ALDOUS HUXLEY

1894-1963

PHOTO BY PHILIPPE HALSMAN

EDITED BY

JULIAN HUXLEY

ALDOUS HUXLEY
1894-1963

A Memorial Volume

Edited by
JULIAN HUXLEY

Breadth of interest seems, in retrospect, to have been the most singular aspect of Aldous Huxley's genius. As a man of letters, his reputation stood high for forty years. But his literary gifts and erudition were matched by his detailed knowledge of music and of medicine, and by his eagerness to learn everything and to try anything—a philosophy, an

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ALDOUS HUXLEY

1894-1963

BOOKS BY ALDOUS HUXLEY

NOVELS

Island
The Genius and the Goddess
Ape and Essence
Time Must Have a Stop
After Many a Summer Dies the Swan
Eyeless in Gaza
Point Counter Point
Those Barren Leaves
Antic Hay
Crome Yellow
Brave New World

ESSAYS AND BELLES LETTRES

On Art and Artists
Collected Essays
Brave New World Revisited
Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow
Heaven and Hell
The Doors of Perception
The Devils of Loudun
Themes and Variations
Ends and Means
Texts and Pretexts
The Olive Tree
Music at Night
Vulgarity in Literature
Do What You Will
Proper Studies
Jesting Pilate
Along the Road
On the Margin
Essays New and Old
The Art of Seeing
The Perennial Philosophy
Science, Liberty and Peace

SHORT STORIES

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Brief Candles
Two or Three Graces
Limbo
Little Mexican
Mortal Coils

BIOGRAPHY

Grey Eminence

POETRY

The Cicadas
Leda

TRAVEL

Beyond the Mexique Bay

DRAMA

Mortal Coils—A Play
The World of Light
The Discovery, adapted from Frances Sheridan

SELECTED WORKS

Rotunda
The World of Aldous Huxley

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Aldous Huxley in London, 1958

ALDOUS HUXLEY

1894 - 1963

A Memorial Volume

EDITED BY
JULIAN HUXLEY

HARPER & ROW, PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

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CONTENTS

Foreword	*Page* 9
Lord David Cecil, C.H.	13
Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B., C.H.	15
Stephen Spender, C.B.E.	19
Sir Julian Huxley, F.R.S.	21
Extract from a letter to the Editor from Igor Stravinsky	26
The Hon. Sir Steven Runciman	27
T. S. Eliot, O.M.	30
Sir Osbert Sitwell, Bt., C.H., C.B.E.	33
Leonard Woolf	34
Juliette Huxley	39
Naomi Mitchison	51
Gervas Huxley	56
André Maurois	62
Professor Dennis Gabor, F.R.S.	66
Victoria Ocampo	73
Yehudi Menuhin	86
Anita Loos	89
Dr Robert M. Hutchins	98
Gerald Heard	101
Professor Harrison Brown	106
Dr Humphry Osmond	114
Dr Max Cutler	123

CONTENTS

Jacob Israel Zeitlin 129

Raymond Mortimer 135

Sybille Bedford 138

Professor Sir Isaiah Berlin, C.B.E. 144

Christopher Isherwood 154

Shakespeare and Religion: Aldous Huxley 163

ILLUSTRATIONS

Aldous Huxley in London, 1958 — *Frontispiece*
By courtesy of W. Suschitzky

Aldous Huxley, about five years old — *Facing page* 30

Aldous Huxley in his and the early twenties — 129

Aldous Huxley in California, 1958 — 160
By courtesy of Philippe Halsman

FOREWORD

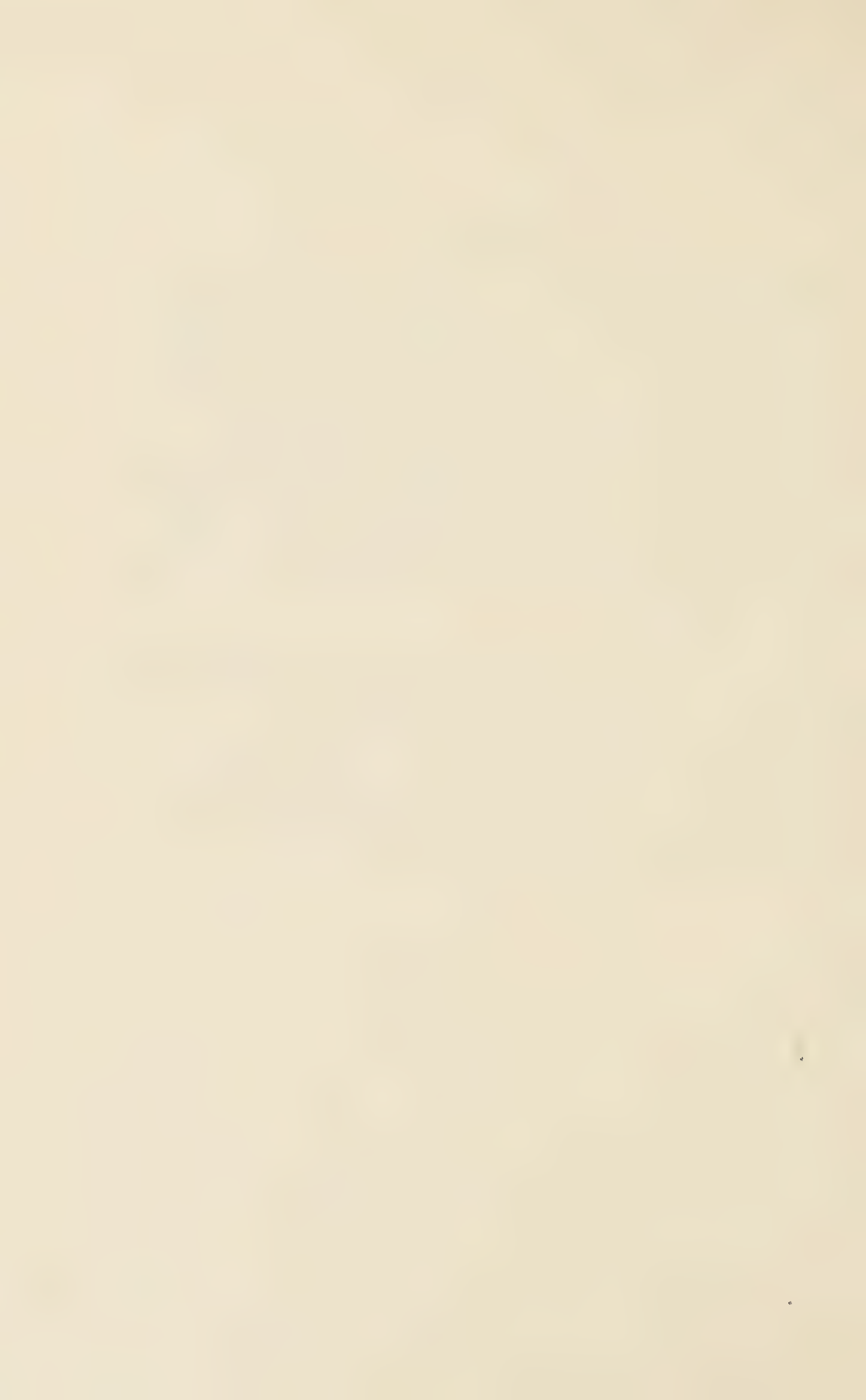
THE Memorial Gathering for Aldous at Friends' House on December 17th, 1963 was a deeply moving celebration, with its spoken tributes from David Cecil, Kenneth Clark, Stephen Spender, and myself as his brother, and Yehudi Menuhin's unforgettable rendering of Bach's Chaconne.

To establish a more permanent and more widely based monument to his memory, we—his publishers Ian Parsons of Chatto and Windus and Cass Canfield of Harper & Row, and myself—set about preparing this Memorial Volume, which should include not only the tributes of the four speakers at Friends' House, but also contributions from friends and admirers in many countries.

The response was immediate and generous. Musicians and scientists, writers and medical men, critics and technologists, educators and psychologists, artists and philosophers—all have contributed to this memorial to a truly memorable man.

Contributors and publishers alike have given their services, free. I wish to thank them all on behalf of the Huxley family, of the readers of this book, and of all the admirers, present and to come, of the life and work of a truly great man.

JULIAN HUXLEY



ALDOUS HUXLEY

1894-1963

David Cecil

WE are gathered together to honour the memory of a great English man of letters. Indeed, Aldous Huxley held a unique position in the literature of his age. He essayed many forms; and was eminent in all. He was a brilliant novelist, a subtle critic of literature, music, painting, a fascinating essayist; and in youth a beautiful poet. In all his work he combined an acute searching intelligence enriched by deep learning with a sparkling literary accomplishment. His books were at once deeply interesting and continuously entertaining.

The unique position, however, which he held in his age was not due to his literary gifts alone. Aldous Huxley was also an influence on men's ideas, even on their conduct. I have been told by more than one distinguished man that the living author who had affected their lives most was Aldous Huxley; for in the formative period between thirteen and twenty he had, as it were, 'released' them, had freed their spirits from the conventions of the past and the inhibiting conditions of the present age. He was able to do this because he blended two strains rarely found in one man. They were the product of his distinguished heredity. In Aldous Huxley's veins flowed the blood of Matthew Arnold and of Thomas Henry Huxley. From both he drew something. Arnold had bequeathed to him a sensitive imagination soaked in the culture of the past, Huxley an adventurous scientific curiosity disciplined by a stern regard for truth. Aldous Huxley did not find it easy to satisfy both sides of his nature: and much of his life was spent in search of a faith. Yet the fact that he combined in himself these two strains was a necessary condition of his achievement and his influence. It enabled him in an especial way to grasp the contemporary predicament.

We live today in a divided, disturbed, confused world. Our culture is fragmented, torn between old and new, and all the time confronted with a changing situation. Aldous Huxley surveyed it on the one hand with the cool objectivity of a

scientist and on the other with the imaginative sympathy of an artist. His Arnold side made him deeply appreciative of the past, its beauty and its wisdom. Yet he was not backward-looking. The Huxley strain in him led him to respond to the new world with intense interest and understanding. Fearless and fascinated, he faced the terrific forces man is now learning to master.

It is this bold breadth of view that enabled him by his example to 'release' the minds of the intelligent young. He showed them how to survey life hampered neither by prejudice nor by ignorance. We hear much these days about the two cultures, scientific and literary, now competing for the attention of man's spirit. Is it possible to be at home in both? The answer is that Aldous Huxley managed to be so. He was equally at ease with Dante and with Darwin. As a matter of fact at ease is a misleading term. His vision was not comfortable and cosy. How could it be? Aldous Huxley saw too much that was puzzling and dreadful in life to look at it in a comfortable mood. Indeed, his vision is often horrifying.

But it is not hopeless. For to the literary and scientific strains in him he added a religious strain. Though scientific, his mind was not materialistic. He had a profound sense of some spiritual reality, not to be apprehended by the senses, existing beyond the confines of time and space, serene, inviolate, ineffable. He was never able to pin down this awareness in a dogmatic formula: he did not attempt to chart the limits and extent of this spiritual region. Nor was there ever any question of his accepting the account of it given by any of the orthodox churches. None the less, the spiritual world was intensely real to him, irradiating his soul with 'bright shoots of everlastingness' and imbuing it with a fortitude that stood the shocks inflicted on him by fate. Aldous Huxley was threatened all his life by blindness, and in his last years he came to know that certain death was coming to him soon. Yet always he maintained his spirit unshaken. The distinguished artist, the bold thinker, was also a selfless and unobtrusive hero.

© David Cecil 1965

Kenneth Clark

OF Aldous Huxley's many marvellous gifts the most surprising was the gift of sight. Nothing could show more clearly the difference between two divisions of sight—if I may be excused such amateur physiology—the efficient functioning of the physical organ in carrying messages to the brain, and the reception of those messages by a prepared intelligence. As we all know, Aldous Huxley's eyes were physical organs of extreme fragility. For some years he was actually blind, and even when he could see enough for practical purposes, he was painfully far from normal vision. I remember, about thirty years ago, looking at a Seurat with him, and he scrutinized it from the distance of a few inches. I should have supposed that he saw nothing but dots. And yet, the fact remains, that what he wrote about painting proves him to have been one of the most discerning lookers of our time. Men of letters are by no means always safe guides to painting. It is not that they are too literary: artists themselves, from Leonardo to Van Gogh, have been extremely literary when they wrote about their works. It is that they do not distinguish between the subject of a picture and the way in which that subject has recreated itself pictorially in the artist's imagination. They do not receive the message of shape and colour, which is the real subject, often modifying, sometimes even contradicting, the ostensible subject. Aldous had an astonishing faculty for seeing what an artist really meant. This allowed him to follow what I believe is one of the most enlightening of all forms of criticism—the description of the subject of a picture in an artist's own terms. May I give an example from one of his earliest books—the picture which Gombauld was painting in *Crome Yellow*. The pictures described in novels usually strike us as very poor stuff—candidates for the old Chantrey bequest. This one is an exception for a reason which soon becomes apparent:

For a long time an idea had been stirring and spreading, yeastily,

in his mind. He had made a portfolio full of studies, he had drawn a cartoon; and now the idea was taking shape on canvas. A man fallen from a horse. The huge animal, a gaunt white cart-horse, filled the upper part of the picture with its great body. Its head, lowered towards the ground, was in shadow; the immense bony body was what arrested the eye, the body and the legs, which came down on either side of the picture like the pillars of an arch. On the ground, between the legs of the towering beast, lay the foreshortened figure of a man, the head in the extreme foreground, the arms flung wide to right and left. A white, relentless light poured down from a point in the right foreground. The beast, the fallen man, were sharply illuminated; round them, beyond and behind them was the night. They were alone in the darkness, a universe in themselves. The horse's body filled the upper part of the picture; the legs, the great hoofs, frozen to stillness in the midst of their trampling, limited it on either side. And beneath lay the man, his foreshortened face at the focal point in the centre, his arms outstretched towards the sides of the picture. Under the arch of the horse's belly, between his legs, the eye looked through into an intense darkness; below, the space was closed in by the figure of the prostrate man. A central gulf of darkness surrounded by luminous forms....

Well, obviously, this is a description of Caravaggio's Conversion of St Paul in Santa Maria del Popolo—we can all recognize that today: but very few people could recognize it in 1921, when, incredible as it now seems, Caravaggio was almost completely forgotten. So my quotation proves not only Aldous's perception of a picture's meaning, and the evocative skill of his writing, but also the width of his artistic experience at an early age. And as I remember the artists whose work he wrote about, I realize that he was one of the chief re-discoverers of the inter-war years. Quite unconsciously and unintentionally he was a great influence on the taste of his time. Breughel, Callot, Piranesi, Goya, Caravaggio, we think of them differently now from what we did in 1925, and many of us who, understandably, do not care to read art-criticism, may owe that change very largely to Aldous. One must add, I think, that this list shows a dominat-

ing trait of his mind—his sense of horror. These are five of the great masters of fearful imagery, and three of them, at least, were haunted by the brutality of man. As so often we feel his kinship with the character in Plato propping up his eyelids to look at the corpses in the moat; and I suppose we must accept this enraged sensibility, this overpowering sense of disgust, as the necessary cost of his marvellously delicate perceptions.

No doubt Caliban held a great fascination for him—more than that pompous old crook of a headmaster, Prospero. Yet we must remember that this was balanced by a deep love for the purest and most impersonal of artists. He had the courage to write an essay called 'The Best Picture': it was Piero della Francesca's Resurrection—I wonder if he saw it first, as I did, in the Arundel Print in Sligger's rooms at Balliol. He loved the architecture of Leon Battista Alberti, because it was a pure expression of solid geometry, and wrote a description of S. Andrea at Mantua as fine as any of his descriptions of painting. Incidentally, it is extraordinary how much he contrived to know about these artists. I have spent many years of my life studying Alberti and Piero and in the end I seem to know far less than Aldous had learnt in a few weeks, by some miraculous combination of intellect and intuition.

Should we say that Aldous's gift of perception was not so much a matter of eye, as a part of a general sensibility to all forms of orderly or impassioned communication—what used to be called a strong aesthetic sense. It is true that Aldous responded with equal intensity to all the arts. *Texts and Pretexts* is one of the most delightful anthologies of verse ever compiled: and his notes on music are (as far as I can judge) as understanding as his essays on painting. However, I think that his powers of visual understanding were exceptional, and in support of this I would quote the descriptions in some of his early books. When one was young one read his books for their bright conversations, in which people said things that would have shocked one's schoolmasters. They were liberating books. Turning to them now, when it is we who are shocked, rather than desirous of shocking, I am struck with something I had never noticed, the descriptions of things seen: Emily's room—indeed all the interiors—

in *Antic Hay*; the Italian countryside in *Those Barren Leaves*.

Yet when all is said of Aldous's power of sight, the obvious truth remains, that his perceptions gained enormously by entering such an incredibly well-furnished intelligence. It is not for me to speak of the range, the confluence of associations, and the power of speedy cross-classification which was characteristic of his mind. But I must say how rare it is for anyone who can look perceptively at works of art to do so honestly and candidly. There is a sort of auto-intoxication in aesthetic experiences which tends to dull the sense of truth; and by truth I mean the quality which Aldous himself defined in his essay on Truth and Tragedy: an awareness of the pull of physical life and day to day necessities, which no amount of ecstasy can altogether obliterate.

© Kenneth Clark 1965

Stephen Spender

I FEEL a little embarrassed speaking here about Aldous Huxley, because I did not know him as well as either of the other speakers. I knew him less well, indeed, than many of those in this hall. So I do not wish to seem to lay claim to be one of his best friends, though I did think of him as a friend and, I should say, an unfailing one.

In a way, I felt I knew him before we ever met, and the better one got to know him the more one felt he was mysterious. By before we met, I mean the late 1920s when he seemed to a whole young generation of students a fairly familiar if exceptionally brilliant literary figure. He seemed to represent the kind of freedom which might be termed *freedom from*: freedom from all sorts of things such as conventional orthodoxies, officious humbug, sexual taboos, respect for establishments. In addition to this one sometimes felt present in his work and his personality the kind of longing for unattainable consistencies which is expressed in some of Shakespeare's sonnets, or painted perhaps on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel: the longing for the mind to be beautiful if the body is so, the artist to be as truthful in his personality as in his art, the scientist to be as benevolent as are the potentialities of his science. The underlying bitterness is that outward appearances so often are betrayed by inside actualities, that the beautiful is not the true, and the truth does not necessarily result in the good.

It would be easy to think that after his first novels Aldous Huxley ceased to be a man of letters. It is certainly true that his later works do not show the kind of interest in writing something called the novel, the story—the nouvelle—the essay even, which we expect from modern writers. But this may be because we have a sense of the writer as someone who uses his experience to create something we call a work of art, not his art as a vehicle to convey his search for the truth. Undoubtedly Huxley became more and more a man pursuing what he believed to be the truth:

firstly the truth which he thought to be the consistency of the means used with the ends aimed at; then the truth of what he called the perennial philosophy; the living of one's life in order to achieve the vision of the mystics; then the kind of truth which is really prophetic: looking into the future and warning people living in the present of what that future may bring; and lastly truths of extra-sensory perception which involved him in his research into the uses of substances like mescalin and lysergic acid, which he called *psychodelic* since they revealed new capacities of the human psyche. A good many people would regard this last kind of research as aberrant and dangerous, but what should concern us here is that it was one aspect of Aldous Huxley's passion for the truth.

I think that when one met him one was aware of a kind of distinction which was not just that of the man of letters, the great man, the poet even. It was the distinction of a man who in his own deepest individuality was a mystic, religious, though he could not accept the orthodoxies; and of a man who in his social awareness was terrified. I don't mean by terrified that he was frightened for himself, but that he had the vision of what Conrad described as the heart of darkness, the never-ceasing consciousness of what men are doing to themselves with their weapons of destruction and their means of scientific improvement, and of the still more terrifying things that they are likely to do in the future. But he always believed that by resolute use of reason and imagination catastrophe could be avoided. These were insights into conditions which also include politics and therefore insights beyond politics, just as his insights into truth were beyond what most writers today think of as the aims of literature.

