THE LITERARY TECHNIQUE OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

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CHAPTER I

ALDOUS HUXLEY AND THE PROBLEMS OF HIS AGE

Few writers have interpreted the consciousness of their times as accurately as Aldous Huxley. With brilliant satire he conveys the deep sense of disillusion which marked the post-war period of the nineteen-twenties. The advance from scepticism to knowledge of God found in his novels reflects the groping spirit of an uneasy age. He speaks for a generation which began in the conviction that there was no need for faith, and came to hope that it was still not too late to find it. The conclusions which he draws from his analysis of man's relationship to his changing world are significant, as he views the organic pattern of current thought and events from many angles. He combines in his work an intense curiosity about all knowledge, literature, art and science; a concern with the incredibleness of everyday appearances; a profound capacity for assimilating experience. To qualities which would already make a full and exact man, Huxley adds that touch of creative genius which transforms an intellectual into a literary artist.

A "moderate extrovert" as he calls himself, Huxley prefers the part of thoughtful spectator to that of active

participator. The mental plane of existence is his natural habitat. He knows that his talent is not one of the heart, feelings, and sympathies, and he attempts to overcome the limitation. But this emotional remoteness has been a source of strength to him in other ways. It has developed in him a clearness of vision, a penetrating power of analysis and an ability to synthesize experience which have become distinguishing features of his work. Altogether, he emerges as a good example of his own definition of an intellectual:

> ...that is to say, a person who has learned to establish relations between the different elements of his sum of knowledge, one who possesses a coherent system of relationships into which he can fit all such new items of information as he may pick up in the course of his life.[1]

In Huxley, this system of relationships is complemented by an "immense erudition and an immense fancy."[2] The combination has led him quite naturally to his own form of speculation, and to his "novel of ideas." Like every other writer, Huxley seeks to express those particular truths gathered from experience which have impressed him and seemed to him capable of producing some corresponding effect upon other minds. He is aware of the fact that:

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1 Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means. London: Chatto & Windus, 1946. p. 196.

2 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect, an Omnibus of Aldous Huxley's Books. New York. Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933. p. 148. (Crome Yellow)

> In words men find a new universe of thought and feeling, clearer and more comprehensible than the universe of daily experience. The verbal universe is at once a mould for reality and a substitute for it, a superior reality.[3]

Thus the manner in which the artist directs the form of language will determine how convincingly his preconceived impressions are communicated to his readers. It is through his literary technique that he must realize his "artistic intentions." As Aldous Huxley has employed a number of technical devices throughout his fiction, to those interested in this aspect of creative writing, the analysis and evaluation of his literary technique forms a fascinating study.

In this thesis an attempt is made to illustrate in what measure the success of Huxley's novels and short stories is due to his selection, organization and direction of material, his manipulation of the patterns of language and his unique integration of ideas. This study endeavours to show what must be Huxley's artistic intentions and, taking his novels in their chronological order, to follow his development as a craftsman in the field of literary technique.

In order to appreciate how successfully any novelist produces the effects he desires, it is necessary to know

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3 Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree. London: Chatto & Windus. 1936. p. 41.

something of his reasons for choosing particular subjects and for presenting them in a particular way. As Joseph Warren Beach has remarked, the philosophical background or the "temper of the age"[4] will influence the artist's intention and the intention determines, or should determine, the technique. With Aldous Huxley it is especially important to understand this background, for all his writings indicate a profound preoccupation with contemporary problems. Preferring the "novel of ideas" to one of pure narrative, he shows in his approach to literature the influence of both his age and his inheritance.

Andre Maurois once wrote:

> ...perhaps the greatest originality of Huxley's lies in the fact that he is the only living novelist with a solid scientific culture, so assimilated that it has transformed his whole conception of the world.[5]

Certainly Huxley has a mind which can absorb an amazing amount of scientific information. This has made him unique amongst his contemporaries, for he has been best able to reconcile science with prose fiction. It has also produced a direct influence upon his way of writing. It is therefore relevant to consider briefly the important aspects of that scientific tradition which combined with the impact of the

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4 Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel. New York: D.Appleton-Century Co. 1932. p. 13.

5 André Maurois, "Aldous Huxley's Progress." The Living Age. Vol.339, September, 1930. p. 54.

first world war to produce the mood of disillusion portrayed so understandingly and with such piquant satire in Huxley's early novels.

It is difficult for us to imagine a world without the conveniences and horrors which have accompanied the advance of scientific thought. The very fact that, in the future, this age may be known as "atomic" is, in itself, an indication of the tremendous progress which has been made since Democritus and Epicurus first taught that matter cannot be divided indefinitely but is formed of indivisible particles of atoms separated by void. Fumdamentally, the gradual change in the degree to which reality can be investigated, through science and the new psychology, has had an immense influence upon our modern way of thinking.

Science, as we know it, had its origin in Francis Bacon's concern with "irreducible and stubborn facts."[6] Reacting against the inflexible rationality of medieval thought, he supported efficient causes as opposed to final causes and thus laid the foundation for a whole new scientific system of investigation, based on observation and experiment. He may be considered chiefly responsible for a trend which has confined man to a mechanistic and materialistic conception of nature.[7]

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6 A.N.Whitehead, Science and the Modern World. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge: 1933. p. 53.

7 Ibid., p. 53.

With this change in approach to the knowledge of things, metaphysics was forced to give way to a more naturalistic view in the realms of astronomy, chemistry, geology, medicine, and, eventually, psychology. In philosophy, Descartes and his successors accepted the new scientific cosmology without making any attempt at modification or rationalization, and as a result philosophy was excluded from its proper role of "harmonising the various abstractions of methodological thought."[8] Descartes further influenced modern thinking when he supported a dichotomy between individual experience and objective fact, which has placed philosophy and religion within the realms of the subjective.

It was from the discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin that the relationship of man to God and the universe, as it had been conceived by the earlier metaphysics, received its severest blow. The Copernican theory of astronomy denied that the earth was the physical centre of focus for the heavens, and Darwin's theory of evolution greatly altered man's psychological and religious idea of himself.

In a materialistic nineteenth century, Darwin's ideas fostered an over-simplification. The world became a machine constructed of atoms, running smoothly, and never deviating

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8 Ibid., p. 23.

from certain mechanical laws. Passions, appetites, consciousness, were all to be explained as mere products of atomic reaction.[9] It was a conception which ignored the spirit of man, his capacity for religious experience, his creative faculties, all those human qualities which have never yet been profitably analyzed by any scientific method. What it produced was that atheism and conviction of meaninglessness which marked the post-war period.

Huxley inherited this ideal of science from his grandfather, T.H.Huxley, and the disturbing effect which the legacy had on his grandson's generation was well summed up by G.K.Chesterton when he concluded; "The fathers have eaten sour grapes; and the children's teeth are set on edge."[10]

T.H.Huxley vigorously championed those principles which Darwin presented in The Origin of Species and The Book of Genesis. The new interpretation which the Old Testament received undermined seriously the authority of the churches, but T.H.Huxley did not doubt that Christianity would survive. He expected that science would provide an answer to the problem in its own terms; in this he had an advantage over many of his contemporaries and successors, for he found it possible to "dissociate" or divide his intellect. Lacking

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9 Paul Elmer More, The Demon of the Absolute. Princeton: The Princeton University Press. 1928. p. 45.

10 G.K.Chesterton, "The Huxley Heritage", The American Review. Vol. 8. February 1937. p. 485.

this ability Aldous Huxley cannot prevent the light of one argument from illuminating all related arguments, all purpose, and all experience. Inclined by nature to a contemplative, mystical view of life, he has been blessed, or cursed, with a scientific approach to facts, a scepticism and a curiosity which also distinguished his grandfather, and which his age inherited with him. He has found life a struggle to synthesize "passion and reason," those discordant elements which surge continually below the surface of his writing. His mind tosses, and his work reflects the uneasiness of his thoughts.

Like his grandfather, Aldous Huxley is fascinated by science, that "application of trained powers to the magic shaping of matter."[11] For him literature is "only a possible approach to an end to which science as yet fails to provide an access."[12] But it has this great advantage,

> A work of art can never be taken for granted, and so forgotten; neither can it ever be disproved and therefore thrown aside. Science is soon out of date, art is not.[13]

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11 John Freeman, "Aldous Huxley," The London Mercury. Vol. 15, February 1927. p. 399.

12 Hans W. Hausermann, "Aldous Huxley as Literary Critic," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America. Vol. 48, No.3, September 1933. p. 908.

13 Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree. pp. 48-49.

In his essay on T.H.Huxley, Aldous admits that as a scientific man his grandfather has become a mere historical figure, but he insists that as a literary man, his non-technical writings "have the persistent contemporariness that is a quality of all good art."[14] Certainly the heart of T.H. Huxley's style is a veracity which would appeal to his grandson, whose own style is moulded by the same striving after clear and forceful expression of definite conceptions.

His grandfather's advice:

> Be clear, though you may be convicted of error. If you are clearly wrong, you will run up against a fact sometime and get set right. If you shuffle with your subject and study chiefly to use language which will give you a loophole of escape either way, there is no hope for you.[15]

Apparently Aldous Huxley took the advice seriously for, after reading Proper Studies, a volume of his essays, D.H. Lawrence wrote:

> I have read 70 pages, with a little astonishment that you are so serious and professorial. You are not your grandfather's Enkel for nothing—that funny dry-mindedness and underneath social morality.[16]

Huxley did display an intense intellectual honesty in his probing into every point of view - a sign of what Lawrence has called his "desperate courage of repulsion and repudiation."[17] Like T.H.Huxley, Aldous repudiates

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14 Ibid., p. 50.

15 Ibid., pp. 61-62.

16 Aldous Huxley, editor, The Letters of D.H.Lawrence. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1932. p. 693.

17 Ibid., p. 783.

superstition but goes further and includes that materialism and that belief in inevitable progress which were also left to him and his generation by the scientist.

Through his mother, Julia Arnold, Huxley is the great-grandson of Dr.Thomas Arnold, famous moralist and formidable wrestler with evil. He was noted for struggling "to inject religious principle into literature and English schoolboys."[18] The tradition which he offered, Aldous Huxley felt inclined to favour (in an essay on Pascal), as early as 1929, and in his later works he has shown much the same desire to inject a belief in spiritual values into literature and humanity. As a result, his novels are the story of his search for such values in the face of a desolate pyrrhonism. This strange mixture of caring and not caring has led Huxley to cultivate an irony and a satire which cut sharply through sentiment and illusion. In him the war between moralist and sceptic has never ceased.

A nephew of Mrs.Humphrey Ward, and a grand-nephew of Matthew Arnold, Huxley found that his heritage had affected not only his own way of thinking and writing, but the complete standard by which literature was judged. In Matthew Arnold the Victorian age had found one of its most rigorous literary critics and champions of cultural advancement. His criteria

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18 Charles J. Rolo, An Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1947. p. xi.

for literature, which emphasized "high seriousness," "grand style" and classicism, also included a desire to improve the reader mentally and morally. As a result, literature was judged by standards that also embraced the historical, ethical, metaphysical and sociological aspects of every work.

This Victorian criticism had a great value, for it focused attention on literature and interpreted it as one of the important activities of any age. At a time when success and wealth were synonymous, the term "Philistine" which Arnold coined served as a not unnecessary reminder that there were certain realms of thought and feeling which the merely acquisitive could not comprehend and could not measure by their particular standards.

It is in the light of the reaction against this Victorianism that Aldous Huxley's artistic intentions are best understood. Two stages of the reaction had already been experienced by the time Huxley became associated with the literary world. The first stage was manifested in Oscar Wilde's school of "art for art's sake" in the 1890's. Considered "decadent" the doctrine which the school adopted took its form from the French Parnassians and the Symbolists.

> The whole motif of the Decadence, its "satanism," its frolic épater le bourgeois, even its title, was borrowed from the French literary efflorescence of the earlier years of the century, from Flaubert, Gautier, and Baudelaire.[19]

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19 Ibid., p. 167.

The protest against the confined, self-satisfied spirit of the Victorians was later supported by a variety of influences. The new forces of Ibsen, Tolstoy, and Nietzsche, of H.G.Wells and Bernard Shaw, represented a combined attack upon Victorian principles and each struck its blow from a different angle.

It was with the twentieth century that the decadence really reached its peak. By 1910, although it was still a revolt against prudery and respectability, it had also rejected almost the entire cultural contribution of the nineteenth century, from history to literature and art to poetry. The substitute for this passing Victorianism was a disillusion which first took root in modern scientific thought and finally flowered in the cynicism of the post-war period.

The war had fostered a freedom in relations between men and women which was encouraged by the popular acceptance of the ideas of Freud and Havelock Ellis. Huxley came of age in a world of changing values. Human behaviour was explained in terms of instinct, glands, and conditioned reflexes. The hormone could be substituted for virtue and vice, the atom for the absolute. As an agnostic, Huxley concluded that man, to satisfy his need for assurance and meaning, had deduced, by a "conjuring trick," "all the

Gods and Goods, all the Truths and Beauties...of a bewildered humanity."[20] As a writer, he found his generation so crippled through four years of war, that its literature was left to a group whose environment and personality had led them to view life with a certain academic detachment. Of this post-war group, Huxley has always been considered a brilliant example.

Huxley admits that his ambition and pleasure are to understand and not to act. This detachment is partially due to the fact that from an early age he suffered from failing eyesight. It curtailed his studies at Eton and prevented him from joining in the traditional activities of young English gentlemen. But it did not prevent him from taking First Class Honours in English at Balliol College, Oxford, although he was forced to study with a magnifying glass. Of his education he once remarked that it was ludicrous to live in the twentieth century equipped with a literary training suitable for the seventeenth. At the same time, he found study no hardship, and, in Proper Studies he says,

> ...I have the kind of mind to which an academic training is thoroughly acceptable. Congenitally an intellectual, with a taste for ideas and an aversion from practical activities, I was always quite at home among the academic shades. Liberal Education was designed for people with minds like mine.[21]

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20 Charles J. Rolo, An Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley. pp. xi-xii.

21 Aldous Huxley, Proper Studies. London: Chatto & windus. 1927. pp. 129-130.

It was during Huxley's years at Oxford that his first essays in prose and verse appeared in the University periodicals. He made his public debut with The Burning Wheel, a volume of verse, in 1916. This was followed by two other books of poetry, The Defeat of Youth in 1918, and Leda in 1920, before his first novel, Crome Yellow, was published in 1921. During the last years of the war Huxley worked in a Government office, and in 1919 he married Maria Nys, a Belgian. In 1919 he was also launched into literary journalism when he joined the staff of the "Athenaeum", and later that of the London "House and Garden." He continued these journalistic activities even while he was writing such early prose works as Crome Yellow and Mortal Coils.

The appearance of Huxley's early novels coincided with an acute consciousness amongst the public of the cynicism and disillusionment to be found in the fiction of that period. Only a small number realized that even before the war many authors had written about the vulgarities of their civilization, and that after four years' barbarism they found nothing to discourage them from continuing. Nor were they so apprehensive nor so serious as they were to become within the next twenty years. As a generation they felt that their depression was justified, for, as Huxley notes in a short essay of 1923,

> Other epochs have witnessed disasters, have had to suffer disillusionment; but in no century have the disillusionments followed on one another's heels with such unintermitted rapidity as in the twentieth, for the good reason that in no century has change been so rapid and so profound. The mal du siècle was an inevitable evil; indeed, we can claim with a certain pride that we have a right to our accidie. With us it is not a sin or a disease of the hypochondries; it is a state of mind which fate has forced upon us.[22]

It was the essential pyrrhonism of Huxley's mind that made him appear to be, in his early works, a typical product of this post-war disillusion and a popular exponent of the "philosophy of meaninglessness." In Ends and Means he admits that he believed there could be no meaning to life. Like his contemporaries he was convinced "that the scientific picture of an abstraction from reality was a true picture of reality as a whole," and like his contemporaries, he did not want there to be any meaning. He took the "philosophy of meaninglessness" as a means of justifying his personal anarchy with regard to political, economic, and moral systems. Because the supporters of these systems asserted that they embodied a Christian meaning of the world, the most simple way of refuting their argument was to deny that the world had any meaning. Like other writers of the period, Huxley denied the meaning, but at the same time he continued to search for it.

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22 Aldous Huxley, On the Margin. London: Chatto & Windus. 1923. p. 25.

Many of Huxley's contemporaries were equally aware of the disintegration of old values and equally affected by the uneasy transition. Some felt Huxley's view of the times to be too cold and critical. T.E.Lawrence wrote in a letter to Edward Garnett in 1924, "whom have we to welcome year by year," and answered himself; "Not Aldous Huxley... somebody lovable."[23]

D.H.Lawrence's reaction to Huxley's work was somewhat similar. After Point Counter Point was published in 1928 he wrote: "No, I don't like his books: even if I admire a sort of desperate courage of repulsion and repudiation in them."[24] But Lawrence was notably critical of other writers, and in a letter to Huxley he admits: "I do think you've shown the truth, perhaps the last truth, about you and your generation, with really fine courage."[25]

Certainly the truth which D.H.Lawrence himself presented was of an entirely different kind. He placed a peculiar emphasis upon sex which Huxley later tried to share, but was able to accept only with difficulty. D.H.Lawrence was continually aware of the otherness beyond man's conscious mind, and he sought, in a sexual merging, what he considered to be the vital principle of life. Although he was a prophet of phallic consciousness, sex represented to him a

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23 T.E.Lawrence, The Letters of T.E.Lawrence, Toronto: Jonathan Cape. 1938. p. 466.

24 Aldous Huxley, editor, The Letters of D.H.Lawrence. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1932. p. 783.

means to an end and he despised a casual approach to sensual activity as an end in itself. What D.H.Lawrence proposed, Huxley could grasp intellectually, but he was temperamentally incapable of such an abandonment to the voice of the blood, even though he did attempt to practise that "life-worship," the development of the real personality behind all the conventional patterns of thought and feeling, which D.H.Lawrence advocated.

D.H.Lawrence's attitude to the crisis of war is particularly interesting because of the influence which he was to have upon Huxley. He adopted a detached attitude to the whole situation.

> All this war, this talk of nationality, to me is false. I <u>feel</u> no nationality, not fundamentally. I feel no passion for my own land, nor my own house, nor my own furniture, nor my own money. Therefore I won't pretend any. Neither will I take part in the scrimmage, to help my neighbour. It is his affair to go in or stay out, as he wishes.[26]

D.H.Lawrence's pacificism has been shared by Huxley. Consequently, neither has given that intimate picture of war itself, or interpreted the poignancy of relationships formed in wartime, as understandingly as Ernest Hemingway. But whatever added experience Hemingway may have accumulated, Herbert Muller believes:

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26 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 356.

> The most significant representatives of the post-war period...are Aldous Huxley and Ernest Hemingway. Both have brilliantly recorded its ways and expressed its mood, and from their work its deeper implications can be clearly disengaged.[27]

Hemingway's interpretation is much more emotional and less fastidious than Huxley's. Hemingway shows man and his emotions in a bare, raw, way foreign to both D.H. Lawrence and Huxley. His characters seek only the most simple things in life; food, comfort, a bed. They never consider intellectual or ethical matters, and, although Hemingway suppresses intellect, he does not lay the strange stress on sex which we find in Lawrence. Nor has he felt the same necessity for any such mystical interpretation as appealed to Lawrence, and, in a different way, to Huxley. To him man is a hunting, loving, fighting animal, and as such he portrays him. The very fact that his characters avoid rationalizing their disillusion indicates a distrust of the old values; their desire to ignore the prevailing mood indicates Hemingway's awareness of it.

In Huxley's post-war novels, Antic Hay, Those Barren Leaves and Point Counter Point, contemporary ills are faced boldly and a diagnosis offered that was badly needed. The novels are brilliant commentaries on the intellectual life of the period, but there is in them all a penetrating irony,

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27 Herbert J. Muller, Modern Fiction. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company. 1937. p. 385.

a mocking humour, a puncturing of pretentiousness and a core of seriousness. They deal with a somewhat sophisticated coterie, but fundamentally they contain a great deal that is applicable to a much wider circle, and, if properly understood, an exceptional amount of solid social criticism. It is not an exaggeration to say of Huxley that:

> More than any writer of the period, he made contacts at a number of points which were yet as remote from his own centre of gravity as were his own sociological ideas from any real societal instinct.[28]

As a result, reading his books, a great many people felt that they had found the perfect expression of their own cynical sentiments. Huxley became enormously popular. But, says Mr.Rolo, in his introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley:

> ...fashion, which so rapturously press-agented Huxley's early novels, has in the long run done him an injustice. The shadow of the Pascalian was not reflected in the portrait of the enfant terrible which fashion, in the twenties, painted in its own image.[29]

He believes that the early reviews such as Michael Sadlier's, where Huxley is referred to as an "amateur in

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28 G.U.Ellis, Twilight on Parnassus. London: Michael Joseph Ltd. 1939. p. 251.

29 Charles J. Rolo, Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley, pp. xxiv-xxv.

garbage," "cynic in ragtime," and "a fastidious sensualist," conjure up the picture of a Michael Arlen or a Paul Morand busy compiling some "Baedeker of the boudoir and cosmopolitan vice."[30] He bemoans the fact that this was Huxley's reward for being, despite his essential seriousness, so unfailingly entertaining.

As Huxley himself remarks very aptly, in Music at Night, "Because we all know how to read, we imagine that we know what we read. Enormous fallacy!"[31]

The seriousness which so many people had failed to detect in Huxley's work became more and more noticeable. As G.U.Ellis explains, Huxley continued to be,

> ...in his general bent, the element of continuity which linked the pre-War social scepticism of Bernard Shaw and H.G.Wells with its intensification in the immediate post-War period.
> But there was a marked change in motive. In a post-War England, busily engaged in making the world safe for democracy, Aldous Huxley was engaged on the more private task of examining the possibilities of making democracy safe for the individual.[32]

In Ends and Means Huxley describes the reaction away from the "philosophy of meaninglessness" which had set in by the end of the twenties, a reaction which tended to favour "the hard, ferocious theologies of nationalistic and revolutionary idolatry."[33] He found that

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30 Ibid., p. xxv.

31 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. p. 283. (Vulgarity in Literature)

32 Ibid., p. 255.

33 Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means. p. 274.

the meaning and value denied to the world as a whole were assigned to certain arbitrarily elected parts of the totality. Huxley admits:

> It was the manifestly poisonous nature of the fruits that forced me to reconsider the philosophical tree on which they had grown.[34]

It would appear from this that Huxley is rebuking himself for his early novels, for Crome Yellow, Antic Hay and Those Barren Leaves, which have been considered by some critics to be his more "attractive" works.

Crome Yellow displays a carefree mood that is not typical of Huxley's later fiction. The irony is muted compared with the bitter cynicism and satire of Antic Hay for, with Antic Hay, Huxley plumbs the depths of disillusion. As the title implies, endless capers are cut by war-weary sophistication in an attempt to escape, in sex and futile science, from the demon nil. There is no escape in Antic Hay, but in Those Barren Leaves appears the first suggestion that the problem of scepticism is not insoluble. There are more rewarding things to do with life than "glory in the name of earwig."[35] The "philosophy of meaninglessness" is still to be found in this novel, but it is the subject rather than the cause of Huxley's satire. Calamy, the

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34 Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means. p. 275.

35 Charles J. Rolo, editor, The World of Aldous Huxley. An Omnibus. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1947. p. 35.

character who may be considered to interpret the author's point of view, has found no pleasure in a life of hedonism. Instead, he turns to solitude in search of the ultimate reality behind appearances. He intends to burrow through the mystery to a truth of some kind, or to some explanation. His remark, "No, it's not fools who turn mystics,"[36] predicts that Huxley will find his answer, not in the abstract thought that Calamy proposes, but in mystical experience.

This search for final meaning was temporarily abandoned when Huxley accepted the canons of D.H.Lawrence's "life-worship." He had shown his dissatisfaction with the "philosophy of meaninglessness" in Those Barren Leaves, and Jesting Pilate, a book of travel completed upon his return from a trip to India in 1926. These works proved that he was anxious to find some new principles, and for a time it appeared that he would adjust himself to Lawrence's way of thinking and feeling.

Huxley found, even on first acquaintance, that Lawrence was "different in kind" from other great men he had known. He was attracted by the tremendous importance which Lawrence placed upon sensation, emotion and intuition. As Huxley has explained:

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36 Aldous Huxley, Rotunda. A Selection from the Works of Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1932. p. 382.

> Lawrence's special and characteristic gift was an extraordinary sensitiveness to what Wordsworth called "unknown modes of being." He was always intensely aware of the mystery of the world, and the mystery was always for him a numen, divine. Lawrence could never forget, as most of us almost continuously forget, the dark presence of the otherness that lies beyond the boundaries of man's conscious mind.[37]

It was difficult, if not impossible, for Huxley to embrace the "dark forest" with the same rapture as Lawrence. He did agree with him on a number of points and he had always admired the full view of life achieved by Rabelais and Chaucer, but Huxley's own temperament was too fastidious, too intellectual, to permit the complete subjugation of the mind to the emotions.

