ALDOUS HUXLEY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS THOUGHT

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CHAPTER I

MR. HUXLEY'S FIRST PERIOD

Introduction

Aldous Huxley's thought advances from a cynical nihilism to a hopeful mysticism. Coming to maturity during the Great War of 1914-1918 Mr. Huxley shared the pessimism of his age. He lacked faith in the individual, in society, and in orthodox Christianity, until the overwhelming impression of the loneliness of individual lives and the futility of life as lived by these individuals impelled him to seek a solution. The solution he has found is, on the ethical side, a faith in the rightness and power of compassion and understanding, and on the spiritual side, a belief in the goodness and effectiveness of a mystical religion.

This advance is logical and consistent. It began with the emergence of a moral norm, limited at first, but nevertheless showing up certain defects in the contemporary scene, such as a philosophy of "good times." The establishment of this norm paved the way for the second stage in the development of Mr. Huxley's thought, a growth which expressed itself as a sort of passive positive philosophy. It was the belief that the best one can do is to develop oneself as fully and harmoniously

as possible. But this belief provided no solution for the ills of futility and loneliness, and he temporarily abandoned it in favour of a positive and even militant philosophy of compassion and understanding. Later the two were united to form the idea of non-attachment, from which, with the addition of a mystical religious element, has emerged the latest phase of his thought.

To facilitate tracing this development a mechanical division of Mr. Huxley's works into two periods will be used in this essay.[1] The first period, beginning with nihilism and developing into a passive philosophy, ends with Do What You Will, 1929. Subsequent works, expressing his active positive philosophy, belong to the second period.

The change both between and within these two periods has been expressed in Mr. Huxley's attitude towards human loneliness and the purposelessness of life. In the first

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1. This division is, of course, true only generally speaking. There are instances when it does not hold, as for example: In 1923 he writes as though he believed in mysticism: "... 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." ("Ben Jonson" in his On the Margin (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1923) p.195.) Also, the Monster of the masque says: "With love I recreate a world from within." Antic Hay (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1923) p.230.

period, generally speaking, his attitude revealed itself in a continual and amoral presentation of this separateness and futility, with overtones of distress. In the second period, still speaking generally, his attitude expresses itself in much direct criticism and many suggestions for reform, so that the feeling of distress has, on the whole, given place to a feeling of hopefulness.

Attitude to loneliness

In his first period Mr. Huxley's attitude towards loneliness was nihilistic: he seldom criticized, he seldom proposed corrective solutions. On the whole, he accepted it. But this acceptance had an emotional quality, and therein lay the impetus for the positive quality of his later philosophy. In essays, novels, poems, by direct statement, by stories of lonely lives, by the counterpoint method, by continual attention to human failings which contribute to the separateness of mankind, he forced upon us the fact that he believed "we countless millions live alone."[2]

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2. M. Arnold, "Isolation".

From the impact of direct and indirect statements upon each other -- although each in itself is neutral in tone -- one gets the emotional quality -- a feeling of distress, a feeling that the whole situation was intolerable to the writer.

Only a reading of his early works can prove this latter statement -- for only from them do we get the neutral tone[3] of the individual statements and the cumulative effect of his continual selection of the subject of separateness. However, an examination of the various occasions[4] on which Mr. Huxley affirms this idea, will help to substantiate the opinion that he does not, in general, complain or sympathise, and also that it is a subject which is much on his mind.

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3. There are some exceptions to this. There are a few times when Aldous Huxley shows emotion, as for example when Gumbril says:"... oh, the horrible pain of weeping, vainly, for something that was nothing, that was everything in the world." (Antic Hay, p.85.)Another example is Lypiatt's question: "Do you know what it is ... to love so much, that you begin to long for the anodyne of physical pain to quench the pain in the soul?" (Ibid., p.101.)

4. It should be borne in mind that the following discussion of methods is not one of artistic technique, but since Mr. Huxley so frequently sets forth his ideas in artistic form, it is to these that we must look for a correct interpretation of his thought.

Apart from the few direct essay statements[5] to this effect and his poem "Sympathy,"[6] Mr. Huxley stated this isolation of the individual most simply and obviously in stories of unloved and lonely characters.[7]

These tales occur so frequently that their subject matter must have been very prominently in Mr. Huxley's thoughts, although he handled them in a most dispassionate manner.

To illustrate: In Those Barren Leaves the fiery artist Lypiatt, with his mission to represent the spiritual

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5. Eg. "... in spite of language, in spite of intelligence and intuition and sympathy, one can never really communicate anything to anybody." Music at Night (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1936) p.267. "To me, at any rate, it seems, in the highest degree unlikely that mankind will ever feel itself intimately and livingly one." Do What You Will (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1929) p.33.

6. Since the poem is short I quote it here:

The irony of being two...!
Grey eyes, wide open suddenly,
Regard me and enquire; I see a face
Grave and unquiet in tenderness,
Heart-rending question of women-never answered:
'Tell me, tell me, what are you thinking of?'
Oh, the pain and foolishness of love!
What can I do but make my old grimace
Ending it with a kiss, as I always do?

In his Leda (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1920) p.22.

7. Eg. Mrs. Aldwinkle of Those Barren Leaves, Mary of Crome Yellow and Marjory of Point Counter Point. There are very few people in the novels who seem close together. [Exceptions are Polly and her mother in Point Counter Point (N.Y., Cerf & Klopfer, 1928) p.30, and Mary and Rampion, Ibid., p.101.

significance of things, his years of failure, his poverty and his self dramatization, is a pitiable creature, but Mr. Huxley does not sympathize. Rather he takes precautions lest we do so, and makes Lypiatt a ridiculous figure with his noisy improvisings on the piano, the loud and tumultuous reciting of his own verse and the satirical comments of his friends. And so it is with other stories of solitary lives -- nothing has any valid significance, says the young Mr. Huxley, therefore nothing can be pathetic.

These tales of loneliness are, as it were, a foreground. The background is the disparateness of all humanity, the idea of which is portrayed by counterpoint. By placing one set of ideas or actions against another set of ideas or actions and by keeping his expression free from the colour of his own emotions, he achieves a dynamic effect -- an effect which is largely that of the inability of people to communicate with one another. Sometimes it is produced by the egoistical conversation of two individuals;[8]

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8. Eg. Denis thinks of his love for Anne while Scogan talks about sanity and madness. Crome Yellow (Lond., Penguin Books, 1921) p. 186f. And again, Denis talks in generalities at Mary about his troubles, and she talks in a similar vein about her own, neither being interested in the other's. Ibid., p.206-208.

sometimes by that of two widely divergent groups.[9] At other times two different types of music are juxtaposed,[10] or again, vividly contrasting actions may be set side by side.[11] In all these instances the conversation or actions of either side, out of their context, have little emotional quality: the quality belongs to them only by virtue of contrast.

Mr. Huxley did not stop with these general portrayals of loneliness; with this panoramic view of the disparity between man and man.[12] He was far too much interested in the

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9. The bored, cynical remarks of the upper middle class interpolated between the courageous and tragic words of the poor in Antic Hay, (p.76-80), is an example. Gregory, in a group where risqué stories are being told, catches remarks about industrialism from another group, and affords another example of counterpoint. ("The Monocle" in Two or Three Graces (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1925) p.229f.)

10. E.g. The Pilgrims' Chorus of Tannhäuser intrudes on the monotonous noise of a jazz band. Dancers are undisturbed by the Pilgrims' Chorus: "... they listened for a little," Mr. Huxley writes, "smiling at the absurdity of this other music from outside; but they danced on uninterruptedly. After a time they did not even take the trouble to listen." Those Barren Leaves (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1925) p.296.

11. E.g. In Point Counter Point Walter searches frantically for Lucy, his desired mistress; while Marjory sits at home and reads old love-letters from him. p. 60f and 77-79 respectively.

12. Virginia Woolf has conveyed this disparity with considerable artistic skill in a similar way. In Between the Acts she keeps a gramophone blaring forth: "dispersed are we, we who have come together."

subject to content himself with general ideas on the matter. He had to analyse it and explain it, and among the various causes for loneliness he found selfishness, cowardice, lack of chastity, unawareness and hypocrisy.

These human characteristics singled out by Mr. Huxley in his first period are of particular importance in a study of the development of his thought. They not only emphasize our earlier remark that he accepted the incommunicability of lives without protest and that his thoughts dwelt on the matter to a marked extent, but in the presentation of most of them there is that undertone of emotional distress which indicates that he would not always accept them. Furthermore, they are all extensions of the ego. Now liberation from the ego is the essential of non-attachment and non-attachment became Mr. Huxley's creed. Consequently the importance of these egoistical qualities warrants a detailed discussion of them.

Selfishness and cowardice, Mr. Huxley believed, are instrumental in augmenting isolation in that they prevent a knowledge of, and interest in, one's fellow man. People are too cowardly and selfish to wish to look deeply into one another's lives. A man viewed from the outside

is a comedy, but viewed from within he is a tragedy, as Lypiatt, the bombastic but sincere artist of Antic Hay says, and Huxley believed. Therefore people prefer to see what is on the surface and to laugh, rather than to see what is underneath and be troubled and perhaps inconvenienced. Mr. Huxley has expressed this idea vividly in the following thoughts of Mrs. Viveash:

> Why was it that people always got involved in one's life? If only one could manage things on the principle of the railways: Parallel tracks -- that was the thing. For a few miles you'd be running at the same speed. There'd be delightful conversation out of the windows; you'd exchange the omelette in your restaurant car for the vol-au-vent in theirs. And when you'd said all there was to say, you'd put on a little more steam, wave your hand, blow a kiss and away you'd go, forging ahead along the smooth polished rails. 13

Mr. Huxley considers that in some extreme cases people are even afraid of face-to-face business interviews or purely impersonal encounters. Gumbril, the hero of Antic Hay, a devil with a fountain pen, cannot manage hand-to-hand combats. Walter Bidlake and his brother-in-law, Philip, suffer from a similar fear and are embarrassed in the presence of servants.

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13. Antic Hay, p.100.

These statements, and numerous others to the same effect, Mr. Huxley made in his youthful dispassionate tone, but an uneasy emotional overtone may be discerned. Probably the clearest instance of this is «Le Fard,»[14] his short story of a woman who, unable to bear the sight of her sick and overworked servant, orders her to put on rouge and lipstick. Madame then feels much better! Nothing could be set forth more coldly, and yet its effect on a reader is emotional. Now perhaps one will say that this is because Mr. Huxley is an artist and has told his story superlatively well. Here is, of course, the difficulty of discussing the ideas of a man who so often expressed them in artistic form, but ~~even so~~, even if Mr. Huxley, by his art, rouses emotion in his readers, why is it an emotion of horror? It is so, I believe, because Mr. Huxley, in his heart of hearts, felt it to be a story of horror.

Another subject with which Mr. Huxley was very much concerned, because he believed that it intensified loneliness by preventing real love and awareness, is that of free-love. His preoccupation with free-love was so pronounced that he has been referred to as the chronicler of

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14. In his Little Mexican...(Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1924) p.236-246.

disillusioned love-affairs. Of course, it is to these affairs and their enticing (to some) risqué note that he owes what popular appeal he has, and it could be that their preponderance[15] was a deliberate attempt to attract readers. But I do not think this is so. Rather he punctuated his works with these accounts because the subject of free-love was of vital interest to him.

Although the subject was of vital interest, Mr. Huxley presented these stories in that dispassionate and non-critical style which characterizes his first period. He quietly describes Mr. Quarles' escapades with Gladys, (Point Counter Point) and Gumbril's experiments with Rosie Shearwater, (Antic Hay) in a sustained-amoral narration, giving little indication that he believed them right or wrong.

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15. The following are illustrative, but by no means exhaustive:

Denis and Mary - Crome Yellow
Gumbril and Mrs. Shearwater - Antic Hay
Calamy and Miss Thriplow - Those Barren Leaves
Walter and Lucy - Point Counter Point
Lucy and other men - Ibid.
Burlap and women - Ibid.
Mr. Quarles, Sr. and Gladys - Ibid.

It might seem, then, that we have no grounds for saying that Mr. Huxley thought free-love was a factor in increasing the separateness of mankind, but there is a clue in the misery and the loneliness of the participants. There is Walter's misery, Moira's death, the Nun's deception and Doris' disgust. All the participants are unhappy. Never does Mr. Huxley endow these stories with the suggestion of worthwhileness as, for example, Louis Bloomfield does in A Night in Bombay; or with the feeling of beauty and tragedy, as Ernest Hemingway does in For Whom the Bell Tolls. All these people lead worthless unhappy lives.[16] However, although free love may spell unhappiness, this is not sufficient grounds for saying that it is a factor of general loneliness. Nor are we able to find such grounds in his amoral stories, but rather we must turn to direct statements.

In direct statements we find that Mr. Huxley's ideas on the subject progressed in keeping with his general

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16. Regarding these stories Mr. Krutch writes: "One will discover in [these] tragic farces the picture of a society which is at bottom in despair because, though it is more completely absorbed in the pursuits of love than in anything else, it has lost the sense of any ultimate importance inherent in the experience which preoccupies it." The Modern Temper (N.Y., Harcourt, 1929) p.97.

philosophy.[17] From the 1925 belief that free-love is boring he advanced to the belief that it is evil in that it prevents real love[18] and -- here we digress to his second period -- finally condemned it as a force working against non-attachment.[19] How even if we omit the digression and just consider Mr. Huxley's first and second attitudes -- first, that free-love is boring, and secondly that it prevents real love -- it is obvious that he was at first dissatisfied with it and later considered the habit a cause of loneliness. If we digress and substantiate the idea further with the support of his second-period attitude, it is equally obvious that anyone regarding such an action as augmenting unawareness, would consider it a feature of loneliness.