With all this, to be with him was to be illuminated and comforted. He feared for humanity, but it would be untrue to say that he disliked people. What moved one when one was with him also encouraged one, because he was really charitable and good.

© Stephen Spender 1965

Julian Huxley

DAVID CECIL, Kenneth Clark and Stephen Spender have spoken of Aldous's extraordinary gifts, both creative and critical, in literature and the arts.

I want to speak of Aldous as a brother and a personality, a prophet and a great thinker who was also a truly whole man.

From early boyhood, I knew in some intuitive way that Aldous possessed some innate superiority and moved on a different level of being from us other children. This recognition dawned when Aldous was five and I a prep school boy of twelve: and it remained for the rest of his life.

As a child, he spent a good deal of his time just sitting quietly, contemplating the strangeness of things. His godmother once saw him gazing out of the window, and asked what he was thinking about. He looked round, said the one word *Skin*, and turned his gaze out through the window again.

This preoccupation with the strange and the bizarre and the improbable and the extraordinary, stayed with him throughout his life. In later years, however, it developed and merged into something more comprehensive—a fascinated recognition of the fundamental mystery at the heart of things. He was never a mystic in any exclusive or in any woolly sense, though he was keenly interested in the facts of mystical experience. He was equally fascinated by the hard facts revealed by scientific discovery and the new clarity of understanding which they provided. But science abolishes only the false mysteries of mere failure to understand how existence works. The more it discovers and the more comprehension it gives us of the mechanisms of existence, the more clearly does the mystery of existence itself stand out. It was this combination of increasing comprehensibility of operative detail with increasingly obvious mysteriousness of the process itself, this contrast between luminous science and numinous existence, which came to fascinate Aldous ever more compellingly as his thought developed.

*   *   *

Aldous possessed a rare combination of gentleness and courage, of acceptance and determination.

I shall never forget the way in which he dealt with the eye trouble which overtook him at Eton at sixteen, and rendered him virtually blind for over a year. He never complained. Not only that, but he set himself to learn to play the piano and to read Braille. He even extolled the advantage of Braille as enabling him to retreat under the bedclothes to read on cold winter nights.

I believe that his blindness was a blessing in disguise. For one thing, it put paid to his idea of taking up medicine as a career. Aldous was certainly not cut out for the day-to-day practice of medicine. Nor, though he was intensely interested in the results of medical (and biological) research, do I think that he would have achieved the fullest realization of his genius in the research field.

Most people seem to imagine that Aldous came to me for help over the biological facts and ideas he utilized so brilliantly in *Brave New World* and elsewhere in his novels and essays. This was not so. He picked them all up from his miscellaneous reading and from occasional discussions with me and a few other biologists, from which we profited as much as he.

His uniqueness lay in his universalism. He was able to take all knowledge for his province. What is more, he was able to integrate this astonishing range of fact and idea to give him a comprehensive vision of man and his possibilities, including the possibilities of vision itself, which he set forth in *The Art of Seeing*.

Here again, his blindness was a help instead of a hindrance. It forced him to rely more on himself and less on books, to cultivate his memory and the art of quick and intense perception. As with blind Milton, it fostered and focussed the immaterial light of his spirit so that it could—

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

and so attain a full inner vision. And when his house burned

down, it helped him to face and overcome the loss of all his possessions—'all tangible links with my past', as he put it—in a truly astonishing way.

So many of those who have written to us about him have stressed not only his gentleness but his essential goodness. These were indeed among his outstanding characteristics; luckily, they did not stand in the way of occasional displays of malicious wit or of his Swiftian gift for ferocious satire.

Perhaps the very clarity of his vision, both of the heights and depths of human nature, forced a certain ambivalence upon him, and led to that withdrawn detachment which became apparent in his middle years. Yet he never lost his basic attachment to life. He was always concerned with perfection of achievement and discovery, not only in the arts but also in the sciences.

It was a wonderful experience to hear him extolling the *Canterbury Tales* or *Candide*, Beethoven's posthumous quartets or Verdi's Requiem, Bernini's sculpture or early Mayan art; expounding the latest experiments on inducing pleasure by electrical stimulation of the brain, the methods of psychologists and art teachers for achieving instant perception of complex scenes, the technical problems of water shortage in California; engaging in discussion with friends like Igor Stravinsky, Robert Hutchins, Edwin Hubble or Linus Pauling.

He first overcame his resistance to speaking in public in 1935, when in a lecture on Peace and Internationalism he passionately asserted that 'good ends cannot justify bad means'—the germ of his great book *Ends and Means* of two years later.

After the second war he even began to enjoy public lecturing, which, like everything else he attempted, he did extremely well. It gave him an opportunity to *do* something about problems that he felt were vital, like population and resources, mental health, non-verbal education, or the enlargement of experience through hypnotism, mystical self-transcendence and chemistry. It also gave him the gratifying opportunity to make contact with the crowds of young and receptive minds who enthusiastically flocked to hear him.

The outcome of this deep and many-sided concern with human affairs and human possibilities was his last full-scale book,

Island. This he regarded as one of his major contributions to serious thought, and he was saddened and upset by the incomprehension of so many of its reviewers, who treated it as a not very successful work of fiction, and science fiction at that.

Aldous was also a true naturalist, and throughout his life was devoted to the strange and beautiful in nature. He loved the country of his birth—south-west Surrey with its varied scenery and natural history. He loved wild flowers and solitary bicycle rides down its then car-free country lanes, he enjoyed picnics and country walks and butterfly collecting.

Only this year, when I was talking about Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, and explaining how our butterflies and poppies and hedgerow flowers were disappearing and our song-birds and falcons were being poisoned by pesticides, he said "It is dreadful: they are destroying half the basis of English poetry."

He was fascinated by the American desert, especially by its strange Joshua trees; and an experience which made a profound impression on him was finding himself in the middle of a mass emergence of seventeen-year locusts—a universal crackling as millions of nymphs emerged simultaneously from their prolonged underground existence and broke out of their chitinous skins into the open air.

* * *

One of Aldous's major preoccupations was how to achieve self-transcendence while yet remaining a committed social being—how to escape from the prison bars of self and the pressures of here and now into realms of pure goodness and pure enjoyment; how to integrate the warring drives of what he called our 'multiple amphibian' nature into some satisfying total pattern of peace, harmony, and wholeness; how to achieve union with that 'something deeply interfused', which pervades existence and makes for righteousness, significance and fulfilment.

This led him to explore the methods and experiences of the mystics, with the production of that remarkable book *The Perennial Philosophy*.

It also led him to the exploration, both theoretical and prac-

tical, of the extraordinary effects on human perception of so-called psychedelic or mind-revealing substances like mescalin and lysergic acid, and so to an active interest in the vast problem of schizophrenia, and to the writing of another remarkable book, *The Doors of Perception.*

Aldous himself was always opening doors—doors through which not only he but all the rest of us might pass, to enter on new kinds of experiences, new ways of thinking, new possibilities of living.

He had no illusions about human beings ever attaining complete perfection or absolute certainty, whether of understanding or of morality. But he believed that life and the world could and should be improved. Above all, he had faith and courage. Only last August he devoted a week of his depleted energies to drafting a programme on this Human Possibilities for the World Academy in Stockholm. And only a week before he died he completed the article on Shakespeare and religion which concludes this Memorial Volume.

He will of course long be remembered for his many-sided writings, and for his amazing knowledge of fact and appreciation of excellence. But above all he will go down in history as the greatest humanist of our perplexed era, the many-gifted man who in a chaotic age of intellectual, aesthetic, and moral irresponsibility, used his gifts to enrich man instead of to diminish him, to keep alight humanity's sense of responsibility for its own and the world's destiny and its belief in itself and its vast unexplored potentialities.

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Extract from a letter to the Editor from

Igor Stravinsky

I LOVED Aldous deeply, and his death has been a terrible shock and loss to me. I am still unable to think about it, and I cannot write about him. I have tried—indeed struggled—to compose a tribute for your book to his memory, but I cannot find words for my feelings.

Since I came to California a quarter of a century ago Aldous has been a guiding spirit to me. And I feel lost without that spirit and that dearest friend.

© Igor Stravinsky 1965

Steven Runciman

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

His victims would not all of them have accepted this estimate. I was, I suppose, in my second year in College at Eton when we were told that we were to be taught by this remarkable young writer. We Collegers were little intellectual snobs, and we were much impressed. None of us had read a word that he had so far written; nor would we have been encouraged to do so. But the name already had a glamour. The impression was deepened when we actually saw him. When I met him afterwards it was always somehow that first vision that I saw, so vividly was it imprinted on my memory—that long, thin body, with a face that was far younger than most of our masters' and yet seemed somehow ageless, and, usually hidden by an infinite variety of spectacles, eyes that were almost sightless and yet almost uncomfortably observant. He stood there, looking something of a martyr but at the same time extraordinarily distinguished.

We had been warned of his blindness and had been told that it was up to us to behave decently. Not all of us did behave decently. At the back of the form-room, particularly on his blinder side, there was always a certain amount of reading of magazines, passing of notes and murmured gossip. But the misbehaviour never went too far, less from the feeling that there is little fun in misbehaving in front of a master who cannot see it than from the certainty that the misbehaviour left him completely indifferent and unmoved.

I cannot say that he was a good teacher in the narrower sense of the word. I have to confess that I cannot now remember a single thing that he taught us. But he was an educator in a wider sense. He showed us a glimpse of the fascination to be found in an unhampered intellectual approach to things. At first we thought his voice affected, but soon some of us were trying to copy it. Above all it was his use of words that entranced us. I doubt if our appreciation of the English or French classics was more than momentarily enhanced by his comments; but the manner in which he made his comments gave us a new, if half-unconscious, appreciation of the potentialities of language. He often used words that were unknown to us and that we tried thenceforward to add to our vocabulary. "That is a word that we must remember," we used to say to each other; and though I have long since forgotten what the individual words may have been, the taste for words and their accurate and significant use remained. We owe him a great debt for it.

He used also to give some of the older boys less formal teaching in English in his own room. I only know of their experiences by hearsay. Some of them used to misbehave, having discovered a bell which, if rung, summoned a puzzled parlourmaid whose interruption Aldous entirely ignored. Here, too, it seems that his use of words and his advice on the use of words were remembered, even when his comments on literature were forgotten.

Many years passed before I saw him again. There came a time when I used to see him in the south of France, when I was visiting Edith Wharton. There was something rather alarming for a young man in the high intellectual atmosphere with which Mrs Wharton surrounded herself; and it was always a great joy when Aldous came over. He would tease her gently but so brilliantly that her resentment was overcome by delighted appreciation. I still felt great awe of him, an attitude that he regarded as silly and undesirable. But he was effortlessly kind and patient with the shy; and his talk still held the same fascination for me, indeed, more so because I was better equipped by then to value its content.

To the end he was an educator in the truest sense. I personally learnt more in detail from his later books than from any of his

earlier teaching. A single sentence of his about mysticism—that the Western mystic seeks to know God, but the Eastern mystic to be God—shows a truer understanding than the words of a hundred theologians; and his works are full of such simply phrased flashes of enlightenment.

There have been many men and women whom I am proud of having known and grateful to Providence for the privilege. But there have been few who have done so much, to me and to many others, in widening understanding. What Aldous did for me, over and above the ordinary limits of acquaintanceship, was to show me the value of language and in the end to unlock the doors into a realm of mind and spirit that can only be opened by a clear and scrupulous use of words.

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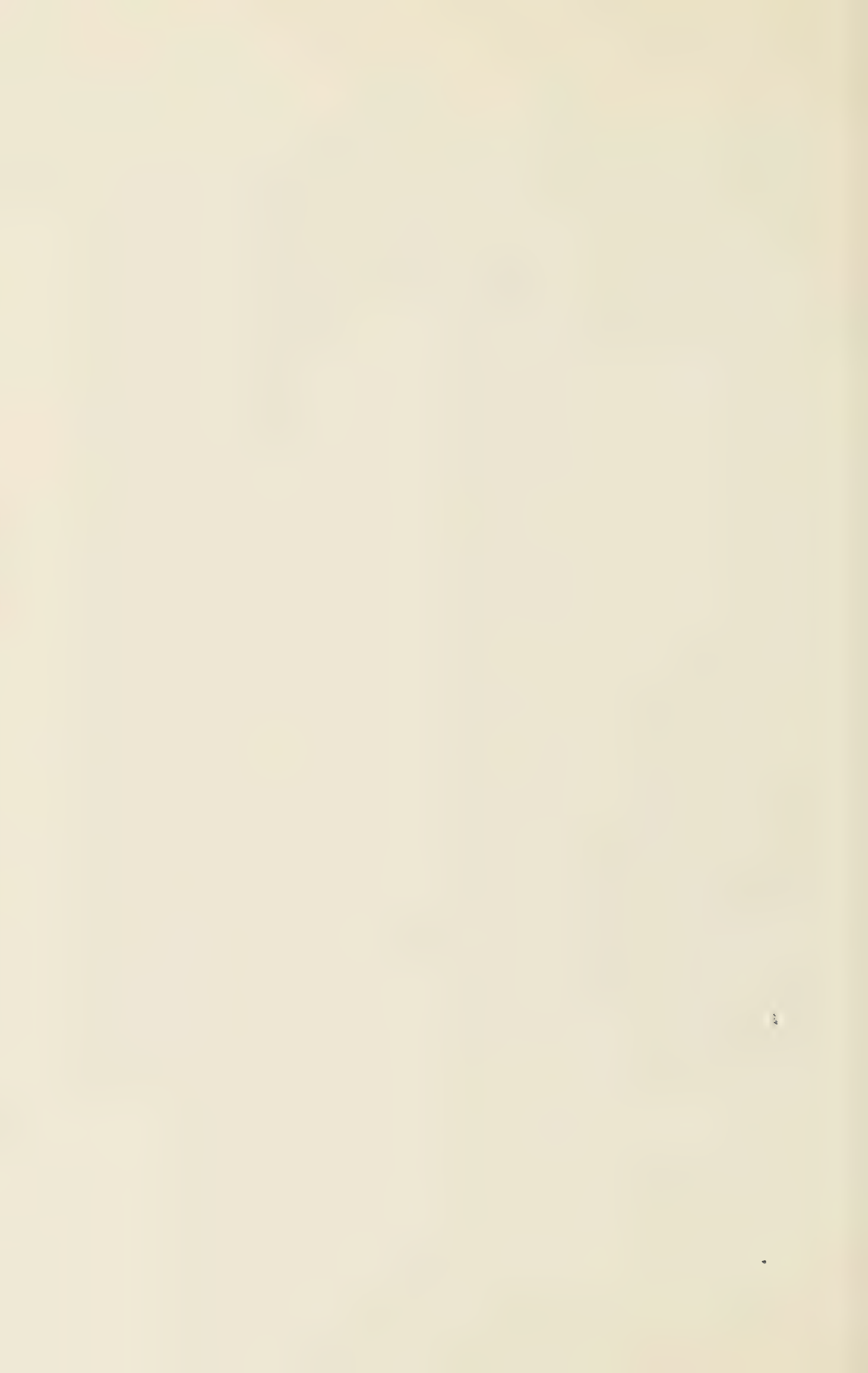
T. S. Eliot

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

It was only after Oxford that I met Aldous Huxley: that meeting was at Garsington, where we were to meet from time to time as guests of Lady Ottoline Morrell. To her I had been introduced by Bertrand Russell; and it is her house and some of her frequent guests who appear, under the thinnest of disguises, in *Crome Yellow*. My own standing in that society had been established by my first volume of verse (a book which might never have seen publication but for the enthusiastic support of Ezra Pound, to whom I had taken it on the advice of Conrad Aiken). My prestige was such that Aldous submitted for my opinion his own book of verse, *Leda and Other Poems*: I am afraid that I was unable to show any enthusiasm for his verse. After this attempt he wisely confined himself to the essay and that variety of fiction which he came to make his own.

I remember Aldous next after his marriage to Maria Nys, when they were living in a basement flat—crammed of course with books—in the Westbourne Grove area. Middleton Murry,

Aldous Huxley, about five years old



whose editorial flair approached genius, was running *The Athenaeum*, and for him Aldous wrote a weekly column of a kind that he could do to perfection. His reading was immense, his taste impeccable, and his ear acute—I remember his pointing out to me once that the metre of Tennyson's *Catullus* was identical with that of Edward Lear's *Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo*. And I was delighted to find that in his last brief book, *Literature and Science*, he quotes a line of Mallarmé which had impressed me so deeply that I paraphrased it in *Little Gidding: donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu.*

There is one anecdote of Aldous which I am sure that I remember more clearly than does anyone else, because the situation was highly embarrassing for myself. We were both among the guests invited to speak after a dinner of the Poetry Circle of a ladies' club. We spoke in order of seniority, culminating with Dean Inge. The speakers had all been assigned topics in advance, and a list of the speakers and their topics was conspicuously displayed on the tables. Aldous had already risen to speak when I glanced at the list, and saw to my horror that my topic, on which I had so carefully prepared myself, had been assigned to someone else, and the subject billed to me was entirely different. It was difficult enough to make conversation with two ladies neither of whom I knew, and to compose a new speech at the same time. But Aldous was embarked on what promised to be a speech of some length, and I was hopeful. However, the room was close and airless, and Aldous had unwisely started to smoke a large cigar. He had just alluded to Creon, and I hoped that he was good for five more learned and witty minutes, when he jack-knifed on to the table. Two or three male guests carried him out to another room, and I was called upon to fill the gap. It was my first after-dinner speech: a baptism of fire. Mercifully, I have no recollection of anything I said.

(I have another reason to remember that dinner. One of my neighbours subsequently invited me to dine at her house; and to her I owe my introduction to the Tarot pack, which I turned to account in *The Waste Land*. I pay this tardy tribute of thanks. But I should not like my present reader to draw the inference

that this lady was the original of my Madame Sosostris—a wholly fictitious character!)

After Aldous and Maria had transferred themselves to California I did not see him for many years. A few years ago my wife and I met him at the flat of an old friend of both of us. We had both become widowers and remarried since Aldous had left England and found a climate kinder to his frail health, and our wives met for the first time. Aldous was charming and interesting as ever: he had lately been to Brazil, and discoursed informatively about his visit. The Huxleys did not remain long in England, and that was my last sight of this gentle and lovable man. His place in English literature is unique and is certainly assured.

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Osbert Sitwell

MY mind goes back to the brilliant amusement Aldous used to give his friends as a young man. Anything he told you had its own distinction and flavour. I recall especially a visit he paid me at Scarborough, when I was standing as Liberal Candidate for the Scarborough, Whitby and Pickering Division. I had no cook at the time: breakfast was brought in by a singing charwoman who would have made her fortune on the contemporary music-hall stage, and we lunched and dined usually at the Pavilion Hotel, which, incidentally, was run by Mrs Laughton, Charles Laughton's mother. The clients would dine early, but the dining-room continued to fill up with silent people on holiday from Leeds, Halifax and Bradford. It was evidently a tradition with them never to speak at meals, or if they spoke at all, to do so in a whisper. This, when the dining-room was full of them, produced a rather eerie effect: but Aldous would be totally unaware of them and would continue in his clear emphatic unclouded voice to give details of the remarkable love-life of the octopus or cuttlefish, or the latest news of life at Garsington.

He was full of ideas and I remembered about this time his saying to me that we ought to put more old words into fresh circulation and that he was going to bring the word *impinge* into modern usage. This he certainly accomplished, for it became a vogue-word.