In Point Counter Point he shows how deeply he was affected by Lawrence's ideas. Based on a theme of self-division, this novel sets up infantilism, diabolism and over-intellectualism as the points to which Lawrence's "noble savagery" forms the corresponding counter point. In the character of Rampion, Huxley portrays those values which Lawrence suggested to him, and in Philip Quarles he embodies many of his own deficiencies as a "life-worshipper." The other characters serve to emphasize the advantages of Rampion's philosophy and the fact that he alone lives a complete life. The reconciling of discordant elements

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37 Aldous Huxley, An Introduction to The Letters of D.H.Lawrence. pp. xi-xii.

within the individual is a favourite subject with Huxley, and in Point Counter Point the old battle between passion and reason rages. Again he struggles with the importance of diversity, not only beneath the surface of reality as we conceive it, but beneath personality as we generally accept it.

In Brave New World, Huxley satirizes a scientific, industrial, and "death-without-tears" Utopia as the inevitable alternative to Lawrence's ideal of life lived fully and instinctively on every plane. He pictures science as an effective means to a sterile end, but infers that it is too late for any other choice to be made except that of suicide, or of life in the squalor of some obscure Indian village.

After Lawrence's death, Huxley visited Central America and found that "noble savagery" at close quarters left him quite disenchanted. He could not share Lawrence's faith in the physical, instinctive, emotional life, and later he wrote:

> The advance from primitivism to civilization... from mere blood to mind and spirit, is a progress whose price is fixed; there are no discounts even for the most talented purchasers. I thought once that the payment could be evaded, or at least very greatly reduced; that it was possible to make very nearly the best of both worlds. But, this, I believe, was a delusion. The price that has to be paid for intellect and spirit is never reduced to any significant extent.[38]

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38 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1935. pp. 21-22.

This discovery brought Huxley to the end of what might be called one of his discipleships, and to the beginning of another.

It was with Eyeless in Gaza, in 1936, that Huxley first stated his personal religion. It marks a change in the mood of his fiction and a new vehemence in his presentation. His subsequent novels have followed a current of pacifist and mystical thought. But they have become more intense and more bitter in their satire, for with his discovery of faith, Huxley has found a new basis for his criticism of our civilization.

Part of the inspiration for Huxley's renovation of spirit has come from Gerald Heard. Like Huxley, he is concerned with everything in general, and the disunity in the world in particular. His views are conveyed by Miller, the anthropologist and doctor in Eyeless in Gaza, who helps the Huxleyian hero, Anthony Beavis,along the road from scepticism to "non-attachment." In an attempt to transcend personality, Beavis is trained in physical co-ordination, meditation and vegetarianism, as advocated by Buddhism. Through this rigorous self-discipline he hopes to overcome satisfaction of the ego and to become detached from his emotions, sensations, intellect, from

success and personal happiness. He reflects, "Evil is the accentuation of division; good, whatever makes for unity with other lives and other beings."[39]

The new knowledge which Beavis receives is confirmed by mystical experience. Life acquires a new significance and he becomes aware of the hideous tragedies which his former egoistical existence caused. The"non-attachment" which Beavis practises demands that he renounce the part of spectator and attempt to better humanity. He becomes a man with a cause. A firm belief in pacificism leads him to the task of spreading the gospel of Ends and Means: "The ends cannot justify the means, for the simple and obvious reason that the means employed will determine the nature of the ends produced."[40]

In Ends and Means, his "practical cookery book of reform," Huxley sets forth his new mystical and pacifist credo in detail. Defining the "non-attachment" Beavis sought, he explains:

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39 Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza. London: Chatto & Windus. 1936. p. 614.

40 Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means. p. 9.

> It entails the practice of charity, for example; for there are no more fatal impediments than anger (even 'righteous indignation') and cold-blooded malice to the identification of the self with the immanent and transcendent more-than-self. It entails the practice of courage; for fear is a painful and obsessive identification of the self with its body....It entails the cultivation of intelligence; for insensitive stupidity is a main root of all the other vices. It entails the practice of generosity and disinterestedness; for avarice and the love of possessions constrain their victim to equate themselves with mere things.[41]

Throughout the remainder of his novels Huxley has continued to elaborate on this theme. In _After Many a Summer Dies the Swan_ Mr.Propter, who speaks for Huxley, denounces time as the great evil. Good, he observes, exists outside of time and personality. But he believes eternal life, while outside of time, may yet be part of human life. Through a conscious practice of virtue, man can prepare himself for that mystical contemplation which alone can lead him to unity with God.

In _Grey Eminence_, Huxley's first biography, he tells the story of Father Joseph, a Capuchin Friar, who tried to reconcile his life as a mystic with his position as a foreign minister under Cardinal Richelieu's regime. The problem gives Huxley ample opportunity to discuss the conflict between politics and religion. Condemning

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41 _Ibid._, p. 4.

politics that seek the advantage of one state at the expense of another, he admits that such activity can be profitable when permitting the individual to preserve those ethical values usually found in small groups while remaining within a large-scale organization. Of the difficulties which face the mystic involved in politics, he writes:

> The business of a seer is to see; and if he involves himself in the kind of God-eclipsing activities which make seeing impossible, he betrays the trust which his fellows have tacitly placed in him.[42]

Huxley proposes that all progressive activities outside of teaching, should be on a small scale, beyond state jurisdiction, and under spiritual authority alone. These activities are to be carried on by groups small enough "to be capable of a shared spiritual experience and of moral and rational conduct."[43]

However, in Time Must Have a Stop, his next novel, he admits: "There's only one corner of the universe you can be sure of improving, and that's your own self...."[44] and that by "the sacrifice of self-will to make room for the knowledge of God."[45] For those who are concerned with

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42 Aldous Huxley, Grey Eminence. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941. p. 316.

43 Ibid., p. 317.

44 Charles J.Rolo, An Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley. p. xxiii.

45 Aldous Huxley, Time Must Have a Stop. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1944. p. 288.

a further study of his "minimum working hypothesis," Huxley published in 1945, The Perennial Philosophy, his anthology of the teaching of the mystics, the "Highest Common Factor" in all theologies.

Ape and Essence is Huxley's latest novel and not the product which would be expected of his profound spiritual beliefs. Reminiscent of Brave New World, it projects the reader into a twenty-second century devastated by atomic warfare. A Belial-worshipping community has managed to survive on the California coast. Here men and women have nothing to do with one another except on Belial's Day, when they indulge in sexual orgies and all the babies deformed by "The Thing," or the third world war, are murdered. Obviously, Huxley's convictions have not heightened his hope for mankind. The Narrator in the novel intones:

> As for the Hope -
> Bless your little heart, there is no hope,
> Only the almost infinite probability
> Of consummating suddenly,
> Or else by agonizing inches,
> The ultimate and irremediable
> Detumescence.[46]

Huxley writes in this depressing vein because he fears man's scientific knowledge has outstripped his power and he is anxious to stir contemporary minds to consciousness. But he takes too much relish in satirizing humanity

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46 Aldous Huxley, Ape and Essence. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948. p. 42.

to make us believe that he has come to love it more intensely. Giving voice to a despair that all thinking men experience in some degree, the solution which he proposes in his religious philosophy is not easily applied to our difficulties today. The Hindu, or Vedanta Philosophy, interpreted by Christopher Isherwood, Gerald Heard and Huxley, in Vedanta for the Western World, invites the same criticism which Albert Schweitzer gives of Brahmanism and Buddhism. He believes that they offer most to those,

> "...whose circumstances enable them to withdraw from the world and to devote their lives to self-perfection beyond the sphere of deeds.[47]

Huxley's philosophy affirms that man's nature is divine, that the aim of human life must be to realize this divine nature, and that all religions are fundamentally in agreement.[48] It is not a philosophy calculated to create a man of action, as its propositions foster a certain passiveness, but it should result in humanitarianism, since the non-attachment that it preaches leads to a progress in charity. Demanding neither the faith of Christianity nor the optimism of Chinese religious thinking, it represents

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47 Albert Schweitzer, Christianity and the Religions of the World. London: George Allen and Unwin Limited. 1936. pp. 49-50.

48 Christopher Isherwood, Introduction to Vedanta for the Western World. p. 1.

a religion unified in itself and the result of logical reasoning. As Dr.Schweitzer admits:

> The redemption it preaches, a redemption to be realised through a merging into spirituality, has something grand about it. This idea, so complete in itself, attracts thoughtful men in an almost uncanny way.[49]

That Huxley should have accepted this philosophy is not surprising. The fact that it is a belief complete in itself, and that it may be subjected to direct experience, would make it particularly suitable for his enquiring and sceptical mind. The significance of Huxley's philosophy lies in the fact that it demands a turning inward of the thoughts; the great lesson it teaches, that, for the majority, a knowledge of God must be sought before it will be given.

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49 Albert Schweitzer, Christianity and the Religions of the World. London: George Allen and Unwin Limited. 1936. p. 52.

CHAPTER II

POEMS, ESSAYS AND SHORT STORIES

Aldous Huxley's intense intellectual curiosity and creative ability led him to explore the possibilities of many forms of literature. In his poetry, essays and short stories he shows certain tendencies of technique which have become more fully developed within the wider sphere of his prose fiction. Thus, to obtain a complete understanding of the literary technique which he employs in his novels, it is profitable to consider those other forms of writing with which he has been concerned.

Huxley's earliest published works consisted of three volumes of poetry. The Burning Wheel (1916), The Defeat of Youth (1918), and Leda (1920). The verses bear the impression of such modern French masters as Rimbaud, Corbière, Baudelaire, and Laforgue. In Laforgue, Huxley found a mixture of "remote discovery with near sentiment"[1] which was well in accord with his own scientific approach to the nature of things, and his desire to give as complete a picture of reality as possible.

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1 Aldous Huxley, "And Wanton Optics Roll the Melting Eye." The Bookman. New York: Vol. 73, March 1931. p. 38.

In On the Margin, he writes; "It should theoretically be possible to make poetry out of anything whatsoever of which the spirit of man can take cognizance."[2]

Huxley complains that few poets have attempted to embody in verse the fresh ideas, facts and points of view with which the new scientific discoveries have presented them. But he agrees with Wordsworth that:

> The remotest discoveries of the chemist, the botanist, or mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any upon which he is now employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings.[3]

Huxley maintains that it is not enough for the poet to know these discoveries through his senses alone, for he will create only flashy poetry of sensation. It is not enough for him to apprehend them in a purely intellectual fashion, but he must feel the abstract ideas with passion. They must mean something to him personally and emotionally. Huxley laments:

> The men who do feel passionately about abstractions, the men to whom ideas are as persons - moving and disquietingly alive - are very seldom poets.[4]

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2 Aldous Huxley, On the Margin. London: Chatto & Windus. 1923. p. 26.

3 Ibid., p. 27.

4 Ibid., p. 29.

Amongst those who have possessed this intense, personal apprehension of ideas, Huxley would include Lucretius, Dante, Goethe, Fulke Greville, Donne, John Davidson and Laforgue. For Donne he expresses a particular preference, as he put "the whole life and the whole mind of his age into poetry."[5]

This awareness of contemporary consciousness Huxley considers to be particularly essential to the poet, especially as he believes, "it is only by poets that the life of an epoch can be synthesized."[6] He has attempted this synthesis in his verse, but achieves it with more success in his novels. Nevertheless, the verses are unique, illustrating, as they do, his love of speculation and scientific ideas, his exceptionally inclusive way of understanding and interpreting. One of the poems which best reflects these characteristics may be found in The Cicadas, a later volume, and is entitled, "Sheep."

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5 Ibid., p. 36.

6 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1935. p. 234.

Seeing a country churchyard, when the grey
Monuments walked, I with a second glance
Doubting, postponed the apparent judgment day
To watch instead the random slow advance
Across the down of a hundred nibbling sheep.
And yet these tombs, half fancied and half seen
In the dim world between waking and sleep,
These headstones browsing on their plot of green,
Were sheep indeed and emblems of all life.
For man to dust, dust turns to grass, and grass
Grows wool and feeds on grass. The butcher's
knife
Works magic, and the ephemeral sheep forms pass
Through swift tombs and through silent tombs,
until
Once more God's acre feeds across the hill.[7]

This same inverted view of phenomena is frequently revealed in Huxley's novels. Such speculation fascinates him and calls attention to his continual awareness of the scientific reality behind those appearances which are commonly accepted at face value.

The contrasting of "remote discovery and near sentiment" which Huxley admires in Laforgue's poems, is also one of his own favourite themes, and is particularly well expressed in "Philosopher's Songs." In the "Second Philosopher's Song" Huxley observes that a drowned man floats face upwards and a drowned woman with her face down. In the "Fifth" he muses that as one of "a million, million spermatazoa" he has likely survived at the expense of a Shakespeare, Newton or a Donne. But it is important to

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7 Aldous Huxley, Verses and a Comedy. London: Chatto & Windus. 1946. pp. 134-135.

note that this adapting of scientific terms has not hampered Huxley's lyricism. He displays skill and ingenuity in such rhyming as "frail and mystic" with "animal triste" and "spermatazoa" with "one poor Noah."

In addition to the ironical effects which Huxley contrives through the scientific allusions, he punctures illusions with the witty and cryptic phrase:

> And there we sit in blissful calm,
> Quietly sweating palm to palm.[8]

Or, as in the "First Philosopher's Song," sums up his frustrated idealism:

> But oh, the sound of simian mirth!
> Mind, issued from the monkey's womb,
> Is still umbilical to earth,
> Earth its home and earth its tomb.[9]

But this occurs in a later volume and in Huxley's earlier poems there is not the same savage cynicism. Indeed, The Defeat of Youth of 1918, reveals a sense of the unity in all things which calls to mind the serene faith of Eyeless in Gaza. The poems give evidence of a pre-occupation with the relationship between soul and body, mind and matter, which has always attracted Huxley regardless of the indifferent attitude he has assumed at times. In view of this essential seriousness the

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8 Ibid., p. 62.

9 Ibid., p. 58.

following quotation is especially significant:

> One spirit it is that stirs the fathomless deep
> Of human minds, that shakes the elms in storm,
> That sings in passionate music, or on warm
> Still evenings bosoms forth the tufted sleep
> Of thistle-seeds that wait a travelling wind.
> One spirit shapes the subtle rhythms of thought
> And the long thundering seas; the soul is wrought
> Of one stuff with the body--matter and mind
> Woven together in so close a mesh
> That flowers may blossom into a song, that flesh
> May strangely teach the loveliest holiest things
> To watching spirits. Truth is brought to birth
> Not in some vacant heaven: its beauty springs
> From the dear bosom of material earth.[10]

The enemy that will defeat youth, to which the title refers, is lust. Appearing frequently in the fabric of Huxley's fiction, sensuality torments Guy in "Happily Ever After," Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, and Sebastian in Time Must Have a Stop. Concerned with psychology, Huxley finds numerous possibilities in the age-old conflict between the spiritual approach to personal relationships and that carnal passion, the existence of which cannot be denied. He gives various interpretations to the problem in his fiction, but he never considers that a compromise between the platonic and the physical might be reached.

It was with Leda in 1920, that the first symptoms of disillusion appeared in Huxley's work. This collection

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10 Aldous Huxley, The Defeat Of Youth. Oxford: B.H.Blackwell, 1918. p. 7.

contained the genuinely satirical "Philosopher's Songs," so reminiscent of Laforgue, and so startlingly different from the gentle beauty of "Italy," for example, in an earlier volume.

The Cicadas published in 1931, was written while Huxley was under the influence of D.H.Lawrence. The title poem expresses his infatuation with life-worship and is one of his most memorable poems, although it does demand an acceptance in the imagery of a certain rhetorical quality.

> Time passes, and the watery moonrise peers
> Between the tree-trunks. But no outer light
> Tempers the chances of our groping years,
> No moon beyond our labyrinthine night.
>
> Clueless we go; but I have heard thy voice,
> Divine Unreason! harping in the leaves,
> And grieve no more; for wisdom never grieves,
> And thou hast taught me wisdom; I rejoice.[11]

Huxley was to find the "lost purpose and the vanished good" of "The Cicadas," the answer to Darwin and Freud, in the "Divine Unreason" of mysticism.

The same volume includes a number of sonnets reminiscent of Baudelaire in their despair and general mood. It has been said of Huxley that he expresses pain more significantly than any other modern poet.[12] Certainly some of his verses give voice to a deep anguish, but

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11 Aldous Huxley, Verses and a Comedy. p. 140.

12 Doris N. Dalglish, "Aldous Huxley's Poetry." The London Mercury. Vol. 38. September 1938. p. 440.

surely his interpretation of disillusion, in poetry, is more than equalled by that of T.S.Eliot, whose sense of the purposelessness, nostalgia and fading hope of his generation is also acute. In "The Waste Land" Eliot depicts the arid post-war world, and in "The Hollow Men" he reveals the tortured despair of men without initiative and vision. In poetry he interprets that "philosophy of meaninglessness" which Huxley has so convincingly transformed into prose.

Huxley is able to achieve more in his prose than in his poetry because he has, primarily, a "prosaic mind."[13] In Proper Studies he refers to himself as an "imperfect visualizer" who thinks in terms of words rather than images.[14] He admits that he lacks the gift of seeing and that he is only transformed by fever into a lyricist. Then he can appreciate how Shelley and Rimbaud normally thought, for, as he explains:

> They had the feverish gift of seeing, but along with it the sober power to organize what they saw into the forms of art, to convert private visions into publicly recognizable beauty and universally comprehensible argument. Possessing at ordinary times a little, perhaps, of their capacity to organize, I lack the gift of seeing. And the fever that brings me visions robs me of my intellect. The person who takes my place...possesses of the poet's genius only that part, alas, which is allied to madness.[15]

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13 Aldous Huxley, Proper Studies. London: Chatto & Windus. 1927. p. 51.

14 Ibid., p. 56.

15 Aldous Huxley. "Fever."Harper's Monthly Magazine. Vol. 158. March 1929. p. 518.

As a non-visualizer, thinking in terms of words, and sometimes even directly in terms of analysis, Huxley has shown a greater concern with abstract ideas than with images. Although he possesses a fancy that matches his erudition. He still insists:

> ...I should never write directly and exclusively of the fancies, as though they were the only things that mattered; I should write of the objects themselves and should only bring in the fancies as illustrative or decorative similes.[16]

The particular objects that interest Huxley are most frequently those which lead to generalization and speculation. This concern with ideas for their own sake has caused Huxley to write essays so highly valued by some critics that they esteem him as an essayist rather than a novelist.

Certainly the essay form is one well suited to Huxley's intellect, as it encourages speculation, permits a display of erudition, and tolerates scepticism. In the essay many technical difficulties which prose fiction involves may be avoided, for it does not require the same fastidious selecting and directing of material or the gradual development of character and dialogue. What it does demand is a liberal point of view and the support of opinions and ideas by argument. This robs the study of that wide appeal which the novel and short story enjoy; the general reading public is never greatly attracted by abstract ideas without the dramatization which they are accorded in fiction.

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16 Aldous Huxley, Proper Studies. p. 51.

In his essays Huxley has explored art, literature, travel, social ills, methods of reform, pacificism and "non-attachment." He treats all those subjects which the characters in his novels discuss, individually and brilliantly. But Huxley is not a fundamentally original thinker, and, for this reason, it seems probable that, in the future, his prose fiction and his interpretation of the spirit of his age will be considered his greatest contributions to literature.

To those principally concerned with Huxley's fiction, his essays are of special value because they clarify those ideas which are the essence of his novels. Through his criticism Huxley reveals his own character and gives a lucid interpretation of his approach to literature in general, and technique in particular.

"Literature, according to Huxley, must above all contribute to a better understanding of the bewildering spectacle of life."[17] For him, mental alertness and universal curiosity are the indispensable qualities of a writer, and, in his criticism, he indicates a preference for those artists, like Balzac and Donne, who were alive to their surroundings and the temper of their times.

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17 Hans.W.Hausermann. "Aldous Huxley as Literary Critic." Publications of the Modern Language Association of America. Vol.48, No.3. September 1933. p. 912.

Huxley's conception of literature is also an inclusive one. He explains: "Literature is also philosophy, is also science. In terms of beauty it enunciates truths....Naturalistic works contain the more detailed beauty-truths of particular observation."[18] As an artist Huxley proposes to play against this backdrop, the role of a natural historian, "ambitious to add... to the sum of particularized beauty-truths about man and his relations with the world about him."[19] He sees himself as a collector of human species and psychological varieties; so much aware of the irrelevancies attached to the subject of his contemplation that he feels compelled to render it in the light of "the whole truth" by which it is surrounded.

In "Tragedy and the Whole Truth," one of the central essays in Music at Night, Huxley explains that he considers tragedy to be a distillation from experience, something which has been made too pure, a sort of concentrated essence. Art of a more wholly truthful variety, like that of Homer and Fielding, may not produce its effects as rapidly as tragedy, but Huxley is convinced that its results are more lasting. The mood which it

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18 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. An Omnibus of Aldous Huxley's Books. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1933. p. 263. (Vulgarity in Literature)

19 Ibid., p. 263.

creates is one of acceptance rather than that of exaltation, which tragedy induces. The description which Huxley gives of "Wholly Truthful" art is a good indication of his own fundamental approach to fiction. He sees it as something which:

> ...overflows the limits of tragedy and shows us, if only by hints and implications, what happened before the tragic story began, what will happen after it is over, what is happening simultaneously elsewhere. Tragedy is an arbitrarily isolated eddy on the surface of the vast river that flows on either side of it. Wholly-Truthful art contrives to imply the existence of the entire river as well as of the eddy.[20]

Another contrast to "Wholly Truthful art" Huxley finds in the aesthetic convention of classicism, an extreme version of which can be found in the French tragedy of the seventeenth century, where the body is excommunicated and man becomes an algebraical equation. In the plays of Racine for example, particulars are smoothed to types and the individual to a discarnate passion. This cutting out of the complex particulars, or all that is corporeal in a situation, Huxley denounces as a shirking of artistic difficulties in rendering experience and reality. According to Huxley the naturalistic writer simplifies very little and implies as much as possible:

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20 Alexander Henderson, pp. 210-211.

> His ambition is to render, in literary terms, the quality of immediate experience - in other words, to express the finally inexpressible.[21]

In relation to the old Greek tragedies, Huxley finds our modern dramas empty and uninspiring. They have become a warped, sterile form of entertainment, a mere titillation, far from the "solemn and rare" experience which the Greeks anticipated. The audience today derives no philosophy of life from a play, and Huxley regrets that the educative virtue of the drama has been so neglected.

> In relation to the modern play or film, it is sheer nonsense to talk about the Aristotelian catharsis. A Greek tragedy was much more than a play...it was also one of the ceremonies of the national religion. The performance was an illustration of the scriptures, an exposition of theology. Modern dramas, even the best of them, are none of these things.[22]

For all his criticism, Huxley's contribution as a dramatist has not been outstanding. His comedy, The World of Light, takes as its theme the inconsistency of man's nature due to the struggle of passion, reason, love and hatred within him. Huxley believes that tragedy and farce are closely related and, in this play, he introduces

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21 Ibid., p. 212.

22 Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means. London: Chatto & Windus. 1946. p. 205.

a generous portion of each. But on the whole, the work suffers from a certain heaviness which appears to be the result of too much discussion and too little action.

Huxley has not experimented very extensively with the drama, but we may take into account "Happy Families" and "Permutations Among the Nightingales," the two one-act plays which are included in his collections of short stories. "Happy Families" shows the influence of Rimbaud and Laforgue in its clever dialogue and is reminiscent of The Defeat of Youth in the clash which it presents between ideal love and physical desire. "Permutations Among the Nightingales" is composed of brilliant conversation; it contrasts the naive with the sophisticated and mingles the amusing with the pathetic. The juxtaposition of tragedy and farce apparent in all the plays, is even more pronounced in the novels.

Before commencing a study of Huxley's short stories it is of some value to consider his candid comments on the responsibility of the critic.

> Critics, it seems to me, content themselves too often with the mere application of epithets....Critics should take pains to show why such and such a piece of writing provokes us to call it by such and such a name. The observable facts of literature are words arranged in certain patterns. The words have a meaning independent of the pattern in which they are arranged; but it is the pattern that gives to this meaning its peculiar quality and intensity; that can make a statement seem somehow truer or somehow less true than the truth....It is the business of the literary artist to make word-patterns in such a way that his readers shall be compelled to draw certain inferences from them. It is the business of the critic to show how our judgments are affected by variations in word-patterns.[23]

The word-patterns which Huxley most frequently selects are those which permit a smooth transition from the particular to the general, from one point of view to another. This balanced oscillation is easily contrived through the "caesura sentence," which Huxley observes in the writings of T.H. Huxley, and which he has used to the best advantage in his own work. In his essay on T.H.Huxley he tells us that the classical examples of this type of sentence may be found in Hebrew literature and in the poetical books of the Bible. Like Hebrew poetry it is based on the division of the sentence by a caesura into two distinct, related clauses. A form which such distinguished English prose writers as Sir Thomas Browne, De Quincey, and Dr.Johnson, have employed, it is similar in principle to that of Anglo-Saxon poetry

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23 Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree. London: Chatto & Windus. 1936. p. 51.