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17. "Emancipation is excellent, no doubt, in its way. But in the end it defeats its own object. People ask for freedom; but what they finally get turns out to be boredom. To those for whom love has become as obvious an affair as eating dinner, for whom there are no bashful mysteries, no reticences, no fancy-fostering concealments, but only plain speaking and the facts of nature -- how flat and stale the whole business must become!" Those Barren Leaves, p.39.

18. "Fashions in Love" in Do What You Will, p.138

19. "A measure of sexual continence is the pre-condition of awareness..." Ends and Means ... (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1937) p.315.

By digressing to the second period we have anticipated Mr. Huxley's later criticism of unawareness. But returning to his first period, we find that unawareness, an obvious factor in human loneliness, early occupied his attention. To illustrate: in an analysis of advertising psychology[20] he ascribes one man's success to his false beard.[21] In another instance he attributes the misfortunes of a man to the fact that he looks like a street Arab and wears a shiny blue-serge suit.[22]

The beclouding instincts are presented in the non-critical manner characteristic of Mr. Huxley's first period; but as the unhappiness in the pictures of fee-love suggests a later attitude of denunciation, so the ridicule with

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20. Huxley continually analyses and ridicules advertising, for example: Jesting Pilate (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1926) p.117-121; After Many a Summer (Toronto, Macmillan, 1939) p.5-11; "Writers and Readers" in The Olive Tree ... (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1936) p.3-7; "Advertisement" In On the Margin, p.127-133, and Music at Night, p.224.

21. Antic Hay, p.160-161.

22. Point Counter Point, p.61.

which these stories are treated points to a more positive attitude in the future. It was not with the biting satire of a Swift or a Voltaire that Mr. Huxley equipped Grumbril of Antic Hay with a "beaver" and made him intimidate a man who had duped millions into buying costly soap dishes, but with a quiet tongue-in-cheek ridicule. Nevertheless, light, bantering ridicule though it be, one feels that Mr. Huxley would soon regard the stupidity thus shown as a serious short-coming.

There is still a further human characteristic which may be singled out as one which fosters human separateness and about which Mr. Huxley writes in detail. This is intellectual and emotional hypocrisy.

About Mr. Huxley's attitude and treatment of hypocrisy the same statements may be made as in the instances of unawareness, free-love, selfishness and cowardice. We may repeat that he pays considerable attention to the subject and illustrate our remark by references to the full length portraits of the intellectual hypocrite, Philip Quarles, Sr.; of Burlap, the slimy editor of "The World"; and of Miss Thriplow, the novelist of Those Barren Leaves. We may state again that these portraits are in neutral stades -- nothing is black or white -- and refer to the cool, matter-of-fact

way in which Mr. Huxley paints the fatuous arrogance of Quarles, Sr., with his useless accumulation of steel filing cabinets, desks, dictaphones, typewriters and calculating machines and his cross-word puzzle efforts. But in spite of the non-critical, almost detached presentation, there is here, again, an emotional element which suggests Mr. Huxley is not entirely resigned to this failing.

This emotional element is not contained in the isolated details themselves, but in the cumulation of these details. It is the total effect of Burlap's actions -- his spiritual masturbations over his wife's death, his quoting of scriptures, his false prudishness, his spiritual talk and pious manner, his overworking and underpaying of employees (particularly the women who loved him) and his infidelity to his wife while she was living -- which brings home the utter despicableness of hypocrisy and suggests that Mr. Huxley would soon find this failing too intolerable to view it disinterestedly.

There is another interesting point in connection with Mr. Huxley's ideas of hypocrisy. There is a difference between the roles of Burlap and Miss Thriplow, a discussion of which necessitates a digression, but indicates very well a slight progress in Mr. Huxley's thought even within the first period.

Burlap, of 1928, is all that is hateful, slimy and contemptible. Yet in this man's mouth there are remarks which, in the light of the philosophy of the book, express Mr. Huxley's beliefs. Burlap professes to believe in "Life," and the central theme of this novel is that life, to be significant, must be lived fully with all parts of one's being. This is the creed of Rampion, the hero; it is this way of life which Quarles, Jr., the novelist, considers most satisfactory, and it is the creed in which Burlap professes to believe. Rampion preaches it and practises it; Quarles believes it but is congenitally incapable of living it, and Burlap simply spouts it.

Miss Thriplow, the hypocritical novelist, had been presented three years earlier. Just as Burlap parrots Rampion's philosophy, she expresses Mr. Huxley's later philosophy of love and compassion. She writes in her private diary:

> We should all be kind and good and unselfish if we always remembered -- remembered that other people are just as much alive and individual and complicated as we are, remembered that everybody needs love just as much, that the only visible reason we exist in the world is to love and be loved. 23

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23. Those Barren Leaves, p.80 & 81.

Taken out of its context, this might be considered a positive belief -- the germ of Mr. Propter's eighty-odd pages of philosophizing in After Many a Summer; but in its context it is cancelled by the egoism and insincerity of the lady novelist. I think, therefore, we can safely conclude that Aldous Huxley had no faith in love and understanding in 1925.

These two hypocrites show how Mr. Huxley's philosophy was growing, for Miss Thriplow (1925) is the only person expressing belief in the benefits of love in Those Barren Leaves and consequently this idea carries no weight: Burlap of Point Counter Point (1928) is only one of three expressing the philosophy of the fully and harmoniously developed individual; and therefore, while he himself may belie the theory, it may still stand, thanks to Rampion and Quarles.

Attitude Towards Futility

As a parallel to Mr. Huxley's attitude to loneliness in his first period is his attitude towards the futility of life. As in the former case, his attitude is one of acceptance, preoccupation and an undertone of distress. The acceptance is the feature which characterizes his first-period (if we may so term it for the sake of brevity) philosophy of meaninglessness: the preoccupation and dis-

tress are the features which anticipate his second-period philosophy of mysticism.

This attitude reveals itself, as in the case of loneliness, in both a general and particular manner, generally in his plots and particularly in his stories of futility in individual lives. Mr. Huxley's stories are reproductions of the patternless existence of his contemporaries: his Crome Yellow is the story of country house guests who pass their time in talking, dancing, eating, lovemaking and more talking; his Antic Hay is a witty and ironical representation of purgatory, where lost souls dash about, eat and drink and talk to no purpose, dancing the "antic hay" to Mr. Huxley's discordant tune of id as, mocking religion, science, romantic love, work, revolution, art and so on, as things no longer worthy of belief; his Those Barren Leaves has the same aphrodisiac setting as Crome Yellow and the guests' actions are as meaningless; his Point Counter Point is the same theme of weakness, lust, insincerity, aimlessness, diabolicism and unlicensed sexual relations. This is how he found life. This is what he describes without criticism. But nevertheless one cannot help feeling in spite of the cold, matter-of-fact narration, that this man, who once wished to believe

that life had no meaning,[24] was distressed by the preponderance of rudderless lives.

Mr. Huxley's uncritical, unsympathetic attitude, his preoccupation and the disturbed overtones are further shown by his personifications of aimlessness -- by Mrs. Myra Viveash, Mrs. Aldwinkle and Lucy Tantamount, for example. Mrs. Viveash is bored with life and tries to find relief in drinking, conversing, eating and driving around. She is a pathetic figure, but Mr. Huxley did not wish to give the impression that he sympathized. By continual reference to her expiring voice, her vacant eyes, and her permanently downward-turning smile, he firmly precludes sympathy. With almost diabolical glee, one might suppose, he justifies this purposeless, undirected life. We are led to believe that Mrs. Viveash was once very much in love with young Tony Lamb, that she was happy then and life seemed to have a meaning. Unfortunately, Tony was killed and she was never able to care for anyone else. I say as though with diabolical glee, for Mr. Huxley knows that this will rouse the reader's sympathies and that he is going to follow this justification immediately with the evil effects

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24. "I had motives," Mr. Huxley writes, "for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption." Ends and Means, p.270.

of her aimlessness -- her preventing Cumbril from going to visit Emily and thereby ending what might have meant happiness for the two young people. Thus, by a careful balancing of sadness and ignobleness, Mr. Huxley achieves an amoral presentation, which we may say represented his attitude. But her life is so very devoid of beauty and significance that we feel he must have been distressed by it.

With a similar balancing, this time of comments and characteristics which make her equally pathetic and ridiculous, Mr. Huxley presents Mrs. Aldwinkle, the hostess, of Those Barren Leaves. She is an old woman, striving to cultivate the "Great," always afraid that the secret of life will be spoken in her absence, but Mr. Huxley does not sympathize. Rather he describes her as:

> ...one of those large handsome, old-masterish women who look as though they had been built up from sections of two different people -- such broad shoulders they have, so Junonian a form: and growing from between the shoulders such a slender neck, such a small compact and childish head. [25]

and records Chelifer's first impression of her as a Chinese lantern.[26]

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25. Those Barren Leaves, p.14.

26. Ibid., p.88.

The vacuity of modern life continued to impress Mr. Huxley and in a later novel, Point Counter Point, this is presented under the name of Lucy Tantamount. Like her sisters, Mrs. Viveash and Mrs. Aldwinkle, she whirls from one night club to another, from one city to another, from one man to another. Speed is Lucy's god, and to travel fast one must not be encumbered with excess baggage -- which to her means personal relationships. She is harder, colder and more remorseless than her sisters, and from the portrayal of this character one feels that Mr. Huxley's sympathy towards such types has lessened, for, whereas in the earlier cases of both Mr. Viveash and Mrs. Aldwinkle, he stresses their loneliness and thereby justifies them in part, he presents no excuse for Lucy's way of life.

In this last illustration then, an illustration which comes from a work at the end of his first period, we see that Mr. Huxley's non-critical acceptance is giving way to impatience over certain facts. This progress from the non-sympathetic but non-critical treatment of Mrs. Viveash (1923) to the unsympathetic and impatient treatment of Lucy (1928), and the progress from the idea that free-love is boring to the belief that it prevents real love, shows that even within his first period -- that period in which, on the whole, his philosophy was nihilistic -- a development in his thought was taking place.

Emergence of a Moral Norm

This development could only start with the establishment of a moral norm, for, it is obvious, that one can have no positive philosophy until one can say certain things are right and others wrong. In his first period there is one thing which Mr. Huxley definitely rejects as useless and even evil. This is the philosophy of a "good time."

> Of all the various poisons which modern civilization, by a process of auto-intoxication, brews quietly up within its own bowels, [Mr. Huxley writes] few, it seems to me, are more deadly (while none appear more harmless) than that curious and appalling thing that is technically known as "pleasure." 27

He emphasizes this idea on several occasions by satirizing modern pleasure, as for example in Jesting Pilate where he writes:

> The joy of rushing about, of always being busy, of having no time to think, of being too rich to doubt. The joy of shouting and hantering, of dancing and for ever dancing to the noise of a savage music, of lustily singing ... The joy of loudly laughing and talking at the top of the voice about nothing. (For thought is barred in this City of Dreadful Joy and conversation is unknown).
> .....
> The joy of going to the movies and the theatre ... of trooping out on summer evenings with fifty thousand others to listen to concerts in the open air, of being always in a crowd, never alone. 28

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27. On the Margin, p.46.

28. Jesting Pilate, p.267.

And he concludes this enumeration of "Joys" with: "The truest patriots, it may be, are those who pray for a national calamity."[29]

Not only is Mr. Huxley's attitude to pleasure noteworthy in that it is an emphatic condemnation and thereby provides a clear example of the establishment of a moral norm, but, like his early treatment of those other human failings already mentioned, it forecasts the lines of his future philosophy by indirectly condemning unawareness which is a result of a life of "good times".[30] People cannot have their minds atrophied by modern "pleasures," by the radio, movies, gramophone and newspapers, and still be mentally alive. Nor can they possess what might be termed an emotional awareness, which is engendered by solitude, reflection and meditation, if they are always rushing around, always shouting and joking with crowds of people.

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29. Jesting Pilate, p.268.

30. For further examples see Do What You Will -- "Spinoza's Worm", p.87-91; "Baudelaire", p.201; "Holy Face", p.204, and "Revolutions" p.225.

The Passive Philosophy

This indirect criticism of unawareness might lead us to suspect that Mr. Huxley would attach much importance to awareness in his future thinking. This is so, but before this philosophy crystallized, his thoughts branched off into a sort of passive belief that the best one can do is to develop oneself as fully and harmoniously as possible.

The idea is conveyed chiefly in his criticism of certain mal-developed individuals such as scientists, in Point Counter Point and in Do What You Will, although a mock heroic treatment was used earlier in Antic Hay, where Gumbril, Jr., equipped with a "beaver" and greatcoat is termed the "Complete Man."

The most complete presentation of Mr. Huxley's belief in all-round development is Rampion. Through him, Mr. Huxley was trying to say that to know human truth you must look for it in the whole being: it is futile to strive to be more than a man, for that kills some vital part of one, and one becomes inhuman rather than superhuman. One must develop intellectually, emotionally and physically, for a man should be above all superlatively a man, and it is only through the full play of a proportionately- and well-developed mind, body and emotions that one comes to know human truths.

Here again we have the problem of discussing ideas which are presented not directly but in artistic form: for Rampion

is not quite convincing. The exponent of a full life should be a vital man, but, in my opinion, Rampion is a rather shadowy, bloodless speaking tube. However, this need not detract from the statement that Rampion was meant to convey Mr. Huxley's philosophy of the complete individual and we can further substantiate it by the remarks of Rampion's friends. For example, Philip Quarles thinks: «Mark Rampion's right. In practice, too; which makes it so much more impressive. In his art and his living, as well as in his theories,»[31] and writes in his diary: «...he himself lives in a more satisfactory way than anyone I know.»[32]

To establish the rightness of Rampion's philosophy Philip Quarles, the solitary intellectual, moves through the pages. He is the essence of what Rampion calls the non-humanly intellectual man, a man who has developed his intellect at the expense of his body, instincts and emotions. Rampion tells him that he has disparaged the human in the interests of the non-human, that the excessive development of any one part of a man kills some other part of him; that he is «whoring after abstractions» and consequently lacks balance, the prerequisite to successful living.