What strikes me most, in looking back on him, was his air of general benevolence, so different from that of many writers. He seemed never to be angry, only surprised, at the follies of people; he was in fact that rare thing, a good man; this was constant in his life.

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Leonard Woolf

THE first time I ever saw Aldous Huxley must have been in 1917 or 1918 on a Sunday afternoon sitting in the garden of Ottoline Morrell's House, Garsington, immutably himself among the vast, heterogeneous collection of human exhibits, distinguished writers, painters, politicians, conscientious objectors, aristocrats, Oxford dons, undergraduates, who carried one to the apogee of a Garsington week-end. He had folded himself and his legs, like some gigantic grasshopper, into a deck-chair. We talked and talked, and off and on for the next forty years and more we met and talked and talked. The first vision of him always recurred, the folded legs of the great grasshopper, and he immutably himself. He was one of the few people who therefore never disappointed one. For psychologically he was all of a piece.

I would distinguish three aspects of the piece. First he had a character of great, deep, subtle charm. It is notoriously impossible to analyze charm. With Aldous, however, I think one can say that his charm consisted partly in the extraordinary combination of gentleness and strength. His voice, his person, his mind distilled gentleness; yet one always felt that it was combined with splendid strength of mind, character, convictions. I remember two occasions on which I was particularly impressed by this remarkable combination of velvet and steel. The first was, I think, the only occasion on which we found ourselves in disagreement on a major political question: I was in favour and he was very much against sanctions in a collective security system for the League of Nations. Looking back with, I hope, some of the objectivity which the passage of forty years should, and sometimes does, give us, I still think that he was wrong and that I was right. Our controversy, which was about the politics of power and the social use of force, is still a vital one: even as I write these words the United Nations is sending to Cyprus Canadian, Swedish, Irish, and Finnish soldiers under an Indian

general in order to prevent, by international collective force, Greek and Turkish patriots murdering one another in the name of nationalism. The controversy is vital, not only politically and socially, but also psychologically. It goes down deep into the individual's mind, and no doubt into those dim and dirty regions where the id is entangled with the ego and superego. In such a controversy, which touches so many sensitive nerves in such tender regions, to find oneself openly opposed by someone for whom one has great affection and respect is a peculiarly painful experience, and it usually produces not only pain, but also exasperation: how on earth, one says to oneself, can a man who is so intelligent and whom I like so much, how on earth can he believe such nonsense? But with Aldous I never felt that exasperation or even the bewilderment at finding him holding what I felt and feel is an untenable position. The reason was that his mind was of the finest tempered steel; his arguments always had the sharpest cutting edge; his intellectual honesty was perfect; but what reconciled one to having these steely weapons turned against one, what made exasperation or irritation impossible, was Aldous's character, his temperament, his essential gentleness and sweetness.

The other occasion on which I became particularly aware of this combination of sweetness and fight in Aldous was a strange one. In the horrible years before the 1939 war when Hitler had begun the liquidation of the Jews, there were several cases of English men marrying German Jewish women solely in order to give them British citizenship and so saving them from being sent back to Germany. In one of these cases it became known that the Foreign Office was taking steps to prevent the marriage. Aldous and his brother Julian started a campaign against what seemed to be a barbarous abuse or misuse of authority and they mobilized all forces which might do something to prevent authority flinging the unfortunate victims to the Nazis. We were among the mobilized and played a very minor part in the drama. Authority was beaten; the wedding took place; and all of us, including the bride and bridegroom, came to a curious, quiet, relieved wedding party in Albany. I cannot now remember the details of the case, but I know that the

campaign was not an easy one. What I remember is that in action Aldous produced the same combination of strength and gentleness as he did in thought and argument. It was equally effective.

The second aspect of Aldous which was very remarkable was his conversation. His talk was entrancing; in its particular style I have never heard anything better. The style was infinitely intellectual, but there was no heaviness or pomposity in it and not a trace of the display which marks and mars the performance of professional talkers. His conversation was an effortless, completely unselfconscious emanation of himself. It had the same exquisite relation to his thought as the perfect rendering of a piece of music has to the musical thought of the composer. To feel the intricacy and subtlety of his own and other peoples' minds at work in the search for truth or in the mysterious working of the imagination gave him unending pleasure and so did the discovery and contemplation of the importance, unexpectedness, absurdity of facts. He was not a monologist and he was a good listener, so that his conversation was really a conversation. But when it came to his turn to have his say, he liked to have plenty of room and time for it, to ruminate without interruption until he had turned over every stone to discover the strange facts hidden beneath them or had followed the labyrinth of his thought and had unravelled the truth at the end of it. And every sentence had the flavour and savour of his individuality in it. Not only his voice, but his appearance and attitudes made what he said such a pure and perfect mirror of his mind and personality. His eyesight was always bad, and there was a look of sightlessness in his eyes which reminded one of the blind seer, the eyes looking inward rather than outward for the truth and finding it there where the ordinary man would never dream of finding it. His attitudes too, lying back in a chair his eyes focussed just above one's head or his head bent over a table and peering through it and even through the earth below it for the truth which he knew was somewhere waiting to be discovered by the sightless eye of the mind, were extraordinarily his own. And always in everything which he said and in his manner of saying it was the characteristic combination of gentleness and strength.

The third aspect of Aldous was a continuation or corollary of the other two. He was the perfect, pure, uncompromising highbrow. In most countries, and particularly in Britain and the United States, the common man is encouraged to dislike and distrust the intellectual to whom emotive names like highbrow or egghead are applied. The highbrow, being an intellectual, uses his intellect and puts a high value on the products of intelligence and reason in the realms of thought whatever the subject of thinking may be. He sets a very high value on works of art, but here his standards of value are also extremely high; the pictures, books, music with which he is concerned must be 'serious' and of the highest quality. You always run the risk of unpopularity if you insist upon quality either in works of art or wine; you are trying to be superior, belittling the Joneses. The consequence is that many intellectuals today who want to hunt with the Joneses and run with the highbrows spend a lot of time and energy in trying to show that they are much more stupid than they appear to be and that they are convinced that all the stupid are good and all the good stupid. This *trahison des clercs*, this apostasy of the intellectuals horrified and disgusted Aldous. He wrote a very good essay on it which he called 'Foreheads Villainous Low' in which he noted that "it is not at all uncommon now to find intelligent and cultured people doing their best to feign stupidity and to conceal the fact that they have received an education". In that essay and indeed in everything which he wrote he was the uncompromising unashamed intellectual. He had a passion for truth and for the long, slow, intricate journeys which the mind has to pursue before it can arrive at the really important truths. And he certainly felt, as Montaigne did, that it was the journey even more than the arrival that mattered. That is why his essays are like his conversation: gentle, leisurely, witty, humorous, imaginative mental odysseys. His mind was driven by that strange curiosity which the Greeks held to be the beginning of wisdom, the seed of knowledge. His curiosity was so intense and his intellect so strong and subtle that his imagination never entirely broke loose from the reasoning part of his mind. That is why, I think, his novels, with all their merits, are

never in the highest class. But his essays, where there is a perfect marriage of intellect and imagination, are masterpieces, works of art.

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Juliette Huxley

SIX miles from Oxford, on top of a steep hill, stood the little village of Garsington, with its old Manor House. This was an unspoilt Elizabethan stone house with three gables, approached by a court flanked by two immense yew hedges. Bought by Philip and Ottoline Morrell in 1915, the house was woken from its Tudor sleep and became alive, personal and loved. The dark Tudor panelling of the large sitting-room was painted a glowing chinese red and the narrow grooves gilt; the tall gothic windows were framed with yellow and flame-coloured curtains, the floors covered with gold and salmon-pink Samarkand rugs. Chinese lacquer cabinets created a symmetry of black and gold, and logs burnt in the stone fireplaces. The smaller drawing-room, also Tudor-panelled, was painted turquoise-green, as well as the hall used as dining-room. A vague scent of incense and pot-pourri enhanced one's sense of privilege, of living in a 'habitable work of art'.

It was late in 1915 that Aldous first came to Garsington. I was then Julian Morrell's governess-companion, as well as a part-time student in Oxford, bicycling there twice a week to listen to Sir Walter Raleigh's lectures on English literature.

Maria Nys was also at Garsington: a young Belgian refugee whom the Morrells were looking after. She was small, rather plump, but lovely beyond words, with large blue-green eyes matching an Egyptian scarab ring on her long finger, a delicate slightly aquiline profile and a small pointed chin under a full mouth. Her hair, cut short by Philip Morrell (the fashion was just beginning with Slade students), hung like a dark helmet. She had the vulnerable and defenceless look of a child with a mature body.

Aldous was introduced by a mutual friend (Desmond MacCarthy, I think it was) as a brilliant young student at Balliol and the grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley. He came to lunch one day, his six foot two seeming even taller because of

the slenderness of his body and his slight stoop. Under the thick brown hair, his wide face was pale, with full lips and blue eyes which had an inward look until one realized that he was almost totally blind in one eye, and not fully seeing with the other. He did not talk much at this first visit, but as soon as he was gone, everyone agreed about the deep impression he had made, an impression of unique quality, of gentleness and depth.

The next time I remember was bringing Julian (Morrell) to tea with him at Balliol. He talked in beautiful French with a striking sense of words; he gave us crumpets, and lemon with our china tea. He was charming with Julian, quoting Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, and *Struwwelpeter* and *Max und Moritz*.

Later he often came to Garsington for week-ends, together with the great variety of people which Ottoline drew round herself—Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Bertrand Russell, D. H. Lawrence and Frieda, Katherine Mansfield and Middleton Murry; artists like Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, young students from the Slade like Dorothy Brett, Carrington, Mark Gertler; and many others. The war of course was in its full horror; Aldous often talked of it with a mixture of irony and a vague sense of guilt—his sight precluded him in any case from joining the Army, but his two best friends (dating from prep-school days at Hillside), Lewis Gielgud and his cousin Gervas Huxley, were both officers at the Front.

Garsington meantime was growing more and more pacifist. Philip Morrell, then M.P. for Burnley, was one of the few sane public men protesting about the senseless slaughter of the best of English youth. The place became a haven for conscientious objectors like Bertrand Russell and Gerald Shove; when Aldous finished Oxford with a brilliant First, he too was absorbed on the farm for a few months. Wearing straw-coloured jodhpurs and pale stockings, with a dark-brown corduroy jacket, he looked absent-mindedly but absurdly romantic and beautiful.

Even in those early days he often seemed to be living in a remote and private world, yet a word could spark off a brilliant discussion, revealing his astonishing erudition and memory. (To the end of his life, he could remember masses of poetry, in

four languages, and surprising statistical details; but for wide tracts of his personal history, there were complete blanks.) He also enjoyed the occasional malicious gossip of Bloomsbury visitors. He brought Tommy Earp to Garsington—a friend who shared his taste for French literature and strange people—and I remember my shock at hearing him describe how Tommy had fooled the Conscription Board by getting into a very hot bath just before the session and presenting himself in a parboiled state which baffled the examiners. Aldous would tell the story with gusto, finishing with his typical indrawn breath on the word 'extraordinary'. He was, even among his own particular friends, the onlooker, the Jesting Pilate, relishing human foibles and suspecting the heroic.

Maria, little Julian and I were listeners. Aldous was often with us—and clearly more and more absorbed in Maria. It was for us a time of growing and expectancy, full of a disquieting and inspiring awareness. Ottoline and her vivid spirit, the visitors, the brilliant talk, the reading and the music—everything seemed to conspire with the house and its decor, even the peacocks screaming and posturing like possessed spirits. It was as if the world were offering a festival of dangerous but rewarding experience to our hungry youth. As Aldous wrote in 1918, in The Defeat of Youth:

Scarce knowing what they wait for, half in fear;
Expectance draws the curtain from their fate.

Maria, just turned eighteen, was the first to break away; she left Garsington to try for a place at Newnham College, Cambridge, but failed; she stayed on in London, tasting a new freedom and its risks, trying not very successfully to earn a living by giving French lessons. Aldous often joined her there until, disillusioned and uncertain, she went to Italy to be with her mother and sisters.

In those days Aldous mooned about the place, silent and bottled-up. After a long evening without a word, he would follow Ottoline to her bedroom, as if unable to bear his own loneliness, and just sit by the fire, brooding; finally sent to bed, he oozed away like a ghost. He used to draw, with a sure and

loving touch, outlines of female nudes, and wrote a lot of poetry.

He and I were alone one evening. His long legs stretched unending before him, Aldous was staring into the fire, and suddenly blurted out his feelings, the awfulness of separation and the misery of uncertainty. Those months of separation from Maria, as well as the searing uncertainty of his situation, were terribly hard for him to bear.

On another occasion, when we had gone up to the roof to look at a full moon hugely floating above, he told me of the death of his mother when he was fourteen years old. At such a vulnerable age, it was a betrayal by life, an annihilating sorrow which he was never to outlive. Two years later, while he was at Eton, blindness had descended upon him, believed at first to be final and complete. A streptococcus had attacked and destroyed the cornea of one eye, and begun to cloud the other: for two years, he lived behind a black band, learning how to be blind. Gradually the left eye returned almost to normal, but the right eye never recovered. His father then remarried, and his step-mother, however devoted, was never able to fill the void left by his mother. Soon after this his brother Trev, nearly five years older than himself, a warm, protective, unselfish influence, committed suicide. Casually, without a word of self-pity or dramatisation, Aldous told me of these shattering experiences.

When his first novels came out, one read them with mixed feelings: a bantering tone, the merciless showing-up of human foibles, an acid undertow, underlay the admirable style and discouraged many readers. (This was in the 1920s, when people were more squeamish than they are today.) One cannot help wondering whether his achievement would have taken a different shape had Aldous not been exposed, in his early formative years, to these traumatic experiences. One only knows that with a gentle, inconspicuous courage he set himself to overcome each new calamity. Curiously, the ferocity which was often manifest in his early work was never apparent in his personal relationships, for he was the gentlest companion, intimidating only in his silences. But he also became a kind of amphibious

creature, rejecting emotional contacts with skilful evasions, using his intellectual equipment as a shield. "It's as though he only felt safe among ideas." These illuminating words are put in the mouth of Elinor Quarles in *Point Counter Point*—a roman-à-clef par excellence, where Aldous, in the persons of Philip Quarles and Walter Bidlake, reveals some facets of his own character.

Later in 1916, Aldous announced that his elder brother Julian had returned from Texas to take up some war-work. Julian came to visit Aldous at Garsington. I was amazed at their difference —Julian ebullient, forthcoming, putting himself out to entertain; Aldous reticent, gentle, often remote; but both with innate gifts of high-powered intellect and imagination.

He was not really built for work on a farm; he and Gerald Shove were out cutting logs during that bitter winter of 1916. Gerald was married to Fredegond (Maitland) and they lived in the bailiff's cottage opposite the manor. A brilliant Cambridge scholar, Gerald was sacrificing his intellectual prospects to his pacifist principles with a grim taciturnity; Aldous did not find him an inspiring companion. It was anyway a dismal time, with the death of so many young men and the constant call for war-work of every kind. Though he hated the war, Aldous felt he must do more for his country and returned to London to work in a government office.

I have unearthed several letters I received from him at that time, early 1917, written on yellow War Office foolscap meant for sterner stuff. We exchanged poems—mine of course crude attempts which he patiently and helpfully criticized; his in Mallarmé French, flawless and nonsensical. "I regret to say that I rarely write in French—and then only when I want to be *un peu scabreux*: it certainly is the best language for indecency ever invented. . . ." He read Laforgue and wrote a little *Hommage* to him which would have surprised the War Lords.

But he soon left the long corridors and mazes of officialdom for Eton, where he took up residence at The Old Christopher, from which he wrote:

> . . . School-mastering is a profession for which I don't think I

was specially suited—but still: it might be worse. I only wish I had any real friends among the masters: it's wretched living in a place where there is nobody one can be fond of, nobody even who particularly interests one. . . .

Later, dated Dec. 11th, 1917.

. . . For my part, I find the grim solitudes of Eton quite insupportable, unless I take a periodical jaunt to London, where a little sympathetic company infuses life enough to carry one on for the next few days. I have been seeing a good deal of the dashing Evan Morgan recently, as well as his mother, Lady Tredegar, who is a very delightful person. Carrington too, I saw the other day the first time for many months; in tremendous form and as enchanting as I habitually find her after an interval of not meeting her. Last Sunday, I looked in on Katharine (Mansfield) in her curious little kennel at Chelsea: all very mysterious, particularly when she suddenly gave a shout in the middle of our conversation and was answered by the sleepy voice of somebody who was in bed behind a curtain and whose presence I had never realized. From there I whisked to lunch with Lady Tredegar and after that to Eliot, whom I found as haggard and ill-looking as usual; we held a council of war about a poetry reading, in which both of us are supposed to be performing tomorrow; I look forward to it with mixed feelings.

There is, happily, only one more week of this term to run, and then I hope to go to Garsington, where I look forward to having a mental and physical tonic and bracing. What amusements we had last year, in spite of the somewhat wet blanket of Bloomsbury!

I have just been reading *Elle et Lui*, which strikes me as one of the finest books: I really must read some more of George Sand . . . she is personally such a superb character.

By that time, I had left Garsington and was in Wimbledon with the Ranee of Sarawak, Brett's sister, preparing to take full charge of her three little daughters, as well as of the nurse, nursemaid, cook and parlour-maid, while the Ranee was planning an adventurous journey back to Sarawak. She actually

never got there, thanks to the war, but stuck in Cape Town for some months.

Aldous writes, from Eton again, on Feb. 5th, 1918.

I am glad that teaching makes you a child—I was about to say 'more of a child'. I am always afraid of being made old by the continual assumption of superiority, the unceasing pretence of knowing better, of being respectable and a good example, which has to be kept up. I do my best to make my boys have no respect for me whatever. Most of my work this term consists in going over essays with a number of the elder boys. I have some fifty a week of them coming in for half an hour each to have their essays corrected and commented on. It is quite interesting at times and preferable to doing much work with large forms in school.

. . . I long to have the leisure to write; but as it is, I can't even get a batch of reviews finished which ought to be sent in at once. All I can do is an occasional line or two of poetry—but no prose, for which one has to settle down for hours at a stretch, a thing I can't of course ever do here. I am doing a most luscious poem about Leda—the lady whom Jupiter visited in the form of a swan and who thereupon laid two eggs, one containing Helen and Clytemnestra, the other Castor and Pollux. It is the most charming story, which is susceptible of perfectly serious and perfectly ironic treatment at one and the same time. When I have finished it, Brett has undertaken to do me some illustrations, which will be pleasant.

Soon after this, my charges and I moved to Callander in Perthshire.

20.V.18

My dear Juliette, The Old Christopher, Eton College

. . . I hope you flourish as you should. Scotland ought to be getting lovely; in another month it will be at its best, with blue transparent days which make everything wholly unreal and ethereal and quite fabulously beautiful. Here in the south we are having the perfect moments of summer; hot clear days and the leaves still fresh and small, not yet tired by the weight of summer and its dust. I bicycle out into Windsor forest and sit under the oak trees

and peruse the works of the French romantics till my soul begins to burst with emotion or till something par trop ridicule sets me roaring with laughter. To-day I even went so far as to compose a poem under a pink may-tree.

A tramp in life, I'd like to be
Respectable through eternity.
Therefore, good friends, when I die,
Put on my old Etonian tie:
Buy me a bowler, neat but cheap
With one of those white things that peep
Over the rich man's fancy vest
And see that my trousers are well-pressed.
And then I'd like to have—don't spare
Any expense—a splendid pair
Of those cloth-topped boots of patent leather,
Which are both boot and spat together,
Wedded as fast as man and wife.
Thus fitted out for future life,
I shall be able without shame
To walk down Bond Street in New Jerusalem.