As an example of this "caesura sentence" Huxley cites a quotation from "Urn Burial":

> Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings. We slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves.[24]

With Huxley the form may become:

> These single-minded revivalists of Christianity did more to preserve the stability of English institutions than all the Tory politicians. The greatest conservatives of the age were not the Wellesleys, but the Wesleys.[25]

Or inverted:

> Tragedy was much more exciting than Homer's luminous pessimism, than this God's smiling awareness of the divine absurdity. Being alternately a hero and a sinner is much more sensational than being an integrated man.[26]

This parallelism forms the structure of Huxley's style. Visible in the sentence, it often dominates the paragraph, even the essay or the novel. From the particular Huxley moves to the general, and by his use of metaphors and related phrases he may present one fact from multifarious angles.

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24 Ibid., p. 73.

25 Alexander Henderson, p. 239.

26 Aldous Huxley, Brief Candles. London: Chatto & Windus. 1930. p. 243.

In his essay on "T.H.Huxley as a Literary Man," Aldous Huxley also notes that by rhythmical effects Sir Thomas Browne and T.H.Huxley contrive to give a judicial and resonant quality to their utterances. Thus, in the first half of a sentence there may be heavy emphasis, and in the second half, a quickening of the movement. The rhythm in Huxley's own work is not so pronounced. He is more likely to choose some phrase and repeat it throughout an essay or over a considerable portion of a particular piece of fiction. This repetition can be seen in the "Subject Matter of Poetry," an essay from On the Margin, where the phrase "wops and bohunks" is reiterated, and in "Vulgarity in Literature," from Music at Night, where a quotation from Villiers de l'Isle-Adam recurs over a passage of several pages.

Huxley's style has been moulded by his genuine love of words, "man's first and most grandiose invention,"[27] and he evokes from them, in those patterns which he chooses, an unusual and unexpected beauty. Attracted by particular words and phrases, Huxley appears to permit his thought to follow the movement which they suggest. As Rémy de Gourmont contends:

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27 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. p. 216. (Crome Yellow)

> Un article...peut être un poème, dès qu'on lui a assigné le rythme sur lequel il déroulera sa brève pavane. Le rythme trouvé, tout est trouvé, car l'idée s'incorpore à son mouvement, et le peloton de fil ou de soie se forme sans que la conscience d'un travail soit quasi intervenue.[28]

Huxley agrees:

> ...in point of fact the man of letters does most of his work not by calculation, not by the application of formulas, but by aesthetic intuition. He has something to say, and he sets it down in the words which he finds most satisfying aesthetically. After the event comes the critic, who discovers that he was using a certain kind of literary device, which can be classified in its proper chapter of the cookery-book.[29]

It is paradoxical that Huxley's own contributions to the critical cookery books have had a marked effect upon his way of writing. He admits that his journalistic activities taught him that it was imperative to be entertaining at all costs. The result has been those fascinating and lively essays, the shower of unusual information, obscure classical allusions and extraordinary words, which make his novels and short stories sparkle.

In treating the short stories it is easier to follow Huxley's technical development if they are considered as a group rather than dispersed throughout the chronological study of the novels. The remainder of this chapter, therefore, is devoted to a discussion of the stories and of the

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28 Alexander Henderson, p. 240.

29 Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree. p. 80.

success which Huxley has achieved in the art of short-story writing.

In contrast to the novel, the short story requires a greater exercising of the artist's powers of selection. Effects must be produced more quickly and more emphatically. There cannot be the same play of emotion and diversity of impression which are an essential part of the longer narrative. Above all there must be "unity of tone."[30] Building a climax the story must keep fundamentally within a certain mood. This is as important to its success as is the "suspension of disbelief" of which it is a part, to both novel and short story. The mood is influenced by the degree or kind of reality with which the writer intends to portray life. The incidents he selects must be chosen because they are suitable to the tone of the story, and not simply because they are in fact true. There may be inconsistencies in life, but in literature they are only distractions. Nor is it the particular incident that is significant, but rather the general truth which is implied. This concern with "tone" and "incident" is particularly important in the short story because there cannot be the slow building up of effect, from events and characterization, which supports the structure of the novel. The

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30 Carl H. Grabo, The Art of the Short Story. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1913. p. 244.

short story writer may be dominated by the desire either to create a single impression, like the painter, or to convey a mixed impression within a unity of tone.

Edgar Allan Poe, who developed the short story on this continent, believed that the form should present a single unqualified impression; words, sentences, paragraphs should accumulate to create a preconceived effect. But this criterion applies to the short story in the most exclusive sense of the term. Huxley, like Conrad, is more inclined to favour the longer story, and to include as much relevant material as possible. He aims at more than a purely aesthetic interpretation, for he is concerned with those moral truths which Poe ignores but which Hawthorne includes, and with psychological truths, which Chekhov and Steinbeck emphasize in their stories. If the short story does not permit a very broad interpretation of the complexities of life, it has other compensatory features, for it enables the author to deal with meaningful fragments of experience, lacking the potentialities for a more extensive rendering, and to depict emotions which could not be sustained over the longer period of the novel.

The critics seem to pass as lightly over Huxley's short stories as they do his essays. Insisting that, above all, he is not a novelist, it is to his novels that they

continually turn. But it was Limbo, a volume of short stories published in 1920 after his poetry, that first aroused critical interest in Huxley's work. This volume paved the way for the more serious consideration of Crome Yellow followed by the brilliant success of Antic Hay.

Limbo displays many of the same characteristics as Crome Yellow. Each shows signs of irony, crypticism, and an appreciation of unusual words and phrases. In each the young intellectual faces the problems of the world, Denis, in Crome Yellow, Dick, in the "Farcical History of Richard Greenow," and Guy in "Happily Ever After," all prove how remarkably well Huxley could analyze the experiences of youth while still contemplating it at such close range.

In the "Farcical History of Richard Greenow" Huxley is not depicting a self-conscious scholar like Denis or Guy, but an abnormal young man who develops a split personality and, as a conscientious objector, leads a most peculiar dual life. The story is not Huxley's best by any means. It gives the impression of being too long drawn out, and it does not sustain the strange, yet entertaining mood which Dick's life at the university sets as the original key. The delightful Mrs.Cravister and other amusing characters gradually fade from the scene and it is difficult

to reconcile the story's dreadfully ironic ending with its comparatively innocuous beginning. It may present an interesting study in psychology or case history, but as a literary effort it never seems to progress from the particular incident to any universal implications.

The unities are ignored in the "Farcical History of Richard Greenow" and the story gives the impression of being much less closely integrated than "Happily Ever After,""The Bookshop," or "The Death of Lully," all in the same volume.

"The Death of Lully" observes the unities of time and place as all the action is restricted to a ship lolling lazily off the coast of Africa. The heat is intense, and the expectancy in the silence is brought screaming to life when Lully, a preacher, is persecuted by the villagers on the shore. The sailors bring him on board, dying, and his history is unfolded through the conversation which takes place between a young Spaniard, travelling home with his mistress, and the captain. Important for the prevailing sense of mystery by which it is surrounded, and the strange comparisons it involves, the story is one of contrast. The amorous young Spaniard's love-making is seen in a new light when Lully denounces sensuality and the self-division in man which leads to

corruption. Beside his asceticism the indulgence of the young man and the materialism of the captain seem despicable and yet understandable. This contrasting of passion and reason creates a mixed emotion, and the implication of the story is found in the captain's closing remark: "Lord...life is a tangled knot to unravel."[31]

The strange and mysterious qualities in "The Death of Lully" are never exploited as they would have been by Edgar Allan Poe. The atmosphere is modified by the intellectual and moral ingredients which Lully's remarks and presence contribute, and as a result, the story is closer to the fantastic tales of Hawthorne, with their Puritan shadows and symbolistic shades than to the purer supernaturalism of Poe.

In "Cynthia" and "Eupompus Gave Splendour to Art by Numbers" there is a sense of fantasy which touches neither weirdness nor morality. "Cynthia" is trivial, light and whimsical. Composed of flimsy material only suitable for that type of story which does not require any rationalization from the author, it illustrates a love of the fantastic which was typical of the "fin de siécle" and reminiscent of Oscar Wilde. The same spirit,

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31 Aldous Huxley, Limbo. London: Chatto & Windus. 1929. p. 292.

that passion for the unusual, is inherent in "Eupompus Gave Splendour to Art by Numbers." Here it is the phrase that attracts and upon which Huxley elaborates. The story gives him an opportunity to point out those vices to which the conscientious intellectual is susceptible, to introduce a number of classical allusions, and to display uncommon knowledge. It is a story over which culture casts its glow, but culture, says Huxley, is just an exalted kind of "family gossip" and he admits, "I enjoy writing that kind of gossip myself."[32] For this reason the novels and short stories usually contain at least one character who can, without any incongruity, discuss a variety of intellectual subjects.

"Happily Ever After" includes a number of characters well qualified to carry the cultural content of the story. Concerned like "Art by Numbers" with intellectuals, and like the "Farcical History of Richard Greenow" with an England at war,it consists of a contrasting of intelligences and a ruthlessly ironical picture of the home front.

By taking the "God's-eye view" and recording what is thought as well as said, Huxley is able to give excellent sketches of Mr.Petherton, a retired university professor,

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32 Charles J. Rolo, Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1947. p. viii.

who writes "meritorious, if not exactly brilliant" books, and Jacobsen, a former student, whose cleverness and scepticism still do not save him from displaying, like Petherton, an emotional stultification particularly obvious in his relationships with other characters. In contrast to his cynical superciliousness stands Guy, the fiancé of Petherton's daughter Marjorie, who is home on leave. Another self-conscious intellectual, like Denis in Crome Yellow, he struggles to understand himself and to realize his potentialities as a writer, if such potentialities do exist. He turns to Jacobsen for advice, but the scholar, like the sceptical sage, Mr.Scogan, who deflates Denis in Crome Yellow, is completely lacking in sympathy. Jacobsen counsels: "Follow your inclinations; or, better, go into a bank and make a lot of money."[33]

The gathering at Mr.Petherton's dinner table calls to mind Peacock's satires,and the conversation which ensues serves to heighten that impression. Through dialogue, the characters reveal themselves and draw out their partners, but never come to any real understanding of one another. As Huxley explains in defining Wholly-Truthful art, hints are given and from them the complete picture is drawn. For this reason the process of selection in the short story is vital, and as the story is compressed the importance of discrimination increases.

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33 Aldous Huxley, Limbo.London: Chatto & Windus. 1929. p. 157.

In "Happily Ever After" there is the same struggle between passion and reason, sensual and ideal love, found in Huxley's poetry, and more frequently in his novels. Guy envies George, who is younger and more attractive, his amorous adventures, but when the same opportunity presents itself to him, he cannot bring himself to take advantage of the situation. Nor is Marjorie likely to force him to become a man of action, as she is not the extreme sensualist that so many of the women Huxley portrays appear to be.

After Guy returns to the front and dies of wounds, Marjorie easily transfers her affections to George. But not without making an attempt to justify herself:

> "Perhaps our darling Guy is with us here even now," said Marjorie, with a look of ecstasy on her face.
> "Perhaps he is," George echoed.[34]

The irony with which Huxley instills this closing passage is venomous, and he infers that the only person who is deeply shaken by the death is the supposedly impassive sceptic, Jacobsen. It is worth remarking that Huxley treats this situation in a manner quite different from that which such a writer as Hemingway would have chosen. His lack of experience in actual warfare makes it impossible for him to draw any comparisons between fighting and the

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34 Ibid., p. 191.

atmosphere at home, or to show in Guy many of the emotions that such a comparison might be expected to arouse. On the whole, his presentation is as detached as that which Jacobsen usually manages to maintain, and the current of satire and disillusion is strong.

Huxley's next book of short stories, Mortal Coils, published in 1922, gives evidence of a much wider experience and greater insight than Limbo. There are few traces of the effects of war-time disillusion in this volume, and it is concerned, as the title implies, with a mocking of human foibles in general. In "The Gioconda Smile" Huxley deals, for the first time, with a subject which recurs frequently throughout his fiction, that is, the plight of a man who cannot free himself from his passions although he realizes that he will never find peace or satisfaction in his self-indulgence. Mr.Hutton, like Gumbril in Antic Hay, is "confident in the powers of his seduction and his moustache."[35] He basks in the admiration of his invalid wife, his coy and affectionate mistress, and a would-be intellectual, Miss Spence. In encouraging Miss Spence's arch advances Mr.Hutton makes a tragic mistake, for, in order to facilitate a proposal which she has no doubt will be forthcoming, Miss Spence

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35 Aldous Huxley, Mortal Coils. London: Chatto & Windus. 1922. p. 11.

carefully eradicates the only obstacle in evidence, Mr.Hutton's wife. After his wife's death Mr.Hutton marries Doris, his mistress, and Miss Spence, out of spite, causes an investigation to be made which results in his being convicted of murder.

The horrible irony of fate is the idea which dominates the story. Nemesis waits patiently while Mr.Hutton looks longingly at Neapolitan peasants, contemplates his own slow descent into a sensual inferno, and finally realizes that he deserves the end which is imminent. The scales of justice are righted when Dr. Libbard, who seems like the psychiatrist in Eliot's The Cocktail Party, to know everything, and to whom any significance may be attributed, calmly assumes that Miss Spence has murdered Mrs.Hutton, and writes out a prescription for a sleeping-draught.

Huxley reveals the characters in this story with subtlety. Janet Spence is well established in the mind of the reader before she is ever met, by a description of her room as Mr.Hutton sees it:

> Photographs of Greek statuary, photographs of the Roman Forum, coloured prints of Italian masterpieces, all very safe and well known. Poor, dear Janet, what a prig - what an intellectual snob![36]

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36 Ibid., p. 1.

Mr.Hutton's character, on the other hand, is illuminated by his relationship with the three women, as well as through his own thoughts. These thoughts, like those of many other persons in Huxley's novels and poems, continue to function even while Mr.Hutton is supposedly succumbing to strong emotion. Embracing his mistress, he is still acutely conscious:

> ...Doris, Doris, Doris. The scientific appellation of the sea-mouse, he was thinking as he kissed the throat she offered him, white and extended like the throat of a victim awaiting the sacrificial knife. The sea-mouse was a sausage with iridescent fur: very peculiar.[37]

This passage also exemplifies one of the methods Huxley employs for mixing the flavour of his encyclopaedic knowledge with the other ingredients of his fiction.

In "The Tillotson Banquet" Huxley creates a mixed impression. Both satirical and pathetic, it tells the story of an old artist given the brief glory of one evening's recognition after years of obscurity. Here the unpleasant truth with which Huxley presents the reader lies in the fact that, although the stage is set for the complete transformation of the old man, Tillotson remains the unfortunate figure he was at the outset. Only Spode, a young writer, really befriends the painter. Lord Badgery, a patron of the

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37 Ibid., p. 10.

arts, who makes this banquet possible, finds nothing to admire in Tillotson except his extinguished artistic ability. Spode visits him frequently and allows him to reminisce about Haydon, his master, and happier days. But Spode is embarrassed by the sincerities which the old man sometimes expresses, sincerities which lead him to realize the futility of his youth and cleverness, to feel his lack of understanding and faith.

> He saw himself suddenly as a boy with a rattle scaring birds - rattling his noisy cleverness, waving his arms in ceaseless and futile activity, never resting in his efforts to scare away the birds that were always trying to settle in his mind. And what birds! wide-winged and beautiful, all those serene thoughts and faiths and emotions that only visit minds that have humbled themselves to quiet....But then, was it possible to alter one's life? Wasn't it a little absurd to risk a conversion?[38]

There are other exceptional images in the story besides this exquisite metaphor of the winged birds of thought, for Tillotson's eyelids beat "like the wings of an imprisoned moth, over his filmy eyes,"[39] when he first comes into the glare of the banquet from his dingy, dark cellar.

In "The Tillotson Banquet" Huxley scatters his classical allusions through Spode's tour of Badgery's gallery, and in the next story, "Green Tunnels," strange learning, interesting bits of information and odd quotations are

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38 Ibid., pp. 140-141.

39 Ibid., p. 150.

conveyed through Mr.Topes. Another scholar who lives in a world that is never quite real but always associated with literature and the past, he forms a strange contrast to the youthful Barbara who inhabits a dream world of quite another sort. Each travels along his own "green tunnel" and, despite Mr.Topes' attempts at communication, the parallel straight lines of their adventures in imagination never meet. The Italian scene is understandingly described as are the changes in mood, which the alternately stormy and clear atmosphere produce. To further the sense of fantasy which envelops the entire tale, Huxley introduces a repetition of "O Clara d'Ellébeuse," with all its rhythmical and romantic connotations.

Quite the opposite effect is achieved in "Nuns at Luncheon," which moves at a much brisker tempo. It describes a luncheon engagement at which Miss Penny, a journalist, tells the story of a seduced nun, to another writer, who is also the narrator. Punctured by the narrator's thoughts and by the waiter's interruptions, the incident is related by Miss Penny with an amazing lack of sympathy. Coolly judging the tragic incident's potentialities as fiction, she speculates:

> And then there's this psychology and introspection business; and construction and good narrative and word pictures and le mot juste and verbal magic and striking metaphors.[40]

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40 Ibid., p. 220.

And she continues:

> ...then, finally, and to begin with - Alpha and Omega - there's ourselves: two professionals gloating, with an absolute lack of sympathy, over a seduced nun, and speculating on the best method of turning her misfortunes into cash.[41]

This comment establishes the original intention of the story and attracts attention to the lines along which it is constructed. The metaphors which spring to the mind of the young writer, as he contemplates Miss Penny, are very striking. He likens her earrings to "corpses hanging in chains," her eyes to a hare's, her laughter to brass. Altogether she emerges as a terrifying woman. His thoughts also reveal his own character. He is relieved that Miss Penny does not press him into a discussion of fundamental questions which would demand that the episode of the nun be taken seriously and considered from a humanitarian point of view. It is this strangely cold manner of analyzing the tragic situation described that heightens its drama. As a story within a story it observes the unities and, composed largely of dialogue, it produces a compact, complete effect with an almost journalistic flavour.

Little Mexican, published in 1924, followed Crome Yellow and the more popular Antic Hay. In its stories there is a development which corresponds to that of the novels and which indicates a pronounced tendency to relate to the particular incident its more universal implications.

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41 Ibid., p. 220.

"Uncle Spencer," the longest of the stories in the new volume, represents Huxley at his best in short story writing. As John Freeman says in an article of 1927, "of all Mr.Huxley's work in fiction, it would be hard to exaggerate the comparative value of this."[42]

In this narrative Huxley relates the history of a man who lived in a confined idealistic world until the war rudely shattered his nineteenth century optimism, and the peaceful provincialism of his life in Longres. Uncle Spencer and the pre-war Longres are seen through the eyes of his young nephew who spends many of his school vacations with his uncle. This situation allows Huxley to indulge in the most vivid descriptions of train trips, arrivals, the chiming of the city bells, the early morning market and the traditional kermesses. Huxley pictures the boy's arrival at the square, after the ride through the winding streets from the station, metaphorically, and supports his image with music, which makes the impression of the reader that much more full.

> Like a ship floating out from between the jaws of a canyon into a wide and sunlit lake, our carriage emerged upon the Grand' Place. And the moment was solemn, breathlessly anticipated and theatrical, as though we were gliding in along the suspended calling of the oboes and bassoons, and the violins trembling with amorous anxiety all around us...[43]

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42 John Freeman, "Aldous Huxley." The London Mercury. Vol. 15. February 1927. p. 394.

43 Aldous Huxley, Little Mexican. London: Chatto & Windus. 1948. pp. 18-19.

First aware of the possibilities of music as a means of heightening impressions in descriptive writing, Huxley was later to discover how successfully the principles of musical composition could be applied to literary technique.

One characteristic of "Uncle Spencer," which is not noticeable in the stories of Mortal Coils, is an inclination to develop parallel digressions from a main theme. These digressions from particular observations may take the form of discussions of generalities or become merely excuses for the conveying of pieces of information. This might hamper the progress of the story but actually makes the kind of story that it is, not particularly concise or to the point, but rambling, going off at brief tangents, cultural and fanciful, actually a long story, not a short one.

The delightfully irrelevant fragments of knowledge which Huxley introduces give a garnishing that makes the tale particularly attractive at least to those who share Huxley's passion for obscure facts and fascinating analogies. Of the generalities which he often interjects, countless examples could be given, but they do serve a specific purpose for they reflect the development which takes place in the mind of the narrator who looks back and relates in retrospect his early admiration for his Uncle Spencer, revealing in his comments the cynical, tolerant attitude which he has gradually adopted.

Huxley gives an excellent character sketch of Uncle Spencer, impetuous, active, detached from current ideas, interested in everything, yet not actually well-informed on any subject. Always quick to draw comparisons, Huxley is reminded of the scholar who specializes in obscure subjects and pores over outdated books, or of the intense Hyde Park orator who pursues a thousand topics but has no idea of the analogies existing between them, no ability to discriminate. Uncle Spencer is a man who possesses a tremendous amount of information but no real culture. This Huxley fears is the plight of our entire generation, for, as he explains elsewhere, it is "not with fragments of the daily paper that we shore up our ruins."[44]

Uncle Spencer's housekeeper, Mlle Leeauw, is greatly impressed by his learning. Huxley illustrates in her the respect of the lower classes for education. She swallows greedily those bits of information which Uncle Spencer bestows upon her but, of course, she has nothing to relate them to:

> ...there emerged, speck-like in the boundless blank ocean of her ignorance, a few little islands of strange knowledge.[45]

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44 Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree. p. 43.

45 Aldous Huxley, Little Mexican. p. 47.

However, Mlle Leeauw is a wise woman and although in Uncle Spencer's presence she is always attentive and interested, in the company of her own class she becomes a robust, enthusiastic peasant. Her ugly sister's marriage to a devil dancer produces little effect upon Uncle Spencer's nephew, for he is too young to be occupied with idle, unperceptive gossip.

It is interesting to observe how differently Uncle Spencer and his nephew react to the outbreak of war. The older man refuses to believe it, the younger is exhilarated. War comes, and Uncle Spencer and Alphonse, the devil dancer, are interned in Brussels. The rest of the story centres largely on their life there and Uncle Spencer's infatuation with Emmy Wendel, a "male impersonator" and fellow prisoner.

In this exposing of characters to a new environment, Huxley resembles Conrad, but, as John Freeman observes:

> ...what adds an overplus of interest, and scarcely diminishes the reader's admiration, is the witness of "Uncle Spencer" to the subtle influence of Marcel Proust.[46]

For Huxley shows Proust simplified, moralized, as applied to the common people. This clear, rich interpretation is most refreshing after his prolonged examination of the intellectual. It proves the diversity of his gifts and the depth of his powers of observation.

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46 John Freeman, "Aldous Huxley." The London Mercury. Vol.15. February 1927. p. 395.

"Little Mexican," the title story, is worthy of mention as the scene is laid in Italy, which implies those vivid word pictures of the colourful landscape Huxley loves to draw. The story is interesting for the character sketches it contains and a morbid sense of deterioration which dominates its development. Of greater appeal is "Young Archimedes," the history of an Italian child who, untutored, excitedly expounds the beauties of the Tuscan scene, and in the boy's love of music Huxley finds excuse for discussing another of his favourite topics.

In 1930 Huxley published Brief Candles. At this time he was under the influence of D.H.Lawrence and the tenets of life worship can be identified in many passages, as well as indirectly inspiring the ideas around which the stories are built.

A criticism of spiritualism and of the desire to be more than human lies at the back of "Ghawdron." The story of Ghawdron is recounted to the narrator by his friend, Tilney, who, in many ways, resembles Huxley. Tilney admits that he is a thinker, that he has a passion for ideas and that he cannot manage personal relationships. He confesses that he has mostly lived his life "posthumously," after the event, in reflections and conversations. Always despising Chawdron,

he consented to write his "autobiography" because he needed the money to keep a mistress. Following this explanation of the circumstances Tilney proceeds to relate the history of Chawdron, "the sentimental Pickwickian child," who was the victim of two women, the first a regular man-eating creature disguising herself as a dear little child, the second a bovaristic and spiritualistic horror Chawdron called "my little Fairy." The whole affair revolted Tilney. He saw in both Chawdron and himself those failings which only life-worship can remedy. They had not lived life fully on every plane. Tilney was prey to bitches for: "Experientia doesn't, in spite of Mrs.Micawber's Papa. Nor does knowledge."[47] Chawdron was prey to sentimentality and infantilism.

Cryptically, and with appropriate ironical comments, Tilney describes the "little Fairy" as one of the results of Chawdron's self-stultification and concern with New Guinea Oil. The narrator encourages Tilney in his discussions and in the unfolding of the story he acts as a unifying element. It is also important to note that in a number of passages where particular emphasis is desired, Huxley quotes from Shakespeare which, as he says of T.H.Huxley's frequent references to the Bible, gives a dignity to the passages.

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47 Aldous Huxley, Brief Candles. London: Chatto & Windus. 1930. p. 21.

On the whole "Chawdron" is created out of psychology rather than incident for, as Huxley would point out, he is anxious to play the part of a "natural historian" and his adventures in life-worship would contribute much to this end.

In "The Rest Cure" a spoiled young woman married to an incomplete intellectual takes for a lover a young full-blooded Italian. Lonely and misunderstood she is so distraught when he deserts her that she commits suicide. The life-worshipper would lay the blame for this tragedy upon the deficiencies of her sheltered unwholesome childhood, and her preoccupied unsympathetic husband.