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31. Point Counter Point, p.232.

32. Ibid., p.378.

Rampion's criticism is justified by the failure Quarles makes of his married life. This solitary man, whose only thought on the unfortunate domestic plight of his brother-in-law, Walter Bidlake, is that it would make good material for a novel, and who, after a dog is killed in front of him, pursues a train of thoughts on morality, is incapable of personal human contacts. All ability to know people personally and intuitively and thereby to have satisfactory relations with them has been distilled out of him by his "whoring after abstractions."

Further proof of the validity of Rampion's philosophy and the fallacy of Philip's way of looking at things is afforded by the latter's belief in the soundness of his friend's philosophy and the realization of his own errors and shortcomings. When two opponents agree there is a good chance that their ideas are sound.[33] Philip writes in his diary that he now sees that the charm of a life devoted to things of the mind is its easiness. Through escape into erudition, scientific research or philosophy, one avoids the bewildering movements of life. It is a process of substituting simple abstractions for the living com-

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33. P. Quarles says this. Point Counter Point, p.378.

plexities of reality.[34] By avoiding reality, by being a spectator rather than an actor, the intellectualist thinks he has achieved freedom from sentimentality, from passion, and from impulse; but in reality he has only made complete and harmonious living impossible.

Rampion's success in conveying this philosophy is largely due to the aid of Quarles -- ironically enough -- who explains it most fully in his diary and whose own life shows the erroneousness of one-sided development.

This idea is further reinforced by the life of Lord Edward and his devotion to research on newts. This sub-plot is simply another demonstration of the thesis that a man interested solely in the abstractions of the mind cannot know human truths and consequently cannot lead a useful and significant life.

Lord Edward is a competent scientist, but totally withdrawn from this world. He is so withdrawn from life that he is not, as is P. Quarles, even aware that he is not living. Since his wife, the feared, unloved, malicious Lady Edwards, fully engaged with lion-hunting, and his daughter, Lucy, occupied with chasing after pleasure, ask

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34. Cf. "Spinoza's Worm" in his Do What You Will, p.70.

nothing from him in the way of human relationship, the situation has not the sadness of that of Philip and his loving, sensitive wife, Elinore. Because the consequences of this preoccupation are not so moving, the story does not carry the same weight as the Philip and Elinore plot, but it does, nevertheless, stand as a condemnation of the mal-developed individual.

It is in Point Counter Point with Rampion representing the positive aspect of this idea, and Quarles and Lord Tantamount standing as foils, that Mr. Huxley conveys his idea of the necessity of a full and well-balanced life. However, previously to this he had brilliantly condemned the one-sided scientist in Antic Hay.

Shearwater, the physiologist of Antic Hay is like Lord Edward Tantamount, completely absorbed and competent in his work, but he has not learned to live wholly. His one-sidedness is delightfully and effectively satirized in a few words by Coleman addressed in his presence to Mrs. Viveash: "Be respectful..." "This is a great man. He reads no papers... He does not know what a beaver is. And he lives for nothing but the kidneys."[35] A preoccupation with science has taken all Shearwater's time and he has not learnt that everything in life should be in proportion.

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35. Antic Hay, p. 73-74.

The story of his love life is very similar to that of Philip Quarles. He develops a feeling for another woman, but one feels that he will soon be back to his kidneys. His neglected wife, Rosie, entertains herself with her lovers. But there is, under the surface, a great difference, for Rosie has not the depth and fineness of character of Elinore and enjoys her affairs, whereas Elinore fights against hers.

For this reason, one of the unhappy results of preoccupation with one thing only -- an unsuccessful married life -- does not seem as tragic as in the case of Philip and Elinore, and, consequently, the error of such a life is not so keenly felt. However, Mr. Huxley drives home his point by using satire.

To escape the attractions of Mrs. Viveash, Shearwater concentrates with added zeal on his experiments, and Mr. Huxley, the brilliant artist, shows him to us at work. In a glass box, seated on a stationary bicycle, sits Shearwater. He is pedalling and sweating, sweating and pedalling mile after imaginary mile, to discover the effects of sweating. The scene itself is ludicrous and light enough for any reader; the meaning behind it is freighted with condemnation of a man who leads a disproportionate life.

To the almost delirious mind of Shearwater there appears an old man crying out "Proportion; proportion" and always as he pedals past Oxford, past Cambridge, past Dover, escaping into fatigue and wisdom, the face of Mrs. Viveash follows him. In the laboratory "the cock into which [he] had engrafted an ovary came out, not knowing whether to crow or cluck,"[36] and other deformed animals, all physical expressions of Shearwater's own violated nature, act with the same uncertainty, unable to be their true selves; a cock is no longer a cock, as the man on the bicycle is no longer a man.

This brilliant picture simply restates the truth that a man must be a man -- complete with mind, body and heart each developed to their highest degree, but none developed at the expense of the other. It has been splendidly expressed by Mr. Huxley. It is very readable: it is very clever, and it is done without personal bitterness. It is this sort of writing that ranks him as a satirist with Voltaire.

A year after Point Counter Point Mr. Huxley emphasized this idea in his publication Do What You Will. The theme of many of these essays[37] is the same: man must develop his

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36. Antic Hay, p.325.

37. Eg. "Spinoza's Worm," and "Francis and Grigory"

mind, instincts and body to the highest degree possible. Here, even a criticism of aspirations towards more than human knowledge is introduced as Mr. Huxley condemns the mystic way (which he was later to adopt) on the grounds that it consists of "convenient and consoling substitutes for the welter of immediate experience..."[38]

This belief in the complete and harmonious development of the whole being is the note on which Mr. Huxley's first period ended, but before the beginning of his second period he realized that this was not enough. His future philosophy was to follow lines forecast in his first-period attitude towards the loneliness and futility of twentieth-century lives. The preoccupation and distress which we have noted were to result in a philosophy which was aimed at correcting these ills. In place of selfishness, cowardice, lack of chastity, unawareness and hypocrisy, he was to suggest compassionate understanding and awareness; in short, liberation of the ego from time and craving. In place of the futility of existence and the philosophy of a "good time" he was to suggest liberation from the ego into God.

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38. "Spinoza's Worm," in his Do What You Will, p.69.

CHAPTER II

MR. HUXLEY'S SECOND PERIOD

Introduction

As emphasized continually throughout chapter I, the progress of Mr. Huxley's thought is expressed in his attitude to loneliness and futility. In the first period his attitude was, on the whole, one of acceptance, and preoccupation, with symptoms of distress. In the second period he remains preoccupied with loneliness and futility, but his distressed acceptance gives place to a hopeful and active program of reform. This programme begins with the idea that through brotherly love those evils which increase loneliness can be abolished. The diminishing of these evils allows the growth of non-attachment, and the non-attached man becomes the ideal man for Mr. Huxley. The non-attached way of life, he suggests, will alleviate the separateness between man and man. As a solution for the feeling that life is futile he advocates that the individual, once he becomes non-attached, should adopt a mystical religion.

This whole programme of brotherly love for a better life is based on the idea that human nature and especially the pernicious and all too prevalent failings previously discussed must be modified. As would be expected from the

first period, in which Mr. Huxley shows so much interest in the individual and so little interest in political problems, he does not look to large-scale social or political reforms, violent or non-violent, to make this world a better place, but to a reform in the hearts of man.[39] Therefore, since Mr. Huxley's philosophy both on the ethical and the mystical plane would be invalid if human nature could not be changed, we must examine his attitude towards this possibility.

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39. Huxley says this several times:
Eg.:"States and nations don't exist as such. There are only people... Nations won't change their national policies unless and until people change their private policies." Eyeless in Gaza (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1936) p.228.

"Social and economic reforms carried out with a view to eliminating occasions for bad behaviour. This is important but not nearly enough." Ibid., p.329.

"Co-ordinated housing wouldn't make her mother any less dirty, any less hopelessly at the mercy of an intoxicated body." Ibid., p.393.

"Construction from within, by training in proper use of the self -- training, simultaneously physical and mental. Construction, at the same time, from without, by means of social and economic arrangements devised in the light of a complete knowledge of the individual, and of the way in which the individual can modify himself." Ibid., p.582.

"It [good] can't be produced except by individuals. And, of course, if individuals don't know what good consists in, or don't wish to work for it, then it won't be manifested, however perfect the social machinery. After Many a Summer, p.244.

In his early works, Mr. Huxley, with his philosophy of nihilism, did not consider his fellow man worth improving and there seems to be no reference to the possibility of doing so. However, after he becomes a mystical moralist with an active program of reform which was intended to improve the lot of mankind, he quite frequently states that it is possible to change human nature. "...Unchanging human nature is not unchanging," he writes, "but can be, and very frequently has been, profoundly changed."[40] At certain periods in history certain "fashions" were regarded as inevitable, as being natural. For instance, he points out, in the early nineteenth century it was human nature to murder the lover of one's sister, or one's unfaithful wife. Now it is unnatural.[41] Why? Simply because man has been conditioned not to do so.

Not only is human nature malleable enough to be changed on the human plane, but it is possible even to transcend this plane, according to Mr. Huxley. ~~It is not necessary~~. It is not necessary for men to live on the human level

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40. Ends and Means, p.24.

41. Ibid., p.93.

all the time. Mr. Huxley says: "they have it in their power to climb out and up, on to the level of eternity."[42]

If human nature could not be changed, if people could not act differently than they do, then one would be justified in sitting back and watching the show, says Mr. Huxley.[43] However, because human nature is malleable, one has a reason and incentive for trying to reshape it in such a way as to improve life on this earth.

Mr. Huxley is well aware of the difficulties entailed in such a reform. The moralist knocks at the door, but it is not opened. People do not wish to be changed; for this means that they must be aware of the errors of their ways, in which case, as Propter says,[44] they must either continue doing wrong, or else change the entire pattern of their lives. To most people, such a right-about turn is even more unpleasant than cynicism and the majority prefer to continue as they are, in a fools' paradise. Furthermore, we have not a satisfactory medium by which to convince people -- language is inadequate and readers misinterpret a writer's meaning.[45]

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42. After Many a Summer, p.245
43. Eyeless in Gaza, p.45
44. After Many a Summer, p.92
45. Infra, p.95.

Yes, it is going to be infinitely hard to alter human nature. People who want to go on thinking about sex and money and "good times" will continue to do so. Greater knowledge and favourable circumstances do not necessarily mean inevitably and automatically good results.[46] However, human beings seem to need to believe in something,[47] and in that need they might accept some such philosophy as Mr. Huxley's.

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46. Eyeless in Gaza, p.490

47. Mr. Huxley is aware of this factor. He says, for example:

"They feel the need of being concentrated and directed. They want their lives to have some sense." After Many a Summer, p.154.

"Men can't live by bread alone, because they need to feel that their life has a point." Ibid., p.242.

Nationalistic propaganda was effective because it came at a time when people found Christianity intellectually unacceptable and yet still felt the need to worship. The Olive Tree, p.11-12.

"...scepticism is, for most human beings, intolerable. They must believe in something; they must have some sort of justificatory ideas." Music at Night, ..., p.116.

"... Those who ... accept the doctrine of absolute meaninglessness tend in a short time to become so much dissatisfied with their philosophy... that they will exchange it for any dogma, however manifestly nonsensical, which restores meaning if only to a part of the universe." Ends and Means, p.275.

Others likewise express this same opinion, for example:

"Nature abhors a vacuum no less in the spiritual than in the physical realm, and religious substitutes consequently spring up to take the place of religion. C.E.M. Joad, Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics (Lond., Gollancz, 1938) p.610.

Having established Mr. Huxley's belief in the possibility of changing the hearts of individuals, we may now continue with his plan for changing human nature, and, consequently, life as a whole. This plan is based on the Christian principle of brotherly love; for it is this love which, in Mr. Huxley's opinion, will alleviate those ills of selfishness, unawareness, cowardice, and superficiality of feeling which troubled him in his youth.

Love plays a considerable part in the philosophy of mysticism and since this is the first detailed mention of Mr. Huxley's positive mystical philosophy it might be well to pause here and discuss Mr. Huxley as a mystic.

First let us assemble the salient points of mysticism. A mystic is generally agreed to be one who has "an overwhelming consciousness of God and his own soul."[48] The mystic way is a process of sublimation, frequently said to take place in three stages, called "Beginner," "Proficient," and "Perfect." In the first or ethical step the soul develops its virtues through general purification and self-discipline,

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48. E. Underhill, The Essentials of Mysticism (Lond., Dent, 1920) p.2.

49. H.C.White says: "...three qualities we may note in all the typical mystics: first, an intense and immediate consciousness of spiritual reality; second, an extraordinary faculty of spiritual concentration; and third, great ethical strenuousness." The Mysticism of Wm. Blake (Madison, Univ. of Wisconsin, 1927) p.57. This definition leads to the same conclusion we are going to arrive at -- Mr. Huxley had great ethical strenuousness, but he did not possess great spiritual concentration or an intense consciousness of spiritual reality.

and at the same time develops detachment. The second stage is the mental one of concentrating all the faculties -- will, intellect and feeling -- which have been developed in the best possible way in the first stage upon the One. The final or unitive stage, where the soul merges with this One, is the goal of mysticism.