You must forgive any errors in the typing. I am writing in the dark, with one bright pencil of moonlight coming in from the south and the castle looking like one of those lovely german picture post-cards which you hold up to the light to make the windows shine yellow. Bank Holiday crowds, growing sparser now, still giggle along the streets. It is profoundly melancholy; one feels like Chatterton. Furthermore it is painfully obvious to-night that the moon is a globe in a vast void and not a comfortable memorial plaque stuck up on the wall of a great man's house. Do you remember our moon-gazings on the roof, avec ce navrant paysage transi d'une lumière d'outre-tombe? I wonder now we didn't begin to howl like dogs out of melancholy, or kiss one another for comfort's sake.

His letters rise like milestones out of a dim past. With their help, I can just reconstruct part of the landscape round them, and my life up at Callander. Lord and Lady Esher were hospit-

able and grandfatherly, Brett soon came up to join her family and we saw a good deal of each other. The Ranee wrote long chatty letters from Capetown, where she was marooned, and the Rajah, whom I had never met, sent me piles of *La Vie Parisienne* to comfort my solitude. They rather embarrassed me, and I sent the lot to Aldous, remembering his drawings of bosoms and rounded thighs. Julian (H) wrote to me from Italy, where he was doing Intelligence work at G.H.Q., and Aldous from his father's house in London during the Eton holidays:

14.IX.18. 16 Bracknell Gardens, N.W.3

My dear Juliette, I dont know why, after months of silence, you should fob me off with a letter six lines long, even tho' you do send me a *Vie Parisienne*, (which by the way has not yet arrived). . . .

I picture you at Callander, sitting like Wordsworth's Old and Solitary Sheep on the top of a naked fell and poring over old numbers of the *Vie Parisienne* in the vain hope of seeing what life is like in the places where life exists. I lose no time in assuring you that life is only too little like the *Vie Parisienne*—I wish it were, sometimes. Oh for a galaxy of delicious Gerda Wegener girls waiting for one with open arms whenever one felt disinclined to work . . . but there aren't any.

The only thing which lightens the general darkness is the Russian Ballet, which is pure beauty, like a glimpse into another world. We—Ottoline, Julian (M), Brett, Gertler and I—had a great evening of it the other day: almost everybody in London was there, and we all went to the back afterwards to see Lopokova, the première danseuse, who is ravishing—finding there no less a person than André Gide, who looks like a baboon with the voice, manners and education of Bloomsbury in French.

I write—immortally (or do I mean immorally? I am not quite sure) and read in between bouts of odious restaurant life, which always make me feel so ill and reduces me almost to death and absolutely to tears—BUT THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM IT! Because—mark my words—one has no tolerable domestic life. I pine and long for domesticity (combined with intelligence) and all I find is

domesticity so tedious as to be impossible and restaurant life so sordid as to be intolerable. We are on the HORNS OF A DILEMMA . . . and where is the escape? I know so well . . . but Fate is so prejudiced against one that it blocks the road.

I hear Brett is coming north fairly soon; she seems to have become much odder and Brettier than ever: no development, but an accentuation of eccentricities. But I thought she was painting a very good picture. She is going to do some illustrations for my Leda poem. When do you remove from Callander to a more salubrious and live climate? Write to me properly, please—to Eton, whither, alas, I return next Wednesday.

Passent les jours et passent les semaines
Ni temps passé
Ni les amours reviennent. . . .

Do write, my dear.

Aldous

In a letter of October 18th he wrote:

...I am glad you like my book.[1] I find it hard to judge the thing. Much of it I find rather remote from myself at present. I have done an admirable short story—so heartless and cruel that you would probably scream if you heard it: the concentrated venom of it is quite delicious—while the subtle horror of my modern epic and the strange mixture of pure beauty and irony found in my LEDA beggars description: you will have to read it to realize to the full the truth of your judgment about me—about one of the ME's: but the other is—what? a sentimentalist? a hero of romance? a bon bourgeois? I leave you to judge: and as it is very late, and I must get up early to-morrow I will leave you to consider this charming problem by yourself and bid you a very good night, en vous embrassant bien affectueusement. Write to me at length and soon.

Aldous

[1] The Defeat of Youth

The next letter is dated 25.XI.18:

> ... I have just come back from a day in Oxford, where I spent some time looking for work—with no prospect of success: the English School there seems to be too impoverished to be able to pay the men it already possesses; much less can it contemplate taking on any new ones, at any rate yet awhile. A future of poverty, hunger and dirt looms menacingly.
>
> ... I am trying to go to Paris for the Christmas holidays: but doubt whether it will be feasible: still I shall make a great effort, as I want very much to go.
>
> Tell Brett I am just approaching the crucial moment of LEDA. The Swan is seen approaching—but I get on very slowly: the accouchements of my Muse are few and laborious. Tell Brett also to remember to vote and to vote Labour, our only hope.
>
> I have been reading nothing but Flaubert and Stendhal of late; the greatest of Frenchmen. And the Goncourt Journals, and Casanova—all good. But there is too much to read: and it so easily becomes a mere indulgence, a vice of the mind quite as deplorable as any other bad habit. I never really feel I am performing a wholly moral action except when I am writing. Then and only then is one not wasting time.

Julian came up to Callander early in January 1919; we got engaged and married in March. Aldous was our best man—put us in the train when we left for our honeymoon, and laughed, perhaps ruefully, when Julian chose that moment to tell us that I was now his chief legatee in his (modest) will. The truth was that Aldous was pretty desperate at that time; deeply in love with Maria and unable to marry for lack of money or prospects.

However, by dint of scrounging around, he managed to find a variety of jobs on various papers, which enabled him to marry in the summer of 1919. He and Maria lived in London, Julian and I in Oxford; we saw each other occasionally, but no one had time for letters. None of us, needless to say, found the world's rich pastures benevolently laid out for our enjoyment, and Garsington's magic became a memory.

For Aldous, it also transfused itself into a source of inspiration, for many of his early novels derive from the experience of those months at Garsington. It is clear, reading them again, that his inward-looking eye missed nothing of the curious evolutions and possibilities of so unusual a group of people. His receptive genius was absorbing and digesting, living, not so much in a remote sad world of his own (as we thought), as in the incandescent flame of re-creation.

Maria died in 1955, and left him, he said, "as if he had been amputated". His second marriage was a great solace—then his house burnt down, with all the personal accumulations of a life-time, destroyed absolutely in a paltry twenty minutes. His own death stalked him for three years. Yet, not long before he died, after a life which many might feel was a long battle with illness and tragic loss, he wrote this letter:

Dearest Juliette,

Julian tells me that your book is now definitely on the launching pad and about to go into orbit. The news has inspired me to write a little blurb, puff, prolegomenon, or whatever you like to call it. Use it or don't use it, as you and the publishers see fit. In any event, it comes to you with my love and in memory of forty-seven years (is it possible) of Old Acquaintance. Do you find, as I do, that the older one gets, the more unutterably mysterious, unlikely and totally implausible one's own life and the universe at large steadily become? For practical purposes, one tries to make a little scientific and ethical sense of it all; for non-practical purposes—aesthetic and 'spiritual'—one cultivates Wordsworth's 'wise passiveness' and opens oneself up receptively to the MYSTERIUM TREMENDUM ET FASCINANS within and without.

Our love to you both,

Ever your affectionate

Aldous

© Juliette Huxley 1965

Naomi Mitchison

THE earliest photograph I have of Aldous shows him as one of the cast of my first play, standing beside dear Trev, his next older brother, in New College cloisters. Looking at all those faces, young and handsome and mostly dead—for this was 1913—I see a curious number of Etonians, including my brother Jack and Dick Mitchison, my future husband. It was still a closed society. Lewis Gielgud was stage manager, both for this and for the next group of plays, in the summer of 1914, in which Aldous, as Charon, had a delicious little cotton-wool beard. I was terrible about my own plays, quarrelled madly, but luckily never at all permanently, with dear Lewis, who stage-managed with all the assurance of a Terry. But I don't think I ever faulted Aldous's interpretation. His cousin Gervas was another good one, but difficult to dress as there were such yards and yards of him.

It was strawberry and gooseberry summer; another photograph is of Aldous eating gooseberries, doubled up under a bush. We were always having picnics up the Cherwell, making fires and boiling kettles; we were always laughing and scrapping, though I, as a girl, found myself constantly entangled in curious spiky prohibitions, whose purpose usually defeated me. I tended to judge people on their attitude to my guinea-pigs, of which I had an enormous number and whose language I could interpret and imitate. The original laws of Mendel were beautifully intelligible to a fifteen-year-old, but I was already beginning to realize that guinea-pig inheritance was more complicated than that of sweet peas, though the words 'crossing' and 'linkage' were only on the horizon. Aldous appreciated the guinea-pigs.

Then came the first year of the war, and Aldous came to stay at Cherwell, my parents' house in Linton Road.

His blindness was at its worst; he was learning Braille, as well as Braille music, with a tough concentration that I admired

enormously. Our friends were going off to the war with their noble young heads in the air, to be thrown to death by incompetent strategists. He was long and dreadfully vulnerable-looking, with very soft hair, and he draped himself over things, his long arms and legs dangling across the backs of chairs or sofas. I at sixteen had got engaged to be married to a young officer—Dick Mitchison, to whom I have been married for nearly fifty years. My brother was in the Black Watch waiting for orders to go out to Flanders. Aldous and I were together a good deal and he stood by me in my fears and anxieties and above all helped to give me a more adult outlook.

It was really Aldous who introduced me to literature as such. I expect he was trying out on the dog, so to speak, some of the lectures on English literature that he was attending. Above all he broke down various prohibitions by assuming that they didn't exist. I was still in the last period of Victorianism; a number of books were forbidden. But when Aldous said that of course I must read *Tom Jones* as part of my education then my mother's defences crumbled.

There is something to be said for literary prohibitions. I should never have got on so well with my French if I had not secretly read *Madame Bovary* (and how dull I thought it was!). And Anatole France. Aldous threw open a whole world to me. My governess was fairly competent at teaching German and made me practise scales; she also arranged flowers, helped my mother with correspondence and Victoria League parties and generally allowed herself to be put upon, but she certainly shared more than all my mother's feelings about what a young girl should or shouldn't read. How wonderful to escape to Aldous's big room next to the schoolroom, and oh, how different!

Also for the first time, he introduced me to music, something completely omitted in my family. It began to mean something, though I never quite knew what. I still don't know what Aldous played on the schoolroom piano, but it was serious music of some kind. What I remember most is his long hands on the piano and his half-blind face reaching forward into the music. I only listened, but he was immersed. In some extraordinary way he did the most brilliant drawings, using thick pencil. Once

or twice he told me he was going to be a painter as though he had set the horse of his spirit against the most difficult fence. He knew an amazing amount about all the arts and took them seriously in a way that was tremendously encouraging to me in our somewhat anti-art Oxford home. With him I felt that they weren't frivolous, that one needn't be ashamed of becoming engaged in them.

And while I was learning from him he was picking up science and a particular attitude towards it from my father, who is in a sense the original of Lord Edward in *Point Counter Point*. Not that a good writer ever does a direct portrait but there must usually be something to set the scene going.

Then his eyes began to recover, he was able to move into Balliol, and I missed him dreadfully. All the more because my parents, who could never bring themselves to disapprove of *him*, disapproved of some of his friends, especially those who were actually pacifists and even proud of it. I was never allowed to go to Garsington, though I longed to. It sounded like a world of utter enchantment and glitter, the world of the more than grown-up. My mother so much disliked the idea of anyone enjoying themselves during 'the Great War' that she couldn't bring herself to let me go and I, though I was by that time a home student, had no regular money allowance so couldn't go on my own even if I had been able to face the inevitable finding out and family grief and upset. I was still basically an obedient child.

Aldous thought this very silly and so of course it was. He used to tell me about Garsington and I envied and admired. Sometimes rather shyly I showed him my own poems. Like most writers at the beginning I half believed passionately in my own powers and half knew that the things I wrote weren't just what I wanted. I hated criticism and yet I sought it out. Aldous was kind and when very occasionally he really did praise something, the praise seemed infinitely worth having. Once he said that something of mine was rather like a Mallarmé and I was flattered to the heart all the more because I had tried to read Mallarmé but almost totally failed to understand him.

At a period of one's life when one is half grown-up but still

partly living in the play world, making up places and people long before one starts putting them seriously on to paper and having them taken seriously by reviewers, it is wonderful to have someone a little older who treats one as a grown-up. I was much teased by my family. Aldous never teased me and never treated me as a child. Instead he asked me difficult questions like 'are you in love?' And then 'describe it to me'. And I twiddled my engagement ring and could only answer in terms of poems I had read and what I supposed a girl should be feeling. And all the time I was admiring the yellow tie and white socks that Aldous had already begun wearing. And I did sometimes wish he would kiss me, but I didn't know how to get him to.

He was of course in Oxford politics, including the University Co-op Shop, which had been started on highly ideological grounds, with a room above for discussions. G. D. H. Cole was in on this, though I expect he laughed at it. Sometimes I kept shop there, and God knows what dire effect that had on the accounts. There was a Co-operative dressmaker who made Earp a pair of pyjamas out of Liberty silk, with the word 'Liberty' on the selvedge, which duly appeared on the legs of the pyjamas. And Earp was a real poet with a slim volume of verse published! We read and even bought one another's poetry.

What flights of fancy they had! I admired but was never able to do it myself. My own poems were deeper in, I couldn't get them out. All of them were heading straight for the world of authors' parties and marvellous experiences. I still plodded and didn't get to the parties. Frances Petersen, my great friend, granddaughter of the Warden of Wadham, did manage to get to Garsington. She told me about it and it sounded like everything one had possibly imagined. There were no chaperones there. Sometimes one's friends escaped from the war and came back to Oxford: they'd had a Blighty. Lewis Gielgud came back very badly wounded. Gervas came back too, but even after I was married, while I still lived at home, the prohibitions and chaperonage went on.

At the end of the war when I was at last going to set up house on my own, Aldous came with me on a shopping expedition. I was buying sheets and true to my upbringing was getting good,

rather expensive, Irish linen meant to last. "But why don't you have black satin?" he asked. I was rather shocked, but a little later I wondered why I hadn't. They probably wouldn't have been much dearer.

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Gervas Huxley

WHAT follows, from someone who was very close to Aldous in his boyhood, is a tribute to the loyalty, unselfishness and courage so strikingly manifested in his youth and so fundamental to his character as a man. It is also a tribute to the magnetic influence which the superior essence of his personality, and the breadth of his interests, exercised on his contemporaries both at his preparatory school and at Balliol.

In 1903, at the age of nine, we went as boarders to Hillside, Mr Gidley Robinson's preparatory school near Godalming, where for five years we were to be the inseparable 'Huxley major and minor'. The loyalty that characterized Aldous throughout his life was strikingly demonstrated when, as a result of my hubristic exercise of authority as head of the school, I was sent to Coventry and had books and other objects hurled at me whenever the masters' backs were turned. Alone among the fifty other boys Aldous stood by me. And next day, on the Sunday outing, Aldous walked with me and the master in charge while the rest of the school kept at a hostile distance.

In 1961 Aldous and I revisited Hillside. Looking at the raised platform at one end of what had been the dining-hall, we recalled its use as the stage for the excerpts from Shakespeare in which we acted in the Easter terms. In 1907, it was *The Merchant of Venice*. Twelve-year-old Aldous played Antonio, and his performance as the unfortunate Merchant was of such pathos that parents in the audience were moved to tears. Even at that age he had a singularly attractive speaking voice which lent dignity and authority to his lines, to which he also brought an extraordinary understanding and appreciation.

Our other excursion into the Arts was in 1907, when Lewis Gielgud (Sir John's eldest brother), Aldous and I, encouraged by an inspiring young master, Hugh Parr, produced on a 'jelligraph' machine two issues of a literary magazine. For Aldous's first appearance in 'print' he contributed a poem and a

short story, illustrated by himself. The poem was called 'Sea Horses' and began:

> *At a gallop we charge up the shingle*
> *At a gallop we leap the sea-wall*
> *With mad exultation we tingle*
> *For we, we can overcome all.*

In the early chapters of Aldous's *Eyeless in Gaza*, Bulstrode is a thinly disguised Hillside, and the schoolboy characters are an amalgam of some of our schoolfellows. The moonlight pastime of sailing little wooden boats with paper sails in the dammed gutters which ran level with the windows of the cubicle dormitory exactly describes one of our most enjoyed pursuits. In these chapters, Aldous brilliantly conveyed the atmosphere of Hillside; but it is only glimpses that he gives, and on the whole they are unpleasant ones.

When, twenty-five years after *Eyeless in Gaza* was written, Aldous and I looked back at our years at Hillside, I was left in no doubt that his time there had been a happy one. It was not that his memory, like the sundial, only registered the sunny hours. It was much more that Aldous possessed the key to an inviolable inner fortress of his own, into which he could and did withdraw from the trials and miseries of school existence. He was able to put them into perspective. Never can I remember him losing his self-control or giving way to violent emotion as most of us did. It was impossible to quarrel with him. Any waves of ill-natured spite or temper broke up at once when they met the shore of his integrity and complete unselfishness.

Another factor which helped him to preserve his remarkable sense of proportion was the deeply interested curiosity with which, even at that age, he regarded the behaviour of the world and his fellows.

If we somehow felt that Aldous moved on a different plane from the rest of us, it was not that he held aloof from his fellows. On the contrary, he was the most companionable of companions, and a full sharer in all our schoolboy nonsense, only with nonsense more imaginatively nonsensical than anyone else's;

puns and plays on words always gave him special pleasure, as they did all through his life.

Meanwhile, his lasting interest in natural history was much stimulated by the system of 'notices' awarded by the tough veteran master, Mr Taylor, to the boys who each summer recorded the first specimen of different species of butterflies and moths.

Every Sunday afternoon Aldous and I used to walk over to Prior's Field, the girls' school founded by his mother, my Aunt Judy. Initially I was somewhat in awe of her, but this soon vanished in the warmth of her understanding of young people and in her happy laughter. I soon realized why Aldous was so deeply devoted to her.

Aldous was never an athlete, but he enjoyed the school games, and in our last year he and I helped to make up a very unprofessional half-back line in the school soccer team. He was an active participator, too, in unofficial seasonal pastimes like paper cricket, in which we played imaginary matches, writing out the teams in a cricket score-book and, by blindfold jabbing a pencil on to a score-sheet, crediting runs or wickets to our heroes.

In 1905, his and my parents jointly rented Mirehouse on Bassenthwaite, in the Lake District. Aldous and I travelled up with his father to Keswick, bringing our bicycles. Aldous always had a deep appreciation of natural beauty, and as we rode from the station to Mirehouse I remember sharing with him our first enthralled view of the lovely shapes of the Lakes mountains.

After Aldous and I left Hillside in 1908—I for Rugby, he for College at Eton—we continued to correspond regularly. Here are extracts from some of his letters. In the summer of 1908, Aldous was at Argentière, near Chamonix, whence he wrote:

> This is a most splendid place . . . we had a vast walk yesterday up to a loathsome mountain called le Buet. The day before we went on the glacier and father pulled me about on a rope and we had great fun. This place has a splendid air which makes me eat and sleep enormously. There is a most beautiful view here of MONG BLONG and several other vast peaks; there is also an Ameri-

can BORE! Bore is hardly the word for him. He falls upon unoffending people and discourses in a loud slow voice with a horrible accent about 'geology' and 'platinum the heaviest of all substances' and 'our Denver'.