Technically the most spectacular device Huxley employs is the variation of atmosphere which greatly influences the action. The slashing of a storm and the peacefulness of the evening in which the Italian changes from friend to lover, are both evoked with apparent effortlessness.

D.H.Lawrence would have transformed this psychological study by his unusual emotional awareness. With Huxley, a strain of irony and mocking detachment makes the reader constantly the observer, rarely the participator.

"The Claxtons" is more important for the development of personality it presents and its psychological inflections,

than for its technique. But, "After the Fireworks" is remarkable for both.

As in "Chawdron," the central character in "After the Fireworks" is an intellectual, a writer named Miles Fanning. The fact that he is such a creative person gives Huxley ample excuse to grant him original thoughts and ideas. This in its turn leads to the most fascinating conversations on such subjects as Etruscan art, the human soul, literature and culture. Fanning's remarks naturally enough parallel Huxley's opinions. Culture, he claims, is "knowing and thinking about things that have absolutely nothing to do with us."[48] When you are without culture:

> ...every fact's an isolated, unconnected fact, every experience is unique and unprecedented. Your world's made up of a few bright points floating about inexplicably in the midst of an unfathomable darkness.[49]

The charming young lady, Pamela, to whom these remarks are addressed is totally without culture. Every experience is unique for her because she wants it to be that way. She sees herself as a kind of heroine, preferably from one of Fanning's novels.

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48 Ibid., p. 231.

49 Ibid., p. 233.

Throughout the story Huxley gives us exciting descriptions, such as the impression Fanning gathers walking down the Via Condotti:

> The air was streaked with invisible bars of heat and cold. Coolness came flowing out of shadowed doorways, and at every transverse street the sun breathed fiercely. Like walking through the ghost of a zebra, he thought.[50]

With brief touches Huxley gives a brilliant picture of the Italian street scene:

> The sunlight was stinging hot and dazzling. The flower venders on the steps sat in the midst of great explosions of colour.[51]

He describes the effervescent fireworks:

> Magical flowers in a delirium of growth, the rockets mounted on their slender stalks and, ah! high up above the Pincian hill, dazzlingly, deafeningly, in a bunch of stars and a thunder-clap, they blossomed.[52]

After the fateful evening of the fireworks Pamela becomes Fanning's mistress. They are constantly together but she discovers that, for him, she is only a kind of abstraction. As she feels the glow wearing off the romance, Fanning's desire for her grows more intense. Finally he is taken ill, and at the close of the story, she prepares to leave him for a younger companion. The ending is inevitable, from the time that Fanning, intending to

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50 Ibid., p. 169.

51 Ibid., p. 171.

52 Ibid., pp. 270-271.

leave her, writes a letter explaining that the differences in their ages and friends will be too great, a letter which he throws away, the story builds towards a realization of all the things he predicts.

The story is almost a short novel. The sparkle of the early days gives way to a dull misery and by little incidents and allusions Huxley illustrates the incompatibility of the two temperaments, the inevitability of disillusion for their romance based on imagination and sensuality.

The most remarkable stories in Huxley's latest assemblage, Two or Three Graces, of 1933, are the title story and "Half-holiday." "The Monocle" and "Fairy Godmother" which complete the volume are character sketches. Concerned with unpleasant, affected people, they lack the appeal of "Half-holiday" where a day in spring, loneliness, and the vivid imagination of an unattractive boy are the essential elements. The story is most noteworthy for the sparkling kaleidoscope which it gives of the transformation in nature and humanity brought about by the change of season.

"Two or Three Graces" is another satirical exposé of the dilemma of a woman who sees herself in some particular role so completely that all her actions become subordinated to it. The narrator's part is played by

Wilkes, a music critic, who meets Grace Peddley through her brother, a bore, and her husband, a more persistent bore. He takes her to concerts and discovers that she is becoming a music critic too; introduces her to his friend, Rodney Gregg, and she becomes a sophisticated young modern, as well as Rodney's mistress. When Rodney's ardours begin to cool, she becomes attached to Kingham. Kingham has been considered by some critics to be a picture of D.H.Lawrence as Huxley first knew him. In the story he rants, raves, lashes himself into a passion and lacerates himself, all for effect.

In complete contrast to Grace is Wilkes' wife, Catherine, one of the few sympathetic portraits of a woman that Huxley has drawn. Sensible and kind, Catherine can understand Grace but she cannot help her. The implication at the close of the story is that Grace will continue to play her bovaristic part.

In an article on Aldous Huxley, G.M.A.Grube refers to "Two or Three Graces" as, "perhaps the best story Mr.Huxley has written,"[53] and goes on to even more rapturous praise when he says; "Able though they are, Crome Yellow and Antic Hay are but preliminary sketches when compared with 'Two or Three Graces'". This is perhaps a slight exaggeration, although the story is admirable, being so well integrated and so carefully kept within the unity of one tone. Dealing

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53 G.M.A.Grube, "Aldous Huxley." The Canadian Forum. Vol.10. No.119. August 1930. p. 401.

with an assortment of extreme personalities it shows the reaction of each upon Grace. But, brilliant though the story may be, it still lacks the positive quality and the more profound social significance of Antic Hay, nor does it permit such an ingenious adaptation of technique to material.

In his short stories Huxley brings to light ideas which are developed to greater proportions within the wider scope of his novels. Concerned with "man and his relations with the world about him" Huxley's stories most frequently interpret particular aspects of human psychology, and do not so much represent an escape from the world as a more careful scrutiny of it. Long, and even rambling, they show many of the same characteristics as the novels; the digressions, the generalities, the delight in every kind of discussion which the essays developed, and the appreciation of words, the casual apocalyptic revelations of beauty in thought and description first inspired by the poems. Until 1933, when Huxley appears to have abandoned this form, the progress of the short stories paralleled that of the novels, representing the small shoots and occasional blossoms of those more ambitious creations.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY NOVELS

"I am writing a novel in the manner of Peacock,"[1] said Huxley in 1920, when he was at work on his first novel, Crome Yellow. In taking Peacock for his model he displayed an acute awareness of his own artistic abilities. Early in his career he appreciated his limitations and those forms which he has subsequently employed have allowed him to express his mature judgments with as much candour as he recorded those first frank impressions in Crome Yellow.

In Peacock's "world of talk," the characters exist to give opinions, the action consists of conversation, the structure is supported by dialogue. It is a world made for satire, peopled with personified ideas, caricatures, and an occasional well-rounded character; a world with which Aldous Huxley felt an immediate affinity. Creating it, Peacock had drawn his principles from "the really great writers of comic fiction, such favourites of his as Aristophanes, Petronius, Rabelais, Voltaire,"[2] who, he asserted, had placed ideas before characters in their works.

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1 Raymond Weaver, "Aldous Huxley." The Bookman. New York: Vol.60. November 1924. p. 266.

2 J.B.Priestley, Thomas Love Peacock. London: Macmillan & Co. 1927. p. 133.

He was familiar with the eighteenth century cônte and that literary device by which the author scatters his own witty comments throughout the narrative. He knew the polished description, the casual yet pointed dialogue. But turning his observations into fiction he was hampered by a limited imagination. It made his world artificial, for he depicted only a certain stratum of society, although he displayed a variety of ideas. He confined action to country houses and the conversation to a few characters.

In Crome Yellow, Huxley, like Peacock, isolates his characters. Gathered together at Crome,their conversations and reflections enable him to exhibit his sophistication and wit. It was a form of dealing with the novel which suited Huxley's purpose admirably, and which he duly credited to Peacock, but as an experiment it had been tried before within the range of Huxley's experience with extraordinary success. South Wind, which Norman Douglas wrote in the mellow, pre-1914-war days, had actually started a trend for novels in the conversational manner. He favoured the same artificially confined settings, the groups of strange, incongruous people, without common emotions or thoughts, and the same controversies in the form of conversation as Huxley adopted. Although he would undoubtedly be familiar

with Norman Douglas's work, this need not imply any conscious imitation on Huxley's part, for he had such a commanding creative genius and such a forceful personality that he would have come to his own "novel of ideas" in any event.

The artist who elects to employ this type of novel must find that the emphasis which it places on dialogue makes it imperative that the dialogue be of an exceptional quality, in order to compensate for the wider scope and elaborate story-telling of the more conventional forms. Peacock overcame such difficulties by developing a style of which Shelley said, "I know not how to praise sufficiently the lightness, chastity, and strength of the language of the whole,"[3] and Mr.Priestley adds,

> His writing always seems almost colourless and stilted. Yet his style has a distinct flavour of its own, and he is really just as personal a stylist as a Lamb or a Carlyle.[4]

Peacock's characters show the same precision. They talk in brief phrases, both "delicately balanced and full of antithesis." But their arguments are often intentionally ridiculous and so their precision and wit create that sense of irony which runs through all Peacock's "novels of talk."

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3 Ibid., p. 165.

4 Ibid., p. 165.

In Huxley's works this irony has become even more obvious and appears to be heightened by the straining of ideas through different characters, which is bound to emphasize and contrast human foibles and paradoxes as well as virtues. Mr.Priestley elaborates on this point with reference to Peacock. He comments,

> If, setting aside the obvious absurdities, you miss this constant undercurrent of irony, this faint mockery in the very neatness of the dialogue, this grave mischievousness in the style itself, a style like an old dry wine, you will probably fail to understand....the enduring appeal of Peacock.[5]

It is equally true that anyone who misses the irony in Huxley will find his novels very strange and sour. He goes far beyond Peacock and Douglas in both irony and satire. Although with Peacock and Huxley satire is always tinged with humour, in Huxley it is an essential element, in Peacock a diversion. Both are in their way thwarted idealists, Peacock on a political level, Huxley on a moral one. Huxley admits that: "A little ruthless laughter clears the air as nothing else can do."[6] The mischievous Peacock is genuinely amused, he insists:

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5 Ibid., p. 166.

6 Aldous Huxley, On the Margin. London: Chatto & Windus. 1923. p. 201.

> The world is a stage, and life is a farce, and he that laughs most has most profit of the performance. The worst thing is good enough to be laughed at, though it be good for nothing else; and the best thing, though it be good for something else, is good for nothing better.[7]

In Norman Douglas there is that satirical quality which is often associated with this form of writing, but he has kept it pitched to a much lower key than Huxley. His work does not reflect the post-war pessimism that has trapped Huxley and his characters, but like Peacock, Douglas finds life a much more carefree affair. In Peacock any argument may be interrupted by a call to "push the bottle round," and in South Wind there is a great deal of bottle pushing too. Huxley has little in common with Douglas' carefree inebriates, and although he accuses Jonson of missing the chance to be "one of the sublime inebriates"[8] he is by no means one of these himself. In fact, the closest Huxley ever comes to adopting such a casual,romantic attitude as the term suggests, is in Crome Yellow.

The significance of Huxley's first novel, Crome Yellow, is brought out by a description which Mr.Scogan, one of the principal characters, gives of a similar first attempt by the average young writer:

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7 J.B,Priestley. p. 200.

8 Aldous Huxley, On the Margin. p. 194.

> "Of course," Mr.Scogan groaned. "I'll describe the plot for you. Little Percy, the hero, was never good at games, but he was always clever. He passes through the usual public school and the usual university and comes to London, where he lives among the artists. He is bowed down with melancholy thought; he carries the whole weight of the universe upon his shoulders. He writes a novel of dazzling brilliance; he dabbles delicately in Amour and disappears, at the end of the book, into the luminous Future."[9]

Huxley's novel avoids what have become literary banalities. He does draw upon his own experience freely, in fact his characters frequently represent aspects of his own personality, but he continually preserves a mocking detachment like that of Peacock, although lacking the "lovable" quality which Peacock preserves. Huxley surveys his own thoughts and reactions as he does those of his creations, curiously but satirically, from a number of angles. Often he seems to derive grim satisfaction from lacerating some already tender spot in his own consciousness, and this appears to be a part of his rueful refusal to take himself seriously. He finds people too strange and fascinating to remain entirely pre-occupied with himself.

The characters themselves, rather than their actions, are of particular importance to Huxley's novels, for they present, through their dialogue, those ideas which he finds equally alive, equally curious. He gives evidence of a clear

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9 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. An Omnibus of Aldous Huxley's Books. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933. pp. 30-31. (Crome Yellow)

understanding of psychological facts and if he does not appear to be capable of a deep emotional interpretation, he does contrive a brilliant exposé and juxtaposition of personal peculiarities. He shows his characters as they see themselves and as others see them. By his method they reveal themselves in the part of both participator and spectator.

The characters in Crome Yellow are indicative of those which compose the dramatis personae of the later novels. They are in many ways decided types expressing definite ideas, but they retain enough flesh and blood to avoid a serious comparison with the personification of vices and virtues in the early "morality plays" or the dramatization of the "humours" with which Ben Jonson was engaged.

Denis, in Crome Yellow, may be considered the first of a series of central characters who embody the failings of the intellectual, and are more particularly identifiable with Huxley. In this novel Denis represents the intellectual in his attempt to become a man of action. For this reason he has been considered by some critics to be reminiscent of Hamlet, but apart from his chronic indecision and his momentary desire to fling himself from the battlements of Crome, he is, in comparison, a very unemotional and normal young man. Despite the frustrations

he believes are besetting him on every side, Huxley assures us that a few moments after Denis climbs into bed, he is always blissfully unconscious.

Introduced to the reader gradually over about nine pages, Denis is twenty-three, a poet and a French scholar. He is also in love with Anne, who, when she appears, proves to be the active, elusive pagan that Denis longs to become. Denis is first met travelling to Crome and is first thwarted as a man of action when he tries to demand immediate attention at the station and is quickly deflated by the station-master. When he arrives at Crome the other guests have already assembled to create a country-house gathering in the true Peacockian tradition. Mrs.Priscilla Wimbush is hostess, a forceful woman whose passions are astrology and horse-racing, which, strangely enough, she finds closely related. Mr.Wimbush, her husband, is a scholar absorbed in writing a history of Crome, and for whom: "The proper study of mankind is books."[10] A colourless man, he is the kind of student engaged in useless study that Huxley diagnoses as an intellectual invalid. Mr.Scogan, Anne, Mary Bracegirdle, Jenny and Gombauld, are all introduced simultaneously. Ivor, who represents the complete antithesis of Denis, a flighty and artistic man of action, appears dramatically

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10 Ibid., p. 289.

in the middle of the novel and actually in a cloud of glory.

> "Look!" said Anne suddenly, and pointed. On the opposite side of the valley, at the crest of the ridge, a cloud of dust flushed by the sunlight to rosy gold was moving rapidly along the sky-line. "It's Ivor. One can tell by the speed."11

Also in contrast to Denis is Mr.Barbecue-Smith, author of such a valuable spiritual guide as "Pipe Lines to the Infinite," who receives a more sarcastic treatment than any of the other characters. A puff-ball of elaborately expressed and divinely inspired aphorisims, the most affected of literary snobs, he attempts to impart the secret of his own success to Denis. Mary Bracegirdle is a young snob of another sort. A would-be intellectual who swallows all the current "first-rate" culture without digesting it and constantly seeks an excuse to introduce her up-to-date knowledge of the arts and of Freud into the conversation. Anne, on the other hand, is quite normal and, for one of Huxley's characters, remarkably unassuming and unselfconscious. She is closer to Catherine of "Two or Three Graces" than to Myra Viveash of Antic Hay.

Jenny Mullion, a deaf girl, produces a unique effect upon Denis. The red note-book in which she draws the most outrageously perceptive caricatures symbolizes for him the

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11 Ibid., p. 153.

outside world's awareness of his existence, and her caricature of him is so accurate that it shakes him deeply. Huxley often uses this method of revealing character, as in Time Must Have a Stop there is the significant sketch which Mrs.Thwale shows to Mr.Cardan, and in Point Counter Point the caricatures of the "eminent contemporaries." In both Crome Yellow and Antic Hay the paintings of the two artists, Gombauld and Lypiatt, are analyzed and their intentions explained. Robust and lascivious, Gombauld's characteristics are repeated in Coleman of Antic Hay and John Bidlake of Point Counter Point. In this novel, like Anne and Ivor, he represents an active contrast to the passive Denis.

Of all the characters, Mr.Scogan is the most vital to the exchange of ideas which constitutes the greater part of the narrative. Introducing him, Huxley employs zoological terms to heighten the impression he wishes to create.

> In appearance Mr.Scogan was like one of those extinct bird-lizards of the Tertiary. His nose was beaked, his dark eye had the shining quickness of a robin's. But there was nothing soft or gracious or feathery about him. The skin of his wrinkled brown face had a dry and scaly look; his hands were the hands of a crocodile. His movements were marked by the lizard's discon-certingly abrupt clockwork speed; his speech was thin, fluty, and dry.[12]

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12 Ibid., p. 26.

Mr.Scogan is important because he conveys many of Huxley's personal convictions and much of his self-criticism. Through Mr.Scogan, Huxley can express his sentiments without running the risk of "literary vulgarity" or "insincerity" which they might involve if revealed through a less eccentric figure. Mr.Scogan discusses suffering, Amour, intellectual aristocracies, architecture, the Caesars,and the imaginary Tales of Knochespotch. In one passage Mr.Scogan's remarks prove that Huxley had in mind, even at this time, the possibility of such a future state as he dramatizes in his Brave New World, a passage which Alexander Henderson tells us was first suggested by an essay of Leigh Hunt's.

In one of his discussions with Mr.Scogan, Denis evinces a genuine love of words, and he explains that the test of a literary mind is an ability to appreciate them.

> The technical, verbal part of literature is simply a development of magic. Words are man's first and most grandiose invention. With language he created a whole new universe; what wonder if he loved words and attributed power to them! With fitted, harmonious words the magicians summoned rabbits out of empty hats and spirits from the elements. Their descendants, the literary men, still go on with the process, morticing their verbal formulas together and, before the power of the finished spell, trembling with delight and awe. Rabbits out of empty hats? No, their spells are more subtly powerful, for they evoke emotions out of empty minds.[13]

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13 Ibid., pp. 215-216.

This quotation is contained in a longer passage where over a number of pages the paradox of the meaning and beauty of "carminative" is reviewed. An example of Huxley's use of repetition and the provocative word, the passage is brought to a close when Mr.Scogan unsympathetically advises a "mental carminative" for Denis.

Huxley again uses this repetition of an unusual word to give an amusing, ironic cast to the staid Mr. Bodiham's sermon. Here the word "knops" is introduced over and over again. It would seem that the comments Huxley makes in his essay on T.H.Huxley might fittingly be applied to himself. He says,

> From the neat antithesis to the odd and laughter-provoking word — Huxley used every device for the expression of sarcasm and irony.[14]

To add to this glaze of irony, which overlays Crome Yellow, Huxley often employs caustic and cryptic comments. But in general the spirit of the novel is never as bitter as in those that followed, or as in some of the poems and short stories which preceded it. There is a note of cheerfulness which will not be suppressed.

The slight plot which the narrative contains develops around Denis and his desire to become a pagan,

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14 Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree. London: Chatto & Windus. 1936. p. 77.

a theme which comes to maturity within the wider scope of Point Counter Point. Denis complains to Anne that he is labouring under "twenty tons of ratiocination," and although he wants above all to make her love him, he flounders so that all he can evoke from her is pity. When finally, urged by Mary, he decides to go away and sends a telegram recalling himself to London, Anne looks so genuinely distressed that he is convinced it was an error, but to save his pride, is forced to depart.

Composed of events quite probable at any summer house party, the main technical grace of Crome Yellow lies in the distribution of those events to present what Mr.Henderson calls "a composition in rondo form."[15] He believes the principal melody is based on "A,B,A,C,A,D,etc," where A represents the theme of Denis and his personal problems and B,C,D the supplementary themes of the other characters. These related themes would include the discourses of Mr.Scogan, the arrival and departure of Mr.Barbecue-Smith and Ivor Lombard, the troubled reflections of Mr.Bodiham, the parson, and his sermon on "knops", the two stories told by Mr.Wimbush and the excitement of Crome Fair.

Although it is from the mind rather than the senses that Huxley wishes to awaken a response, he still

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15 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1935. p. 133.

cannot resist the temptation to dwell upon the charm of the gardens and architecture of Crome, the colour and confusion of Crome Fair. He proves irrevocably that he can be a story teller with the dramatic tale of the dwarfs, like some fragment of Wilde or Beardsley, and the story of the spiritual Miss Lapith's marriage to George Wimbush. The baroque effect which all these added elements produce is further strengthened by glimpses of the parapet of Crome under a "gibbous" moon, with peacocks strutting on the lawn and the chaste symmetry of garden and pool finely etched in the pale light.

The characters do not develop within the structure of Crome Yellow, no wide social implications are involved, the group portrayed is far from representative, and the mood of the times is not strongly felt. Yet idyllic and unusual this novel possesses that "lovable" quality which T.E.Lawrence felt Huxley's later successes lacked. As Alexander Henderson so aptly expressed it:

> Huxley's other novels have more matter in them, a wider range, a greater complexity of pattern, but none has excelled his first in grace, in Mozartian lightness of touch.[16]

From Crome Yellow it is possible to foresee the path which the later novels are to follow. Using Peacock as a

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16 Ibid., p. 135.

model, and writing a "novel of ideas," Huxley has shown dissatisfaction with the simple straightforward narrative. Rather, he has chosen a form which emphasizes what E.M. Forster refers to in his Aspects of the Novel as the "value" rather than the regular progression of events, or time element, in fiction. By "values" Mr.Forster means those moments which are remembered outside of their place in time, moments which stand forth, days, months, even years, when reconsidered.

> "What the story does," says Mr.Forster, "is to narrate the life in time. And what the entire novel does — if it is a good novel— is to include the life by values as well."[17]

There has been amongst novelists of Huxley's generation and his general tendencies, a trend towards the emphasis of the life by values and towards experimentation in matters of technique. This has been particularly noticeable in the work of James Joyce, and his Ulysses is one of the best examples of that radical departure from the "well-made novel"[18] of Henry James. The "modernists," like Huxley, who followed Joyce's lead, found that the patterns which the tradition of the "well-made novel" presented, were too confined to permit the protean interpretation of contemporary man and his psyche which they wished to give. They had new ideas and

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17 Ibid., p. 41.

18 Joseph Warren Beach. The Twentieth Century Novel. New York: D.Appleton-Century Company. 1932. p. 8.

they felt the need of new patterns in which to encompass them. They differed from the earlier novelists in their disregard for plot, which Fielding and Trollope honored, and the elaborate unfolding of events which create a climax. They were concerned with illuminating experience so that it would reflect not one deep dramatic light, but all the refracted lights and darks, shades and shadows of reality. To achieve this effect the "modernists" applied a kaleidoscopic movement to action and consciousness in their fiction and placed an emphasis on "values," or important moments, almost to the exclusion of the chronological exposure of events. The forms which the modernists have applied are loose yet rhythmical in comparison with those of a more definite, rational, and logical nature which preceded them.

With some like Joyce the process of experimentation has been carried far, others, like Huxley, have adapted the new methods to their needs without the same exaggeration or elaborate use of symbolism. All have tended to discontinuity, to diversity, complexity, and the accentuation of high "moments."[19] It has been left to the imagination of the reader to fill in the blanks, to conjure up the complete impression, given such hints as Huxley believes are sufficient to make up the "wholly truthful" artistic creation.

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19 Ibid., p. 346.

Ulysses has been referred to as the parent of Huxley's Antic Hay,[20] and there are certainly a number of features which they have in common. Like Joyce, Huxley lacks that emphasis upon plot which creates the dramatic element so necessary to the "well-made novel." In Ulysses there is no real plot, just a series of every-day occurrences, the psychological importance of which has been magnified and subjectivized. Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalaus, the two central characters, lack any great capacity for action, as do Denis of Crome Yellow, and Gumbril of Antic Hay. In Joyce's narrative the subjective is exaggerated, but even in Huxley's novels it plays a conditioning part, for his serious intellectuals are as given to introspection as is Huxley himself. His subjectivism is different in degree from that of Joyce, and he does not indulge in the same "infinite expansion of the moment"[21] but, in so far as Joyce was the originator of a whole new approach to the technical aspects of fiction, Huxley is indeed in his debt.

That there should have been a general desire to find new modes of expression was partly due to the new

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20 Joseph Collins, Taking the Literary Pulse. New York: George H.Doran Company. 1924. p. 164.

21 Joseph Warren Beach. p. 409.

psychology and scientific discovery. Mr.Scogan, of Crome Yellow, surveying the advanced ideas of the younger generation, had a remark to make which may well veil one of Huxley's "sincerities" and express at the same time a note of self-criticism which may be only too justly applied to his fiction.

> "It is all very estimable, no doubt. But still"—Mr.Scogan sighed—"I for one should like to see, mingled with this scientific ardour, a little more of the jovial spirit of Rabelais and Chaucer."[22]

It is a criticism which Joseph Warren Beach has echoed in respect to the work of "the modernists" as a whole.

