxley worried about selling out, about losing his vision of higher things in the struggle to make his way. It was as an ascetic saint of letters that Huxley invoked the name of Villiers.

He later cast Flaubert later in a less attractive version of this role: "It was Flaubert, I think, who described how he was tempted, as he wrote, by swarms of gaudy images and how, a new St. Antony, he squashed them ruthlessly, like lice, against the bare wall of his study. He was resolved that his work should be adorned only with its own intrinsic beauty and with no extraneous jewels, however lovely in themselves. The saintliness of this ascetic of letters was duly rewarded; there is nothing in all Flaubert's writings that remotely resembles a vulgarity" (C.E., p. 111). Yeats had popularized this view of the author of Axël, and it is interesting that when Villiers next turns up in Huxley's writings it is in connection with the famous phrase that Yeats so often quoted when signing autograph albums: "Vivre? Nos valets le feront pour nous." Huxley, not quite accurate in his French citation, may have been more familiar with Yeats's comments on Johnson: "He has renounced the world and built up a twilight world instead . . . He might have cried out with Axel, 'As for living, our servants will do that for us.'"[65] But Huxley was at no time willing to be an antagonist of life and always opposed escapism, even in its symbolist form, because he equated it with his great hatred, the simplification and falsification of reality. Thus the position adopted by Huxley in his essay, Vulgarity in Literature (1930), should have surprised no one and cannot

really be attributed solely to the influence of D. H. Lawrence.

Life

In Vulgarity in Literature, Huxley attacks the aesthetic movement for much the same reasons he criticized Dowson--for lacking "spontaneous life" and "mental capacity." With regard to the first he comments: "Moments come when too conspicuous a show of vigor, too frank an interest in common things are signs of literary vulgarity. To be really lady-like, the Muses, like their mortal sisters, must be anemic and constipated. On the more sensitive writers of certain epochs circumstances impose an artistic wasting away, a literary consumption. This distressing fatality is at once transformed into a virtue, which it becomes a duty for all to cultivate" (C.E., p. 104). "For the most self-conscious and intelligent artists of the last decades of the nineteenth century, too frank an acceptance of the obvious actualities of life, too hearty a manner and (to put it grossly) too many 'guts' were rather vulgar" (C.E., pp. 105-106). The second point, the aesthetes' lack of interest in an intellectual approach to life, is illustrated by reference to economics, physics, and psychology. Huxley says there are three reasons why modern writers are no longer willing to withdraw from contact with life: ". . . the usual reaction of sons against fathers, another industrial revolution and a rediscovery

of mystery." Huxley feels that twentieth century writers recognize that they are living in ". . . a second heroic age of economics . . ." and will respond to it as the Romantics did with ". . . an energy proportionate to that of their enemies. . . ." "Life begets life," Huxley remarks, "even in opposition to itself." Moreover, ". . . the physicists and psychologists have revealed the universe as a place, in spite of everything, so fantastically queer, that to hand it over to be enjoyed by footmen would be a piece of gratuitous humanitarianism. Servants must not be spoiled." Thus the writers who continue to maintain the pose of the nineties are outside the mainstream: "A few aging ninetyites survive; a few young neo-ninetyites, who judge of art and all other human activities in terms of the Amusing and the Tiresome, play kittenishly around with their wax flowers and stuffed owls and Early Victorian beadwork. But, old and young, they are insignificant. Guts and an acceptance of the actual are no longer vulgar" (C.E., p. 106). This is similar in tone to comments Huxley was making in May of 1920: "Those of our moderns who stress uniqueness are not, of course, widely read. They are interesting only if you are peculiar in their way--if you have a passion for purple table-cloths, or if you reverence snakes, or if you suffer from a complicated inferiority-complex."[66] (It should be noted that Huxley's attitude toward originality varies according to whether or

not the example at hand seems to him a barrier to breadth of experience or a defense against mediocrity.) A few months earlier in March, Huxley had remarked, using the editorial we:

> In the presence of what is really popular in literature and drama, most of us feel rather like Swann among the Verdurins. We suffer from the education which it has been our fortune, or, perhaps, our mischance, to receive. . . . It may be, indeed it almost certainly is the case, that our susceptibilities are too tender. It is true, as Wordsworth said in his Preface to "Lyrical Ballads," that "the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability." But it is also true that a human being may become so much elevated above his fellows that he will finally shrink, not merely from the gross and violent emotions, but from all the primary emotions of whatever sort. He will, in fact, become a highbrow. At the present time we see only too many of these persons, self-elevated to an enormous height above the ordinary level of humanity.[67]

Huxley was voicing his antagonism to certain aspects of aestheticism as early as 1915. A letter to Julian Huxley written in 1915 while Aldous was at Balliol College, Oxford, defines the modern German spirit in terms of the nineties and decadence: "The brutal and the sentimental join hands; weltering sensuality, noise and violence for their own sakes. . . . The Germans have remained in the nineties. Wilde is their favorite modern English author. With their brutal sentimentality they cling to the spirit of Rops and Louis Legrand in art; a mixture of the macabre, the monstrous, the huge and the slyly obscene dominates them artistically" (L, p. 80).

The Role of the Artist in Society

Vulgarity in Literature is, among other things, an attempt to define a role for the artist in society. It is a rejection of the ivory tower vision of the artist as perpetual outsider with no role to play in society. How the artist can participate in society without compromising his integrity is a problem both Yeats and Eliot wrestled with and solved in their different ways. Huxley also confronts the problem and offers a solution:

> Literature is also philosophy, is also science. In terms of beauty it enunciates truths. The beauty-truths of the best classical works possess, as we have seen, a certain algebraic universality of significance. Naturalistic works contain the more detailed beauty-truths of particular observation. These beauty-truths of art are truly scientific. All that modern psychologists, for example, have done is to systematize and de-beautify the vast treasures of knowledge about the human soul contained in novel, play, poem and essay. Writers like Blake and Shakespeare, like Stendhal and Dostoevsky, still have plenty to teach the modern scientific professional. There is a rich scientific harvest to be reaped in the works even of minor writers. By nature a natural historian, I am ambitious to add my quota to the sum of particularized beauty-truths about man and his relations with the world about him (C.E., p. 110).

Huxley's interest in art as a source of insights appeared early. Thus, in the Athenaeum, one finds him saying about Richard Aldington's book of love poems, Images of Desire, the imagery of which was borrowed from the Song of Songs, that "One is more interested in what he adds of his own, the psychological details of passion."[68] Thus though Huxley's statement or formulation of his solution to the

problem in Vulgarity in Literature (1930) may be typical of a certain stage in Huxley's career, the attitude is not. Elsewhere in the Athenaeum articles he expressed his views on intellectuals and the role they should take in society.

> The state of intellectual liberty is a bleak, cold, solitary state. Servitude is easy, comfortable and warm. It is not to be expected that more than a very few who are free should not content themselves with merely keeping their heads in stampedes and hoping that the nobility of their attitude will end by bringing the stampeders to a sense of shame. In these days of vast democracies, when a stampede is a horribly formidable thing, the mere fact of the existence of one or two free spirits is not enough. It has become necessary for the free to make sure that those in intellectual servitude are the slaves to something decent and commendable, not slaves to criminal stupidities. . . . there is surely no reason why the free intelligence should not be able to devise some simple scheme for making the crowd feel passionately about the importance of the things that are of real value. It ought not to be impossible to rouse in the multitude soul an enthusiasm for, shall we say, scientific research equal in intensity to the enthusiasm felt for the war. It is all a question of finding some way by which the instincts and passions may be involved.[69]

Huxley felt science could be made more attractive by being incorporated into poetry. In this way, Huxley felt that art might be a means of redirecting man's passions to worthier goals. Laforgue provided an example of a poet able to turn science into poetry:

> In a poet like Laforgue . . . science and philosophy had been educated into him so deeply that they became a part of his inmost being, not a mere epidermis of acquired culture; with the result that the effusion of his natural sensibility was deeply tinged with Darwin and Hartmann. It is surely of some poet like Laforgue, not scientifically didactic, but scientifically lyrical, that Wordsworth is thinking when he says, in words quoted by Mr. Gosse: "The Poet . . . will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of Science . . . he will

> be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of science itself." We believe that Wordsworth was right. When science has entered into human life as familiarly as flowers and wine and love have done, then the poetry of science will begin. It may well be that this century will see the coming of that time.[70]

In an article Huxley wrote on J. C. Squire's book, The Birds; and Other Poems, an article published in the Athenaeum of August 22, 1919, two months prior to the previous citation, the subject of poetry about science was treated at greater length. After remarking that Squire's poems deal with "genuinely scientific ideas" and commenting that "This attempt to marry science and poetry seems to us worthy of all praise," Huxley reviews the history of poetry in English dealing with this subject-matter.

Starting with Erasmus Darwin, he refers to Phillips, Dyer, and Armstrong. He analyzes Darwin's "method of making science poetical": "It consisted in calling a spade something like 'brown Agriculture's lowliest tool' in an elegant antithetical couplet, and then, in a foot-note, calling it a plain spade and appending a short lecture on its uses." These Eighteenth century poets go wrong because "They are simply versifying and, in the process, obscuring prose." They do not fuse thought and emotion. But other poets have. Huxley cites Fulke Greville, Donne who "felt passionately about abstract ideas," and Blake. With the exception of Blake, the nineteenth century is devoid of poets "who took a sufficiently passionate interest in the

new scientific truths to turn them into poetry." Tennyson, Buchanan, and Davidson are considered and dismissed--Buchanan not because his poems are lacking in passion but because they are bad. The failure of the Victorian poets turns Huxley's thoughts to France, and he is once more prompted to comment on Laforgue.

Having finished his review, Huxley takes up the ostensible subject of the essay, Squire's poetry. Squire, who writes of the "infinities and eternities" of the universe "almost jauntily," is not the poet Huxley has been looking for. Three poems called "Processes of Thought" are "more personal, more intimately felt" and "seem . . . nearer our ideal of what the lyric inspired by science or philosophy should be like." The key to the matter is that, given a genuine poetic talent, "An author must be passionné by his subject, must feel, if he is writing of science or philosophy, that the truths with which he is dealing are in intimate relation with himself. On the rare occasions when this happens, the versified exposition of science or philosophy becomes poetry."[71]

In an article on Ruskin published during the centenary year of 1919, Huxley rejects Ruskin's aesthetics but applauds his influence in social reform: "There have been many makers of Utopian schemes. Ruskin used the epithet proudly, blaming his fellow-countrymen for the ignoble sneer with which they generally uttered the word:

but there are very few whose Utopias have in any detail come true, or have, like Ruskin's, remained a permanently fruitful ideal. In politics his influence has been entirely for good."[72]

The Subject Matter of Poetry

Huxley differed from the aesthetes not only in envisioning a more central role for the artist as molder of society but also in placing more importance on ideas, on content, than the heirs of the symbolists did. Perhaps the most important of Huxley's early essays was an essay published in its original form as one of three essays on modern poetry in an issue of the Poetry Bookshop's influential Chapbook series alongside essays by F. S. Flint and T. S. Eliot. It was entitled significantly, "The Subject-Matter of Poetry." Since this essay was totally rewritten and exists in two forms, it deserves attention here. Moreover, in the second version, Huxley draws on material from his review of Squire's poetry discussed above. Therefore, the critic is able to study in depth Huxley's views on this point.

In the Chapbook version of "The Subject-Matter of Poetry" Huxley begins by insisting on the comprehensiveness of poetry in the great periods, such as the Elizabethan:

> Out of what subject-matter can poetry be made? The question has been asked and variously answered many times in the history of literature. At one time poetry is all nymphs and smiling champaigns, at another

> nothing but horrid rocks and chivalry. But the human mind is too curious and expansive to suffer long confinement, and at the greatest literary epochs poetry has claimed the whole of life as its subject. The Elizabethans made poetry equally well out of the sublime and the ridiculous, beauty and ugliness, idealism and cynicism--out of everything, in fact, that intimately touched their lives. All limitations of subject are artificial and temporary.

Huxley is upset by what he regards as a trend in modern poetry toward no subject at all:

> Love goes first: a worn-out, nauseating topic that can be left for fools to sentimentalise over. Philosophy--that is too heavy; and besides, what is the use of making up theories about the universe when they are all certain to be untrue? Beauty goes too; like love, it is so sickly and sentimental. Psychology follows; it is too slow and boring and elaborate, and there is nothing new to say about it. And so everything goes, till there is nothing left but a few little jokes and a few sensations. This is surely a deplorable conclusion to what is in its beginnings a very healthy tendency; deplorable unless you desire, as some of the most implacably youthful Frenchmen avowedly do, to destroy literature completely. Let us by all means puncture the bladder of pretentiousness, mock at lachrymose sentimentality, at fustian, at earnestness untempered by humour, at sickly-sweet prettiness. But let us also remember that these things are the corruptions of good; and because they are very bad, shall we therefore reject the good things from which they have decayed--beauty, grandeur, a serious philosophy of life, the great primary emotions? Too clever and too sensitive, we are perpetually haunted by the fear of having our work called sentimental or chocolate-boxy. And so we are reduced to our clowns and our bright prismatic sensations. The process has not gone so far in England as it has in France. . . . But the same tendency, advanced to a less extreme stage, is also discernible here.

Yet Huxley admits that the grand subjects are poorly served by poets at present:

> It could be wished that the poets who still deal in the grand traditional subjects were a little more capable of justifying their continued employment. Anyone

> who, labouring at the sweated trade of reviewing, has had to battle with the turgid inrush of contemporary verse will have agreed, in moments of desperation, with M. Tzara, that literature ought to be destroyed. In more optimistic mood he would be content with a Society for the Prevention of Premature Poetry having statutory powers to interdict all writers of verse from talking of love, God, nature, or, worst of all, dreams.[73]

In his second version of this essay, Huxley has sharpened his focus considerably. He is concerned with the question of why "most of the world's best poetry has been content with a curiously narrow range of subject-matter" (C.E., p. 91). Whereas before he had railed against those who wouldn't deal with traditional subjects, such as nature and love, or dealt with them in a way that was trivial or trite, he now focuses on the problem of abstract thought as subject-matter for poetry. Science, in particular, claims his attention. (It was a topic to which he would return in his last work, Literature and Science.) Why has no Yeats stepped forward to expound in great poetry the vision of Einstein or the other scientific minds that have done so much to reshape the world we live in? Primarily it is a problem of finding a man with the necessary combination of gifts.

In the early twenties Huxley felt the right man had not appeared: "The twentieth century still awaits its Lucretius, awaits its own philosophical Dante, its new Goethe, its Donne, even its up-to-date Laforgue. Will they appear?" (C.E., p. 96) In the early sixties, Huxley

is still a voice in the wilderness prophesying the coming of the scientist-poet who will enable us to feel along the pulse the new world envisioned by science:

> The hypotheses of modern science treat of a reality far subtler and more complex than the merely abstract, verbal world of theological and metaphysical notions. And, although a determinant of human nature and human behavior, this reality is nonhuman, essentially undramatic, completely lacking in the obvious attributes of the picturesque. For these reasons it will be difficult to incorporate the hypotheses of science into harmonious, moving and persuasive works of art--much more difficult, obviously, than it was to incorporate the notions of diabolic obsession or of a Lord of Power arbitrarily quickening and killing the souls of His creatures. But for any serious and gifted artist a difficulty is never an insurmountable obstacle; it is a challenge to intellectual combat, a spur to further achievement.[74]

Huxley believed that good intentions were not enough either for the artist in words or the artist in living. Therefore, he insisted that knowledge of facts, knowledge in the sense defined by Huxley's essay "Knowledge and Understanding," was essential to those who wished to be fully alive in the present moment.[75] Concluding "The Subject-Matter of Poetry" with a phrase that announces the aim of his early novels, Huxley condemned "poetry in which there is no more than the dimmest reflection of that busy and incessant intellectual life which is the characteristic and distinguishing mark of this age" (C.E., p. 96).

Although Huxley applauded the "return from the jeweled exquisiteness of the eighteen-nineties to the facts and feelings of ordinary life" (C.E., p. 94), he

condemned much of the poetry of the Georgians on the grounds of its trivial subject-matter and dull style. About the Georgians "who seem never to have deeply willed or strongly felt or sincerely thought about anything at all," he wrote: ". . . one pictures the Georgians sitting down, pen in hand, and wondering what their next little lyric shall be about--bull-frogs, bull-finches, bullets, bullocks, bul-buls, bilge . . . ? It doesn't really matter a bit; for if you have nothing serious to say, one piece of nonsense is as good as another."[76] About the poetry of John Drinkwater Huxley wrote:

> Mr. Drinkwater has indicated the two stools between which he falls. He tries at one and the same moment to be both a simple Cotswold farmer and a furious intellectual traveller. He is, in point of fact, a well-educated minor poet. His simplicity always and inevitably has the air of an affectation. He would have us believe that he lisps in numbers because the numbers come. (Unhappily, they do not always come; there are moments when he lisps in purest prose.) As for the furious intellectual travel, the only traces of it one can find are the ingenious little epigramatic conceits with which he heightens his simplicity.[77]

Advance in Art

The young Huxley felt art could advance in two ways: "Advance in poetry, if it signifies anything, means the discovery of new subject-matter, with a new way of expressing it." He felt, after reading Sandberg, that ". . . too much stress has been laid on the newness of the new poetry." Sandberg had merely introduced new slang, neither his subject-matter nor his technique were new.

In 1920 Hardy, De la Mere, D. H. Lawrence, the Irish poets, and T. S. Eliot were the only poets Huxley felt marked a genuine advance in poetry. Huxley was caustic about young London poets, men with backgrounds and views similar to his own, who urged open-mindedness about subject-matter in theory but rejected it in practice:

> . . . a young and esteemed contemporary with whom I was lunching. . . . was deploring the "short-windedness" of modern poets; he thought the time had come for poets to essay "comprehension." He mentioned "the Universe," and then he quoted Matthew Arnold's phrase ["See life steadily and see it whole"]. He is a very pleasant and exceptionally intelligent young man. He frankly cannot understand religious people and he finds the scientific mind unsympathetic; he took a good degree at Oxford and is learned in eighteenth-century French literature. Our conversation was interrupted by two men coming to sit at our table and discussing their own affairs rather loudly. They appeared to be cinema actors, and the extraordinary oddity of some of their sentiments caused my friend and myself to exchange whimsical smiles. He made a little gesture of comic despair as we went out: "Such is life in the great West," he murmured.[78]

Huxley was as much concerned with the "new way" of expression as he was with the "new subject-matter." Huxley never accepted the extreme symbolist position of Wilde that, "art never expresses anything but itself."[79] He knew Mallarmé's famous mot--"Ce n'est point avec des idées qu'on fait des sonnets, Degas, c'est avec des mots"[80]--but did not take it to heart. It was not the last word. He was a friend and admirer of T. S. Eliot and may well have heard him express such views as, "The poet who 'thinks' is merely the poet who can express the emotional equivalent

of thought."[81] Austin Warren has interpreted this to mean: "The business of the poet is to produce 'objective correlatives' for thought, the imaginative illusion of a view of life."[82] Huxley, however, felt that the words of a poem should also have meaning. In the Athenaeum, Huxley wrote about a now forgotten writer:

> Mr. Dickinson's verse is poetry in which the process of eliminating sense has been arrested half-way. One can see that he would like to get rid of it altogether; he understands words as music, but words as symbols containing a meaning seem hardly to interest him. [Huxley cites an example.] The first two lines are intelligible and pleasing; the last two are simply rhythm without sense. . . . The fact is that these lines, like most of his verse, have no meaning, but a very nice sound. If Mr. Dickinson will realize that words are something more than mere sound, if he will use them exquisitely and conscientiously instead of at haphazard, he will become an interesting writer.[83]

Because of his complex view of art, style has a special place in Huxley's thinking which will be discussed below in Chapter IV. A brief comment on this point, however, would not be out of place here. Style was the cover word for the structural organization of a work of art, for all the means by which the poet achieved his ends. Though respecting the integrity of the literary work of art as an organic whole, Huxley did not regard its autonomy as complete. Style signified the means by which the elements, the raw material assembled by the artist, were transformed into "that very definite but indescribable thing, a work of art."[84] Yet style was a dangerous thing when taken as an end in itself. It could result in a belief in art as

magic, a belief that a verbal formula could substitute for action. Huxley admired and translated Mallarmé, recognizing his power, but he could not accept unreservedly Mallarmé's aesthetic with its emphasis on the supreme importance of style.

Huxley's concept of the ways in which progress occurs in art is a crucial aspect of his use of evolution as metaphor. In this chapter it is sufficient merely to note that the young Huxley acknowledged the requirements of both subject-matter and form, and that he sought ways of advancing art in both areas. Art as an instrument of consciousness acting upon man's experience in this environment of time and space must be perfected. It must achieve new powers in order to increase man's ability to perceive order in apparent diversity. Its order must be made capable of new openness in order to better serve man's expanding vision of wholeness.

Chaos and Order

The previous sections of this chapter have shown that Huxley's attitude toward life and art differed in several ways not only from that of the aesthete of the nineties but also from that of some contemporary artists. It should, however, be clear that he took much from this aesthetic tradition and had little use for the hearty, anti-intellectual tradition of public poetry in his day.

In the Athenaeum, as has been shown, Huxley spoke out against both the poetry of Alfred Noyes and his kind and the poetry of the lesser Georgians who seemed to be saying nothing of importance in a very dull way. It remains to be proven, however, that Huxley liked art in a sincere, unambiguous way, and that he found a worthy place for it in his view of life. Did Huxley feel, as a young man, the way Charles M. Holmes portrays him as feeling? Did he think, despite his steady production of poems, short stories, and novels, that art was unimportant? Or, on the other hand, did Huxley's rejection of art come at a later stage of his career? Did Huxley's religious conversion turn him into a hair-shirted prophet of renunciation, an artist with no use for art, as Glicksberg has suggested? The answer to the question raised by Holmes can, in part, be determined by asking and answering another question: what function did Huxley feel art filled in man's mental economy? The present section will attempt to resolve the Holmes difficulty. The answer to the problem posed by Glicksberg's view will be deferred to the following chapter.

Huxley's view of art is an integral part of his view of man's existential situation. This is evident if his definitions of art are examined. In these it is apparent that Huxley emphasized certain elements. Taking three examples from various periods of his career we note a distinct family resemblance:

> The mind of a great poet is a mirror endowed with the power of collecting the diffused and broken light of experience and reverberating it in one bright focal ray of consummated expression. (1918)[85]

> [Art] is the organization of chaotic appearance into an orderly and human universe. (1926)[86]

> Art may be defined, in this context, as a process of selection and transformation, whereby an unmanageable multiplicity is reduced to a semblance of unity. (1950)[87]

For present purposes, the key words to note are: in the first definition, one; in the second, organization and orderly; and in the third, unity. Huxley, throughout his career, acknowledged the importance of form. He believed in the necessary integrity of the art object. Faced with an unusual genre as a beginning critic in the Athenaeum, he was willing to sacrifice every criteria save that one: "A prose poem must be something complete in itself; that is perhaps the only rule that can be laid down for the composition of this unsatisfactory, hybrid form."[88] This suggests that balancing Huxley's concern with static complacency is a concern with incompleteness. But in order to understand this aspect of Huxley's attitude toward art we must understand his attitude toward his own experience of life as well as the situation in which man finds himself.

Chaos and Order

These words are descriptive of qualities essential to man's experience as Huxley understands it. Huxley's

writings embody a dialectic of these two elements. Wholeness, a contradictory ideal involving both growth and completion, an ideal which is both the synonym and identifying characteristic of objectivity, is the ideal that Huxley seeks, and chaos and unity are key elements of it. Both have good and bad aspects. Though Huxley, paradoxically, often weights the scales in favor of the uncreated, the unmanipulated stuff of experience, and seems only too aware of the pitfalls of thought, he is also a conservative apostle of order--in politics, a Jeffersonian democrat. (Many sceptics are, like Dryden, both religiously devout and politically conservative.)

The failure of the critics to understand Huxley has been due to their tendency to overlook the fact that these values, chaos and unity, must be judged in a context. Some forms of order, like some forms of chaos, lead to, or strengthen, a sense of wholeness. These are good. On the other hand, all that promotes separateness, subjectivity, and muddled thinking is bad. Art, a form of order, can be either good or bad according to its function in a particular situation. If Huxley seems, at times to be anti-art, it is a fact that can be adequately explained in various ways, but each quotation is a fact within a context and can be fully understood only in terms of the dynamics of the particular intellectual battle being fought at the moment.

The Human Mind

What did Huxley believe man's situation to be? Reality, Huxley's first name for God, exists in both internal and external aspects. Reality itself is the totality of internal and external facts. Using the metaphor of cosmos as consciousness, one could say that Huxley, like Yeats, "calls up God to be a symbol of the most complete thought."[89] In the twenties, Huxley believed that, insofar as man was concerned, the different aspects of reality were isolated and discrete. Man's mind had no access to external facts and, most important, no access to wholeness or reality. After his conversion, however, Huxley believed that reality, though only with great difficulty, could be known through mystical intuition. But, at all stages of his career, Huxley believed that it was man's duty to place himself in a proper relation to reality.

Perception of Reality

The external aspect of reality is infinitely subtler than the inner one. Huxley, perhaps because of his period of blindness, because he had experienced the betrayal of a sense organ, was only too well aware of the dangers of solipsism, dangers which raised to a central position the philosophic problem of how we know what we know. The splitting of experience into objective and subjective, like the splitting of the self into emotion

and intellect, was a convention he both utilized and rebelled against. Like Yeats, Eliot, and Lawrence, he desired unified sensibility. But in his early period, though he desired objectivity, he despaired of obtaining it, believing all knowledge to be conditioned by the imperfect modes of knowledge possessed by the mind. Later, when he accepted the mystics' claim to direct knowledge of reality, he was able, at last, to unite objective and subjective, to believe that both provided reliable facts (sense knowledge and knowledge by intuition or revelation) that led to a single and whole truth. Yet he never ceased to warn of the dangers of partial, subjective beliefs.

The external world existed, but what man knew primarily was the mental fact, the product of both external stimuli and internal feelings. Subject to distortion, such facts required constant scrutiny. Custom, convenience, bad habits, a perverse will, an insulating and isolating love of self, all features of life which prevented the free play of an altruistic, non-utilitarian, aesthetic attitude toward experience, these were the villains. Man was continually allowing himself to be trapped, was continually being persuaded to take the part for the whole. Huxley describes this process in connection with one of his culture heroes, the scientist:

> From the world we actually live in, the world that is given by our senses, our intuitions of beauty and goodness, our emotions and impulses, our moods and

> sentiments, the man of science abstracts a simplified private universe of things possessing only those qualities which used to be called "primary." Arbitrarily, because it happens to be convenient, because his methods do not allow him to deal with the immense complexity of reality, he selects from the whole of experience only those elements which can be weighed, measured, numbered, or which lend themselves in any other way to mathematical treatment. By using this technique of simplification and abstraction, the scientist has succeeded to an astonishing degree in understanding and dominating the physical environment. The success was intoxicating and, with an illogicality which, in the circumstances was doubtless pardonable, many scientists and philosophers came to imagine that this useful abstraction from reality was reality itself.[90]

Much of Huxley's teaching, early and late, can be symbolized by the fable of the blind man and the elephant: each blind man thought the elephant resembled the portion of the creature he had managed to grab hold of. Huxley makes this image the subject of one of the best known of his poems, "Two Realities":

> A WAGGON passed with scarlet wheels
> And a yellow body, shining new.
> "Splendid!" said I. "How fine it feels
> To be alive, when beauty peels
> The grimy husk from life." And you
>
> Said, "Splendid!" and I thought you'd seen
> That waggon blazing down the street;
> But I looked and saw that your gaze had been
> On a child that was kicking an obscene
> Brown ordure with his feet.
>
> Our souls are elephants, thought I,
> Remote behind a prisoning grill,
> With trunks thrust out to peer and pry
> And pounce upon reality;
> And each at his own sweet will
>
> Seizes the bun that he likes best
> And passes over all the rest.[91]

Symbol Systems

Man, possessing mind, reaches out to the world with mental hands as well as physical ones. Man's symbol systems, Huxley never tired of saying, were just as capable of deceiving him as any of his senses. Viewed as a source of knowledge, symbol systems showed themselves to have definite limitations. Viewed as a source of understanding, of access to total reality, they were inadequate at best and, at worst, were often productive of life-denying, life-defeating errors. Thus Huxley's chief self-accusation after his conversion was that he had been wrong to accept the scientific picture of reality as the whole truth.

Order, any man-made mental order, required the corrective of chaos, immediate experience. Frederick J. Hoffman recognizes and defines this facet of Huxley credo: "Each of us searches for his own way of accommodating himself to the universe. But we are frequently afraid of the reality we see and experience, and we hasten to impose upon it some form of order, original or borrowed. We are seldom hospitable toward mere diversity in itself; we are too often afraid of it. Huxley would have us accept the immediate first record of our senses, to be not affrighted but thrilled by their gift of disorder to our minds." Commenting on this, Hoffman remarks: "The principal defect in this philosophy of knowing is its marginless and limitless generosity to flux itself--so that one actually

escapes the responsibility of any interpretation of life by accepting and entertaining momentarily each of them."[92] Hoffman errs, however, in thinking that this attitude of openness represented the essential Huxlean position. The other side of the coin was Huxley's belief that the uninterpreted fact of experience, however spiritually refreshing, was meaningless if not part of a larger whole. Huxley's outlook balanced the one against the other, and his particular position during the different periods of his life depended on which element seemed most likely to defeat separation and insularity, to promote objectivity, comprehension, and wholeness. Huxley's usually favorable attitude toward art was based not only on the belief that it provided, at times, direct perception of reality but also on the consideration that it was the form of order which embodied with the least distortion the ideal of wholeness.

Many of the ideas summarized above can be illustrated by exerpts from a work of Huxley's middle period, Texts and Pretexts (1932), a work written before his conversion but after his early period. On the nature of the mind Huxley writes (he is commenting on a passage from Blake):

> The implication here, is that our imaginations can create the world in their own image. That they do some creating is obvious. . . . But experience shows that the processes of cleansing and improvement cannot go beyond a certain point, and that the effects cannot

> last for more than a very short time. We are not free to create imaginatively a world other than that in which we find ourselves. That world is given. For either, as common sense affirms, there is a thing in itself outside and independent of our consciousness, a thing which is unchangeably what it is, and so limits the creative power of the imagination in just the same way as his material limits the power of the sculptor. Or else subjective idealism is true and we create our world, but create it by means of a certain type of mind which, as it can only vary within relatively narrow limits, can only project a certain narrowly varying kind of universe. Blake wants the world to be different from what it is and asserts that, by some miracle, it will become different. And in the first moment of reading we generally believe him, because he is a great and most persuasive artist, and because what he says is always partly true and wholly desirable. No philosopher is quite so exciting as Blake; for none has the art of mingling such profound and important truths with such beautiful, wish-fulfilling errors.[93]

On the type of experience that beneficially enables us to escape the built-in defects of our own limiting symbol systems, he writes: "If the doors of percepton [sic] are cleansed, and if sensual enjoyment is improved, then the world will appear infinite and holy. And, in point of fact, artists and mystics do succeed, from time to time and for a brief moment, in cleansing their perception and improving their sensual enjoyment--with the happiest effects on the world in which they live."[94] About such a moment he writes:

> The horizontal light of evening causes the world to shine with such an unusual, such a goldenly improbable radiance, that, looking, we are startled out of our ordinary purblind complacency; we are almost forced to see things as they really are and not as we imagine them to be. Or rather, since we cannot see things as they really are, we are forced to become aware of our

> immediate impressions and to forget the phantom generalizations and symbols which constitute our everyday universe.[95]

Art and mysticism are linked in Huxley's thinking; poets are the secular equivalents of saints. Through insight they put men in touch with eternal reality. Their subjectivity is in tune with a greater objectivity. About the Impressionists he writes:

> Custom, for us, has staled the Impressionists. We look at their pictures and no longer feel that we are being made fools of and insulted. Sometimes, by luck or (trained by them) with a deliberate effort, we are able to see the external world with their innocent and unbiased eyes . . . see it for a little sub specie momenti. But, strangely and mysteriously, sub specie momenti is somehow sub specie aeternitatie. . . . What we ordinarily call "nature" and find duller than a witling's jest is in fact the system of generalizations and utilitarian symbols which we construct from our sensations. Sometimes, however, we are made directly and immediately aware of our sensations; it is an apocalypse; they seem supernatural. But it is through sensations that we come into contact with the external world, the world of Nature with a capital N. Hence a seeming paradox: external Nature is supernatural; and the supernatural, because mental, universe in which we do our daily living is all too natural--natural to the point of dullness.[96]

However, concerning the type of experience that is entirely self-contained, that is unconnected to any body of knowledge, that leads to no deepened understanding of the nature of things, Huxley is explicit--such experience is animalistic:

> Apes have emotional noises, but no names for classes of objects. The language of palaeolithic man was probably not very unlike the language of apes. He must have found it difficult to make noises when emotionally calm. (An unexcited dog cannot bark.) Noises that were intellectual abstractions--these he was only

> just learning to make. His power of generalization was therefore extremely feeble. He thought in terms of particular images. Hence the snapshot realism of his bisons--a realism which is only recaptured when men, grown very highly civilized, discover a technique for forgetting that art of abstraction, which made civilization possible, and learn to look at the world once again with the unprejudiced eyes of beings who do not yet know how to speak.[97]

In another essay, also of the thirties, he writes:

> Words form the thread on which we string our experiences. Without them we should live spasmodically and intermittently. Hatred itself is not so strong that animals will not forget it, if distracted, even in the presence of the enemy. . . . Animal love is as much at the mercy of distractions as animal hatred. The dumb creation lives a life made up of discrete and mutually irrelevant episodes. Such as it is, the consistency of human characters is due to the words upon which all human experiences are strung. We are purposeful because we can describe our feelings in rememberable words, can justify and rationalize our desires in terms of some kind of argument (C.E., p. 245).

In one of his last essays Huxley writes:

> We are humanized by imitating others, by learning their speech and by acquiring the accumulated knowledge which language makes available. But we understand only when, by liberating ourselves from the tyranny of words, conditioned reflexes and social conventions, we establish direct, unmediated contact with experience. The greatest paradox of our existence consists in this: that, in order to understand, we must first encumber ourselves with all the intellectual and emotional baggage which is an impediment to understanding (C.E., p. 386).

In view of Huxley's theory of development, discussed in the following section, it is helpful to paraphrase one of the key sentences in this passage: But we understand only when, rising through the tyranny of words, conditioned reflexes and social conventions, we reestablish on a higher level and in a new way direct, unmediated

contact with experience. It was for failing to recognize this truth that Huxley rebuked D. H. Lawrence in Beyond the Mexique Bay:

> Lawrence wrote eloquently of Oaxaca and Lake Chapala, with passion, sometimes over-emphatically, of the merits of that rank weed-life of the natural man. But it is significant that he spent only a few months in Mexico and that, wherever he lived among primitives, he found it necessary, in spite of the principles he had made his own, to refresh himself by occasional contacts through books, through civilized men and women, with the lilies of the mind and spirit. The attempt to return to primitiveness is both impractical and, I believe, wrong. For a lily is a lily and we know by direct intuition and by discursive reasoning, that it is better than a weed. . . . Lawrence so much hated the misapplication of science, that he thought that science itself should be abolished. But the only thing that can prevent science from being misapplied is more science of a higher quality. If Miahuatlan were the only possible alternative to Middlesborough, then really one might as well commit suicide at once. But luckily it is not the only alternative.[98]

But despite his role as a writer and intellectual, Huxley is always more conscious of the dangers of excessive order than the dangers of chaos: "The effort to reduce diversity to identity can be, and generally is, carried too far." The mind has a compulsive tendency to simplify:

> The human mind has an invincible tendency to reduce the diverse to the identical. That which is given us, immediately, by our senses, is multitudinous and diverse. Our intellect, which hungers and thirsts after explanation, attempts to reduce this diversity to identity. Any proposition stipulating the existence of an identity underlying diverse phenomena, or persisting through time and change, seems to us intrinsically plausible. We derive a deep satisfaction from any doctrine which reduces irrational multiplicity to rational and comprehensible unity.[99]

In this respect, Huxley is, somewhat ironically, a continuator of his grandfather's Victorian, iconoclastic tradition. The young Thomas Henry Huxley, like the young Aldous Huxley, employed scepticism as a base from which to attack outworn thought patterns: "The men of the new Enlightenment, which occurred in the middle years of the nineteenth century, once again used meaninglessness as a weapon against the reactionaries" (C.E., p. 367). The abandoning of meaninglessness as a strategy in response to the political events of the late twenties and thirties does not remove the basic concept of the way the mind works though it, perhaps, makes it less obvious.

Art and the Need for Chaos

With regard to art as a symbol system creating order it can be seen that Huxley viewed it in different ways according to the aspect he had in mind at the moment. Although Huxley believed art to be man's chief emblem of order, he regarded it often as something of a mixed blessing (a view he took toward most things) because if, on the one hand, it possessed a special status as the embodiment of the principle of unity, on the other it represented--especially literature--symbol knowledge, a stylized vision of external reality. Literature, employing the medium of words, was especially liable to the dangers of

distortion through excessive subjectivity and factual untruth. A critic's comments on the characters of Bernard Malamud exemplifies Huxley's point:

> And here lies the source of that strangeness we are puzzled to account for in his Jewish characters--they are so beautifully drawn in their physical being (their speech, their gestures, their ordinary social attitudes, their milieux) that we never think to question their authenticity as East European immigrant Jews, when all the while their spiritual lineaments have been quietly copied not from any models on earth but from an idea in the mind of Bernard Malamud.[100]

Following desire's lead men could project onto reality types of order that were little more than wishful thinking.