Your loving

Aldous

Next comes a letter from Eton during Aldous' first 'half' in the autumn of 1908:

I notice with horror that you say 'term' instead of 'half', the only civilized expression. Poor little me has to do fagging for 3 halves. However I am in the Lower V. All collegers start there. We have just gone through the most awful event of the half i.e. 'Extra Books' consisting of 800 lines of Homer and about 400 lines of Virgil. Monday is St. Andrew's Day. Julian and Trev are coming from Oxford I think. They are dreadful swells now. So am I for that matter. I look so chic in tail-coats, mouldy collars and white ties. I suppose you people at Rugby wear some type of rational dress like pyjamas and bowler hats, don't you? Have you done anything bad in the fagging line lately such as burning your fagmaster's toast or putting his tea in his bath or breaking 2 dozen eggs. I can't say I have yet. I have only been whipped twice so far (1) in a general working off of the whole of the College for hiding a letter (2) for forgetting to take VIth form cheese out of Hall.

Your loving cousin

Aldous

Aldous's schooldays were marred by a double tragedy: first the death of his mother and then his well-nigh total loss of sight, which brought his career at Eton to an end. In *Eyeless in Gaza*, when Aldous writes so movingly of Anthony Beavis's sense of isolation and grief when his mother dies during his schooldays, he was drawing on his own bitter experience.

What amazed me most about Aldous's blindness was his courage in facing calmly and cheerfully this complete disruption of his life, with never a trace of self-pity. At this time he fre-

quently stayed in our house, and I recall going into his bedroom one very cold morning and finding him hunched up in bed with his hands under the bed-clothes. "You know, Gerry," he said, "there's one great advantage in Braille: you can read in bed without getting your hands cold!" Braille may have had another advantage, as I remember Aldous telling me how impossible he had found it to read Macaulay in Braille. The artificiality of the style, which the eye takes in happily, became intolerable when spelt out letter by letter. Quite possibly the clarity and economy of Aldous's future prose style owed something to his having undergone this test of reading other people's works in Braille.

In October 1913, he and I entered Balliol together and shared the delights of a leisurely pre-war Oxford, untouched by industry and the motor car, where horse-drawn trams trundled up the High and everyone went on foot or on bicycles. That year at Oxford was a time when, untroubled by examinations except the ridiculous 'Divvers', we were free to spend most of our time exploring the splendid, new and sophisticated Balliol world. Under the influence of Neville Talbot, the Dean, and such scholar-athletes as Ronnie Poulton from Rugby, the tone of the college had changed since Aldous's elder brothers had been there a few years earlier. Balliol's pre-eminence in scholarship was as great as ever, but rowdiness and drunkenness were no longer fashionable among the bloods, and Balliol had become a generally sober and serious place, with such eminent undergraduates as Godfrey Elton, Harold Macmillan and 'God' Wedderburn, the rowing blue, setting the tone. Among the dons, 'Sligger' Urquhart still kept open house in his rooms every evening, while distinguished scholars like A. L. Smith and Cyril Bailey were our friends as well as our tutors.

Almost at once Aldous's room overlooking the Broad became the centre where the elite of our year gathered, drawn by the magnet of his mind, the curiosity of his catholic tastes, and his unassuming friendliness. Over the fireplace was pinned a picture very unlike the 'classical' reproductions generally favoured by undergraduates—a striking French poster of a group of bare-breasted nubile girls by the sea-shore. Against one wall stood a piano. The room seemed always to be full of people talking

and laughing and discussing every subject under the sun, serious and frivolous. Among the frivolities was the recent arrival of syncopation, which held a special fascination for Aldous, and on the piano he would strum such novelties of early jazz as 'He'd have to get under, get out or get under' or 'The Wedding Glide'.

Our Oxford year culminated in that summer term of 1914 which was to mark the end of an epoch. August 1914 saw Aldous for the second time abruptly cut off from all his contemporaries, since his eyesight debarred him from any form of military service, and from many types of non-military office work. I have always felt that this second isolation must have been an even greater blow to Aldous than the first. The friendships he had made at Oxford were closer and more mature, and promised to be more lasting, than those in his short time at Eton, and the isolation, being also of the mind, was more than a purely physical one. Simultaneously, there fell the shattering blow of his brother Trev's suicide. In a letter to me, Aldous wrote "There is—apart from the sheer grief of the loss—an added pain in the cynicism of the situation. It is just the highest and best in Trev—his ideals—which have driven him to his death, while there are thousands who shelter their weakness from the same fate by a cynical, unidealistic outlook on life. Trev was not strong, but he had the courage to face life with ideals—and his ideals were too much for him."

It was a forlorn and deserted Balliol, haunted by the ghosts of his friends, to which Aldous went back that October.

I had only one brief glimpse of him before the end of the war four years later. Just before Christmas 1914 I was passing through London on my way to Grimsby to take out a draft of the Manchester Regiment to Flanders. Unasked, I found Aldous waiting at Paddington to meet me, and we spent the day making last-minute purchases before he saw me off at King's Cross. I well remember how reassuring was his familiar presence in those hours of uncertain expectation, and how deeply comforting it was to know that, whatever the Fates might have in store, his friendship would always be with me.

© Gervas Huxley 1965

André Maurois

ALDOUS HUXLEY and I began our careers as writers at about the same time. From the beginning I was an admirer of his. I wrote the preface to *Point Counter Point* when it was published in French. In the first half of the 'twenties he emerged as the most intelligent writer of our generation. It was said that he filled up any spare five minutes by re-reading the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The great range of his knowledge seemed to be inherited. For he was the grandson of Thomas Huxley, one of the most forceful minds England has produced; and, on his mother's side, he was a great-grandson of Thomas Arnold of Rugby, the zealous and serious-minded educational reformer, and a great-nephew of Matthew Arnold, the poet, educationalist and critic. A French parallel is perhaps to be found in the Berthelot family, with their remarkably wide culture, embracing both poetry and science.

First, then, he had at his command superb intellectual equipment. Whatever the subject, Aldous Huxley's approach was that of the expert. If he described an elderly nobleman grafting a newt's tail on to its amputated foreleg his account of the process might have been by Jean Rostand; and when he wrote about French poetry it read as though it was by Paul Valéry. He was in fact as much a man of French as of English culture. He quoted Baudelaire as often as Shakespeare. Proust, for whom he had a great admiration, influenced him considerably, and the Gide of *The Coiners* still more. His earliest novels recall Anatole France: the dialogue of his clever, sensual characters—who are very much under the author's control—is worthy of Jérôme Coignard or Bergeret.

With *Point Counter Point* there emerged a new Huxley. This book was a novel of analysis rather than of narrative. It was a dissection of a particular social stratum, that of the British intelligentsia: dons, painters, men about town. Here was a cynical, anarchic, brilliant England, which included the fore-

runners of the angry young men of today. The central character, as in *The Coiners*, is a novelist, Philip Quarles, who describes his book as he writes it. Philip Quarles is aware of the dangers of excessive intelligence to the artist. "It's incomparably easier to know a lot, say, about the history of art and to have profound ideas about metaphysics and sociology than to know personally and intuitively a lot about one's fellows." Proust's strength had been his acceptance of the mediocrity of his characters. For all the excellence of the thought and writing of Huxley's books, one thing is missing: the ordinary man.

A great novelist must above all be vulgar, asserted Chesterton, because life is vulgar and men are vulgar, and because it is the novelist's object to reproduce life. This vulgarity was exactly what was lacking from Aldous Huxley in England or Jean Giraudoux in France, but was the fundamental characteristic of Balzac or Dickens or Dostoievsky. Chesterton was right. In spite of his extraordinary gifts, Huxley failed to inspire his characters with the intense life which Dickens gave to his. On the other hand, he was an excellent essayist and also a penetrating and historically minded biographer—witness *Grey Eminence* and *The Devils of Loudun*—for here reality supplied his imaginative deficiencies.

What was Huxley's philosophy of life? It is expressed by a character in *Point Counter Point*, whose ideal was that of a man who was complete and balanced, believing that though this was an ideal difficult to attain it was the only thing worth pursuing. "A man, mind you. Not an angel or a devil. A man's a creature on a tight-rope, walking delicately, equilibrated, with mind and consciousness and spirit at one end of his balancing pole and body and instinct and all that's unconscious and earthy and mysterious at the other. Balanced. Which is damnably difficult. And the only absolute he can ever really know is the absolute of perfect balance. The absoluteness of perfect relativity." This philosophy of life delighted me because it was also mine.

But there is more than one man in each of us. The Aldous Huxley who wrote brilliant, frivolous novels very soon gave way to a maturer Aldous with a stronger sense of tragedy. *Brave*

New World was an exercise in pessimistic prognostication, a terrifying Utopia. In this world of the future—in the year 632 of Our Ford, according to the new reckoning—science has transformed people into conditioned robots, nurtured in test tubes. Neither love nor the family survive. The motto of the World State is: *Community*, *Identity*, *Stability*. The drug *soma* provides an escape from all violent emotion, from boredom and from despair. Everything is perfect and hateful. Man has been destroyed by science.

It took courage to set down this cruel prophecy. Huxley was courageous. It showed in his actions as well as his writing. His sight was always very weak. With incredible patience he had set about the re-education of his eyes. Curious about the effect on the mind of drugs which produce hallucinations, like mescalin and lysergic acid, he tried them on himself, and in *The Doors of Perception* described the extraordinary states of ecstasy in which his vision of the world became that of a Van Gogh, sublime and terrible. He went to live in America, where he made contact with Hindu sages. This scientifically minded man found himself asking whether rationalism was pragmatically superior to irrational beliefs. In his anthology, *The Perennial Philosophy*, he showed that mysticism fills what seems to be a universal need of the human soul and that in all countries and in all religions mystics have similar visions and similar ecstasies.

It was an astonishing reversal of his thought, and disturbing to anyone as close to the earlier Aldous Huxley as I had been. What was more astonishing still was the fact that even when his inclinations settled towards mysticism the luminous clarity of his mind remained unchanged, and enabled him to write his last major work, *Island*, displaying his growing concern for human fulfilment.

Four years ago, passing through Paris, he asked if he could pay me a visit. I invited him to lunch. I did not know that he was then suffering from the first effects of the disease that was to kill him: cancer of the tongue. He showed no anxiety. His eyes looked dim, but his thinking was as vigorous as ever. He talked about poets and musicians: "True philosophy is religion, or

else it is art, which is simply another form of religion." I thought how he was thus in complete agreement with the views of my master, Alain. His marvellous intelligence had outdistanced mere intelligence.

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Dennis Gabor

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S lifelong influence on me started in the middle 'twenties on one of my many train journeys between Budapest and Berlin, when I settled down with his Tauchnitz volume of *Brief Candles*. This, and his early novels, which I greedily lapped up after this first acquaintance with him, acted like an electric shock on me and my fellow Central European intellectuals, especially in my home country, Hungary. It must be remembered that the last great English success in Central Europe before Huxley was John Galsworthy, whose patrician characters made money, built houses, organized charities, gave a little time to their somewhat melancholy love-affairs, but never seemed to discuss intellectual matters or to enjoy music. And here at last was an intellectual like ourselves, only so much more accomplished, and an English society whose existence we never suspected from reading Galsworthy, Wells, Shaw or even D. H. Lawrence, in which the same matters were discussed as we discussed in cafés; a real intellectual society in which the diabolical publisher or art dealer was the only businessman. No wonder that we took him immediately to our hearts! My young fellow-scientists had also another reason to love him. Here at last was a writer who could touch on scientific matters without making us wince.

He made a great impact on us, but we did not make any on our contemporary world. The sort of Central European who before 1933 could read and enjoy Aldous Huxley was destined to emigration or the gas-chamber. The outstanding young Hungarian novelist and literary critic, my friend Anthony Szerb, who was one of the first to discover Huxley's unique standing in contemporary literature and to spread his fame, died in an extermination camp.

Others were luckier, and they made an impact on the world, but not of the sort Huxley would have desired. The brilliant Hungarian quartet, Szilard, Wigner, von Neumann, and Teller,

who had such a great part in the atomic and in the hydrogen bomb, were all great readers of Huxley, and they followed his thought up to *Brave New World*, but not to *Ends and Means*. Between 1931 and 1937 Huxley's spirit soared above all practical considerations, in a tragic epoch in which evil won all the battles, in preparation for the great, final blow. The Huxley of this time was a little less than the earlier or the later Huxley—the Huxley who could understand a greater slice of human life than any of his contemporaries. *Satyagraha*, which he advocated, brought Ghandi triumph ten years later, against a mellow, somewhat weary Britain. It would have led to nothing but a catastrophe against a mad Germany and Japan. It was not Huxley at his best who under the influence of Dick Sheppard recommended absolutes; so simple that a child could grasp them but only an angel could follow them. This was not congenial to Huxley, whose greatness lay in the unparalleled span of his mind, in his ability to compose grand contrapuntal symphonies of human life, and to put them into perfect literary form.

I am not concerned here with Aldous Huxley's literary fame; whether future literary historians will rank him with Thomas Love Peacock or with Dean Swift. My concern is his heritage to those who really care about the future of the human race, and in this respect I hope that he will be remembered with Thomas More.

Why are there so few men of letters who dare to look into the future? Hope in the future is of rather recent origin in human history. The Greek spirit blossomed out at its most glorious at the time of the political downfall of Greece, and was imbued with a profound pessimism; they felt that all change is likely to be for the worse. At a similar stage of Roman history, Marcus Aurelius wrote that "a man of about forty has seen everything that ever was or will be on Earth". Hope in the future started only with the belief in progress, at the time of the Renaissance, and reached its climax just before Aldous Huxley was born, towards the end of the nineteenth century. Even at that time there were a few malcontents and pessimists, such as Samuel Butler. But soon after the turn of the century a rift developed between what it is now fashionable to call the Two Cultures; those who

believed in science, and often did not know much about human nature, and those who instinctively, and without knowing much of, or even about, it, damned science and all its works. One need only think of H. G. Wells and contrast his Utopias with E. M. Forster's nightmare, *The Machine Stops*, written at the beginning of this century. In this Battle of the Cultures Aldous Huxley had a unique position. He was a consummate literary artist with a profound understanding of science, and he had a great love for humanity.

The raw material of every social philosophy are men and women. Huxley has created about a hundred remarkable characters, who fill an enormously wide spectrum. Only illiterate brutes are missing from it, but the IQ starts with the chicken-brained Moira of *The Rest Cure*, the highly unsatisfactory wife of the brilliant young scientist, equally unsatisfactory in his own way. (This was the first of Huxley's many cruel portraits of scientists.) At the other end of the spectrum Huxley puts, alas! the transfigurations of D. H. Lawrence and of Dick Sheppard. Huxley was too much of an intellectual to have much love for himself. He appears recognizably in his many *raisonneurs*, who in his early novels are always emotionally handicapped persons.

Huxley was deeply aware of the gulf which divides many people, of "the abyss which opens up between two easy chairs before a fireplace", and he was always searching for its causes. He attributed perhaps too much importance to physique; probably because he was such an extreme ectomorph. But he could hardly exaggerate the emotional distance between introverts and extroverts, between cerebrotonics, somatotonics and viscerotonics. He could masterfully measure the emotional distance which is the cause of so much human unhappiness, but he could not bridge it. His own emotional distance from the characters of his own creation is only too evident, at any rate in his early novels; this is why D. H. Lawrence reproached him for his 'funny dry-mindedness'. The deep incompatibility of human types is one of the problems which Huxley left for the future. It has always existed, but it is becoming more acute with the progress of material culture, which makes people more

intolerant of unhappiness, which was taken for granted in the past epochs of poverty and tyrannical parents.

The fundamental problem of social philosophy, as Huxley saw it, is the reconciliation of a maximum of individual liberty with a stable social organization. In the bitterly satirical 'bad Utopia' of *Brave New World* his solution was the complete abolishment of families, with the hypnopaedic slogan that "everyone belongs to everyone else". In his much later and constructive Utopia, *Island*, he reverted to happy families—but with the concession that children who were annoyed with their own parents could go round a circle of adoptive parents. Thus to the last he remained suspicious of the scars left by the emotional ties of the family; scars which other people cherish as the German ex-student cherished his *Mensurschmisse*.

In *Brave New World* the child was freed from the possessiveness of the parents only to be claimed as its full possession by the whole of society. This was, next to cruelty, the thing Aldous Huxley hated most. In his *Science, Liberty and Peace* (1947), he gave a closely reasoned analysis of the threat to individual liberty arising from the progress of science and from the concomitantly growing centralized power of the modern state. His chief remedy is decentralization of production: 'Jeffersonian democracy'. Huxley's contention was that technologists have so far given too much attention to production in large units and that further research may very well reveal that what is gained in production is lost in distribution. To this I would say that it would be very fine indeed if centralized production could be condemned on the basis of inefficiency, and that there is some chance of this, because the huge conglomerations such as exist, and are still growing, around New York and on the West Coast of the U.S. threaten to pose an insoluble traffic problem. But I would also add that we are now approaching a degree of efficiency at which the problem of unemployment leads the whole system *ad absurdum*. If, as Huxley believed, and I believe too, decentralization will increase human happiness, it must be increasingly adopted not only where it is efficient, but perhaps even more where it is inefficient!

Huxley was scornful of the idol of efficiency; with William

James he poured ridicule on the Gospel of Work and on the Bitch Goddess Success, and he had the courage to write of 'the ignoble Benjamin Franklin'. But he saw clearly that the under-developed East was badly in need of Western efficiency. When at the end of the 'forties Sir John Boyd-Orr raised his somewhat exaggerated alarm cries about the impending starvation of the East, Huxley became for a time an apostle of hydroponics (soilless agriculture); a characteristic reaction of his sensitive soul which always readily responded to human suffering, and also characteristic of an optimistic streak in his nature which always hopefully seized on the latest novelties in science; sometimes a little prematurely. But his was a mind deeply suspicious of escapism. Only half a year before his death he lent his voice to the international appeal of the United Nations for Man's Right to Freedom from Hunger, but he clearly saw that neither the East nor the West can in the long run live on charity—by taking or by giving. The East may need charity for a while—not the charity of St Elisabeth of Hungary who kissed the lepers (a recurrent theme in Huxley's early essays), rather the charity of Albert Schweitzer who gives them gold injections—but the West cannot for long save its soul by saving the bodies of others. Huxley was brave enough to shun even this noble type of escapism, and to face squarely the problems of Western Man, which arise well above the level of simple survival, and which are so much graver, because they have never been solved, and we do not even know whether a solution is possible.

In the early years after the rebound from *Brave New World*, Huxley's answer was simple. Happiness is possible on the animal level; it is possible on the superhuman timeless level, but not on the human plane of time and craving. Time must have a stop. This may well be the profoundest truth Huxley or anybody else has ever uttered, but it is too great a nugget to be translated into the small change of social policy. It is too great a step for Western Man to change from a worshipper of the Bitch Goddess Success to one who concentrates on "the unitive knowledge of ultimate Reality, the realization that Atman and Brahman are one".

Huxley saw this clearly enough, and he saw also that the only

way to such a fundamental change is through profound reforms in education. Throughout his life he threw out suggestions for education, sometimes original, something echoing others. He was so transcendentally honest that it would never have occurred to him to sacrifice truthfulness for the sake of originality. *Brave New World* is full of the tricks of a loathsome educational method, fit only to create a race of gregarious extroverts. (Huxley was so sensitive on this point that he even accused Freud, somewhat unjustly, of trying to turn everybody into an extrovert.) His later writings also contain some admonitory examples (see for instance his spirited attack on calvinistic education in *Island*), but mostly he gave good positive advice. There is a passage in *Ends and Means* which shows that the unity of Atman and Brahman was not the only unity which he valued, where he writes of "the web of understanding which in the mind of the accomplished intellectual connects the atom with the spiral nebula and both with his morning's breakfast, and the music of Bach and the pottery of neolithic China". One can say that this is perhaps the only passage in all his works in which he writes of himself without self-deprecation, because by these high standards Aldous Huxley was perhaps the only 'accomplished intellectual'.