> ...the nihilism runs strong, the corrosive criticism of old ideals...in Joyce, in Butler, Dreiser, Lewis, Huxley, Hemingway, Faulkner. And the vast reading public misses in these men, not merely the romantic sentiment they are accustomed to in the novel, but something more fundamental, which for want of a better term we may call humaneness, and which is strongly felt in certain Continental writers like Knut Hamsun and Thomas Mann. What these writers in English have obtained by their ruthlessness is something significant and valuable, but they have paid a high price for it. They have certainly had something to say, but it has been mainly critical and destructive.[23]

Huxley, accused of this "heartlessness"has attempted a defence:

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22 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. p. 152. (Crome Yellow)

23 Joseph Warren Beach, pp. 548-549.

> I don't feel myself to be extremely heartless. But the impression is partly my fault. I have a literary theory that I must have a two-angled vision of all my characters. You know how closely farce and tragedy are related. That's because the comic and the tragic are the same thing seen from different angles. I try to get a stereoscopic vision, to show my characters from two angles simultaneously. Either I try to show them both as they feel themselves to be and as others feel them to be; or else I try to give two rather similar characters who throw light on each other, two characters who share the same element, but in one it is made grotesque.[24]

This is the key to Huxley's literary technique, but does it completely account for the heartlessness which there is to some extent in all his fiction. Certainly the spirit of disillusion had a strong influence, even Mr.Scogan says: "After all, we all know that there's no ultimate point."[25] And the title of Antic Hay, taken from Marlowe's lines, proves that Huxley is mainly concerned with futility in this novel:

> My men like satyrs grazing on the lawns
> Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay.[26]

Although only two years intervened between Crome Yellow and Antic Hay, the later novel shows what an enormous chasm yawned between them. The whole psychological depth

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24 Ross Parmenter. "Huxley at Forty-Three."- Interview. The Saturday Review of Literature. Vol.17. No.21, March 19, 1938. p. 10.

25 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. p. 293. (Crome Yellow)

26 Charles J. Rolo. editor. The World of Aldous Huxley. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1947. p. 3.

of the war, with its cynicism, disillusion and uncertainty had been plumbed by the time Huxley created his picture of a sophisticated and restless post-war London. From his amazingly perceptive observations, his careful analysis and his special understanding of the prevalent mood,Huxley wrought the popular Antic Hay and Point Counter Point.

Huxley caught in prose as no one else, the spirit of meaninglessness and hopelessness that enshrouded the nineteen twenties. With his eye for tragedy and farce, he quickly saw the wry humour of such pointless games as "Beaver" and in the "Last Ride" of Mrs.Viveash and Gumbril, a symbol of the sad escapism that lay behind the desire of a whole generation to lose itself in almost continuous inebriation and entertainment. But if the theme of the book is this futility it is conveyed in a lively and exciting manner, with this qualification that, between Crome Yellow and Antic Hay, Huxley's humour had taken on a moral hue and a quality of indignation. Seeing, like Laforgue, that tragedy and farce are closely related, Huxley shakes his head over the antics of his contemporaries but shares their misery with them and derives a certain amusement from the whole performance.

> Everyone's a walking farce and a walking tragedy at the same time. The man who slips on a banana skin and fractures his skull describes against the sky, as he falls, the most richly comical arabesque.[27]

In Antic Hay Gumbril, like Denis, is a character whose nature prevents him from grasping those illusive truths and beauties which he most desires. Unable to take positive action, he shows his frustration in a number of ways. He leaves his position as a school master in order to attempt a commercial venture and exploit his idea for pneumatic trousers, an idea inspired by sitting on the hard seats at chapel. To give himself the confidence he needs for such a venture, and for other more amourous pursuits, he puts on a great padded coat and a false beard, but even so, his attempts at action, although often comparatively successful for a time, are always thwarted by the weakness inherent in himself. He shows his unhappiness and with a stupid, self-conscious defiance insists, "I glory in the name of earwig."[28]

This desire to become a man of action which so many of Huxley's characters possess, seems to indicate Huxley's own sense of need for the fuller and less intellectual view of life which he later found in D.H.Lawrence's "life-worship."

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27 Ibid., p. 171.

28 Ibid., p. 35.

The ideal of the "Complete Man" so popular in the novels, has its origin in a desire for greater development of individual bias similar to that which Emerson advocated. That "fulfilment of a natural tendency in each man"[29] is what Denis and Gumbril try to attain with little success, but which is realized in Rampion of Point Counter Point.

Caught in the same empty vortex of sophistication as Gumbril, Mrs.Viveash has little in common with Anne or Mary of Crome Yellow. She might perhaps be a more mature Pamela of "After the Fireworks," certainly she springs from the same source as Lucy Tantamount and Mrs.Thwale. She initiates the "bitch motif"[30] into Huxley's fiction. In Antic Hay her complete antithesis is her counterpart Emily, who is so pure and good, so terrified of physical love, that she becomes almost as unnatural in her way as Mrs. Viveash is fiendishly uninhibited.

To Gumbril, the rather lifeless Emily represents all the goodness which he cannot possess because he follows Myra Viveash along a downward path which leads only to a variety of time-killing diversions. The day that he is to meet Emily in the country Mrs.Viveash compels him to have lunch with her, and he is so weak that, although he thinks

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29 Ralph Waldo Emerson. Letters and Social Aims. London: George Routledge & Sons. 1883. p. 285.

30 David Daiches. The Novel and the Modern World. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1939. p. 195.

of Emily all through luncheon, in the end, he allows her to go out of his life. He lets confusion and despair banish the truth and nobility he found in her kind of goodness. In every way it is meaninglessness that conquers hope and a search for values. In a night of unadulterated love with Emily, Gumbril found: "In the starlight good, true and beautiful became one,"[31] but he qualifies this with his next remark: "Write the discovery in books—in books quos, in the morning, legimus cacantes."[32]

The problem is the same with Mrs.Viveash and the lecherous Coleman, the "philosophy of meaninglessness" has no lack of adherents. Mrs.Viveash is convinced: "Tomorrow ...will be as awful as today."[33]

Rosie, whose romantic nature Gumbril is able to exploit in his bearded role as a "Complete Man," is another bovaristic character, as Gumbril is also to a certain extent. She dramatizes every situation and is easily prey to the advances of Gumbril, Coleman and Mercaptan. Deceiving her husband, Shearwater, she shares the same lack of scruples and intelligence as Grace Peddley in "Two or Three Graces." Shearwater lacks sensibility and Huxley points out, through Rosie's reflections, that his unsympathetic

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31 Charles J. Rolo, editor, The World of Aldous Huxley. p. 199.

32 Ibid., p. 199.

33 Ibid., p. 203.

attitude has made her what she is. A physiologist who, like Mr.Wimbush, conscientiously studies and makes useless experiments, Shearwater devotes himself to a pursuit of scientific knowledge which seems as fruitless as that of Lord Edward in Point Counter Point. Here Huxley again points out the inefficacy of science when taken as a true picture of reality and pursued as an end in itself. This sceptical view of the scientific world Huxley dramatizes in terms of life in Antic Hay. Raymond Weaver believes that in effect Huxley is saying:

> Let us, just as reasonable beings, look at the human animals; as scientists, without sentimental preoccupations, let us observe the behavior of this tribe, this vermin infecting this lukewarm bullet that scuds through infinite space around its insignificant sun.[34]

So Huxley looks at Mercaptan, a critic, and sees him surrounded by a "sham little eighteenth-century," although Huxley himself shares some of that eighteenth-century spirit, at least in his fastidiousness. He creates in Mr.Bojanus, the philosopher and tailor, one of his most human figures. But the characters he treats most sympathetically are Lypiatt, the disillusioned idealist, and Gumbril senior, an atheist, an old school man and an anti-cleric. This is some indication perhaps

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34 Raymond Weaver, "Aldous Huxley." p. 267.

of Huxley's turning to the past (like T.S.Eliot) in a search for those qualities which he can at least respect. Certainly the traditional values are extinguished in the world he creates, as they were in Eliot's The Wasteland.

Every value that Huxley scrutinizes turns out to be a fake. Institutional religion, science, romantic love, they are all disappointments to him. Lypiatt, the artist, believes in himself intensely until, despairing, he realizes that sincerity alone cannot create a masterpiece and commits suicide. In Coleman there is the first suggestion that diabolism, which Spandrell carries to its extreme in Point Counter Point might be a solution. Coleman is in many ways a disciple of the Marquis de Sade, to whom Huxley frequently refers in his works; he may also be modelled on Baudelaire, described in Do What You Will, a volume of Huxley's essays, as a satanist who is potentially a saint, debasing himself through self-torture and sensuality in order to worship goodness. In Huxley idealism is continually distorted. The old values are crumpled up and cast aside, to be replaced by a blank or blotted meaninglessness.

In Antic Hay Huxley gives an excellent cross-section of characters but, as in Crome Yellow, they are all within the same côterie and are the same types that recur throughout the whole of his fiction.

Gumbril is first introduced, then his father, and subsequently, in a restaurant scene, Gumbril, Lypiatt, Coleman and Mercaptan all gather to parry and thrust in a skirmish of ideas. This particular episode is of consequence not only for the exposition of opinions it contains, but for the skilful revelation of each character's inadequacies which Huxley contrives. For although Huxley seems always to elucidate his own thoughts in the process of creation, and although he enjoys the contest of ideas he originates, at the same time he is anxious to show, through conversation, the state of the characters' minds and through their reflections, to indicate how such a state was brought about. All this he further illuminates with his knowledge of history, art,science, literature and philosophy, so that, through the intellectual discussions, the witty and pointed dialogue in which Huxley excels, the characters reveal their personalities and draw those of their companions into focus.

> "I glory in the name of earwig," said Gumbril. He was pleased with that little invention. It was felicitous; it was well chosen. "One's an earwig in sheer self-protection," he explained.

But Mr.Mercaptan refused to accept the name of earwig at any price...."No, if I glory in anything, it's in my little rococo boudoir, and the conversations across the polished mahogany, and the delicate, lascivious, witty little flirtations on ample sofas inhabited by the soul of Crébillon Fils."

. . .

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

"Charming, charming," murmured Mr.Mercaptan, who was pouring oil on his salad.[35]

Following the demands of that two-angled vision which Huxley believes accounts for his heartlessness, he allows Lypiatt to see himself as others see him in the few moments when, before committing suicide, he hears Gumbril and Myra Viveash discussing his failure as an artist. A comic figure, Lypiatt rants and raves and yet his suicide is a tragedy, if an inevitable one. Again, to clarify and contrast, Gumbril and Coleman are made to resemble one another, but in Coleman the worst features of Gumbril are played upon and made grotesque. Lypiatt is foil to Mercaptan and Gumbril, Emily is a contrast to Myra Viveash,

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35 Charles J. Rolo, editor, The World of Aldous Huxley. pp. 35 to 37.

old Mr.Gumbril's generosity and humaneness are the opposite of the young sophisticates' futile self-interest.

Through the characters Huxley also gives a cross-section of those moral problems which are repeated like a favourite phrase through all Huxley's writing. But these problems are never presented in exactly the same way. As Alexander Henderson explains:

> They divide and combine and re-combine in a great variety of ways. Put algebraically, if A plus B minus C equals X in one book, in another we shall get A minus B plus D equals X, and so on, through many modifications.[36]

As his example Mr.Henderson points out that only Spandrell in Point Counter Point and Savage in Brave New World kill themselves because of their inner disharmony, and because they haven't achieved their ideal state. Chelifer of Those Barren Leaves and Gumbril on the other hand, both feel the same problem but never as intensely. Calamy is the first to actually act upon his most serious beliefs.

In Antic Hay Huxley only deals with a period of a month or so and the history of the characters which is

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36 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1935. pp. 139-140.

given is inherent in their reflection. Only in brief glimpses does the reader learn of Myra Viveash's dead lover or of Rosie's family background. These reflections are scattered through the action, and the action moves continuously from group to group, from one centre to another. Like Joyce and the "modernists" in his tendency to shift the scenes Huxley does not lay as much stress on symbolism as may be found in Ulysses, although his characters are almost symbols of certain human weaknesses and ideas. But with the macabre and revolting play which Gumbril and Mrs.Viveash witness Huxley does introduce a deliberate use of symbolism, conveying in the story of the monster how sordid life appears to the idealist. There is also a symbolic value in the "Complete Man's" beard, and in that picture of Shearwater peddling furiously on a stationary bicycle to escape disorderly futility and retain a sense of proportion.

In many ways Antic Hay is particularly indicative of Point Counter Point. It includes the same dissolute gatherings in restaurants, the same depressing sense of disintegration. That useless expending of life and potentialities with which both novels are concerned is particularly emphasized in the night club scene where the

impression is again brought home more forcefully by a description of the weird, meaningless music, and a repetition of the mournful chant, "What's he to Hecuba?" with its empty response, "Nothing at all."[37]

Again, Gumbril listening to Mrs.Viveash tell of her attempts to really "like" someone, sympathizes with her and accompanies her on the piano:

> "...you should try," said Gumbril, whose hands had begun to creep softly forward into the Twelfth Sonata. "You should try."
>
> "But I do try," said Mrs.Viveash...."I haven't succeeded," she added, after a pause.
>
> The music had shifted from F major to D minor; it mounted in leaping anapaests to a suspended chord, ran down again, mounted once more, modulating to C minor, then, through a passage of trembling notes to A flat major, to the dominant of D flat, to the dominant of C, to C minor, and at last, to a new clear theme in the major.
>
> "Then I'm sorry for you," said Gumbril, allowing his fingers to play on by themselves.[38]

In Antic Hay Huxley has shed some of those Peacockian traits which marked Crome Yellow. The scene is not restricted to a country house but shifts about London. The characters, who are less static than those of Crome Yellow or Crotchet Castle, are made to develop within the story and to prove by

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37 Charles J. Rolo, editor, The World of Aldous Huxley. p. 133.

38 Ibid., p. 131.

the changes which events produce in them, that they are not altogether what Mr.Forster calls "flat."

> "Flat characters," he says, "were called 'humours' in the seventeenth century, and are sometimes called types, and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form they are constructed round a single idea or quality: when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round."[39]

In Antic Hay Huxley's characters give evidence of rounding the curve. In this Huxley shows a marked advance over Crome Yellow. For, in Antic Hay, as Raymond Weaver remarks, each character achieves perfection of its own particular kind in "the best Aristotelian sense,"[40] they do progress in a certain direction throughout the novel. Shearwater, trying to escape a passion for Mrs. Viveash, realizes that he has been too preoccupied and too unattentive to Rosie. Rosie begins to see what a sordid little world she has created for herself and longs for Shearwater. Lypiatt, unable to seek a refuge in Gumbril's "earwig," tries to outface the surrounding disillusion and finally commits suicide. Gumbril is so moved by his father's selflessness that he at least contemplates conversion and is aware of a "crystal quiet... inexpressibly lovely," for which Calamy is willing to surrender all his former pleasures.

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39 Edwin Muir, The Structure of the Novel. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1929. p. 135.

40 Raymond Weaver, "Aldous Huxley."p. 267.

If Huxley lacks a certain sympathetic understanding in depicting his characters, he does exhibit a genuine appreciation of their problems. For this reason Antic Hay is valuable and especially so according to R.L.Chambers' standards, for he writes:

> All works of art, to be significant at all, must possess in the first place what may be called contemporary significance. In them must be found the best available interpretation and expression of the contemporary truth. This does not mean that the significant writer sets out to write social criticism: the contemporary truth is more than that. To find the truth and to express it correctly means to find and express correctly a relationship—the relationship between subject and object, the subject being the whole consciousness of contemporary man, the object being the whole environment,—physical, intellectual and spiritual,—of contemporary man. It is the function of the significant writer to express this truth, or as much of it as he can.[41]

It is with such contemporary truths that Huxley has always been concerned. The popularity of Antic Hay proved that even in its most superficial aspects his picture of post-war London corresponded with the feelings of the majority of his contemporaries. If that public largely failed to realize that Huxley was with them but not of them, his subtler intentions have been obvious to those who are able to see his work in a better perspective. Huxley

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41 R.L.Chambers, The Novels of Virginia Woolf. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd. 1947. p. 52.

expresses in Antic Hay all that his particular kind of consciousness will permit, and his interpretation, if regrettably critical and somewhat lacking in humaneness, is still of great value.

If, in 1923, as Alexander Henderson declares, Antic Hay was favoured by the avant-garde and considered the one book that it was "unforgivable" not to have read,[42] Those Barren Leaves of 1925 was "the most popular of Huxley's novels among reasonably intelligent readers."[43] The later work does not show the same disillusion as its predecessor. The sense of meaninglessness is contemplated rather than experienced and, on the whole, the more tolerant, amused spirit of Crome Yellow prevails.

In Crome Yellow Mr.Scogan describes to Denis the imaginary "Tales of Knockespotch," where:

> Fabulous characters shoot across his pages like gaily dressed performers on the trapeze. There are extraordinary adventures and still more extraordinary speculations. Intelligences and emotions...move in intricate and subtle dances ....An immense erudition and an immense fancy go hand in hand. All the ideas of the present and of the past, on every possible subject, bob up among the Tales, smile gravely or grimace a caricature of themselves, then disappear to make place for something new. The verbal surface of his writing is rich and fantastically diversified. The wit is incessant.[44]

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42 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. p. 1.

43 Ibid., p. 112.

44 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. p. 148. (Crome Yellow)

In Those Barren Leaves Huxley comes closest to realizing the ideal which this passage suggests. The adventures are somewhat limited but speculations flow freely from art and love to scepticism and Freud, from death and mysticism to the language of the Etruscans. Ideas do seem to grimace caricatures of themselves in many of Huxley's characters. Already endowed with erudition, wit and intelligence, these characters lack a capacity for strong emotion, but possess a predilection for fanciful speculation well calculated to display those ideas which they are intended to express. To facilitate this comparison and development of ideas, Huxley again isolates his characters and in this novel it is through Mrs.Aldwinkle, and at her Italian palace, that they are brought together.

In Mrs.Aldwinkle Huxley creates another bovaristic woman, or, more accurately in this case, an elderly and imaginative child. Mrs.Aldwinkle sees herself as "unofficially a princess, surrounded by a court of poets, philosophers and artists."[45] But Huxley does not satirize her with the same persistence as he does his more intelligent victims, rather he simply makes fun of her.

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45 Aldous Huxley, Rotunda. A Selection from the Works of Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1932. p. 23.

An intrepid hunter of intellectual lines, she has captured as two prize exhibits, Mary Thriplow and Francis Chelifer, who are both writers.

Like so many of Huxley's characters, Mary Thriplow is inclined to picture herself in a number of different roles, and she attempts to create a suitable impression for the benefit of each person she meets. She deliberately conjures up emotions for the sake of her writing and Huxley mockingly accentuates her self-deception. The fact that Mary Thriplow cannot be taken too seriously makes it possible for Huxley to convey some of his serious personal opinions through her. The complaint which she voices concerning the reception of her novels amongst the reading public is one which Huxley would feel justified in making.

> "They always seem entirely to misunderstand what one writes," Miss Thriplow went on. "They like my books because they're smart and unexpected and rather paradoxical and cynical and elegantly brutal....They don't see the tragedy and the tenderness underneath. You see," she explained, "I'm trying to do something new— a chemical compound of all the categories. Lightness and tragedy and loveliness and wit and fantasy and realism and irony and sentiment all combined. People seem to find it merely amusing, that's all.[46]

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46 Ibid., pp. 54-55.

Huxley finds a further opportunity to jibe at his profession in the notebook which Mary, like Philip Quarles, keeps of her thoughts; not only her own thoughts, but everything she hears, for she is constantly deciding how best to employ any clever remarks which are made in her presence.

Although Mary is a more creative person than Mrs.Viveash, or the later Lucy Tantamount, she may still be considered an example of their sensual type. Just as Chelifer repeats, less violently, the satanism of Coleman and the deliberate cultivation of "earwig" which marked Gumbril.

Chelifer attempts to immerse himself in the degradation to which the immortal soul is exposed in its human form, but he is actually what Calamy,psychologically the most significant character in the novel, calls a "sentimentalist inside out,"[47] who "at once hypnotized and sickened by everyday reality...like today's Existentialist hero, makes a cult of his nausea."[48] Another intellectual, Chelifer suffers from self-consciousness. Exaggerating the importance of his own emotions he is too absorbed to attempt any search for transcendent values such as Calamy

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47 Ibid., p. 381.

48 Charles J. Rolo, Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley. p. xiv.

undertakes. Instead, he resolves everything into an enveloping scepticism.

Mr.Cardan, another guest of Mrs.Aldwinkle, is also a cynical, cultured man. A typical nineteenth century sceptic, he represents the same type as Mr.Scogan, and is well qualified to express Huxley's intellectual views, as well as to exude that glow of erudition which is always anticipated in Huxley's work. Describing Mr.Cardan, Huxley remarks:

> He had a melodious voice, ripe, round, fruity and powdered, as it were, with a bloom of huskiness— the faint hoarseness of those who have drunk well, eaten well and copiously made love.[49]

Mr.Falx is a foil to Mr.Cardan and his favourite topic, the "working class," resounds with a peculiar dissonance through the majestic halls of the summer palace of the Cybo Malaspina.

Of all the characters Calamy shows the greatest development within the novel and his evolution is the result of a similar development within Aldous Huxley. Once a hedonist, Calamy resists worldly pleasures and seeks something beyond the cynical meaningless world of his intellectual companions and beyond the cultivation of personality which Gumbril sought as a "Complete Man." At

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49 Aldous Huxley. Rotunda. p. 26.

the same time Calamy does grant disillusion and the unsettled times their due:

> "I don't see that it would be possible to live in a more exciting age," said Calamy. "The sense that everything's perfectly provisional and temporary--everything, from social institutions to what we've hitherto regarded as the most sacred scientific truths—the feeling that nothing, from the Treaty of Versailles to the rationally explicable universe, is really safe, the intimate conviction that anything may happen, anything may be discovered—another war, the artificial creation of life, the proof of continued existence after death—why, it's all infinitely exhilarating."
>
> "And the possibility that everything may be destroyed?" questioned Mr.Cardan.
>
> "That's exhilarating too," Calamy answered, smiling.[50]

This uneasy exhilaration is not enough for Calamy, any more than it proved to be for Huxley. Where Gumbril weakly succumbed to Myra Viveash, Calamy resists the world of flesh that Mary Thriplow symbolizes, and, alone in the mountains, seeks a world of the spirit.

In Those Barren Leaves the characters appear to be more aware of one another than they were in Antic Hay. Chelifer takes time to consider Mr.Cardan, Mr.Cardan sees through Mary Thriplow, Calamy can understand Chelifer, and poor Mrs.Aldwinkle is perfectly transparent to them all. But while they are able to analyze one another, they feel no personal concern for each other. The exception is,

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50 Ibid., pp. 35-36.

of course, as with Peacock, the two lovers, Irene and Lord Hovenden, who seem charming and naive compared to the other sophisticated members of the party. Lord Hovenden appears to be completely out of place with Mr.Cardan and Calamy. He blushes and lisps, feeling quite inadequate, but with Irene he can be himself, and behind the wheel of his car, which takes the place of a "Complete Man's" beard for him, he is master of every situation. Flying along at a fabulous speed he has the courage to ask Irene to marry him, and the story of their romance is one of the most amusing and charming that Huxley has ever related.

On first acquaintance Those Barren Leaves appears to be somewhat disjointed in design, but there is a definite purpose behind its construction. The novel is divided into five parts. The first consists of "An Evening at Mrs.Aldwinkle's." Here the reader is introduced to all the main characters except Chelifer, and the scene is set at the palace with a suitable description of its history and of the surrounding Italian countryside. Part II is composed of "Fragments from the Autobiography of Francis Chelifer." In this section Chelifer's career is followed and many ironical references made to his position as editor of the Rabbit Fancier's Gazette. His mother is also introduced in this chapter, and she subsequently joins

Mrs.Aldwinkle's entourage. Typical of the mother-figure in Huxley's fiction, Mrs.Chelifer's modest gray dress, her irreproachable integrity and her gentle manner have a kind of symbolic meaning. In Part III, "The Loves of the Parallels," the love of Irene and Lord Hovenden is presented as pure and genuine compared with the sordidness of Mr.Cardan's proposed marriage to the half-witted Miss Elver, and Mrs.Aldwinkle's passion for Chelifer. Part IV, entitled, "The Journey," tells of a visit to the Etruscan tombs and of Miss Elver's death, punctuated by selections from Chelifer's memoirs. It is brought to a close with Mr.Cardan's sceptical reflections as he witnesses Miss Elver's funeral. The last chapter, "Conclusions," which is largely concerned with Calamy and his ultimate decision to go into a retreat, contains the underlying message of the novel. With Calamy's conclusions an answer is given to the question which Antic Hay prompted, an alternative proposed to supposedly inescapable meaninglessness.

The fact that Huxley has found a tentative answer to scepticism does not lessen his ironical view of life lived according to the ways of the world. Although Huxley tends a little more to understanding than exposure in Those Barren Leaves, he finds it difficult to escape his second self, that "second me" of which Alphonse Daudet

spoke: "The second me, I have never been able to intoxicate, to make shed tears, to lull to sleep. And how it delves into things, and how it mocks!"[51] Huxley is best able to overcome this tendency to mock in "Fragments from the Autobiography of Francis Chelifer," but the temptation is too great in "The Loves of the Parallels," and "The Journey."