> Poetry "was ever thought to have some participation of diviness, because it doth raise and errect the mind by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things." This means, in modern jargon, that poetry is admirable only when it deals in wish-fulfilments. With this judgment I profoundly disagree. And, fortunately, many excellent poets have shown, by their practice, that they do too. There is, in every language, a huge mass of wish-fulfilment poetry; but there is also a great deal of poetry that renders, or that passes judgment on, man's actual experience--a great deal of poetry, in a word, that "doth buckle and bow the mind to the nature of things." For me, such poetry is by far the most interesting and valuable.[101]

Literature could do great harm as well as good. It could be a cause of separation as well as union, but it was <u>not</u> unimportant: "We tend to think and feel in terms of the art we like; and if the art we like is bad, then our thinking and feeling will be bad. And if the thinking and feeling of most of the individuals composing a society is bad, is not that society in danger?"[102] Good art was good not because of its subject-matter, though this was highly

significant. It was good because it enabled the individual to transcend the limitations of his personal vision. "In the best art we perceive persons, things and situations more clearly than in life and as though they were in some way more real than realities themselves. But this clearer perception is at the same time less personal and egotistic. Writers who permit their readers to see in this intense but impersonal way exercise an influence which, though not easily definable, is certainly profound and salutary."[103]

From the previous section of this chapter it will be remembered that, for Huxley, art was the communication of facts as well as the presentation of a symbol of order, subject-matter as well as form. Huxley never accepted the pure symbolist view that the subject matter should be totally absorbed by the form, that the term, literature, should be restricted to those works which were a special kind of discourse, a fictional or imaginary discourse. In "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," Huxley suggests that a psychology text, while not usually classifiable as a work of art, might, in point of fact, be one, if only "secondarily and incidentally" (C.E., p. 97). Here Huxley may have had in mind Freud's work or, more probably, William James's; for, as Norman Podhoretz observes: "We would all admit, if pressed, that books like Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams or Tocqueville's Democracy in America are

as much works of imagination as Ulysses or The Waste Land. . . ."[104] Indeed T. S. Eliot wavered on this point also:

> . . . we treat the historical writing of Clarendon or of Gibbon--our two great English historians--as literature; or Bradley's Logic, or Buffon's Natural History. All of these writers were men who, incidentally to their religious or historical, or philosophical purpose, had a gift of language which makes them delightful to read to all those who can enjoy language well written, even if they are unconcerned with the objects which the writers had in view. And I would add that though a scientific, or historical, or theological, or philosophic work which is also "literature," may become superannuated as anything but literature, yet it is not likely to be "literature" unless it had its scientific or other value for its own time.[105]

Because he was willing at times to be extreme and say, ". . . all communication is literature,"[106] Huxley was concerned about the impure as well as the pure aspect of literature. He was always strict about the degree to which literature presented an adequate view of life. Eliot said that pure literary criticism should be followed by criticism directed to the moral value of the work.[107] Most of Huxley's criticism was of the second kind. It was directed mainly against the partial or incorrect view which, sanctified by its embodiment as art, set itself up as the whole truth. When art, by the perfection of its order, obstructed the growth of knowledge and understanding, it must be viewed with a critical eye.[108]

Over-simplification by Abstraction

Several Athenaeum articles illustrate the anti-order aspect of the Huxley dialectic as it appears in his

literary criticism. In the Athenaeum he applied the truth-teller principle to Maeterlinck's play Betrothal. Huxley characterizes it as an allegorical fairy tale, "something in which the fantastic is wedded to the instructive."[109] Allegory was Huxley's word at this time for faulty generalizations. In another article Huxley had written extensively and contemptuously of man's tendency to falsify reality.

> Stones will preach as many sermons as there are Jaqueses to contemplate them; the running brooks contain a whole Bodleian. To see the world in terms of symbolism is one of humanity's chronic weaknesses. One must be immensely sophisticated to believe that things are what they seem to be--opaque objects, interesting in themselves and for themselves, and not transparent windows through which to gaze on further and more significant realities beyond.[110]

History and the literature of the past were record books of this fault: "The Middle Ages abounded in symbologists. Nor was the Renaissance exempt from the symbolizing tendency . . . . Even the most enlightened men indulged in the delightful occupation of making two meanings grow where only one grew before--among them the greatest English apostle of enlightenment, Francis Bacon himself."[111]

In the review of Maeterlinck's Betrothal, Huxley contrasts it unfavorably with the Christmas pantomine, Aladdin:

> As a work of art, "Aladdin" is far more original, far firmer and clearer in execution, and far healthier than M. Maeterlinck's panto at the other end of the Strand. A difference of degree separates "Aladdin" from the comic fantasy of Shakespeare, but a vast,

> unbridgeable difference of kind isolates "The Betrothal." If Shakespeare had ever treated the theme of "Aladdin," which indeed he might very well have done, he would in all probability have devised the Widow Twankey and the comic Peko as interrupters of the romantic theme; he would simply have produced a Shakespearian version--marvellous with poetry and rich grotesqueness--of the Hippodrome pantomime. But "The Betrothal"--no, he could never have written any kind of version of "The Betrothal." To do so he would have had to renounce his mind, cease to be Shakespeare.

Maeterlinck's fault, the cause of Huxley's disgust, is the premise of his play: "The prime thesis of M. Maeterlinck's allegory is that there is only one possible mate for every human being. . . . The Only Girl in the World theory has its origin in two very simple sets of facts, the one relating to the external circumstances of man's social environment, the other to his inward psychological make-up." Of these two causes, the subjective or psychological is more pertinent than the objective or social: "The other fact that has given strength to the Only Girl in the World notion is the psychological fact that human beings tend to rationalize their emotions--almost invariably with the most peculiar results."[112] As Huxley remarks elsewhere: "Modern man's besetting temptation is to sacrifice his direct perceptions and spontaneous feelings to his reasoned reflections; to prefer in all circumstances the verdict of his intellect to that of his immediate intuitions" (C.E., p. 6). In his essay, "Knowledge and Understanding," written in the middle fifties, Huxley would characterize over-abstraction, over-generalization, and

over-simplification as being among "the commonest of all intellectual sins and the most dangerous" (C.E., p. 317).

In another work of the fifties, The Doors of Perception, Huxley reiterates his position concerning the dangers of symbol systems as simplifications of reality:

> . . . the intellectual is by definition the man for whom, in Goethe's phrase, "the word is essentially fruitful." . . . We can never dispense with language and the other symbol systems; for it is by means of them, and only by their means, that we have raised ourselves above the brutes, to the level of human beings. But we can easily become the victims as well as the beneficiaries of these systems. We must learn how to handle words effectively; but at the same time we must preserve and, if necessary, intensify our ability to look at the world directly and not through that half opaque medium of concepts . . . .[113]

This quotation makes clear the fact that in issuing these warnings Huxley sees himself as addressing an audience of intellectuals who have overvalued symbols. Elsewhere in Doors Huxley writes: "Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born--the beneficiary inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people's experience, the victim in so far as it confirms him in the belief that reduced awareness is the only awareness and as it bedevils his sense of reality, so that he is all too apt to take his concepts for data, his words for actual things."[114]

Relativism and Empiricism

Before his conversion, writing in Texts and Pretexts, Huxley stressed two remedies as antidotes to oversimplification by abstraction: "reason and experiment."[115] Reason often took the form of relativism, the bringing to bear on a subject of all possible information and points of view, while experiment turned out to be the empirical attitude basic to Huxley's quest for objectivity. After his conversion Huxley emphasized the additional aids of meditation by the trained mystic and awareness of the immediate moment.

Huxley's relativism found many expressions, but its most memorable is in his doctrine of points of view. Everything must be considered from as many angles as possible. Perhaps the earliest full presentation of this idea comes in a review of one of Lord Haldane's lectures published in the Athenaeum:

> We shall . . . touch briefly on only one of Lord Haldane's points--the different categories of being in which man exists, and the dangers we run by dwelling on one of these modes of existence to the exclusion of the rest. It is possible, obviously enough, to look at a man in a variety of ways. For the chemist and the physicist he is a mass of molecules built up into a machine; for the physiologist he is a living organism; for the psychologist he is not only alive but conscious; for the philosopher and moralist he is an immortal spirit, who is because he thinks, and, knowing good from evil, can exercise a free choice. . . . Now it is clear that you are quite justified in regarding a man as a machine, if you keep in mind that he also exists on other planes, that he is something beside a machine. The danger is that, being intensely interested in man's machinery, you will not remember his

> other modes of existence and that you will be tempted to say that he is nothing but a machine. And this danger exists not in the study of man alone, but in the study of the whole universe. We are apt to see but a single aspect of reality, the aspect in which we personally are most interested, and to imagine that the single facet which is before our eyes is the whole truth. . . . It is the business of the philosopher, standing apart from the world of things, and not, like the man of science, absorbed in specialized researches, to look on reality as a whole and as it exists in all its possible modes of being.[116]

Haldane's message, as interpreted by the young critic of the Athenaeum, was the sermon Huxley would preach for the rest of his life.

The first expression of Huxley's empiricism appears equally early. In a review of a novel by Elie Faure, a review published in the Athenaeum, one finds Huxley writing:

> "J'ai perdu le secret qui complique la vie," says the hero of M. Barbusse's "Clarté." For him the war has disentangled the complicated world, leaving a plain untwisted clue to follow: the simple notion of Humanity leading to social revolution and pacifism. The process is exactly reversed in "La Roue." Pierre Lethievent begins where the other ends. His case is like that of so many intelligent young men who have passed a cloistered adolescence among books; they go out into the world with a ready-made philosophy of life into which they try, Procrustes-like, to fit their experience. They succeed sometimes; more often they fail, and the results are more or less painful according as their preconceived ideas are rigid, or flexible enough to be readjusted in the face of facts. The enormous experience of the war filled and burst the narrow bounds of many comfortably fixed ideas, Pierre's among them. "Il avait quitte la region des abstractions intransigeantes et des sentiments ingénus pour pénétrer dans l'empire des faits et leur complexité tragique." Pierre stumbles thorugh this tragic complexity of facts, trying to understand, trying to adjust and reconcile all the contradictory truths; now he sees only reality, life with its innumerable facets,

> each of which is a partial truth. His standards of good and evil also change. All that stirs up life, that gives it force and lyrical fervour, is good. All that tends to stagnation and repression and complacency is evil.

"How far this is," exclaims Huxley, "from M. Barbusse's ingenuous belief in the social revolution as the cure for all evils!" Huxley extols "M. Faure's merits as a critic of life . . . ."[117]

Art and the Need for Order

Opposition to excessive simplification through excessive order was only one half of the Huxley dialectic. Though man's dream of perfect order could be tragic, order in some form was necessary. As Huxley noted in Ends and Means: "If we were not always trying to reduce diversity to identity, we should find it almost impossible to think at all. The world would be a mere chaos, an unconnected series of mutually irrelevant phenomena."[118] In Brave New World Revisited he wrote: "The soul of wit may become the very body of untruth. However elegant and memorable, brevity can never, in the nature of things, do justice to all the facts of a complex situation." "But life is short and information endless: nobody has time for everything. In practice we are generally forced to choose between an unduly brief exposition and no exposition at all."[119] In an Athenaeum review, Huxley made this image of a necessary order organizing chaos, the creation image, the central motif:

> In reading these poems we get the impression that the author has only partially succeeded in "informing" (in the Platonic sense) the chaos of his thoughts and emotions. The chaos is an interesting chaos, a nebulous mass of beauty; at the command of some compelling creative word it might take a splendid and orderly shape. But the word has not been spoken; we can only speculate how fine Mr. Church's poetry would be if it had. Compressed, chastened, epigrammatized a little, such poems as "Hurricane," "Sunset in the Garden," "September Eve," would be remarkable poems of passion. As it is, the passion is there, wild, violent and vague, like an inundation. A greater poet would have known how to confine it within banks, and how to give the flood a direction.[120]

In later years, Huxley continued, however reluctantly, to recognize the need for and use of intellectual systems to bring together in a meaningful way the scattered impressions the mind received moment by moment.

> The science of aesthetics is not the same as, nor even a proximate means to, the practice and appreciation of the arts. How can one learn to have an eye for pictures, or to become a good painter? Certainly not by reading Benedetto Croce. One learns to paint by painting, and one learns to appreciate pictures by going to picture galleries and looking at them.
>
> But this is not to say that Croce and his fellows have wasted their time. We should be grateful to them for their labours in building up a system of thought, by means of which the immediately apprehended significance and value of art can be assessed in the light of general knowledge, related to other facts of experience and, in this way and to this extent, "explained" (P.P., p. 131).

As examples of Huxley's antidotes to disorder in literature and art due to lack of system, one might focus on his use of three factors--tradition, classicism, and universal human traits. Tradition and classicism were ready at hand for the young Huxley, but a concept of universal human traits of the type that could be used to give

fictional characters wide significance evolved slowly in Huxley's thought, becoming full blown only with the discovery of the work of Sheldon on body types. It was only later, convinced by his scientific and theological studies, that Huxley emphasized a belief in stable elements in the mind and body.

Since the words tradition and classicism may seem out of place in the work of a man who later, under the influence of Lawrence, proclaimed himself a romantic, and since these words have acquired a special flavor in twentieth century literature as a result of their adoption by T. S. Eliot, it might be well to point out that this is the sort of thing which has led to so much confusion on the part of Huxley critics. The context of Huxley's thought, as represented by the order-chaos dialectic, suggests that these words have a much more innocent meaning here than they do in the case of Eliot. There is no question, for example, of a tie-in with a social-political program. There is no secret sympathy, on Huxley's part, for Charles Maurras and the Action Française. In the Athenaeum essay, "Buffon," Huxley concludes his review by saying: "An occasional expression of dislike for the makers of the Revolution and a few jibes, in the manner of M. Maurras, at the Romantics remind us every now and then of M. Dimier's political prejudices. But on the whole, the book is remarkably temperate and unbiased. One is

grateful to M. Dimier for admiring Buffon as himself and not as a potential supporter of the 'Action Française.'"[121] Huxley was solely in search of ways of universalizing personal experience through general rules. There were two aspects to this--the psychological and the structural.

Huxley, as a young man rejecting the subjective and seeking the universal, sympathized with the aims of neo-classical art, an aesthetic aimed at communication. He rejected the symbolists' hermetic view of literature, a stand discussed above, and enrolled himself under the banner of trobar leu rather than that of trobar clus. He did this because he believed that the function of literature, of writings published as such, was to provide valuable communication on a high level to as many as possible, because he believed great literature should transcend the bounds of a narrow subjectivity and speak to the condition of a wide variety of men.[122] But if the young Huxley spoke up for classicism, it was the ideal he admired more than the specific formulations.

Structurally, one can see this dislike of the subjective in art in Huxley's rejection of the bildungs roman as a model for the early novels, in his admiration for novelists like Balzac and Dickens who painted a broad social canvas, and in his antipathy to stream-of-consciousness technique in the novel and overly subtle analyses of the mental life of fictional characters. Another point at

which this attitude becomes visible is in Huxley's treatment of artistic tradition and its influence on the practicing artist. Throughout his life Huxley also held that art is governed by an inner logic created by the examples of artists past and present, a logic which makes certain art forms possible at a given moment, a logic which is almost independent of historical events.

Tradition

Classicism in art meant to young Huxley objectivity and wholeness. Later, in Vulgarity in Literature, he rejected classicism on the grounds that it represented exclusion, the opposite of wholeness. (The principle of devotion to wholeness remained the same though Huxley appeared to have done an about face.) Tradition, likewise, meant for Huxley a means to an art not bogged down in excessive subjectivity but open to the widest possible audience of sensitive readers. Later, however, his views on tradition may have led to some dissatisfaction with art itself because art seemed limited by its own inner logic in what it could hope to accomplish: ". . . at any given epoch there is only one prevailing style of art, in terms of which painters and sculptors treat of a strictly limited number of subjects" (O.A.A., p. 32). A comment from a late essay may be instructive: "There is, to quote the title of Simone Weil's posthumous essay, a great 'Need for Roots'; but there is an equally urgent need, on occasion,

for total rootlessness" (C.E., p. 388). The element of order is recognized as being necessary, but it is always seen in dynamic tension with rootlessness, a need for chaos.

For the Athenaeum of June 6, 1919, Huxley wrote an article entitled, "Art and the Tradition." The opening paragraph, a discussion of Camille Mauclair's book L'Art Indépendant Français Sous La Troisième République, shows Huxley in the not-entirely-to-be-expected role of a defender of tradition:

> M. Mauclair is an independent who has lived to find himself a believer in tradition. Ever a hater of official art, he has been outstripped by none in his ardour to overthrow existing academies and institutes. He has been the admirer and, in many cases, the friend of most of the great independent artists in literature, painting and music who have lived and worked in the days of the Third Republic. Now, in his later years, he has come to the conclusion that a tradition and a discipline are profitable and necessary to the existence of the arts. He fears anarchy as much as he hates officialdom. It is not that he has ceased to admire his old friends and fellow-rebels; but he has come to believe that their example is pernicious to those who have inherited from them only the rebelliousness without the compensating genius. There will be many to agree with M. Mauclair in desiring to see the revival of a living classical tradition, which shall check and discipline the unlimited individualism that flourishes in the arts to-day.

In the concluding paragraphs, in a passage that recalls the letter of 1915 to Julian Huxley cited above, Huxley analyzes Robert de la Sizeranne's L'Art Pendant La Guerre and finds in it a survey of the influence of tradition on the art of Germany:

> Perhaps the only country in which a definite artistic tradition now exists is Germany. In his admirably amusing study of modern German art, M. de la Sizeranne gives a not too prejudiced picture of the results of this tradition. Germany is certainly a hideous warning of what havoc a bad tradition may work. The deplorable Boecklin, with his sentimental pantheism, his islands of the dead, his realistic mythology, is the father of the modern German school.
>
> Des Deutschen Künstlers Vaterland
> Ist Griechenland, ist Griechenland
>
> One traces Boecklin's neo-classicism everywhere: in Kley's pornographic drawings of centaurs and nymphs, or again, in the world of practical life, in that characteristically German cult for the nude, which drives earnest professors and their wives to go out ski-ing with no clothes on, in the belief that they are recapturing the authentic spirit of Hellas. Running parallel with Boecklinism, and perhaps deriving inspiration from the grandiose bestiality of the Boecklinian centaur, we find the brutal-colossal school of which every Bismarck memorial offers an example. Translated into terms of architecture and decoration, the same strength and size dominate modern German town-planning. The German tradition is a bad tradition and has been fruitful in bad works. But the important fact is that it has been fruitful. It justifies one in hoping much from a good tradition.[123]

In another article for the Athenaeum (November 14, 1919) Huxley comments on a volume of poetry by his friend, Drieu La Rochelle. Modern French poetry, Huxley decides with satisfaction, is not subjective: "Generalized, austere and intellectual, the French poetical style of to-day has reacted wholesomely against the richness, the too great subtlety, the preoccupation with shades and half-tones, which characterized the work of the last generation. The 'Cubist' poets have preserved the generalizations and the intellectuality of this style, but have substituted a

pleasing grotesqueness for the nobility and gravity of older poets, such as M. Duhamel and M. Claudel." M. La Rochelle is halfway between the two extremes of modern French poetry, Claudel and the Cubists, though closer to Claudel. Huxley puts the French poet in a context of Huxley's English contemporaries:

> It is interesting to compare M. La Rochelle's poetry with the work of our younger war poets. The reaction of such writers as Mr. Sassoon to the horrors of the trenches is immediate; their poetry is a record of these horrors, a series of instantaneous photographs picturing, almost without comment, emotions and incidents in the soldier's life. Other poets, of whom Mr. Nichols is perhaps the most interesting, have treated the raw material of sensation and emotion to a more elaborate process of digestion. But the basis of their poetry is still the mood, the incident, the vividly seen picture; on this text of immediate reality they write such philosophic sermons as may occur to them. But the case with M. La Rochelle is very different. There is in his poetry no record of events, no picturesque detail. He has rationalized and generalized the chaos of immediacy, and he ushers us, without preliminaries, straight into the clearer, calmer world of ideas.
>
> One can imagine, for example, how a contemporary English poet would write of the sensations of a young man from the university suddenly plunged into the closest physical intimacy with men of a different class and upbringing. He would--more or less subtly according to his talent--analyze his emotions hint at conversations, tell illustrative anecdotes. M. La Rochelle presents us in a line or two from a long poem, with the rationalized results of his emotions. . . . How different this is from anything in contemporary English poetry! and how different from what French poetry was when Verlaine was engaged in fixing the most delicate shades of nostalgic emotions! M. La Rochelle is an original thinker, but his way of expressing his thoughts is typical of modern French poetry.

Huxley concludes by clarifying the relationship of La Rochelle and Claudel. "In the essentials, however, he is

not a disciple of the Catholic poet. His outlook is wholly different: he sees life clearly, grimly, and not through the spectacles of Catholic mysticism."[124] The spectacles image, an image used elsewhere in the early writings of Huxley, refers to the workings of the mind. At this point Huxley usually views mysticism negatively, linking it not to universality but to subjectivity. It is not a way out of man's private universe but merely a cul de sac. His opinion of mysticism changed when he came to believe it represented general and objective intuitions concerning reality, when he came to believe that the intuitions of the mystic paralleled the findings of the scientist.

In 1934 Huxley was more explicit about the relation of tradition and man's mental processes. Here he was not so favorable in his estimate of its workings, viewing it as an obstacle to a broader view of things: "For an artist the material obstacles in the way of unrestricted self-expression are easier to surmount than the mental." Artists who can transcend the limitations of their technique can do whatever they like with their material. But what would they like? "The answer to that is that they liked only what they could like, only what they were psychologically capable of liking, only what, in a word, they had been conditioned to like. The Zeitgeist is just Professor Pavlov on a cosmic scale" (O.A.A., p. 17). Tradition may be stronger among primitive peoples, but

> . . . sooner or later even the most highly civilized and emancipated person comes to a mental frontier which he cannot pass--comes to it, of course, unaware, and does not realize his inability to go further; for it is of the essence of these inward barriers that they never reveal their presence, unless, as the result of some fortunate or unfortunate conjunction of circumstances, we are shaken out of our second nature and transported violently to the other side of what is thenceforward perceived to have been an arbitrary limitation of our freedom (O.A.A., p. 18).

Art, as tradition, becomes a way of seeing. It may be harmful but need not be: "One painter or writer may borrow from another and remain in his art completely original. Artistic borrowing is only harmful when the borrower turns the master's characteristic gesture--the expression of some individual habit of mind--into a convention, adding to it nothing significant of his own."[125] Art, in this respect, is like religion or philosophy: "An edited cosmology must necessarily reflect the character of the editors, and this character will become, to a certain extent, the character of all those who accept the edited religion as their guide through life. Philosophy, according to Bradley, is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe by instinct. But most of what we believe by instinct turns out, on analysis, to be merely what we happen to have picked up in childhood."[126] Man must grow; and, as he grows, he will necessarily press against arbitrary limitations of whatever kind. What Huxley is castigating here is stasis, passivity, acceptance of the status quo. Tradition can be an important force for either bad or good.

As Huxley noted in Texts and Pretexts, art can be responsible for the character of nations: "Nations are to a very large extent invented by their poets and novelists. The inadequacy of German drama and the German novel perhaps explains the curious uncertainty and artificiality of character displayed by so many of the Germans whom one meets in daily life."[127] Here tradition is seen positively, but in "On Tradition and the Individual Style," the essay of 1934 quoted from above, Huxley views it under the sign of separation: "Once established (mainly as the result of personal accidents), an artistic tradition canalizes the activity of artists--and the more isolated and homogeneous the society, the more strict, as we have seen, is their conditioning. Now, it is possible that some traditions are more propitious to artists than others." "Perhaps a very great artist might be able to surmount the obstacles which these put in his way. I do not know" (O.A.A., p. 30). Huxley had seen the problem even as a young man. In the Athenaeum he wrote: "Tradition is the best of guides, but one may be too traditional. A great writer cannot fit himself into existing moulds; he must alter them, develop them to suit his own purposes. To be able to embody one's spirit in the exact forms which others have created to give expression to their own thoughts is a sign of the weakness and poverty of that spirit."[128]

In an essay of the fifties, "Art and Religion," Huxley dealt with the relation of the "inner logic" of an artist's tradition to the historical milieu. Dealing with a particular example, baroque art in Rome during the seventeenth century, Huxley writes that art went its way independent of current religious ideals: "The truth would seem to be that while the great masses of the people remained, as ever, indifferent or fitfully superstitious, and while the masters of the spiritual life preached a worship of the Spirit in spirit and in truth, the artists chose to glorify a Christianity of thrills and visceral yearnings, now violent, now cloyingly sentimental. And they chose to do so for reasons connected, not with the problems of life, but with those of art" (O.A.A., p. 33). Citing the example of the monastery of Pontignano, he remarks: "The Pompadourish art in the Pontignano chapels tells us nothing whatever about contemporary Carthusian religion. All we learn from it is that, when eighteenth-century Carthusians felt the need of restoring ancient buildings, the only restorers available were, as we might have expected, men brought up in the current tradition of art" (O.A.A., p. 34).

Classicism

In his earlier mood, when artistic tradition seemed one of the ways to escape undue subjectivity and attain the breadth of vision that represented truth and wholeness,

Huxley had kind words for such neo-classical artists as Ben Jonson (1919) and Christopher Wren (1923). Ben Jonson was, above all, an artist with principles, an artist who curbed the run away impulse of his fertile imagination:

> In these sentences from Discoveries Ben Jonson paints his own picture--portrait of the artist as a true artificer--setting forth, in its most general form, and with no distracting details of the humors or the moral purpose of art, his own theory of the artist's true function and nature. Jonson's theory was no idle speculation, no mere thing of words and air, but a creed, a principle, a categorical imperative, conditioning and informing his whole work (O.A.A., pp. 149-50).

Even in this early essay, however, even in the midst of his general praise, Huxley puts his dialectic to work and finds that Jonson's virtue was also a shortcoming since it represented a less inclusive art than that of his contemporaries, the great Elizabethans:

> Working solely with the logical intellect and rejecting as dangerous the aid of those uncontrolled illogical elements of imagination, he produced work that is in its own way excellent. It is well-wrought, strong, heavy with learning and what the Chaucerians would call "high sentence." The emotional intensity and brevity excepted, it possesses all the qualities of the French classical drama. But the quality which characterizes the best English poetry of all periods, the power of moving in two worlds at once, it lacks. Jonson, like the French dramatists of the seventeenth century, moves on a level, directly towards some logical goal. The road over which his great contemporaries take us is not level; it is, as it were, tilted and uneven, so that as we proceed along it we are momently shot off at a tangent from the solid earth of logical meaning into superior regions where the intellectual laws of gravity have no control. The mistake of Jonson and the classicists in general consists in supposing that nothing is of value that is not susceptible of logical analysis; whereas the truth is that the greatest triumphs of art take place in a world

> that is not wholly of the intellect, but lies somewhere between it and the inenarrable, but, to those who have penetrated it, supremely real, world of the mystic (O.A.A., p. 153).

In words oddly reminiscent of those the critics would later apply to him, Huxley writes, "His aim was to give his audiences real facts flavored with sound morality. He failed to be a great realist, partly because he lacked the imaginative insight to perceive more than the most obvious and superficial reality, and partly because he was so much preoccupied with the sound morality that he was prepared to sacrifice truth to satire; so that in place of characters he gives us humors, not minds, but personified moral qualities" (O.A.A., p. 152). And again, ". . . instead of creating in his art the actual world of men, he invented the wholly intellectual and therefore wholly unreal universe of Humors" (O.A.A., p. 155). His conclusion is an attempt to reconcile an admiration for one type of objectivity with his depreciation of an exclusive and highly stylized art form: "Ben's reductions of human beings to a series of rather unpleasant Humors is sound and medicinal. Humors do not, of course, exist in actuality; they are true only as caricatures are true. There are times when I wonder whether a caricature is not, after all, truer than a photograph; there are others when it seems a stupid lie. But at all times a caricature is disquieting; and it is very good for most of us to be made uncomfortable" (O.A.A., p. 157).

Huxley's essay, "Sir Christopher Wren," is signif-
icant because it represents so clearly the use of an his-
torical figure as the embodiment of one end of a dialectic.
The historical figure placed opposite to Wren is Ruskin.
Wren, as readers of Antic Hay recall, is the guiding spirit
of Grumbril Senior who recreates in miniature the ideal
London Wren would have built if his plans had not been
frustrated. Wren represents order seen positively as the
benign opponent of arbitrary and unruly individualism. In
his Athenaeum article on Ruskin, Huxley had preferred
classical architecture to nineteenth century sham Gothic:

> . . . we think, with a touch of sadness, of Ruskin's eloquent words, "Gothic is not only the best, but the only rational architecture, as that which can fit itself most easily to all service, vulgar or noble." Regretfully we remember the beauty and comfort of the rooms in Queen's or the New Buildings of Magdalen; we compare the calm simplicity of the Camera or the Judge's Lodgings with the tortured frenzy of the Meadow Buildings. But we must not think of these evil Palladian things. Founded on pride and luxury, they have not the moral purity of Gothic buildings. Ruskin gives us the choice of being good and living in Keble or living in Magdalen New Buildings and being bad. For ourselves, we have no hesitation. We are for Palladio and the primrose path.[129]

This essay on Wren, apparently delivered first as an
address on the occasion of Wren's bicentenary, Huxley
turns to his attack on Ruskin:

> Descending with majesty from his private Sinai, Mr. Ruskin dictated to a whole generation of Englishmen the aesthetic Law. On monolithic tables that were the Stones of Venice he wrote the great truths that had been revealed to him. Here is one of them:

> It is to be generally observed that the proportions of buildings have nothing to do with the style or general merit of their architecture. An architect trained in the worst schools and utterly devoid of all meaning or purpose in his work, may yet have such a natural gift of massing and grouping as will render his structure effective when seen at distance.

Now it is to be generally observed, as he himself would say, that in all matters connected with art, Ruskin is to be interpreted as we interpret dreams--that is to say, as signifying precisely the opposite of what he says. Thus, when we find him saying that good architecture has nothing to do with proportion or the judicious disposition of masses and that the general effect counts for nothing at all, we may take it as more or less definitely proven that good architecture is, in fact, almost entirely a matter of proportion and massing, and that the general effect of the whole work counts for nearly everything (O.A.A., pp. 274-75).

ater Huxley comments:

> The architects of the nineteenth century sinned . . . towards meanness and a negation of art. Senselessly preoccupied with details, they created the nightmare architecture of "features." The sham Gothic of early Victorian times yielded at the end of the century to the nauseous affectation of "sham peasantry." Big houses were built with all the irregularity and more than the "quaintness" of cottages; suburban villas took the form of machine-made imitations of the Tudor peasant's hut. To all intents and purposes architecture ceased to exist; Ruskin had triumphed (O.A.A., p. 277).

is as an opponent of this destruction of art that Wren

es his place in the pantheon of Huxley heroes. Huxley

tes that

> . . . the qualities which most obviously distinguish Wren's work are precisely those whch [sic] Ruskin so contemptuously disparages and which we, by our process of interpretation have singled out as the essentially architectural qualities. In all that Wren designed--I am speaking of the works of his maturity . . .--we see a faultless proportion, a felicitous massing and

> contrasting of forms. He conceived his buildings as three-dimensional designs which should be seen, from every point of view, as harmoniously proportioned wholes (O.A.A., p. 275).

Wren's virtues include the ability to bring together diverse elements in a new unity. Huxley observes that Wren's "originality reveals itself in the way in which he combines the accepted features of classical Renaissance architecture into new designs that were entirely nglish and his own." However Wren's aesthetic wholeness nd sanity are the outward sign of a moral wholeness:

> But Wren's most characteristic quality--the quality which to his work, over and above its pure beauty, its own peculiar character and charm--is a quality rather moral than aesthetic. . . . 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 (O.A.A., p. 276).

tley concludes: ". . . it is in England that the golden n of reasonableness and decency--the practical philosy of the civilized man--has received its most elegant dignified expression" (O.A.A., p. 278).

versal Human Traits

Another form of order which Huxley found increasy appealing was the concept of certain standard or ersal factors in the mind and body, factors which d serve as a basis for reliable generalizations coning the nature of man. In an early essay, published

in the Athenaeum on June 4, 1920, Huxley treated the idea playfully. He opens by pointing out that Dowden has criticized students of Shakespeare for oversimplifying Hamlet's character in an effort to remove contradictory elements. Huxley uses the citation as a jumping off point for a discussion of the mind's tendency to classify and reduce people to types:

> It is usually assumed that the presence of some qualities involves the absence of others, and, further, we have a rough-and-ready classification, whereby certain qualities occur together. These classifications are, in practice, adopted by all of us, from William James with his division of all humanity into tender-minded and tough-minded people, to the poor little hack novelist for whom all retired Irish Colonels are red-faced, choleric and good natured. In America, we understand, there are experts who make a good income by correlating various moral and mental qualities with such physical traits as the width between the eyes, the shape of the jaw and the size of the ear-lobes. A great manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway is supposed to have refused all applicants whose fingers were stained with nicotine.

wever, Huxley is not, this time, leading up to an all-out sault on over-simplification. "But although the method s its dangers when pursued into details, it is neverthess true that men fall into types. In the drama and the el, at any rate, there is such a thing as 'consistency' character, and we insist on consistency in fiction bese we find it in life."[130] The fact that some element order exists leads Huxley to speculate on the relation- of type and intellectual outlook. "It should be an eresting question to philosophers to determine how far

this consistency extends. Will it ever be possible to deduce, from a man's behavior in a Bank Holiday crowd, his views about the Absolute? How many of a man's beliefs are determined by his 'temperament'?" After speculating that most philosophy, and perhaps even mathematics, is subject to the influence of temperament, Huxley turns to the bull-fight ring, using its different schools of fighters as examples, and follows this by a comment on the possible use of eugenics that must be the germ of the picture of bottle babies in Brave New World:

> It becomes evident that the only effective way to make converts is to breed them. We foresee that, when the Eugenists gain control of the country, unprecedented intrigues will be set on foot. The poet with high connections will arrange for the procreation of an appreciative audience of not less than twenty thousand. With this solid nucleus of fated adherents he could well trust to chance for world-fame. Immortality would be a matter of bargaining; it would be arranged for, on the give-and-take principle. It already distresses many serious patriots that the only man of our time who seems secure of immortality should be a German-Jew. Such almost criminal absent-mindedness on the part of Providence would be tactfully corrected.[131]

The next stage in Huxley's thinking about types is collected in Texts and Pretexts. In the chapter entitled, "The Individual," Huxley examines Blake's theory that individuals as such do not exist; a man is a "mere locality in space--the region where states occur; nothing more." Huxley decides:

> Blake's doctrine, then, would seem to be partially true. Our successive states are islands--but, for the most part, "sister islands linking their coral arms under the sea"; islands of the same archipelago, having

> the same geology, the same fauna and flora, the same climate and civilization. But here and there, in midocean, rises some isolated peak; uninhabited, or peopled by races of strange men and unknown animals; an island where life is unrecognizably different from that which we lead on the familiar atolls of our home waters. Between these and the oceanic islands, there exists, no doubt, some obscure, submarine connection. If in no other way, they are at least united in this: that they rise from the crust of the same globe. But the connection is invisible; we have no direct knowledge of it, can only infer its existence. For practical purposes--as mystics and lawyers unexpectedly agree--it is not there.[132]

A new application of the theory of types comes in Ends and Means. Here Huxley applies it to society, to the working of democracy in particular.

> Not all those who can't be bothered with democracy are debarred from political life by want and poverty. Plenty of well-paid workmen and, for that matter, plenty of the wealthiest beneficiaries of the capitalistic system, find that they can't be bothered with politics. The reason is not economic, but psychological; has its source, not in environment, but in heredity. People belong to different psycho-physiological types and are endowed with different degrees of general intelligence. The will and ability to take an effective interest in large-scale politics do not belong to all, or even a majority of, men and women. Preoccupation with general ideas, with things and people distant in space, with contingent events remote in future time, is something which it is given to only a few to feel. "What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?" The answer in most cases is: Nothing whatsoever.[133]

In The Perennial Philosophy, Huxley utilized the a types of William Sheldon in his chapter on "Religion Temperament" (P.P., p. 147). Huxley describes "the ee categories, in terms of which Sheldon has worked out is, without question, the best and most adequate sification of human differences":

> To the three physical components Sheldon gives the names of endomorphy, mesomorphy, and ectomorphy. The individual with a high degree of endomorphy is predominantly soft and rounded and may easily become grossly fat. The high mesomorph is hard, big-boned and strong muscled. The high ectomorph is slender and has small bones and stringy, weak, unemphatic muscles. The endomorph has a huge gut, a gut that may be more than twice as heavy and twice as long as that of the extreme ectomorph. In a real sense his or her body is built around the digestive tract. The centrally significant fact of mesomorphic physique, on the other hand, is the powerful musculature, while that of the ectomorph is the over-sensitive and (since the ratio of body surface to mass is higher in ectomorphs than in either of the other types) relatively unprotected nervous system (P.P., pp. 149-152).

uxley relates the three types to the religious life. The path of devotion is the path naturally followed by ne person in whom the viscerotonic component is high." The path of works is for those whose extraversion is of e somatotonic kind, those who in all circumstances feel e need to 'do something.'" "Finally, there is the way knowledge, through the modification of consciousness, til it ceases to be ego-centered and becomes centered in united with the divine Ground. This is the way to ch the extreme cerebrotonic is naturally drawn" (P.P., 152-153).

In his last book, Literature and Science, Huxley rns once more to types and their value as a means of ring our insights about man: "It was not until the tieth century that science at last caught up with rature and began to correlate differences of physique differences of temperament and behavior. What the

men of letters had done intuitively was now done methodically by the experimenters and the statisticians." Huxley concludes by recommending the use of the findings of science in literature:

> To the twentieth-century man of letters science offers a treasure of newly discovered facts and tentative hypotheses. If he accepts this gift and if, above all, he is sufficiently talented and resourceful to be able to transform the new raw materials into works of literary art, the twentieth-century man of letters will be able to treat the age-old and perennially relevant theme of human destiny with a depth of understanding, a width of reference, of which, before the rise of science, his predecessors (through no fault of their own, no defect of genius) were incapable.[134]

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II

[1]Aldous Huxley, Collected Short Stories (New York, 1957), pp. 374-375. Hereafter cited as C.S.S.

[2]In a letter to Mrs. Creighton, September, 1907, Mrs. Ward wrote: "What interests and touches me most, in religion, at the present moment, is Liberal Catholicism. It has a bolder freedom than anything in the Anglican Church, and a more philosophic and poetic outlook. It seems to me at any rate to combine the mystical and scientific powers in a wonderful degree. If I only could believe that it would last, and had a future!" Mrs. Ward's daughter comments that Mrs. Ward was reading deeply in Father Tyrrell, Bergson, and William James at this time--the period of her greatest contact with and influence on Aldous Huxley. See Janet Penrose Trevelyan, The Life of Mrs. Humphrey Ward (New York, 1923), p. 257. On Krishnamourti see F. Baldensperger, "Les petits illogismes d'un grand romancier: une hypothèse historique d'Aldous Huxley," in Essays in Honor of Albert Feuillerat, ed. Henri M. Peyre (New Haven, 1943), p. 258.

[3]Clark, p. 180.

[4]Clark, p. 139.

[5]Aldous Huxley, Island (New York, 1962), p. 185. Hereafter cited as Island.