Huxley was deeply convinced that human potentialities are far larger than we realize. One of his favourite quotations was William Blake's: "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is, infinite." Throughout his life he was searching for means to 'cleanse the doors of perception'. This led him first to study the mystics, and later to experiments with hallucinants. He was deeply convinced that mind-improving drugs are possible, and I am glad to say that there are eminent biochemists who agree with him. There may be other new methods of education—Huxley towards the end of his life was particularly interested in the prospects of non-verbal education—but there is no invention more badly needed in the present and coming crisis of our civilization than mind-improving drugs.

Throughout most of his life Aldous Huxley struggled with a conflict between pessimism and optimism, between his capacity

to enjoy existence in its manifold beauty and wonder, and his revulsion from its many horrors. His disciplined faith enabled him to remain kind and loving until the very end, and even to dictate from his sickbed a brilliant and moving article on 'Shakespeare and Religion', which he signed the day before he died. His last novel, *Island*, was written when he already knew that he was doomed. In this he deliberately abandoned the satirical approach whose pungency and biting wit his public had always appreciated, in favour of a positive and constructive declaration of faith, though he knew that this would be considered by many as tedious and rather unbelievable didactic stuff. It would not have surprised him to see that an eminent writer, a great admirer of Huxley's satire, would write of 'the goody-goody bores of *Island*'. This was a small sacrifice for him, who was in the first place a modern saint, and only in the second place a great literary artist. To me *Island* was the last great gift with which he enriched my life.

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Victoria Ocampo

THE first letter I received from Aldous Huxley is dated May 23rd, 1931. Drieu la Rochelle, our mutual friend, had asked him, on my behalf, to write an article for the Review *Sur*, whose first number had just come out. Huxley wrote from La Gorguette, Sanary. His contribution, 'Pygmalion versus Galatea', soon followed and appeared in the third issue of my magazine.

In connection with an article of mine on *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Aldous Huxley wrote to me: "C'est un livre sur lequel on pourrait faire une étude très intéressante. Ce fait si curieux, par exemple, que Lawrence ne dit rien sur les sentiments et les sensations de Mellors—qu'il parle seulement de la femme. . Et puis cette méthode qu'il propose de dépasser l'individu, les intérêts personnels, en allant non vers une lumière, vers des espaces libres de l'esprit, mais vers une nuit viscérale, sous-personnelle, comme un Jonas dans sa baleine . . . J'admire énormément les livres de Lawrence at je l'ai beaucoup aimé personnellement—mais je souffre souvent en le lisant d'une espèce de claustrophobie, j'ai l'impression d'avoir été avalé comme le malheureux prophète. Quel soulagement de sortir d'un livre-baleine comme *Lady Chatterley* et de pouvoir se promener, par exemple, dans les immenses espaces du *Paradiso*!"

I believe it was this passage of his second letter that made me aware of the existence of an Aldous still unrevealed, who perhaps had not yet found himself and for whom I began to feel a latent, tremulous admiration. A still wavering admiration which had a different density, a different quality from the one I felt for the author of *Point Counter Point*.

Point Counter Point was also mentioned in this second letter, for I had asked him for the translation rights of this book for my publishing firm. The firm's first publications were in fact the Spanish versions of D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo* and Huxley's *Point Counter Point*.

In August 1931, in answer to my invitation to come to Buenos Aires on a lecture tour, Huxley remarked on a rather curious coincidence: he too had thought of going to Latin America, first to the Antilles and after that to Argentina. As to the lectures, he added: "Je n'ai jamais donné de conférences et, à dire la vérité, j'ai plutôt peur de me lever et de parler en public. Ce qui est bête, mais, pour moi, une raison suffisante pour vous dire (tout en vous remerciant encore une fois de l'honneur que vous m'avez fait): non."

In November of that year it looked as if the idea of a trip to Argentina had crystallized into a settled plan. "I should expect to be in Argentina in January or February next year—unless something happens between now and then to change our plans ... It is very kind of you to offer to introduce us to the country." My invitation remained open for the rest of Huxley's life, but again and again some unsurmountable obstacle intervened to prevent him making the visit. Really, I used to tell him, this is beginning to look as if Fate was against us. In 1932, plans for a trip again came to nothing "owing to the march—or rather the stampede—of political events".

At the end of 1931, Aldous Huxley, who for the time being had given up the thought of a journey to Argentina, gave me his address in London, so that I might get in touch with him on my arrival there: the Cavendish Hotel, Jermyn Street.

I sailed for England with plans for our meeting, but a certain last-minute reluctance overcame me. The night before my departure from Paris, I had heard Gandhi speak at Luna Park. The Mahatma had just returned from London, where I myself was going. His *actual presence*, his words devoid of all showy eloquence, the direct answers he gave to questions which were sometimes put with the malicious intention of making him appear ridiculous, had made me insensitive to everything except that man in white, with his round and shaven head, physically unattractive, but transfigured when he spoke. Or we were transfigured by him. The fact is that I was still living in the atmosphere he had created on that memorable night.

The day after my arrival in London, Aldous Huxley came to fetch me at the flat in Albemarle Street where I was staying, and

we walked together along Piccadilly and the Strand to the Savoy. I was rather intimidated in the company of this Englishman, already famous, and so courteous, distant—and tall (I do not often have to look up when addressing anyone). He had, moreover, physical beauty, the kind which—like that of Virginia Woolf—is perdurable because it is produced by the structure of the bones. The bones ensure its preservation. For the first time, with sidelong glances, I scrutinized the landscape of this noble and delicate face which I would never forget: the slightly aquiline nose, the wide forehead, the generous mouth, the eyes . . . but the half-veiled eyes were looking elsewhere. They were already threatened with the blindness which, years later, Mrs Corbett tried to improve, but could never wholly cure.

The acute shyness of my adolescence, which I seldom entirely overcame, reasserted itself on that afternoon, to my despair. Aldous Huxley talked; I stammered. We talked of *Point Counter Point*, of D.H. Lawrence, his friend. However, once settled at our little table and comforted by tea and the pleasant temperature of that Wildean hotel (it was a cold day), I could control my obsession no longer, and voiced it: "I heard Gandhi speak last night and cannot think of anything else. What is your opinion of him?" Without hesitation, with the suavity of a scalpel that cuts almost without pressure, he answered in French: "Il ne m'intéresse pas du tout." If he had sliced off one of my fingers, he could not have wounded me more unexpectedly. I recoiled. My soul (or what we call by that name) recoiled. Words froze on my lips and I was afraid I would be unable to use them without stoning him with them. I sank into the icy silence of our Andean lakes. Gandhi was not mentioned again, and since we did not speak of him that afternoon, I felt that we had not talked at all.

In 1943, when I had become a friend of both the Huxleys (for Maria, his first wife, was a being loved by all those who were fortunate enough to know her), I asked Aldous with a smile if he remembered his answer to my question on that particular day. "Comment ai-je pu . . ?" he said, lifting his hand to his forehead. In a letter dated March 28th, 1946, I find a passage that gives us the key to this gesture and exclamation: "Yes, how remote it seems, the time of our first meeting, and what a stupid, unsatis-

factory kind of existence I was leading! And what a strange Decline-and-Fall world it was we were living in!"

By then I had matured sufficiently to learn, the hard way, that people rarely change. In our youth we even imagine that we ourselves can make them change. Aldous was, in this as in many other ways, an exception. He did change and changed radiantly.

* * *

Knowing my admiration for Virginia Woolf, Huxley took me one afternoon to the private view of an exhibition of Man Ray's photographs, saying that, as one of Man Ray's subjects, Mrs Woolf might be there, though she seldom went out. And we did meet her. It is thus Aldous I have to thank for the opportunity of approaching a woman unrivalled, in her time, for genius and a special kind of captivating beauty. The generosity he showed towards his friends was one of the distinguishing traits that made Aldous a being apart. He was generous to me, though he himself sometimes thought otherwise. For example, when writing to me after I had spent a few days at La Gorguette, he explained: "I am, I fear, a very bad entertainer of guests, for I spend so much of my time laboriously wrestling with ghosts and words, and often find it hard to escape from their clutches into the world of solid flesh-and-blood people. But if you can put up with a partially absentee host, I do hope, now that the happy precedent has been established, that you will come again."

The qualms he felt as a host had no foundation. I remember the hot July days at Sanary as very luminous ones, only at times darkened for me by my own timidity and the fear of boring Aldous. I had felt certain qualms of conscience myself when I received an invitation to spend a few days with the author of *Point Counter Point*. But they were of a different kind. I had written an article on *Beyond the Mexique Bay* for the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación*, in which I had raised certain objections, mentioning the points on which I disagreed with the author. I had been shocked by some of his rather unflattering, though probably justified, remarks on Central America. I said so. Accustomed as I am to the extreme touchiness of Spanish-American (and indeed Spanish) writers, I felt nervous

and dubious about what I had written. This worried me to such an extent that I decided to send Aldous my article to clear the matter up. Though I was an unknown South-American, with no importance whatever in the world of English letters, and he the author of a novel that had brought him world fame and had moreover become a best-seller, I thought that my remarks might annoy him. It was only fair to show him that I had written. I could not accept his invitation with any pleasure as long as he remained unaware of certain passages of my article, otherwise laudatory. I spent three or four uneasy days wondering what impression my letter would make. This proves that I did not as yet know Aldous Huxley. The answer arrived; opening the envelope required quite an effort. "Thank you for your letter and the article. In spite of this last—or because of it, for I know that there is much truth in what you write—I hope you will come and stay with us a few days here. . . . The best train is the 21.25 from Gare de Lyon, which stops at Bandol, our nearest station, at 10.58, the following morning. . . . I hope you manage to come."

To say that these words relieved me is a poor way of expressing the effect they had on me. This kind of generosity, as well as the desire to give pleasure to his fellow-beings (or, in my case, to a friend), was a trait of both Huxleys. In Maria it did not surprise, for she was quite obviously all intuition, all heart. As Stravinsky put it, when I saw him last, in January 1964, knowing little, she understood all. But in Aldous the trait was puzzling, because at that time his intelligence dazzled. It came between him and oneself. It prevented one from seeing his other qualities (which were, perhaps, in those days more in the background or under *la ligne de flottaison*). This at least was my impression; so much so that as I was taking leave of him one afternoon, in London, I said: "Good-bye, iceberg." Later this outburst worried me. Would he resent it? How relieved I felt again when next day Maria told me on the telephone that Aldous had said, laughing: "Elle a été très gentille. Elle m'a appelé banquise."

In spite of his bad eyesight, Aldous was painting by way of pastime during the summer when I was his guest at Sanary. He

was struck with the idea of painting my portrait. While I sat for him, Maria and I would talk, or she would read something to us. Full of curiosity, I wanted to see the work in progress. . . . He never allowed me even to peep at it. His only comment was a disgusted: "C'est monstrueux" one morning; and suddenly there was no more talk of the portrait.

The plans for a trip to Buenos Aires continued to miscarry with a discouraging regularity. Some unforeseen obstacle (ill health, work) would present itself and our projects would come to naught. In June 1935 he assured me that they would both come in August, though it was an awkward month in view of the holidays of their only son, Matthew. But Matthew would like to learn Spanish and might perhaps come too. In the same letter Aldous told me that he was doing manual labour for relaxation: "Vous ririez beaucoup à me voir demi nu piochant d'immenses trous dans le jardin. Le travail manuel me réconcilie beaucoup avec ma profession d'intellectuel."

In another letter, which is undated, but must have been written shortly afterwards, he apologized for getting me to organize this trip for nothing. "I wish I could accept your invitation . . . but circumstances are against it. For some months now, I have been sleeping very badly, which has meant very little work—so that I am frightfully behind time. I am making a desperate attempt to finish my book this summer—if this accursed insomnia will allow me—and the preparation of lectures and the visit to B.A. would have made this quite impossible. I have just received, however, an invitation from the Pen Club of Argentina to come as their guest to the Pen Congress of 1936. I am writing to give a provisional acceptance, dependent on dates. . . ."

But he was not to attend this Congress either, nor the one held in 1962 to which he was also invited. And I was thwarted of my desire to see him in my house, or my garden—a place he might have found restful, as it is surrounded by trees, facing a river as wide as the pampas or the sea.

This house, which I had so often hoped to see him enter, caught fire in June 1947. By a miracle, only two rooms were damaged—one of them my library. Aldous, who was to suffer

the same kind of accident—though much more serious—wrote to me: "I am thankful you got off as lightly as you did—though the thought of a burned library is one to sadden the heart of an old book-worm like myself." On June 30th he mentioned the fire again: "Thank you for your letter and the fascinating account of the old house and its occupants. Expanded, it would make a very beautiful essay story, at once documentary and symbolic; a reconstruction of a vanished life the last remains of which are obliterated by the catastrophe of fire in a present which holds only the promise of more destruction, not accidental but deliberate and coolly planned by the most highly educated of technicians. I hope you will do this and give us a *Temps Retrouvé* qui est simultanément un temps détruit, une durée interrompue, une continuité brisée."

These were difficult times for me, as an Argentinian, not only in the sense alluded to by Huxley: the threat of the atom bomb used as an instrument of war. We were living under a totalitarian regime, imported from Europe (though it never got as monstrous as its model), and of course the dictator did not approve of my way of thinking, which was shared by the elite of Argentinian intellectuals. A few years later, this ideological disagreement was to take me as far as prison. . . . All this could only be hinted at in letters because of the censorship. But even so, the Huxleys managed to say a good deal.

Incidentally, a few days after the fire, I gave a reception in the undamaged part of the house for Sir Julian Huxley (then Director-General of Unesco) and a group of Argentine intellectuals such as were far from being held *en odeur de sainteté* at that period. And to be sure, they must have smelled more of burning, like the damned, for everything in my house was permeated by that hellish smell.

At that time Aldous was keeping a close eye on the filming of his *Gioconda Smile* (a title, he told me, considered incomprehensible in Hollywood and which it was found necessary to alter). Jessica Tandy's acting fully satisfied him and he seemed quite amused by this new experience.

But before these events, I saw the Huxleys in Los Angeles, in 1943. I found Aldous much changed. From *Eyeless in Gaza* and

Grey Eminence onwards I had sensed a shift which his actual presence and our conversations confirmed: a shift from the purely intellectual to the spiritual. His friendship with Krishnamurti was an obvious symptom of this change. After my departure from Los Angeles (in September 1943) he wrote: "The renewal of a friendship requires more calm and leisure than we had during your visit. Still, I'm very glad you came even fleetingly and as hurriedly as you did. . . . What you ask about the role of the heart in mystical religion can be answered simply. The heart cannot be commanded—but the will can. In other words it is in our power to exercise the rational and voluntary love of God, because our will is free and we can always make the choice of serving and honouring God rather than the contrary choice of serving and honouring ourselves. This rational voluntary love may or may not be accompanied by a movement of the heart. If so, it is good. But the right choice is none the less right for being unaccompanied by affective emotion, and there is no use in trying to force oneself to feel the love of God, if the feeling does not arise spontaneously. St Teresa records how she used to try to compel herself to feel love as well as to act it out in a series of deliberate choices. She was quite unable to command her emotions and came to realize that voluntary and rational love was as truly love as that which was accompanied by emotion. When it was so accompanied, she was glad; but when it wasn't, she did not feel depressed."

The longed-for end of the war drew near without our meeting again. But the prospective peace was already worrying Aldous almost as much as the war had distressed him. He told me so on August 10th, 1945: "Thank God we are to have peace very soon. But I confess that I find a peace with atomic bombs hanging overhead a rather disquieting prospect. National states armed by science with superhuman military power always remind me of Swift's description of Gulliver being carried up to the roof of the King of Brobdingnag's palace by a gigantic monkey: reason, human decency and spirituality, which are strictly individual matters, find themselves in the clutches of the collective will, which has the mentality of a delinquent boy of fourteen in conjunction with the physical power of God."

The news of Drieu la Rochelle's death reached him through me. They had been friends since 1919. And the last tragic chapters of Drieu's life, with his final suicide (after two attempts which miscarried, since he was discovered in time to be revived) saddened Aldous, as they had saddened me.

Some passages of this letter of April 1945 are remarkable not only for their wisdom but for their similarity to statements made by Drieu himself (which were published posthumously and which Aldous never came to read). Aldous began by saying that he agreed with my interpretation: the secret of Drieu's unhappiness was a tendency to be strongly attracted by things or ideas that were unlike him. Aldous thought that, in his own way, Drieu was a victim of a kind of bovarysm. "Of course it was impossible for him to be, except in imagination and on paper, the strong man he congenitally was not. And also it was impossible for him not to be bored and disgusted and profoundly disquieted by the strong men with whom his bovarysm made him associate and for whom he employed his talents. . . . And when Germans were actually there, in power, his native sensibility and intelligence must have been constantly shocked by the coarseness, stupidity, squalor and ugliness of practically everything they did or thought or spoke or felt. And yet he forced himself to write about *fascist socialism* and the new order, etc." How true this judgment was Drieu himself confirmed in his farewell letter to me, written on the day of his first abortive suicide, in which he said that politics had long ago ceased to exist for him and that he had taken refuge more and more in the study of the religions of India, particularly Sankara.

But the passages in this same letter from Aldous that I now find particularly striking are those about Benjamin Constant: "In many respects, I think Drieu was very like Benjamin Constant. Constant's was a more extreme case, of course. Drieu did not display Constant's extraordinary eccentricity—the infant-prodigyism, the passion for gambling, the fantastic mingling of *philosophe* and romantic, which made him rush into every kind of adventure and made him at the same time analyse his every thought and pass judgment on his every act, so that the most wildly romantic adventures all turn into dust

and ashes and boredom, even while he was undertaking them. But there was something of this in Drieu too; and how essentially similar to Drieu's efforts in the same line were Constant's excursions into politics. He wanted to bovaryze himself into a Plutarchian tribune of the people, and though Napoleon cut short his first efforts, he actually succeeded, later on, in becoming (for others, at least, if not for himself) the great liberal leader he had bovarycally tried to be. Tragically, Drieu chose the role antithetical to tribune of the people—or perhaps it would be truer to say that he was pushed into it by circumstances, by the fact that the *status quo* was not a tyrant, but a corrupt democratic-capitalist machine. . . . Between ivory-towerism and art for art's sake on the one hand and direct political action on the other lies the alternative of spirituality. And between totalitarian fascism and totalitarian socialism lies the alternative of decentralism and co-operative enterprise, which constitutes the economic-political system most natural to spirituality. The majority of the intellectuals at the present time recognize only two alternatives in their situation, and opt for one or the other, with results that are always bad, even if they happen to choose the victorious side. . . . I have just finished a book which I am calling *The Perennial Philosophy*, an anthology of what is the Highest Common Factor in the world religions. . . ."

Religion was just what Drieu wrote about in his last letter . . . and of his contempt for everything connected with politics, as I have said. These two friends, who were so different in temperament and had taken such widely divergent ideological paths, seemed finally to come together again in a single unifying truth, making it the focus of their meditation. But how sad was the end of the one who chose a way that was not his dharma!

Returning to Benjamin Constant, in a book recently published by Gallimard (*Sur les Ecrivains*, p. 208) we find a parallel drawn by Drieu between himself and the author of *Adolphe*. The passage is taken from Drieu's unpublished diary. The coincidence between what Aldous said in his letter and what Drieu wrote in his diary is evidence of Aldous's insight.

After the end of the war, I saw the Huxleys in New York. It was to be our last meeting. A trip to Argentina was still being

discussed. Aldous had already developed into what in my view was his highest self. Of this last meeting I particularly remember a drive along the Hudson. I had rung up the Huxleys to comment on the beauty of the trees at that moment of autumn. We must see them together, I said. I invited them to drive with me as far as West Point. It would be an outing dedicated to the leaves. When I came to fetch them, Maria asked me to take Aldous alone. "Je resterai. Il me voit trop. Vous aurez plaisir à causer tête à tête." This was not true, for Maria was one of those rare women, companions of great men or famous writers, who far from being an element of distraction, create an atmosphere which assists communication. Maria was always a bridge, never a barrier.