It is in the exercise of his intellect that Huxley is most content. Those passages which deal with actual actions and events, without opportunity for conversational digressions, do not possess the same attraction as those where a conflict of ideas is staged. Alexander Henderson alludes to the "longueurs" which approach when Huxley tells of Mr.Cardan's meeting with Miss Elver and her brother in Chapters VI and VII of Part III.[52]

It is typical of Huxley to introduce such an amusing and original conversation as that which Mr.Cardan begins concerning the undeciphered language of the Etruscans:

> "Fufluns, Fufluns," he repeated with delighted emphasis. "It couldn't be better. They had a real linguistic genius, those creatures. What poets they must have produced! 'When Fulfluns flucuthukhs the ziz'—one can imagine the odes in praise of wine which began like that. You couldn't bring together eight such juicy, boozy syllables as that in English, could you?"[53]

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51 Charles J. Rolo, Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley, p. xi.

52 Ibid., p. 112.

53 Aldous Huxley, Rotunda. p. 313.

Still contemplating the same subject Mr.Cardan draws attention to a trait frequently found in Huxley's writing. He says:

> "...I have often noticed that an idea which, expressed in one's native language, would seem dull, commonplace and opaque, becomes transparent to the mind's eye, takes on a new significance when given a foreign and unfamiliar embodiment..."[54]

Thus Mr.Scogan considers himself: "Vox et praeterea nihil"[55] and Gumbril, dancing to a refrain that symbolized futility, finds the perfect expression: "Les chants désespérés sont les chants les plus beaux, Et j'en sais d'immortels qui sont de purs sanglots."[56]

The skilful use of repetition which Huxley has developed can be found in all the novels. In Those Barren Leaves he achieves particularly effective results in that scene where Irene tells Mrs.Aldwinkle of her decision to marry Lord Hovenden, and, suddenly aware of her age, Mrs. Aldwinkle hears the clock ticking mercilessly, repeating over and over, "getting old." Again, throughout that entire passage dealing with Tarquinia Huxley dwells on the significance of words denoting "love." The pages reverberate with the varying inflections of "amore," "liebe," "amour," and "flucuthukh."

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54 Ibid., p. 315.

55 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. p. 226. (Crome Yellow)

56 Charles J. Rolo, editor, The World of Aldous Huxley. p. 133.

Huxley feels strongly the attraction of strange words. By their repetition and the insertion of delightfully odd, irrelevant information, he adds an exaggerated baroque quality to more fundamentally significant material. Alexander Henderson notes that besides this baroqueness, Huxley makes use of a polysyllabism, "itself a form of exaggeration, and this is, in all probability, one of the causes of the feeling of light mockery which seems to lurk continually behind even the most serious passages of the book."[57]

As an antithesis to this light, amusing treatment of his subject, Huxley applies the terms of science to description. Chelifer, writing in his memoirs, recounts how nearly he came to drowning:

> ...I coughed up all the stationary air that was in my lungs and, my mouth being under water, I drew in fresh gulps of brine. M eanwhile my blood, loaded with carbonic acid gas, kept rushing to my lungs in the hope of exchanging the deadly stuff for oxygen. In vain; there was no oxygen to exchange it for.[58]

In another passage Calamy, whose relationship with Mary Thriplow has become what he himself would call "a mere experiment in applied physiology," holds her in his arms while he contemplates his hand, dark against the pale

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57 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. p. 124.

58 Aldous Huxley, Rotunda. pp. 160-161.

square of the window. His thoughts are reminiscent of Mr.Hutton's in "The Gioconda Smile," and, more observant than Doris, Mary is soon aware that his attention is divided. She asks him to tell her what he is thinking and Calamy goes on to explain:

> "This shape which interrupts the light—it is enough to think of it for five minutes to perceive that it exists simultaneously in a dozen parallel worlds. It exists as electrical charges; as chemical molecules; as living cells; as part of a moral being, the instrument of good and evil; in the physical world and in mind. And from this one goes on to ask, inevitably, what relationship exists between these different modes of being. What is there in common between life and chemistry; between good and evil and electrical charges; between a collection of cells and the consciousness of a caress?"[59]

It is to investigate the ultimate reality behind this apparent diversity that Calamy withdraws from society, and he speaks here in scientific terms that are to be adopted by Philip Quarles in Huxley's next novel, Point Counter Point.

Those Barren Leaves is similar to Crome Yellow in the isolation of its characters from the contemporary world of events, in keeping with the Peacockian tradition, and in the indulgent quality of its satire. The more mature work covers a wider variety of topics in its discussions and digressions, and differs from its

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59 Ibid., p. 357.

predecessor, Antic Hay, in that it has less of a contemporary value and more of the unlimited suggestion of fantasy. Nor is there in Those Barren Leaves the preoccupation with sex or with futility so evident in Antic Hay. But there is the added importance of Calamy's conversion and, upon concluding Those Barren Leaves it seems natural to suppose that Huxley's next novel will provide a more explicit study of Calamy's choice.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

In Point Counter Point Huxley gives no sign of pursuing the solitary search for values which Calamy began in Those Barren Leaves. This abandoning of mystical contemplation is surprising, as both Those Barren Leaves and Jesting Pilate show that, by 1926,Huxley was dissatisfied with an exposure of meaninglessness and the lostness of his generation. He sought a positive belief and it was in his admiration for Lawrence and in his acceptance of "life-worship," the spontaneous living which Lawrence advocated, that he found a temporary peace for his uneasy spirit.

The human values by which Lawrence's philosophy was sustained attracted Huxley. Like Montaigne, he believed man was intended to be neither an angel nor a beast, but to achieve a harmony of mind and body. Accepting these fundamentals of natural humanism, Huxley still found that a number of obstacles lay in his path if he were to become a true "life-worshipper." Lawrence condemned spirituality and Huxley, as Those Barren Leaves bears witness, had been inclined towards a mystical interpretation of the universe. Lawrence also discredited intellectualism, considering it the great evil, blunting man's sensitiveness to the mystery

of life and damaging his sense of wonder. Huxley, on the other hand, was committed to an intellectual life by his own temperament, from which he has never really escaped. Again, Lawrence had a remarkably deep dislike of science which Huxley found particularly difficult to share. In his Introduction to The Letters of D.H.Lawrence he recalls that Lawrence used to speak of all scientists as "liars," implying that they were pernicious intuition-destroyers. Huxley has at times expressed the same sentiment in mocking tones, but never with the same deadly seriousness as Lawrence. To Huxley the appeal must be to the head, whereas Lawrence would say, "Evidence doesn't mean anything to me. I don't feel it here," indicating his solar plexus.[1]

In the end, Huxley admits that he avoided mentioning science in Lawrence's presence.

> Lawrence could give so much, and what he gave was so valuable, that it was absurd and profitless to spend one's time with him disputing about a matter in which he absolutely refused to take a rational interest. Whatever the intellectual consequences, he remained through thick and thin unshakably loyal to his own genius.[2]

Huxley's writing, even while he was under Lawrence's influence, still exhibited his exceptional scientific knowledge. However, he did continue to deride science as he

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1 Aldous Huxley, Introduction to The Letters of D.H.Lawrence. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1932. p. xv.

2 Ibid., p. xv.

had in Antic Hay, and to point out the futility of it pursued as an end in itself.

Huxley was always more concerned with a study of facts and truths than with an awareness of his feelings, heart, and emotions. But he did feel an enthusiasm for all that is "splendidly human" and so, for a time he agreed with Lawrence that the natural instincts represented the best in man. What Huxley never could share was Lawrence's real love of life, his intensity, and his power of understanding. Huxley's analysis of people, as of facts, never comes as close to an understanding as to a critical appraisal. That Huxley felt this to be a short-coming there can be little doubt, for, in Point Counter Point, of 1928, he includes not only his impression of Lawrence and "life-worship" but also an account of the difficulties which an intellectual of his own particular type experiences in trying to live life fully and completely.

In Mark Rampion, Huxley has presented the force of Lawrence's personality and the essence of his philosophy. As a well-integrated person, Rampion has achieved a fixed point from which the other characters deviate in the directions of self-division or infantilism, satanism or over-intellectualism. Thus Huxley achieves a counter point

of ideas, as well as of forms. Rampion and his wife, Mary, are both well-rounded characters. Rampion asserts that such completeness is the result of a properly balanced personality and he gives an eloquent expression of Lawrence's beliefs when he explains:

> "Nobody's asking you to be anything but a man. A man, mind you. Not an angel or a devil. A man's a creature on a tightrope, walking delicately, equilibrated, with mind and consciousness and spirit at one end of his balancing pole and body and instinct and all that's unconscious and earthy and mysterious at the other. Balanced. Which is damnably difficult. And the only absolute he can ever really know is the absolute of perfect balance. The absoluteness of perfect relativity."[3]

One of the characters most desiring to achieve this balance is Philip Quarles, who closely resembles Huxley himself. Rampion sees Philip as weighted down too heavily on the side of the mind to the exclusion of the emotions, and he labels him a "barbarian of the intellect."

As the limitations of Quarles' over-intellectualism are obvious when contrasted with Rampion's vitality, so the slimy spiritualism and infantilism of Burlap prove that he is also stunted beside the full stature of the "life-worshipper." Burlap acquires many admirers through his smooth, angelic manner, but he has difficulty in exercising the little demon at his shoulder who reveals

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3 Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point. New York: The Modern Library. 1928. p. 478.

him to himself. An editor, as much interested in finance as in St.Francis, and with a talent for gentle rape, he appears to Rampion to be a disgusting "little Jesus pervert."

With over-intellectualism, infantilism, and spirituality, Rampion also condemns satanism. In Point Counter Point it is Spandrell who represents the type of Coleman in Antic Hay, but Spandrell acts on a much more refined principle. He indulges in a form of seduction which is calculated to produce the utmost sense of degradation in his victims. Steeped in this licentiousness, Spandrell is another of those characters who, like Baudelaire, immerse themselves in evil because essentially they crave goodness. As Rampion points out, he is not content to be a good human being, but tries to be a "second-class angel." To account for the state of Spandrell's mind, as he does for most characters, Huxley describes his intense love for his widowed mother when he was a boy, and his subsequent hatred of his step-father because he associated him with a military gentleman in a pornographic volume which he read under the bed-clothes at school. Whatever the cause of Spandrell's self-mortification and satanism has been, the results are well illustrated and lead, eventually to his suicide, for when Spandrell discovers that his experiments in immorality

yield diminishing returns, he decides upon murder as a means of shocking himself back to an awareness of virtue and vice through a sense of moral sinning.

Spandrell's accomplice in the murder of Webley, leader of the British Freemen, is Illidge, a communistic member of the working class. In Illidge Huxley again portrays a scientist and proves how naive and insufficient the specialist becomes when involved in the world outside his laboratory. Self-conscious and aggressive by turns, Illidge flaunts a forced scepticism and a disdain for his wealthy employer, Lord Edward Tantamount. Lord Edward is a kindly, detached old man, also preoccupied with his biological research, who has never developed any other interests, except, perhaps music. Mocking this worship of science for its own sake, Huxley indicates that the experiments which Illidge and Lord Edward perform are as useless as those of Shearwater in Antic Hay. Akin to Shearwater by nature, Lord Edward is equally well-meaning and ineffectual, but in contrast with the disillusioned Illidge he represents the quiet stability of the Victorian era. Listening to the Old Man's generalities about science, Illidge appears to be contemptuous: "Why, as likely as not he'd begin talking about God. It really made one blush."[4]

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4 Ibid., p. 37.

Illidge is so anxious to prove that he is too sceptical for a belief in God, in good or evil, that he becomes involved in Spandrell's proposed murder of Webley. Webley, who is an imposing figure on his horse with a sword in his hand, before a group of Freemen, may have been modelled along the lines of Sir Oswald Moseley. He is titanic, forcible, persuasive, but human enough to be in love with Elinor Quarles, Philip's wife. In search of Elinor he comes to the Quarles home after she has already left to go to her little son, Phil, who is dying of meningitis. Knowing of her absence and of Webley's expected arrival, Spandrell and Illidge enter the empty house and wait for him there. When he arrives they carry out their plan.

The climax of the novel is in the murder, which brings in its wake Spandrell's suicide, and the accompanying theme of little Phil's death. But other themes cross and re-cross in the background, now emerging and rising to crescendo for a few pages, then dropping back to a pianissimo. One such lesser theme is that of Walter Bidlake and Marjorie, with which the book opens. Theirs is the first statement of that self-division which was also a source of conflict in Antic Hay. The quotation which in most editions precedes

the first chapter of Point Counter Point is taken from "Mustapha," a poem by Fulke Greville:

> Oh wearisome condition of humanity
> Born under one law to another bound,
> Vainly begot and yet forbidden vanity,
> Created sick, commanded to be sound.
> What meaneth nature by these diverse laws
> Passion and reason, self-divisions cause.[5]

Implicit even in the opening lines of the book is the division which Walter feels, as did Denis of Crome Yellow and Gumbril of Antic Hay. Another typical Huxleyan character, a would-be man of action, Walter assures Marjorie, his mistress, that he won't be late, while actually he is absolutely certain that he will be. Tired of Marjorie and infatuated with Lucy Tantamount, Lord Edward's daughter, Walter is hurrying to an evening party at Tantamount House. This gathering gives Huxley an excellent opportunity to introduce a number of the characters simultaneously and to give an over-all impression of the social circle in which they move. To accomplish this, he focuses attention upon one group after another.

Huxley takes pains to introduce a multiplicity of characters, for in Point Counter Point, as in all his novels, he is concerned with portraying a variety of types, all associated with a single superficial set. John Bidlake,

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5 Aldous Huxley, On the Margin. London: Chatto & Windus. 1923. p. 103.

Walter's father, is depicted as a sensual artist, like Gombauld of Crome Yellow, but no longer in his prime. Lady Edward Tantamount is described as a witty, intelligent, and attractive woman, who takes the greatest delight in creating awkward situations. Lucy, her daughter, shows the same mischievous desire to make people uncomfortable. But she is more memorable as another repetition of that "bitch motif" which Myra Viveash represents. A sophisticated young woman, Lucy seeks new experiences, sensations, and victims, in a determination to keep herself amused. A symbol of the post-war period, she flaunts her accidie, as Huxley feels that all his generation were inclined to do. But in drawing Lucy, Huxley creates such a one-sided impression of her character that she becomes almost de-humanized. It is a failing which may frequently be found in Huxley's portrayal of women, and one which could not be credited to Joyce, for Huxley can seldom conceal the slight nausea he feels when confronted with sex.

Walter makes Lucy his mistress and Marjorie, deserted, and having Walter's child, makes religion her refuge. Walter is himself later left by Lucy, but although his self-division is mainly involved with these sexual relationships, he is aware of it on other planes as well.

His fastidiousness, for example, probably a projection of Huxley's own feelings, prevents him from being the bravely objective, uninhibited, kind of person he aspires to be.

Closer than the analogies implied between Walter and Huxley are those which exist between Philip Quarles and the author. Huxley has very poor eyesight and Quarles is described as having a crippled foot. Both are sensitive, observant, sceptical and, like Huxley, Quarles is anxious to follow Lawrence's philosophy as Rampion expresses it. Neither Huxley nor Quarles finds it easy to make personal contacts and both are aware of a sense of separateness due to their inability to enter into things. In Crome Yellow, Denis reflects that we are all "parallel straight lines" and in Point Counter Point, the "parallel silences" of Philip and Elinor often flow on, never meeting.

In addition to the glimpses of Elinor and Philip in their relations with one another and with other people, Huxley gives an even clearer interpretation of Philip's ideas, and presumably his own, through the notebook which the writer keeps. His remarks concerning literary technique are particularly pertinent, as they define those forms which have been used within the novel itself.

Technically, it is with Point Counter Point and the satires, Brave New World and Ape and Essence, that Huxley reaches the peak of his experimentalism. This feature of Point Counter Point is best interpreted by Philip's comments:

> The musicalization of fiction. Not in the symbolist way, by subordinating sense to sound....But on a large scale, in the construction. Meditate on Beethoven. The changes of moods, the abrupt transitions. (Majesty alternating with a joke, for example, in the first movement of the B flat major Quartet. Comedy suddenly hinting at prodigious and tragic solemnities in the scherzo of the C sharp minor Quartet.) More interesting still, the modulations, not merely from one key to another, but from mood to mood. A theme is stated, then developed, pushed out of shape, imperceptibly deformed, until, though still recognizably the same, it has become quite different. In sets of variations the process is carried a step further. Those incredible Diabelli variations, for example. The whole range of thought and feeling, yet all in organic relation to a ridiculous little waltz tune. Get this into a novel. How?[6]

Quarles asks the question, then proceeds to answer it:

> The abrupt transitions are easy enough. All you need is a sufficiency of characters and parallel, contrapuntal plots. While Jones is murdering a wife, Smith is wheeling the perambulator in the park. You alternate the themes.[7]

Huxley puts these theories into practice. In the first chapters of Point Counter Point the scene alternates from Walter leaving Marjorie for the evening, to the various

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6 Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point. pp. 349-350.

7 Ibid., p. 350.

guests at Tantamount House listening to Pongileoni and the quartette, from the immense hall to the laboratory above where Lord Edward and Illidge are experimenting. They leave their work and descend to hear the music, and it naturally follows that the different groups of guests should again be touched upon. At a casual reference to Elinor and Philip the scene shifts to India and they are shown dining and driving under a bright, full moon. This alternation in the centre of focus continues throughout the entire novel and the various themes are constantly dissolving and re-combining.

Philip Quarles suggests another means of achieving this musicalization:

> More interesting, the modulations and variations are also more difficult. A novelist modulates by repudiating situations and characters. He shows several people falling in love, or dying, or praying in different ways—dissimilars solving the same problem.[8]

Innumerable examples of this modulation may be found in Point Counter Point. For example, there is that contrapuntal movement which reveals how differently Spandrell, Illidge, Elinor and Quarles react when confronted with death. Spandrell tries to persuade himself that the murder he has committed is a hideous crime, while Illidge is convinced that he actually has done a dreadful thing. Elinor is stunned at the news of Webley's death and in agony over

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8 Ibid., p. 350.

little Phil's illness. Philip Quarles is as sympathetic and unhappy over the boy's death as his emotional nature permits.

It is also remarkable that in these scenes describing little Phil's illness Huxley practically ignores all the emotional elements in the situation. Anxious, perhaps, to avoid the "emotional vulgarity" he perceives in Dickens' death scene of little Nell, Huxley tries to introduce factual details in the manner of Dostoevsky. In the end he escapes one evil but never attains its corresponding good. This may result from his inability to express such deep feeling, from his awareness of the fact that: "Sincerity in art...is mainly a matter of talent,"[9] and that his talent is not of the emotions.

Again Quarles writes in the notebook:

> Another way: The novelist can assume the god-like creative privilege and simply elect to consider the events of the story in their various aspects—emotional, scientific, economic, religious, metaphysical, etc. He will modulate from one to the other—as, from the aesthetic to the physico-chemical aspect of things, from the religious to the physiological or financial.[10]

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9 Aldous Huxley, "Vulgarity in Literature." The Saturday Review of Literature. Vol.7. No.10. September 27, 1930. p. 159.

10 Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point, p. 350.

On the upper floor, where Lord Edward and Illidge are working:

> Pongileoni's blowing and the scraping of the anonymous fiddlers had shaken the air in the great hall, had set the glass of the windows looking on to it vibrating; and this in turn had shaken the air in Lord Edward's apartment on the further side. The shaking air rattled Lord Edward's membrana tympani; the interlocked malleus, incus, and stirrup bones were set in motion so as to agitate the membrane of the oval window and raise an infinitesimal storm in the fluid of the labyrinth. The hairy endings of the auditory nerve shuddered like weeds in a rough sea; a vast number of obscure miracles were performed in the brain, and Lord Edward ecstatically whispered "Bach!"11

This juxtaposition of two accounts, if one be purely scientific, will set up ironical reverberations at once striking and disturbing. These reverberations are also aroused by the contrasts which the frequent changing of the scene permits. As Philip records in his notebook, it is a desire to see the multiplicity in phenomena that motivates this kind of writing, an effort to cultivate some new approach to fiction. Philip wants to view reality through the eyes of the biologist, chemist, physicist, and historian, to contrast their varying interpretations and thus create a complex picture that will include life on every stratum.

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11 Ibid., p. 38.

This intention is perhaps best realized by Huxley in the passage concerning the ultimate disintegration of Webley's body after the murder. This way of dealing with death, different again from the manner in which Huxley approaches that of little Phil, does not evoke a strong emotion, but it does illustrate the illusiveness of what we call life. As Alexander Henderson points out, no other author deals with death in quite this manner, for no other possesses the erudition which makes such a passage plausible.[12]

Describing the dramatic moment of Spandrell's self-inflicted death, Huxley again makes skilful use of music. Spandrell, having sent a note to the British Freemen telling them that he is Webley's assassin, plays Beethoven's heilige Dankesang as he waits for death. The Freemen shoot him and as he dies he hears:

> Heaven, in those long-drawn notes, became once more the place of absolute rest, of still and blissful convalescence. Long notes, a chord repeated, protracted, bright and pure, hanging, floating, effortlessly soaring on and on. And then suddenly there was no more music; only the scratching of the needle on the revolving disc.[13]

What then has Spandrell discovered? Huxley leaves us with the question. A bang or a whimper, God or simply the scratching of a needle.

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12 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1935. p. 78.

13 Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point. p. 512.

The novel does not end with Spandrell's death but with Burlap, the spiritual, over-grown infant who, having driven his secretary to commit suicide, goes home to share his bath with Beatrice, the timorous housekeeper he has made his mistress: "And what a romp they had! ...Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."[14] The irony with which Huxley imbues this closing passage is fierce; the last touch which he adds to his picture of a meaningless and decadent "Vanity Fair" leaves no doubt as to the desirability of a widespread "life worship."

In so far as there is any one dominant character in the novel, it is Rampion. It is worth observing that his character is never split, he is never given an ironical treatment. But because he expresses only opinions and ideas and is seldom seen in action he is, as Huxley admits, such a "slightly monstrous" character as the novel of ideas is liable to produce.

Said D.H.Lawrence:

> ...your Rampion is the most boring character in the book—a gas-bag. Your attempt at intellectual sympathy!—It's all rather disgusting, and I feel like a badger that has its hole on Wimbledon Common and trying not to be caught.[15]

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14 Ibid., p. 514.

15 Aldous Huxley, editor, The Letters of D.H.Lawrence. p. 758.

Elsewhere Huxley insists that none of the characters in the novel are intended to be portraits of specific persons, but he admits that all artists must draw upon the people with whom they associate, otherwise their characters would be lifeless.

Lawrence never cared for Point Counter Point as a novel, although he did feel that Huxley spoke the truth about his generation. He admired Huxley for revealing the feelings of the moment but he hated those feelings. Lawrence regretted that Huxley could only "palpitate to murder, suicide, and rape,"[16] but in compensation he believed that only one of many Huxleys wrote his novels, and that the other selves were undoubtedly much "nicer."

It is interesting to discover that in another of Lawrence's letters, written in 1927, a year before Point Counter Point was published, he refers to Les Faux-Monnayeurs of André Gide. Huxley has often been accused of imitating Gide technique in Point Counter Point and certainly his novel does resemble Les Faux-Monnayeurs in a number of ways. Whether or not Huxley is at all indebted to Gide, Lawrence did write to him:

> We'll send the books back. Proust too much water-jelly—I can't read him. Faux Monnayeurs was interesting as a revelation of the modern state of mind—but it's done to shock and surprise, pour épater—and fanfarons de vice!—not real.[17]

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16 Ibid., p. 757.

17 Ibid., p. 686.

This would seem to indicate that by 1927 Huxley had at least read Les Faux-Monnayeurs but need not necessarily imply that he deliberately made use of the same innovations. Nevertheless it is odd that both should have conceived of music as a basis for technique in the novel and both created novels in which the subject is discussed at length in notebooks kept by characters who are also writers, for Gide also intends to shed light upon the whole of humanity and existence through the particular part of life which he conveys.[18]

It was this desire to incorporate into one story a vast amount of related experience and its wider implications, while at the same time preserving a sense of balance and pattern, that motivated "expressionistic" novels of the type of Joyce's Ulysses. In Antic Hay Huxley had shown a marked affinity with Joyce's manner of writing, and evinced a similar concern with the diffuseness of experience in his interpretation. In Point Counter Point he further develops the technical tendencies evolved in the earlier work and, like Joyce, seeks to instill into literature the meandering movement of life. Towards this end both have based the structure of their novels upon the continual ebb and flow of repeated and modulated themes. Their choice of

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18 Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel. New York: D.Appleton-Century Co. 1932. pp. 458-469.

technique indicates a lack of concern for any "catharsis" and a turning away from the neo-classical "geometricalization of passion."[19] Rather they have been intent upon bringing to light the best method of rendering "that infinitely complex and mysterious thing, actual reality."[20]

Considering the possibility of such an inclusive mood constructed on the principles of musical composition, Philip Quarles contends:

> However queer the picture is, it can never be half so odd as the original reality. We take it all for granted; but the moment you start thinking, it becomes queer. And the more you think, the queerer it grows. That's what I want to get in this book—the astonishingness of the most obvious things. Really, any plot or situation would do. Because everything's implicit in anything. The whole book could be written about a walk from Piccadilly Circus to Charing Cross.[21]

This ideal of incorporating into one story a vast amount of related experience was first realized by Huxley in Antic Hay, and from it the technical principles of Point Counter Point naturally followed.