With these points in mind I would say that Mr. Huxley is not a mystic but that his works are mystical in principle. He does not seem to have an overwhelming consciousness of God, nor when describing the soul's union with the One does he give the impression of having personally undergone such an experience. Rather, he seems to have an overwhelming consciousness of the unhappy state of life on earth. However, there is a close resemblance between his ideas and that of the three mystical stages, particularly the first stage, in which the physical and ethical requisites of the mystic are emphasized. Because of this close similarity between his philosophy and mysticism we hear it said that Huxley has become a mystic, but it should be borne in mind, that, although his principles resemble those of a mystic, he is not necessarily a mystic -- rather he is a mystical philosopher.[50]

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50. Cf. "... a mystic philosopher and a mystic may have much the same philosophy, or intellectual body of conceptions, about God and man and the universe, but where a philosopher rests with theory, the mystic goes on into a practical realization." H.C.White, The Mysticism of William Blake, p.49.

Having pointed out the relation between Mr. Huxley's philosophy and mysticism, let us return to his attitude towards love as the basic weapon by which the diverse causes of separateness may be removed.

Love, whether it be of one's fellow man, beauty, nature or of the Absolute Itself, has always been considered as one of the accredited vehicles by which the mystic path may be travelled.[51] In modern times, judging from the works of recent writers on mysticism and those of novelists, it seems that the love of one's fellow man is the favoured way. It is Mr. Huxley's preference.

Of the mystical aspect of nature Mr. Huxley has little to say; of beauty, even less. There are several occasions where we might look at his attitude towards nature: his essay «Man and Nature» for example. Here the only pertinent information we find is that: «most nature poets unjustifiably moralize and humanize the object of their worship,[52]» and that «nature

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51. To cite a few examples from English mystical writers: Shelley, Spenser, Keats and Rossetti worshipped beauty; Browning and Blake loved their fellow man; Vaughan and Wordsworth deified nature, and Thomson and Crashaw praised God.

52. In his Texts and Pretexts (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1932) p.47-64.

is incredibly foreign to us."[53] Or again there is the love of birds expressed by Brian Foxe and Joan Thursley in Eyeless in Gaza and by Gumbril, Sr., in Antic Hay. None of these instances however show any reverence of nature. The same may be said of his essay "The Country,"[54] which is merely an exposition of the psychological fact that the worse the climate in which a man lives, the greater his enthusiasm for the country. To his attitude towards beauty, although Mr. Huxley was an art critic at one time, I can recall no references;[55] which at least means that he paid it practically no attention. There are then, no indications that he considered love of beauty or nature to be a mystical way.

Nor does Mr. Huxley believe in an anthropomorphic God. The reasons for his lack of pure adoration of the Absolute are both general and particular. In medieval times, when it chiefly flourished, this adoration was the passionate love of a loving God (of necessity anthropomorphic); it was the type of emotion

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53. Op.cit., p.64.

54. In his Along the Road...(Lond.,Chatto & Windus, 1925) p.54-63.

55. It is true that he discusses painting from a technical point of view. He mentions the perspective, the quality of the flesh, and so on, in such novels as Crome Yellow and Point Counter Point, but that concerns art, and not the spiritual significance of beauty.

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described again in the seventeenth century by Crashaw and Herbert. During the Middle Ages it often took the form of a mystical marriage of a nun to Christ,[56] or of a monk's soul (which was considered feminine) to Christ. In the secular world, at least, this idea of a mystic marriage could have few supporters nowadays. Belief in an all-seeing, all-loving, all-powerful God, who does not permit even a sparrow to fall to the ground without his will, seems to have greatly lessened.

For these general reasons Mr. Huxley's mysticism would not be based on the pure adoration of an anthropomorphic God. It is true that he might have followed Plotinus and many of the greatest mystics in loving a non-anthropomorphic Absolute, but this is a harder way, which leaves man everything to do for himself. There is no One saying "Come unto me all that labour." The One needs nothing, and desires nothing. Secondly, Mr. Huxley is always interested mainly in the betterment of life on this earth, and it is doubtful whether the love of an abstract One would be as efficacious as the love of one's fellow man.

Not only does Mr. Huxley consider, as do many of his contemporaries, that there is no reason to believe in an

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56. Catherine of Sǿiena was the mystic bride par excellence.

anthropomorphic God,[57] but he thinks that such a conception often has evil results. These detrimental effects he explains fully in *Ends and Means*.[58] No form of religious self-education, he says, produces so much energy as devotion to a personal deity, a mortal or divine hero. This energy is good provided it is well directed (as with the energy produced from chastity) but, judging from history, devotion to a personal deity does not give a satisfactory direction to the energy produced, for the deity must be absolutely perfect or else one imitates some evils.

In the secular world, Huxley continues, a living hero will be corrupted by the worship of his contemporaries. If he is no longer alive, the defects and limitations of even the best person are augmented by the defects and limitations of his biographers. Hence the result is the same -- one is not worshipping and imitating an absolutely perfect being.

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57. In an early work, *Jesting Pilate*, Huxley notes that the belief in a personal God is probably unfounded. Because we are persons ourselves we attribute personal qualities to God. Furthermore, only the greatest religious geniuses have any knowledge of the truth about God and this knowledge is an elusive, hardly communicable kind. Of these religious geniuses, Buddha was, according to Huxley, the most intellectually powerful, and he rejected the idea of a personal God. p. 193-4.

58. p. 234-240.

Where a personal God is the deity worshipped the effect is similar; for although theologians have insisted that God is an absolutely perfect person, the human mind can only think of Him as resembling a human being. Hence God's characteristics of jealousy and hatred and the justification people find for being jealous and hating. This imitation of something not perfect leads to evil ends.

Nor is this the only reason Mr. Huxley is opposed to the anthropomorphic conception of God. What he looked for was a way of life which would eliminate certain characteristics which are extensions of the individual ego and he considers that belief in a personal God increases one's ego and thereby is inimical to his purpose. He writes: «It [anthropomorphic conception of God] has also led to that enormous over-valuation of the individual ego, which is so characteristic of Western popular philosophy.»[59]

In short: «Belief in a personal God has released an enormous amount of energy directed towards good ends; but it has probably released an equal amount of energy directed towards ends that were silly, or mad, or downright evil.»[60]

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59. Ends and Means, p.240.

60. Loc. cit.

Besides being what seems the logical attitude of a twentieth-century man seeking a correction for various forms of self-interest, a non-anthropomorphic conception of God is, in Mr. Huxley's view, that held by the greatest mystics.

> "At all times and in every part of the world, [he writes,] mystics of the first order have always agreed that this ultimate reality, apprehended in the process of meditation, is essentially impersonal. This direct intuition of an impersonal spiritual reality, underlying all being, is in accord with the findings of the majority of the world's philosophers. 61

Pure adoration of the Absolute being, it would seem, nearly impossible for a twentieth-century man as well as personally undesirable to Mr. Huxley, he advocates turning the affections to one's fellowman, and emphasizes the virtues of helpfulness, tolerance, compassion and understanding. In reality, he turned to the Gospel of Christ, the first Christian mystic -- to His Golden Rule. It is brotherly love that he hopes will abolish the prevalent loneliness of man, foster courage, increase awareness, eliminate hypocrisy and selfishness: in short, counter those human weaknesses which in his opinion are the most serious.

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61. Ends and Means, p.293-4.

This is Mr. Huxley's first attitude to love: love is an active moral force, the purpose of which is to create greater unity between man and man. This is his answer to the problem of the loneliness of life. Later, love plays a role in his solution to the feeling of futility -- mysticism -- for it is a path by which the mystic may travel to union with the Absolute. For the sake of clarity these two solutions, termed the ethical and the spiritual, will be discussed separately, but it must be borne in mind that there is a close interrelationship between the two, for the same love that is an end in itself in the ethical realm, is a means to the end in the spiritual realm.

The Answer to the Problem of Loneliness

The ethical aspect of love is presented chiefly in[62] Eyeless in Gaza and After Many a Summer. In Eyeless it is an end in itself, in After Many a Summer, although it is a means to an end, it still has an ethical purpose.

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62. Mr. Huxley makes a few references to love elsewhere. With Browning's attitude, he writes: "Love, the last defence against old age -- the last, and for those whose good fortune it is to have some one person to care for, or who have learned the infinitely difficult art of loving all their neighbours, the best. For it can survive, in many cases, even the ruin of bodily and mental power, can break through the prevailing insentience and apathy like a flame through ashes." "Old Age," in his Texts and Pretexts, p.153. Again he writes: "In a world where most people had been taught to love their fellows there would be no difficulty in reconciling the claims of Grace with those of Justice, of universality with favouritism." "On Grace" in his Music at Night, p.97.

In Eyeless in Gaza Mr. Huxley praises love as an active moral force of inestimable value, for it not only develops the ability to do good by generating patience, tolerance, awareness, and intelligence, but creates the will to do good. Like Plotinus and other mystics, Anthony Beavis writes in his diary: "Indifference is a form of sloth and sloth in its turn is one of the symptoms of lovelessness."[63] Again, Anthony restates this idea and expresses the opinion that love generates virtues when he writes:

> Love is the best policy. The best not only in regard to those loved, but also in regard to the one who loves. For love is self-energising. Produces the means whereby its policy can be carried out. In order to go on loving, one needs patience, courage, endurance. But the process of loving generates these means to its own continuance. Love gains because, for the sake of that which is loved, the lover is patient and brave. 64

Love is not only self-energising, but it is also self-creating and Anthony writes: "...if you had enough love and goodness, you could be sure of evoking some measure of answering love and goodness from almost everyone you came in contact with..."[65]

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63. Eyeless in Gaza, p.15.

64. Ibid.,p.501-2.

65. Ibid.,p.171 .

This idea of Anthony's is given considerable prominence in Eyeless in Gaza for it is reinforced by the preachings of Miller. Miller rebukes Mark Straithe's bragging about his forcible subdual of some Indians, whom he regards in the same light as he would his bugs. He is proud of being an entomologist, but Miller is an anthropologist -- he calls a man a man, not a bug, and proceeds to treat him as a man, and he says if you

> go among a suspicious, badly treated, savage people; go unarmed, with your hands open... Go with the persistent and obstinate intention of doing them some good -- curing their sick, for example. I don't care how bitter their grievance against white men may be, in the end, if you're given time enough to make your intentions clear, they'll accept you as a friend, they'll be human beings treating you as a human being. 66

Love, then, is extolled in Eyeless in Gaza as a power which produces more love, which generates the greatest human virtues -- courage, compassion, understanding, sympathy -- and ~~which~~ impels men to practise these virtues. However Mr. Huxley is a twentieth-century moralist and these ideas cannot be set forth dogmatically; cannot be set forth, for example, without asking if there may not be times when love

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66. Eyeless in Gaza, p.577.

does not seem to beget love, and without drawing our attention to the fact that love in its narrower aspects can beget evil desires as well as virtues. The relationship of the sincere and loving Brian Foxe to the pusillanimous and cowardly young Anthony Beavis is an illustration in point. Foxe was kind to Anthony on his return to the boarding school from his mother's funeral. He alone had enough love in his heart, and therefore sufficient intelligence and courage to show this kindness. Yet, even during those days, Anthony had a certain feeling of hatred for him at times; and later, when they are young men, Anthony is the indirect cause of his friend's suicide. Love apparently did not beget love; for if it had, Anthony would not have acted as an egoistical, despicable coward in the whole affair which resulted in Brian's death.

We have said love apparently did not beget love, but it might be more correct to say that love apparently did not foster love quickly, for who can say that after Brian's death his love did not influence Anthony, that it was not a factor in bringing him to that earthly salvation which he later achieved?

In Eyeless in Gaza Mr. Huxley is also careful to point out that not all love is good. The kindly, Christian Mrs. Foxe has much love in her heart, but unfortunately this

love developed a strong possessive element. She wished to keep her beloved son for herself, and in spite of her smiling soft-voiced assurances that she liked the girl he wished to marry and in spite of her offer of money, it was she who encouraged him in his idea that he should first work and prove himself worthy of his fiancée. Therefore, she was, in part at least, instrumental in the unhappiness of two people.

In spite of the realization that love may not produce love quickly and that it can have in it elements of evil, Mr. Huxley concludes Eyeless in Gaza with the idea that unity is the chief end of life, and that its achievement must begin with the life-long and infinitely difficult art of loving people. In the words of the youthful, stammering Brain "the point was caring for people, caring until it hurt."[67]

If we pause here and look back on his works to date, we shall recall that on the negative side, so to speak, all the human failings which distressed Mr. Huxley, all the hypocrisy, selfishness, cowardice and unawareness, are characteristics which make for disunity. This idea of disparateness between man and man was the force which led him to seek a solution, and it seems logical that the virtue most necessary to produce

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67. Eyeless in Gaza, p.73.

a better way of life, is that which will most readily diminish the causes of disunity , in other words, love.

Between the writing of Eyeless in Gaza and After Many a Summer Mr. Huxley's ideas have advanced from being primarily ethical to being primarily mystical. In Eyeless good is whatever makes for unity and this unity is chiefly between man and man. In After Many a Summer good is whatever makes for liberation into union with God. How then does this new emphasis affect his attitude towards love?

The role of love remains the same: it should still dispel human failings such as selfishness, lust, anger and fear, and better the human level (as Mr. Huxley terms it). The purpose of love, however, is changed: it must not only achieve unity among men, but, by liberating man from the ego, it should enable him to have union with the Absolute. This latter aspect will be discussed in the next section. Here we must examine Mr. Huxley's concept of the ethical value of love.