[6]Noel Annan, Leslie Stephen, His Thought and Character in Relation to his Time (London, 1951), p. 214n.

[7]Julian Huxley, Touchstone for Ethics 1893-1942 (New York, 1947).

[8]C. D. Broad, "Review of Huxley's Evolutionary Ethics," Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Herbert Feigl and Alfred Sellars (New York, 1949), pp. 564-586.

[9]Julian Huxley, The Individual in the Animal Kingdom (Cambridge, 1912), p. 151.

[10]See A.H., pp. 42, 59-60. On Huxley's father see Clark, pp. 131-132. See Atkins, p. 39.

[11]Cyril Connolly, The Enemies of Promise, rev. ed. (New York, 1948), p. 47.

[12]Huxley put his father into several works. See Clark, pp. 233-234 and L., pp. 409-410.

[13]William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature (New York, 1958), p. 298.

[14]C. E., p. 1. Note the house image and similar use of the word snug (C.E., p. 5).

[15]Aldous Huxley, On Art and Artists (New York, 1960), pp. 156-157. Hereafter cited as O.A.A.

[16]Atkins, pp. 39-45. Atkins sees Huxley as a belated Victorian. See, however, Calvin Bedient, "The Huxleys: Brave Voyagers," The Nation, CCVII (October 14, 1968), p. 377.

[17]On the God of the Evolutionists see Gertrude Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution (New York, 1962), p. 398.

[18]Aldous Huxley, Time Must Have a Stop (New York, 1944), p. 141. Hereafter cited as Time.

[19]Cited in Annan, p. 155.

[20]Irvine, p. 134.

[21]Irvine, p. 117. Huxley is recalling Newton's famous metaphor.

[22]Island, p. 134.

[23]William Gaunt, The Aesthetic Adventure (New York, 1945), p. 36.

[24]The cult of extroversion placed many writers in strange position of supporting anti-intellectualism. Huxley on this see "Mr. Noyes," The Athenaeum, July 30, , p. 142. Hereafter cited as Ath. All subsequent tions from this magazine refer to articles published e by Aldous Huxley.

[25]See sections 2 and 3 of "Part 1: Predicament" in olly. See Richard Ellmann, ed., Edwardians and Late orians (New York, 1960), pp. 206-207.

[26]Ellmann, pp. 197-198, 203.

[27]John Lehman, A Nest of Tigers: The Sitwells in their Times (Boston, 1968), passim, and L., passim.

[28]Ruth Z. Temple, "Aldous Huxley et la littérature française," Revue de Littérature comparée, XIX (January-March, 1939), pp. 65-110.

[29]John R. Reed, Old School Ties: The Public Schools in British Literature (Syracuse, New York, 1964), passim. This is the best survey of this material. See also Connolly, passim.

[30]Edith Sitwell, Elegy for Dead Fashion (London, 1929), p. 11.

[31]Sacheverell Sitwell, Splendours and Miseries (London, 1943), p. 24.

[32]Sacheverell Sitwell, Collected Poems (London, 1936), pp. 424-425.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Sacheverell Sitwell, Primitive Scenes and Festivals (London, 1942).

[35]Lehman, p. 69.

[36]Lehman, p. 70.

[37]Connolly, p. 55.

[38]Loc. cit.

[39]Arthur Symons, "Bayreuth: Notes on Wagner," ne, IV (September 1899), p. 145.

[40]Balzac cited in Osbert Burdett, The Beardsley riod, (New York, 1925), p. 8.

[41]Lehman, p. 40.

[42]Clark, p. 214.

[43]G. M. Trevelyan, English Social History (New York, 4), p. 582.

[44]Jerome Hamilton Buckley, The Victorian Temper bridge, Mass., 1951), p. 217.

[45]Ath.,(December 31, 1920), p. 893.

[46]C. K. Stead, The New Poetic: Yeats to Eliot (New York, 1964), p. 69.

[47]Stead, p. 75.

[48]Arnold Bennett cited in Stead, p. 51.

[49]Clark, pp. 136-138.

[50]Clark, p. 137.

[51]Clark, p. 138.

[52]Ath., February 20, 1920, p. 242.

[53]Ath., July 16, 1920, p. 81.

[54]Ath., May 21, 1920, p. 672.

[55]Ath., October 22, 1920, p. 565.

[56]C.E., p. 98.

[57]O.A.A., p. 134.

[58]For Noyes see Ath., July 30, 1920, p. 142. For atson see Ath., October 24, 1919, p. 1066.

[59]C. A. Rodway, "The Last Phase," in The Pelican uide to English Literature, ed. Boris Ford, V: From Dickins Hardy (Baltimore, 1958), p. 402.

[60]Aldous Huxley, "John Davidson," in The English ets, Selections with Critical Introductions, ed. Thomas mphrey Ward, V (London, 1918), p. 562-565 passim. Here- ter cited as Ward.

[61]Ath., October 10, 1919, p. 996.

[62]Ward, pp. 562-565 passim.

[63]Aldous Huxley, The Burning Wheel (Oxford, 1916), 10. Hereafter cited as Burning.

[64]Ath., June 13, 1919, p. 458.

[65]Frank Kermode, Romantic Image (New York, 1964), 57.

[66]Ath., May 21, 1920, p. 672.

[67]Ath., March 12, 1920, p. 339.

[68]Ath., June 20, 1919, p. 510.

[69]Ath., October 22, 1920, p. 565.

[70]Ath., October 17, 1919, p. 1031.

[71]Ath., August 22, 1919, p. 783.

[72]Ath., September 5, 1919, p. 842.

[73]Aldous Huxley, "The Subject-Matter of Poetry," in Three Critical Essays on Modern Poetry, Chapbook, 2nd Ser., No. 9 (London, 1920), pp. 11-16, passim.

[74]Aldous Huxley, Literature and Science, (New York, 1963), pp. 106-107. Hereafter cited as L.S.

[75]See also Aldous Huxley, "Culture and the Individual," in LSD: The Consciousness-Expanding Drug, ed. David Solomon (New York, 1964), pp. 39-44. Hereafter cited as Solomon.

[76]Ath., December 12, 1919, p. 1335.

[77]Ath., June 13, 1919, p. 458.

[78]On advance in poetry see Ath., March 5, 1920, p. 307. On young London Poets see Ath., May 21, 1920, p. 672.

[79]Quoted in Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-950 (Garden City, New York, 1950), p. 185. For Huxley on ignificant form see Ath., August 29, 1919, p. 831.

[80]Robert Gibson, ed. Modern French Poets on Poetry Cambridge, 1961), p. 150.

[81]T. S. Eliot in T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work, . Allen Tate (New York, 1966), p. 280.

[82]Loc. cit.

[83]Ath., June 27, 1919, p. 541.

[84]Ath., July 25, 1919, p. 666.

[85]Ward, V, p. 607.

[86]O.A.A., p. 37.

[87]O.A.A., p. 32.

[88]Ath., June 27, 1919, p. 541.

[89]Ellmann, p. 192.

[90]C. E., pp. 361-362.

[91]Burning, p. 16.

[92]Frederick J. Hoffmann, "Aldous Huxley and the Novel of Ideas," in Forms of Modern Fiction: Essays Collected in Honor of Joseph Warren Beach, ed. William Van O'Connor (Minneapolis, 1948), p. 72. Hereafter cited as Hoffman.

[93]Aldous Huxley, Texts & Pretexts: An Anthology with Commentaries (New York, 1962), p. 57-58. Hereafter cited as Texts.

[94]Texts, p. 57.

[95]Texts, p. 31.

[96]Texts, p. 23.

[97]Texts, p. 53.

[98]Beyond, pp. 249-250.

[99]Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means (New York, 1937), . 13. Hereafter cited as Ends.

[100]Norman Podhoretz, Doings and Undoings (New York, 968), p. 177.

[101]Texts, pp. 6-7.

[102]Texts, p. 1.

[103]Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree (New York, 1937), 30. Hereafter cited as O.T.

[104]Podhoretz, p. 133.

[105]T. S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature," in Selected ;ays, New Edition (New York, 1950), p. 344.

[106]O.T., p. 56.

[107]Eliot, p. 343.

[108]L. S., pp. 53-54. Huxley greatly admired the poetry Hopkins yet was offended by his use of outdated scientific :epts for imagery.

[109]Ath., February 4, 1921, p. 129.

[110]Ath., November 19, 1920, p. 697.

[111]loc. cit.

[112]Ath., February 4, 1921, p. 129.

[113]Aldous Huxley, Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell (New York, 1963), pp. 73-74. Hereafter cited as Doors.

[114]Doors, pp. 23-24.

[115]Texts, p. 173.

[116]Ath., July 4, 1919, p. 558.

[117]Ath., May 23, 1919, p. 377.

[118]Ends, p. 13.

[119]Aldous Huxley, Brave New World Revisited (New York, 1958), p. vii.

[120]Ath., December 5, 1919, p. 1302.

[121]Ath., June 27, 1919, p. 536.

[122]For a similar view see Christopher Isherwood, Vedanta for the Western World (New York, 1945), p. 16.

[123]Ath., June 6, 1919, p. 440.

[124]Ath., November 14, 1919, p. 1202.

[125]Ath., August 6, 1920, p. 172.

[126]O.A.A., p. 27.

[127]Texts, p. 52.

[128]Ath., June 13, 1919, p. 458.

[129]Ath., September 5, 1919, p. 842.

[130]Ath., June 4, 1920, p. 737.

[131]Ibid.

[132]Texts, p. 46-47.

[133]Ends, p. 85.

[134]L.S., p. 56.

CHAPTER III

AFTER CONVERSION: HUXLEY AND RELIGION

A crucial question in any exposition of Huxley's ideas is the nature of the effect his "conversion" had on his viewpoint. The general assumption has been that it occurred, and that it was devastating, effecting almost a complete revision of Huxley's thought. Many critical studies of Huxley have taken this as a starting point. This study has taken the view, as suggested above in the discussion of the two-career theory, that Huxley's conversion was not an about face but rather a continuation as well as a transformation and extension of positions on art and life established at the beginning of Huxley's writing career. Taking art as a yardstick, the previous chapters have presented evidence to show that descriptions of the young Huxley as a pure aesthete or, conversely, as a secret enemy of art are mistaken and why they should be regarded as being so. Here the point will be made that Huxley's conversion, if such it was, was something other than is usually supposed, that the change affected his esthetic very little, and that the beliefs described above in Chapter II provide the basic dynamics for the religious development of Huxley's final period.

Huxley's Conversion

It might be best to approach the problem of Huxley's conversion by examining the nature of Huxley's conversion as well as what he converted to. The word conversion often suggests a violent emotional experience leading to a drastic change in the way of life. Huxley's does not seem to have been of this type, a fact of central importance in determining its effect on his thinking. Huxley had noted by 1919 the limitations of the scientific world view[1] and, in any case, had always, despite later disclaimers, leaned toward a version of mysticism. Thus he wrote his brother, Julian, in 1915: "I have come to agree with Thomas Aquinas that individuality . . . in the animal kingdom if you like . . . is nothing more than a question of mere matter. We are potentially at least, though habit of matter has separated us, unanimous. One cannot escape mysticism; it positively thrusts itself, the only possibility, upon one" (L., p. 88). The story of Huxley's conversion is really the story of his long search for an acceptable version of mysticism. He searched also for a rationale which would justify putting faith in the intuition of unity which he already possessed by direct experience. Several months before the letter to Julian, he wrote, from Scotland, to Jelly d'Aranyi:

> One does feel tremendously, when one is in this beautiful country, that one is a part of a larger soul, which embraces everything.--But then again I

> myself feel equally keenly, when I get back among all the wretchedness of the town, that it is impossible to recognize this splendid unity. It looks as though the amount of good and evil were about the same in the world. I think the good will probably win in the end--though not necessarily, unless the most persistent and tremendous efforts are made. I dont [sic] think one is justified in taking a holiday, under the belief that everything is necessarily falling out for the best. But I'm not a pessimist, and I think it will be all right. I think we shall ultimately work all the disorder into a single principle, which will be an Absolute--but which at present exists only potentially and at the nature of which we can only very dimly guess (L., p. 73).

In the chapter, "Beliefs," in Ends and Means (1937), Huxley assesses the intellectual milieu in which his conversion took place. Whether reality as a whole could be known or experienced was the basic question. Conveniently ignoring the historical record he states that, a decade earlier, he would have answered in the negative. Now he had come to the conclusion that it could, at least by some people. "Does the world as a whole possess the value and meaning that we constantly attribute to certain parts of it (such as human beings and their works); and, if so, what is the nature of that value and meaning? This is a question which, a few years ago, I should not even have posed. For, like so many of my contemporaries, I took it for granted that there was no meaning. . . . I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none . . ." (C.E., p. 364). Huxley goes on to discuss meditation as "a method for acquiring knowledge

about the essential nature of things" (C.E., p. 373). The knowledge acquired by those who have undertaken the proper training in this discipline is paralleled with the findings of those "trained in the discipline of mathematical physics" (C.E., p. 373). Huxley concludes, "The modern conception of man's intellectual relationship to the universe was anticipated by the Buddhist doctrine that desire is the source of illusion" (C.E., p. 374).

Huxley is, quite obviously, approaching his problem from two angles, and it is the conjunction of evidence from two disparate intellectual fields that disposes him to a belief in mysticism:

> . . . investigators, trained in the discipline of mathematical physics and equipped with instruments of precision, have made observations from which it could be inferred that all the apparently independent existents in the world were built up of a limited number of patterns of identical units of energy. . . . Meanwhile the mystics has shown that investigators, trained in the discipline of recollection and meditation, could obtain direct experience of a spiritual unity underlying the apparent diversity of independent consciousness (C.E., p. 373).

Huxley was susceptible to belief in ideas that cross-checked in this way. In his essay on D.H. Lawrence, he mentions that their agreement on many issues seemed significant since they were such different minds. Thus Huxley is willing to make an act of faith but only cautiously. "There is probably no argument by which the case for theism, or for deism, or for pantheism in either its pancosmic or acosmic form, can be convincingly

proved . . . . Final conviction can come only to those who make an act of faith. The idea is one which most of us find very distressing" (C.E., p. 369).

In Doors of Perception (1954), Huxley discussed meditation and what it has meant to him up to the period of the fifties when he first experimented with mescalin: "For 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'" (C.E., p. 335). Huxley's conversion would seem to have been primarily a matter of intellectual conviction leading up to an act of faith justified by reason; and its chief manifestation, meditation, would seem to have been equally intellectual and moderate.

The nature of Huxley's conversion is the subject of comment by the English student of religions, R.C. Zaehner, in his controversial book, Mysticism Sacred and Profane. Because Zaehner is a hostile witness of Huxley's religious views, it may be useful to quote his remarks extensively:

> It was . . . the great religious systems of India which principally attracted him, particularly the Vedānta and those forms of Buddhism which are most akin to it. Just why this should have been it is difficult to say. Prima facie one might have supposed that his attraction was based on some profound religious experience and that this experience was felt to be in accordance with what the Vedānta taught rather than with what the Christian mystics described. Huxley himself, however gives the lie to this in The Doors of Perception. . . . We can only conclude that Huxley's "conversion to a Vedāntin way of life was due to little more than a total rejection of everything that modern civilization stands for and to a deep-seated aversion to historical Christianity. . . .[2]

Huxley's concept of "contemplation" seems to have been extremely wide, extending indeed to all the activities of normally educated and cultivated persons. It would never have occurred to the great majority of these to refer to their appreciation, rapt or otherwise, of poetry, painting, or music as "contemplation", a term which has come to have religious overtones. Nor does the word naturally occur to one in connection with discursive thinking,--a process which is generally regarded as being the reverse of contemplation. It seems, then, fairly clear that, before taking mescalin, Huxley had only the haziest notion of what "contemplation", used in a religious sense, meant. . . . He would, then, appear to have been converted to the philosophia perennis on purely intellectual grounds.[3]

At another point Zaehner remarks: ". . . what Mr. Huxley and his friends understand by religion . . . obviously . . . is not what Protestant Christians normally understand by the word."[4] Professor Zaehner is a Catholic convert, but his phraseology suggests that he is not thinking entirely within a Catholic context. His shock upon discovering that Huxley apparently underwent no dramatic crisis of conversion may have been anticipated and rebutted by Huxley in his book, The Perennial Philosophy:

> But violent conversion, as Sheldon has pointed out, is a phenomenon confined almost exclusively to persons with a high degree of somatotonia. These persons are so intensely extraverted as to be quite unaware of what is happening in the lower levels of their minds. If for any reason their attention comes to be turned inwards, the resulting self-knowledge, because of its novelty and strangeness, presents itself with the force and quality of a revelation and their metanoia, or change of mind, is sudden and thrilling. This change may be to religion, or it may be to something else--for example, to psycho-analysis. To insist upon the necessity of violent conversion as the only means to salvation is about as sensible as it would be to insist upon the necessity of having a large face, heavy bones and powerful muscles. To those naturally subject to this kind of emotional upheaval, the doctrine that makes salvation dependent on conversion gives a complacency that is quite fatal to spiritual growth, while those who are incapable of it are filled with a no less fatal despair (P.P., pp. 155-156).

Zaehner is helpful not only in establishing the points that Huxley's conversion was intellectual and not emotional, and that Huxley's religious convictions probably grew out of his previous intellectual views, thus removing any need to discover a discontinuity between the two periods of Huxley's thought, but he is also helpful in clarifying the probable nature of the continuity underlying the apparent changes of position:

> What attracted him in the mystics,--using this word in a wide sense for the moment,--was that one and all they claimed to have transcended the empirical "self" and broken into a new and larger sphere of perception. Mysticism, so interpreted, could include not only the classical monistic mysticism of India, but the strictly pantheistic and "pamphysistic" outpourings of, for instance, Walt Whitman: it could include not only those solipsistic Muslim mystics who identified themselves with God, but also pure visionaries who did no such thing, but lived in a different private universe of their own in the manner of William Blake.

The key phrase in this passage occurs when Zaehner remarks that Huxley was attracted to the mystics because ". . . they claimed to have . . . broken into a new and larger sphere of perception."[5] Huxley was searching again for wholeness, the end of fragmentation (in this case the isolation of the self), and the attainment of a larger sphere of perception.

At several points Zaehner makes remarks pertinent to the general ideas expressed in earlier chapters of this study. Thus he notes that ". . . the experiences of Mr. Huxley while under the influence of mescalin . . . do not tally with those of other mescalin-takers. It will be pointed out that while the incredible heightening and deepening of the sense of colour seems to be experienced by a large majority of those taking the drug, the sense of rising superior to the 'ego' and of what Huxley calls being a 'not-self', is not typical."[6] Later he remarks that Huxley's experience was conditioned by his earlier studies in Vedāntin and Buddhist ideas and states, ". . . as Baudelaire has rightly observed, drugs can add nothing new to a man, but can only raise to a higher power what is already within him."[7] Yet he fails to apply this insight to Huxley's denigration of his own inner world as experienced under mescalin. If we recall Huxley's consistent and long standing antipathy to the purely subjective in intellectual life, it is



clear why he found this aspect of his experience unattractive. Zaehner remarks, however, rather unkindly, that, "Whether Huxley was right in identifying his banal vision with a banal 'ego' is plainly not a matter on which anyone but himself can venture an opinion."[8]

Before abandoning Zaehner, it should be noted that certain points made by him are relevant to our general discussion of Huxley. Huxley's religious ideals emphasized wholeness and escape from fragmentation, especially that represented by the isolated self. There was a central emphasis on the external, the objective, the universal. Mysticism meant not a negation of rationalism but a larger vision, one leading to a perception of the wholeness of the world and the place of the individual self in that whole. The operational relativism was not abandoned but transformed.

Another authority who comments on Hindu religion, the philosopher Abraham Kaplan, is helpful in determining ways in which the religious beliefs Huxley adopted linked up with his earlier attitudes. "Very early in Indian thought," Kaplan notes, "the viewpoint is expressed that differences among various philosophies and even religions are superficial."[9] Another quality of Indian thought is its recognition of the individual: "It is paradoxical that we, who put much emphasis on individualism in economics and politics, have so little room for it in

rality and religion, as compared with Indian thought."[10] us Indian religion is a "combination of catholicity and ndividualization."[11] Huxley's relativism is paralleled y the doctrine of syadvada: "No matter how carefully laborated a philosophy may be, it remains, after all, only a human point of view. It is inseparable from a particular standpoint, and therefore inescapably expresses only a single perspective on a reality which transcends all perspectives. No proposition is wholly and completely true but only up to a point, in a manner of speaking."[12]

Beyond tolerance of contradiction, however, what is wanted in Indian thought is synthesis.--This may be a new principle in Huxley's thinking deriving from his wish to mature beyond the mere exposing of error.--Kaplan notes further that, "The Indian outlook, we might say, is not a matter of tolerance but of integration. . . . The strategy . . . is acceptance by incorporation."[13] This last idea seems related to notions central to Huxley's thought, both in the realm of art and elsewhere, and will be examined more fully below.

Kaplan writes that ". . . the cardinal point in the whole teaching of orthodox Indian philosophy is this: that the Atman and Brahman are identical. The ultimate reality of individual human existence and the ultimate reality underlying the whole of being are one and the

ame."[14] For Huxley, this means that man can escape the rison cell created by the senses and the various forms f mental abstraction, man can know ultimate reality.

Kaplan also points out that it is not proper to speak of the Indian world view as pantheism. "Brahman is not just manifested throughout nature, but nature is itself a manifestation of Brahman. It is not that God is in all things, but that all things are in God, are God. Yet that is not quite true either, for Brahman is not exhausted by nature. It transcends the world process, and all distinctions by which we conceptualize this process."[15]

Finally, since Huxley has been accused of retreating from the world of moral action, it should be of interest that Kaplan does not feel the Indian viewpoint leads to quietism or moral indifference. All is one, but this truth is not enough. "Nor does it suffice to lay hold of this truth only in speculation; it must be realized in action, for it is only in action that we can work out our karma."[16] This is true not only of Indian philosophy but also of other oriental faiths and philosophies which attracted Huxley. Huston Smith writes of "Taoism's struggle (not always successful) to keep from degenerating into quietism, and the vehemence with which Zen Buddhism has insisted that once students have attained satori, they must be driven out of it, back

into the world."[17] In Doors Huxley presents his view of this matter:

> . . . now I knew contemplation at its height. At its height, but not yet in its fullness. For in its fullness the way of Mary includes the way of Martha and raises it, so to speak, to its own higher power. Mescalin opens up the way of Mary, but shuts the door on that of Martha. It gives access to contemplation--but to a contemplation that is incompatible with action and even with the will to action, the very thought of action. In the intervals between his revelations the mescalin taker is apt to feel that, though in one way everything is supremely as it should be, in another there is something wrong. His problem is essentially the same as that which confronts the quietist, the arhat [a Buddhist monk who has attained his goal of enlightenment; a saint] and, on another level, the landscape painter and the painter of human still lives. Mescalin can never solve that problem; it can only pose it, apocalyptically, for those to whom it has never before presented itself. The full and final solution can be found only by those who are prepared to implement the right kind of Weltanschauung by means of the right kind of behavior and the right kind of constant and unstrained alertness. Over against the quietist stands the active-contemplative, the saint, the man who, in Eckhart's phrase, is ready to come down from the seventh heaven in order to bring a cup of water to his sick brother. Over against the arhat, retreating from appearances into an entirely transcendental Nirvana, stands the Bodhisattva, for whom Suchness and the world of contingencies are one, and for those boundless compassion every one of those contingencies is an occasion not only for transfiguring insight, but also for the most practical charity. And in the universe of art, over against Vermeer and the other painters of human still lives, over against the masters of Chinese and Japanese landscape painting, over against Constable and Turner, against Sisley and Seurat and Cézanne, stands the all-inclusive art of Rembrandt (C.E., p. 335).

Multiple Selves

In the previous chapter, Huxley's Lockean concept f the mind as a small chamber or narrow room was dis- ussed. His treatment of man's desire to escape the confining self is well known to the general reader of Huxley through its expression in such works as "Pascal," "Drugs that shape Men's Minds," Grey Eminence, and Doors of Perception. The unstated image is that of a house which can be explored if the individual wishes (perhaps the original metaphor is that of an invalid in a sick room returning to health); and, indeed, one of Huxley's favorite sayings from the Bible is "My House has many mansions." God is infinite (the two words are often treated as synonyms by Huxley), and expansion or growth is, therefore, a spiritual process of great virtue. The individual is becoming like God. The self is growing toward God.

This belief in growth, as it applies to consciousness, is present in Huxley's writing from beginning to end. There is variation, however, in the words he used to express his sense of the inner infinity to which self is heir. At one time he liked to speak of the many "selves" that existed within the single person. Toward the end of his life a favorite word was "universe"; each person moved through many diverse worlds. Huxley also

iked to speak of levels or types of consciousness. In
ne passage from the essay on Lord Haldane quoted in the
revious section, Huxley spoke of man existing on several
planes." Awareness was Huxley's term for a fully
eveloped consciousness of the general activity of the
whole mind-body.

One of Huxley's most detailed anatomies of the mind as a whole containing diverse elements occurs in an essay of the fifties, "Education of an Amphibian," in which Huxley discusses how the different faculties, non-verbal as well as verbal, can be developed harmoniously:

> Every human being is an amphibian--or, to be more accurate, every human being is five or six amphibians rolled into one. Simultaneously or alternately, we inhabit many different and even incommensurable universes. To begin with, man is an embodied spirit. As such, he finds himself infesting this particular planet, while being free at the same time to explore the whole spaceless, timeless world of universal Mind. This is bad enough; but it is only the beginning of our troubles. For, besides being an embodied spirit, each of us is also a highly self-conscious and self-centered member of a sociable species. We live in and for ourselves; but at the same time we live in and, somewhat reluctantly, for the social group surrounding us. Again, we are both the products of evolution and a race of self-made men. In other words, we are simultaneously the subjects of Nature and the citizens of a strictly human republic . . . .

A few pages later he writes:

> To my earlier list of man's double lives I would like to add yet another item. Every human being is a conscious self; but, below the threshold of consciousness, every human being is also a not-self--or, more precisely, he is five or six merging but clearly distinguishable not-selves. There is, first of all, the personal, home-made not-self--the not-self of habits and conditioned reflexes, the not-self of

> impulses repressed but still obscurely active, the not-self of buried-alive reactions to remote events and forgotten words, the not-self of fossil infancy and the festering remains of a past that refuses to die. This personal not-self is that region of the subconscious with which psychiatry mainly deals. Next comes the not-self that used to be called the vegetative soul or the entelechy. This is the not-self in charge of the body--the not-self who, when we wish to walk, actually does the walking, the not-self that controls our breathing, our heartbeat, our glandular secretions; the not-self that is prepared to digest even doughnuts; the not-self that heals wounds and brings us back to health when we have been ill. Next, there is the not-self who inhabits the world from which we derive our insights and inspirations. This is the not-self who spoke to Socrates through his daimon, who dreamed the text of Kubla Kahn, who dictated King Lear and the Agamemnon and the Tibetan Book of the Dead, the not-self who is responsible in all of us for every enhancement of wisdom, every sudden accession of vital or intellectual power. Beyond this world of inspiration lies the world of what Jung has called the Archetypes--those great shared symbols which stand for man's deepest tendencies, his perennial conflicts and ubiquitous problems. Next comes the world of visionary experience, where a mysterious not-self lives in the midst, not of shared human symbols, but of shared non-facts--facts from which the theologians of the various religions have derived their notions of the Other World, of Heaven and Hell. And finally, beyond all the rest, but immanent in every mental or material event, is that universal Not-Self, which men have called the Holy Spirit, the Atman-Brahman, the Clear Light, Suchness.[18]

Le Culte du Moi

Because of the quasi-religious value Huxley attached to growth, one of the most disastrous things a person can do is to remain content with an existing state of affairs. An essay of 1920 deals with the subject of "Cultivation of the Me," (a title derived perhaps from Barrès who wrote a series of novels entitled le culte du moi) and gives a clear picture of one of Huxley's

central concerns, mental growth, a concern that governed his scale of values both early and late. Discussing what he calls the unwritten "epic of self-knowledge," Huxley devotes a paragraph to the awakening mind of the infant. This is followed by a paragraph discussing ways in which physical sensations, such as pain, intoxication, lust or desire, chloroform, excessive speed, and sea-sickness, all "reveal hitherto undreamed-of potentialities in our bodily machine." Pain, for example teaches us ". . . that our microcosm is in every detail a miniature replica of the larger universe; it is equipped even with a hell." In the second half of his essay Huxley turns to the type of exploration most congenial to him: "The spiritual explorations are the more important, the more exciting and genuinely dramatic."

Quoting Sir John Davies, Huxley points out that affliction can teach us self-knowledge. Certain kinds of happiness, however, Huxley adds can also teach us. For examples, he turns to mystical experiences. "Even the least religiously-minded of men," Huxley observes, "must sometimes have felt in the presence of nature the velleities of a strange and profoundly mystical emotion which they would ordinarily believe themselves incapable of feeling." This confession is a significant link between Huxley and his Wordsworthian heritage, but his

second example is perhaps more important because it is an undisguised personal experience, and because it indicates one way in which Huxley's interest in art carries over to his later concern with religion.

> . . . recently, at the exhibition of Spanish pictures, I myself was suddenly seized with a curious emotion of whose potential existence within me I had no idea--a complicated and not easily describable emotional conviction of the extraordinary size and wealth of the world. Intellectually, of course, one realizes that the universe is a large place and that human beings have many different ways of looking at it. But it was the sight of El Greco, Morales, Goya, and Velasquez hanging together in the same galleries that made me suddenly feel this fact as well as know it. Nobody can tell what experience will serve to enlarge the Me. One may learn to know new chapters of oneself in the most unlikely way.[19]

A second essay of the same period provides further examples of this type of experience:

> . . . to see life whole. The phrase instantly conjures up a panorama. I think--being literary--of Dr. Johnson's "from China to Peru"; I pause for a moment to think of the possible strange universes of thought and feeling slumbering in those four hundred million queerly-shaped heads in China; I remember there are some hundreds of millions of Buddhists--people who yearn after what seems to us the ultimate nothingness of Nirvana; half-forgotten stories of lost civilizations come to my mind--a horrible Aztec manuscript I once saw, with its record of a vigorous artistic people, but so alien, so utterly inhuman! And what were the thoughts and feelings of those who errected the great carven figures on Easter Island?[20]

Huxley is describing a spontaneous mystic experience of the type that Whitman self-consciously cultivated as a discipline helpful to the creation of his poetry. Whitman was in the habit of reciting to himself roll calls of place names from an atlas he kept at hand. For Huxley,

the sense of the variety of possible viewpoints within the unity of the human experience served the same purpose. During the twenties, Huxley obviously relied on this insight for one of the controlling patterns in his novels. Equally important, however, is the indication that Huxley valued this experience because it linked emotion and intellect. The "emotional conviction" of a truth one has accepted intellectually is a bridge between the different parts of the self, giving a sense of wholeness that validates the metaphor of man as microcosm, of human mind-body as miniature of the universal mind-body.

Huxley concludes his essay with a description of those men who self-consciously seek the fullest knowledge of their inner worlds in its bizarre as well as its more familiar forms.

> The deliberate cultivation of the Me is the pastime of sophisticated minds or of what are, in the widest sense of the word, religious temperaments. Dostoievskian characters who perpetrate a brutality for the sake of exploring the dark recesses of their conscience, or who would commit suicide in order to see if they can get beyond the sense of fear, are rare phenomena in the moral world. But the sophisticated dilettanti of sensations are common enough. These are the men who draw the line at shooting themselves or committing a brutal outrage. Their voyages of exploration stop short of the heart of darkness. They might marry two wives as an experiment, or indulge in a love affair with a peasant girl in order to see what would be the reactions of their civilized personalities to an unsophisticated contact. They are ready to cultivate the Me by travelling or disguising themselves as tramps, by behaving eccentrically in public, or accosting perfect strangers in the street.[21]

Similarly, in the essay cited above, Huxley describes two great artists as examples of such men: "And even if the life known to Shakespeare and Cervantes was a partial life, yet think of what they knew! The London of Shakespeare's time was almost a microcosm, and it is evident that Shakespeare sampled it all. He had a rich, welcoming curiosity; he could hobnob with everybody. And Cervantes, of course, had been everything in his time. Their work is the work of immensely experienced men."[22] Thus at the very start of his career, Huxley regards his quest for self-knowledge, for escape from a limited consciousness, as religious and links this expression of the religious spirit to the effort of great artists. It is after reading this that Huxley's desire, expressed in Vulgarity and Literature, to provide beauty-truths for mankind becomes more readily comprehensible. And the concluding sentences of his last book, Literature and Science, take on added meaning: "That the purified language of science, or even the richer purified language of literature should ever be adequate to the givenness of the world and of our experience is, in the very nature of things, impossible. Cheerfully accepting the fact, let us advance together, men of letters and men of science, further and further into the ever-expanding regions of the unknown."[23] And it is after reading this, as well as the evidence of the preceding pages, that one acquires the

conviction that, for Huxley, three factors are of great importance: growth, diversity, and detachment, the prerequisite of comprehension. In the pages that follow these will be examined in relation to Huxley's conversion.

Growth

To The Devils of Loudun, Huxley appended an Epilogue in which he discussed the means by which the consciousness might be enlarged, dividing the various means into two categories, the horizontal and the vertical. Though the essay is devoted to vertical means, the horizontal being, Huxley says, "too obvious to require analysis and of occurrence too frequent to be readily classifiable,"[24] The latter were the means first tried by Huxley himself. As he notes, "In order to escape from the horrors of insulated selfhood most men and women choose, most of the time, to go neither up nor down, but sideways."[25]

Like the Freudian concept of sublimation, self-transcendence takes the emotional energy centered on the self and turns it toward an object outside the self:

> This horizontal, or nearly horizontal, self-transcendence may be into something as trivial as a hobby, or as precious as married love. It can be brought about through self-identification with any human activity, from running a business to research in nuclear physics, from composing music to collecting stamps, from campaigning for political office to educating children or studying the mating habits of

> birds. Horizontal self-transcendence is of the utmost importance. Without it, there would be no art, no science, no law, no philosophy, indeed no civilization.[26]

It differs from vertical self-transcendence, which may be either upward or downward, in that its effects are within the area circumscribed by ordinary consciousness. They are within the range of more or less conventional mental experience.

Huxley, himself, was noted as a young man for his encyclopedism, his intense curiosity about all kinds of facts and especially about out of the way knowledge. When he was a boy, his brother Julian, "would quote to him the remark of the gentleman who had listened to an hour of Macaulay's table-talk: 'Sir, his information is greater than society requires.'"[27] Huxley could satirize himself better than anyone else, and it is hard to read his essay, "Conxolus," in Along the Road (1925), without realizing that Huxley knew, as well as anyone else, the dangers of taking trivia seriously. Even the essay in which he recommends taking on trips a volume of the Encyclopedia Britanica (half-size edition) is not wholly serious, because Huxley ends by praising the mind's habit of forgetting, a habit which keeps men from going mad or becoming "a mine of useless and unrelated knowledge."[28] The mind remembers only what it needs, and Huxley

concludes, "I should be ashamed to indulge so wantonly in mere curiosity at home during seasons of serious business."[29]

This intense curiosity about the diverse aspects of life often expressed itself in the form of tourism, first in Europe (Along the Road), later around the world (Jesting Pilate), and still later to Mexico and Central America (Beyond the Mexique Bay). During the Second World War, Huxley lived quietly in California, but he resumed his travels in the fifties with journeys to the Middle East, Brazil, and India again. It was a way of remaining open, of escaping intellectual fossilization. His comments in Jesting Pilate (1926) are instructive:

> I set out on my travels knowing, or thinking that I knew, how men should live, how be governed, how educated, what they should believe . . . . I knew which was the best form of social organization and to what end societies had been created. I had my views on every activity of human life. Now, on my return, I find myself without any of these pleasing certainties . . . . My own losses, as I have said, were numerous. But in compensation for what I had lost, I acquired two important new convictions: that it takes all sorts to make a world, and that the established spiritual values are fundamentally correct and should be maintained . . . . But if travel brings a conviction of human diversity, it brings an equally strong conviction of human unity. It inculcates tolerance, but it also shows what are the limits of possible toleration. Religious and moral codes, forms of government and of society are almost endlessly varied, and each has a right to its separate existence. But a oneness underlies this diversity. All men, whatever their beliefs, their habits, their way of life, have a sense of values. And the values are everywhere and in all kinds of society broadly the same.[30]

In his novella, Two or Three Graces (1926), Huxley has Kingham say:

> The world proves to you that nothing has any meaning except in relation to something else. Good, evil, justice, civilization, cruelty, beauty. You think you know what these words mean. And perhaps you do know, in Kensington. But go to India or China. You don't know anything there. It's uncomfortable at first; but then, how exciting! And how much more copiously and multifariously you begin to live! But precisely for that reason you feel the need for some sort of fixity and definition, some kind of absolute, not merely of the imagination, but in actual life. That's where love comes in, and domesticity. Not to mention God and Death and the Immortality of the Soul and all the rest. When you live narrowly and snugly, those things seem absurd and superfluous. You don't even appreciate your snugness. But multiply yourself with travelling, knock the bottom out of all your old certainties and prejudices and habits of thought; then you begin to see the real significance of domestic snugness, you appreciate the reality and importance of the other fixities.[31]

In the thirties, Huxley adopted to a certain degree a means of horizontal self-transcendence he had largely avoided up to that time--commitment to social causes and political movements: he became a supporter of anon Dick Sheppard's pacifist crusade that was formalized nder the title, the Peace Pledge Movement. Although he ad been endoctrinated in pacifist ideology as a young n during his visits to Garsington, his poor eyesight d made it unnecessary for him to make a stand on the sue at that time. During the period of the rise of cism, however, he came to feel that public action was uty of the integrated man he wished to become. Without

ever abandoning his belief--he continued to take stands on issues for the rest of his career--Huxley came to feel that political action was meaningless or incomplete without a religious point of view:

> When we identify ourselves with an idea or a cause we are in fact worshiping something homemade, something partial and parochial, something that, however noble, is yet all too human. "Patriotism," as a great patriot concluded on the eve of her execution by her country's enemies, "is not enough." Neither is socialism, nor communism, nor capitalism; neither is art, nor science, nor public order, nor any given religion or church. All these are indispensable, but none of them is enough. Civilization demands from the individual devoted self-identification with the highest of human causes. But if this self-identification with what is human is not accompanied by a conscious and consistent effort to achieve upward self-transcendence into the universal life of the Spirit, the goods achieved will always be mingled with counterbalancing evils.[32]

The vertical means of self-transcendence were always of keen interest to Huxley. Downward transcendence, however, was more in evidence than upward. This enlargement of the "insulated self" into the "lower than ersonal" included such major means as drugs, sexuality, nd herd-intoxication as well as such minor ones as ythmical movement and rhythmical sound. Only the major ans will be discussed here.