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19 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley. London: Chatto & Windus. 1935. p. 211.

20 Ibid., p. 211.

21 Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point. p. 228.

Another example of reaction against the "logical neatness" of James, Flaubert, Bourget and Prevost, Gide's writing shows the deformalization of Joyce and the same technical inclinations as Huxley. Like Huxley he seeks musical juxtaposition, but he also wishes to show one event as seen from different angles, through different characters whose views are all coloured by their personalities, so that the reader himself is allowed to discover the true view.

The obviousness which Gide avoids in this way, is one of Huxley's greatest defects in Point Counter Point. Everything is made too explicit and the reader is seldom allowed to make his own decisions. Even in the contrapuntal movement of the story each alternation seems to be directly felt. But the form which Huxley has chosen has its own limitations, especially with regard to the portraying of characters. It is difficult to give a lucid impression of a number of individuals simply by means of the opinions which they express, for quite apart from the fact that people do not always speak their deepest feelings freely, it is difficult to keep such garrulous characters from becoming unnatural. Artificially limited in this way they never appear to be really their own masters, but rather the passive instruments of their creator. In this Huxley is the victim of a failing which Gide has escaped, for Huxley

too frequently accounts for the characters' psychology without permitting them to present their case dramatically. Missing this point he runs the danger of losing in explicitness a genuine artistic revelation so that in the end, the more natural qualities in reality may be sacrificed to technique.

It has actually been suggested that Huxley's concern with technique springs from his inability to create a simple, common, straightforward, story, a novel of real people displaying real emotions. The thoughts which Philip Quarles has upon the subject would seem to support the accusation and to prove that Huxley is aware of his limitations; that he has attempted to overcome them:

> ...if, he reflected, he didn't write that kind of story, perhaps it was because he couldn't. In art there are simplicities more difficult than the most serried complications. He could manage the complications as well as anyone. But when it came to the simplicities, he lacked the talent—that talent which is of the heart, no less than of the head, of the feelings, the sympathies, the intuitions, no less than of the analytical understanding.[22]

It was this intellectualism which prevented Huxley from becoming a continuing convert to Lawrence's philosophy, and led him to adopt a novel of ideas whose chief defect is:

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22 Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point, p. 229.

> ...that you must write about people who have ideas to express—which excludes all but about .01 per cent. of the human race. Hence the real, the congenital novelists don't write such books. But then, I never pretended to be a congenital novelist.[23]

This quotation would appear to give voice to Huxley's own convictions. Questioned as to whether he was more of an essayist than a novelist, Huxley replied, "Perhaps I am." Certainly within his novels he has scattered a number of brief but brilliant essays, whether this need detract from his value as a novelist depends upon the critic's personal opinion as to what comprises the amorphous novel form. Huxley himself gives a very unconfined definition:

> "It's like catch-as-catch-can wrestling....You can do what you can get away with. There aren't any divinely laid down canons of the novel. All you need is to be interesting."[24]

In Point Counter Point Huxley attains a height of technical achievement unsurpassed by any of his other novels. He accomplishes a "tour de force," brilliant and fascinating, but the "musicalization" he employs does not always realize his intention. For, as Huxley himself admits, the novelist can never really hope to reproduce the abrupt transitions of music, which are so much more rapid and symbolical

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23 Ibid., p. 351.

24 Ross Parmenter. "Huxley at Forty-Three."—Interview. The Saturday Review of Literature. Vol.17. No.21. March 19, 1938. p. 11.

than those of prose fiction. It is in re-creating a sophisticated and unsettled London of the 1920's that Huxley does realize his ambition, for he unquestionably adds to "the sum of particularized beauty-truths about man and his relations with the world about him."[25]

With Brave New World Huxley continues his experiments in literary technique. Written during that period of transition, between the search for values suggested in Those Barren Leaves and the final acceptance of faith found in Eyeless in Gaza, Brave New World is another of the fruits of "life-worship" as well as another technical tour de force. In addition, the novel proves that Huxley had acquired an even more inclusive view of humanity than his earlier works implied, for, while he had been aware of man as a religious, intellectual, and social being, now, for the first time, he considered the individual as a citizen and part of a political state.

In Brave New World Huxley creates a scientific Utopia. Satirizing the modern technological advance, accompanied by a scientific materialism and a less responsible morality, he visualizes a society well calculated to kill

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25 Aldous Huxley, Retrospect. An Omnibus of Aldous Huxley's Books. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1933. p. 263. (Vulgarity in Literature)

initiative, emotion, and nobility of character. This Brave New World is expected to exist in After Ford 632, but the hideous and ludicrous world of the future is of particular importance for the relation it bears to the world of today. "Prophecy is mainly interesting for the light it throws on the age in which it is uttered";[26] and as Huxley further observes, the "future is the present projected."[27]

As an answer to the question of where this worship of science rather than of life can lead, Huxley presents this picture of a highly industrialized civilization where babies are decanted from bottles, happiness is induced by sleep hypnosis and preserved through the Feelies, Scent Organs, or through "soma," a drug with "all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects."[28] Man obviously made for the machine, is divided, in his bottled state, into classes, according to his place in the mechanized scheme of things. The lower classes, who do the most tedious work, are produced in batches of eighty or ninety, all absolutely identical; to preserve the artificially engendered hierarchy of the State in constant harmony, all are

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26 Aldous Huxley, The Olive Tree. London: Chatto & Windus. 1936. p. 135.

27 Aldous Huxley, "The Outlook for American Culture." Harper's Monthly Magazine. Vol.155, August 1927. p. 265.

28 Aldous Huxley, Brave New World. London: The Zodiac Press. 1948. p. 45.

conditioned to believe that their own class is the best of all possible classes and taught that to enjoy their synthetic brand of happiness is man's chief end.

Only rarely does anyone subject to the law of "Community, Identity, Stability," escape the confines of conditioning to seek his individuality. But two of the characters in the upper stratum, Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson have been left with some shreds of their own emotions and desires, their own ability to make decisions. Of the two, Bernard shows less strength of character, but it is with his weakness and "self-division" that Huxley appears to be most concerned. Bernard's inability to adapt himself is well demonstrated in his relationship with Lenina, a woman well adapted to her environment and perfectly content. Accepting without question the hypnotically taught rules of conduct, she is typical of all the unconsciously uninhibited women who inhabit the "brave new world." Equating their lovewith lust, Huxley sees them as blatantly immodest, and through Bernard's disgust further emphasizes their complete lack of a moral sense.

> Since Swift pictured the Brobdingnagian Maids of Honour, no English writer, not even Joyce, has treated women so savagely as Huxley in this novel.[29]

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29 Hugh Kingsmill, "The Menace of Utopias." The English Review. Vol.54. March 1932. p. 327.

As an experiment upon Lenina and himself, Bernard takes her with him on a visit to an Indian reservation in New Mexico. Here the Savage is discovered and his emotional, imaginative, conception of life, inspired by Shakespeare, is contrasted with their highly civilized and materialistic view. The filth of the primitive village is the antithesis of the aseptic, well-regulated Utopia. The vast difference is brought home forcefully to the Savage when he accompanies Bernard and Lenina back to the World State. This experiment precipitates a number of crises. Helmholtz Watson and Bernard, encouraged to exert their personalities by the rebellious spirit which the Savage displays, in the face of their artificial, unnatural civilization, are sent, at the close of the book, to live in the seclusion of those desert islands where individualists are interned. Bernard shows great weakness when he is condemned, but Helmholtz, who possesses a more enquiring mind and less passive nature, is pleased with the prospect. He sees a possibility of realizing those potentialities which he is convinced he possesses, but which could never be brought fully to life in the unsympathetic atmosphere of the scientific Utopia. He asks Bernard:

> "Did you ever feel"..."as though you had something inside you that was only waiting for you to give it a chance to come out? Some sort of extra power that you aren't using—you know, like all the water that goes down the falls instead of through the turbines?"30

The close of the book promises Helmholtz full development and a new freedom of thought for Bernard, but it brings only tragedy for the Savage. Horrified by the lack of nobility in the new world and unimpressed by the wonders of science, he misses God and poetry, danger and sin. He finds God and Good have been banished, reading and solitude forbidden, truth-seeking and emotion discredited. If this mass-produced, scientifically induced, state of unconsciousness is happiness, the Savage claims the right to be unhappy.

Regarded as an oddity and unable to escape notoriety, the Savage is pursued by the civilization he abhors, until, unable to come to terms with life, and tired of being ridiculed, he finds the only solution in self-flagellation and, eventually, suicide.

By presenting the greater amount of this story in dialogue, and alternating paragraphs of the dialogue with brief passages of description, Huxley reproduces the brisk staccato of continually moving machinery. Presenting the remarks of the Director of the H atchery and Conditioning Centre he supplements direct speech with the jottings of

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30 Aldous Huxley, Brave New World. p. 57.

the students in their notebooks, and he avoids continually introducing each speaker through such brief contrapuntal exchanges as the following:

> "Eighty-eight cubic metres of card-index," said Mr.Foster with relish, as they entered.
> "Containing all the relevant information," added the Director.
> "Brought up to date every morning."
> "And co-ordinated every afternoon."
> "On the basis of which they make their calculations."
> "So many individuals, of such and such quality," said Mr.Foster.
> "Distributed in such and such quantities."
> "The optimum Decanting Rate at any given moment."
> "Unforeseen wastages promptly made good."[31]

Brave New World is built on the same pattern of shifting scenes as Point Counter Point, but here the movement is more rapid, for, if in one sentence a particular place or consciousness is described, in the next, the centre of focus may already have altered. Such rapid transitions make it possible for Huxley to give a kaleidoscopic view of the whole Utopian civilization within a single chapter, and to avoid lengthy passages of pure narrative.

Through his technique and encouraged by the nature of his subject, Huxley dips generously into his fund of scientific knowledge, and is also able to introduce his sense of the past, his awareness of culture.

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31 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

> "You all remember," said the Controller, in his strong deep voice, "you all remember, I suppose, that beautiful and inspired saying of Our Ford's: History is bunk. History," he repeated slowly, "is bunk."
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> He waved his hand; and it was as though, with an invisible feather whisk, he had brushed away a little dust, and the dust was Harappa, was Ur of the Chaldees; some spider-webs, and they were Thebes and Babylon and Cnossos and Mycenae. Whisk, whisk—and where was Odysseus, where was Job, where were Jupiter and Gotama and Jesus? Whisk—and those specks of antique dirt called Athens and Rome, Jerusalem and the Middle Kingdom—all were gone. Whisk—the place where Italy had been was empty. Whisk, the cathedrals; whisk, whisk, King Lear and the Thoughts of Pascal. Whisk, Passion; whisk, Requiem; whisk, Symphony; whisk...[32]

This metonomy, as Alexander Henderson has observed, gives a feeling of fantasy to the passage.

Throughout the book Huxley skilfully interjects quotations from Shakespeare, through the reflections of the Savage, which set in relief the lack of "splendidly human" qualities in the unnatural atmosphere.

Huxley gives certain subjects a greater import by following a dialogue with its dramatization. In this way, for example, he treats the remarks of the Controller on the horrors of family life in that outdated world where mothers and fathers still existed:

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32 Ibid., pp. 26-27.

> "And yet, among the savages of Samoa, in certain islands off the coast of New Guinea..."
> The tropical sunshine lay like warm honey on the naked bodies of children tumbling promiscuously among the hibiscus blossoms. Home was in any one of twenty palm-thatched houses. In the Trobriands conception was the work of ancestral ghosts; nobody had ever heard of a father.
> "Extremes," said the Controller, "meet. For the good reason that they were made to meet."[33]

This shifting of the point of view is one of the most distinctive features of Huxley's technique. He accomplishes transitions with a speed, vivacity, and above all, a lucidity, which is particularly remarkable in his adapting of dialogue and description to preserve a smooth yet rich surface.

In Brave New World Huxley, like the Savage, makes no effort to hide the repugnance he feels towards the growing industrialism of our civilization. The enthusiastic acceptance of the machine has made it easy to replace the emotions with superficial entertainment. In satirizing this conflict between "science" and the natural dignity of man, Huxley expresses his reaction to the theory of inevitable progress and the idea, advanced even in Bacon's New Atlantis, that the improvement of man's physical, social, and political environment automatically produces his greater happiness.

As a thwarted idealist satirizing the existing state of affairs, Huxley bears a resemblance to Swift, but Huxley's detached and sceptical approach to his subject lacks something

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33 Ibid., pp. 30-31.

of that practical worldliness, that feeling for proportion, which Swift took from the eighteenth century.

From Huxley's Brave New World there is no returning, and in it there seems to be no escape, for it offers a number of hopeless alternatives. It is impossible to make anything humanly good in the social world pictured in this satire, and the plea for "life-worship" is implicit in the reflection of a civilization where the best human emotions and the noblest thoughts are inevitably absent.

CHAPTER V

THE ACCEPTANCE OF MYSTICISM

To Huxley "life-worship" had brought an intensification of his convictions that society was chaotic and corrupt and that positive values were disintegrating. In Brave New World he had clearly intimated that he felt no faith for the future if it were an intensification of the present, but in Beyond the Mexique Bay of 1934, he also frankly admitted that he could never obey his intuitive desires and emotions to the exclusion of such modifications as his mind might present. In other words, D.H.Lawrence's ideas, robbed of the power which his magnetic personality had lent them, ceased to intoxicate, and in Eyeless in Gaza Huxley records some of the sensations of his sober awakening.

Lawrence had been satisfied with mere animal purpose disregarding intellectual rationalizations. But Huxley observes:

> ...Lawrence had never looked through a microscope, never seen biological energy in its basic undifferentiated state....Those depths beneath depths of namelessness, crawling irrepressibly—they would have horrified him. He had insisted that the raw material should be worked up—but worked only to a certain pitch and no further; that the primal crawling energy should be used for the relatively higher purposes of animal existence, but for no existence beyond the animal. Arbitrarily, illogically. For the other, ulterior purposes and organizations existed and were not to be ignored. Moving through space and time, the human animal discovered them on his path, unequivocally present and real.[1]

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1 Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza. London: Chatto & Windus. 1936. p. 360.

With Eyeless in Gaza Huxley abandons Lawrence's intuitive interpretation of life and his own congenitally intellectual one to give expression to his acceptance of mysticism, that spiritual philosophy in which he continues to place his trust. In his story of a man's laborious progress from scepticism to the acquisition of convictions, Huxley has paralleled his own experience.

The title of the novel is taken from the lines of Milton's dramatic poem, "Samson Agonistes."

> Eyeless in Gaza at the Mill with slaves,
> Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke;[2]

The quotation refers to Samson who, according to Judges XVI, a slave and blinded, tore down the house of the Philistines through the strength of the Lord. In Huxley's novel, Anthony Beavis finally escapes the spiritual Philistinism by which he has been surrounded and bound, and through a genuine proof of his unshakable faith achieves, at the close of the book, a new strength through a mystical confirmation of that peace and unity which he realizes to be the essence of life.

Before his conversion Beavis is drawn as a relativist, ethically and psychologically, showing the same intellectual detachment as Philip Quarles and Huxley himself. Beavis has

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2 John Milton, Paradise Regained, The Minor Poems and Samson Agonistes. Merritt Y. Hughes, editor. New York: The Odyssey Press. 1937. p. 544.

avoided all emotional entanglements up to this point, but it is when his mistress, Helen, leaves him that he is brought to reconsider his past. He discovers then that neither his own primarily cogitative approach to life, nor the natural living of Lawrence, is sufficient. He knows that through his intellectual indulgences and irresponsible detachment he has sought to avoid a sympathy and understanding of others. This irresponsibility has caused him to corrupt Joan, his friend Brian Foxe's fiancee, simply to satisfy the curiosity of his mistress of the moment, Mary Amberley. Thus through his lack of integrity he brings about Brian's suicide. His own worst enemy, Beavis tries to preserve his detachment in his relationship with Helen, Mary's daughter. When Helen, no longer able to accept the heartless sensuality he offers her as a substitute for the decent human affection she craves deserts Beavis, he finds that he really does love her, but too late.

Reconsidering his past in the light of this crisis, Beavis finds that at forty-two everything is pointless and sordid. In this mood he accepts the proposal of his friend, Mark Staithes, of a trip to Mexico, where Beavis hopes that the excitement of a revolution will help him throw off his negativity.

In Mexico Beavis meets Miller, a doctor and anthropologist, who appears to represent Huxley's impressions of Mr.Gerald Heard. Miller diagnoses Beavis' disease as physical no less than mental, and, just as Heard taught Huxley, Miller teaches Beavis to transcend his personality through educating his body as well as his mind. This physical co-ordination is intended to make possible an integration of his faculties and Beavis, returned to London, continues to work towards this end. He realizes that to find his life more fully he must, in a sense, lose it, and that those desires, sensations, emotions and intellect which lead to egocentricity can only hold him back.

In a word, what Beavis seeks is the "non-attachment" which Huxley continues to preach in all the novels of this later period. As David Daiches has remarked:

> From Gumbril senior to Calamy, from Calamy to Rampion, from Rampion to Miller and Anthony after his conversion. The evolution of the Huxley hero stands as one of the most instructive phenomena in recent literature.[3]

Many critics turning to Eyeless in Gaza from the bright sophistication of Point Counter Point, bemoaned the lack of vivacity to which they had become accustomed in Huxley's work.

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3 David Daiches, "The Novels of Aldous Huxley." The New Republic. Vol.100. November 1,1939. p. 365.

In Eyeless in Gaza the world is seen from a new vantage ground and the general satire which the novel contains is heightened by that new note of authority and greater self-knowledge which is the basis of this more mature drama.

With this novel Huxley again proves that he is interested in how the story is told as well as in what it has to tell. In Point Counter Point he interpreted his slice of life through the movement and pattern suggested by music, in Eyeless in Gaza the forms he chooses are justified by their analogy to the unpredictable motion of memory. With this in mind Huxley does not unroll events in their chronological sequence, but instead allows each chapter of the book, describing a particular incident or some stage in Anthony's progress towards a mystical pacifist view, to appear as though by chance. But behind this apparent disjointedness there is an orderly system, for Huxley marks these chapters with a date and year, as though they were so many snapshots, and the question raised by his presentation would seem to be, is memory a random process, or has it a more than casual bearing upon the present?

At first Beavis thinks that:

> Somewhere in the mind a lunatic shuffled a pack of snapshots and dealt them out at random, shuffled once more and dealt them out in different order, again and again, indefinitely. There was no chronology. The idiot remembered no distinction between before and after.[4]

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4 Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza. pp. 22-23.

But from the construction of the novel it would appear that Huxley is not convinced of this for he does not permit the technique to be original at the cost of clarity. Incidents are not introduced without rhyme or reason, but are threads carefully drawn in at appropriate moments to become part of an elaborate design, and Beavis, reconsidering the strange habits of memory, gives a key to the construction of the novel when he observes that the reason might perhaps be found, "not before the event, but after it, in what had been the future."[5] It is upon this reflection of the future on the past, the past on the present, and upon similar counterpoints that Huxley bases the contrapuntal movement of the novel. Thus the maze is not without a plan, and having a plan turns out to be an amazingly intricate piece of work. There are a number of ways in which the actual drafting and detail of the construction may be approached. Phyllis Bentley, in an article on "The Structure of 'Eyeless in Gaza'", divides the book into four separate parts, according to time. From 1902 to 1904 through Anthony's school days; from 1912 to 1914 when he is at Oxford and causes Brian's suicide; from 1926 to August 30th,1933, when he meets Helen and she finally leaves him, and from August 31st, 1933 until 1935 during the period

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5 Ibid., p. 24.

when he meets Miller and comes under his guidance. Within each of these time sequences events are tumbled and yet manage to present contrasts to one another.[6]

Replying to Phyllis Bentley's article, W.A.Ismay also emphasizes the point that Eyeless in Gaza is even more deliberately formalized in its structure than Huxley's other novels. All this evidence would seem to confirm the opinion that Huxley has not simply jumbled the incidents of his story at random, but rather has tried to illuminate experience in a new way, and to the best advantage. Certainly this presentation permits subtle comparisons, such as those which exist between the unregenerate and the reformed Beavis, between those qualities in the son which are made grotesque in the father; which would be more difficult to attain through a straightforward story-telling. Every shapshot chapter is necessary to the novel and casts a revealing light on some character, some other snapshot. Imitating the movement of the mind, and illustrating the complexity of the mind's simultaneous perceptions, Huxley is able to show the different levels of Beavis' consciousness in quite a different manner from the pure "stream of consciousness," adopted by Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, or James Joyce. Nor does the novel deal purely with Beavis' search for beliefs, for incidents

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6 Phyllis Bentley, "The Structure of 'Eyeless in Gaza.'" The London Mercury and Bookman. Vol.34. No.203. September 1936. p. 435.

involving other people and related events are also described. But these are carefully selected and only those which contribute to the significance of the whole are included.

By disclosing certain climactic events early in the book and retarding others, Huxley keeps curiosity alert. He creates varieties of suspense, and exchanges one for another. For example, within the plot there are the dramas and tragedies of Helen, Brian Foxe, Joan and Mary Amberley. But more important to Huxley is the development of those psychological varieties which constitute the raw material for a counter point of conflicting emotions. It is with individual will, social harmony and world unity that Huxley is most concerned, and there runs through the novel the feeling of an illusory free will within an actual psychological predestination. This is particularly well illustrated in the case of Beavis himself, for all the psychological changes he undergoes are means to a certain end, all his discontinuous memories lead towards his own self-knowledge. Huxley also devotes particular attention to the cause of Anthony's attitude towards Helen, his betrayal of Brian Foxe, and his sense of his own inadequacies, especially that fear of death which in the last chapter of the book shows signs of abating. It is with psychological freedom that the story is mainly concerned, and Beavis,

seeking freedom from irresponsibility and fear comes to find that the solution lies in freedom from self.

At the close of Eyeless in Gaza Huxley indicates that Beavis has espoused the pacifist cause and is willing to work on its behalf. That is to say, Beavis has become a participator after a life of sceptical observation, and, to prove that he has at least passed the frontier into the land of the mystics, Huxley gives in the last chapter of the novel, glimpses of those stages in Beavis' mystical meditation which lead him to apprehend deeply the final unity of mankind, to realize that separateness and diversity are the conditions of life. Beavis moves towards a consummation which is pure experience and "unmediated knowledge." This awareness of unity with other lives and beings which the passage seeks to convey is deepened by the echoing and re-echoing of the word "peace."

Technically Eyeless in Gaza is a highly effective novel. If it gives the impression of being somewhat self-conscious in its originality the fact will not worry Huxley, for he affirms:

> A consciously practised theory of art has never spoiled a good artist, has never dammed up inspiration, but rather, and in most cases profitably, canalized it.[7]

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7 Aldous Huxley, On the Margin. London: Chatto & Windus. 1923. p. 188.

In *After Many a Summer* Huxley does not exhibit the same tendency towards technical experimentation that marked *Eyeless in Gaza* for in the former novel the narrative moves forward through a more orderly progression of events, although punctuated by Huxley's customary discussions and digressions. Here Huxley again brings into play a favourite Peacockian device and assembles all the characters at the castle of Jo Stoyte, the California millionaire, so that a comparison of ideas and of conflicting personalities is easily brought about.

As in *Crome Yellow* the story opens with the thoughts of one of the principal characters, Jeremy Pordage, as he approaches the centre of activity. Through his eyes such unconventional features of Los Angeles as the Beverly Pantheon are satirically viewed. He is struck by their vulgarities and in his reactions he reveals his own self-consciousness and conservatism. He is precise and precious in comparison with Stoyte, who despises him for being a scholar, and who, while continually casting aspersions on culture and learning, is yet, an undiscriminating and enthusiastic patron of the arts. Stoyte has stocked his castle with innumerable treasures but the *pièce de résistance*, as Huxley describes it through the eyes of Mr.Pordage, is the castle itself, an example of bad taste on the most tremendous scale.

Materialistic, possessive, warm and cold-hearted by turns, Jo Stoyte attempts to compensate himself for an unhappy childhood. Rich as he is, his happiness is ruined by a fear of death, and it is through a consideration of moral and spiritual values, to which Stoyte's problem gives rise, that Huxley interprets his own most serious thoughts.

Stoyte's happiness depends upon Virginia, his mistress and adopted daughter, and upon Dr.Obispo, who carries out experiments in longevity to satisfy the millionaire's desire to prolong his life. The futility of such an ambition is most clearly realized when it is contrasted with those ideas which Mr.Propter presents.

Mr.Propter, who lives in the valley below the millionaire's magnificent monstrosity, believes that eternal life is to be found, not in prolonging our life in time, which amounts only to a "permanent possibility of sensation" but in experiencing that life outside of time which may still be part of life in the present. For he believes that in selflessly seeking good and practising charity man may condition himself for a mystical experience of oneness with God.

It is by Mr.Propter that the real message of the novel is conveyed, as it is with time, life, and death that Huxley is really concerned. Rejecting the world of time he asserts

that all our acts on the human level are perpetually threatened by evil. Three planes of existence are dealt with in the book; the animal, where good exists in a harmonious adaptation to environment, the kind of philosophy that Lawrence extolled; the timeless, or eternal, where good exists in a transcending of the ego; and the human plane, where man, like the tight-rope walker, unceasingly strives to maintain his equilibrium, ever fearful of the abyss of evil below.