In After Many a Summer Mr. Huxley's views on love are presented in Propter -- in his deeds (the role of love) rather than in his words (the purpose of love). Apart from the statement that we can have all the virtues except the two that really matter, understanding and compassion, and yet be a bad man,[68]

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68. After Many a Summer, p.115.

no direct praise seems to be given to love. Yet Propter is the living example: Propter with his efforts to help Hansen, the poor devil from Kansas, and many like him, with his interest and kindliness towards Pete Boone, his toleration of the mocking Jeremy, his sympathy and understanding of poor Jo whose pituitary gland is faulty, clearly states the case for love as a medium by which life on earth may be made happier and better.

Anthony Beavis is the man who theorizes on love; Propter is the man who loves. In the latter those failings of egoism, cowardice and unawareness of which Mr. Huxley disapproved, have been supplanted by the virtues of charity, courage, awareness, generosity and sympathy engendered by love.

It follows, therefore, that since these virtues are, in Mr. Huxley's opinion, those of an ideal man, and since they are those of a non-attached individual, we can expect his ideal man to be non-attached. This is the case, and in Ends and Means we read:

> The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possessions. Non-attached to the objects of these various desires. Non-attached to his anger and hatred, non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, social position. Non-attached even to science, art, speculation, philanthropy. 69

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69. Ends and Means, p.3-4.

Propter is the artistic restatement of this quotation. We have already seen that he shows the value to others of the practice of love; but for a complete picture of the non-attached man we must see him as a whole, see his appearance, actions, personality and philosophy.

To Mr. Huxley's eyes the ideal man has serenity, sympathy, tolerance, understanding and power. Of Mr. Propter's appearance he writes that he had

> ...a subtle face, in which there were the signs of sensibility and intelligence as well as of power, of a gentle and humorous serenity no less than of energy and strength. 70

Nor is this man a wizened, bloodless philosopher. He radiates life -- in fact, more life than anyone else, according to Pete. He is disinterestedly friendly, serene and powerful, gentle and strong and has a power and warmth of personality.

It is this personality which makes him beloved by such opposites as Jo Stoyte, the fat boy at school, whom Propter alone did not tease, and Jo's coloured chauffeur who, while quite incapable of understanding his philosophizing, yet cheerfully stops on the road to give him a lift.

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70. After Many a Summer, p.18.

Nor is Propter a philosopher living in the clouds. As we have seen, he has practical designs for ameliorating the lot of mankind. He is building clean cabins for the transient harvesters; he is experimenting with an electric generator so that men may be more independent of large cities.

Propter not only lives the life of a non-attached individual but preaches it verbally. He meditates aloud, asks questions, answers questions and discusses his philosophy at length, all the time being aware of its inherent difficulties in the way of workableness. From all this talking we get a fairly complete picture of Mr. Huxley's philosophy in 1939.

Briefly it is this: he looks upon life as consisting of three levels -- the animal level, the human level and the spiritual level. On the animal level good may be accomplished by being the best animal possible. In <u>After Many a Summer</u> Mr. Huxley has little to say about this level, although he does point out that anger, fear and desire interfere with the proper functioning of the body and are therefore evil,[71] but the inclusion of this first level in <u>After Many a Summer</u> is of particular importance in retracing the logical and consistent development of Mr. Huxley's thought.

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71. <u>After Many a Summer</u>, p.120.

We have seen how Mr. Huxley's first period concluded, in Point Counter Point and several of his essays in Do What You Will, with the idea that a man should develop his potentialities as fully and harmoniously as possible and how at the beginning of his second period, this idea seemed to have been supplanted by a philosophy of love. Also it will be recalled that in the introductory remarks we said that, after this emphasis on the role of love, Mr. Huxley added to his concept of love the idea of the complete individual and thus formed the ideal of the non-attached man. In the enumeration of these three levels we find the justification for this contention, for as this is the lowest level, so it is the prerequisite level to Mr. Huxley's latest ideas.

A man may not transcend his personality until he has become a person, Mr. Huxley believes.[72] As in life, then, one must first of all be a person, neither subhuman nor dehuman but superlatively a human being, before one can submerge one's personality into a greater personality, so in Mr. Huxley's writings the earliest emphasis is first on the development of all man's potentialities and then on the transcending of this

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72. Ends and Means, p.325.

thoroughly developed personality.[73]

This first level is where "good consists as the proper function of the organism in accordance with the laws of its own being."[74] The second level is the human one, where, Mr. Huxley believes, love plays its great role of diverting evil tendencies from one channel to a less disastrous channel, of supplanting all that which intensifies the ego -- nationalism, pride, self-sacrifice and so on, with the only two important, according to Mr. Huxley, virtues of understanding and compassion.[75]

The third or spiritual level is where good "exists as the experience of eternity, as the transcendence of personality, the extension of consciousness beyond the limits imposed by the ego."[76] This brings us to the spiritual aspect of Mr. Huxley's

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73. E. Underhill writes: " ... an impoverished or one-sided character was never yet found capable of fully developed and fruitful mysticism." The Essentials of Mysticism, p.266. Admittedly we are talking about the human level which is not a matter of transcending personality, but it is only the non-attached man who is capable of mysticism, and, therefore, it follows that only a fully developed individual is capable of non-attachment. Mr. Huxley unfortunately makes no direct comment on this logical deduction.

74. After Many a Summer, p.120.

75. Ibid., p.118.

76. Ibid., p.120.

philosophy which will be discussed later. At present we are primarily concerned with his ethical conceptions.

Propter's philosophy and his virtues are those Mr. Huxley wishes each and every individual to possess. This is the touchstone for the whole of his critical and constructive programme of reform. What aids and what hinders this non-attachment is Mr. Huxley's main concern and it is on this basis that war, social reform, religion, industrial progress, education, and so on, are finally judged. Let us consider some of them.

Education

Modern educational institutions are not producing or even doing their best to turn out complete men, not to mention non-attached men. On these grounds Mr. Huxley criticizes them and makes suggestions for their improvement.

Light, satirical comments are passed on education in Brave New World[77]; the scientific student of literature is ridiculed in Proper Studies[78]; academic education is deplored by Rampion in

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77. Brave New World (Garden City, N.Y., Sun Dial Press, 1932) p.2 & 3.

78. "If the whole business were not so stupidly boring, one would laugh. For the scientific student of literature is one of the most comical figures of our day." Proper Studies (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1927) p.135.

Point Counter Point[79]; examinations are condemned in The Olive Tree[80], and so on through Mr. Huxley's works, but the definite and comprehensive statement of his attitude towards modern education is given in Ends and Means[81]. Here he considers education from the four points of view of character, mental, emotional and physical training.

From the point of view of character training Mr. Huxley feels that primary and secondary education prepare people either for domination or subordination: either by strict rules they are broken in will and spirit and become too submissive; or, as compression results in combustion, they react against this severe discipline and become domineering. In either case they have not been educated for freedom, intelligence, responsibility and voluntary cooperation, and are the militarists and canon fodder respectively of warring states.

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79. Rampion talking about educating his children says he will do as little as he can about it. "Unfortunately, they have to go to school. I only hope they won't learn too much. It'd be really awful if they emerged as little professors stuffed with knowledge, trotting out their smart little abstract generalizations. They probably will... They'll be professors, the little devils. They'll be horrid little scientists... Horrid little brains that do their best to suppress the accompanying hearts and bowels." Point Counter Point, p.471.

80. "Literature and Examinations" in The Olive Tree, p. 108-116.

81. "Education" in Ends and Means, p.177-224.

Mentally the results of both technical and academic education are deplorable, for neither aids a man in complete living. The intellectual and physical life of man must be correlated.

Emotions must be developed, harmonized and balanced by education. For the emotional training of a non-attached man Mr. Huxley suggests playing instruments, taking part in theatricals and reading literature whose heroes and heroines are non-attached. It is, of course, imperative that the non-attached man be self-sufficient, and Mr. Huxley makes suggestions for teaching children to rely on their own spiritual resources. They must be taught to study, to do things and to make things -- in short to entertain themselves.[82]

Awareness, one of the chief characteristics of the non-attached man, must be cultivated. Children must be taught to question what they hear, to analyze metaphors, personifications and abstractions such as "nation". They should also learn to dissociate ideas which clever advertizers and propagandists put before them -- such as voluptuous females and soap.[83]

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82. Cf. Huxley's criticism of the modern "good time", supra, p.23-24.

83. Supra, p.14-15.

Non-attachment, thinks Mr. Huxley, contrary to the early mystics, is difficult if the person has a maladjusted body.[84] If the body gives pain, then one tends to think too much about it, and, furthermore, it affects the mind. Mr. Huxley says: "Where the body is maladjusted and under strain, the mind's relations, sensory, emotional, intellectual, conative, with

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84. While the Christian idea of God the Father revealing Himself in the human form tended to sanctify the body and to abolish the Eastern teaching of the mortification of the flesh, yet asceticism is one of the vehicles by which the early Christians travelled the mystic path.

The purpose of this asceticism was to subdue all fleshly lusts, all earthly love, ambition, desires and cravings, in order that a man might be free of temporal entrammellings and thus, with purified senses, be led to a mystic union with Christ: it was a means to a detached life.

Although this disinterested way of life is still considered requisite to the mystic way of life, it is now believed that perfect detachment of the will and senses may be achieved without the aid of physical expedients.

(Modern writers on mysticism, such as A.E. Waite, Lamps of Western Mysticism (Lond., Knopf,1923) p.26, and E.Underhill, The Essentials of Mysticism, p.14, while considering mortification of the flesh unnecessary, stress the necessity of an initial detachment from things of the senses.)

These men, however, unlike a large number of their predecessors are not immured. Modern examples of mediaeval contempt for the body are found rather within convents and monasteries, as testified, for example, in the case of St. Thérèse, the French nun who died in 1897 . It is told of her that her life was a series of self-denials and mortifications, both self-inflicted and otherwise. It was early noticed that she had exceptional gifts and even after she had contracted tuberculosis the prioress insisted that she attend the night office, saying: "Une âme de cette trempe, ne doit pas être traitée comme une enfant, les despenses ne sont pas faites pour elle. Laissez-la, Dieu la soutient." E.Underhill, The Essentials of Mysticism, p. 209.

external reality are likely to be unsatisfactory,"[85] and the same applies in the case of internal reality. Again only a healthy body can be aware. A good physical education is, therefore, necessary for the non-attached man.[86]

Sport, a type of physical education, makes another contribution to the development of the ideal individual, Mr. Huxley believes, if it is well used, for He thinks that it can teach endurance and courage, a sense of fair play and a respect for rules, coordinated effort and the subordination of personal interests to group interests -- all highly desirable qualities for the non-attached man.

Mr. Huxley has set forth a detailed and comprehensive list of educational requirements for the training of his non-attached individual and yet he is careful to note that a good education alone will not cure our ills. He writes:

> Good education will be fully effective only when there are good social conditions and, among individuals, good beliefs and feelings; but social conditions, and the beliefs and feelings of individuals will not be altogether satisfactory until there is good education. 87

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85. Ends and Means, p.220.

86. It is interesting to note that Mr. Huxley's grandfather, who advocated intellectual training for the working class, stressed the importance of physical training and drill. C.Ayres, Huxley (N.Y., Norton, 1932) p.144.

87. Ends and Means, p.180.

Industrial and Mechanical Progress

Present day industrial and mechanical progress Mr. Huxley regards as undoubtedly an evil,[88] for he believes that it ultimately leads to war. He writes: "Industrial progress means overproduction, means the need for getting new markets, means international rivalry, means war."[89] Or, if it does not lead to overproduction it will lead to war in another way, for it

> means more specialization and standardization of work, means more ready-made and unindividual amusements, means diminution of initiative and creativeness, means more intellectualism and progressive atrophy of all the vital and fundamental things in human nature, means increased boredom and restlessness, means finally a kind of individual madness that can only result in social revolution.[90]

War, it will be agreed, is nowadays considered an evil, except by Fascist's states, which believe that war is laudable because it enables the individual to develop and display his courage and will to power. Mr. Huxley would no doubt acquiesce in the general attitude of people in democratic countries, but he has a particular reason for disapproving of war: he believes violence begets violence and violence is hostile to the development of the non-attached man, whose basic virtues must be

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88. Do What You Will, p.86.

89. Point Counter Point, p.357.

90. Loc. cit.

compassion and understanding.[91]

By way of forestalling the evil result of industrialism, Mr. Huxley suggests that, if they must, men may work "as idiots and machines for eight hours out of every twenty-four and real human beings for the rest."[92] This idea, however, was expressed during his complete-human-being phase and, unfortunately, he seems to make no suggestions in later works. However, in so far as a fully and harmoniously developed personality is a prerequisite to a liberated personality, we may safely conclude that his recommendation is in keeping with the furtherance of a philosophy of non-attachment.

War

Time and again Mr. Huxley indicates emphatically that amelioration of social conditions must be achieved in the main through the modification of the individual's feelings, ideas and wishes rather than through direct political or social legislation[93].

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91. For a further discussion of Mr. Huxley's attitude to war see below.

92. Point Counter Point, p.357.

93. Supra, p.34.

One of the reasons for this contention is war, for "every road towards a better state of society," writes Mr. Huxley, "is blocked sooner or later, by war, by threats of war, by preparations of war."[94] And the only way, in his opinion, to eliminate war is to attack its causes which, fundamentally, are psychological. They reside in the will, feelings, opinions and prejudices of the people, and until the latter are changed there will be no hope for permanent peace, and consequently no hope for a better society.

The logical and complete expression of this idea is found in the chapter entitled "War" in Mr. Huxley's Ends and Means. Here in straight-forward essay style he enumerates the psychological, political and economic causes of war; he discusses the existing methods of war prevention, and suggests methods of curing the war habit.