By drugs Huxley means not only such obvious things opium, peyotl, or hashish, but also alchoholic drinks. te often, Huxley believes, such means are totally tive, causing "present discomfort and future adion, degeneration and premature death."[33] However,

this is not the whole story. Paradoxically, any liberation from the conventional persona of everyday life can be a means of access to higher forms of consciousness:

> In actual life a downward movement may sometimes be made the beginning of an ascent. When the shell of the ego has been cracked and there begins to be a consciousness of the subliminal and physiological othernesses underlying personality, it sometimes happens that we catch a glimpse, fleeting but apocalyptic, of that other Otherness, which is the Ground of all being. So long as we are confined within our insulated selfhood, we remain unaware of the various not-selves with which we are associated--the organic not-self, the subconscious not-self, the collective not-self of the psychic medium in which all our thinking and feeling have their existence, and the immanent and transcendent not-self of the Spirit. Any escape, even by a descending road, out of insulated selfhood makes possible at least a momentary awareness of the not-self on every level, including the highest.[34]

Huxley's experiments with L.S.D. in the last decade of his life were not, as many people supposed, a radical departure from earlier views--he had justified his use of satire on the grounds that it did people good to have pins stuck in their smug complacency ("But at all times a caricature is disquieting; and it is very good for most of us to be made uncomfortable").[35] His advocacy of the use of L.S.D. did not represent an abandonment of reason or of religion. It did not mean that Huxley felt a pill could or should be developed that would give men an escape from reality--or, another possibility, total access to deity. "The full and final solution can be found only by those who are prepared to implement the

right kind of Weltanschauung by means of the right kind of behavior and the right kind of constant and unstrained alertness" (C.E., p. 335). It was not a holiday, but rather a learning experience. What Huxley hoped was that the gratuitous grace offered by chemistry could help men expand their awareness of their own potentialities, of their own selves. "We cannot make ourselves understand; the most we can do is to foster a state of mind, in which understanding may come to us" (C.E., p. 394). In the context of Huxley's search for expanded consciousness, it can be seen as a desire to bring men into contact with the fullness of reality. Of course, the chemical, whatever it might be, would not do this by itself.[36] Its function, a negative one, would be to remove obstacles and provide an opportunity for new experience which the wise person could take advantage of. Its function would be to suggest how much lay beyond the everyday mental world, the limited consciousness.

Sexuality, often considered to be the aspect of life for which Huxley had least sympathy, was largely a means of downward transcendence, though Huxley came to feel, late in life, that there were means by which this often abused power could be redeemed and made to serve as a bridge to fuller consciousness. In The Devils of Loudun, Huxley divides elementary sexuality, sexuality as an end in itself, into the innocent and the squalid varieties.

Lawrence, he says, has written of one; Genêt of the other. In the essay, "Appendix," first published in Tomorrow, Tomorrow, and Tomorrow and reprinted in Huxley's Collected Essays, he takes a positive approach to sexuality and suggests a technique by which he believes the pleasure can be prolonged and a spiritual benefit derived from this basic drive. In The Devils of Loudun he summarizes his findings:

> The road runs downhill; but on the way there may occasionally be theophanies. The Dark Gods, as Lawrence called them, may change their sign and become bright. In India there is a Tantric yoga, based upon an elaborate psychophysiological technique, whose purpose is to transform the downward self-transcendence of elementary sexuality into an upward self-transcendence. In the West the nearest equivalent to these Tantric practices was the sexual discipline devised by John Humphrey Noyes and practiced by the members of the Oneida Community. At Oneida elementary sexuality was not only successfully civilized; it was made compatible with, and subordinate to, a form of Protestant Christianity, sincerely preached and earnestly acted upon.[37]

In Ends and Means, he upholds chastity but recognized the use of sex as ritual by the Hindus: ". . . Indian ascetics . . . train their bodies systematically, until they are able to exercise conscious control over physiological processes that are normally carried out unconsciously. In many cases they go on to produce unusual mental states by the systematic and profound modification of certain bodily functions, such as respiration and the sexual act."[38] Readers of The Genius and the Goddess and Island will also note a positive attitude toward certain forms of sexuality.

The form of downward self-transcendence which Huxley found most repugnant was herd-intoxication. Because of its use by dictators and unscrupulous churchmen, and because of the development in the present century of technological devices, such as the public address system, radio, and television, because of the spread of universal education which on its lower levels merely makes the populace more vulnerable to propaganda, Huxley is hard put to say a good word for a means so often and so grossly abused. Yet even here his general principle that all means of self-transcendence can occasionally be useful holds, and Huxley writes: ". . . even to the member of an excited mob there may come (at some relatively early stage of his downward self-transcendence) a genuine revelation of the Otherness that is above selfhood. This is one of the reasons why some good may sometimes come out of even the most corybantic of revival meetings. Some good as well as very great evil may also result from the fact that men and women in a crowd tend to become more than ordinarily suggestible. While in this state they are subjected to exhortations which have the force, when they come once again to their senses, of posthypnotic commands."[39] The revival meeting uses herd-intoxication, vain repetition, and rhythmic sound to break down the old ego. When this process is accompanied by genuinely

spiritual suggestions then the result may be "a reintegration of broken-down personalities on a somewhat higher level."[40]

The form of self-transcendence that received Huxley's attention during the latter half of his life was upward transcendence by means of meditation and the disciplines of mystical thought. In the Introduction to The Perennial Philosophy, Huxley explains the rationale behind his research into this realm of thought:

> Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing. For example, the being of a child is transformed by growth and education into that of a man; among the results of this transformation is a revolutionary change in the way of knowing and the amount and character of the things known. As the individual grows up, his knowledge becomes more conceptual and systematic in form, and its factual, utilitarian content is enormously increased. But these gains are offset by a certain deterioration in the quality of immediate apprehension, a blunting and a loss of intuitive power. Or consider the change in his being which the scientist is able to induce mechanically by means of his instruments. Equipped with a spectroscope and a sixty-inch reflector an astronomer becomes, so far as eyesight is concerned, a superhuman creature; and, as we should naturally expect, the knowledge possessed by this superhuman creature is very different, both in quantity and quality, from that which can be acquired by a star-gazer with unmodified, merely human eyes.
>
> Nor are changes in the knower's physiological or intellectual being the only ones to affect his knowledge. What we know depends also on what, as moral beings, we choose to make ourselves. "Practice," in the words of William James, "may change our theoretical horizon, and this in a twofold way: it may lead into new worlds and secure new powers. Knowledge we could never attain, remaining what we are, may be attainable in consequences of higher powers and a higher life, which we may morally achieve" (P.P., pp. iv-v).

In Ends and Means, Huxley devoted two chapters, one entitled "Religious Practices," the other entitled "Beliefs," the latter a chapter largely reprinted in the Collected Essays, to his views on mysticism and its place in the quest for total awareness. Since enlightenment or total awareness is a level of consciousness beyond the ordinary, it requires both talents and application in all but the most unusual cases (L., p. 449), though there are exceptions: "But direct awareness of the 'eternally complete consciousness,' which is the ground of the material world, is a possibility occasionally actualized by some human beings at almost any stage of their own personal development, from childhood to old age, and at any period of the race's history" (P.P., pp. 20-21).

Huxley believes that some men, at least, can learn and religion is a means of learning: "Religion is, among many other things, a system of education, by means of which human beings may train themselves, first to make desirable changes in their own personalities and, at one remove, in society and, in the second place, to heighten consciousness and so establish more adequate relations between themselves and the universe of which they are parts."[41] "From the humanistic point of view," Huxley writes elsewhere, "religious practices are valuable in so far as they provide methods of self-education, methods

which men can use to transform their characters and enlarge their consciousness."[42] The techniques Huxley recommends are not spectacular:

> Goodness is the method by which we divert our attention from this singularly wearisome topic of our animality and our individual separateness. Recollection and meditation assist goodness in two ways: by producing, in Babbitt's words, "a suprarational concentration of will," and by making it possible for the mind to realize, not only theoretically, but also by direct intuition, that the private universe of the average sensual man is not identical with the universe as a whole. Conversely, of course, goodness aids meditation by giving detachment from animality and so making it possible for the mind to pay attention to its actual relationship with ultimate reality and to other individuals. Goodness, meditation, the mystical experience and the ultimate impersonal reality discovered in mystical experience are organically related.[43]

In his chapter on religious practices, Huxley, characterizing himself as a rational idealist, divides religious practices into three categories: physiological (rhythmical movements, asceticism etc.); emotional (intimate relationship with a personal god); and meditation. Of meditation he writes: "The method of meditation has often been used in conjunction with the emotional and physiological methods. In its purest form, however, it would seem to be quite independent of either."[44] And the function of meditation? This, Huxley says, "is to help a man to put forth a special quality of will."[45] Meditation is, therefore, "from a humanistic point of view . . . a particularly effective method of

self-education."[46] Meditation is usually practiced alone but may, under certain conditions, be effective in a group.

The man who, unvisited by gratuitous grace, wishes to achieve this higher consciousness through training must be intelligent with a knowledge both of the world around him and of himself. The knowledge of self which makes him a fully adult person has both its physical and mental sides. For the physical, he recommends the teachings of F.M. Alexander discussed at length in Chapter XII of Ends and Means. Concerning the mental he remarks: "Of the purely psychological methods of heightening the awareness of self it is unnecessary to say very much. Self-analysis, periodical analysis at the hands of others, habitual self-recollectedness and unremitting efforts to resist the temptation to become completely identified with the thoughts, feelings, sensations or actions of the moment--these are the methods which must be employed."[47] Thus Huxley viewed the ideal life as one of growth:

> The greater part of the life of the greater number of human beings is sub-personal. They spend most of their time identified with thoughts, feelings and sensations which are less than themselves and thus lack even that relative autonomy from the external world and their own psychological and physiological machinery, belonging to a genuine full-grown person. This sub-personal existence can be terminated at will. Anybody who so desires and knows how to set above the task can live his life entirely on the personal level and, from the personal level, can pass, again if he so desires and knows how, to a super-personal level. This super-personal level is reached only during the

> mystical experience. There is, however, a state of being, rarely attained, but described by the greatest mystical writers of East and West, in which it is possible for a man to have a kind of double consciousness--to be both a full-grown person, having a complete knowledge of, and control over, his sensations, emotions and thoughts, and also, at the same time, a more than personal being, in continuous intuitive relation with the impersonal principle of reality.[48]

Those who could not or would not grow must suffer a sad fate:

> The saying that to him that has shall be given and from him that has not shall be taken away even all that he has, is a hard one; but it happens to be an extremely succinct and accurate summary of the facts of moral life. . . . Weakness may be forgiven, but so long as it continues to be present, no amount of forgiveness can prevent it from having the ordinary results of weakness. These results are manifest in the present life and, if there should be some form of survival of bodily death, will doubtless be manifest in any subsequent existence.[49]

The ultimate insight was also a command: "Human beings are creatures who, in so far as they are animals and persons tend to regard themselves as independent existents, connected at most by purely biological ties, but who, in so far as they rise above animality and personality, are able to perceive they are interrelated parts of physical and spiritual wholes incomparably greater than themselves. For such beings the fundamental moral commandment is: You shall realize your unity with all being" (C.E., p. 376).

Diversity

A major problem for many of Huxley's readers was the apparent abandonment of the humanist position worked out in the twenties and given eloquent voice in Do What You Will. In his essay on Pascal, Huxley wrote:

> And yet the life-worshiper is also, in his own way, a man of principles and consistency. To live intensely--that is his guiding principle. His diversity is a sign that he consistently tries to live up to his principles; for the harmony of life--of the single life that persists as a gradually changing unity through time--is a harmony built up of many elements. The unity is mutilated by the suppression of any part of the diversity. A fugue has need of all its voices. Even in the rich counterpoint of life each separate small melody plays its indispensable part. The diapason closes full in man. In man (C.E., p. 361).

Humanism

The humanist with his curiosity about all aspects of man, his fascination with the sheer variety of life, seemed to have been left behind in the process of conversion to "the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world" (P.P., p. iv). Andre Maurois, an early admirer and commentator on the writings of Huxley, represents many when he says that, for him at least, Huxley's philosophy was best expressed in the following passage from Point Counter Point: "A man, mind you. Not an angel or a devil. A man's a creature on a tight-rope, walking delicately, equilibrated, with mind and consciousness and spirit at one end of his balancing

pole and body and instinct and all that's unconscious and earthy and mysterious at the other. Balanced. Which is damnably difficult. And the only absolute he can ever really know is the absolute of perfect balance. The absoluteness of perfect relativity" (A.H., p. 63). "This philosophy of life," Maurois declared, "delighted me because it was also mine" (A.H., p. 63). But then, "He went to live in America, where he made contact with Hindu sages. This scientifically minded man found himself asking whether rationalism was pragmatically superior to irrational beliefs. In his anthology, The Perennial Philosophy, he showed that mysticism fills what seems to be a universal need of the human soul and that in all countries and in all religions mystics have similar visions and similar ecstasies" (A.H., p. 64). Maurois concludes: "It was an astonishing reversal of his thought, and disturbing to anyone as close to the earlier Aldous Huxley as I had been" (A.H., p. 64). Most commentators, like Maurois, regarded Huxley's new position as an abandonment of the old. Indeed, it was hard to view it otherwise. To cite only one example, Huxley recommended polytheism in Do What You Will; but in Ends and Means and The Perennial Philosophy, he upholds monotheism.

Huxley, himself, however, never ceased to regard himself as a humanist. In 1936, the year of the publication of Eyeless in Gaza, the novel that first announced

to the world Huxley's new point of view, Huxley wrote to a friend: "It seems to me that the point at issue is only one of terminology. Humanism, as he [Laurence Housman] defines it, is not the same as humanism, according to Marxians, which was the humanism I was talking about. I accept his humanism, but not the other. It is all a matter of defining one's terms before using them" (L., p. 399). One of the last essays Huxley wrote before his death was a piece included in the volume of essays edited by his brother Julian, The Humanist Frame. When Huxley died, his brother Julian praised him as "the greatest humanist of our perplexed era" (A.H., p. 25). The crux of the debate over Huxley's right to the title of humanist is concerned with what was believed to be Huxley's altered attitude toward diversity.

Subordination and Variety

The problem is two-fold. It involves not only Huxley's attitude toward life and ideas but also his art, specifically his handling of the novel of ideas. As a Pyrrhonic aesthete, as one who regarded general truths as psychological, Huxley viewed all metaphysical ideas as being of equal validity if not of equal value. He exempted only matters that came under the heading of logic or the theory of knowledge. "The only branches of philosophy in regard to which it is permissible to talk of

truth and falsehood are logic and the theory of knowledge. For logic and the theory of knowledge are concerned with the necessities and the limitations of thought--that is to say, with mental habits so primordial that it is all but impossible for any human being to break them" (C.E., p. 354). Two tests could be applied in these matters. One was the appeal to consensus gentium: "When a man commits a paralogism or lays claim to a more than human knowledge of the nature of things, we are justified in saying that he is wrong. I may, for example, admit that all men are mortal and that Socrates is a man, but nevertheless feel impelled to conclude that Socrates is immortal" (C.E., p. 354). Why is this conclusion unacceptable? "I may have a personal taste for Socrates's immortality; but, in the syllogistic circumstances, the taste is so outrageously bad, so universally condemned, that it would be madness to try to justify it" (C.E., p. 354). The other test Huxley applied was pragmatic:

> The hero of Dostoievsky's Notes from Underground protests against the intolerable tyranny of two and two making four. He prefers that they shall make five, and insists that he has a right to his preference. And no doubt he has a right. But if an express train happens to be passing at a distance of two plus two yards, and he advances four yards and a half under the impression that he will still be eighteen inches on the hither side of destruction, this right of his will not save him from coming to a violent and bloody conclusion (C.E., p. 354).

Later as a disciple of the perennial philosophy, however, he would no longer hold that, "Pessimism is no truer than optimism, nor positivism than mysticism" (C.E., p. 356). Mysticism was accepted as presenting a kind of truth which a reasonable man could accept, could justifiably put his faith in. The question which this change raises is whether, or to what extent, the acceptance of one type of metaphysical belief as being more true than other types affected Huxley's love of diversity.

Certain critics have accepted the thesis first put forward by Frederick J. Hoffman that the true significance of Huxley's conversion lies in the effect it had upon his art, specifically upon his handling of the novel of ideas. Hoffman sees this effect as a shift away from diversity: ". . . Huxley discusses, in Do What You Will, the psychological nature of truth. Truth, he says, is internal. A 'psychological fact' is valid for the person who holds it, if for no other. This makes for a diversity of truths, for an infinite variety of interpretations, and for an emphasis upon attitude as the determinant of the quality of truth. Opposed to this point of view is the tendency toward unity--purely intellectual knowledge which secures a unity from diversity of experience and holds tenaciously to that unity."[50] Hoffman believes that the early novels, regarded as possessing greater merit than the later novels, can be separated from the later novels

on the basis of Huxley's shift from a democratic handling of ideas to a doctrinaire or unified treatment. Hoffman feels that Huxley saw the danger clearly as a young man but later forgot his own warnings:

> The weaknesses of Philip Quarles' kind of intellectual are admitted by Huxley in these essays [the essays of Do What You Will]. One must accept life in all its manifestations, he says in one place, condemning Swift for having failed in this regard; and, speaking of Wordsworth's "Handy Manual for Nature Lovers," he suggests that "it is fear of the labyrinthine flux and complexity of phenomena that has driven men to philosophy, to science, to theology--fear of the complex reality driving them to invent a simpler, more manageable, and therefore consoling fiction."[51]

Hoffman's argument with regard to the novel of ideas is that the novel of ideas is a unique twentieth century form peculiarly adapted to a presentation of present day intellectual eclecticism, and that Huxley violates the essence of the genre by attempting to establish one set of ideas as superior to others. I will return later to this critique of Huxley's novels and the problems it poses. For present purposes it is sufficient to show the pertinence of this version of the two-career theory to Huxley's concern with diversity, and to raise the question whether this new viewpoint did indeed mean the abandonment of a basic criterion of value.

In a recent book on Huxley, Harold H. Watts summarizes the world view adopted by Huxley during the last part of his life. Although superior to earlier versions by other critics, Watts's presentation is weak in its

treatment of Huxley's post conversion view of diversity which Watts regards as being synonomous with desire, the source of evil in man. Watts begins with a description of Huxley's dislike of abstract systems that simplify complexity and his desire for "a proper interpretation of life" that would enable "man to respond to a very wide range of possibilities."[52]

Watts understands that Huxley sees man as a being which, composed of various elements (". . . man is not only a body and a psyche, but also a spirit . . ."),[53] passes through various developmental stages. There is the instinctual level of the body, the bond between men and animals. There is the level of reason, language, and full humanity. And finally, there is the spiritual level where mind transcends itself by stepping out of its own inner light and allowing the "immanent-transcendent One" to live for us and through us. Watts correctly recognizes that the succeeding stages do not cancel out preceding ones: "But, unlike the cyclic frog, man is three beings at once. He is an animal with some of his instinctual inheritance intact. He is a conscious, reasoning, social creature living in terms of the moral code of his society, with what prudence and intelligence he can summon to aid him in this portion of his existence. And man can be a creature of 'air' or spirit who is responsive to the 'ground' or divine principle that supports or informs all existence,

human or otherwise."[54] Yet Watts finds this somewhat perplexing and paradoxical. He is apparently bothered by the fact that it is possible for a person on the highest level to return to a lower level or to be on several levels simultaneously. (Huxley's comment in Ends and Means on "double-consciousness," a passage cited below, is revelant here.) What Watts has overlooked, of course, is that spiritual progress or increase of consciousness is not successive but inclusive.

Spiral Advance

Huxley remarks at several points in The Perennial Philosophy that, "Spiritual progress is a spiral advance" (P.P., p. 187). One image that comes to mind is that of the expanding circles in the water which result from throwing a pebble in the pond. But better still is the gyre of the falcon which circles simultaneously upward and outward. Each stage, each power, of man is transfigured by the advance to a new level; it is not abandoned but enhanced. On this point Watts, however perplexed, is clear:

> This full human journey does not, in Huxley's opinion, amount to an impoverishment of man's participation in either instinctual or rational activity. Illumination and vision do not terminate his sensuality; instead, they give sensuality an enlightening context to which animals cannot aspire and of which most human beings do not dream. Illumination and vision also refine the workings of rationality and of all else that is creative in man; they endow these non-instinctive powers with a sense of their proper limits.[55]

Because of the importance of the spiral image to Huxley's thought, an image with overtones of Hopkins (whose poetry Huxley was among the first critics to hail), Yeats, and especially, of Emerson, it seems best to digress from Watts at this point and insert several of the passages in which Huxley uses this image to explain his concept of proper growth.

> Spiritual progress is always in an ascending spiral. Animal instinct gives place to human will and then to grace, guidance, inspiration, which are simply instinct on a higher level. Or consider the progress of consciousness. First there is the infant's undifferentiated awareness, next comes discrimination and discursive reasoning, and finally (if the individual wishes to transcend himself) there is a rise which is also a return towards an obscure knowledge of the whole, a realization of the timeless and the non-dual in time and multiplicity. Similarly, in religion, there is the primitive worship of the god who is immanent in nature, next the worship of divine transcendence, and then, on the intellectual level, the philosophy of scientific monism and, on the existential level, the mystical experience of the One, which corresponds, two stories higher up, to the felt pantheism of the origins (O.A.A., p. 123).

> It looks as though there were a kind of spiral development, from unconscious animal, through conscious human up to a what for lack of better words may be called super-conscious spiritual, which last exhibits the characteristics of the animal plane, but transfigured and on a higher level. Santayana uses the phrase "animal faith" to describe our commonsense confidence in the existence of an external world. The phrase "animal grace" might similarly be used to connote the unbelievably perfect workings of what Driesch calls the Entelechy in our bodies and nervous systems. Analogous but superior, of the corresponding point of the circumference of the spiral, but on a higher level, is spiritual grace. On the opposite side of the circumference, on the conscious human level, is "human grace", represented in the individual by inspiration from and self-sacrifice to strictly human "ideals", "causes" and so forth (L., p. 449).

> We start as infants in the animal eternity of life in the moment, without anxiety for the future or regret for the past; we grow up into the specifically human condition of those who look before and after, who live to a great extent, not in the present but in memory and anticipation, not spontaneously but by rule and with prudence, in repentance and fear and hope; and we can continue, if we so desire, up and on in a returning sweep towards a point corresponding to our starting place in animality, but incommensurably above it. Once more life is lived in the moment--the life now, not of a sub-human creature, but of a being in whom charity has cast out fear, vision has taken the place of hope, selflessness has put a stop to the positive egotism of complacent reminiscence and the negative egotism of remorse (P.P., pp. 187-188).

The spiral image is sometimes related directly to the life of the artist.

> . . . only that which is soft and docile is truly alive; that which conquers and outlives everything is that which adapts itself to everything . . . . The simplicity and spontaneity of the perfect sage are the fruits of mortification--mortification of the will and, by recollectedness and meditation, of the mind. Only the most highly disciplined artist can recapture, on a higher level, the spontaneity of the child with its first paint-box. Nothing is more difficult than to be simple (P.P., p. 115).

Of literature Sebastian Barnack writes in Time Must Have a Stop: ". . . poetry, of course, is the best that human life can offer. But there is also the life of the spirit, and the life of the spirit is the analogue, on a higher turn of the spiral, of the animal's life. The progression is from animal eternity into time, into the strictly human world of memory and anticipation; and from time, if one chooses to go on, into the world of spiritual eternity, into the divine Ground."[56] Since, as Huxley notes, ". . . the nine Muses are the daughters of Mnemosyne;

memory is of the very stuff and substance of poetry,"[57] the emphasis on the need to free oneself from memory is disturbing. And the last passage cited is typical of those which have caused trouble for Huxley critics who fail to note the simultaneous and inclusive characteristics of the spiral image. Huxley has John Rivers respond to the questioning of his author friend on this point in the novel, The Genius and the Goddess:

> "And what about my writing, what about those daughters of Memory?"
> "There would have been a way to make the best of both worlds."
> "A compromise?"
> "A synthesis, a third position subtending the other two. Actually, of course, you can never make the best of one world, unless in the process you've learned to make the best of the other."[58]

It is also the explanation of his answer written in response to a query from the literary critic, John Atkins: "I do not feel impelled--nor am I financially able--to give up writing, nor do I think that writing is in any way incompatible with understanding. 'Knowledge', says Lao-tsu, 'is adding to your stock day by day; the practice of the Tao is subtracting.' The secret [of] life is to do both--add and subtract--to the limit" (L., p. 392).

Before turning from the spiral image, it might be well to consider its function in the thought of another transcendentalist author, Ralph Waldo Emerson. The critic, Sherman Paul, deals directly with this question in his book, The Angle of Vision. A few excerpts from his

discussion of this image show how closely Huxley's thought parallels that of Emerson, an author whose writings enjoyed a vogue during Huxley's youth among English intellectuals.

> In Emerson's geometry of morals, the circle was the basic figure. . . . like the horizon, it symbolized the Unattainable (C, II, 305) and the progressive ascent by which one advanced on the chaos and the dark. . . . the circle represented as well the unifying Idea (as he adapted it from Coleridge), and its concentric expansion represented the process of ascending generalization, each step of which, in man's moral progress, was his highest knowledge of God. . . . And by taking up the angle of vision, every man could become the center of the circle, at one with God; for in Emerson's astronomy, as in St. Augustine's, God was "a circle whose center was everywhere, and its circumference nowhere." (C, II, 301) God was the "centripetal force" in "the depths of the soul" (J, IV, 215), saving man, in the unending antagonism of centripetal and centrifugal forces, from the circumferential ignorance. Man's life in God began from the moment of ecstasy, and from "there the Universe evolves itself as from a centre to its boundless irradiation." (J, III, 402) Again the circular growth of the self described this idea and god-seeking: "The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without End." (C, II, 304)[59]
>
> Each Idea, by compensating for a multitude of observations, was an ascent; each Idea became a higher platform from which to survey the prospect for a still higher generalization looming on a still more distant horizon. Ascending to thought in this way was the intellectual equivalent of distant visioning; the synthesis was in the focus of ever widening vistas--and one's visual reach was best achieved in ascent.[60]
>
> This intellectual restlessness was the true compensation. . . . And "ascent" was the proper word. . . . The compensation of insight or self-recovery, then, lay in the power to press beyond the limits of a previous thought. . . . He felt the heart's refusal to be imprisoned in an Idea, and he expressed this by saying "that around every circle another can be drawn . . . there is no end in nature."[61]

In a long passage Paul summarizes the significance of the ascending circle image (spiral) to the whole of Emerson's thought:

> By joining the static and mechanistic circle of Newtonian astronomy (his debt to eighteenth-century science) with the dynamic science of Ideas or dialectic of Coleridge, Emerson made his circle an organic symbol capable of representing both the unfolding mind and the ascending natural chain of being. His circle united his two desires: the desire for fixity or centrality in the universe of the spirit, and the desire for change and growth and freedom in the organic universe of prudence. He wanted it to show both the "evanescence and centrality of things." He wanted a symbol for what the ancient myths taught him was still true in human experience, that "things are in a flood and fixed as adamant: the Bhagavad Gita adduced the illustration of the sphered, mutable, yet centered air or ether." (J, VII, 29) The circle symbolized this sphered mutability, the growth that depended on a fixed center in being. . . . That the perpetual transformations witnessed in the natural process expressed in their tendency the circular ascent of spirit were as much a miracle to Emerson as the mind's self-expansions. For both were affirmations of the infinite, of the compensation of ascent, of the power of new prospects.[62]

Acceptance of the Universe

From this material it is possible to return to Watts's commentary on Huxley's thought with a deeper understanding of the issues. Watts focuses on Huxley's reinterpretation of the Judeo-Christian myth of the Fall from the Garden of Eden. Huxley's view is that the myth is inadequate because it fails to account for the suffering of non-human species. Huxley would reinterpret it to show that ". . . creation, the incomprehensible passage from the

unmanifested One into the manifest multiplicity of nature, from eternity into time, is not merely the prelude and necessary condition of the Fall; to some extent it <u>is</u> the Fall."[63] Watts takes this to mean that this world, like time, is evil. He alludes to Gnosticism, saying that Huxley views are "modern versions of the Gnostic conviction that creation itself was an act foreign to the perfection of the unitary divine principle."[64] At another point he writes: "In the Huxleyan universe, the 'fall' was rather an offense or, at the very least, an incapacity on the part of the ground of being itself. The ground, in some way that cannot be understood, allowed what man calls the world and consequently the life of instinct and the life of society to come into existence and, in Shelley's phrase, stain 'the white radience of Eternity.'"[65] Yet this is not a necessary or even a satisfactory conclusion because Huxley has often written about the beauty of nature and specifically condemned theological viewpoints that place all value in eternity, that oppose a corrupt and decaying world to a perfect heaven. His God is immanent as well as transcendent. The following passage written in 1929 shows his pre-conversion point of view:

> Like so many of the Fathers of the Church, Swift could not forgive men and women for being vertebrate mammals as well as immortal souls. He could not forgive them, in a word, for actually existing. It is unnecessary for me to insist at length on the absurdity, the childish silliness, of this refusal to accept the universe as it is given. Abstractions are made from

> reality and labled soul, spirit, and so forth; reality is then hated for not resembling these arbitrary abstractions from its total mass. It would be as sensible to hate flowers for not resembling the liquid perfume which can be distilled from them. A yet greater, but no less common, childishness is to hate reality because it does not resemble the fairy stories which men have invented to console themselves for the discomforts and difficulties of daily life, or to hate it because life does not seem to hold the significance which a favorite author happens to have attributed to it. Ivan Karamazov returning God his entrance ticket to life is a characteristic example of this last form of childishness. Ivan is distressed because the real universe bears so little resemblance to the providential machine of Christian theology, distressed because he can find no meaning or purpose in life (O.A.A., p. 173).

Huxley accepted the universe no less after his conversion than before. In a deeply moving passage from The Devils of Loudun, Huxley recounts how the saintly Surin was restored to sanity by looking closely and without prejudice at the objects of this world: "There was no wind, and the silence was like an enormous crystal, and everywhere was a living mystery of colors merging, of forms distinct and separate, of the innumerable and the one, of passing time and the presence of eternity."[66] Surin had driven himself mad by dwelling on abstract notions: "Hoping to deserve the Donum, he ignored the datum. But the highest Gift is by means of the given. The Kingdom of God comes on earth and through the perception of earth as it is in itself, and not as it appears to a will distorted by self-centered cravings and revulsions, to an intellect distorted by ready-made beliefs."[67]

Moreover, there is no evidence in Huxley's writings that, for him, the Fall indicated any failure or incapacity on the part of the divine principle. Knowing the end of creation was enough. Why the world should exist in the first place is a question Huxley wastes little time on. But a phrase here and there gives a suggestive hint. Thus in The Perennial Philosophy, he writes that the spiritual growth and realized potentialities of the individual are the primary rewards of living well, but he also states that a secondary reward is ". . . the adding of all the rest to the realized kingdom of God" (P.P., p. 239). While this phrase can, and undoubtedly does, refer to the attainment of a greater degree of harmony in society, it also suggests that the creation may serve some divine purpose and be in accordance with divine will. Huxley treats this point in Ends and Means when he discusses whether or not the moral argument for theism need be rejected as mere wishful thinking. He thinks it need not be. Thus it is possible that "whatever partial and temporary appearance may be," there is a "power external to ourselves" that "so arranges things that . . . the total world order is moral and demonstrates the union of virtue with happiness."[68] In The Perennial Philosophy Huxley points out regarding man that,

> . . . this "wearisome condition of humanity" is the indispensable prerequisite of enlightenment and deliverance. Man must live in time in order to be

> able to advance into eternity, no longer on the animal, but on the spiritual level; he must be conscious of himself as a separate ego in order to be able consciously to transcend separate selfhood; he must do battle with the lower self in order that he may become identified with that higher Self within him, which is akin to the divine Not-Self; and finally he must make use of his cleverness in order to pass beyond cleverness to the intellectual vision of Truth, the immediate, unitive knowledge of the divine Ground (P.P., p. 141).

Thus Time may be evil but the things of time are not evil but are aspects of God. Existence in time is necessary to man, and his striving for increased consciousness may add something to the realized kingdom of God. Finally, creation may be acceptable and pleasing to God because it is, in some humanly unimaginable way, moral and demonstrates the union of virtue with happiness.

If the separateness which space and time create is evil, it does not follow that Huxley must hate the diversity that is characteristic of this world. On a higher plane of existence earthly variety may be transcended, but need not be eliminated. Huxley did hold, toward the close of his life, the view that even the body, or its equivalent, would be necessary after death: "But when you are released from the body there has to be some experimental equivalent of the body, something has to be held on to. . . ."[69] Later, in the same context, he comments: "But clearly they all have said that there is something which is the equivalent--again in this extraordinary doctrine of Christianity, the resurrection of the body,

and ultimately immortality will have something like the body attached to it. I don't know what it means, but obviously one can't attach any ordinary meaning to it. But one sees exactly what they are after--some idea that somehow we have to get an equivalent on a higher level of this anchorage which space and time and gravitation give us . . . ."[70] Perhaps earthly variety will be merely transfigured by ascending the spiral of spiritual progress as Huxley believes man's lower qualities of instinct and reason will be.[71]

Huxley concludes his essay, "Knowledge and Understanding," with a series of traditional paradoxes, one of which states that ". . . unity is not so much one as not-two" (C.E., p. 399). Another paradox along the same lines is often quoted by Huxley: "samsara" or the earthly condition "and nirvana" or the spiritual state "are the same" (C.E., p. 399). Huxley believes with Blake that we can see the world in a grain of sand, a heaven in a wild flower and gives expression to this belief in the conclusion to his essay, "Ozymandias, the Utopia That Failed":

> A monstrous yucca at the limit of its natural habitat? A symbol within the cosmic symbol? The eye travels out across the plain. The buttes are like kneeling elephants and beyond them, far away, are the blue ghosts of mountains. There is a coolness against the cheek, and from overhead comes the scaly rattling of the wind in the dead dry leaves of the Joshua tree. And suddenly the symbol is essentially the same as what it symbolizes; the monstrous yucca in the desert is at once a botanical specimen and the essential suchness. What we shall all know, according to the

> Bardo Thodol, at the moment of Death may also be known by casual flashes, transfiguringly, while we inhabit this particular pattern of patterns.[72]

One of the phrases that assumes great importance in The Perennial Philosophy is "one-pointed contemplation." Here, if anywhere, would seem to be the much talked of turning away from Huxley's earlier love of variety toward exclusion, the turning away from complexity or diversity toward simplification as a value. Yet Huxley on this point is illuminating:

> In cases where the one-pointed contemplation is of God there is also a risk that the mind's unemployed capacities may atrophy. The hermits of Tibet and the Thebaid were certainly one-pointed, but with a one-pointedness of exclusion and mutilation. It may be, however, that if they had been more truly "docile to the Holy Ghost," they would have come to understand that the one-pointedness of exclusion is at best a preparation for the one-pointedness of inclusion--the realization of God in the fulness of cosmic being as well as in the interior height of the individual soul. Like the Taoist sage, they would at last have turned back into the world riding on their tamed and regenerate individuality; they would have "come eating and drinking," would have associated with "publicans and sinners" or their Buddhist equivalents, "wine-bibbers and butchers." For the fully enlightened, totally liberated person, samsara and nirvana, time and eternity, the phenomenal and the Real, are essentially one. His whole life is an unsleeping and one-pointed contemplation of the Godhead in and through the things, lives, minds and events of the world of becoming. There is here no mutilation of the soul, no atrophy of any of its powers and capacities. Rather, there is a general enhancement and intensification of consciousness, and at the same time an extension and transfiguration (P.P., p. 299).

Note in this passage the repetition of the paradox cited above: samsara and nirvana are the same. Note also the words used to describe the effect of this spiritual study

on consciousness: enhancement, intensification, extension, and transfiguration. This passage would seem to refute Watts's contention that Huxley's teaching is intended to show how a man may "put behind himself the variety that his sense of his separate personality and the thrust of his particular desires keep before him."[73] It also explains, though not completely, Huxley's contention that contemplation in its fulness as well as in its height unites the way of Martha with the way of Mary, unites action in the world with awareness of divine Reality.

> To discover the Kingdom of God exclusively within oneself is easier than to discover it, not only there, but also in the outer world of minds and things and living creatures. It is easier because the heights within reveal themselves to those who are ready to exclude from their purview all that lies without. And though this exclusion may be a painful and mortificatory process, the fact remains that it is less arduous than the process of inclusion, by which we come to know the fulness as well as the heights of spiritual life (P.P., p. 61).

Watts seems inaccurate when he writes that, ". . . the Huxleyan model man will succeed in his high task only intermittently."[74] And again, ". . . the person who succeeds at this task of union with the ground of being will not enjoy that admirable state very long. Rather, it is man's destiny, as the mixed creature he is, to 'return' to the embraces of sex or, less sensationally, to the struggles of a good society against the evils of democratic nationalism or a still more evil fascism."[75] Huxley's view of the matter is somewhat different. In

the discussion of "double-consciousness" in Ends and Means, he writes: "St. Teresa tells us that, in 'the seventh mansion,' she could be conscious of the mystical Light while giving her full attention to worldly business. Indian writers say that the same is true of those who have attained the highest degree of what they call samadhi."[76] Once again Huxley's effort is to be inclusive rather than exclusive. The type of growth he is interested in is a growth which radiates out from a given point including new territory without abandoning the old.