I protested in vain and had to leave alone with Aldous on that golden morning. On the way we talked mainly of our favourite poets. Aldous knew Mallarmé by heart. He recited several poems, but repeated, as if savouring its taste, one verse: "Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu." Time has not tarnished my memory of his voice, the verse and the colour of that morning.

When I sailed from New York to France on November 14th, 1963, Stravinsky had already warned me that Aldous was dying in Los Angeles. Anita Loos sent me *Literature and Science*, suggesting that I should write to Aldous after reading it on board. My letter would reach him—so she said. But, mistrustful of Anita's optimism, I sent a cable, not mentioning Aldous's health, only my wish to see him.

Alone in my cabin, while the *Queen Mary* was slowly moving out, I lay down on the bunk and opened the book. I immediately fell on a verse in italics: "Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu"—the verse of that morning when the gold and copper tints of the New York autumn glowed among the dark rocks. A moment of shared delight in the beauty of the world.

Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu . . .

I began to read from the page where I had found the verse. "Every literary artist must invent or borrow some kind of uncommon language capable of expressing, at least partially, those

experiences which the vocabulary and syntax of ordinary speech so manifestly fail to convey. *Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu* . . . that is the task confronting every serious writer." I closed the book; I shut my eyes: they were smarting. I thought: I shall write to him, though it will be hard. How can I talk of anything except my worry, my anxiety? It is like the first day we met, when, unable to talk of Gandhi, I felt there was nothing else to talk about.

In my cable I sent him "my affectionate good wishes". This was not "giving a purer sense to the words of the tribe"; in fact, rather the opposite. This was having recourse to a commonplace. Perhaps sorrow, when it first strikes, has a common language for us: a language of commonplaces. Tears are a commonplace. How poor my letter sounded, when I wrote it! A farewell with no farewell and one that would never reach him. It flew on a Friday from France to California. Next day, listening to a broadcast on President Kennedy's murder, I heard that Aldous too had died.

Two days after this news I received a few lines which Aldous had dictated—probably to Laura—and signed himself. He said that at the moment he certainly needed my good wishes. He added: "I hope we may soon find an auspicious moment for our long delayed meeting." Did he really hope to live, with death already at his side? I suspect he did not want to distress his friends. I know he had not wanted to grieve his brother, and tried to conceal his suffering.

His mere presence in the world meant a deep companionship to his friends, even to those who were far removed geographically. By losing him we have lost the comfort of feeling accompanied (no matter what happened to us) in spite of distance.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought . . .

For him, the dull substance of the flesh *was* thought.

Because he gave "un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu", his genius and personality will last among us beyond the grave. But, like water or sand slipping through our fingers, we feel the loss of those trifles that our heart—with its reasons so like unreason—longed for and received: for instance, from time to

time, a few words on a scrap of paper flying over oceans and continents.

The loss of this man, whom at the beginning of our friendship I had called an iceberg, hurts one's heart, not one's intellect. The intellect does not suffer, because it cannot lose him. But how deep is the heart's wound! And why should one deny or conceal it?

Above and beyond the 'blessed spot' into which we were born, the house in which we grew up, we find our real home with certain spirits, with certain beings. Beings sometimes born under different latitudes and in different centuries. When we are fortunate enough to have been a contemporary, a friend, of some of them, their physical death leaves us bereft. With Aldous Huxley gone, his admirers feel like Ruth in the poem, sick for home. For what indeed is home if not the presence in this world of these beings? Saints may forgo this consolation. As to us, what else can we do but stand, like Ruth, 'in tears amid the alien corn'?

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Yehudi Menuhin

As I bring to mind my private images of Aldous Huxley, I cannot help but feel that somewhere, somehow, a chain of magic words lies unassembled which could reveal him to us again, palpable, in all his ineffable compassion, in that translucent fragility as of a shell which was both home for his spirit and reverberator for all human wavelengths.

As words to him were a means of communicating the incommunicable, so could I imagine certain right words could recreate that which cannot be created. As he made words breathe and live, could words not repay their debt, making him live again in return? And 'in the beginning' was it not logos, the word—the breathed word—that moved across the waters?

During the few years I had the privilege of knowing him, he had made himself into an instrument of music—concentrated as he was in the spoken word, his voice was the gentlest melody, ennobled beyond hate, violence and prejudice, yet not without passion, which sang of all that had ever touched his senses as of all the myriad impressions his mind had made its own.

Quite beyond the literary forms of which he was master, it was the fluid quality of his conversation which revealed his nature in all its depth and humility. His unfathomable knowledge communicated itself rather in the awed revelation of mysterious worlds unpenetrated than in the exposition of its own vast dimension.

Never overbearing, never pompous, as pure in his maturity and ready to respond like a tuned violin to a trained hand; or in wonder and sympathy as a child to a story, this was a man in whom wisdom never destroyed innocence. He was scientist and artist in one—standing for all we most need in a fragmented world where each of us carries a distorting splinter out of some great shattered universal mirror. He made it his mission to restore these fragments and, at least in his presence, men were whole again. To know where each splinter might belong one

must have some conception of the whole, and only a mind such as Aldous's, cleansed of personal vanity, noticing and recording everything, and exploiting nothing, could achieve so broad a purpose.

Efficient dreamers, practical poets, inspired scientists, informed artists—we need these more than ever before: will Aldous Huxley's life work provide the inspiration and the example for others, or is he a phenomenon impossible to duplicate? Are our minds so tarnished, distracted and negative that we cannot embrace a tolerant, positive, and reconciling spirit like his?

Aldous would have led the way—scaling the sheer rock-face of our present predicament with its superhuman demands and terrors, its anguished escapes, its scope restricted to the toe-hold of the next impaling rock—onwards to humanity's next higher encampment, on to where once more a reassembled vision of stars and earth would restore a wholeness of conception wherein life and death, the transcendental and the terrestrial, spirit and matter, would appear related—a wholeness of conception and unity offered only by religion.

For man's intuitive awareness, subjective as well as objective, of the greater wholeness and unity of all creation will forever demand religious forms, symbols and rituals in the light of his changing experience, knowledge and circumstance. Yet because of 'religion's' breadth of conception, representing permanence as it were, its forms must of necessity remain the most constant, binding and slowest-changing element in society. But let us not quarrel about symbols, about languages: let us reverently accept those in use, both as needed tools and as the repositories of indelible past experience, continuing the while to evolve new forms—we hope away from idolatry and prejudice, and towards a unity embracing maximum diversity.

True to the Huxley heritage, Aldous, with his more introvert quality of artist, intuitive and transcendental, like his more extrovert brother Julian, had to live his life in this wholeness of experience, continually reintegrating, reinterpreting and formulating at all levels from primitive survival to the common frontiers of art, science and religion. He points the way to a

synthesis of literature and science, of the private and the public worlds—of the human being as he is to himself or as he is when an army general, a tax collector, a salesman, a chemist, a doctor or an artist.

It is not surprising that Aldous Huxley loved and understood music—for music, intangible in its complexity as the play of light on water, is at one and the same time the purest mathematics and the purest art, and in truth the very mirror I referred to above, reflecting simultaneously the universe and the individual, joining all in a wave of human sound.

How sad those unforgettable reunions *à quatre*, so spread in space—from Gstaad through London to Los Angeles—should have been so confined in time. Yet those fleeting years of friendship hold the most precious memories when, together again, revelling in that illumination he brought to all subjects—music, poetry, painting—we formed that most basic and balanced unit of society, not the family—basic to continuity—but two couples, poised beyond the stream of time, Aldous joined by his sweet Laura, and my own lovely Diana, since childhood raised on Aldous's writings, and thanks to whom both my son Gerard and I share her love for the writer and the man.

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Anita Loos

IN the summer of 1926 my husband and I were living in New York, where my existence was hectic in the extreme. The previous year *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* had been published and was giving rise to stirring incidents almost every day. I was getting countless letters from people I'd never met; the most exciting of them all came from Aldous Huxley, written at a time when he must have been on a lecture tour:

Congress Hotel
Chicago

14-May-1926
Dear Miss Anita Loos,

I have no excuse for writing to you—no excuse, except that I was enraptured by the book, have just hugely enjoyed the play, and am to be in America so short a time that I have no leisure to do things in the polite and tortuous way. My wife and I are to be in New York for about a fortnight from Monday 17th onwards and it would be a very great pleasure—for us at any rate—if we could arrange a meeting with you during that time. Please forgive my impatience and accept the sincere admiration which is its cause and justification.

Yours very sincerely,
Aldous Huxley

Soon after Aldous and Maria arrived in New York they came to tea at our apartment. On first meeting Aldous, I was immediately struck by his physical beauty; he was a giant in height, with a figure that was a harmonious column for his magnificent head; the head of an angel drawn by William Blake. His faulty sight even intensified Aldous's majesty, for he appeared to be looking at things above and beyond what other people saw. But his chief trait was an intense curiosity and, while he was the

greatest of all talkers, he was equally the greatest of all listeners. Maria, a lovely brunette no taller than five feet, with wavy hair, pointed oval face and big blue-green eyes, was as unusual in her way as Aldous was in his. It was after I came to know her well that I learned the real meaning of the word 'fey', for Maria supplied its definition; she lived a life of pure fantasy. She studied palmistry, believed in the stars, and even in the crystal-gazers of Hollywood Boulevard. At the same time, she had practical virtues that made her the truest helpmeet I ever knew. As well as being Aldous's best loved companion, she was his housekeeper, secretary, typist and drove his car in California. She protected him from the swarms of bores, pests, and ridiculous disciples who try to attach themselves to a great man, and all the while her unconventional reactions amused Aldous as well as amazed him.

Following that tea party in New York, our correspondence was resumed and later the same year we all met in Paris; then in London, by which time a friendship with Aldous and Maria had become a constant factor in my life. After my husband and I moved to Santa Monica, the Huxleys came to settle in nearby Los Angeles, bringing their son Matthew, whom I met for the first time. Many complex reasons have been offered as to why Aldous left London—but the explanation is really quite simple. The dry air of Southern California was most soothing to his lungs, which were never robust, and his faulty vision was at its best in the California sunlight, which was still of a pristine clarity. Later on, when smoke and grime polluted the air, the Huxleys used to go for breathers to nearby desert areas; or Aldous remained in town and suffered, for his American roots were too firmly implanted for him to pull free.

From the time they arrived in Los Angeles the Huxleys were in daily contact with us; if we did not meet, at least we spoke on the phone. They soon collected a group of friends; among the regulars were Edwin Hubble, the distinguished astronomer and theorist of the expanding universe, his wife Grace, Gerald Heard, Christopher Isherwood, Charlie Chaplin, Paulette Goddard, and Greta Garbo.

For years our lives ran along the most pleasant lines. No place

in the world provides as much food for laughter as Los Angeles and its environs: its extraordinary assortment of kooks and goons; its fantastic religious cults; the Four Square Gospel of Amy Semple MacPherson, the Holy Rollers, and the Great I Am were a constant source of amazement and delight to Aldous. He took as much pleasure in speculating about these cults as their devotees did in practising them.

Every Sunday our group came to my house on the ocean front at Santa Monica for lunch, after which we usually took long walks on the beach, entertained by Aldous's infinite variety of comment on botany, sea shells, birds, and everything in and out of the world. Walking was his favourite entertainment and, like the Pied Piper, Aldous led us all after him. When work was over, we went for almost daily excursions either on the beach or through the fire-breaks ploughed across the crackling, dry hills that surround Hollywood. Those walks, by the way, set us apart from the majority of Southern Californians, who are so dependent on wheels that they've lost the use of their legs except for crossing sidewalks to and from their cars. Any citizen caught by the police using his feet for transportation is suspect. On one occasion Aldous, out for an evening stroll in Beverly Hills, was stopped by two officers of the law who wanted to know what he was up to. Aldous's reply that he was merely taking the air didn't at all convince the patrolmen, who ordered him to get off the sidewalk at once or they'd haul him to the station. That near-arrest greatly amused Aldous as a measure of the Southland's *Kultur*.

Both Aldous and Maria loved picnics; the thought of one made them as happy as little children. I recall one particular outing with dramatis personae so fantastic that they might have come out of *Alice in Wonderland.* There were several Theosophists from India, the most prominent being Krishnamurti. The Indian ladies were dressed in saris which were elegant enough but the rest of us wore the most casual old sports outfits. Aldous

might have been the giant from some circus sideshow; Maria and I could have served as dwarfs, but with our tacky clothes the circus would have been pretty second-rate. Nobody would ever have recognized the glamour of Greta Garbo and Paulette Goddard in that tatterdemalion group. To protect themselves from fans who might crop up out of nowhere, Greta was disguised in a pair of men's trousers and a battered hat with a floppy brim that almost covered her face; Paulette wore a native Mexican outfit with coloured yarn braided into her hair. Bertrand Russell, visiting Hollywood at the time, Charlie Chaplin, and Christopher Isherwood all looked like naughty pixies out on a spree. Matthew Huxley was the only one of the group who was a mere normally dishevelled teenager.

The picnic gear was as unusual as the cast of characters. Krishnamurti and his Indian friends, forbidden to cook or eat from vessels that had been contaminated by animal food, were weighed down with crockery and an assortment of clattering pots and pans. Greta, then strictly a vegetarian, was on a special diet of raw carrots which hung at her side in bunches. The others could and did eat ordinary picnic fare, but Paulette, to whom no occasion is festive without champagne and caviar, had augmented the equipment with a wine-cooler and thermos cases.

We had started out in several motor cars, with no definite objective except to find a spot where a fire could safely be built and the Theosophists could put their uncontaminated pots and pans to use. It wasn't easy to find a location; we dared not venture into the dry bush because of the devastating fires which plague Southern California when it isn't being devastated by floods. Finally we found a place which, in the matter of safety, was ideal. The scenery, however, left quite a lot to be desired, for we had chosen the sandy bottom of the Los Angeles River, which is a raging torrent for about two weeks during the rainy season and drier than a desert the remaining fifty weeks of the year. As we trooped down into the hot river bottom, we failed to notice a sign that read 'No Trespassing'.

Krishnamurti and the Indian delegation set about cooking their rice. And while the remainder of us were unpacking sand-

wiches, Greta's raw carrots, and Paulette's caviar, we were shocked by a gruff male voice ringing out with, "What the hell's going on here?"

Stunned into silence, we turned around to face a Sheriff, or some reasonable facsimile, with a gun in his hand.

"Don't anybody in this gang know how to read?" he demanded of Aldous.

Aldous meekly allowed that he could read, but still no one got the man's implication until he pointed out the sign. Then Aldous, feeling that we were not going to desecrate the bed of the Los Angeles River (already strewn with rusty cans and assorted rubbish), politely asked if we might be permitted to stay. The Theosophists' rice was on the fire, our food on the tablecloth, and Aldous promised that as soon as lunch was over we would clean up and leave the river bottom neat and tidy. It was apparent that his plea was getting us nowhere; the Sheriff merely glowered and fingered his gun. Then Aldous played his trump card. He indicated the presence of Miss Garbo, Miss Goddard, and Mr Chaplin. The Sheriff's measly little eyes squinted only briefly at the group.

"Is that so?" he asked. "Well, I've seen every movie they ever made," said he, "and none of them stars belong in this outfit. So get out of here, you tramps, or I'll arrest the whole slew of you."

We folded our tents like the Arabs, and guiltily stole away. It was not until we were in the garden at the Huxley house where the picnic was resumed that we began to think about the titillating headlines our adventure might have produced and how they would have added to the long list of Hollywood scandals. "Mass arrest in Hollywood. Greta Garbo, Paulette Goddard, Charlie Chaplin, Aldous Huxley, Lord Bertrand Russell, Krishnamurti, and Christopher Isherwood taken into custody." That Sheriff might have had his picture in newspapers all over the world and realized every humble Californian's dream of sharing billing with the greats. But, alas, he missed his chance by letting our batch of scoff-laws go free. I hope he reads this now and is properly regretful over losing his one opportunity for fame.

When the expanding industries of Los Angeles began to darken the air with smog, the Huxleys retreated to Santa Monica and their home on a hilltop overlooking the Pacific became a source of fun for all of us. The house had been furnished by a somewhat eccentric previous owner, and it gloried in a swarm of conversation pieces which could have been assembled in no other culture of the world. The first thing to greet one on entering the hall was an objet d'art that had once been used to advertise some movie—a larger than life-sized facsimile of King Kong, the Ape Man, in whose hairy arms a sparsely dressed cutie was struggling, while Kong looked around for a convenient spot to commit rape. The remainder of the decor did Kong full credit; there was a bar that was an Arabian Night's dream of dowdy grandeur; red lights revolved and blinked down on a large, stuffed crocodile, and there were layer upon layer of tortured motifs cut out of wood with a fret-saw. Of course, Aldous could have thrust the eyesore of a bar, together with Kong and his sex-pot victim, into the cellar, but he didn't. He seemed to feel it would be a shame to dispense with a unique source of amusement in a world filled to the brim with sadness.

During World War II, Aldous's profound sensitivity made him look on its grim course as a matter so personal that it shouldn't be discussed.

I remember the night when Paris fell and a number of our group came to dine at our house. When Aldous arrived his face was dead white, he bore the expression of someone who was peering into hell; but the talk was mostly some sort of scientific discussion between Aldous and Edwin Hubble. Nobody mentioned Paris.

Incredible as it may appear, there were times in our relationship when I was able to feel a little superior to Aldous. He once came to me to say that, staunchly as he had remained apart from the

movie industry, he now felt tempted to try for a job in it. The Battle of Britain was on in full force, his income was curtailed by it, and his obligations increased. Did I think he might possibly make good in one of the studios? I laughed at his ridiculous humility and told Aldous nothing could be easier than to find him a job. I was working at M.G.M. at the time and, on investigating the new projects coming up, found one which seemed ideal—a movie version of *Pride and Prejudice*, which was ready for dialogue. When I informed the producer that the great writer was available, he set up an appointment with Aldous for the very next day.

Very soon after their interview my phone rang; Aldous was calling, with Maria on the extension, and their mood was that of gloomy resignation.

"I'm sorry," Aldous said, "but I can't take that movie job."

I wanted to know why not.

"Because it pays twenty-five hundred dollars a week," he answered in deep distress. "I simply cannot accept all that money to work in a pleasant studio while my family and friends are starving and being bombed in England."

"But Aldous," I asked, "why can't you accept that twenty-five hundred and send the larger part of it to England?"

There was a long silence at the other end of the line, and then Maria spoke up.

"Anita," she said, "what would we ever do without you?"

"The trouble with Aldous," I told her, "is that he's a genius who just once in a while isn't very smart."

Aldous did take the job, of course; Maria's family and many friends in England benefited thereby. So did the movie, for Aldous's dialogue was fine, as TV viewers of the late, late show can now attest.

Among our diversions in those days were any number of experiences among the mystics of that world centre of mumbo jumbo; the more ridiculous our adventures, the more they helped Aldous to measure the outer boundaries of human idiocy. But occasionally an incident turned out to be thought-provoking in the extreme.

A group of us had gone to the pier to have dinner at a little

fish restaurant, and while waiting to be served, Charlie Chaplin noticed a sign across the way that read, 'Scientific Handwriting Analysis. Ten Cents.' Charlie decided, as a joke, to try the expert out. Aldous stopped him. It would be too simple for a swami to 'read' for Charlie because his appearance was familiar to practically everyone in the world. On the other hand no one would recognize Aldous. So Charlie wrote a few words on a scrap of paper which Aldous took to the lady. He returned from his interview in a mood of deep concentration and reported what had happened. The lady had studied the writing a moment and then looked up at Aldous suspiciously, "Are you trying to make fun of me, sir?" she asked. Aldous assured her he was not and wanted to know why she asked. She paused and studied Charlie's writing more closely. Then, still suspicious, she asked, "Did you write this while you were in an unnatural or cramped position?" Aldous then admitted that the writing was not his own but he assured the lady that it had been done quite normally. "Then," said the expert, "I don't know what to say, because if what you tell me is true, the man who wrote this is a God-given genius." We were all duly impressed. Later Aldous came to know the handwriting lady personally; she turned out to be well versed in her trade and we consulted her frequently.