There are two main psychological causes for war: dissatisfaction or boredom with their work, which makes people welcome the excitement and feeling of purpose in life which war brings; and Nationalism, a false sort of religion, which teaches its followers that they are men and women superior to those of other races. Furthermore, Nationalism, whose ethics of international

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94. Ends and Means p.89.

policy are approximately those of gangsters and swindlers, gives scope for and sanction to those anti-social impulses for the most part so well repressed in the average citizen.

It is these two causes which must be eliminated, for unless they are, the secondary causes, armament manufacture, national desire for glory, territory, resources and markets, cannot be removed. By way of remedies, Mr. Huxley briefly suggests that the principle of self-government be tried in business and industires and that a change of duties within the same company be tried in order to counteract boredom.

Nationalism, Mr. Huxley admits, breeds courage, fortitude and temperance, but it also breeds hatred, pride and intolerance, which are the antithesis of the essential and primary virtues of love and awareness. Nationalism must be displaced by a different religion, by one that inculcates love and awareness.[95]

Once this philosophy has been accepted, once human will and feeling, human convictions, prejudices and opinions have been changed, then people will desire and will use the machinery for peaceful change, such as peaceful arbitration, which is now ready but unused because of the fundamental psychological reason that people still hate and fear their fellow man, still are greedy, contemptuous and vain.

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95. For further criticism of Nationalist see p. 88

Social Reform in General

As previously stated, Mr. Huxley places his highest hopes for the betterment of life in the improvement of the individual.[96] However, he also believes that to a certain extent social reforms will make their contribution, for there is a complex interrelationship of action and reaction between the two.

In acknowledging the usefulness (or possible usefulness) of reform, Mr. Huxley admits only one type of reform -- that of non-violence.[97] For violent reform he has nothing but condemnation. Its fruits, he believes, can only be suspicion, resentment and more violence. Reform by violence can have good results only if it is followed by acts of justice and good-will; and if violence has been used these compensatory acts of non-violence are most difficult to perform. In short: " ... the chances are," he writes, "that any reform which requires violence for its imposition will not only fail to produce the good results anticipated, but will actually make matters worse than they were before."[98]

Social reforms without violence are efficacious chiefly as preventive ethics -- they prohibit opportunities for individuals to behave in an excessively attached way. For example, fewer

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96. Supra, p. 34.

97. Supra, p. 63-65.

98. Ends and Means, p.28.

murders have been committed since the legislation restricting the sale and forbidding the carrying of firearms. Although social reforms of a non-violent nature can remove opportunities for wrong doing, yet they may simply redirect evil tendencies from one outlet to another. The wickedness is still there; it merely expresses itself through another channel. The change is not fundamental, and therefore not adequate.[99]

Socially, then, all reforms and movements, in so far as they aid non-attachment, are to be praised, and all existing conditions which are hostile to it should be changed.

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We now have Mr. Huxley's complete answer to his problem of loneliness of individuals -- non-attachment -- and since non-attachment is not only an end in itself, but a means to the mystic end, it affords an indication of Mr. Huxley's answer to futile philosophies. But before we examine this latter solution, it might be well to study the character of Anthony Beavis, hero of Eyeless in Gaza, as a means of understanding more clearly the evolution of Mr. Huxley's thoughts up to the time when he felt he had a method for dispelling the isolation of individuals.

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99. Eyeless in Gaza, p.119f.

Propter is Mr. Huxley's expression of complete non-attachment, as Rampion is his early expression (albeit artistically imperfect) of the complete development of man's potentialities. These two heroes represent landmarks in the development of his thought; Rampion, standing for the emergence of a positive philosophy and the prerequisite of Mr. Huxley's final solution, and Propter, expressing that solution. Anthony Beavis is the link between these two men. He resembles Rampion in his early belief in the theory of the complete individual and he resembles Propter in his later belief in the supreme value of love.

Anthony not only provides a link between Rampion and Propter in the way we have stated, but shows us in his thoughts a summary of the progress of Mr. Huxley's own thinking up to the point where he had accepted unity among men as the sole end, but had not yet conceived of union with the Absolute as the real end. Like Mr. Huxley, Anthony started by viewing life through opera glasses and accepting it; like him also he came to idealize first, the proper functioning of the body,[100] and then the power of love. He is probably the completest single expression of the evolution of Mr. Huxley's thought.

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100. This may not sound accurate but it should be remembered that the physical perfection which Anthony stresses is an aspect and a very pronounced aspect of the complete-development philosophy.

The young Anthony is a "High Lifer"; through the study and writing of sociology he has taken the easiest way, he has avoided life and responsibility to court death under the guise of worthwhileness and freedom.[101] His primary failing is cowardice. Even as a boy he was afraid to think of his mother's death,[102] afraid to learn to skate,[103] afraid of his teachers,[104] afraid of dead birds,[105] afraid of poor slum children.[106] Later in life he was afraid of responsibility,[107] and afraid of intimate personal relationships; so he chose to sit back and watch life through a pair of opera glasses.[108] There is a long hard road to travel before Anthony Beavis can believe that "evil is the accentuation of division; good, whatever makes for unity with other lives and other beings,"[109] and to believe it with enough conviction actively to work for those qualities which may lead to unity -- compassion and understanding.

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101. On the other hand Mark Staithe, another character in Eyeless has much courage, but it is wrongly used and is, therefore, a fault. Eyeless in Gaza, p.572.

102. Ibid.,p.29.

103. Ibid.,p.38.

104. Ibid.,p.55-56.

105. Ibid.,p.72.

106. Ibid.,p.110.

107. Ibid.,p.307.

108. Ibid.,p.15.

109. Ibid.,p.614.

Through his sociology Anthony questions and theorizes on mankind, on freedom, reform, self-control, and single-mindedness, and comes to know that proper use of the body, awareness, love, patience, chastity and so on are of the greatest good. Unfortunately, he knows this only theoretically, as he himself says,as he knows that "there are birds that live symbiotically with wasps. A curious and interesting fact, but no more."[110]

Theoretical knowledge becomes personal vital knowledge to Anthony through the teaching and precept of Miller; through a growing feeling of the vanity of his own life and through the feeling that other lives are not only vain but often sad or revolting.

Miller it is who first teaches him the proper use of the body. It is he who points out that instead of taking lessons in public speaking one can do much along this line if one learns to sit and rise correctly, and to manage one's body. Miller teaches him that to learn the proper use of the self, one much first inhibit all improper uses.[111] In walking, sitting, or eating one must be aware of what one is doing. Muscular awareness and power of control can be transfered to other planes, so that one

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110. Eyeless In Gaza, p.365.

111. Ibid.,p.327.

becomes more clearly and consistently conscious of what is going on, Miller believes. This teaching starts Anthony on the road to self-development.

Vital knowledge is further developed by Anthony's sudden realization that, having spent his whole life reacting against his father's ways, he has arrived at the same point as his father. He too is in a burrow, at the mercy of any childish passion that may arise.[112]

A certain visit with a friend, Beppo, is the third factor which helps make theoretical knowledge vital. Beppo is fat and bald but pitiable because his philosophy of promiscuity no longer gives him satisfaction and because he knows that he is aging and the only thing people want from him is money. He is aware of this, but refused to understand it. Anthony sees the similarity between Beppo and himself.

With these factors at work Anthony Beavis finally develops to the point where he believes with the whole of his being that "evil is the accentuation of division...," and that the life time task should be the gigantic struggle of creating love, awareness, patience and understanding.[113]

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112. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 469.

113. Ibid., p. 614.

The final phase of Anthony's thought is that with which this section has been concerned. Here we have seen how Mr. Huxley, driven by a feeling of horror at the existing lack of unity between men to seek a solution, decided that brotherly love by giving the ability and the will to be compassionate and understanding, would counteract this evil. We have also seen that this same love was one by which the mystic way has often been travelled. This way, as previously suggested, was adopted by Mr. Huxley as an answer to the twentieth century's unsatisfactory philosophy of nihilism and its outgrowths of pseudo-religions, as a means of giving a satisfying purpose to an otherwise futile life.

The Answer to the Seeming Futility of Life

We have continually emphasized the fact that a philosophy of meaninglessness and the consequent futility of life drove Mr. Huxley to seek some belief which would make life significant. He himself considers that those who "accept the doctrine of absolute meaninglessness tend in a short time to become so much dissatisfied with their philosophy ... that they will exchange it for any dogma, however manifestly nonsensical, which restores meaning if only to a part of the universe."[114] In the twenties and thirties of the present century such dogmas were taking the form of what he calls "substitutes for religion," Nationalism, "good times," science, and worldly success, for example, were becoming popular creeds. But these dogmas Mr. Huxley found to be, in the case of nationalism, evil, and in the cases of other so-called substitutes, entirely unsatisfactory. Therefore, he adopted, as might logically be expected of a man who believed in the first step of the mystic way -- non-attachment -- a mystical religion.

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114. Ends and Means p.275.

But why, if Mr. Huxley needed a religion, as he implies, did he not accept one that was becoming popular with his contemporaries? The reason is two-fold. On the ethical plane Mr. Huxley was advocating liberation from the ego and denouncing all that ~~which~~ intensifies the ego. In as much, therefore, as he considered that these pseudo-religions bind man more firmly to his ego, he condemned them. In the spiritual realm, Mr. Huxley considered that any twentieth century replacement for religion must minister to those same needs in the hearts of men which religion formerly satisfied. Of Mr. Huxley's ethical attitude we already have a clear picture. It remains then to present his attitude to religion before we can fully grasp his denunciation of twentieth century pseudo-religions.

Attitude towards religion.

Ideas expressed aesthetically, as Mr. Huxley says in his essay on T.H.Huxley,[115] create a much more vivid impression than those set forth in dry essay form. This suggests one of the difficulties, as previously noted, of discussing thoughts presented in artistic medium, for we tend to assign false values to the meaning of certain passages, simply because we do not discount their artistic value. This is particularly

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115"T.H.Huxley as a Literary Man" in The Olive Tree, p.54.

the case with Mr. Huxley's ideas on religion. It is why we feel, after a superficial reading of his novels, that he ridicules and belittles religion. Several satirical attacks against supposedly religious people, for example, have made such a poignant impression on our mind that we judge Mr. Huxley to be irreligious. This judgement, basically speaking, is not valid. To support this latter contention I propose first to examine in detail several passages[116] in his novels which discuss various aspects of religion[117] and then to turn to his direct essay statements.

In Mr. Huxley's novels the most skillful scene of religious subject matter is probably the meeting of the diabolical Spandrell and the drunken Carling. Following immediately after Spandrell's account of his sadistic seduction of an innocent girl and gaining vividness by this particular juxtaposition, the scene opens with Carling, in a public house, explaining to a barmaid that because marriage is a sacrament a married couple should stay together and be unhappy rather than be divorced. Here, and with what delightful irony, he is met

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116. To do this it is necessary unfortunately, since this thesis is concerned with Mr. Huxley's thought and not his art, to take into consideration the aesthetic mastery of the passages.

117. The word "religion" throughout this next section will be used in the general sense of a belief in an ultimate reality. At times, which will be obvious, it will also be used to mean a particular manifestation of religion, such as Christianity.

by the diabolical Spandrell, the most degenerate of all Mr. Huxley's characters. And what do they talk about? Carling exclaims in horror at Spandrell's red, pink and black handkerchief. Why it is impossible! The church has prescribed white for this season! Spandrell looking at the other's white socks now understands why he looked as if he were about to play tennis. The witty comments of Spandrell and the maudlin and ludicrous remarks of Carling continue until the latter reels out muttering: "God have mercy upon me."

Indeed its artistic perfection makes it most vivid; it holds the reader's attention, it makes Mr. Huxley at least a semi-popular writer, but, and here is the problem of an artist-moralist, this same vividness tends to produce a false impression. We must not be mislead by the witty rapier thrusts, the clever juxtaposition, or the ludicrous comments of Carling. We must ask; Is it really religion Mr. Huxley is attacking? No, at the most it is a weak, hypocritical man professing to be a Christian, and as such it does stand as a satire against people who profess and call themselves Christians but who are insincere or evil in their living.

For a correct understanding of Mr. Huxley's attitude it is also important to note the aspect of religion which he ridicules. It is merely the outward form, the mere practices (as he calls

it in his essay on "The Essence of Religion"[118]) -- white handkerchiefs, white socks -- that is ridiculed. Of course, one may say his scope was limited to this, for the false Carling would know nothing of the real essence of religion; but an examination of Mr. Huxley's ideas on the "essence" and the "mere practice" of religion may show that he does not consider the outward trappings of religion significant.

In his essay on "The Essence of Religion"[119] he states that although he himself does not feel the need of religious ritual and in fact the only religious life he has is purely solitary, nevertheless, this does not say that the essence of religion can only be found in solitude, or that people desiring the trappings of religion, only know the mere practice of religion. All this he very generously states; yet one feels that to Mr. Huxley the religion of solitude is superior.

This impression is further increased when one considers that it is the outward aspect only of religion that he satirizes in his Brave New World. It is the gestures, symbols, music, social emotions of present day church services that are humourously adapted to the needs of the "decanted" adults in the Brave

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118. Proper Studies, p.171.

119. Ibid., p. 171-191.

New World. For example, there is the Solidarity Service with its synthetic music, coloured lights, loving cup of strawberry ice-cream soma, hymn singing and primitive sexual dancing. Or again, when he writes: " ... the Director made a sign of the T on his stomach and all the students reverently followed suit."[120]

From the above we can only conclude that Mr. Huxley was emotionally biased in favour of a solitary religion and that he ridicules Christian hypocrisy.