The Novel of Ideas

At this point it is possible to return profitably to Hoffman's thesis about Huxley's fiction. Hoffman feels, as we have seen, that the later novels are weakened by the expousing of a particular viewpoint, and that only while the different intellectual positions were of equal value did the form have validity. It is, of course, possible to define a genre in such a way that it will include what you like and exclude what you dislike. This is what Hoffman seems to have done. That a novel of ideas must be objective in its presentation of various positions is debatable--the theater of ideas, as exemplified by Shaw, is not neutral--and the assumption that Huxley was neutral in his early novels is even more controversial.[77] If Huxley's later novels fall short of his earlier ones,

it must be on other grounds, such as that suggested by Huxley's own observation that, in certain novels, the essay element swamps the narrative.[78] It would seem more to the point to ask how the intellectual positions differ in the later novels. Here the horizontal-vertical dichotomy (presented above in connection with the ways of escaping the self) is illuminating. In the early novels Huxley is concerned with securing the greatest possible horizontal diversity, the greatest possible variety of viewpoints within a given milieu (Philip Quarles's .01% of the human race that has ideas). In the later books Huxley is portraying stages of understanding; the emphasis is vertical--on spiritual development. Rather than contrasting philosophies of life, Huxley is contrasting degrees of enlightenment. There is usually at least one character who undergoes a change in the course of the novel. There is a sense of development in Huxley's later novels that is lacking in the early books which seek to create an aesthetic whole by juxtaposing the parts of a social group. Watts notes this change. Of the early novels he writes: "This use of event does not have much in common with a plot which is an 'action' that shapes and transforms the beings who endure it."[79] Of the later novels he says: ". . . one could maintain that events there do indeed produce signal alterations."[80]

Hoffman speaks of the early novels as examples of the novel of diversity. The implication is that Huxley turned his back on variety when he endorsed a religious Weltanschauung. It is manifestly untrue in the sense that contrast through diversity of character types remained Huxley's basic literary technique throughout his career. Other critics have noted this. Jerome Meckier, for example, states that, ". . . it is the use of counterpoint, the interplay of satire and structural technique, that marks Point Counter Point and Eyeless in Gaza as the peak of Huxley's career. The revival of counterpoint in Time Must Have a Stop makes it the most successful of Huxley's later novels."[81] Eyeless in Gaza (1936) and Time Must Have a Stop (1944) are both post-conversion novels. Even Hoffman sees clearly that in a novel like Point Counter Point Huxley is testing out viewpoints in the modern world, and that ". . . the limitations of each are demonstrated in the individual fates of the persons who hold them."[82] Huxley continues to expose limitations. In the later novels he is doing what he did in the early novels--exposing the limitations that the wise man will transcend in his search for wholeness. Hoffman does not see that, in this regard, the dynamics of the later novels are exactly the same as those of the earlier ones. The static circle has become a ladder--that is all. Hoffman's view that the later novels are weaker artistically than

the early ones, however debatable, may or may not be true, but certainly his explanation of why the later novels fail is unacceptable in so far as it depends on an arbitrary and unsatisfactory definition of the novel of ideas, a definition which does not even describe the early novels, and one especially unacceptable insofar as it implies that Huxley abandoned diversity and contrast in his later novels.

A Thomist View

By what line of reasoning did Huxley arrive at the belief that diversity was not incompatible with a religious point of view? It is impossible to be sure on this point since existing documents do not contain explicit statements, but a letter Huxley wrote in 1945 to Jean E. Hare, a letter cited in part above, contains a suggestive hint:

> The conclusion of Point Counter Point is the concentrated expression of that kind of aesthetic mysticism which runs through the book and which is the analogue on another plane (perhaps even, to some extent, it is the homologue) of the ultimate, spiritual mysticism. Anyhow, it was through the aesthetic that I came to the spiritual--having begun by rejecting the spiritual in favour of the aesthetic and by identifying it with the aesthetic, making the part include the whole. The sense that even the highest art was not good enough, that if this was all it was a pretty poor thing to be man's final end--this was, at bottom, the impelling motive (L., p. 538).

A few years earlier in another letter, he wrote:

> As a young man, I cared supremely for knowledge for its own sake, for the play of ideas, for the arts of literature, painting and music. But for some years now I have felt a certain dissatisfaction with these things, have felt that even the greatest masterpieces were somehow inadequate. Recently I have begun to know something about the reality in relation to which such things as art and general knowledge can be appraised. Inadequate in and for themselves, these activities of the mind can be seen in their true perspective when looked at from the vantage point of mysticism. "Those barren leaves of science and of art" are barren only when regarded as ultimate ends (L., p. 474).

The aesthetic mysticism of Bloomsbury became religious mysticism. The polytheistic humanism of the twenties became the mystical monotheism of the thirties. Huxley felt he had fallen into the error he habitually decried in others, the taking of the part for the whole.

In 1934 Gerald Vann wrote a book entitled, On Being Human: St. Thomas and Mr. Aldous Huxley. If Vann sent Huxley a copy of his book, and if Huxley read it, parallels with much of Huxley's thought would be understandable. But it is not necessary to show such a link. Although Huxley may never have seen Vann's book, it is certain that he took an interest in the writings of the scholars of the neo-Thomist movement and was deeply read in the philosophy of Aquinas. Moreover, much that Vann writes is a restatement of traditional religious views that Huxley would have known. The significance of the book for present purposes is that it provides a rationale

for regarding theocentric religion as being compatible with humanism, growth, and diversity but stresses the necessity of completing humanism with a spiritual outlook.

Vann states in the opening pages of the appendix to his book, a chapter entitled, "The Polytheism of Mr. Aldous Huxley," that he sees distinct parallels between his theocentric position and that of the young Huxley who wrote Do What You Will: "If the name of Mr. Aldous Huxley has appeared very frequently in this essay it is because the positive, constructive part of the life-worship theory which he advocates seems to be very similar to what has been submitted here. 'The perfect ideal,' he says, 'would be the ideal, not of super-humanness, but of perfected humanity' . . . ." "Yet Mr. Huxley considers his thesis opposed to the Christian ideal, opposed to monotheism of any sort, whereas the purpose of this essay has been precisely to try and show its identity with Christianity and with the Catholic doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas."[83] That Huxley would (without embracing Roman Catholicism to be sure) abandon polytheism and move to a religious position similar to that set forth by Vann could not have been foreseen at the time Vann wrote his book, but it indicates the high quality of the analysis he made of Huxley's thought and makes his book worth the closest attention as a study of the rationale by which Huxley probably bridged the gulf between his

aesthetic and religious periods. For, if there are, as this essay maintains, continuous elements in Huxley's thought, then these elements must include his hatred of reductionism and his concern with wholeness, and it is on these that Vann focuses his attention.

Huxley's aethetic criteria of wholeness and the weaknesses of his first formulation of it had been evident as early as 1918 in the prose-poem, "Beauty." Herman Clay Bowersox, writing on these early poems, singles out Huxley's use of the words "soul" and "eternity":

> Presumably this "soul" and this "eternity" are only names for formal perfection, which is the principle of beauty. But this beauty is not the same as the beauty of art, for it is the result, not of selection and ordering, but of the quantitative balancing of elements of personality and of modes of activity, primacy being denied to any one of the human faculties. In the rosy Brotherhood of Common Life there is only eating and drinking and marrying and thinking, "and when thinking fails, feeling. . . . subtly"--a series of discontinuous activities succeeding each other in time and of equal importance. This is not the unity of the fine arts; it is a kind of wholeness, but it is not aesthetic harmony or real psychological integration.
>
> One may also note that this "beauty" provides no standard of evaluating the elements which compose the whole. Good and evil, in this philosophy, are hardly more than quantitative differences, fullness of existence being the only criterion of value. Cruelty and stupidity, for example, are not vices, but the necessary complements, respectively, of kindness and intelligence; and there is really no choice between them, since both are manifestations of human character.
>
> Huxley gives no clear sign in the early poems that he was aware of these limitations in his philosophy; indeed, as this doctrine of wholeness is to reappear in later works--most notably in Point Counter Point and Do What You Will--we may assume that it is one of his cherished theories.[84]

Hoffman's "democracy" is here decried as aesthetic anarchy, because there is "no standard of evaluating the elements which compose the whole."--Thus, the concept of inclusion as merely quantitative is the chief characteristic of Huxley's use of the criterion of wholeness prior to the conversion. It explains both his praise of polytheism and his use of counterpoint. Before the conversion Huxley concentrated on horizontal wholeness. After it he concerned himself with vertical wholeness. Vann shows how this change may be made without abandoning diversity.

Vann begins his essay by defining scholasticism and humanism. Scholasticism, with which Catholic thought is identified, he divides into two types, the early and the late. The early is admirable; the late is not. "Scholasticism may mean a more or less homogeneous system, a coincidence of problem and principle throughout a period; or it may denote an attitude of mind, the outlook we call academic, the absorption in abstract and meaningless problems . . ." (V., p. 8). At another point he writes, "And it was this spirit of the late scholasticism, its lack of contact with reality, its atmosphere, not the general doctrinal character of scholasticism as a body of thought, which aroused the humanist reaction. After the sound spirit of inquiry and the architectural energy of the early leaders of the movement comes the academic

spirit of pedantry . . ." (V., p. 8). These types are not, of course, confined to historical periods but are found at all times.

Vann divides humanism into three types, again according to historical period: the Greek; the Renaissance; and the modern American. The Greek form of humanism was pagan, the Renaissance was sometimes pagan and sometimes Christian, the modern American is neither pagan nor Christian but rather a new religion itself. Humanism, according to Vann has three characteristics: "Humanism therefore would seem to be compounded of these several notions: the love of beauty in all its manifestations, the completion of the personality in all its powers, the symmetry or coherence in which that completion is unified, the enthronement of humanity over the earth" (V., p. 15).

The love of beauty and the centrality of man are important to Huxley, but it is what C.W. Reese described as, ". . . the effort to enrich human experience to the utmost capacity of man and the utmost limits of the environing conditions" (V., p. 11), that relates most closely to his love of diversity. Vann holds that the early scholasticism, as represented by St. Thomas, is not incompatible with humanism though it insists on the addition of a faith in the supernatural to humanism's basic love of this world:

> There is nothing equivocal in St. Thomas's assertion of the beauty of created things, in his uncompromising departure from the platonic and manichaean attitude towards the body, in his idea of human perfection and the completeness of the personality. Yet equally his stand is on the supernatural basis of the faith: God is the beginning and end of creation; God's goodness and beauty are the absolutes to which all other goodness and beauty is relative; the symmetry he advocates is the symmetry demanded by a supernatural end (V., p. 17).

Aquinas taught, says Vann, that ". . . diversity is necessary inasmuch as the most perfect mirroring of God's beauty in creatures could be accomplished only by the unified splendour of a manifold creation synthetised into a harmony." Vann quotes Aquinas:

> The perfect likeness of God could not be attained by creatures of one kind alone, for inasmuch as the cause is greater than the effect, that which is found in the cause in simplicity and unity is found in the effect in composition and multiplicity . . . . Hence it is written that God saw all things that he had made and they were good, for the particular things are in their nature good, but altogether are exceedingly good on account of the symmetry of the universe, which is the ultimate and most noble perfection to be found in things (V., p. 19).

Furthermore, Vann continues, again quoting Aquinas, since "the beautiful is the same thing as the good, differing only by a distinction of the mind," it is obvious that things are beautiful in so far as they represent their type: ". . . each thing is beautiful and good according to its proper form" (V., p. 19). But there is a hierarchy of things in the universe. Aquinas writes:

> The universe as a whole is made up of all creatures as the whole is made up of its parts. But if we wish to assign an end to any whole and to its parts we shall

> find: that the particular parts are designed for their respective actualities, as the eye is made for seeing; that the less noble part is designed for the more noble, as the senses are made to minister to the understanding or the lungs to the heart; and that all the parts are designed for the perfection of the whole, as the matter is for the form, inasmuch as the parts are, as it were, the material of the whole. But further, the whole man is designed for some extrinsic end, say, that he may have fruition of God. So that in the parts of the universe, each creature is designed for its own proper actuality and perfection; the less noble are designed for the more noble, as the creatures lower than man are designed for him, and the whole universe with all its parts is designed for God as its end, inasmuch as in them is reflected by a sort of mirroring the divine goodness, to the glory of God . . . (V., p. 20).

Harmony of the part to the whole is an essential to the thomist as to the humanist.

> And as for the completion to which humanism looks as its ideal and the aspect of symmetry under which that completion is envisaged, it is fundamental to the entire thomist system. . . . Completion, entelechy, is that for which immediately every man and every part of man is made. All the over-emphasis, therefore, the concentration on one part and its perfection to the exclusion of others, which humanism decries, thomism decries also. And the ultimate completion which a humanism on the purely natural plane must lack, that completion the thomist outlook supplies. It is not something less than humanism as the non-Christian understands it; it is infinitely more, and more in the humanist's own sense, a fulness which on his own principles and aspirations he must welcome for it is their ultimate realization (V., p. 21).

Vann concludes: "Humanism in this sense does not aim at the 'harmonious development of the faculties in this world rather than felicity in a next'; it aims, on the contrary, at the harmonious development of the faculties in this world with a view to a further and final felicity in the next" (V., p. 22).

In a later chapter, after denouncing both Puritanism and Antinomianism and declaring that true humanism will keep a balance of power between repression and prodigality, Vann returns to the theme of a harmonious hierarchy of values. The beauty of this world will not be despised by the true mystic: "To despise created beauty, for example, for the sake of an infinite beauty is not true mysticism, it is a pathetic mistake" (V., p. 29). However, Vann continues,

> . . . there is a hierarchy of beauty as there is a hierarchy of human powers. The higher dignity, the deeper worship, must be assigned to the higher beauty, the deeper worth. To deify created beauty is to sin against beauty. So, too, to despise the body for the sake of the soul, the senses for the sake of the mind, knowledge for the sake of love or love for the sake of knowledge, all these are misjudgments and unjust. But it is a misjudgment also to exault the senses over the mind, the body over the soul. Each of these parts of the personality must have its play, its evolution, but each must keep its due place if the whole is to be perfect (V., p.p. 29-30).

Elsewhere Vann writes: "Man is himself a hierarchy of powers, each important, yet subordinated one to another and ultimately to the whole personality. If man is to be a 'Whole, co-ordinated, full of significance and beauty' his powers must be correlated, must be subordinated, for every co-ordination implies a subordination" (V., p. 57).

In addition to the question of a hierarchy of values Vann hits hard on the question of ends and means. The part must not be taken for the whole, but neither must things of intrinsic worth, such as man, be taken as merely

means. Man uses the things of this world as means of transcending the world in search of God, but he cannot consider them as merely means. Thus creatures "are end means. They have their own inherent goodness, their own lovableness" (V., p. 49). Similarly the body is not to be sacrificed to the soul:

> The body is made for the soul. But it is far from being a mere instrument, a means. It is an end-means. Platonism makes man fundamentally the soul alone; the body is but its instrument. For St. Thomas each is an essential element. The pythagorean idea of the body being a prison which only hampers the soul is discarded. Man is not man without the body. Even after death, when the soul attains its beatitude in the vision of God, "its desire is not fully set at rest": it longs for reunion with the body as partner in its glory (V., p. 57).

Vann cites Grabmann who holds, like Huxley in The Perennial Philosophy, that life in the body is valuable to the soul: "The separated soul . . . lacks not merely an instrument but an essential element of human completeness and perfection" (V., p. 59). Aquinas rejects "the old theory . . . that the body was after all an unfortunate ligature to be discarded as far as possible, to be down-trodden and rendered inactive and consequently incapable of disturbing man's preoccupation with the supernatural" (V., p. 59). In Grabmann's words: "union with the body does not in the least mean a degradation for the soul; it means a perfecting which bears it in this life to the plenitude of power and the complete development of the human being in the realm both of nature and of grace" (V., p. 59).

The early church fathers did not despise the body. Vann quotes Étienne Gilson: "One has only to consult any of the Greek and Latin Fathers from the second to the fourth century to see that, in them all, the preoccupation is pre-eminently with man, that it is man, body and soul in indissoluble union, that they are concerned to save. To despise the body, to blacken nature under pretext of ensuring more fully the rights of the soul or of God, is to cut oneself off by that very fact from the communion of the church . . . " (V., p. 60). Vann believes ". . . we do not set out fundamentally to save our souls so much as to save ourselves. Indeed, we do not set out fundamentally to save ourselves, but to become perfect men . . . " (V., p. 61). One must see body and soul acting in harmony: "Body and soul take part symphonically, each alone being imperfect, making respectively for lechery or angelicist unreality. Love to be complete must concern both body and soul . . . . It is an activity of the whole man" (V., p. 61). Thus Vann writes:

> It must be emphasized once again that St. Thomas's theory of the supernatural is diametrically opposed to those which consider the supernatural life as destructive of the natural. For him it is precisely the perfecting and fulfilment of the natural. Keeping the two in their right subordination he views them as perfectly harmonious: the supernaturalised man is the perfected natural man raised to a higher plane not by isolation from, but by building upon, the lower. His personality is realised to the fullest extent of what are called his obediential potentialities (V., p. 67).

Detachment

Because asceticism seems to be opposed to fulfillment Vann takes up the paradox that the ascetic life, when freely chosen out of a love for God that does not involve a despising of the things of this world, can be the fulfilled, the realized life. Thus, Vann says the view of St. Thomas in the Summa Theologica is that the mystic life as "the supreme actualization of the spirit, set above all other actualizations . . . includes them, it 'informs' them and gives them their true orientation" (V., p. 68). Later on he writes:

> Asceticism then is part, and a necessary part, of the general scheme of completion. It seeks to bring out the best by avoiding over-development of the part at the expense of the whole. The virtues tend to make man habitually what is best in him. The final perfection of the virtuous life is that capacity for knowing by a sort of intuition, a connaturality in St. Thomas's phrase, what is right, for it is a question, in the last analysis, of vision. The Wisdom which is the gift of the Holy Ghost is the power to see with God's eyes; when a man has attained to that he is very near the purity and the perfection of Paradise (V., p. 75).

All men must make choices, and choices involve accepting limitations. Those accepted by the monk are greater because his goal is supernatural, and because human nature, as a result of the Fall, is biased toward the material and away from the spiritual; but the monk, as distinguished from the puritan, loves this world in all its aspects and ". . . practices a self-perfecting asceticism to the attainment of a fuller completeness" (V., p. 72).

The inner life cultivated by the monk is also humanistic: "the inner life" is "at the opposite pole from introspection which is entirely inhumanist because entirely self-centered, centripetal" (V., pp. 67-68). The monk may be less cut off from humanity than the man of the world. "The humanist is not an experience-monger. He is not a man who has tried every section and species of experience, but a man who loves every section and species of reality" (V., p. 70). Again, "It is very easy for the recluse to become centripetal and isolated, to commit spiritual suicide. Perhaps it is still easier for the modern who is not a monk, for one must be all the time on one's guard against the amusement mania, the degrading of realization into mere expressionism" (V., p. 71).

The Thomist in Vann's opinion is more closely allied to a realist than an idealist position. He believes, as does Huxley, in the existence of external reality independent of the knowing mind.

> Thomism accepts reality, dependent on ideas indeed, but not on the ideas of men; on the contrary, as particularities of truth to which our knowledge, if it is to be knowledge, must in the first instance conform. And as things exist independently of our thought, so their existence is independent of the service they render us. A rose is a thing of value whether it be sniffed in a suburban garden or flourish unseen in a wilderness. It is, in one sense, absolute. Its goodness is intrinsic to it, apart from all utility and service (V., p. 55).

Idealism, which owes its existence to Descartes' separation of mind and body, is responsible for a narrowness

that discredited all study of principles, all interest in metaphysics, while materialism triumphs and produces a different narrowness: ". . . principles were apt to be regarded as academic non-entities, the empty formulation of an out-of-date system still occasionally bombinans in vacuo. And the end of it all was, to a great extent, the accumulation of an enormous mass of specialised learning and erudition, a magnificent advance in the scientific conquest of nature, and then, in the realm of such a science as ethics a more or less utilitarian standpoint . . . " (V., p. 43). In such a Manicheean world humanism can only take refuge in escapism which is, along with dilettantism and insensibility, one of the three sins against humanism (V., p. 70). The "sorry anaemia of the nineteenth-century aesthetes" (V., p. 44) is proof of this.

The artist must maintain contact with reality. In a statement that could stand as preface to much of Huxley's later work, Vann states: "If a man is to be led by his philosophy into a segregation from reality, from personal contacts, he had far better renounce his philosophy and cultivate his back garden with his fellow men. To regard philosophy as the mere exercise of intelligence about reality is to mistake its whole essence. The 'love of wisdom' is affective as well as intellectual: knowledge demands love as its complement. 'Knowledge,' says

St. Thomas himself, 'is not perfect unless love be joined to it'" (V., p. 36). Indeed, as Huxley makes clear in the last sentence of his Collected Essays, ". . . Love is the last word" (C.E., p. 399). From a humanist point of view, artists have a special significance; their wisdom is affective in a special way: "Herein lies the subjective importance of art--science incarnate, in Cocteau's phrase--the artist lives necessarily in direct contact with reality" (V., p. 36).

Action in the world depends for its effectiveness on its relationship to truth. The theocentric humanist is at an advantage here and may accomplish more than the worldly man. Huxley's favorite quotation from St. Augustine was the statement: "Love, and do what you like" (P.P., p. 92). A contemporary example might be Thomas Merton, a correspondant of Huxley's, a man whose influence in the world was considerable though he lived the life of a Trappist monk. Vann writes, ". . . humanism is in no conflict with the Catholic idea of what is called detachment or of mortification. The Catholic principle of detachment, whatever may have been the attitude demanded by a particular, exceptional case, is quite clear. What is demanded is the readiness to forgo the enjoyment of beauty in this or that sphere where it is incompatible with the service of God. The love of beauty in all its manifestations is not only not forbidden; by the very concept of Christianity it is required" (V., p. 27).

Huxley's definition of non-attachment makes clear that positive actions are necessary:

> Non-attachment is negative only in name. The practice of non-attachment entails the practice of all the virtues. It entails the practice of charity, for example; for there are no more fatal impediments than anger (even "righteous indignation") and cold-blooded malice to the identification of the self with the immanent and transcendent more-than-self. It entails the practice of courage; for fear is a painful and obsessive identification of the self with its body. (Fear is negative sensuality, just as sloth is negative malice.) It entails the cultivation of intelligence; for insensitive stupidity is a main root of all the other vices. It entails the practice of generosity and disinterestedness; for avarice and the love of possessions constrain their victims to equate themselves with mere things. And so on. It is unnecessary any further to labour the point, sufficiently obvious to any one who chooses to think about the matter, that non-attachment imposes upon those who would practise it the adoption of an intensely positive attitude towards the world.[85]

Vann devotes the fourth chapter of his book to the necessity of action as a completion of contemplation:

> From the life of the spirit, the life of contemplation, flows the life of action. The perfect life is made up of the co-ordination of these two, the active flowing from the "superabundance" of the contemplative. Art is born of a necessity in the soul of the artist to express the fruit of his contemplation: life, which must be a work of art, must be the outcome of the life of the spirit. Charity in action must flow from charity in contemplation. Where the active life, however good in appearance, is not the fruit of contemplation it is not perfect. Again, mortification, the whole life of asceticism, must be prompted, necessitated, by the inner exigencies of charity. . . . While charity commands and prompts the due degree of asceticism, asceticism fans and cleanses the flame of love. But it is asceticism which is the subordinate, charity which reigns supreme (V., pp. 80-81).

Detachment or non-attachment as a religious concept has obvious connections with aesthetic detachment in

art and scientific objectivity in science. Huxley writes in The Perennial Philosophy: "And the same applies to all created things, lives and minds. It is bad to love-know them with self-centered attachment and cupidity; it is somewhat better to know them with scientific dispassion; it is best to supplement abstract knowledge-without-cupidity with true disinterested love-knowledge, having the quality of aesthetic delight, or of charity, or of both combined" (P.P., p. 82).

As a young man Huxley had cultivated the pose of the observer, the man who reflects on and contemplates the passing scene from a distance conducive to the operation of the philosophic mind. As Suzanne Heintz-Friedrich notes: "In all diesen Erstlingswerken ist Huxley der Zuschauer, der gleichsam von einem Podium herab das Treiben um sich herum beobachtet und kritisiert . . . . Sein wissenschaftliche Bildung prädestiniert ihn ohnehin zu einer solchen Haltung. Mit der Unbeteiligheit eines Wissenschafters löst er sich von der Welt los, die ihn persönlich nicht berührt, sondern nur als Object der Beobachtung interessiert."[86] Huxley's scepticism and his use of satire as an art form have several causes, but not the least of these is the desire to maintain an objectivity conducive to the highest types of thinking and to attack complacency, to attack ignorance and insensibility. His purpose was the opposite of diletantism or escapism. His

later commitment to knowledge of an ultimate, all encompassing consciousness did not negate his earlier position.

Huxley wrote his brother, Julian, in 1919: ". . . great events are both terrifying and boring, terrifying because one may be killed and boring because they interfere with the free exercise of the mind--and after all, that freedom is the only thing in the world worth having and the people who can use it properly are the only ones worthy of the least respect: the others are all madmen, pursuing shadows and prepared at any moment to commit acts of violence" (L., p. 173). In the middle fifties he wrote: ". . . I am not a religious person--in the sense that I am not a believer in metaphysical propositions, not a worshipper or performer of rituals, and not a joiner of churches--and therefore I don't feel qualified or inclined to tell people in general what to think or do. The only general advice I can give (apart from exploring individual cases on an ad hoc basis) is that people should use their common sense, act with common decency, cultivate love and extend and intensify their awareness--then ask themselves if they know a little more than they did about the Unknown God" (L., p. 811). In 1962 Huxley felt free to call himself an agnostic (L., p. 935). Non-attachment was an extension of the earlier position; using the spiral image Huxley was fond of, one could say it was purified and raised to a higher level.

The cosmic view of St. Thomas as presented by Vann had certain similarities to the view later set forth by Huxley:

> . . . St. Thomas's metaphysic, like Aristotle's, is teleological. . . . He sees the birth of worlds, the march of centuries, as an emanation from the infinite, which in a vast sweep runs its course back to the abyss of energy from which it sprang. The aristotelian idea of potentiality applies to the universe as a whole: each entity aspiring towards its proper actualisation, the cosmos itself is viewed as "yearning" for its fulfilment. The desire of the soul for assimilation with the Godhead is the supreme human example of this general trend. Man's fulfilment is his divinisation--his becoming divine in a human mode--for here one may not separate in St. Thomas the philosopher from the theologian: he views man as revelation has shown him to be, called by God's mercy to the fulfilment not only of his natural potentialities but of his obediential potentialities also, in the way of grace. Pico della Mirandola lauded St. Thomas for his perfect balance. It is seen in its fullest expression in this outlook which embraces all reality and in which nothing is overstressed, nothing is ignored. Thomism is far removed from pseudo-mysticism, from manichaeism, equally far from hedonism and materialism. Truth, beauty are given their due on every plane; matter and spirit co-ordinated and subordinated. The contemplation of the things which God has made is good (V., pp. 46-47).

Huxley's image of the inclusive, upward spiral is also suggested. Thus Vann writes of ". . . the knowledge called connatural: the knowledge of sympathy such as exists in friendship. Analogously, it recurs on the higher plane of the supernatural world." And Vann reminds us: ". . . the supernaturalized man is the perfected man raised to a higher plane not by isolation from, but by building upon, the lower" (V., p. 67). But the chief lesson that Huxley may have derived from his religious studies is that, "If

man is to be a 'Whole, co-ordinated, full of significance and beauty' his powers must be correlated, must be sub-ordinated, for every co-ordination implies a subordination" (V., p. 57).

For Huxley, then, the turn to mysticism followed from the search for wholeness and completion, for total consciousness. The search was not dictated by a violent conversion. Philosopher Morris Philipson makes this point in his Introduction to Huxley's On Art and Artists: "Huxley's is a consistent mind, and the paradox of the 'whole' and the 'clear' informs his writings . . . " (O.A.A., p. 12). And elsewhere he writes: "The later writings of Huxley stand with one foot inside the realm of what he considers a rationally defensible mysticism. For him, the aim of seeing life 'whole' as well as 'clear' is achieved by accepting the conditions of such mysticism. In effect, the condition for ultimate comprehension requires recognizing the limits of rational thought only because one has used reason to its fullest. The rest may be silence (from the rationalist's point of view) but it is the singing, significant silence for one who has learned at last how to hear what does not speak to the mind" (O.A.A., p. 14). Vann, in his book on St. Thomas and Aldous Huxley, shows one way of linking religious mysticism and the quest for human fulfilment and, by so doing, may well have given students of Huxley a genuine insight into the intellectual basis of Huxley's conversion.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER III

[1]Ath., July 4, 1919, p. 558. For additional support of my position on Huxley's conversion, see the unpublished dissertation by Clyde Adolph Euroth (Minnesota, 1956).

[2]R. C. Zaehner, Mysticism Sacred and Profane (New York, 1961), p. 2.

[3]Zaehner, pp. 14-15.

[4]Zaehner, p. 1.

[5]Zaehner, p. 15.

[6]Zaehner, p. xi.

[7]Zaehner, p. 3.

[8]Zaehner, p. 9.

[9]Abraham Kaplan, The New World of Philosophy (New York, 1963), p. 204.

[10]Kaplan, p. 207.

[11]Kaplan, p. 208.

[12]Kaplan, loc cit.

[13]Kaplan, p. 210.

[14]Kaplan, p. 220.

[15]Kaplan, p. 218.

[16]Kaplan, p. 228.

[17]Huston Smith, "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?," in Solomon, p. 167.

[18]Aldous Huxley, Tomorrow, Tomorrow, Tomorrow (New York, 1956), pp. 1, 9-10. Herafter cited as Tomorrow. See also Solomon, pp. 38-48.

[19]Ath., November 26, 1920, p. 730.

[20]Ath., May 21, 1920, p. 672.

[21]Ath., November 26, 1920, p. 730.

[22]Ath., May 21, 1920, p. 672.

[23]L.S., p. 118.

[24]Aldous Huxley, The Devils of Loudun (New York, 1952), p. 326. Hereafter cited as Devils.

[25]loc. cit.

[26]Devils, pp. 326-327.

[27]Clark, p. 152.

[28]Aldous Huxley, Along the Road (New York, 1925), p. 77. Hereafter cited as Along.

[29]Along, p. 78.

[30]Aldous Huxley in Clark, p. 226.

[31]Aldous Huxley, Two or Three Graces (New York, 1926), p. 117.

[32]Devils, p. 327.

[33]Devils, p. 314.

[34]Devils, pp. 323-324.

[35]O.A.A., p. 157.

[36]See L., p. 874. Huxley's experiences varied from time to time. This suggests that the state of mind Huxley brought to the session was as important a factor as the drug itself.

[37]Devils, pp. 324-325.

[38]Ends, p. 269.

[39]Devils, p. 325.

[40]loc. cit.

[41]Ends, p. 260.

[42]Ends, pp. 267-268.

[43]Ends, p. 346.

[44]Ends, p. 285.

[45]Ends, p. 286.

[46]Ends, p. 287.

[47]Ends, p. 378.

[48]Ends, pp. 376-377.

[49]Ends, pp. 354-355.

[50]Hoffmann, pp, 192-193.

[51]Hoffmann, p. 193.

[52]Harold H. Watts, Aldous Huxley (New York, 1969), p. 33.

[53]P.P., p. 187.

[54]Watts, p. 38.

[55]Watts, pp. 39-40.

[56]Time, p. 282.

[57]loc. cit.

[58]Aldous Huxley, The Genius and the Goddess (New York, 1956), pp. 4-5. Hereafter cited as Genius.

[59]Sherman Paul, "The Angle of Vision," in Emerson: a Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Milton R. Konvitz and Stephen E. Whicher (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1962), pp. 175-176.

[60]Paul, p. 176.

[61]Paul, pp. 176-177.

[62]Paul, pp. 177-178.

[63]P.P., p. 182.

[64]Watts, p. 36.

[65]Watts, p. 35.

[66]Devils, p. 304.

[67]Devils, p. 305.

[68]Ends, p. 324.

[69]Laura Archera Huxley, This Timeless Moment: A Personal View of Aldous Huxley (New York, 1968), p. 176. Hereafter cited as Archera.

[70]Archera, pp. 177-178.

[71]Meckier, p. 167.

[72]Tomorrow, pp. 101-102.

[73]Watts, p. 36.

[74]Watts, p. 36.

[75]Watts, p. 37.

[76]Ends, p. 377.

[77]Meckier, p. 28.

[78]George Plimpton, ed., Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, 2nd Ser. (New York, 1963), p. 206. Hereafter cited as Writers at Work.

[79]Watts, p. 55.

[80]loc. cit.

[81]Meckier, p. 174.

[82]Hoffman, p. 196.

[83]Gerald Vann, On Being Human: St. Thomas and Mr. Aldous Huxley (New York, 1934), pp. 99-100. Hereafter cited as V.

[84]See the unpubl. diss. (Chicago, 1943) by Hermann C. Bowersox, pp. 15-16.

[85]Ends, pp. 4-5.

[86]Suzanne Heinz-Friederich, Aldous Huxley: Entwicklung Seiner Metaphysik (Bern, 1949), p. 14.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTINUING THREAD: EVOLUTION AS METAPHOR

The various guiding principles in Huxley's thought can be subsumed under a single head, and that is organicism. In Huxley's writings one sees one result of the nineteenth century obsession with the organic metaphor. The relationship of this heritage could be elaborately traced. Thus beyond the nineteenth century looms the shadow of the doctrines known collectively as the great chain of being. Closely allied in terms of influence on Huxley's thought is the belief in the imagination as a means of grace--especially in its effect of lending a spatial characteristic to the imagery of natural religion (the infinity of God is equated with the infinity of space). The great chain of being is discussed by A.O. Lovejoy; the belief in the imagination as a means of grace, an aspect of the doctrine of the Sublime, is dealt with by Ernest Lee Tuveson. Here, however, my concern is to deal directly with the effects of organicism in the work of Aldous Huxley. And the aspect which is most relevant is that of organic evolution viewed as a metaphor of man's proper role in the world and of the proper nature of works of art.

The Lessons of Evolution

What aspects of the doctrine of evolution did Huxley seize upon? In what sense can it be said that a belief in evolution as a model of ideal form shaped and gave consistency to Huxley's thought and work? The previous chapters point to several aspects. The first is complexity; a development from simple to complex is regarded as progress or advance. The metaphor is one of developmental stages within an organism, such as the growth from fetus to adult, or of the rise of higher animals from single cellular forms of life. Complexity is, therefore, a virtue. The second is non-specialization: all-round development, non-specialization, is preferable to adaptation to a particular end. These two principles are related to two further beliefs or values: first, that proper change or growth is necessary and good; and second, that harmony of part to totality or wholeness is the identifying characteristic of natural objects. These four concepts, principles, criteria of value--complexity, non-specialization, growth, and wholeness--govern much of Aldous Huxley's thought in art as well as religion and politics. Whether these beliefs are satisfactory as criteria of value, or whether they are consistent with each other, is, for present purposes, irrelevant.

C.D. Broad's analysis of the "suppressed premise" in the thought of Julian Huxley sheds light on the principle in the work of Aldous Huxley outlined above:

> If, then, Prof. Huxley is to support his own views . . . and . . . refute those of an opponent by appealing to the facts and laws of evolution, there must be a suppressed premise in the argument. This premise must be some such proposition as "States of affairs which have more complexity-in-unity are as such intrinsically better than those which have less complexity-in-unity", or (what is by no means the same) "Processes of change in which there is increase of complexity-in-unity in the successive phases are intrinsically better than those in which there is stability or diminution in this respect". (Prof. Huxley might prefer the latter as more "dynamic", since it ascribes intrinsic value, not to the separate phases, but to the process of change itself in which they occur.)[1]

Complexity

Huxley deals directly with evolution at some length in Ends and Means and The Perennial Philosophy. In the former work, speaking of complexity, he writes:

> Evolution has resulted in the world as we know it today. Is there any reason for regarding this world as superior to the world of earlier geological epochs? In other words, can evolution be regarded as a genuine progress? These questions can be answered, with perfect justification, in the affirmative. Certain properties, which it is impossible not to regard as valuable, have been developed in the course of evolution. The lower forms of life persist more or less unchanged; but among the higher forms there has been a definite trend towards greater control and greater independence of the physical environment. Beings belonging to the highest forms of life have increased their capacity for self-regulation, have created an internal environment capable of remaining stable throughout very great changes in the outer world, have equipped themselves with elaborate

> machinery for picking up knowledge of the outer world, as well as of the inner, and have developed a wonderfully effective instrument for dealing with that knowledge.[2]

Non-Specialization

Not all creatures and forms of life have progressed equally, however. In Ends and Means, Huxley states that the reason for this is the tendency to specialize:

> Evolutionary progress is of two kinds: general, all-round progress and one-sided progress in a particular direction. This last leads to specialization. From the evidence provided by the study of fossils and living forms, we are justified in inferring that any living form which has gone in for one-sided progress thereby makes it impossible for itself to achieve generalized progress. Nothing fails like success; and creatures which have to perform one sort of task and to live in one sort of environment are by that very fact foredoomed to ultimate failure.

Huxley, in the chapter entitled, "Ethics," equates specialization with separateness, his definition of evil: "Good is that which makes for unity; Evil is that which makes for separateness."[3] He sees "The urge-to-separateness, or craving for independent and individualized existence" as the true meaning of the Bibical myth of the Fall: ". . . the suffering of creatures remains a fact and is a necessary part of creatureliness. In so far as this is the case, creation is the beginning of the Fall. The consummation of the Fall takes place when creatures seek to intensify their separateness

beyond the limits prescribed by the law of their being" (P.P., p. 228). Huxley indicates how this may come about:

> The urge-to-separateness, or craving for independence and individualized existence, can manifest itself on all the levels of life, from the merely cellular and physiological, through the instinctive, to the fully conscious. It can be the craving of a whole organism for an intensification of its separateness from the environment and the divine Ground. Or it can be the urge of a part within an organism for an intensification of its own partial life as distinct from (and consequently at the expense of) the life of the organism as a whole (P.P., p. 228).

But the true evil of this urge is premature specialization which renders impossible the ascent "through unitive knowledge, into the wholeness of eternal Reality" (P.P., p. 227). The matter which has satisfied its appetite for form by becoming man is the only world-stuff that has escaped the blind alley of specialization:

> Only one species, of all the millions that exist and have existed has hitherto resisted the temptation to specialize. Sooner or later all the rest have succumbed and have thus put themselves out of the running in the evolutionary race. . . . Man alone kept himself free from specialization and was therefore able to go on progressing in the direction of greater awareness, greater intelligence, greater control over environment. Moreover, alone of all living beings upon this planet he is in a position to advance from his present position. If man were to become extinct, it seems certain that no other existing animal would be able to develop into a being comparable to man for control over or independence of environment, for capacity to know the world and its own mind.[4]

In The Perennial Philosophy he wrote:

> On the biological level the Fall would seem to have been consummated very frequently during the course of evolutionary history. Every species, except the

> human, chose immediate, short-range success by means of specialization. But specialization always leads into blind alleys. It is only by remaining precariously generalized that an organism can advance towards that rational intelligence which is its compensation for not having a body and instincts perfectly adapted to one particular kind of life in one particular kind of environment. Rational intelligence makes possible unparalleled worldly success on the one hand and, on the other, a further advance towards spirituality and a return, through unitive knowledge, to the divine Ground (P.P., pp. 228-229).