What an alteration of spirit this indicates when compared with the passages extolling the purely human attributes of man which abound in Point Counter Point. Huxley now finds that it is beyond this human level of experience we must seek peace, in the realization of a unity behind apparent diversity, such as that which Anthony Beavis achieved in Eyeless in Gaza. Here lies the justification for "non-attachment" and the source, una sola sancta, of justice, truth and peace.

Mr.Propter believes that man's life, if prolonged as Jo Stoyte desires, (i.e., materially-centered) would result in his gradually becoming more and more like an ape, and, in the last chapter of After Many a Summer his deductions are proved to be correct.

The chief technical device in After Many a Summer is the pattern of contrast, no innovation in Huxley's writing. These contrasts are effected through stereoscopic vision and alternations in the centres of consciousness. In their broadest aspect they are between good and evil values, as illustrated by events and as shown in the various characters or, ironically, within the same character.

The satire to which Huxley's observations lead him is contrived to point up the importance of Mr.Propter's message. Huxley quotes Mr.Propter as having said:

> ...a good satire was much more deeply truthful and, of course, much more profitable than a good tragedy. The trouble was that so few good satires existed, because so few satirists were prepared to carry their criticism of human values far enough.[8]

Huxley certainly does not suffer from such a lack of perseverance, and he adds a further flourish to his criticism through the series of ironies illuminated by his custom of frequently changing the scene.

In this novel Mr.Propter, considered to be another portrait of Mr.Gerald Heard, is the character who expresses Huxley's convictions, and represents the norm of developed and harmonized man from which all the other characters are

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8 Aldous Huxley, After Many a Summer. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, at St.Martin's House. 1939. p. 227.

seen to vary; Virginia in the direction of spiritualism, Obispo toward sensualism, Jo Stoyte towards materialism. As a scholar and a man of good will, Mr.Propter can find a grotesque reflection of his intellectual self in Mr.Pordage. This double view of one type of personality is intended to compare two varieties of humanists, one who has escaped from his ego to achieve non-attachment and become invulnerable, the other, his counterpart who has remained a shallow, superior and self-conscious being. Meeting his other half and seeing in him something of himself, Mr.Propter ironically sums the situation up:

> "Take a decayed Christian"..."and the remains of a Stoic; mix thoroughly with good manners, a bit of money and an old-fashioned education; simmer for several years in a university. Result: a scholar and a gentleman..."[9]

Huxley has been criticized for including such a large amount of sensual as well as religious experience in many of his novels. George Catlin finds it dubious, "whether Huxley does himself justice by trying to sell philosophy to the nit-wits by seasoning it with aphrodisiacs."[10] It would seem that by these tactics Huxley is bound to disappoint both those who are mainly impressed by his philosophy and those who seek only a more sensual entertainment. In this

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9 Ibid., p. 19.

10 George Catlin, "Time and Aldous Huxley." The Saturday Review of Literature. Vol.21. No.14. January 27, 1940. p. 5.

Huxley would justify himself by explaining:

> The facts of life must be stated...They have got to be brought up into consciousness. The difficulty is how to state them without shocking people to such an extent that they will be oblivious to everything else.[11]

In Point Counter Point Huxley exposed sexuality as an expression of the spirit of post-war London; in Brave New World it represented the inevitable result of the lack of a moral sense engendered by scientific materialism; in Eyeless in Gaza it was an aspect of irresponsibility and unenlightenedness; in After Many a Summer, apart from the irony it involves, it is intended, as Huxley has pointed out, to suggest an aspect of life which cannot be ignored.

In spirit, After Many a Summer moves further away from the meaningless scepticism of Antic Hay and towards the serious moral awareness of Eyeless in Gaza. But Eyeless in Gaza is a more profound psychological drama and much less thinly-covered manifesto. In After Many a Summer we are perhaps too aware that, as Theodore Spencer remarks,

> ...what we are watching is, after all, an abstraction from life itself; vivid and even violent though it may be, it tends to be less an organism than an arrangement. It is what we often feel when we read Ben Jonson, and what we rarely feel when we read Shakespeare.[12]

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11 Ross Parmenter, "Huxley at Forty-Three." The Saturday Review of Literature. Vol.17. No.21, March 19,1938. p. 11.

12 Theodore Spencer, "Aldous Huxley: the latest Phase." The Atlantic Monthly. Vol.165. March 1940. p. 409.

In contrast to mutability Huxley offers an eternity which is realizable in the present and a hope for man as a social and moral being.

The title of the book is taken from the lines of Tennyson's poem which tell of Tithonus' longing for death after he has been made immortal, but refused eternal youth:

> The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
> The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
> Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
> And after many a summer dies the swan.[13]

Grey Eminence, published in 1941, is Huxley's first attempt at biography. In the story of Father Joseph, a Capuchin friar who tried to mix mysticism with power politics, Huxley endeavours to prove that such a reconciliation can never be achieved; that large-scale political activity is inherently evil and corrupts; that the theocentric person should not involve himself in those activities which make it impossible for him to transcend himself through contemplation.

As the friar sows, he reaps, and as Huxley points out, he makes the great mistake of identifying the will of God with the glory of France. He forgets that the means employed will influence the ends achieved. At the close of his career as a political intriguer, and after continual efforts to

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13 Aldous Huxley, After Many a Summer. Preliminary leaf.

prolong the Thirty Years' War, Father Joseph discovers that he has fallen from grace, and suffers acutely from the loss of his earlier and closer communion with God.

It is unnecessary in the study of Huxley's technique to linger over a work which, in its lucid history of Father Joseph's psychological and mystical, religious and political activities more than amply achieves what it intends, but whose objectives, differing from those of the novel, demand fewer of those ingenious devices associated with Huxley's pure fiction.

Frequently involved in a recording of mystical experience, Huxley finds the same difficulty in Grey Eminence as Mr.Propter has enlarged upon in After Many a Summer, the difficulty of making "one-pointedness" and "active annihilation" at all understandable to those who are uninitiated into its mysteries, through language, which is inadequate for such a task. As Mr.Propter says:

> "...The only vocabulary at our disposal is a vocabulary primarily intended for thinking strictly human thoughts about strictly human concerns. But the things we want to talk about are non-human realities and non-human ways of thinking. Hence the radical inadequacy of all statements about our animal nature and, even more, of all statements about God or spirit, or eternity."14

Aldous Huxley's tremendous capacity for experience has qualified him to discuss such subjects. In Grey Eminence his customary digressions are largely confined to similar

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14 Ibid., p. 157.

topics, such as, the Hindu and the early Christian development of the mystical tradition, the experiences of Benet Fitch of Canfield and Pierre de Bérulle, the wiles of Satan and the misinterpretations of vicarious suffering. On the whole these digressions are less worldly and casually unpremeditated than those of Antic Hay, Those Barren Leaves and Point Counter Point. There is of course an essential seriousness in these earlier works, but Grey Eminence proves that the sophisticated, sceptical Huxley has become, according to George Catlin, "the best of our political philosophers. He is the only man today rewriting St.Augustine in letters of hell-fire."[15]

The sparkle of the earlier Huxley is reflected in such descriptions as that of Marie de Médicis, a "large, fleshy, gorgeously bedizened barmaid"[16] and in his appreciation of the paradox of Father Joseph's personality. Both a religious Ezéchiely and a worldly Tenebroso-Cavernoso, Huxley sees him as:

> Combining in his own person the oddly assorted characters of Metternich and Savanarola, he could play the diplomatic game with twice the ordinary number of trump cards.[17]

Huxley again shows his ever-present interest in the psychology of his characters through his careful analysis

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15 George Catlin, p. 5.

16 Aldous Huxley, Grey Eminence. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1941. p. 123.

17 Ibid., p. 128.

of the determining conditions which made Father Joseph the dual personality he was. He adds to his description of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, through his account of the etchings of Callot.

The book is fascinating and well endowed with ideas related to its subject. Of all Huxley's works Grey Eminence is the least technically original but, straightforward and serious, it presents in its lucid exposition of mysticism, a noble message, undisguised and well directed at a materialistic and politically ambiguous world.

Time Must Have a Stop marks another step in Huxley's pilgrimage:

> ..."a pilgrimage from flesh to spirit, from pride of intellect to humility of intuition, from self-hood to selflessness, from time into eternity, from lonely separation to union with the Absolute."[18]

In this novel the Huxleyan hero is Sebastian Barnack, a "Della Robbia angel" of seventeen, who is taken to Italy for the holidays by his uncle, Eustace Barnack. Again grouping the characters together at a villa, Huxley creates a setting reminiscent of Those Barren Leaves and the dramatis personae in both novels fall into roughly the same categories. Sebastian, developing within the course of the novel, carries Calamy's initial search for values to its

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18 Ben Ray Redman, "From Time into Eternity." The Saturday Review of Literature. Vol.27. No.36. September 2, 1944. p. 7.

mystical conclusion; Mrs.Thwale, like Mary Thriplow, is another manifestation of those worldly pleasures which Sebastian finds it difficult to overcome; Uncle Eustace is the same cultured hedonist as Mr.Cardan; and his mother-in-law, at whose villa they are all guests, is as forceful and demanding a hostess as was Lillian Aldwinkle.

Huxley focuses particular attention on Sebastian and Mrs.Thwale, another of those women who seek sensation and self-annihilation in sexuality. Sebastian is prey to her advances but an opposing influence is introduced in the person of Bruno Rontini, the contemplative sage in his novel, who seeks self-annihilation of a more complete and purer kind. Sebastian unintentionally brings disaster to the saintly man but, from him, the boy learns those lessons which alter his whole conception of life.

Time and eternity are the underlying sources of the psychological and dramatic development of the novel. Time, on a human level, implies consciousness of self and is evil. Eternity should imply oneness with God, but when Uncle Eustace dies, unconverted and having lived luxuriously and too well, he drifts about in space sardonically surveying humanity, refusing to surrender his personality.

It is Sebastian's progress towards this surrendering of personality, this realizing of eternity while still

within the world of time, that Huxley wishes to relate fully. When Sebastian is first met he is young, egotistical and romantic, devoted to the Gospel of Poetry.

> "In the beginning were the words, and the words were with God, and the words were God. Here endeth the first, last and only lesson."19

The realm of Sebastian's experience is broadened within a few days by a dose of Uncle Eustace's epicureanism, by Mrs.Thwale's experiments in applied physiology, and by an introduction to the saintliness of Bruno Rontini. The epicureanism is incidental and of only comparative value, but the conflict which Sebastian encounters within himself has its origin in an oscillation between the ideas of Mrs.Thwale and those of Bruno, which represent their antithesis.

Descendite ut ascendatis is the motif which is interpreted in terms of sensuality and spirituality. Huxley presents two extremes of self-naughting; that of Veronica Thwale intends only to transform the world through a self-inflicted violence. She is one of those whom Bruno would define as wanting life to be a "tale told by an idiot," and her desire to transform reality is typical of that flight from self which motivates much of our twentieth

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19 Aldous Huxley, Time Must Have a Stop. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1944. p. 247.

century escapism. The extreme of self-naughting which Bruno represents aspires to attain a plane above the "merely human," above craving and awareness of self, rather than in that temporary opiate of sensual indulgence which lies below. The answer to our modern dilemma, Bruno concludes,is in finding out "how to become your inner not-self in God while remaining your outer self in the world." The movement, Bruno suggests and the novel follows, is from time to eternity, the timeless reality of the Divine Ground.

The note-book in which Sebastian, like so many of Huxley's heroes, discloses his personal problems and advancement, also gives a clear expression of Huxley's religious philosophy as it was in 1942, and as it is dramatized in the novel. Sebastian explains that he conceives of a Divine Godhead or Ground of being, which is "transcendent and immanent," a "law of Dharma, which must be obeyed" and which is a Law of mortification, all of which corresponds with the Christian interpretation, but he differs in believing that "it is possible for human beings....to become actually identified with the Ground."[20] This is the condition which has been realized by Bruno Rontini and it is this consummation which Sebastian seeks.

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20 Ibid., pp. 294-295.

At the risk of seeming repetitious, it must be observed that like all Huxley's novels, Time Must Have a Stop is dependent upon contrasts and comparisons for its desired effects. Through a comparison with the world of unscrupulous political activity, of self-indulgence and general unawareness, the world which Bruno advocates, of pacificism, of non-attachment and knowledge of God, is made to appear to be the only hope for our floundering civilization. Such comparisons are also drawn between the different characters, or between the same character as seen at different times; and Sebastian, like Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza, is shown before and after his conversion. These comparisons also contribute to ironical undercurrents, and Mrs.Thwale is referred to as an Ingres Madonna, then described when distorted by her desires or as she reveals herself to Eustace Barnack in a drawing which indicates the extent of her depravity. The picture of Mrs.Thwale which Huxley creates deepens the impression that he is incapable of portraying a woman who can contribute to a man's completeness rather than destroy his integrity.

In the later novels Huxley has always placed a pure spirit in opposition to the unregenerate run of humanity. Beavis and Miller, Mr.Propter, Sebastian and Bruno Rontini,

these disciples of mysticism, try to convey a message to other individuals who, like Eustace Barnack, refuse to listen. But with Huxley there is always the suspicion that his interest in ideas, mystical, social and political, leads him to create characters who are test cases, as in Freudian psychology, and are to be considered for their maladies rather than for themselves. Perhaps it is the detachment which Huxley preserves in his analysis of assorted minds and actions that sometimes makes him appear to be a student of pathology rather than psychology, and of psychology rather than humanity.

The aura of culture and warm glow of Italy which surrounds Time Must Have a Stop relates it closely to After the Fireworks, and those short stories which are so often placed in the same setting. But it bears its closest resemblance to Those Barren Leaves and displays many of the same sort of digressions and fascinating conversations. A cross between Those Barren Leaves and Eyeless in Gaza, this novel shows signs of having combined the old bright, caustic spirit of the twenties with Huxley's new transformed and enlightened one.

As in Those Barren Leaves Huxley delights in describing the Italian scene. Eustace Barnack observes:

> ...the city of Florence, framed between the cypresses of his descending terraces. Over Monte Morello hung fat clouds, like the backsides of Correggio's cherubs at Parma; but the rest of the sky was flawlessly blue, and in the flower beds...the hyacinths were like carved jewels in the sunlight, white jade and lapis lazuli and pale pink coral.[21]

Through Uncle Eustace, as through Mr.Cardan, Huxley brings many facts about life and art to the attention. He notes that nobody but Dégas "could render the cozy and domestic squalors of our physiology with so much intensity and in forms so exquisitely beautiful."[22] So through touches of Donne and Swift, Chaucer and Dante, and Shakespeare, Huxley makes us aware of his deep sense of the past.

It is from the words of the dying Hotspur, in Henry IV, Part I, that Huxley takes the title of the novel:

> But thought's the slave of life, and life's time's fool,
> And time, that takes survey of all the world,
> Must have a stop.[23]

Unfortunately, as Huxley points out, most people ignore the final clause. Time does have a stop, and only by taking eternity into account are we delivered from the slavery of life, only by this awareness of eternity do we

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21 Ibid., p. 63.

22 Ibid., p. 79.

23 Ibid., title page.

avoid fooling away our lives. "The divine Ground is a timeless reality."[24] If we have realized this, Huxley believes that everything from a meaningful interpretation of life to a freedom from the self-destruction he has described, will be forthcoming. From these conclusions Huxley's latest novel arises, for, he observes, if such conclusions are transposed from an evangelical to a Shakespearian key, they represent the following admonition:

> "Cease being ignorant of what you are most assured, your glassy essence, and you will cease to be an angry ape, playing such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep."[25]

In the last chapter of Time Must Have a Stop Sebastian declares that one of the tasks of the coming year would be to discuss the relation between the Ground and its higher manifestations. It is surprising to find that following a number of works concerned with the dialectics of self-transcendence and mysticism, Ape and Essence, Huxley's latest novel, does not carry the study a step further. Huxley chooses instead to satirize our war-making world and depict the kind of civilization that will survive if we refuse to take the initial step towards pacificism and away from power politics.

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24 Ibid., p. 298.

25 Ibid., p. 298.

In many respects Ape and Essence calls to mind its predecessor in the tradition of social satire, Brave New World, but it lacks the phantasy and even the thin laughter of the earlier work. The subject of Huxley's attack in this novel is our contemporary war-producing, self-destroying social organism and the immediate problem of the atomic bomb. He senses the apprehension that hangs heavily in the air and predicts, in 1948, a depressing future that in 1950 appears to be just that much more imminent.

In 1946, writing the preface to a new edition of Brave New World, Huxley notes that he had given only two choices to the Savage, life in Utopia which amounted to insanity, or the life of a primitive, which was the equivalent of lunacy. If he were to revise the book Huxley assures us that he would offer a third alternative, "the possibility of sanity....in a community of exiles and refugees."[26] A community which, of course, would be small and decentralized, where "science" would be made for man and religion would be synonymous with an intelligent pursuit of the transcendental Godhead. In Ape and Essence Huxley does offer this alternative, but it is the only optimistic feature of a state which is otherwise quite as hopeless as that of Brave New World, and a great deal more brutally inhuman.

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26 Time. Vol.48. No.14. September 30,1946. p. 60.

The narrative is begun on the day of Ghandi's assassination and the scene is laid in Hollywood. Huxley takes the opportunity provided by an interview between a writer and producer to discuss the paintings of Rembrandt, Breughel and Piero, and to indulge in dissertations on Plato, Marx, Athena, Brahman, Atman, Order, Beauty, Ghandi, and the general political situation. Leaving the studio after this interview, the writer and a friend pick up a discarded movie script by a man named Tallis. This overture, with its announcements of sharply contrasting motives and events, the man of peace done to death (symbol of the world's brutality and disorder); the dreams of order and beauty running perversely and tragically to tyranny and mad violence, then comes to a stop; and the main story, thus introduced, consists entirely of the remarkable apocalyptic script, as prepared by the late Tallis. In the script, the prologue is a symbolic sequence in which the third world war is depicted as a battle between identical baboons, aided by two enslaved Einsteins. Through the interjected speeches of a Narrator Huxley makes his ironical commentary on so-called "scientific progress" for "ends are ape-chosen - only the means are man's." The script proceeds to give an account of a civilization on the coast of California which has survived the horrors of this atomic warfare, or

"the Thing." From New Zealand, which the war apparently never touched, comes a Rediscovery Expedition of which Dr.Poole is a member. Shortly after his arrival he finds himself in the hands of a strange Belial-worshipping community and at this point Ape and Essence becomes, as Brave New World had been, the story of one man with a moral sense against a philistine mob. This particular mob worships Belial and celebrates his Day with fervent gusto, for, although men and women are forbidden any contact with one another all the rest of the year, at the time of this festival orgies are the rule. Mothers whose babies have been deformed by the Thing have their heads shaved and their babies brutally impaled on knives. Dr.Poole is horrified by these barbarous rites, such as the digging up of the embalmed dead, the stoking of fires with books, the substitute of detumescence for Liebestod and the whole idea that man is created "to propitiate Belial, deprecate His enmity and avoid destruction for as long as possible."[27]

The alternative which Huxley offers to lunacy and insanity in this novel is to be found in the settlement of deserters to which Poole and the girl Loola finally escape. Loola is a product of her environment like Lenina of

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27 Aldous Huxley, Ape and Essence. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1948 p. 93.

Brave New World. But unlike Lenina she is anxious to escape from it and she can appreciate the nobler possibilities of life which her genuine love for Dr.Poole helps her to discover. To the arid world without a proper balance of values Huxley opposes a more profound belief than his admiration for natural humanism, and at the close of the book Dr.Poole symbolically scatters the shell of an egg over the grave of William Tallis and echoes the theme of Huxley's mystical thought through Shelley's lines:

> "'That Light whose smile kindles the Universe
> That Beauty in which all things work and move
> That Benediction, which the eclipsing Curse
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love,
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me
> Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.'" 28

Fundamentally, Ape and Essence is designed on the same technical patterns which Huxley has favoured in all his novels. There are the same counterpoints with their resulting contrasts and ironies so typical of the brilliant and sophisticated Antic Hay or Point Counter Point. But the patterns, as might be expected from the nature of the subject matter, are closer to those of Brave New World. Here Huxley again develops the ever-changing scenes, the

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28 Ibid., p. 204.

varied exchanges of ideas in the form of conversations, the crypticism and the mocking humour. Having already used music and memory as a means of producing this ironical counterpoint, in this novel, Huxley adopts the technique of the motion picture complete with angle-shots, cut-backs, medium and trucking-shots, all of which are harmonized and directed by the voice of a Narrator speaking in verse and prose.

Through the Narrator Huxley gives an added insight into the actions and reflections of the characters. He also introduces the fancy and erudition usually provided by such garrulous intellectuals as Mr.Scogan, Mr.Cardan and Eustace Barnack. Through the Narrator Huxley also intends to bring home the wider implications of the satire to a generation who, although they have ears, are exceedingly loath to hear. Yet in this case their unwillingness is understandable, for Huxley's message is so obvious and so scathing in its satire that it is almost too acid to be digested.

This satire shows our world at its most grotesque. Just as Huxley divides characters and allows one to survey his counterpart, who is really himself in his worst aspects, so here he applies the same theory to our world and permits us to see what may be our future if we continue along our present path.

In Ape and Essence Huxley resolves everything into bitterness to point up an obvious and reiterated moral. Through a savage dramatization of present evils, he hopes to awaken a contemporary world to an awareness of those goods and the virtue of that gospel which the kindly contemplative men of good-will in his latest novels are trying desperately to spread.

Huxley's mystical philosophy has intensified his profound uneasiness and it will appear to many that Ape and Essence is a book written out of fear rather than faith. Reading his latest novel we can understand Lawrence's conclusion that while he admired Huxley's books he did not "like" them, and what he wrote to Huxley in 1928 applies equally well today:

> I do think that art has to reveal the palpitating moment or the state of man as it is. And I think you do that, terribly. But what a moment! and what a state![29]

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29 Aldous Huxley, editor, The Letters of D.H.Lawrence. London: William Heinemann Limited. 1932. p. 757.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

"All that we are...is the result of what we have thought."[1] All that Aldous Huxley has become is recorded in the gradual development which his "novels of ideas" represent, and not only his own development, for he has "come close to writing a biography of the ideas of modern man."[2] Endowed with a mind that is curious, inclusive, intellectual, analytical and quick to draw comparisons, Huxley has, above all, been aware of his times. He feels keenly that we are living in a period of transition, and, according to his latest novel,he hopes that our struggle will result in an acceptance of faith and pacificism such as his own.

This lively interest in current affairs, combined with astuteness and remarkable powers of observation, have made Huxley, like Alexander Pope, distinguished for his critical spirit and the completeness of his thought. He is strongly impressed, as was Pope, by the incongruities of experience, and this fact has greatly influenced his literary technique, for it has caused him to adopt the pattern of contrasts as his chief structural device.

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1 Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means. London: Chatto & Windus. 1946. p. 241.

2 Charles J. Rolo, An Introduction to The World of Aldous Huxley. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1947. p. xxv.

Huxley's concern for modern man leads him to an irony and a more bitter satire, which, intensely emphasizing present ills, are intended to shock us into action and reform. He makes us seriously reconsider our standard of values, our approach to life in time and eternity, our responsibility to society as social beings, and as individuals, to ourselves.

> Sceptic, esthete, satirist, stylistic virtuoso, encyclopedia of scientific fact, columnist of the family gossip known as Culture, amateur of the fantastic and expert in human folly— Huxley has been all of these things. But his energizing impulse has always been as it is now, preoccupation with the spirit of man.[3]

Huxley has a deep sense of the past as well as of the present, and through his blending of reflections on literature, art, and music with those fundamental ideas which his novels are intended to express, he gives a glowing finish to his work. His cultural allusions make demands upon the intellect and learning of the reader and necessitate a technique flexible and discursive enough to include all he wishes to say. As Alexander Henderson sums up:

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3 Ibid., p. xxv.

> Huxley's prose is a kind of very brilliant and cultivated conversation. Its peculiar texture, with its balancing of generalization and particular example, of statement and re-statement, has the rhythm of conversation among a small but choice group of cultured, intelligent and uninhibited men and women, all familiar with each other, all able to catch every allusion to a common past, and each an expert on some branch of human culture...[4]

This sparkling prose is remarkably lucid and as well adapted to the type of novel which Huxley writes as is his technique to the mood and scope of each work. His presentation is versatile and original but, as a writer, he contributes more on the whole to the intelligence than to the emotions, and those qualities usually associated with his work are, for the most part, intellectual.

In directing the form of language Huxley creates contrapuntal movements, juxtapositions and comparisons. The drama in his novels lies not so much in events as in conflicting themes, views, and attitudes, and Huxley succeeds perhaps quite deliberately, in producing a consciousness of the diversity of facts, impressions, and values, rather than a catharsis.

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4 Alexander Henderson, Aldous Huxley, London: Chatto & Windus. 1935. p. 236.

In his way of writing Huxley illustrates an approach to literary technique that is typical of contemporary tendencies, and in what he has to say he embodies the spirit of his times. The expression he gives to his consciousness of our modern world makes Huxley a "perfect example of the writer of transition."[5]

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5 Edwin Muir, "Aldous Huxley." The Nation. Vol.122, February 10,1926. p. 145.

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