Mr. Huxley's comments on the clergy might be cited as another feature of religion which he seems to criticize. One thinks of the light fun poked at their clothes which he suggests should be worn back to front "so that every clergyman should present to the world a smooth façade, unbroken by stud, button, or lace."[121] Or, one thinks of the more serious criticism levied against their character as, for example, in the dinner scene at the Rev. Thursley's where the Reverend interjects grace between loud outbursts of anger against his wife and family over an empty ink pot.[122] But again, these scenes do not concern the essence of religion. The criticism is rather against hypocrisy -- against the disparity between the teachings of the clergy and their manner of living.

120. Brave New World, p.27.
121. Crome Yellow, p.62.
122. A further illustration: This same condemnation is also succintly expressed in Antic Hay. Gumbril doubts if the Rev. Pelvey, M.A. had an answer and "clue to the question of God." "That was hardly believable. Particularly if one knew Mr. Pelvey personally. And Gumbril did." p.4.

So although the average reader of Mr. Huxley's novels may feel that the writer is hostile to religion, we cannot find examples to substantiate this idea. On the contrary, there are at least two characters who find true consolation in religion. Both Mrs. Quarles, Sr., and through her, Marjory Carling of Point Counter Point find peace and solace in it. To them it is a real and vital thing.[123]

We must conclude then that Mr. Huxley attacked religious hypocrisy, as he did other types of hypocrisy; that he ridiculed the mere practices of religion; but that he never attacked a person who sincerely believed in religion and who lived accordingly.

Careful consideration of the novels having dispelled the impression that Mr. Huxley is hostile to religion, let us turn to his direct essay statements on the subject. These are given for the most part in the "Essence of Religion"[124] Here there is little criticism of religion, although as already discussed Mr. Huxley inclines to believe that solitary religion is

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123. It should be recalled that Mr. Huxley often has fine sentiments put into the mouths of his characters (as for example Burlap, supra p. 17), but these sentiments are debunked by the hypocrisy of the people themselves. However in this case it is not so. He lets it stand, as it were.

124. Proper Studies, p. 171-191.

superior to that accompanied by mechanical observances and mass emotions. Rather religion is here held up as a necessity; as the only means whereby a number of important states of mind and emotions can be satisfied. It is the only thing which answers our sense of awe at the mysteries of life with an adequate explanation of the universe; it fills our need for consolation; it satisfies our desire to believe in the absolute truth of a thing, and its church services with their ritual satisfy our social emotions. Because it satisfied so many of our mental and emotional needs it was a thing to be cherished. Regarding its value Mr. Huxley writes:

> Much of the restlessness and uncertainty so characteristic of our time is probably due to the chronic sense of unappeased desires from which men naturally religious, but condemned by circumstances to have no religion, are bound to suffer. 125.

Mr. Huxley, is not then, as might be at first supposed, irreligious. However, he was unable to accept religion in the twentieth century form of orthodox Christianity, for the same general reasons that it was repudiated by his contemporaries and for the personal reasons that he did not favour Christian rituals, and what is more important, that he disapproved, as previously shown, of an anthropomorphic conception of God. To him religion must be a philosophy which is

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125. "The Substitutes for Religion" in Proper Studies, p.213.

126. Supra., p.41-45.

of ethical value in that it fosters non-attachment in an individual and thereby indirectly improves society. To this end an anthropomorphic conception of God, binding man to his ego, is hostile. Furthermore, he believed religion must heighten man's consciousness. Christian ritual and outward observances he finds inimical to this. In addition, religion must minister to those same needs in the hearts of men that Christianity used to satisfy.

Unable to accept orthodox Christianity, Mr. Huxley looked at the present day pseudo-religions of "good times," science, financial success and nationalism, and in the light of his above mentioned religious requirements, concluded that they were unsatisfactory.

Attitude Towards Substitute Religions

Mr. Huxley's opinions of the philosophy of a "good time" which he considers not only inadequate but inane, has already been discussed.[127] So too, in so far as he thinks that scientists are badly developed escapists, has his attitude towards science.[128] But the grandson of T.H.Huxley also believes that science cannot bring happiness to the layman. His attitude to science is, I

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127. Supra., p. 23-24.

128. Supra., p. 28-31.

believe, summed up in a satirical comment by the Controller of the Brave New World: "They seemed to have imagined that it [science] could be allowed to go on indefinitely," he says, "regardless of everything else -- that you could develop any branch of science to any extent that you wished and at the expense of other things."[129]

To show what a dreadful state of affairs would result if science were allowed to continue along present lines, Mr. Huxley takes twentieth-century scientific tendencies and by witty, brilliant and extreme exaggeration satirizes science. Children are decanted, boys blush at the name of mother, children are conditioned to like their lot in life -- to think their colour of clothing is the most beautiful, that the part of the country they live in is the most desirable, and that the work they do is the best. Everyone is happy; and if, by chance, something goes wrong, a few grams of soma will send them into an oblivion from which they will return, after an ascertained time, without any of the effects of the modern drug holiday. Physical comforts are unlimited -- there are showers, scent machines, dryers, television sets, etc., in one's living quarters. Disease, old age and sickness are unknown. Commercial pleasures are abundant: helicopters, feelies, community sing-songs, obstacle golf and Riemman-surface tennis occupy the pleasure time of these

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129. Brave New World, p. 273.

regimented lives. Supply has so exceeded demand that children are conditioned to believe "Ending is better than mending." Here is a world where everyone is happy, everyone is provided with absolute comfort, immunity from pain and disease and old age -- in short, immunity from life itself. And herein lies Mr. Huxley's criticism. These people do not really live. It is the cry of the Savage: "I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness, I want sin,"[130] that condemns this Brave New World.[131] The inhabitants of the

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129. Brave New World, p.288

130. As in the case of Mr. Huxley's artistic treatment of certain aspects of religion (supra p.74f) his brilliant artistry tends to give a false impression of his ideas and again we must consider his art in order to rectify this impression.

Unquestionably he has done a brilliant work. The scientific knowledge displayed (and much of this had to be cut before the book was published), the light and witty rhyme and phrase adaptations (e.g. Big Henry for Big Ben; Ford for Lord; "Bottle of mine..."), and the ingenuity and imagination of the whole are obvious features for praise. But one might almost say that he has done too good an artistic job of it. Artistry often helps a moralist drive home his point, but in this case the bright and brave world has been so cleverly painted that it has an air of reality and people fail to realize that it is a satire. Lately of the some half dozen people who were asked their opinion of the book not one realized it was a satire -- some with squeamish stomachs thought it horrible -- others said they could see no point in a world like that, thus showing they had missed the point entirely.

This is, of course, regrettable from the moralist's point of view. Because people fail to grasp the point of Brave New World it is a failure as a satire. This, however, in no way disproves the contention that Mr. Huxley meant it as a satire against the excesses of modern scientific developments.

scientific world, as the scientists themselves, have merely escaped from life and escape from life is no solution to the problems of living.[131]

To continue our instances of Mr. Huxley's ideas on the limitations of science: Old Jo Stoyte of *After Many a Summer*, desperately afraid of death and of lopsing his sexual potency and looking to science to save him from these fates, represents Mr. Huxley's latest condemnation of science. Jo keeps a private Doctor, Sigmund Obispo, working on the secret of living indefinitely. Acting on the intimation from the Haubork papers that the secret of longevity has been discovered, they go to Europe. Here Obispo discovers the Fifth Earl of Gonister, who nominally died over one hundred years before. The secret of living indefinitely had already been solved: the earl at 201 has matured into a raging foetal ape. Such is the best solution to death that science has found.

Science then, is so obviously incapable of bringing happiness to either layman or scientist, in Mr. Huxley's opinion, that he

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131. It is interesting to note, before leaving the main discussion of this book, the resemblance between "Book 5" of Plato's *Republic* which advocates that the children of the guardians should not know their parents; that they should be early trained in the pursuits of their class, and that the ideal men should be allowed more opportunity to produce children, and this work, with its parentless children; scientific conditioning, and controlled production of specified numbers of children for each class.

does not even consider it seriously from the point of view of a religion which will foster non-attachment, heighten man's consciousness, or fill the part formerly taken by Christianity.[132]

None of these substitutes for the need for consolation, the belief in an absolute truth and for an explanation of the universe, which were formerly satisfied by religion, is more severely condemned by Mr. Huxley than the prevalent substitute of financial success. In essays and novels it is denounced as a poor, false, cheap and unsatisfactory thing.

In two very similar essays, "The Substitutes for Religion," and "A Note on Ideals",[133] Mr. Huxley discusses and condemns this philosophy of worldly success. He points out that the Christian ideal of service has come to mean, in our "Americanized" world, efficient business. Apostles of commerce are trying to persuade people that service, that is, supplying things cheaply and efficiently to meet the demand (a demand, as he does not fail to

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132. Morley Callaghan writes regarding Aldous Huxley's attitude to science: "The child of the scientific tradition, the darling of the bright intellectuals of the post war world, putting up his head and shouting that the pseudo-scientific view of life ... was such a limited view of reality that it was a little phoney." "Ends and Means and Aldous Huxley," The Canadian Forum, 17:432, March, 1938.

133. Proper Studies, p.207-29 and p.260-271 respectively.

note, created largely by the business man's own advertising) is a spiritual act; it is a service to humanity. There is, however, a vast discrepancy between the Christian ideal of service which consisted of humility, self-devotion and charity, and the business ideal of service which demands only keen business ability and the minimum of conventional honesty.[134]

Nor is the substitute satisfactory, concludes Mr. Huxley. For those who are prospering and too busy to think, it is fairly successful, but it is on the whole inadequate -- it offers no explanation of the universe; no consolation in time of trouble, and it is too easily achieved.

So much for the clear and logical statements of 1927. Twelve years later Mr. Huxley gives these same ideas artistic expression by the creation of Jo. Stoyte of After Many a Summer. Jo is very wealthy: he has a mediaeval fortress with a drawbridge, electric elevators, soda fountains, rare literary collections, the highest-priced works of art and sculpture that could be bought in Europe. He has the means to support a private doctor and doctor's assistant and a children's hospital,

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134. In fiction, Mr. Huxley expresses this same disapproval at least once. It used to be, says Anthony Beavis of Eyeless in Gaza, that envy and ambition expressed themselves in violence. Nowadays these sins, transferred to another plane, express themselves in terms of economic competition. p.119.

not to mention servants and a mistress. Detail upon detail is accumulated to give a vivid picture of his great wealth. But he is unhappy: he fears old age and death, he has few friends, he is lonely, he is jealous. His wealth offers no solution for these problems. Contrasted with this inefficacy of a religion of wealth is the happy content of the mystic, Mr. Propter, a man having few worldly possessions, but living a life of consideration, generosity, and brotherly love -- the life that Mr. Huxley believes to be best.

Definitely then, the religion of big business is ineffective as a substitute for orthodox Christianity. But it is more than that. It is a positive evil. Mr. Huxley rates it as one of the greatest present day evils and states that it is that ~~that~~ which non-violence preachers must attack. They must, he writes, "rid themselves and the world of the prevailing obsession with money and power."[135]

Mr. Huxley's presentation of his disapproval is both definite and clear. There is no excuse for being confused as to his ideas as there might be in the case of orthodox religion. Judged as a substitute for religion it is totally inefficacious. Judged from the point of view of Mr. Huxley's ethical philosophy it is equally unsatisfactory, for how can a man devoting all his energies to the gaining of money, hope to achieve any degree of detachment from things of this world?

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135. Ends and Means, p.157.

For ethical and spiritual reasons Mr. Huxley likewise denounces the pseudo-religion of nationalism. Spiritually, nationalism approximates the role of religion more nearly, he believes, than other substitutes, for it gives a God, in the form of the nation[136], to be worshipped and it satisfies man's social instincts with its inspiring military ritual, but it is definitely evil, for a nation which believes itself superior to all other nations will eventually wage war. We have already noted Mr. Huxley's disapproval of war as that which blocks all roads to human progress. Ethically, the changes in the personalities of its devotees are the antithesis of the changes Mr. Huxley wishes to see take place. Instead of his desired liberation from time and craving, with all the virtues of non-attachment, nationalism produces attachment to things of this world and all the characteristics of an intensified ego.

Mr. Huxley, then, realized that present day substitutes neither adequately replace religion by satisfying certain emotions, desires and states of mind, nor do they encourage the attributes of non-attachment. What then does he offer us for a religion? He presents to those wanting to be "concentrated" and directed a theocentric religion, which as he says: "...

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136. Of this Mr. Huxley writes: " ... the more modern untruth to the effect that ... God is the nation or the party or the human race as a whole. After Many a Summer, p.98.

provides the basis for a religion free from unacceptable dogmas, which themselves are contingent upon ill-established and arbitrarily interpreted historical facts."[137]

Mysticism

This type of religion is the logical acquirement of a man weary of a "no-trick world", feeling the need of being "concentrated and directed", and yet who is a non-orthodox Christian in so far as he disapproves of a personal God,

> heaven and hell and the absolute reality of human personalities ... the meritoriousness of mere good intentions and of unquestioning faith in a set of incorrect opinions, ... the efficacy of priestly mediation, [and] the magic of sacraments. 138

It is the logical outcome of the thoughts of a man who first hoped to achieve by love a better world in which unity between man and man might be possible; then still by love, a world which would foster a life of non-attachment, for non-attachment is the first step in the mystic way.[139]

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137. Grey Eminence ... (Toronto, Macmillan, 1941) p.77.

138. After Many a Summer, p.97.

139. Mr. Huxley, as already said, wanted to change human beings by inculcating the virtues implicit in love -- awareness, tolerance, sympathy, and so on. He believed the mystic way was the best for this purpose. He writes: "For the radical and permanent transformation of personality only one effective method has been discovered -- that of the mystic." Grey Eminence, p. 243.