Growth

Growth is good; settling for a limited form which does not lead one to the goal of existence, does not lead to God, to the infinite, the unlimited, is bad. The opening lines of "Sea Horses," a poem Huxley wrote in 1907, take the overcoming of obstacles as their theme:

> At a gallop we charge up the shingle
> At a gallop we leap the sea-wall
> With mad exultation we tingle
> For we, we can overcome all.[5]

Man, by avoiding specialization, can overcome obstacles, is still capable of growth. The other animals are severely handicapped: ". . . cold-bloodedness limits the power of any animal to become independent of its environment; . . . effective control over the environment is impossible for animals of less than a certain size; . . . some animals are not only too small but are predestined, as the anthropods are predestined by their system of tracheal breathing, to remain small to the end of the chapter; . . . absolute smallness limits the size

of the nervous system and so, apparently, of the amount of mental power which any animal can dispose of."[6] For man, the animal capable of growth, growth was a duty: the shortcoming of many characters in Huxley's later novels is their failure to grow. Sebastian Barnack's father is an example:

> Old, tired, bitter. But that wasn't all, Sebastian said to himself, as he watched the deeply furrowed, leathery face and listened to the now incongruously loud and commanding voice. That wasn't all. In some subtle and hardly explicable way his father gave an impression of deformity--as though he had suddenly turned into a kind of dwarf or hunchback. "He that is not getting better is getting worse." But that was too sweeping and summary. "He that isn't growing up is growing down." That was more like it. Such a man might end his life, not as a ripened human being, but as an aged foetus. . . . And, of course, in an age that had invented Peter Pan and raised the monstrosity of arrested development to the rank of an ideal, he wasn't in any way exceptional.[7]

Wholeness

If there must be growth, there must also be a harmonious interrelationship of parts. In Ends and Means Huxley wrote:

> So-called separate, individual existents are dependent upon one another for their very being. They are inter-connected by a network of relationships--electro-magnetic, gravitational, chemical and, in the case of sentient beings, mental. That network gives them their being and reality. An individual existent is nothing except in so far as it is a part of a larger whole. In other words, it is not an individual existent.[8]

The interrelationship, often obscure and hidden, of parts within a whole, fascinated Huxley before his conversion as

well as after. Writing in 1933 of mental states, including the mysterious not-I experience of mysticism, Huxley commented in the passage cited at length in Chapter II: "Our successive states are islands--but, for the most part, 'sister islands linking their coral arms under the sea.'"[9]

Imagery and Evolutionism

Relationship

The use of island imagery in Huxley's writing is important as part of a larger pattern of enclosure and escape-from-enclosure imagery, imagery of limitation and escape from limitation. The search is for the larger whole that will include the part. Mental states must become parts of a unified or total consciousness; fragmentation and insularity must be avoided. The conscious mind must be aware of the unconscious--a "sensible and realistic religion," writes Huxley, will "help individuals . . . heighten their awareness, so that they become conscious of the Unconscious (this is Suzuki's definition of enlightenment) . . . " (L., p. 827). The insulated self (Huxley's phrase) must recognize its own nothingness except as a part of the whole, of reality. And the cosmos itself must be seen as a mere island in the eternity of God: "Zen literature seems so puzzling because it is concerned, not with God as something other than the world, to be

known and worshipped by human selves apart from the world and in contradistinction to it, but with God as including the world (for obviously the infinite includes the finite) . . . " (L., p. 638).

In Texts and Pretexts, Huxley's opposition to elaborate analysis of mental states in novels combines with his use of island imagery to produce an interesting complex of ideas. For Huxley, man's consciousness has two aspects--separate states and unity of the whole. Man is thus an example of variety in unity: ". . . man is simultaneously a diversity of states and an individual unity."[10] Persons with different interests accent different aspects: the moralist and business man accent the unity of the individual; the immoralist and the psychological analyst emphasize the diversity of different states of mind: "Over against the moralist and the business man, stand the immoralist and the psychological analyst--geographers, who emphasize the sea as opposed to the coral."[11]

Huxley is concerned that mental unity seems to be lost sight of in the proliferation of variety, "Now the body particularizes and separates, the mind unites" (C.E., p. 108). This is mind's virtue. He equates separation with evil in Texts and Pretexts just as he does in Ends and Means: "The psychological analyst is inevitably, whatever his intentions happen to be, on the

side of the immoralists. Analysis is an insistence on separation. The analyst perceives division in what had seemed continuous, fissures through what other, less keen-eyed, had thought the solid earth."[12] The need is for synthesis and wholeness. What the age provides is analysis.

Focusing on writers, Huxley paraphrases one of his favorite quotations from Swift: "Under his pen, two islands grow where only one grew before." In the hands of Joyce and Proust, traditional characters have disappeared: "We know each state very well; but what is the sum of the states? what, finally is the character of the man under analysis?" As a result of the craze for analysis: ". . . the 'psychological reality' of individual characters has correspondingly grown dimmer."[13]

It is clear that Huxley feels we should accentuate the "obscure, submarine connection" between islands rather than the separating sea. Nevertheless, he concludes this essay with a characteristic acceptance of both of the items he has just contrasted: "We can look at human beings macroscopically or microscopically, with the eye of Shakespeare or the eye of Lawrence. Thanks to the psychological research-workers, it is possible for us to see ourselves and our fellows as individuals or as successive states--and therefore as morally responsible for what we do, or as morally irresponsible."[14]

Separation

Another illuminating bit of evidence with regard to Huxley's view of the necessary interrelationship of things is his use of the concept of mental compartments, usually in the phrase, "water-tight compartments." The image, with its overtones of British shipbuilding, can be found in the writings of Thomas Henry Huxley and Julian Huxley as well as those of Aldous Huxley. The phrase is negative in connotation, suggesting something that is static, shut off, finished, a dead end. Thus, in 1893, T.H. Huxley condemned the compromisers and trimmers of earlier decades who tried ". . . to keep their scientific and other convictions in two separate logic-tight compartments."[15]

Julian Huxley, in the autobiographical portion of his book, Religion Without Revelation, twice uses the concept to explain aspects of his own mental life. In the first instance, he writes of the way the idea of going by contraries occurs to people in various parts of the world: ". . . if I may trust my own recollections, it was in my own case a quite spontaneous rationalisation . . . most likely it arises with equal inevitableness elsewhere and equally remains in one of the mind's watertight compartments."[16] Later, when speaking of the surprising fact that chapel services were emotionally meaningful to him, he uses the phrase again: "In spite of this, as I say,

in spite of all my intellectual hostility, the chapel services gave me something valuable . . . this simple personal fact illustrates better than could whole reams of argument, the extreme complexity of religion, and the ease with which watertight compartments are established in the religious life, as indeed within the mind in general."[17] Finally, in a book of essays published some twenty-nine years after Religion Without Revelation, Julian Huxley uses the phrase in a context reminiscent of his brother. Discussing education, he writes: "Some branches of science and learning have shown tendencies towards isolationism and autarkic self-sufficiency strangely similar to those shown by various nation-states in their economic and cultural affairs. This has had its counterpart in education, notably in the compartmentalization of subjects of study at our universities."[18] In the chapter of Ends and Means entitled "Beliefs," Aldous Huxley expressed one of his deep concerns in the following words: ". . . intensive specialization tends to reduce each branch of science to a condition almost approaching meaninglessness. There are many men of science who are actually proud of this state of things. Specialized meaninglessness has come to be regarded, in certain circles, as a kind of hall mark of true science." Huxley's complaint is that ". . . no attempt is made to produce a comprehensive synthesis . . . " (C.E., p. 368).

A pre-conversion example (c. 1931) of Aldous Huxley's use of the "watertight" image occurs in the essay, "And Wanton Optics Roll the Melting Eye":

> We live in a world of non sequiturs. Or rather, we would live in such a world, if we were always conscious of all the aspects under which any event can be considered. But in practice we are almost never aware of more than one aspect of each event at a time. Our life is spent first in one watertight compartment of experience, then in another. The artist can, if he so desires, break down the bulkheads between the compartments and so give us a simultaneous view of two or more of them at a time. So seen, reality looks exceedingly queer. Which is how the ironist and the perplexed questioner desire it to look (O.A.A., pp. 85-86).

In an essay of 1949, Huxley uses the term as a metaphor of the relations between different aspects of a given culture at any one historical moment: "Man and society are, doubtless, wholes; but they are wholes divided, like ships, into watertight compartments. On the one side of a bulkhead is art; on the other is religion. The level may be high in one compartment, low in the other. The connection between the two is not below the water line, but only from above, only for the overseeing intellect that looks down and can see both simultaneously and recognize them as belonging, by juxtaposition rather than by fusion to the same individual or social whole" (O.A.A., pp. 34-35). An essay published in 1956, "Faith, Taste, and History," picks up this idea and treats it at greater length:

> Man is a whole, but a whole with an astounding capacity for living, simultaneously or successively, in water-tight compartments. What happens here has little or no effect on what happens there. The seventeenth-century taste for closed forms in music was inconsistent with the seventeenth-century taste for asymmetry and openness in the plastic arts. The Victorian taste for Mendelssohn and Handel was inconsistent with the Victorian taste for Mormon Temples, Albert Halls and St. Pancras Railway Stations. But in fact these mutually exclusive tastes coexisted and had no perceptible effect on one another. Consistency is a verbal criterion, which cannot be applied to the phenomena of life. Taken together, the various activities of a single individual may "make no sense," and yet be perfectly compatible with biological survival, social success and personal happiness (C.E., pp. 214-215).

Huxley's emphasis is on the consciousness that, seeing from a height, will see disparate things as belonging to a single whole, if not by fusion then at least by juxtaposition: "How strange, I found myself reflecting, as the glutinous tide washed over me, how strange that people should listen with apparently equal enjoyment to this kind of thing and the Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major. Or had I got hold of the wrong end of the stick? Perhaps mine was the strange, the essentially abnormal attitude. Perhaps there was something wrong with a listener who found it difficult to adore both these warblings around a hymn tune and the Prelude and Fugue" (C.E., p. 210). There must be a patterning of opposites in a transcendent whole:

> We have had enough, and more than enough, of prophets, revivalists and tragedians. But we have also had enough of the tellers of bawdy stories, to whom long-suffering humanity has turned for an antidote to all

> those Jeremiahs and Savonarolas, and portentous Dantes, those preachers of crusades and heresy hunters, ancient and modern. Heads implies tails; simper is merely the obverse of bang. Felicia of Laura, Bouvard et Pecuchet of Paradise Lost. There is no escape except into the divine equanimity, which reconciles all the opposites and so transfigures the world.[19]

Differences and contrasts in art as in life--whether of quality or of genre--must be seen as parts of a total picture. Here one sees the influence of Huxley's gestalt orientation, and one understands his praise of pointillisme as the ideal artistic symbol of reality:

> . . . what Seurat supposed to be merely pointillisme was in fact inspiration--a vision of the world in which material reality is the symbol and, one might say, the incarnation of an all-embracing spiritual reality. The famous method was the means whereby he told this Taoistic and Wordsworthian story; pointillisme, as he used it, permitted him to render empty space as no other painter has ever done, and to impose, through color, an unprecedented degree of unity upon the composition. In Seurat's paintings the near and the far are separate and yet are one. The emptiness which is the symbol of infinity is of the same substance as the finite forms it contains. The transient participates in the eternal, samsara and nirvana are one and the same (C.E., p. 156).

Huxley's desire for wholeness also makes comprehensible the rather desperate debate in The Doors of Perception[20] over whether a true saint would or would not concern himself with the quality of art objects. The fully conscious man would see the whole. Would this not prevent him from exercising discriminating aesthetic taste? The answer is, of course, that this is a faulty dilemma. The saint is the multiple man existing simultaneously on several levels, living both in the world

and in eternity. Insofar as the saint was concerned with action in the world, insofar as he was concerned with the spiritual well-being of others, with the increase of consciousness in others, the saint would care about the truth, the artistic validity or wholeness, of the symbols on which men fed their souls. In this world men must work for the good of all. As a higher consciousness, however, the saint would merely note the queerness of the juxtaposition while contemplating, like one of Yeats's old men in "Lapis Lazuli," the seamless whole of life with serenity and religious joy. Being totally aware, ". . . you will discover what Carl Rogers calls your 'delicate and sensitive tenderness toward others.' And not only your tenderness, the cosmic tenderness, the fundamental all-rightness of the universe--in spite of death, in spite of suffering. 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.' This is the utterance of someone who is totally aware" (C.E., p. 398). Thus the saint who feels the deepest love for all men can regard even the possible destruction of the world with equanimity. From this height value judgments are meaningless.

> My awareness, of course, must be uncontaminated by approval or condemnation. Value judgments are conditioned, verbalized reactions to primary reactions. Total awareness is a primary, choiceless, impartial response to the present situation as a whole. There are in it no limiting conditioned reactions to the primary reaction, to the pure cognitive apprehension of the situation. If memories of verbal formulas of

> praise or blame should make their appearance in consciousness, they are to be examined impartially as any other present datum is examined (C.E., p. 397).

Huxley's view is that ". . . the universe is bottomlessly odd. Lucian, Astarte, the alphabet, sparrows in church, St. Dominic, the Albigenses--what a rich mixed bag of disparate items! But, ultimately, nothing is irrelevant to anything else. There is a togetherness of all things in an endless hierarchy of living and interacting patterns."[21]

Julian Huxley on Evolution

> Change and the idea of evolution are at the basis of all modern thought in science and philosophy alike.[22]

In 1912, when Aldous Huxley was eighteen, Julian Huxley published his first book entitled, The Individual in the Animal Kingdom. The book offers many parallels with the mature thought of Aldous Huxley as examined in the preceding pages. Dealing as it does with evolution, organic structure, and growth, the book offers insights into the way the biological metaphor was used by members of the Huxley family.

Julian Huxley, quite self-conscious about his speculative use of the organic metaphor, defends his practice by asserting that the existence of consciousness in man makes necessary the cooperation of the Zoologist, the Psychologist, and the Philosopher. He, thus, falls

back on the familiar criterion of wholeness: "More, even were the Zoologist to confine himself to a description of non-conscious organic individuals and the deductions he drew from them, he would often find himself without a reasoned criterion of Individuality or a true idea of what he means by 'higher' or 'lower' individualities. It is only when the Biologist and the Philosopher join hands that they can begin to see the subject in its entirety" (I.A.K., p. 2).

Huxley defines the individual as a term referring to a structural unit basic to organic life. A minimum concept of an individual suggests: 1) "the individual must have heterogeneous parts, whose function only gains full significance when considered in relation to the whole"; and 2) "it must have some independence of the forces of inorganic nature"; and 3) "it must work, and work after such a fashion that it, or a new individual formed from part of its substance, continues able to work in a similar way" (I.A.K., p. 28).

Non-organic structures, such as mountains or the solar system, undifferentiated structures or structures lacking irreplaceable parts, cannot be individuals: ". . . an animal is a whole and no mere aggregate: it has an inner principle of unity, which may be loosely fixed and lightly changed, but is none the less real. Our hypothetical homogeneous masses have, in themselves, no

inner principle: their definiteness is imposed on them from without, and one feels that if the external conditions altered, they would have none of the independence of our perfect individual, but would alter blindly with the conditions . . . " (I.A.K., p. 11).

Basic to the nature of the individual is the paradox implied by the phrase, "Unity in Diversity." There are two sides to this coin: the relations of the parts to the whole and the relation of the whole to itself (I.A.K., pp. 14-15). Thus wholeness and diversity are both necessary: ". . . from the very unity of the whole we can postulate diversity of its parts. This sounds paradoxical, but in reality it can be easily shown that nothing homogeneous can be an individual" (I.A.K., p. 10).

Under the heading of factors making for independence, Huxley discusses the by-now-familiar criteria of size, complexity, and adaptability (non-specialization). Of these three, the third is most important. A being who could be exempt from accidents might achieve this state in one of three ways: increase in size, increase in complexity, increase in adaptability. Only the third will really do, and man's mind is the key to that method. Protoplasm is the basis of life, and it has limits that make the third method the only workable one: ". . . no considerable advance towards independence through either

of the first two methods is physically possible for life; it is only the third way, with its multiplication of potentialities which, in spite of size really not so hugely great and mechanism really not so vastly complex, can yet give life a considerable fresh amount of immunity from accident" (I.A.K., pp. 8-9).

When Huxley discusses working, he writes: ". . . the individual appears as a machine whose working has for result no 'finished article,' the uses of which do not affect the machine, but merely the continuation of the same working" (I.A.K., p. 16). Continuance means reproduction since the individual is unable to endure indefinitely. "Our first definition of the individual based on the idea of continuance can now be amended. We must not say that the individual is a whole whose parts work together in such a way as to ensure that this whole, and its workings, shall persist; the individual only persists for a limited time. . . . something does . . . continue . . . it is . . . the kind, the species . . . " (I.A.K., p. 20).

Continuance is important: "Our minimum conception of continuance--the continuance of the kind of individual rather than of the single individuals themselves--is thus a touchstone to distinguish between what is and what is not an individual" (I.A.K., p. 25). In literature, the living tradition, so important to T.S. Eliot and the

young Aldous Huxley, assumes, perhaps, the central position of what Julian Huxley calls "the kind, the species." Elsewhere Julian Huxley writes: "The essential thing about an organism is its actual working, the way it directs the current of energy by which it is continually traversed, and causes it to act on the external world" (I.A.K., p. 25).

The Scale of Individuality

Huxley, at the beginning of his book, rejected the method of defining individuality by seeking a highest common factor in favor of an alternative method, that of creating a scale which would grade individuals in terms of the degree to which they possessed the characteristics of individuality. "There are," Huxley wrote, "two chief ways of enquiry into the meaning of things--the static and the dynamic" (I.A.K., p. 2). He preferred the dynamic. "In view of the change, the progressive change or evolution which is one of the fundamental things of life, the second method is the more natural, and in a way includes the first" (I.A.K., p. 3). Huxley rejected what he called the "Highest Common Measure" approach in favor of a scale because he felt a scale of individuality would "establish a direction in which its movement is tending, and from that [men could] deduce the properties of the Perfect Individual, possessing then a maximum conception of

Individuality" (I.A.K., p. 2). Huxley's book seeks to establish a means of ranking things in the organic world; and, to the extent that Huxley's work permits, it also establishes criteria for judging items not usually considered in this light, such as ant hills, nations, and art objects.

By thus establishing a scale of higher and lower individuality in the organic world as well as a direction of development, Huxley implies also how things ought to be, implies that Nature is behind the pattern he presents, that the philosophy he subscribes to is natural. The natural, from this point of view, is also the good. To go from simple to complex is natural, is progress, is good: "Given cohesion of parts, your primeval organism is marked off from the rest of the world. Even though it may be homogeneous, no true system of diverse parts, yet this mere fact of existence as a single and separate material body is a first step . . . it presents itself as a whole unit to the forces of the outer world: living substance thus starts with its foot upon the ladder leading to independence . . . " (I.A.K., pp. 50-51). To develop diversity within unity is good: the individual "shows diversity both in what it is--its physical structure and the architecture of its consciousness--and in what it does--the actions which more truly constitute its real essence. It also has unity, because though all

its heterogeneity of architecture is devoted to producing heterogeneity of actions, each one of these only has meaning when considered in relation to the whole" (I.A.K., pp. 14-15). To become independent of one's environment is good: "some measure of adaptability, or useful response to changed conditions, becomes a common property of all living things" (I.A.K., p. 6). To be flexible and able to adapt to the inevitability of change is good: "With life it has been the same: if one species happens to vary in the direction of greater independence, the inter-related equilibrium is upset . . . the continuous change which is passing through the organic world appears as a succession of phases of equilibrium, each one on a higher average plane of independence than the one before, and each inevitably calling up and giving place to one still higher" (I.A.K., p. 116).

The scale of individuality is quite complex: ". . . individuals exist in grade upon grade, any one in any grade being able to combine with others like itself or with others unlike itself to form the beginnings of a new system, a new individual. Moreover, within each grade there may exist individuals of every degree of perfection" (I.A.K., pp. 152-153). But there is a genuine progress within the series. Single cells are at the bottom: ". . . living matter at its first appearance on earth, as the direct results of its material composition,

could only express itself in the form of cells . . . . Decreed thus by necessity at the outset, these cells are used ever afterwards as the words out of which all life's poems are fashioned" (I.A.K., p. 65). Man is at the top of the scale; and beyond man, in the realm of speculation, looms the shadowy figure of the perfect individual. The perfect individual would "possess perfect internal harmony, and perfect independence (in our particular sense) of matter and of time itself" (I.A.K., p. 28). Huxley, applying the name, Personality, to the highest forms of individuality--those characterized by freedom from limits, speculates, as Aldous Huxley was to do decades later, on the possibility of a total spiritual development:

> Personality, as we know it, is free compared with the individuality of the lower animals; but it is still weighted with a body. There may be personalities which have not merely transcended substance, but are rid of it altogether: in all ages the theologian and the mystic have told of such "disembodied spirits," postulated by the one, felt by the other, and now the psychical investigator with his automatic writing and his cross-correspondences is seeking to give us rigorous demonstration of them.
>
> If such actually exist, they crown Life's progress; she has started as mere substance without individuality, has next gained an individuality co-extensive with her substance, then an individuality still tied to substance but transcending it in all directions, and finally become an individuality without substance, free and untrammelled (I.A.K., pp. 30-31).

Within the realm of the known, the societies of man can be "scientifically" graded using the scale of individuality. Civilized man is higher than savage man: "In this making of Nature his own, civilized man has an

individuality vastly fuller, more perfect, than the savage. Both in resisting adverse forces and in harnessing the indifferent to his will, he is far superior . . . (I.A.K., pp. 4-5). Elsewhere Huxley writes: "Civilized man is the most independent, in our sense, of any animal: this he owes partly to his comparatively large size, more to his purely mechanical complexity of body and brain, giving him the possibility of many precise and separate actions, and most to the unique machinery of part of his brain which enables him to use his size and the smoothly-working machine-actions of his body in the most varied way" (I.A.K., p. 7).

Man is a special case and, as a grade, higher than other grades of individuals because of his brain: "It is noteworthy that the course of internal differentiation has over and over again . . . tended in the same direction--towards the formation of a Brain. . . . In the higher insects and the higher mammals . . . the brain seems to have transcended all other parts of the body, to have gone farther than they in specialization, and to be now in truth the master by whom the rest are employed" (I.A.K., p. 140). "In man, an individuality presents itself as something definite and separate from all others, something which animate a particular mass of matter and is inflexibly associated with it, appearing when it appears

and vanishing only when it dies. That idea of individuality is not universally applicable" (I.A.K., pp. 48-49).

The ranking of each individual man depends on the complexity of his states of consciousness. The greatest possible degree of complexity within the unity of the individual consciousness represents the highest good:

> This development of sense-organs and brain has had great influence on the progress of individuality. We do not usually stop to consider in what dense darkness the majority of living things must live and move and have their being. Without brain or sense-organs, theirs must be a dim and windowless existence. The world lies round about; but it cannot make its way into their beings. Or say, the world is locked, and living things must make their own keys to it. So it is with men: educating their minds they forge key after key, each opening a new chamber, letting in a new flood of light from every material object. Show a flower to an aboriginal savage: what he sees is something very different from what Wordsworth or Sir Joseph Hooker would have seen. What he sees, however, contains more of reality than what a beetle or a snail, with their imperfect eyes, could see. The effect produced on an organism when some object is presented to its senses thus depends partly on the perfection of its sense-organs, partly on that of its brain. As we go down the scale, both dwindle: veil upon veil is let down: till at the last there is an almost utter darkness, and not of sight alone (I.A.K., pp. 140-141).

It is significant, however, that for Huxley mere or pure uniqueness is not synonymous with individuality: "Phrases such as 'he has a marked individuality,' or 'he is very individual' lead people to suppose erroneously that one of the chief characters of an individual is its difference from all others." "However, even apart from the initial flaw, that mere difference constitutes individuality, the chain of argument will not hold . . . " (I.A.K., p. 81).

In man differentiation of states of consciousness has replaced differentiation of parts:

> These cannot all exist as such at one time, but by means of the memory each can be summoned up as it is wanted. No doubt accompanying them there are physical and chemical differences in the nervous tissue, causing differences of continuity between the various neurones, but this physical heterogeneity is of no obvious or visible kind. The broad differences, the differences that can be felt, lie in the states of consciousness, so that the individual, after advancing a long way in its march towards perfect individuality by means of heterogeneity of co-existent structures, has got to its present position by adding to this a new device, heterogeneity of states of consciousness, which states, through not being co-existent, can be more numerous and more heterogeneous than ever the structures could (I.A.K., pp. 13-14).

Group-Individuals

Man's consciousness makes it possible for him to enter into many larger, aggregate individuals or groups. "When we come to man, this power possessed by one unit of entering into more than one individual 'at once' . . . becomes very marked. A man can very well be at one time a member of a family, a race, a club, a nation, a literary society, a church, and an empire. . . . they are individuals . . . here once more the tendency towards the formation of closed systems has manifested itself, though again in very varying degrees, so that some of the systems show but a glimmer of individuality, others begin to let it shine more strongly through" (I.A.K., p. 142). This concept of aggregate differentiation, of group-individuals

containing many particular persons who might, in turn, belong to several different group-individuals, is an extension of the process of internal differentiation that evidently impressed Aldous Huxley. In 1926, he wrote Julian, after reading Julian's article entitled the "Biological Meaning of Individuality": "It is curious, when one come to think of it, how one human being can be a constituent part of several social individuals seemingly of the most diverse and hostile character--as Faraday, who was at once a Sandemanian and a Fellow of the Royal Society, or as a man who is simultaneously a soldier, a Christian and a sodomite" (L., p. 272). Years later, he published comments which show he had become critical of this concept: "But it is very doubtful whether a society is an organism; and it is certain that it can know nothing about the character of human existence. Individuals may make true statements about large groups; but large groups can say nothing about either individuals or themselves"[23] (C.E., p. 234).

Julian Huxley stressed in his book the belief that Nature was constantly trying to form individuals into new and more complex groups. Sometimes this results in parasitism, a negative form of over-specialization: ". . . what the animal seeks is adaptation to an environment which by very reason of its peculiarity and narrowness is not already occupied by other competitors. Eventually

the fate of the parasite becomes bound up with that of the host. The final result is thus the same; the form which has made the too-special adaptation loses independence" (I.A.K., p. 134). At other times, however, the result was a new and higher grade of individual:

> Now suppose that the one organism does not merely rush into a ready-made vacuum provided by the other, but that the two should conspire together . . . . This is in effect what happens when two species become mutually dependent. . . . At first sight, then such a system appears like a double parasitism, and twice the evil that parasitism brings should be its portion. This is not really so, for while the true parasite takes what he can get and gives nothing in return, here each pays the other willingly, for services rendered. In extremes of parasitism there is maximum waste; mutual aid (though it implies mutual dependence) establishes minimum waste. . . . If the two parts have sunk in the scale, yet by that very sinking the beginnings of a new whole have sprung up. They have lost in independence, but something else--the system formed by their combination--has gained in harmony. . . . If the parts of the system, instead of being related by but one tie and for a short space only, were to be brought into relation for the whole of their lives, the resulting system would have the chance of becoming not only more harmonious, but even a more independent individuality than was either of its parts before their mutual adaptation . . . (I.A.K., pp. 134-135).

Though the individual might have lost some independence, he ultimately gained through the extended power of the whole: ". . . all know that union is strength" (I.A.K., p. 51).

Julian Huxley's emphasis on the drive for differentiation that leads to a higher level of union--the "tendency towards wholeness" (I.A.K., p. 149)--relates directly to Aldous Huxley's concern with the

interrelationship of things. Julian writes: "We begin to realize what an influence the correlation of parts can exert--how one part can affect others bu its mere presence or absence" (I.A.K., p. 148). Aldous writes in 1945, in a letter to Julian: ". . . at present no language spoken in the ordinary way by ordinary people is capable of expressing the fact, which is the keystone of modern science, that the universe is a continuum; that there is no such thing as simple location, in Whitehead's phrase; that nothing is separate and independent, but that everything exists in a field and is bound up with everything else" (L., pp. 491-492). Although Aldous Huxley's attraction to Gestalt theories in psychology and aesthetics may have several causes, it is likely that the influence of his family was great.

In a passage that might serve as a motto for Aldous Huxley's early novels, Julian comments: ". . . nature has been persistent in her efforts to create other 'naturally-isolated systems,' other individualities. Out of every little accidental company she tends to make an inter-related whole whose parts are largely dependent on each other . . . " (I.A.K., pp. 125-126). Julian can see the world itself as an individual:

> In a sense, therefore, the whole organic world constitutes a single great individual, vague and badly co-ordinated it is true, but none the less a continuing whole with inter-dependent parts . . . . This individuality, however, is an extremely imperfect

> one--the internal harmony and the subordination of the parts to the whole is almost infinitely less than in the body of a metazoan, and is thus very wasteful; instead of one part distributing its surplus among the other parts and living peaceably itself on what is left, the transference of food from one unit to another is usually attended with the total or partial destruction of one of the units" (I.A.K., pp. 125-126).

Statements of this kind can easily become paradigms for thinking about areas other than the biological. When Huxley speaks of the "necessity for the parts of a compound individual to lose their own independence for the ultimate greater independence of the whole" (I.A.K., p. 136), one is reminded not only of the hierarchical metaphors common in the writings of apologists for the Christian church (the laymen are the hands, the priests and bishops are the brains) but also of comparisons to be found in the writings of political conservatives. Huxley, however, sees the possibility of this interpretation of the biological metaphor and seeks to prevent it:

> . . . it yet remains true that the state or society at large is still a very low type of individual: the wastage and friction of its working are only too prominently before our eyes. With the examples of what life has accomplished in producing our own bodies, we can never despair. But we must not be too far tempted by biological analogies: the main problem is the same, but the details all are new. The individuals to be fused into a higher whole are separate organisms with conscious, reasoning minds--personalities; and the solution will never be found in the almost total subordination of the parts to the whole, as in the cells in our own bodies or the sweated labourer in our present societies, but in a

> harmony and a prevention of waste, which will both heighten the individuality of the whole and give the fullest scope to the personalities of all its members (I.A.K., pp. 143-144).

The emphasis is on a harmony obtained through equality rather than subordination.

A further point regarding the political implications of Huxley's book is that internationalism must have been regarded in the Huxley family circle as not merely a political belief but also as the parallel of a natural process. Extreme nationalism could only be regarded as a form of over-specialization. One can see that the support which Aldous Huxley gave this political view in the pages of the Athenaeum must have been, in part, the result of discussions with members of his family,[24] and Julian Huxley's connection with the United Nations as head of UNESCO was the logical outcome of beliefs adopted years before. Julian Huxley concludes his book with a final observation on the light that biology can shed on politics:

> All roads lead to Rome: and even animal individuality throws a ray on human problems. The ideals of active harmony and mutual aid as the best means to power and progress; the hope that springs from life's power of transforming the old or of casting it from her in favour of new; and the spur to effort in the knowledge that she does nothing lightly or without long struggle: these cannot but help to support and direct those men upon whom devolves the task of moulding and inspiring that unwieldiest individual--formless and blind to-day, but huge with possibility--the State (I.A.K., p. 154).

Julian Huxley on Art and Evolution

The importance of Julian Huxley's early work for the purposes of this study lies in its documenting of the intellectual milieu in which Aldous Huxley grew up. Moreover, because of the continuing closeness of the brothers,[25] it is highly suggestive as to the evolutionary principles that appear to have directed the thought of Aldous Huxley, especially with regard to the movement from lower to higher forms by means of the development of more and more complex individuals possessing, in the case of man, complex states of consciousness, individuals capable of entering into compound individuals. This train of thought sheds new light on Aldous Huxley's concern with groups composed of persons of high intellectuality or sensitivity since such groups represent the highest achievement of evolution. It may be that future critics will want to consider the question of whether Huxley's conversion may not have represented a discouragement with the evolutionary possibilities of group consciousness as opposed to the potentialities of the single individual. Huxley's abiding fascination with psychology and states of mind also becomes understandable in view of the important evolutionary role assigned by Julian Huxley to the human brain.

While such parallels should not be exaggerated, they can be legitimately inferred from the passages of The Individual in the Animal Kingdom cited in the previous

section. Nevertheless, Julian Huxley's early work does not deal directly with art or aesthetics, and it is helpful to have these parallels, parallels between the biological metaphor and the Huxley aesthetic, made explicit. This service is performed by Julian Huxley in his Introduction to a collection of essays by various hands entitled, The Humanist Frame.[26] In this introductory essay, Julian Huxley discusses the part aesthetic creation can play in the economy of the developing human consciousness.

Julian Huxley believes that the humanist's "major concern must be with professional art and its psycho-social functions. How and to what extent does art reflect or express a period or a people; how and to what extent does it promote cultural richness and achievement--in a word, what part does it play in man's evolution" (H.F., p. 33)? Huxley offers one answer to the last question. "Art opens the doors of that other world in which matter and quantity are transcended by mind and quality" (H.F., p. 29). He analyzes the aspects of man which make this an important function:

> Man by his very nature has the possibility and indeed the necessity of living his life in two worlds at different levels of meaning--the world of matter and mechanical operations, and that of mind and psychological operations--the level of material needs and that of mental satisfactions. And the mental world is in the strict sense of the word transcendent. In it, we manage to escape from the material world and its quantitative exigencies by transcending it in some higher synthesis in which qualitative elements of our being are organized into effective forms. In the

> light of evolutionary Humanism, man is seen as struggling consciously or unconsciously, to create more areas of this matter-transcending world of mental operation, and pressing painfully on towards fuller emergence into its satisfying realms (H.F., p. 29).

How does the individual artist play his part in this process? Huxley believes the artist has two chief roles--the role of creator and the role of interpreter. "As interpreter, he translates complex and emotion-tinged experience into directly communicable forms and so is able to express what otherwise would remain unexpressible. He bears witness to the variety of the world and its significance, to its wonder and beauty, but also to its horror and nastiness. His witness may be by way of affirmation or by way of protest" (H.F., p. 34). The second function is equally important: "As creator, on the other hand, he provides experiences of stimulus and enjoyment, sometimes enlargements of experience itself (think of Turner or Stravinsky, or, most obviously, of Shakespeare)" (H.F., p. 34). Huxley defines the role of art in the ideal society: "In the fulfilment society envisaged by Humanism, art would be assigned a large role--to beautify the public sector, to bear witness to the richness of existence, to affirm values in concrete effective form, to provide achievements of which human societies can be proud and through which mankind can find itself more adequately" (H.F., p. 34).

Like his brother, Aldous, Julian Huxley sees art as adding new understanding to man's knowledge. What art creates is significance. Having defined art as "the effective organization of experience into integrated forms which are emotionally significant and aesthetically satisfying" (H.F., p. 28), Huxley states that art "provides a qualitative enrichment of life, by creating a diversity of new experience" (H.F., p. 28). From an unidentified source, Huxley quotes approvingly a phrase with a Faust-like ring: art "is 'a process of extending ourselves, through our sensibilities and our imagination, to something we have not reached before" (H.F., p. 28).

Art is progressive and evolutionary: ". . . within a given region the arts evolve. Consciously or unconsciously, each new period, each new generation, demands change. Sometimes the change consists primarily in the fuller development or even the exaggeration of an existing style or tradition; sometimes it is a reaction against it, with the emergence of radically new approaches, attitudes, and techniques; sometimes a combination of the two" (H.F., p. 33). Both art and science are fields of knowledge; both evolve. Art, however, is not progressive in the way that science is. "Science is mainly cumulative and co-operative; the scientist makes his contribution to a growing and enlarging whole, whose unity is more

important and more overriding than the unitary quality of the individual contributions which are incorporated into it" (H.F., p. 31). Art, however, "is, in evolutionary terms, a cladogenetic or branching process, promoting differentiation and diversity" (H.F., p. 31). In art, there is "the creation of individual works, each qualitatively different from the rest, and embodying a particular organization of experience" (H.F., p. 31). For this reason, art works of one period are not superseded by those of a later period. Continuing his biological analogy, Huxley writes that:

> In its historical development, art plays somewhat the same role as does adaptive radiation and diversification in biological evolution. Both lead to a fuller utilization of the potential resources and opportunities of the environment--in the case of adaptive radiation, of the material resources and opportunities available for organic metabolism in the physical environment; in the case of art, of the emotional aesthetic resources and possibilities available for psycho-metabolism in the total environment, both physical and cultural. This is art's main evolutionary aspect (H.F., p. 31).

Huxley notes other ways in which art is evolutionary or progressive. Art is "summatively progressive": ". . . Stephen Spender discusses the striking fact, first emphasized by Malraux, that today, for the first time in history, the whole sum of past art is available for present enjoyment." Art is "technically progressive": ". . . painters, for instance, either build on past techniques or react against them and search for a new one."

Finally, art is "essentially progressive": ". . . with the lapse of time men not only learn to turn new aspects of experience into art (as Renaissance painters did with space and perspective, or as contemporary artists are doing with abstract or action painting), but discover how to organize a greater number of different components, of thought and emotion as well as of technique, into a single work which shall be a significant whole; in other words, how to create higher patterns of aesthetic organization" (H.F., p. 31).

The emphasis on organization is basic to Huxley's thought. "But although art is in general a process of differentiation and proliferates variety, it is in particular always a process of integration and synthesis; any work of art, however humble, brings together a number of separate (and sometimes apparently disparate) elements and moulds them into an organic unity" (H.F., p. 28). Huxley discusses the ways in which organization enters into the final artistic creation: "Operationally, a work of art exerts its effects by conveying multiple meaning in a single synthesis. The meaning is often best conveyed by suggestion rather than by attempts at rigid and accurate affirmation . . . .The suggestion may work on the basis of long-forgotten and even unconsciously assimilated early experience, or on remembered association, or by way of potent symbol or of effective design" (H.F., p. 29).

Huxley says the multiplicity of meaning may be conveyed by either of two factors: 1) "single elements in the work"; or 2) "the bringing together of single elements with separate meanings into a multisignificant whole pattern" (H.F., p.p. 29-30). Of the first method he cites as examples: ". . . the multivalency of words or phrases in great poetry like Blake's Tiger or Coleridge's Kubla Khan, or Traherne's 'the corn was orient and immortal wheat', the multivalency of an individual character in a play, like Shakespeare's Hamlet . . . " (H.F., p. 30). Of the second, he offers as examples: ". . . a great pictorial composition like Raphael's School of Athens, or a great musical composition like Bach's B Minor Mass, or a great novel like Tolstoy's War and Peace" (H.F., p. 30).

The evolutionary view with its emphasis on higher patterns of organization leads Huxley to assert that some aesthetic patterns are of a higher order than others: "A symphony is in a certain real sense a higher achievement than a song or a military march, Giotto's Arena Chapel in Padua than a single drawing or than Lascaux, Dante's Divina Commedia than a sonnet, Tolstoy's War and Peace than a Maupassant short story or even Don Quixote" (H.F., p.p. 31-32). Huxley's scale, however, is complex: "Of course, within each type or grade of organization there is every possible range from good to bad, just as there is every possible range from successful to unsuccessful species and lineages within one grade of biological

organization like the mammals or the reptiles. But this does not invalidate the fact that some grades of aesthetic organization are truly 'higher' than others, just as mammalian organization is in a strictly scientific sense higher than reptilian. In both cases it is clear that real advance is involved" (H.F., p. 32).

Huxley's conclusion leads him to a defense of the artist's right to draw on materials sometimes considered inartistic (the incorporation of additional materials is a sign of progress): "The artist can utilize intellectual ideas and moral concepts among the raw materials which he organizes, thus transmuting reason and morality into art and giving a further dimension to his work. In painting, we need only think of the conceptual background of Michelangelo's Creation of Adam . . . . Greek tragedy flowered out of the ground of current ideas and beliefs, and Dante's Divina Commedia owes its compelling greatness to the strong and beautifully organized intellectual framework on which it is supported" (H.F., p. 30). The power of organization, of pattern making, is essential: "Inferior artists will be incapable of organizing these non-aesthetic elements into an aesthetic unity, and their work will not rise above the didactic or the propagandist, the moralistic or the merely representational. But the good artist can fuse them into a richer whole in the creative crucible of his imagination" (H.F., p. 30).

Aldous Huxley on Art and Evolution

In Aldous Huxley's criticism, especially his art criticism, one finds the four evolutionary principles (complexity or size, non-specialization, growth, and wholeness) clearly exemplified from the earliest essays to the last. In the discussion that follows these four points will be examined in turn illustrated with suitable examples. Because there is an inter-relationship among the criteria of wholeness that Huxley derived from evolution, a certain degree of overlapping will be unavoidable.

Complexity

If one turns to Huxley's earliest criticism, as exemplified by the pieces published in the Athenaeum, it becomes apparent that the criteria of complexity affects Huxley's treatment of two topics which recur throughout his career and are often inter-connected. The first is that of the artistic magnitude of the object--magnitude being a catchall name for the diverse aspects of an art object which may suggest complexity and size. The second is that of affective reach or universality in art--universality referring to those aspects of the art object which extend its influence as a work of symbolic communication. This latter point finds its most frequent expression in Huxley's treatment of abstract art.

In the issue of the Athenaeum for June 6, 1919, Huxley published his essay on "Art and the Tradition" (excerpts from this essay have been cited in previous chapters during the discussion of Huxley's praise of order and dislike of pure aestheticism). The pertinent portion of the article is a gloss on Camille Mauclair's attack on mere rebelliousness in the arts. Huxley analyzes what he views as an undesirable trend, "the contraction of theme": "Perhaps the most characteristic difference between the modern independents and their classical predecessors lies in their attitude towards the great set-pieces in which the older artists scored their most splendid triumphs. In literature, in painting, in music, the same phenomenon is observable. There are no modern epics, no great overwhelming pictures; the symphony is giving place to the musical lyric." Huxley sees two causes, one economic and one cultural. The first results from the unwillingness of patrons to spend the amount of money needed to purchase large works of art. The second results from the turning of artists from public to private themes: "The 'subject,' on which the classical authors brought their powers of style to bear, has almost disappeared from modern art . . . ." Huxley concentrates his attention on the cultural trend. He sees an aesthetic snobbery developing which prevents the moderns from creating masterpieces on the scale of the past:

> Artists brought up in the independent school, preoccupied with the purely aesthetic side of art, are apt to be afraid of beauty, afraid of the great emotions, afraid of universal truths. They are terrified lest they should become "pompier" if they traffick in these things. Some have stylized life out of existence, sacrificing the beautiful to the aesthetic. Some, fearing to be betrayed into sentimentality, have eschewed emotions for mere sensations. The classical masters had style, but they had also matter. Their painters were not afraid of becoming chocolate-boxy if they represented more or less faithfully some of the inexhaustible beauties of external reality. They had as much sense of the aesthetic as the independents of to-day; unlike their successors, they could stylize the uninformed, indefinite beauty of nature without destroying it in the process. Their pictures are the aesthetic arrangement of objects in themselves beautiful and significant. In literature, too, men were not afraid of the fundamental emotions or of general truths. They could be individual without talking of themselves; they could stamp the impress of their style on large impersonal themes.[27]

Students of Huxley will recognize in this passage the genesis of Huxley's later and better known essay, "Art and the Obvious," as well as his book-length essay, Vulgarity in Literature.

In another Athenaeum essay, Huxley develops, in the process of discussing the poetry of Ernest Dowson, a scale of art objects based on complexity:

> Art can express emotion in a variety of ways: simply and directly, as in folk-song, where the different modes have an immediate and almost physical effect; later on with the complexity of the symphony, in which the primitive emotion is enriched with all its intellectual and spiritual implications; and then decadently, by allusions to other works of art and by ringing the changes of a well-learned technique. Dowson was as incapable of writing folk-songs as of writing symphonies; he did not possess the spontaneous life or the mental capacity to do either.[28]

In Along the Road (1925), Huxley republished an essay first published in the previous year, "Popular Music." In this essay, he links the evolution of popular music to that of serious music. In this case, the effects of evolution have not been happy. The serious composer, Beethoven, is responsible for the violently emotional nature of popular music, "because it was he who first devised really effective musical methods for the direct expression of emotion" (C.E., p. 174). Although Beethoven had "noble" emotions and was "too intellectual a musician to neglect the formal, architectural side of music" (C.E., p. 174), other composers have not hesitated to discard this extra and, for their purposes, unnecessary aspect of music. In their hands the popular melody concentrates solely on emotion and simplifies into the popular tune. It was a type of specialization. Moreover, as Huxley was later to observe of painters and saints, it is the man who has perfected his talent that can (higher on the spiral) return to his starting point and (ironically in this case) be simple effectively: "The technique of being barbarous effectively has come, of course, from serious music" (C.E., p. 175). Huxley concludes with a passage that contains the clearest statement of the criteria on which his judgment is based: "The only music a civilized man can take unfailing pleasure in is civilized music. If you were compelled to listen every day of your

life to a single piece of music, would you choose Stravinsky's 'Oiseau de Feu' or'Beethoven's [sic] 'Grosse Fugue'? Obviously, you would choose the fugue, if only for its intricacy and because there is more in it to occupy the mind than in the Russian's too simple rhythms" (C.E., p. 176).

In "Oaxaca" an essay in From Beyond the Mexique Bay (1934), Huxley repeats his argument:

> So far I have spoken only of technical improvements in the handling of materials. There have also been purely aesthetic advances in the technique of expression. Of these the most startling are to be found in the domain of music. Beethoven made it possible to give direct and poignant expression to a great number of thoughts and feelings which, owing to the absense of a suitable idion, were inexpressible by even the most highly gifted of his predecessors. Beethoven's aesthetic discoveries were exploited by other men in order to express thoughts and feelings of greatly inferior quality. The same thing happened in the case of all the great musical innovators of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thanks to Beethoven, to Berlioz, to Wagner (himself a sad vulgarian), to Rimsky-Korsakov, to Debussy, to Stravinsky, the modern jazz composer is in a position to express (with what an appalling technical efficiency!) every shade of all the baser emotions, from a baboonlike lust to a nauseating self-commiseration, from the mindless mass hysteria of howling mobs to a languishing masturbatory "Traumerei." The first popular waltz, as I pointed out some years ago, was "Ach, du lieber Augustin." Compare that innocently silly little tune with a successful waltz or blues of today. The distance traveled has been enormous. Towards what goal? One shudders to imagine it (O.A.A., p. 95).

In 1930, Huxley published his long essay, Vulgarity in Literature, in book form. In it he employs

the criteria of magnitude as a means of distinguishing between major works and second rate productions:

> Art, as I have said, is also philosophy, is also science. Other things being equal, the work of art which in its own way "says" more about the universe will be better than the work of art which says less. (The "other things" which have to be equal are the forms of beauty, in terms of which the artist must express his philosophic and scientific truths.) Why is The Rosary a less admirable novel than The Brothers Karamazov? Because the amount of experience of all kinds understood, "felt into," as the Germans would say, and artistically recreated by Mrs. Barclay is small in comparison with that which Dostoevsky feelingly comprehended and knew so consummately well how to re-create in terms of the novelist's art. Dostoevsky covers all Mrs. Barclay's ground and a vast area beside (C.E., p. 115).

In 1950, Huxley returned to the theme in his essay, "Variations on El Greco." There he wrote:

> . . . Nature is a richer source of forms than any textbook of plane or solid geometry. Nature has evolved innumerable forms and, as we ourselves move from point to point, we see large numbers of these forms, grouped in an endless variety of ways and thus creating an endless variety of new forms, all of which may be used as the raw materials of works of art. What is given is incomparably richer than what we can invent. But the richness of Nature is, from our point of view, a chaos upon which we, as philosophers, men of science, technicians, and artists, must impose various kinds of unity. Now, I would say that, other things being equal, a work of art which imposes aesthetic unity upon a large number of formal and psychological elements is a greater and more interesting work than one in which unity is imposed upon only a few elements. In other words, there is a hierarchy of perfections. . . . The old distinction between the Fine Arts and the crafts is based to some extent upon snobbery and other nonaesthetic considerations. But not entirely. In the hierarchy of perfections a perfect vase or a perfect carpet occupies a lower rank than that, say, of Giotto's frescoes at Padua, or Rembrandt's "Polish Rider," or the "Grande Jatte" of Georges Seurat. In these and a hundred other masterpieces of painting the pictorial whole embraces and

> unifies a repertory of forms much more numerous, varied, strange, and interesting than those which come together in the wholes organized by even the most gifted craftsmen (O.A.A., pp. 233-234).

Finally, in 1956, Huxley recapitulated the idea in an essay, "Gesualdo: Variations on a Musical Theme." Once again, he set up a scale or hierarchy of art objects: "The traditional distinction between the crafts and the fine arts is based, among other things, on degrees of complexity. A good picture is a greater work of art than a good bowl or a good vase. Why? Because it unifies in one harmonious whole more and more diverse, elements of human experience than are or can be unified and harmonized in the pot" (O.A.A., pp. 301-302).

Huxley's ideal of far reaching communication was also based on a desire for fullness, completion, or universality. His realization of the limits of aesthetic communication may have been a factor in his turn to mysticism. In the selections cited above from the Athenaeum, Huxley deplored the turning away from large, public themes, the narrowing of attention to the subjective aspect of experience. In Vulgarity in Literature, Huxley praised the fugue over Stravinsky's "Oiseau de Feu" because ". . . there is more in it" (C.E., p. 176). This concern with completeness in communication led to the adoption of a controversial opinion in art criticism. Huxley held consistently to a belief that representational

art that told a story was superior to non-representational art. He did not, however, go so far as to prefer program music and problem pictures to other forms of art: "It is not only in program music and problem pictures that composers and painters express their views about the universe. The purest and most abstract artistic creations can be, in their own peculiar language, as eloquent in this respect as the most deliberately tendencious" (C.E., p. 178).

The reasoning behind Huxley's position was that the story element constituted an addition to the fullness of the art object. More people could get more out of the art object. This view, however, has cost Huxley dearly as an art critic: ". . . Huxley's taste in art always comes down heavily on the side of meaning; admirers of much modern art must find his visual esthetics as outmoded as John Ruskin's outright moralism in The Stones of Venice."[29]

In "Art and the Obvious," the Huxley of 1931 wrote:

> In the history of the arts naturalism is a relatively rare phenomenon; judged by any standard of statistical normality, Caravaggio and the Victorian academician were artistic freaks. The unprecedented fact is this: some of the most sensitive artists of our age have rejected not merely external realism (for which we may be rather thankful), but even what I may call internal realism; they refuse to take cognizance in their art of most of the most significant facts of human nature. The excesses of popular art have filled them with a terror of the obvious--even of the obvious sublimities and beauties and marvels. Now, about nine tenths of life are made up precisely of the obvious.

The consequence of this, Huxley concludes is "that there are sensitive modern artists who are compelled, by their disgust and fear, to confine themselves to the exploitation of only a tiny fraction of existence" (O.A.A., p. 79).

The narrowing of which Huxley complains can be found also in music and literature. "We listen to a music from which almost every expression of a tragical, a mournful, a tender sentiment has been excluded--a music that has deliberately confined itself to the expression of physical energy, of the lyricism of speed and mechanical motion" (O.A.A., p. 79). Huxley sees this tendency as a "topsy-turvy romanticism" which, in the manner of F.T. Marinetti, "exaults the machine, the crowd, the merely muscular body, and despises the soul and solitude and nature" (O.A.A., p. 79). Literature is similarly affected. "Advanced literature is full of the same reversed romanticism. Its subject matter is arbitrarily simplified by the exclusion of all the great eternal obviousnesses of human nature. This process is justified theoretically by a kind of philosophy of history which affirms--quite gratuitously and, I am convinced, quite falsely--that human nature has radically changed in the last few years and that the modern man is, or at least ought to be, radically different from his ancestors" (O.A.A., pp. 79-80). The logical consequence of this art by subtraction is aesthetic nihilism: "Those who are completely and

ruthlessly logical parade a total nihilism and would like to see the abolition of all art, all science, and all organized society whatsoever" (O.A.A., p. 80). So much for the Dadaists! Huxley was probably also aware, through his friendship with the Sitwells, of the experiments of Gertrude Stein: "He has a terror of the obvious in his artistic medium--a terror which leads him to make laborious efforts to destroy the gradually perfected instrument of language" (O.A.A., p. 80).

In art, significant form was not the enemy. "A painter or a sculptor can be simultaneously representational and non-representational. In their architectural backgrounds and, above all, in their draperies, many works even of the Renaissance and the baroque incorporate passages of almost unadulterated abstraction. These are often expressive in the highest degree. Indeed, the whole tone of a representational work may be established, and its inner meaning expressed, by those parts of it which are most nearly abstract" (O.A.A., p. 232). In 1925 he had written: "The contemporary insistence on form to the exclusion of everything else is an absurdity. So was the older insistence on exact imitation and sentiment to the exclusion of form. There need be no exclusions" (C.E., p. 138). Likewise the Huxley of 1950 saw no incompatibility between form and story: "At the present time it would seem that the most sensible and

rewarding thing for a painter to do is (like Braque, for example) to make the best and the most of both worlds, representational as well as nonrepresentational" (O.A.A., p. 234).

The essay on Gesualdo of 1955 found that, indeed, the quality of the form was dependent on the representational element:

> Moreover the richness of their formal material is a direct consequence of their literary subject matter. Left to itself, the pictorial imagination even of a painter of genius could never conjure up such a subtle and complicated pattern of shapes and hues as we find in these illustrations of texts by Lucian and Ovid. To achieve their purely plastic triumphs, Botticelli and Titian required to be stimulated by a literary theme. It is a highly significant fact that, in no abstract or nonrepresentational painting of today, do we find a purely formal composition having anything like the richness, the harmonious complexity, created in the process of telling a story, by the masters of earlier periods (O.A.A., p. 301).

Huxley's opinion on the art of our period is that: "Some of the nonrepresentational pictures painted in the course of the last fifty years are very beautiful; but even the best of them are minor works, inasmuch as the number of elements of human experience which they combine and harmonize is pitifully small. In them we look in vain for that ordered profusion, that lavish and yet perfectly controlled display of intellectual wealth, which we discover in the best works of the 'literary' painters of the past" (O.A.A., p. 302). Huxley's friend and admirer,

the art critic Sir Kenneth Clark, stated much the same conclusion in different words:

> Now it is an incontrovertible fact of history that the greatest art has always been about something, a means of communicating some truth which is assumed to be more important than the art itself. The truths which art has been able to communicate have been of a kind which could not be put in any other way. They have been ultimate truths, stated symbolically. Science has achieved its triumph precisely by disregarding such truths, by not asking unanswerable questions, but sticking to the question "how." I confess it looks to me as if we shall have to wait a long time before there is some new belief which requires expression through art rather than through statistics or equations. And until this happens, the visual arts will fall short of the greatest epochs, the ages of the Parthenon, the Sistine Ceiling, and Chartres Cathedral.[30]

Huxley's view of the complex world created by the artist led him to a further dicta concerning art, one equally as controversial as the view discussed above: namely, that the aesthetic cosmos bore the signature of its creator. Huxley attempted the type of thing in art criticism that the work of Leo Spitzer in stylistics has made the student of literature familiar with. Taking a biographical fact, El Greco's eyesight, Huxley says he was a man who used his defective eyesight. "Used it for what purpose?" Huxley asks. El Greco used his handicap "to express what strange feeling about the world, what mysterious philosophy" (C.E., p. 148)? El Greco's art expresses a philosophy, Huxley insists, for "every significant artist is a metaphysician, a propounder of beauty-truths and form-theories" (C.E., p. 148). It is a

philosophy of no known school, and it is perceived through the artist's selection of elements, his style. Huxley is aware that this approach is unacceptable to many: "Annoyed by the verbiage and this absurd multiplicity of attributed 'meanings,' some critics have protested that music and painting signify nothing but themselves; that the only things they 'say' are things, for example, about modulations and fugues, about color values and three-dimensional forms. That they say anything about human destiny or the universe at large is a notion which these purists dismiss as merely nonsensical" (C.E., p. 178). However, Huxley argues, "If the purists were right, then we should have to regard painters and musicians as monsters. For it is strictly impossible to be a human being and not to have views of some kind about the universe at large, very difficult to be a human being and not to express those views, at any rate by implication. Now, it is a matter of observation that painters and musicians are not monsters. Therefore . . . . The conclusion follows, unescapably" [sic] (C.E., p. 178). Inescapably, Huxley says and comments further in a later essay on the same subject:

> A representational picture is one that "tells a story"--the story, for example, of the Nativity, the story of Mars and Venus, the story of a certain landscape or a certain person as they appear at a certain moment of time. But this story is never the whole story. A picture always expresses more than is implicit in its subject. Every painter who tells a

> story tells it in his own manner, and that manner tells another story superimposed, as it were, upon the first--a story about the painter himself, a story about the way in which one highly gifted individual reacted to his experience of our universe. The first story is told deliberately; the second tells itself independently of the artist's conscious will. He cannot help telling it, for it is the expression of his own intimate being--of the temperament with which he was born, the character which he himself has forged and the unconscious tendencies formed by the interaction of temperament, character, and outward circumstances (O.A.A., p. 229).

The examples Huxley offers to prove his contention in his essay, "Variations on El Greco," are comparisons of the drapery in the painting of Piero della Francesca as opposed to the drapery in the works of Cosimo Tura: "In Piero's draperies there are large unbroken surfaces, and the folds are designed to emphasize the elementary solid-geometrical structure of the figures. In Tura's draperies the surfaces are broken up, and there is a profusion of sharp angles, of jagged and flamelike forms" (O.A.A., p. 232). This second "story" told by the paintings is perceived, if only intuitively, by the viewer: ". . . the pictures of Piero della Francesca leave upon us an impression of calm, of power, of intellectual objectivity and stoical detachment. From those of Cosimo Tura there emanates a sense of disquiet, even of anguish" (O.A.A., p. 232).

Piero della Francesca and Cosimo Tura are a favorite contrast with Huxley, and he compares, at length, a Virgin by Piero with a Virgin by Tura in an earlier

essay, "Music at Night" (C.E., pp. 178-179). But Huxley is deft in his interpretations of what paintings "say." His comment on a plate by Goya enlarges one's concept of the "meaning" of the work without insisting on a special meaning:

> Consider, for example, the technically astonishing plate, which shows a large family of three generations perched like huddling birds along a huge dead branch that projects into the utter vacancy of a dark sky. Obviously, much more is meant than meets the eye. But what? The question is one upon which the commentators have spent a great deal of ingenuity--spent it, one may suspect, in vain. For the satire, it would seem, is not directed against this particular social evil or that political mistake, but rather against unregenerate human nature as such. It is a statement, in the form of an image, about life in general. Literature and the scriptures of all the great religions abound in such brief metaphorical verdicts on human destiny.
> . . . . . .
> In the language of the plastic arts, Goya has added a score of memorable contributions to the stock of humanity's gnomic wisdom (C.E., p. 164).

Non-Specialization

Huxley's second principle derived from his concept of evolution, non-specialization, is the central theme of one of his most famous essays, "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," published in 1931. Huxley is here concerned with one type of specialization, the use of literary genre. He is also concerned, of course, with the limits imposed on communication by literary tradition, an inescapable subject for the early twentieth century author, especially for a friend of D.H. Lawrence. As

Huxley wrote a few years later in a passage cited above: "Once established (mainly as the result of personal accidents), an artistic tradition canalizes the activity of artists--and the more isolated and homogeneous the society, the more strict . . . is their conditioning. Now, it is possible that some traditions are more propitious to artists than others." And again, "Perhaps a very great artist might be able to surmount the obstacles which these put in his way. I do not know" (O.A.A., p. 30).

Huxley begins with an example from literature of what he considers to be wholly truthful art. From Homer's Odyssey he selects the scene in which Scylla snatches six sailors from Odysseus's boat. Odysseus and the remainder of his crew sail on, later beach the boat, cook and eat a hearty meal, and then and only then mourn their lost comrades. To Huxley this suggests a realism on Homer's part which is unmatched in most of Western literature.

Truth must be defined, and Huxley states that truth in literature is something more than mirroring reality: "Good art possesses a kind of super-truth--is more probable, more acceptable, more convincing than fact itself" (C.E., p. 97). All great artists convince; all great art has what Huxley calls "acceptable verisimilitude." Homer's work differs from that of other artists not by its truthfulness but by its total truthfulness, by its tolerance of details that in other pieces of literature would be considered irrelevancies.

Huxley had discussed in Vulgarity in Literature (1930) the dilemma of the writer faced with a choice between an irrelevant but intrinsically attractive detail and the necessity of keeping to the general plan of the work. But in that essay he was able to give no better rationale for his desire to be inclusive rather than exclusive than that the aristocratic pleasure of displeasing appealed to him: It was the pleasure of going beyond a boundary, an arbitrary limit on one's freedom. "To overstep artistic restraints . . . such offenses against good taste are intoxicatingly delightful to commit, not because they displease other people (for to the great majority they are rather pleasing than otherwise), but because they are intrinsically vulgar, because the good taste against which they offend is as nearly as possible an absolute good taste; they are artistic offenses that have the exciting quality of the sin against the Holy Ghost" (C.E., p. 111). Huxley quoted Baudelaire: "ce qu'il y a d'enivrant dans le mauvais goût, c'est le plaisir aristocratique de déplaire" (C.E., p. 111).

In "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," however, Huxley makes amends for this flippancy. Offering a full dress theory of literature, he suggests that it can be divided into two types: the wholly truthful and the partially truthful, the later being identified with the genre of tragedy. Wholly-truthful art, however, is not to be taken

as the antithesis of tragedy--that is, as comedy. It is not one of the traditional genres or modes. These are characterized by exclusion. Wholly truthful art is characterized by inclusion. Huxley offers a second example of what he means. In Fielding's Tom Jones, Sophy Western, being helped off her horse, is pulled headfirst to the ground when the Innkeeper's knees buckle under him. Sophy's bottom is displayed en plain air. I.A. Richards, Huxley notes, has asserted that ". . . good tragedy is proof against irony and irrelevance--that it can absorb anything into itself and still remain tragedy" (C.E., p. 99). What asks Huxley would be the effect on Shakespeare's Othello if Desdemona took a similar fall. He answers his own question: ". . . a few Fieldingesque irrelevancies would destroy it--destroy it, that is to say, as a tragedy; for there would be nothing to prevent it from becoming a magnificent drama of some other kind" (C.E., p. 100).

Tragedy in Huxley's view is essentially different from Wholly-Truthful art:

> To make a tragedy the artist must isolate a single element out of the totality of human experience and use that exclusively as his material. Tragedy is something that is separated from the Whole Truth, distilled from it, so to speak, as an essence is distilled from the living flower. Tragedy is chemically pure. Hence its power to act quickly and intensely on our feelings. . . . It is because of its chemical purity that tragedy so effectively performs its function of catharsis. It refines and corrects and gives a style to our emotional life, and does so swiftly,

> with power. Brought into contact with tragedy, the elements of our being fall, for the moment at any rate, into an ordered and beautiful pattern, as the iron filings arrange themselves under the influence of the magnet. Through all its individual variations, this pattern is always fundamentally of the same kind (C.E., pp. 100-101).

On the other hand:

> Wholly-Truthful art overflows the limits of tragedy and shows us, if only by hints and implications, what happened before the tragic story began, what will happen after it is over, what is happening simultaneously elsewhere (and "elsewhere" includes all those parts of the minds and bodies of the protagonists not immediately engaged in the tragic struggle). Tragedy is an arbitrarily isolated eddy on the surface of a vast river that flows on majestically, irresistibly, around, beneath, and to either side of it. Wholly-Truthful art contrives to imply the existence of the entire river as well as of the eddy. It is quite different from tragedy, even though it may contain, among other constituents, all the elements from which tragedy is made. (The "same thing" placed in different contexts, loses its identity and becomes, for the perceiving mind, a succession of different things.) In Wholly-Truthful art the agonies may be just as real, love and the unconquerable mind just as admirable, just as important, as in tragedy. . . . But the agonies and indomitabilities are placed by the Wholly-Truthful writer in another, wider context, with the result that they cease to be the same as the intrinsically identical agonies and indomitabilities of tragedy (C.E., p. 101).

The imagery of water overflowing limits is the opposite number of the water-tight compartment imagery discussed above; and it, too, can be traced through Huxley's writings.[31]

The effects of the two types of literature are essentially different. Tragedy is fast acting and produces a more intense effect. Wholly-Truthful art, however, has effects that are more lasting.--Parallels with Huxley's

later religious views can be seen in his statement that the mood produced by such works is "never one of heroic exultation; it is one of resignation, of acceptance. (Acceptance can also be heroic)" (C.E., p. 102). The broad view leads to equinimity. The catharsis of tragedy (like the conversions of revival meetings?) is "violent;" the catharsis of Wholly-Truthful literature (perhaps like Huxley's gradual conversion?) is milder and "lasting" (C.E., p. 102).

Huxley concludes with the interesting observation that, however rare in the past, Wholly-Truthful literature now seems to be replacing in popularity the strict genres, such as tragedy: "I have sometimes wondered whether tragedy, as a form of art, may not be doomed" (C.E., p. 102). The reason for this would seem to be the knowledge explosion: "In recent times literature has become more and more acutely conscious of the Whole Truth--of the great oceans of irrelevant things, events and thoughts stretching endlessly away in every direction from whatever island point (a character, a story) the author may choose to contemplate. To impose the kind of arbitrary limitations, which must be imposed by any one who wants to write a tragedy, has become more and more difficult--is now indeed, for those who are at all sensitive to contemporaneity, almost impossible" (C.E., p. 102). Whether the writer deals in fantasy or naturalism, his

instinct is to overflow the limits of traditional genres and create a work of Wholly-Truthful art. Huxley lists five major contemporary writers (Proust, D.H. Lawrence, André Gide, Kafka, Hemingway) and states that ". . . all are concerned with the Whole Truth" (C.E., p. 102).

Although Huxley recognizes the dominance of the new form, he thinks tragedy is merely in eclipse. He does not see tragedy as an impossible form in modern society. He concludes his essay with yet another version of inclusion:

> . . . the significant writers of our age are too busy exploring the newly discovered, or re-discovered, world of the Whole Truth to be able to pay any attention to it. But there is no good reason to believe that this state of things will last for ever. Tragedy is too valuable to be allowed to die. There is no reason, after all, why the two kinds of literature--the Chemically Impure and the Chemically Pure, the literature of the Whole Truth and the literature of Partial Truth--should not exist simultaneously, each in its separate sphere. The human spirit has need of both (C.E., p. 103).

Huxley's belief in the importance of viewing art objects as wholes goes back at least as far as his college days--criticising the commentaries on Elizabethan drama, he wrote his father in 1915: "All the critics pick out individual scenes which are, of course, astonishingly good, while they neglect to consider the pieces as a whole" (L., p. 67). Huxley's belief that art objects should be inclusive, that literary works should bring diverse elements together in harmonious wholes, can be

traced back nearly as far. In 1919, in an Athenaeum essay, Huxley commented on the comic method of Pope, drawing, in the process, an interesting contrast of Pope and the Elizabethans:[32]

> He is always mock-heroic; he wraps up low ideas in high words, contrasts the grotesqueness of the theme with the majesty of the diction and versification. This method of writing comic poetry is the commonest because it is the easiest. Pope, it is true, brought mock-heroic to its perfection in the "Rape of the Lock," and he did wonders with it in the "Dunciad" too. But one could wish that he had taken the comic a little more seriously--taken it seriously enough to give it a form of its own, instead of fitting it into an incongruously noble form and relying on the incongruity to bring out the comedy. The Elizabethans moved easily from the sublime to the grotesque, giving to each its own lyrical intensity of expression. They did not juxtapose funerals and hornpipes for the sake of melodramatic contrast, but, realizing that life is compounded of inextricably implicated farce and tragedy, they treated both as equally excellent themes for their art, assigning each its proper expression and its due and natural place in the picture. Pope, like most other poets since their time, fixed a great gulf between the low and the high. Taking only the high seriously, he created for it a form of poetical expression. The low he made no effort to express in its own terms; when he wrote on low, grotesque themes he simply pariodied his own sublimity.[33]

Huxley's desire for an inclusive art form continued; and fifteen years after publishing "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," he wrote John Van Druten:

> . . . whatever may be happening to us, other people's lives go on unchanged by our joys and sufferings . . . . But this is something which cannot, perhaps, ever be rendered in drama. A play can tell the truth and nothing but the truth; but it can never (or at any rate has never up till now) told, or rather implied--for it can never be fully told--the whole truth. That is why, I think, I have never cared profoundly for the theater. Even Shakespeare is

> compelled by the nature of the medium he is working in to stop short of telling the whole truth. And if he accepted the aesthetic and, in some sort, the moral limitations of the medium, then it is doubtless presumptuously silly to attempt to transcend them by putting in scenes that stress the basic irrelevance to our sufferings of other people's lives, and even of our own lives, on the physiological level. Still, I should dearly like to be artist enough to incorporate the irrelevant relevantly into a drama and, by that incorporation, to intensify the dramatic quality of the main theme (L., p. 560).

While working on the manuscript of his novel, Island, in 1959, Huxley wrote his son, Matthew, that: ". . . I am always haunted by the feeling that, if only I had enough talent, I could somehow poetize and dramatize all the intellectual material and create a work which would be simultaneously funny, tragic, lyrical and profound. Alas, I don't possess the necessary talent, and so shall have to be content with something that falls considerably short of the impossible ideal" (L., pp. 875-876).

Because of the attention attracted by "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," the theme of this essay was one of the topics raised with Huxley during an interview in 1960:

> INTERVIEWERS: You praised Fielding long ago in your essay "Tragedy and the Whole Truth." Do you still believe that fiction can give a fuller view of life than tragedy?
> HUXLEY: Yes, I still believe that tragedy is not necessarily the highest form. The highest form does not yet exist, perhaps. I can conceive of something much more inclusive and yet equally sublime, something that is adumbrated in the plays of Shakespeare. I think that in some way the tragic and comic elements can be more totally fused. I don't know how. Don't ask me how. If we get another Shakespeare one of these days--as I hope we will--perhaps we'll see. As I say in that essay, Homer has a kind of fusion of

> these elements, but on a very simple-minded level. But, my goodness, how good Homer is, anyhow! And there's another really sublime writer who has this quality--Chaucer. . . . If he had been born two or three hundred years later I think the whole course of English literature would have been changed. We wouldn't have had this sort of Platonic mania--separating mind from body and spirit from matter.[34]

Three years later, at the time of his death, Huxley was still excited by the unsolved problem. His second wife, Laura Archera Huxley, describes his intention for his last novel, a chapter of which is also included in her book, This Timeless Moment:

> . . . Aldous wanted to describe the many different human beings that a man could be, particularly one living during the phenomenal sixty years of this century. In this sense such a novel could not have been written before, because never, in such a short space of time, have there been such profound and startling changes--"explosion" is a better word. Aldous wanted to show how the universes we perceive and feel--one on each side of our skin--interweave, and how they affect each other in an unending, interchanging circle. He also wanted to show how our potentials are sometimes developed and sometimes stunted by the technology that is part of our culture.[35]

Elsewhere she includes a transcription of a taped conversation made during his final illness in which Huxley discussed his ideal art form:

> Laura: HAVE YOU A NEW IDEA FOR WORK? A NEW KIND OF LITERATURE? (I was referring to something he had said earlier in the night when he had awakened.)
> Aldous (slowly, deeply, longingly): WELL, I CAN SEE THAT ONE CAN WRITE THE GREATEST BOOK EVER WRITTEN, IF ONE KNEW HOW . . . I MEAN I KNOW HOW, THEORETICALLY. BUT IN PRACTICE, OF COURSE, IT'S SOMETHING RATHER DIFFERENT.
> Laura: FROM WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN UP TO NOW?
> Aldous: (very low, hesitatingly): REALLY, FROM WHAT ANYBODY HAS EVER WRITTEN . . . BUT THEN IT'S SUCH

IT'S ENOUGH ALMOST THE ALMOST THE WHOLE COURSE OF LIFE.

Laura: HOW DIFFERENT?

Aldous (with a wonderful, happy emphasis, in a voice unexpectedly like his strong, vital self): BY BRINGING IT ALL IN!

Laura: AT ONCE?

Aldous: SOMEHOW.

Laura: LIKE YOU WERE SAYING YESTERDAY--ABOUT ALL THE UNIVERSES?

Aldous: THAT'S IT--AROUND A CENTRAL STORY WITH EPISODES.

Laura: YOU MEAN, YOU WANT TO DO IT LIKE BACH, IN ALL THESE DIFFERENT WAYS . . .

Aldous: WELL, I MEAN BACH IS MUSIC AND THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE.

Laura: CAN YOU DO YOUR NEW NOVEL LIKE THAT?

Aldous (such longing in his voice): WELL, IT WOULD BE MARVELOUS IF I COULD.

Laura: CAN YOU APPLY IT TO ANY LITTLE THING, EVEN A LITTLE SHORT STORY?

Aldous: NO, I WOULDN'T WANT TO.

. . . . . .

Laura: IF YOU CAN DO SOME MORE ON THIS BUSINESS OF ALL THE UNIVERSES AT ONCE. . . . IS THAT WHAT YOU MEANT, ALL AT ONCE?

Aldous: YES.

Laura: AND YET IT'S DIFFERENT FROM A POLYPHONIC THING, IS IT?

Aldous: WELL, IT HAS TO BE VIRTUALLY ANALOGOUS TO POLYPHONY . . .

Laura: BUT YOU CANNOT SPEAK ALL AT ONCE . . .

Aldous: WELL, NO, ONE CAN'T, AFTER ALL. IT'S NOT LIKE BACH WHERE YOU CAN HAVE FIVE PARTS GOING ON. WHEN YOU HAVE WORDS, YOU INTERRUPT THE THING. . . . EACH PART BLURS THE OTHER.

Laura: THAT'S PROBABLY WHY PEOPLE WRITE OPERA--SO THEY CAN HAVE A POLYPHONY OF WORDS AND MUSIC AND PAINTING AND DANCING?

Aldous: I MEAN, THIS IS WHAT WAGNER HOPED TO DO AND DIDN'T. UNFORTUNATELY, HE WAS AN UNSPEAKABLY VULGAR MAN.[36]

The various techniques for achieving this ideal, techniques worked out by Huxley in previous novels, especially in Point Counter Point, are among the best known aspects of his work and need not be reviewed here.[37]

Growth

In a second taped conversation with his wife, Laura, Huxley used a metaphor to express his belief, reminiscent of the opinion expressed by Julian Huxley in The Individual in the Animal Kingdom and cited above, that men must take movement and growth as one of their guiding principles: "YOU SEE, THIS--I WAS THINKING OF ONE OF YOUR TITLES--THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS OF TRYING TO MAKE ICE CUBES OUT OF RUNNING WATER, ISN'T IT?"[38] The allusion is to one of the chapters in Laura Huxley's book, You Are Not the Target. Laura Huxley explains: "Its concept is that our organisms are continuously changing in a continuously changing world; that the essence of life is its fluidity, its ability to change, to flow and to take a new course; that the trouble is that sometimes, usually unconsciously and unwillingly, we freeze a piece of this flowing life into an 'ice cube.'"[39] Any static state that excludes others, even that of the pure mystical experience itself, what Huxley calls in The Perennial Philosophy the interior height obtained by "one-pointedness of exclusion and mutilation" (P.P., p. 299), is objectionable. A tape published by Laura Huxley presents Huxley's view that such mysticism was undesirable because it excluded the dynamism of love and work. Laura Huxley asks if he

thought he were going to have that type of mystical experience.