Mr. Huxley's mystical religion may be discussed under several headings, the most important of which are his attitude towards the Absolute; the three steps of the mystic way; the presentation of his ideas, and the usefulness of the mystics' works to his fellow men.

Great mystics are believed to have an overwhelming consciousness of the immanence of God. Now, as previously stated, Mr. Huxley never seems to give this impression, the impression one gets from his works being rather that of an overwhelming consciousness of the miseries of this world. Nevertheless he does give us sufficient information about his idea of God to enable us to form a fairly clear picture.

Negatively speaking, we have seen that, according to Mr. Huxley God must not be looked upon as anthropomorphic[140] since this leads, among other things, to an intensification of the personal ego, which is contrary to the principle of non-attachment. Speaking positively, God is to him, as to John Tauler and many of the greatest mystics,[141] "... a being withdrawn from creatures, a free power, a pure working."[142]

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140. Supra., p. 41-45.

141. E.g. Ruysbroeck, and Jacopone da Todi.

142. To give a further example: Mr. Huxley refers to the Absolute as an "impersonal consciousness underlying the personal mind." Ends and Means p. 295.

For union with this Absolute one must travel the mystic path. As already pointed out[143] the first step in the mystic way is the purifying and liberating of the self, the achievement of what Mr. Huxley terms non-attachment. This liberation of the ego from time and craving may be achieved by the acquisition of such virtues as compassion, awareness, courage and charity which come from the primary and essential virtue of love, and which are fostered by a good educational system, sufficient economic security to be free of that source of worry, sufficient personal responsibility to keep people alert, and the absence of violence. This is the ethical aspect of mysticism and it has been discussed at length.

Let us then leave the ethical step and pass to the spiritual steps of mysticism.

The second of the mystical stages is what has been termed "Proficient." It is a matter of the liberated self meditating on Reality. It has been used in every part of the world and at all times as a method of acquiring knowledge about Reality. As would be expected of a man who found the trappings of religion distracting and who early professes that the only religion he had was a solitary one, Mr. Huxley gives it due importance in

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143. Supra., p.38.

the mystic way. He says:

> Properly practised, with due preparation, physical, mental, and moral, meditation may result in a state of what has been called "transcendental consciousness" -- the direct intuition of, and union with, and ultimate spiritual reality that is perceived as simultaneously beyond the self and in some way within it. 144

As illustrations Mr. Huxley shows both Propter[145] and Frère Joseph[146] in the act of meditation. At first they make an effort to concentrate upon the One (an impersonal spiritual Reality in the case of Propter and an anthropomorphic God in the case of Frère Joseph). During this time their minds wander and return, until concentration becomes effortless and they finally obtain direct experience of the spiritual reality.

Mr. Huxley also concours with mystics in the idea that this union of man's soul[147] with Reality is the end of the mystic way.

In 1929 when Do What You Will was published Mr. Huxley had not yet become a mystical philosopher, but already he had

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144. Ends and Means, p.286.

145. After Many a Summer, p.94f.

146. Grey Eminence, p.4-11.

147. Mr. Huxley describes the soul of the theocentric saint as a "Nothingness". Grey Eminence, p. 4, and After Many a Summer, p.90 and 98.

realized the possibility of a sort of union. Here he writes:

> It is ... true that, in certain circumstances, we can actually feel, as a direct intuition, the existence of the all-comprehending unity, can intimately realize in a single flash of insight the illusioriness of the quotidian world of distinctions and relations. 148.

This, at that time, was dismissed as too difficult to be practical.

By 1939 Mr. Huxley considers it still very difficult but eminently worthwhile. In After Many a Summer he shows Propter's efforts at meditation and then the final union. He writes:

> His vigilance gradually ceased to be an act of the will, a deliberate thrusting back of irrelevant personal thoughts and wishes and feelings. For little by little these thoughts and wishes and feelings had settled like a muddy sediment in a jar of water, and as they settled, his vigilance was free to transform itself into a kind of effortless unattached awareness, at once intense and still, alert and passive -- an awareness whose object was the words he had spoken and at the same time that which surrounded the words. But that which surrounded the words was the awareness itself; for this vigilance which was now an effortless awareness -- what was it but an aspect, a partial expression, of that impersonal and untroubled consciousness into which the words had been dropped and through which they were slowly sinking? And as they sank they took a new significance for the awareness that was following them down into the depths of itself - a significance new not in respect to the entities connoted by the words, but rather in the mode of their comprehension, which, from being intellectual in character, had become intuitive and direct, so that the nature of man in his potentiality and of God in actuality were realized by

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148. Do What You Will, p.63.

> an analogue of sensuous experience, by a kind of unmediated participation.
>
> The busy nothingness of his being experienced itself as transcended in the felt capacity for peace and purity, for the withdrawal from revulsion and desires, for the blissful freedom from personality... 149

Some two years later Mr. Huxley again attempts to describe this intimate knowledge of Reality. After a more difficult attempt at meditation Father Joseph finally reaches the desired goal:

> ...the annihilation for which he had striven seemed now to be consummated in a kind of rapture of devotion and compassion, love and pain. He was absorbed into a blissful participation in the sufferings of God incarnate -- of God incarnate and therefore at the same time of the pure essential Godhead out of which the God-man had proceeded. That body upon the cross was the invisible made visible. Calvary was bathed in the uncreated light, irradiated by it, consubstantial with it. Absorbed into its source and ground, the crucified Christ was annihilated in the light and there was nothing but the shining rapture of love and suffering. There, as it were, recondensing, the light took form again in Jesus crucified, until a new transfiguration once more assimilated Calvary with the glory that surrounded it. 150

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149. After Many a Summer, p.99-100.

150. Grey Eminence, p.10.

Something has been said of the skill and effectiveness of Mr. Huxley's presentation of various ideas. We now come to consider the idea which is most difficult to convey, that of the union of the soul with Reality.

The reasons for this difficulty are two-fold: the nature of the experience itself and the inadequacy of language to express things of the spirit.[151] For these reasons many mystics

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151. Mr. Huxley comments on the language difficulty several times. The following are a few instances. In 1930 he writes: "a writer can't influence people, in the sense of making them think and feel and act as he does. He can only influence them to be more, or less, like one of their own selves." ("After the Fireworks", in Brief Candles (Lond., Chatto & Windus, 1930) p.212. Perhaps this idea of 1930 is negative because he had not yet sufficient faith in his philosophy to wish to go to the trouble of changing people, or perhaps, uttered by the philandering novelist, Miles Fanning, it should carry no weight. However, in Ends and Means, which is not conversation for conversation's sake and which was first published in 1937, the same idea is expressed. Here Huxley points out that an outstanding individual writes his philosophy. It is interpreted incorrectly by men of lesser intelligence. "They re-interpret his words in the light of their own experience, their own knowledge, their own prejudices. Consequently, they learn from their teacher not to be like him, but to be more themselves" (Ends and Means, p.228) This, as we know, is what happened in the case of Plotinus.

These difficulties of language are general. In After Many a Summer, Mr. Huxley comments on the inadequacy of language for conveying mystical ideas. Because of the inadequacy of a vocabulary intended for strictly human thoughts about strictly human concerns (and he discusses the deplorable state of the word "love" with its many and varied connotations), he suggests a new impersonal language like that used in mathematics and the sciences, but the difficulty here, he reflects, is that no one would understand it. Therefore, if a man tries to convey mystical experiences he will do so in everyday language and probably be misunderstood. Mr. Huxley concludes that the best way is to find out for oneself by first hand experience. (After Many a Summer, p.157-166.)

resort to suggestions addressed to the imagination, or to descriptions addressed to the intellect.[152] We therefore find vague, suggestive passages of symbolic comparisons or, what is better,[153] a negative language as that, for example, used by Dionysius the Areopagite.[154]

As would be expected the pictorial method is most frequently used by those whose Absolute is an anthropomorphic God.[155] It is the method Mr. Huxley uses when he describes Frère

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152. Neither way is particularly satisfactory for "man will not come to God in vision or audition or revelation, but within his own soul." H.C.White, The Mysticism of Wm. Blake, p.63.

153. E. Underhill, The Essentials of Mysticism, p. 73. and H. White, The Mysticism of Wm. Blake, p.60.

154. "The cause of all things is neither soul nor intellect; nor has it imagination, opinion or reason, or intelligence; nor is it reason or intelligence; nor is it spoken or thought. It is neither number, nor order, nor magnitude, nor littleness, nor equality, nor inequality, nor similarity, nor dissimilarity. It neither stands, nor moves, nor rests... It is neither essence, nor eternity, nor time. Even intellectual contact does not belong to it. It is neither science nor truth. It is not even royalty or wisdom; not one; not unity; not divinity or goodness; nor even spirit as we know it." O.T.Davidson's translation in Journal of Speculative Philosophy, 22:399, 1893.

155. E.g. Bridgit of Sweden wrote in pictorial images. Vaughan wrote: I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light.
Blake wrote: To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.
Whitman wrote: Light rare, untellable, lighting the very light.

Joseph's union. The language of negation, or a language appealing to the intellect is that used by mystics who have pure imageless contemplation. Mr. Huxley uses it in connection with Propter's contemplation.

Regardless of the method used, a clear understanding of this union is not conveyed, but at least from the best of these descriptions one feels that their authors have experienced an ineffable harmony and immeasurable beatitude, a feeling which should inspire a would-be theocentric saint to greater efforts.

Mr. Huxley's way, as already said, depends on the type of Absolute with whom he is expressing the union. In fiction he expresses it as a satisfying liberation from personality in the case of Propter[156] and as a great light for Frère Joseph.[157] From the point of view of the respective stories these two incidents are satisfactory, that is, one gets the idea that both men, to some degree at least, experienced union. However, they make no contribution to the mystical literature on the subject. This could hardly be expected, since Mr. Huxley cannot be considered a great mystic and his ideas about union seem to be those acquired from reading rather than from personal knowledge.

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156. Supra., p. 93.

157. Supra., p. 94.

We now come to our last point in connection with Mr. Huxley's mysticism.

One of the most frequent criticisms levied at mystics is that they are solitaries, of no use to their fellow men. But this is not necessarily the case, for many of the leading thinkers, as for example Plato, Spinoza, Goethe ~~and Hegel~~ have been mystics and also mystic writers such as Blake and Foxe have had practical ends.

Mystics do prescribe a sort of flight from the world, to union with the One. Yet this is not all, for this experience has some function to perform for the rest of mankind. W.E. Hocking[158] suggests that the explanation of this lies in what he calls the law of alternation. Too much work makes Jack a dull boy: recreation is necessary for clear perception. So the mystic, relaxed by his releases from things of the flesh, returns to the world with a keener sense of perception, and is able to give a new scale of values to things.

Mr. Huxley, it seems, could not be accused of lack of concern for his fellow men. Always, even in his most mystical work, Grey Eminence, he is primarily concerned with reformation among men. It was from the desire to improve life on earth that his mystical philosophy grew. Starting with the idea that love in the hearts of man might diminish the feeling of loneliness

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158. Types of Philosophy (N.Y., Scribners, 1929) p.462.

and separateness, progressing to the belief that a world inhabited by charitable and loving people (plus a certain amount of political and economic adjustment) would be most suitable for the life of the ideal, non-attached man, it culminated in the idea of this non-attached man having union with Reality. Because of the emphasis he places on moral reform he escapes the common criticism of mystics.

Furthermore, Mr. Huxley believes that this reformation in the hearts of the individual must be mostly dependent on the efforts of the mystic. By leading exemplary lives, by teaching, and by writing or by precipitating social reforms the mystic must help his fellow man achieve this desired change of heart.

Conclusion

A mystic philosophy is, then, Mr. Huxley's present belief. It was arrived at through an effort to solve the problems of the individual's loneliness and feeling of futility. The effort was logical and consistent. Prompted by distress over these problems, he condemned all human characteristics which increased loneliness and praised all those which increased unity between men. The characteristics which he considered virtues were those of a mystic and, consequently, when he answered the problem of futility, when he introduced a spiritual significance into life, he maintained that the mystical philosophy of life was the most satisfactory.

There is nothing original in these ideas. People have found life a lonely and futile affair before. The search for "good times" has been criticized by many. Others have extolled the benefits of a harmoniously and well developed personality. Love, for generations, has been looked to as a power which will make life on earth happier. The whole of Mr. Huxley's mystical philosophy has been outlined and followed by writers and mystics.

The interest in these ideas is not by virtue of their originality. They are, however, significant from two points of view. Each idea is of psychological interest in its relation to the whole series of ideas to which it belongs. The final belief of mysticism is of historical significance, for it is expressed by a twentieth century writer who may be regarded as a spokesman of the lost generation of that post-war jazz and cocktail era, when all established beliefs had been shattered and none knew in what he could trust; which, having nothing to live for -- no hope for the individual or for society -- was, nevertheless, wrenched from its nihilism and given a new spiritual life by the need to fight and overcome such foes as futility, depression and faulty religious substitutes such as Fascism, which threatened to plunge the Western Democracies into an even deeper morass. Mysticism, which throughout the centuries has been looked to as a means to a significant way of life, is once again, in the twentieth century, proposed as a solution to life's problems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is an almost complete bibliography of works by and about Mr. Aldous Huxley which appeared in book and periodical form prior to April, 1942. Since that time he has apparently written nothing of importance. In the interests of inclusiveness and convenience all works are listed. Those I have not read are marked with an asterisk. The imprint given in all cases is that of the first edition. However, the exigencies of writing compelled the use of other editions, in some instances, and the following is a list of those books used, the editions of which vary from those in the bibliography:

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