> Aldous: WELL NOW, I CAN IF I WANT TO! BUT I MEAN IT IS VERY GOOD TO REALIZE THAT IT IS JUST THE--SO TO SAY--THE MIRROR IMAGE OF THIS OTHER THING. IT IS JUST THIS TOTAL DISTRACTION--I MEAN, IF YOU CAN IMMOBILIZE THE TOTAL DISTRACTION LONG ENOUGH, THEN IT BECOMES THE PURE, ONE-POINTED DISTRACTION--PURE LIGHT.
> Laura: IF YOU CAN IMMOBILIZE IT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
> Aldous: YOU CAN IMMOBILIZE IT, BUT IT ISN'T THE REAL THING--YOU CAN REMAIN FOR ETERNITY IN THIS THING AT THE EXCLUSION OF LOVE AND WORK.
> Laura: BUT THAT THING SHOULD BE LOVE AND WORK.
> Aldous: (with emphasis): EXACTLY! I MEAN THIS IS WHY IT IS WRONG. AS I WAS SAYING, THIS ILLUSTRATES THAT YOU MUSTN'T MAKE ICE CUBES OUT OF A FLOWING RIVER. YOU MAY SUCCEED IN MAKING ICE CUBES . . . THIS IS THE GREATEST ICE CUBE IN THE WORLD.[40]

In another portion of the same tape Huxley comments: "TO FIX SOMETHING AND TRY TO KEEP IT--OF COURSE, IT IS ALWAYS WRONG."[41]

One can also see this principle at work in Huxley's early Athenaeum criticism. In a review Huxley contrasts favorably the attitude of a character in a novel by Romain Rolland with that of Maurice Barrès:

> Clerambault is the antithesis of "ce pauvre Barrès" with his "besoin de murailles, de barrières, de frontières, d'ennemis." Clerambault's natural movement is one of expansion; Barrès's of contraction. Clerambault believes above all things in life and in living men. Barrès is above all interested in the dead. He is of opinion that no feast of youth should be without its illustrious skeletons, and all his sombre eloquence is meant to persuade us that we can do nothing unless we are haunted by old ghosts. There are many who feel at home in the splendid charnel-house of Barrès. Others find it easier to breathe in the fresh air of Clerambault's hopeful internationalism. It is a matter of temperament, of age, of upbringing.[42]

A similar note is struck in Huxley's short story, "Young Archimedes," where Huxley has the narrator comment on the views of the young genius: "Wagner was among his dislikes; so was Debussy. When I played the record of one of Debussy's Arabesques, he said, 'Why does he say the same thing over and over again? He ought to say something new, or go on, or make the thing grow. Can't he think of anything different?'"[43]

Huxley's friendship with D. H. Lawrence during the late twenties brought the problem of spontaneity in art to the forefront of his consciousness. One dimension of this problem was set forth in the prefatory essay he wrote for the edition of Lawrence's letters which he published in 1932:

> No man is by nature complete and universal; he cannot have first-hand knowledge of every kind of possible human experience. Universality, therefore, can only be achieved by those who mentally stimulate living experience--by the knowers, in a word, by people like Goethe (an artist for whom Lawrence always felt the most intense repugnance).
>
> Again, no man is by nature perfect, and none can spontaneously achieve perfection. The greatest gift is a limited gift. Perfection, whether ethical or aesthetic, must be the result of knowing and of the laborious application of knowledge. Formal aesthetics are an affair of rules and the best classical models . . . .
>
> Lawrence would have nothing to do with proceedings so "unnatural," so disloyal to the gift, to the resident or visiting numen. Hence his aesthetic principle, that art must be wholly spontaneous, and, like the artist, imperfect, limited and transient (C.E., p. 120).

Lawrence's way was not Huxley's--especially in matters of composition. Lawrence preferred the folk-song to the symphony. "Art, he thought, should flower from an immediate impulse toward self-expression or communication, and should wither with the passing of the impulse" (C.E., p. 120). Lawrence refused to correct what he had written; he would not revise or patch a first draft. He rewrote from scratch. "There are, I believe, three complete and totally distinct manuscripts of Lady Chatterly's Lover" (C.E., p. 120).

Nevertheless, in the essay Vulgarity in Literature, however, Huxley went as far as he could toward adopting Lawrence's position:

> In the French tragedies (the most completely Manichean works of art ever created) lust itself has ceased to be corporeal and takes its place among the other abstract symbols, with which the authors write their strange algebraical equations of passion and conflict. The beauty of algebraical symbols lies in their universality; they stand not for one particular case, but for all cases. Manichaeans, the classical writers confined themselves exclusively to the study of man as a creature of pure reason and discarnate passions. Now the body particularizes and separates, the mind unites. By the very act of imposing limitations the classicists were enabled to achieve a certain universality of statement impossible to those who attempt to reproduce the particularities and incompletenesses of actual corporeal life. But what they gained in universality, they lost in vivacity and immediate truth. You cannot get something for nothing. Some people think that universality can be paid for too highly (C.E., p. 108).

Of himself, Huxley wrote: ". . . I have a taste for the lively, the mixed and the incomplete in art, preferring it to the universal and the chemically pure. In the

second place, I regard the classical discipline, with its insistence on elimination, concentration, simplification, as being, for all the formal difficulties it imposes on the writer, essentially an escape from, a getting out of, the greatest difficulty--which is to render adequately, in terms of literature, that infinitely complex and mysterious thing, actual reality" (C.E., p. 109). Despite Huxley's apparent attack on classicism and universality in these passages, the familiar strategy of condemning exclusion remains the same. The classicists impose limitations and insist on elimination, concentration, and simplification.

Even if one wishes to accept Huxley's statements at face value, however, it is difficult to do so in view of contradictory statements made at the same period. Huxley exaggerated when he said he preferred the incomplete in art. In the same year that he published Vulgarity in Literature, he wrote T.S. Eliot: ". . . I don't really like a great deal of DHL's poetry, which seems to me insufficiently organized artistically--rather the raw material of poetry (the most astonishing raw material very often) than poetry itself" (L., p. 334). W.H. Auden has written an essay praising just this quality in Lawrence's poetry,[44] but Huxley was too conservative an aesthetician to be satisfied with this solution to the problem of how to write a poem and would probably be as

out of sympathy with recent art movements that take Lawrence's view of the desirability of spontaneity and impermanence in art as he was with the Dadaist movement in 1919 during his days as the Athenaeum poetry critic.[45]

The lasting effects of Lawrence's doctrines would seem to be a certain freedom from worry concerning the future of his own works or reputation or, even, literature itself and the use, in his essays, of a technique he describes as "directional free association." This technique, however, is only superficially spontaneous. In truth it is "obedient to the inner logic of art" and is the result of much hard work on the part of the writer who must exercise great skill "if the free associations are to lead to the desired goal and if the work is to be an artistic whole and not merely a specimen of automatic writing" (O.A.A., p. 8).

If the deliberate use of spontaneous first impressions and incomplete or non-permanent art forms did not appeal to Huxley, it may be in part because he came to feel that it was a mistake to apply the growth aspect of the organic metaphor to the on-going or developmental aspect of structure: "A work of art is not a becoming, but a multiple being" (O.A.A., p. 238). The art work became assimilated to eternity, became a microcosm, which, containing time and motion, is itself motionless. The

great work of art, like eternity and unlike tragedy, can absorb all irrelevancies:

> There is no question here of a dialectical process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. . . . [A work of art] exists and has significance on several levels at once. In most cases these significances are of the same kind and harmoniously [sic] reinforce one another. Not always, however. Occasionally it happens that each of the meanings is logically exclusive of all the rest. There is then a happy marriage of incompatibles, a perfect fusion of contradictions. It is one of those states which, though inconceivable, actually occur. Such things cannot be; and yet, . . . there they actually are (O.A.A., p. 238).

Art, like mysticism, was ideally inclusive rather than exclusive. Mysticism, to be wholly admirable, had to be known in its fullness of love and work as well as its height of the clear light. Art, to be wholly admirable, had to include truth to the startling chaos of immediate experience as well as fidelity to the remembered order of time past. It will be recalled that in The Genius and the Goddess, the writer asks John Rivers:

> "And what about my writing, what about those daughters of Memory?"
> "There would have been a way to make the best of both worlds."
> "A compromise?"
> "A synthesis, a third position subtending the other two. Actually, of course, you can never make the best of one world, unless in the process you've learned to make the best of the other."[46]

Art is the mirror image of the wholeness known to the mystic. In The Perennial Philosophy, Huxley had made this point with the following quotation: "The experience of beauty is pure, self-manifested, compounded equally of

joy and consciousness, free from admixture of any other perception, the very twin brother of mystical experience, and the very life of it is super-sensuous wonder" (P.P., p. 138). In a passage from Huxley's novel, Island, a passage which Laura Huxley reports is a direct transcription of a personal experience, Huxley comments on Bach's Fourth Brandenburg Concerto:

> This Allegro--he knew it by heart. Which meant that he was in the best possible position to realize that he had never heard it before. . . . The Allegro was revealing itself as an element in the great present Event, a manifestation at one remove of the luminous bliss. Or perhaps that was putting it too mildly. In another modality this Allegro was the luminous bliss; it was the knowledgeless understanding of everything apprehended through a particular piece of knowledge; it was undifferentiated awareness broken up into notes and phrases and yet still all-comprehendingly itself.
> . . . . . .
> . . . And tonight's Fourth Brandenburg was not merely an unowned Thing in Itself; it was also, in some impossible way, a Present Event with an infinite duration. Or rather (and still more impossibly, seeing that it had three movements and was being played at its usual speed) it was without duration. The metronome presided over each of its phrases; but the sum of its phrases was not a span of seconds and minutes. There was a tempo, but no time. So what was there?
> "Eternity." . . . He began to laugh.[47]

This passage is one of the clearest expressions in Huxley's writings of the aesthetic mysticism common to members of the Bloomsbury group. As commentators on religion have noted, the order and repeatable nature of the "events" in a work of art relate it to ritual, to the timeless or eternal order brought into being by the reenactment of

the myth. In the phrase of Mircea Eliade, the art object is a "sacred space."

In his essay, "Art for Art's Sake," E.M. Forster, a prominent member of the Bloomsbury group, deals with the relationship of art and mysticism to man's quest for order. He writes: "A work of art, we are all agreed, is a unique product. But why? It is unique not because it is clever or noble or beautiful or enlightened or original or sincere or idealistic or useful or educational--it may embody any of those qualities--but because it is the only material object in the universe which may possess internal harmony. All the others have been pressed into shape from the outside, and when their mold is removed they collapse. The work of art stands up by itself, and nothing else does."[48] Forster finds true order in only two categories of life, the religious and the aesthetic. Huxley would concur in this opinion but would go on to point out that pure order was not even desirable in the social and political category. In Ape and Essence he has the narrator comment that the imitation of the perfection obtainable in art is a cause of political disaster: ". . . from the Parthenon and the Timaeus a specious logic leads to the tyranny which, in the Republic, is held up as the ideal form of government. In the field of politics the equivalent of a theorem is a perfectly disciplined army; of a sonnet or picture, a police state under a dictatorship."[49]

If growth in art was not a matter of unplanned form or open-ended structure, then there must yet be something of nature within the art object. Huxley apparently found a treatment of the subject which appealed to him in the words of Hsieh Ho, the fifth-century Chinese artist who formulated the famous Six Principles of Chinese painting. Huxley cites his dicta and offers his own annotation:

> "The first principle is that, through a vitalizing spirit, a painting should possess the movement of life." A number of other renderings of the First Principle have been suggested, such as "a painting should possess rhythmic vitality"; "a painting should express the life movement of the spirit through the rhythm of things"; "a painting should manifest the fusion of the rhythm of the spirit with the movement of living things." But, however the renderings may vary, "it is quite evident," in the words of the great Sinologist, Osvald Siren, "that the First Principle refers to something beyond the material form, call it character, soul, or expression. It depends on the operation of the spirit, or the mysterious breath of life, by which the figures may become as though they were moving or breathing." It is to this rhythm of the spirit manifested by the movement of given events that the artist pays attention; and in order to render this spiritual essence of things, he may be compelled to distort appearances, to refrain both from exactly copying or conventionally prettifying (O.A.A., p. 256).

In a passage which may suggest the way in which Huxley felt he had exemplified life movement in his own work, he comments:

> A great representational artist, such as Lautrec or Goya, as Degas or Rembrandt, is interested in several aspects of experience--the aesthetic, the biological, the psychological, and sometimes, the ethical--and the facts which he sets down on paper or canvas are forms which he extracts from given reality, which

> he makes, for the purpose of expressing and communicating his own special preoccupations. For this reason he finds no incompatibility between truth to nature and distortion. Indeed, if there is to be truth, to the particular aspects of nature in which he is interested, there must be a certain amount of distortion (O.A.A., p. 255).

Apart from capturing growth or life in his work, the artist is interested in the way the media itself can grow. Growth can also be described as progress or advance. Julian Huxley's discussion of the ways in which the word evolution could be applied to art has been cited earlier in this chapter. Aldous Huxley's treatment of the same subject, published in the Athenaeum for March 5, 1920, has also been discussed above in the section dealing with Huxley's relation to the aesthetic movement. Less detailed, less completely thought out, than Julian's the view of Aldous Huxley is worth quoting here for the second time: "An advance in poetry, if it signifies anything, means the discovery of new subject-matter, with a new method for expressing it."[50]

Huxley was interested in the growth aspect of the organic metaphor not merely in relation to structure or treatment of materials but also as a subject. The development of artists or their inability to develop became a prime subject for Huxley early in his career, furnishing subject matter for articles in the Athenaeum; and it continued to fascinate him until the end of his life. Lipiatt and Sebastian Barnack are fictional

characters that come easily to mind, though there are others--even Will Farnaby, the journalist of Island, is a would-be artist stymied by his personal problems and inadequate view of the nature of things, a condition which seems well on its way to being remedied by the end of the novel.

One aspect of this subject, the growth of talent in artists, that Huxley commented on with particular frequency was the problem of the child genius, such as Mozart. He wrote a short story on the subject, "Young Archimedes." In the visual arts, Huxley was fascinated by the fact that children seem to possess a natural ability which declines with age. He discusses this in several essays, notably in "The Education of an Amphibian," and in "Doodles in a Dictionary": "Up to the age of ten (provided of course that his teachers don't interfere) practically every child paints like a genius. Fifteen years later the chances of his still painting like a genius are about four hundred thousand to one. Why this infinitesimal minority should fulfill the promise of childhood, while all the rest either dwindle into mediocrity or forget the very existence of the art they once practiced (within the limits of childish capacity) with such amazing skill and originality, is an unsolved riddle" (O.A.A., p. 253).

In later life Huxley, who as a young man had written so much about artists whose ambitions exceeded their talents, wrote about the successful artist who has managed to move productively through different stages of a long career. In his description of Goya's career ("Variations on Goya," 1950), one can sense a parallel with Huxley's own career: "It is a progress from light-hearted eighteenth-century art, hardly at all unconventional in subject matter or in handling, through fashionable brilliancy and increasing virtuosity, to something quite timeless both in technique and spirit--the most powerful of commentaries on human crime and madness, made in terms of an artistic convention uniquely fitted to express precisely that extraordinary mingling of hatred and compassion, despair and sardonic humor, realism and fantasy" (O.A.A., p. 216). If this passage were taken as a self-portrait, the works referred to as the climax of the career, the "commentaries on human crime and madness," might well refer, one feels, to Grey Eminence and The Devils of Loudun rather than to the later novels. A second passage might also be taken as an oblique commentary on Huxley's own work. If so, then it points directly to the paradox of Huxley's art--a highly stylized and narrow art produced by an artist who wanted to "get it all in": "It is not, of course, the only method of composition. Indeed, the nature of this particular artistic idiom is

such that there are probably certain things that can never be expressed in it--things which Rembrandt, for example, was able to say . . . ." Nevertheless, "within the field that he chose to cultivate--that the idiosyncrasies of his temperament and the quality of his artistic sensibilities compelled him to choose . . . ", he "remains incomparable" (O.A.A., p. 225).

Wholeness

Throughout his career, Huxley was concerned with wholeness in art. (In his early article on Sir Christopher Wren, it will be remembered, Huxley remarked: ". . . the general effect of the whole work counts for nearly everything" (O.A.A., p. 275). But the explanation of his relationship to this ideal is not simple. It envolves a grasp of Huxley's view of the nature of art (literature, poetry) and his view of its function. What follows must, of necessity, be something less than a complete presentation of all the ramifications of the subject. Fortunately, a brief overview will suffice for present purposes.

It will be remembered that an earlier chapter cited Huxley's definition (c. 1918) of the poet's mind as a point of focus for "the diffused light of experience."[51] This image is recurrent in Huxley's work especially in Eyeless in Gaza and The Perennial Philosophy, where it is used to explain certain religious conceptions. (The

artist or poet was Huxley's first vision of man as the animal that understands. Later he would confer on the saint the honor of being the type of the highest form of consciousness.) Because this image concerns understanding, getting things in focus, it suggests that art has two aspects, formal and moral. It is a device for ordering materials so that an act of understanding may take place, an act non-utilitarian in nature which will ideally result in communication and action.

When Huxley emphasized the social aspect he defines literature as "the art of making statements movingly."[52] When he is thinking of how this is accomplished, of what preceeds effective communication, he defines art as, "the organization of chaotic appearance into an orderly and human universe" (O.A.A., p. 37). Huxley is aware, from the days of his Athenaeum criticism on that the essence of art is not self-expression, nor is it imitation, though this point is often obscured by the emphasis Huxley places on the artist's special relationship to reality.

Perhaps the intellectual difficulty can be resolved if it is remembered that this relationship is on two levels, content and form. The artist's truth value, insofar as his truth value has anything to do with his art, is a matter of form rather than content. Speaking of religious art, Huxley writes:

> The excellence of a work of religious art depends on two factors, neither of which has anything to do with religion. It depends primarily on the presence in the artist of certain tendencies, sensibilities, and talents; and, secondarily, it depends on the earlier history of his chosen art, and on what may be called the logic of its formal relations. At any given moment that internal logic points toward conclusions beyond those which have been reached by the majority of contemporary artists. A recognition of this fact may impel certain artists--especially young artists--to try to realize those possible conclusions in concrete actuality. Sometimes these attempts are fully successful; sometimes, in spite of their author's talents, they fail. In either case, the outcome does not depend on the nature of the artist's metaphysical beliefs, nor on the warmth with which he entertains them (O.A.A., pp. 41-42).

An artist may even present false ideas on the content level and yet embody in his work the Whole Truth:

> When we think of it in relation to the great world of human experience, El Greco's universe of swallowed spirit and visceral rapture seems, as I have said, curiously oppressive and disquieting. But considered as an isolated artistic system, how strong and coherent it seems, how perfectly unified, how fascinatingly beautiful! And because of this inner harmony and coherence, it asserts in one way all that it had denied in another. El Greco's conscious purpose was to affirm man's capacity for union with the divine. Unconsciously, by his choice of forms and his peculiar treatment of space, he proclaimed the triumph of the organic and the incapacity of spirit, so far as he personally was concerned, to transfigure the matter with which it is associated. But at the same time he was a painter of genius. Out of the visceral forms and cramped spaces, imposed upon him by a part of his being beyond his voluntary control, he was able to create a new kind of order and perfection and through this order and perfection, to reaffirm the possibility of man's union with the Spirit--a possibility which the raw materials of his pictures had seemed to rule out (O.A.A., p. 238).

Early and late Huxley warns against assuming that, because an artist is truthful on one level, he is also truthful on the other: "We have a certain difficulty in taking in

anything that is not intrinsically elegant; a certain eagerness to accept anything that moves us aesthetically. Handsome faces are sometimes associated with ugly characters; and in the same way, alas! literary art may be associated with untruth. The natural human tendency to believe what is beautiful has been the source of innumerable errors."[53] By truth, here, Huxley means basically truth to fact, literal truth.

The confusion is further compounded when Huxley speaks of beauty-truths. When Huxley writes in Vulgarity in Literature that he wants to add beauty-truths to man's knowledge through the practice of his art, or when he praises artists as having discovered truths that psychiatrists and scientists are only now rediscovering, he has reference to the intuitions of the gifted individual, intuitions which in their unverified state might or might not be valid. They are only potential knowledge. Thus beauty-truths lack the absolute character of the metaphysical truth represented by Beauty itself, by the total form.

It has been noted above that art objects are characterized by Huxley in the same terms in which he describes the nature of man, consciousness, the world, life, God, and the cosmos. Undoubtedly the acceptance by Huxley of the mystics' claim to valid insight concerning the Nature of Things gives increased significance to his

personal efforts as an artist as well as to the efforts of other artists. Before his conversion, Huxley clearly recognized that the life of dedication led by the true intellectual is basically spiritual in character. But after his conversion, he attached an even greater value to it. The belief that the universe makes sense, and that great art is a symbol of this, adds cosmic significance to the work of the artist. His art is not merely gratifying, it is a contribution to the moral welfare of man. Before his conversion Huxley writes: "Art is not the discovery of Reality--whatever Reality may be, and no human being can possibly know" (O.A.A., p. 37). After his conversion, Huxley writes (as has been shown by the section cited above from Island) that the work of art can be an example of the nature of reality; or he writes of art as the ideal means of showing forth religious truths: "Music can say four or five different things at the same time, and can say them in such a way that the different things will combine into one thing. The nearest approach to a demonstration of the doctrine of the Trinity is a fugue or a good piece of counterpoint" (O.A.A., p. 7).

What Huxley came to express with ever increasing vividness is the belief that reality is a composite thing, a composition of contrary elements, a structure of incompatibles that are mysteriously bound together in an organic whole. Reality is not understandable from a

strictly human point of view; the pattern is too complex. "In the raw, existence is always one damned thing after another, and each of the damned things is simultaneously Thurber and Michelangelo, simultaneously Mickey Spillane and Maxwell and Thomas à Kempis. The criterion of reality is its intrinsic irrelevance."[54] If things make sense it is "from God's point of view."[55] God, surveying all the water-tight compartments from above, can see reality as a living gestalt or pattern.

In Ends and Means, Huxley discusses his view of man: "The things we ordinarily call objects or individuals--a tree, a man, a table--are not 'concrete realities,' as the romantic anti-intellectuals would have us believe. They are abstractions from a reality that consists, as systematic investigation reveals, of a network of relations between the interdependent parts of an incalculably greater whole. A man, for example, is what he is only in virtue of his relationship with the surrounding universe."[56] Of consciousness, Huxley wrote: "We are like icebergs, floating in the given reality of our physiology, of our intuitions and perceptions, our pains and pleasures, but projecting at the same time into the airy world of words and notions."[57] About the world he comments that it is "beautiful, frightful, unutterably odd and adorable" (O.A.A., p. 259). In more formal language: ". . . the world is unquestionably a continuum;

there are in reality no separate substantial things, there are only merging events and interacting processes in space-time" (C.E., p. 324). About the nature of the relationship of God and cosmos, Huxley writes: "God is even in one's posterior when at last one has crawled full circle and seen it revealed in its full glory. The infinite is totally present at every point of space and time, even the most trivial and preposterous" (L., p. 638).

The essence of art, of poetry as opposed to non-art or "prose," was a formal factor designated in Huxley's early writings as style and in his later work as pattern or gestalt. Here Huxley follows the thought of his early enthusiasm, Mallarmé: "Verse, to this way of thinking, begins as soon as there is any conscious aesthetic organization of language."[58] Graham Hough is here referring to Mallarmé's discussion of his "majestueuse idèe inconsciente, á savoir que la forme appelée vers est simplement elle-même la littèrature; que vers il y a sitôt que s'accentue la diction, rhythme dés que style."[59] That Huxley's use of the words style or pattern is more or less inclusive of the three elements (integritas, consonantia, claritas) that Hough discusses in An Essay On Criticism should be obvious. Huxley has in mind all aspects of the total organizational structure of the work of art.

Huxley, on the evidence of the essays written for the Athenaeum, would use the word style to refer both to the use of rhetorical devices, lesser organizational devices, such as oxymoron, repetition, and alliteration (as when he condemns a writer for using these "florid tricks of style"),[60] and to the larger structural patterns (as when commenting on Shelley's poetry he wrote that "Much of what Shelley wrote is still the raw material of poetry scarcely worked up into a definitely stylized art").[61] In his observations on Buffon's Histoire Naturelle, one can see the Mallarméan concept in operation:

> One is struck as much by his fine and detailed observation as by the largeness and sobriety of his generalizations. And the whole, detail and generalization, is fused and transformed into literature by the power of a magnificent style. There are certainly moments when Buffon's style falls into that sin of over-ornateness and pomposity with which he has often been reproached.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> However, it is quite wrong to suppose that the whole of the "Histoire Naturelle" is couched in language as flowery as this. Buffon can be eloquent without bombast, as in the introduction to the "Epoques de la Nature." His exposition of general ideas ls [sic] always clear, his descriptions always lively. Marmontel declared that he would give Buffon a high place among descriptive poets. The compliment was double-edged in intention--for Marmontel meant, by calling him a poet, to disparage Buffon's merits as a man of science--but it may be applied to Buffon as a piece of unmingled praise. Every man of science is to a certain degree a poet; he must possess imagination as well as laborious accuracy. To the poet's imagination Buffon added something of the poet's power of expression. The "Histoire Naturelle" is a monument of fine literature. With the increase of knowledge, its scientific value has necessarily grown less, but its literary value remains as high as ever. Men will continue to read it, because it is a great work of art.[62]

The same position is taken in Huxley's essay of the thirties, "T.H. Huxley as a Literary Man." There he writes: "Even plain records of observed fact may be, in their own way, beautiful or ugly. From all of which we must conclude that all verbal communications whatsoever are literature."[63] All beautiful verbal communications, all verbal communications possessing "conscious aesthetic organization of language," are literature.

In another Athenaeum essay, style, the informing power of art, was opposed to subject-matter. Huxley, however, wanted both. He opposed the tendency among aesthetes to ignore subject-matter and the grand themes. But his appreciation of style was no less keen than theirs: "Style, of course, is of the highest importance. It is the essentially artistic element in art, the outward expression of the human mind moulding the matter in which it works." Above all, style is "the essentially human, aesthetic element in art."[64] He might have added that it was the essentially mystic element in art, thus linking the growing, open quality characteristic of organic entities with the order-seeking, religious quality also characteristic of man. Both tendencies meet in the stylistic tension of great art.

In later essays, one finds the word pattern also being used. In 1932 Huxley writes:

> Critics, it seems to me, content themselves too often with the mere application of epithets. Majestic, flat, sublime, passionate--criticism is in many cases just a calling of laudatory or disparaging names. But this is not enough. Critics should take pains to show why such and such a piece of writing provokes us to call it by such and such a name. The observable facts of literature are words arranged in certain patterns. The words have a meaning independent of the pattern in which they are arranged; but it is the pattern that gives to this meaning its peculiar quality and intensity; that can make a statement seem soemhow truer or somehow less true than the truth. Moreover, a word-pattern of one kind will cause us to say of its inventor: "This man is (for example) sincere"; of another kind: "This man is affected and false." It is the business of the literary artist to make word-patterns in such a way that his readers shall be compelled to draw certain inferences from them. It is the business of the critic to show how our judgments are affected by variations in word-patterns.[65]

Beauty, for Huxley, became increasingly organic as well as inclusive, increasingly a matter of organization in which every part, even the pauses in music or silences in poetry, was necessary to the whole. The strength of his conviction on this point helps to explain his reaction to the New York school of action painting that developed in the fifties. Raymond Mortimer recorded Huxley's comment after viewing the paintings of Jackson Pollock for the first time: "Is there any reason why they should not be smaller or larger instead of ending just where they do" (A.H., p. 137)?

During the late thirties and the decade of the forties, Huxley commented extensively on the relationship of art and wholeness. In several places Huxley employed

an image of white spaces. This image is a significant motif linking physics to pointilliste painting, science to art and mysticism. Huxley used this image of white spaces in a speech he made at the founding of Trabuco College in California:

> 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, between the notes of music, in the apertures between groups of sculpture. This function or talent is unconscious. They throw a net and catch something, though the net is trivial.[66]

In his novel, Time Must Have a Stop (1944), Huxley has his hero, the poet Sebastian Barnack, write in his notebook:

> Three prostrate telegraph poles lying in the patch of long grass below my window at the inn--lying at a slight angle one to another, but all foreshortened, all insisting, passionately, on the fact (now all of a sudden unspeakably mysterious) of the third dimension. To the left the sun is in the act of rising. Each pole has its attendant shadow, four or five feet wide, and the old wheel tracks in the grass, almost invisible at midday, are like canyons full of blue darkness. As a "view" nothing could be more perfectly pointless; and yet, for some reason, it contains all beauty, all significance, the subject matter of all poetry.[67]

Elsewhere Sebastian emphasizes the point that beauty does not inhere in objects: ". . . any particular manifestation of beauty--in art, in thought, in action, in nature--is always a relationship between existences not in themselves intrinsically beautiful . . . ."[68]

Beauty becomes a synonym for the inclusive world outlook Huxley espouses. Huxley, in The Perennial Philosophy, interprets Keats' phrase, "Beauty is truth, truth, beauty," to mean, in one sense, that "Beauty is the Primordial Fact, and the Primordial Fact is Beauty, the principle of all particular beauties" (P.P., p. 137). Huxley explains: "Among the trinities in which the ineffable One makes itself manifest is the trinity of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. We perceive beauty in the harmonious intervals between the parts of a whole. In this context the divine Ground might be paradoxically defined as Pure Interval, independent of what is separated and harmonized within the totality" (P.P., p. 137).

The aesthetic experience of ectascy through sensitivity to relationships becomes a metaphor of the higher mystic experience. Sebastian notes in his diary on Christmas Eve:

> Today there was an almost effortless achievement of silence--silence of intellect, silence of will, silence even of secret and subconscious cravings. Then a passage through these silences into the intensely active tranquility of the living and eternal Silence.
>
> Or else I could use another set of inadequate verbal signs and say that it was a kind of fusion with the harmonizing interval that creates and constitutes beauty. . . . this was a perception of, an actual participation in, the paradox of Relationship as such, apart from anything related; the direct experience of pure interval and the principle of harmony, apart from the things which, in this or that, concrete instance, are separated and harmonized.[69]

In Time Must Have a Stop, Huxley quoted Bradley's remark: "Short of the Absolute, God cannot rest . . . ."[70] The evolutionary task of the artist was to make art an ever more adequate symbol of reality, to find new ways of bringing life's diversity within its organic form. Art must bring wholeness to fragmented man through the power of beauty. Important to Huxley before his conversion as a way of finding meaning in life, art remained, after his conversion, to shape and support his faith in a form of religious mysticism. The wholeness of great art remained as man's best symbol of the highest level of consciousness, the contemplative vision of the nature of things as seen by God.

Conclusion

Aldous Huxley held throughout his life a belief that a scale of values existed, a scale based on the evolutionary criterion of complexity. Yet, as a young man who believed that the mind had no certain knowledge of anything, he resisted in the name of diversity any attempt to establish priorities among the multitude of acts or intellectual positions that presented themselves to man. He essayed the "rich, welcoming curiosity" he attributed to Shakespeare.[71] This form of openness had its drawbacks, however. It led to a negative relativism which was static in its refusal to place a higher value on some forms of experience than on

others. And this negativism conflicted with Huxley's basic faith in the evolutionary possibilities of life.

Huxley articulated his position in Time Must Have a Stop through the contrast of Dante and Chaucer. Bruno Rontini prefers Dante. Uncle Eustace prefers Chaucer. For Huxley, Dante is the writer who has transcended mere quantitative inclusion and established a hierarchy of ends. Eustace, the Chaucerian, can merely continue being what he is. In his life everything cancels out because all things have equal value. Thus it may well be that the conversion Huxley underwent represented in one of its dimensions a solution to an artistic rather than a religious or political dilemma. Through a return to a belief in a hierarchical system of values ordered by the nature of things, by moving beyond the ideal of mere acceptance, Huxley was able to set himself new problems and to see the necessary pattern for his art as being that of dynamic growth.

If this reading of Huxley's life and thought is correct, it would go far toward explaining why Huxley shifted from writing novels that are essentially group novels (the central character being no more than a link between the various members of a circle of acquaintances) to novels that center around characters who undergo crisis experiences that change their lives and set them off in a new direction. Of the late novels only After Many a Summer Dies the Swan would seem to be an exception to this rule.

However, it too can be brought within the pattern if it is seen as a drama in which opposing viewpoints contend for the allegiance of the uncommitted young people who are the growing point of society. The bleakness of the novel's outcome with the murder of the young man and the sensual enslavement of the girl may represent the despair of Huxley himself as he observed the world preparing once again to engage in total war. The inner awakening has begun in Peter Boone but external events deny him his chance for further enlightenment. Virginia Maunciple has her moments of aspiration, but the corruption of those around her makes a mockery of her spiritual ignorance.

Huxley must be regarded, finally, as a writer of integrity. His ideal of art was demanding, and he would not be content with a small perfection. Like Edith Stilwell, his creative dilemma was how to transform an initial success with a highly stylized and narrow art form into a mastery of art forms that could say more with equal power. It may be that neither succeeded, and that their later works represent merely honorable failures, that both were trapped by a premature specialization. But in Huxley's case, at least, one senses that the reaching out for artistic breadth and maturity was part of a total life view, and that evolutionism with its emphasis on growth provided him with a continuing thread between the apparently divergent portions of his career.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER IV

[1]C. D. Broad, "Review of Huxley's Evolutionary Ethics," in Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Herbert Feigl and Wilfred Sellars (New York, 1949), p. 586. Hereafter cited as Broad. Suzanne Heinz-Friederich and Cyril Connolly have noted the influence of evolutionism on the thought of Aldous Huxley. See Suzanne Heinz-Friederich, Aldous Huxley: Entwicklung Seiner Metaphysik (Bern, 1949), pp. 78-83. See also Cyril Connolly, The Unquiet Grave: A Word Cycle by Palinurus (New York, 1943), p. 56.

[2]Ends, pp. 303-304.

[3]Ends, pp. 304, 351.

[4]Ends, pp. 304-305.

[5]A.H., p. 57.

[6]Ends, pp. 305-306.

[7]Time, p. 304.

[8]Ends, p. 293.

[9]Texts, p. 46.

[10]Texts, p. 47.

[11]Texts, p. 48.

[12]loc. cit.

[13]Texts, p. 49.

[14]Texts, p. 49-50.

[15]T. H. Huxley cited in Irvine, p. 352.

[16]Julian Huxley, Religion Without Revelation (New York, 1957), pp. 68-69. Hereafter cited as R.W.R.

[17]R.W.R., p. 72.

[18]Julian Huxley, Knowledge, Morality and Destiny (New York, 1957), p. 87.

[19]Tomorrow, p. 186.

[20]Doors, pp. 29-30.

[21]Tomorrow, p. 201.

[22]Julian Huxley, The Individual in the Animal Kingdom (Cambridge, 1912), p. 27. Hereafter cited as I.A.K.

[23]Aldous Huxley's change of position is apparently paralleled by a change in Julian's outlook. See Broad, p. 571.

[24]Ath., October 22, 1920, p. 565. See also Meckier, p. 158.

[25]See L., passim. See also Clark, passim. Sir Julian Huxley's recently published autobiography, Memories, should also be helpful in this regard. Concerning the intellectual influence he may have had on his brother's work and thought, Sir Julian, in a letter to the author (November 29, 1968), remarks that ". . . we read each other's books with interest, and had various discussion about mysticiam, the role of mind in evolution, and the population problem. Aldous never consulted me formally about his work in progress--e.g. all the biological stuff in Brave New World he just picked up casually from my talk and his reading.

"We were both agreed on the necessity for something religious, in the extended sense of the word, at the center of one's beliefs and hopes, though he was more inclined to mysticism and 'transcendent' experience through meditation and even drugs like lysergic acid (see Laura Huxley's book and his last work Island) than I (see my Religion Without Revelation and Essays of a Humanist)."

[26]Julian Huxley, The Humanist Frame (London, 1961), pp. 27-34. Hereafter cited as H.F.

[27]Ath., June 6, 1919, p. 440.

[28]Ath., October 10, 1919, p. 996.

[29]Watts, p. 47.

[30]Sir Kenneth Clark, "The Blot and the Diagram", Encounter, XX (January, 1963), p. 36.

[31]See Ath., July 2, 1920, p. 9. Huxley depreciates a writer because "his previousness is not the extravagant, ebullient preciousness of a writer overflowing with life and for ever seeking new strange forms in which to express himself." On breaking barriers see Huxley on Rimbaud (Ath., August 22, 1919, p. 796) and on Pope (Ath., September 12, 1919, p. 880.)

[32]See also Texts, pp. 194-195.

[33]Ath., September 12, 1919, p. 880.

[34]Writers at Work, p. 34.

[35]Archera, p. 210.

[36]Archera, pp. 206-208.

[37]See Meckier Chapter V, et passim. See also Watts, 44, 59, 63ff.

[38]Archera, p. 168.

[39]loc. cit.

[40]Archera, p. 169.

[41]Archera, p. 168.

[42]Ath., October 22, 1920, p. 565.

[43]C.S.S., p. 242.

[44]Auden, p. 278.

[45]Ath., August 20, 1920, p. 243.

[46]Genius, pp. 4-5.

[47]Archera, pp. 146-147.

[48]E. M. Forster, Two Cheers for Democracy (New York, 1951), p. 92.

[49]Aldous Huxley, Ape and Essence (New York, 1948), p. 5.

Huxley's description of a temple in Island (pp. 183-184) shows that even in art perfect order seemed less attractive than it had to the young Huxley. Irregularity had come to represent the human aspect of art. The temple stood ". . . a great red tower of the same substance as the

mountains, massive, four-sided, vertically ribbed. A thing of symmetry in contrast with the rocks, but regular not as Euclidean abstractions are regular; regular with the pragmatic geometry of a living thing. Yes, of a living thing; for all the temple's richly textured surfaces, all its bounding contours against the sky curved organically inwards, narrowing as they mounted towards a ring of marble, above which the red stone swelled out again, like the seed capsule of a flowering plant, into a flattened, many-ribbed dome that crowned the whole."

[50]Ath., March 5, 1920, p. 307. See above, pp. 105-108.

[51]Ward, V, p. 607.

[52]O.T., p. 54.

[53]O.T., p. 55.

[54]Genius, p. 1.

[55]Genius, p. 1. The two quotations cited by Julian Huxley (I.A.K., p. 85) make this point:

> Question: "What's one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one?"
>
> Alice Through the Looking-Glass.
>
> Answer (sometimes):
> "Each one almost a Whole, yet all but Parts
> They have lost self to form a Greater Whole
> Far nobler than its sum of single Parts."
> The Green Bayswater.

[56]Ends, p. 293.

[57]Tomorrow, p. 3.

[58]Graham Hough, An Essay on Criticism (New York, 1966), p. 104.

[59]Hough, p. 19.

[60]Ath., December 12, 1919, p. 1335.

[61]Ath., June 6, 1919, p. 432.

[62]Ath., June 27, 1919, p. 536.

[63]O.T., p. 58.

[64]Ath., June 6, 1919, p. 440.

[65]O.T., p. 52.

[66]Clark, pp. 302-303.

[67]Time, p. 299.

[68]Time, p. 300.

[69]loc. cit.

[70]Time, p. 280.

[71]Ath., May 21, 1920, p. 672.

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May 23, 1919, p. 377 [720].
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October 10, 1919, p. 996 [706].
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October 24, 1919, p. 1066 [895].
November 14, 1919, p. 1202 [849].
December 5, 1919, p. 1302 [677].
December 12, 1919, p. 1335 [741].
February 20, 1920, p. 242.
March 5, 1920, p. 307.
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May 21, 1920, p. 672.
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July 30, 1920, p. 142 [823, 824].
August 6, 1920, p. 172 [772].
August 20, 1920, p. 243 [237].
October 22, 1920, p. 565 [851].
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