To my own particular viewpoint, Aldous's sense of humour outshone all the other facets of his tremendously complex nature. It even came into play at the time when one of those hellish Southern California brush fires had destroyed the home where Aldous lived with Laura, whom he had married the year following Maria's death. He and Laura had barely escaped with their lives, but Aldous's manuscripts, Maria's diaries with their record of the happy, eventful years they had spent together, Aldous's priceless letters from most of the great people of his time, and a library that had been collected during the major part of his life, had all been reduced to ashes. On reading about the catastrophe, I phoned Aldous from New York for a firsthand account. I could sense that he was smiling when he said quizzic-

ally, "It was quite an experience, but it did make one feel extra-ordinarily *clean.*"

I shall always think of Aldous as smiling. One of my most cherished mementos of him is a delicate bottle of Schiaparelli perfume in a fancy pink box made in the shape of a book. On the fly-leaf Aldous wrote, "For Anita, one of the few books that doesn't stink."

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Robert M. Hutchins

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S favourite phrase was 'most extraordinary', which he pronounced in an accent and intonation that sounded most extraordinary to American ears. 'Incredible', spoken with an extended prolongation of the second syllable, was a synonym for 'most extraordinary'.

The most extraordinary and incredible things were the possibilities and performance of the human race. To see him standing in front of the fire, looking like a caricature of himself by Max Beerbohm, reciting the latest evidence he had gathered, was one of the greatest pleasures of my life.

In the foreword to Laura Huxley's book, *You Are Not the Target*, Aldous wrote, "Men and women are capable of being devils and lunatics. They are no less capable of being fully human."

He saw around us, as he wrote me once, "the immense organized insanity in which we must all live and move and have our being". *Brave New World* was always on his mind. So he wrote me that a study published by the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions on automation and cybernetics had "a sickeningly *Brave New Worldish* flavour". He found a certain melancholy satisfaction, such as Cassandra must have felt when her prophecies came true, in the work of Jacques Ellul, *La Technique*, which suggests that we are living in the Brave New World already.

At a meeting at the Centre he said, "To parody the words of Winston Churchill, never have so many been so completely at the mercy of so few." He went on: "The nature of science and technology is such that it is peculiarly easy for a dictatorial government to use them for its own anti-democratic purposes." He reminded the group that "the crash programme that produced the A-bomb and ushered in a new historical era was planned and directed by some 4,000 theoreticians, experimenters, and engineers".

Though he thought the human race recalcitrant—"evidently we have to have a tremendous number of kicks in the pants before we learn anything"—he did not think it hopeless. He believed we used ten per cent, or less, of our capacities. Hence his interest in what he called 'non-verbal, non-conceptual' education, in psychotherapy, and in mescalin. These were all methods of tapping unused reservoirs of intelligence and sensibility. Like human ecology, which was another of his preoccupations, they might help us to get our technological *hubris* under control.

This balance was what he was always after. He seldom missed a chance to deflate any statement about scientific and technological 'progress' that omitted to take into account its effect on the quality of human life. So I heard him reply to a report on the wonders of modern communication, "When we didn't communicate with Japan, we didn't go to war with her, either."

In the foreword to Laura's book he describes himself as a 'theorist of human nature', and sums up what he "had always preached: the great truth that the life problems of a multiple amphibian are many-faceted, and, if they are to be solved, must be attacked simultaneously from many different angles".

His interest in all the angles led to the incredible range of his acquaintances, his reading, and his conversation. He wrote a characteristic note to me after he had shown Sir Julian and Lady Huxley around Hollywood. He said they had seen "the local sights, which included Disneyland, two Nobel prize-winners, a performing whale, and a movie producer". From all of them, including the whale, I am sure Aldous learned something of the possibilities of the multiple amphibian.

He said, "The man of letters is tempted to live too exclusively in only a few of the universes to which he has access." This is a temptation to which Aldous never yielded.

In particular he relentlessly pursued all the aspects of technological change and tried to raise the question of the advantages or disadvantages to human life that might ensue.

He dragged me to Hollywood to meet a man who had a device that would slow down a phonograph to half speed and thus permit far longer and cheaper records. Aldous saw this as a

chance to make all the classics available in a new form at low cost to everybody.

He dragged me to lunch with the founder of the Ampex Corporation to hear the tale of building an airplane untouched by human hands that could fly to any destination without a pilot. What pleased him most was the report that Ampex could get you past four enemy attacks you might encounter on the way—and it was working on the fifth.

He described with a mixture of pride and grief the incredible pea fields that stretched square mile after square mile below the Grand Coulee dam, with not a house in sight. A few men appeared with enormous machines to sow and reappeared to reap. The machines with which they reappeared were most extraordinary. These monsters shelled the peas, sorted them, and deposited them in deep freezes carried in their mechanical entrails. It was altogether an astonishing performance. But what was going to happen to people?

His perception of his own role was clear. He said: "I feel strongly that the man of letters should be intensely aware of the problems which surround him, of which technological and scientific problems are the most urgent. It is his business to communicate his awareness and concern. Literature sets up a vision of man which guides people to a better understanding of themselves and their world."

Up to the end of his life he was still puzzling about how "to put across these massive events, correlated with technological advance, in the penetrating way characteristic of good literature".

After that most extraordinary fire, which destroyed everything he had in such an incredible way, Aldous wrote me: "I am evidently intended to learn, a little in advance of the final denudation, that you can't take it with you."

He took with him our gratitude for the tremendous kicks in the pants he gave us. He was one of the great teachers of our time. He could teach us because he kept on learning himself.

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Gerald Heard

OF all the authors of our time Aldous Huxley had probably the most multi-faceted mind. Science and Art interested him equally. And, beside the Sciences and Arts, his curiosity was aroused by those innumerable quirks and oddities of man, those anomalies of Nature and of Mind which the Sciences and Arts, now that they are self-conscious and organized disciplines, disregard as being insignificant. In this respect Huxley's intellect, though in the main one of the twentieth century, abreast of modern theory and concerned with modern practice, was still akin with the temper of the seventeenth century. For in those sixteen-hundreds—as Alfred North Whitehead was always pointing out—the natural philosophers were only just making their great insights. That is why Whitehead called the seventeenth century the 'century of invention'.

Later he enlarged the sense in which he used that term, saying it was in the sixteen-hundreds that there was made the great and basic find, the discovery which made the scientific thinkers of that century immortal. For their prize was not the discovery of any specific thing or of any particular natural law. It was the discovery of the method whereby discoveries may be made. It was finding out the way to find.

The tempered metal of Huxley's mind was made of that amalgam of curiosity with scepticism. The web of his thinking was shot with doubt as to systems, with their closed 'laws' and sacred canons. His great enthusiasm was for hypotheses and daring speculations. He enjoyed the strange and the anomalous.

This, today, is not academically respectable. The 'surd' (that is, the fact or experience which will not fit into the scientific-mathematical order) is dismissed as an intellectual impertinence, as being 'absurd'. Bacon had declared, "I reject the syllogism." But in the academic orthodoxy of today a new syllogism rules. In "the Halls of Ivy" where faith in "natural laws" holds sway,

the ghost of Scholasticism, not of the Roman Empire, "sits robed and crowned on the grave thereof".

I believe, after a friendship of thirty-two years with Huxley, that here may be found the clue to a feature in his life that, although it was of decisive proportions, most of those equipped and willing to estimate him as an author and a thinker would wish to avoid.

And naturally so. For in the current frame of meaning, Huxley's long and intimate struggle with the obscure issues lumped together under the name of 'religion' make little sense, awake even less sympathy and, indeed, arouse disgust. He often remarked that in modern man's sense of the obscene a reversal had taken place. For while the nude body no longer shocked the public, still less the sophisticate, to bare your soul today, even in private, was to awake revulsion.

Since the one contribution which I can make to these studies of so remarkable a mind is in that field, this particular tribute will therefore deal with Aldous Huxley and the spiritual life.

No discovery is made as a purely intellectual adventure. The emotions (which are the e-motors) must first arouse impulse. And often it is a negative drive that jolts the mind out of its accustomed channel. I think that what may have made the first crack in the polished carapace of Huxley's cynical scepticism was the reaction of emotional negativism of almost every scientific researcher toward the statistical data accumulated through decades of laboratory investigation into extra-sensory perception. Huxley counter-reacted strongly.

I recall listening to a discussion, in the 'twenties, between him and the now Lord Rothschild. Victor Rothschild held that the statistical departure from chance (for example, in the records made of 'card guessing' at the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University) was not sufficient for warranting the assumption that the human mind was exhibiting an unrecognized faculty. Huxley maintained with vigour that the deviation from chance (that is, of more than one in five guesses being maintained as a statistical average over a long series of runs) must indicate the presence and operation of a force other than pure randomness.

"Why", he asked, "have the Life Insurance Companies been able—using such statistical tables—to calculate mortality probabilities so accurately that for two hundred years they have shown a steady and substantial profit?"

But there were working in his mind forces other than impatience with what he felt to be the over-caution of most laboratory scientists. A remarkably open mind is very often associated with a highly sensitive temperament. So often, indeed, that perhaps the price of unusual awareness had to be a painfully acute sense of life's miseries.

Certainly Huxley was vividly aware of the beauty of life and this world, and, even more, the strangeness of it. Often its fantastic confusions seemed to hold him spellbound before their terrible enigma. For a time, during the period of his early writings, he tried, as many of the hyper-sensitively talented do, to stand back from this inexplicable aspect of things. He would remain aloof, unattached or, in his favourite phrase, non-attached; especially in regard to the pains and predicaments of humanity—disasters mainly self-incurred. What could even the wisest man, given unlimited power, do with a race that was always boasting of its freedom and responsibility while behaving less wisely than an animal?

At first, Huxley had felt that he could defend himself against involvement and so be guarded against heartbreak. "What fools these mortals be!" He was fond of a Shakespearean line as a book title and this line could serve as the motto of the group of books which first made him known to the public.

However, his sensitiveness was too keen to allow him disengagement. His grandfather's last admonition (T. H. Huxley's famous Romanes Lecture at Oxford) had been to "Defy" (not desert) "the Cosmic Process!" But how? What 'Kingdom of Righteousness', let alone Utopia, could man build when it must not only be founded on and in a world of chaos but built by a creature that was warped by bestial instincts?

In the end, Huxley drew from the other, the Arnold side of his family and took as his guide the Arnoldian line, "You must be born again". And he began to investigate those many methods

(many, but all with one aim) which answer 'yes' to that most crucial question, "Can human nature be changed?"

He soon recognized that no discipline of conduct or even training of character was enough. The one led to automatism, the other to that bleak pride which is at best tragic and more often ruthless. Nothing less would do but the actual alteration of consciousness itself. The historical record claimed that off and on this had taken place and that on occasion (for example, with such men as Moses, Gautama, Confucius, yes, and in modern times Ignatius Loyola and Wesley) such 'twice-born' men had given those who followed them a new lease on life. William James' famous *Varieties of Religious Experience* had made these ideas and that phrase familiar with the reading public and almost tolerable to psychologists.

With great courage Huxley not only wrote on these issues and recommended study of the various yogas and the Buddhist trainings such as Zen. He also set himself to test out and experiment with these traditional exercises. At the same time, he was thoroughly investigating hypnosis with some of the best medical therapeutic practitioners, studying the many psychosomatic techniques as they developed, enquiring into endocrinological treatments, keeping himself abreast of and getting to know personally the researchers in electro-encephalography (brain-waves, for short) and following carefully the latest reports on the psycho-physical effects of the Limited Environment. The potential value of all these in opening up the deeper-and-higher mind he recognized and commended.

It was not, however, until 1953 that he found at last what for him was a fully effective aid to that total unwavering attention which permits the emergence of the highest quality of comprehensive consciousness, that complete, ego-less awareness of being.

A medical friend had asked him to experiment with mescalin—something he had long wished to do. The effects surpassed his informed expectation. Later, LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) served him even better. His long study of and practice in states of meditation and contemplation had taught him how to avail himself of this perfect instrument, the invaluable use of

which is to banish from the mind those otherwise uncontrollable automatic interruptions of and obstacles to undeviating 'one-pointedness'.

For him, then, LSD was a sacrament, a perfect psycho-physical aid to sustain the mind at its utmost reach. Those who patronized his interest and achievement, as though they were some pathetic failure of nerve, either had never studied this subject or known with any intimacy this student who was as pertinacious as he was daring.

Increasingly, as the consciousness-changing methods and medicaments are explored, it appears that here may be the most efficacious and most liberating of all our present discoveries. And of all the contributions this remarkable mind made to the spirit of his age this last courageous venture may come to be valued as his greatest.

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Harrison Brown*

SO overpowering were the emotions which flowed in the world on November 22, 1963, as the result of the tragic death of President John F. Kennedy, the death of another great man went largely unnoticed. On that same sad day, Aldous Huxley died. He was a quarter of a century older than John Kennedy. He had already made an enormous contribution to society, so his death, in a sense, was less tragic than that of the younger man, who was just beginning to exert a profound influence upon the world. But his death was nevertheless premature, for at age sixty-nine he still had wide-ranging interests and many important thoughts yet to put to paper.

Aldous Huxley and John Kennedy, neither of whom was a scientist, complemented each other in many ways which are important to the scientist. Huxley, observing the rapid and unprecedented transformations in our society which are resulting directly from the tremendous upsurge of science and technology, looked into the future and did not like what he saw. He foresaw disasters which took several forms—war, starvation, total human regimentation. In his novels and essays he attempted to warn us of our ultimate fate. He cajoled us because he believed that only if people were to understand what is likely to happen, would they take the steps necessary to avoid disaster. As he grew older and as that which he had foreseen appeared actually to be happening, only more rapidly than even he had anticipated, he became more pessimistic in the sense that he saw with ever-greater clarity how immediate the dangers were, and how difficult it would be to avert disaster. But he never abandoned the belief that disasters could be averted, and that improvement was possible. He continued to lecture and speak on the

* This essay was given in part as an address at ceremonies commemorating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Microbiology at Rutgers University and the twentieth anniversary of the first clinical use of streptomycin.

perils of over-population and over-regimentation, and in his last important book, *Island*, he gave a remarkable picture of the 'good Utopia' that man might construct if he employed his scientific knowledge in a truly rational and imaginative way. Only a few months before he died, though already gravely ill, he played a leading part in framing a programme on 'Human Possibilities' for the World Academy of Sciences.

John Kennedy appreciated the dangers which had been so lucidly described by Aldous Huxley. During the great crisis of October 1962, when the United States and the Soviet Union came close to all-out war, he appreciated first-hand the dangers of nuclear annihilation which confront the constituent nations of our anarchical world. He appreciated the fact that, with each passing year, there are more hungry people on the earth; and he understood the significance of this for the future course of history. He detested totalitarianism, yet knew that at the time he took his oath of office more people than ever before in history were living under authoritarian control. Yet, he believed that these problems were politically, socially and technically soluble, and he dedicated himself to their solution. He recognized that science and technology were at the roots of many of humanity's ills as well as her achievements. But he also believed that science and technology, properly applied, could help create a world of abundance, of human well-being and of freedom.

Three of Aldous Huxley's writings had particular influence upon my own views concerning man's destiny: *Brave New World*, which was written in 1931 and which I first read in 1934 during my first year in university; *Ends and Means*, which I read as a graduate student while Hitler's mechanized battalions were sweeping over the plains of Poland; *Science*, *Liberty and Peace*, which I read in 1946 after having spent the greater part of the war helping to create the first nuclear explosives.

After more than thirty years, *Brave New World*, which was written before the horrors of the Nazi regime and before Stalin had reached full stride in his efforts to regiment Soviet society, seems in a ghastly way marvellously prophetic. Admittedly, by today's standards, the 'Nine Years War', which

eventually led to the emergence of the *Brave New World*, was both unseemingly long and rather pallid, particularly when we consider that it does not take place until about 2080.

"The noise of fourteen thousand aeroplanes advancing in open order. But in the Kurfürstendamm and the Eighth Arrondissement, the explosion of the anthrax bombs is hardly louder than the popping of a paper bag." Or "TNT plus mercury fulminate equals well, what? An enormous hole in the ground, a pile of masonry, some bits of flesh and mucus, a foot, with the boot still on it, flying through the air and landing, flop, in the middle of the geraniums—the scarlet ones; such a splendid show that summer!"

Our progress in the technology of war has clearly been considerably more rapid than Aldous Huxley anticipated. Likewise, changes in our society leading toward regimentation have taken place more rapidly than he expected. In 1958 he wrote:

> In 1931, when *Brave New World* was being written, I was convinced that there was still plenty of time . . . these things were coming all right, but not in my time, not even in the time of my grandchildren.

Then he adds,

> The prophecies . . . are coming true much sooner than I thought they would. . . . The nightmare of total organization has emerged from the safe, remote future and is now awaiting us, just around the corner. Impersonal forces, over which we have almost no control, are pushing us towards that nightmare.

Those who have read *Brave New World* in their youth have little difficulty remembering the contents: the scientifically arranged caste system, the abolition of history, the eradication of culture, the abolition of free will by methodical Pavlovian conditioning, the regular doses of chemically induced happiness, the establishment of beliefs using sleep teaching, the controlled genetics, the bokanovskification of eggs to produce "standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons", the abolition

of religion and love, the ever-present Malthusian belt. Yet, since the book was written, the world has seen book-burning, large-scale eradication or rewriting of history and massive attempts to inject orthodoxies into entire populations using the most effective known tools of persuasion and coercion. We have seen tremendous advances in our understanding of genetics. We have seen religion abolished. New and improved forms of chemicals for inducing happiness appear with increasing frequency.

In *Ends and Means*, Huxley worries again about the planned society. "Our world is in a bad way, and it looks as though it would be impossible to rescue it from its present plight, much less improve it, except by deliberate planning. . . . Meanwhile, however, it is quite certain, because observably a fact, that in the process of trying to save our world or part of it from its present confusion, we run the risk of planning it into the likeness of hell and ultimately into complete destruction. There are cures which are worse than disease."

In these lines he expresses a major dilemma which concerned him for many years. If we don't look ahead, if we don't plan, we may be doomed. If we do engage in massive social planning we may well be doomed anyway, only in a different way. During these middle years he very much doubted that social planning and democracy were compatible, and believed that planning would lead to increased centralization of power, which would lead in turn to totalitarianism. He further believed that an increased probability of war was inevitably associated with the centralization of power.

In *Science, Liberty and Peace*, written immediately after World War II, Aldous Huxley returns again to the theme of totalitarianism. He fears that as a reaction to too little order in the world, particularly with nuclear weapons hanging over our heads, we will emerge with too much order—by which he means the authoritarian state. He points out that our science and our technology have placed in the hands of rulers of nations weapons of persuasion and coercion of unprecedented power, and that as a result totalitarian regimes can no longer be overthrown—provided, of course, that those weapons are used. The traditional revolt using sticks and stones and muskets is

no longer possible. The road toward totalitarianism is now a one-way street.

Later, Huxley became terribly concerned about another manifestation of change brought about by scientific and technological developments—the frightening rapid increase of world population. We are confronted by the fact that not only is the world population increasing rapidly—the *rate* of increase is increasing rapidly as well. He lists this as a major factor leading to a diminution of individual human freedom.

We must recognize that today, as a result of the injection of science and technology into our culture on a massive scale, change is taking place in the world more rapidly than ever before in history. This rapid change can lead to disaster, and in this sense I share Aldous Huxley's concern. I can easily visualize the destruction of civilization. I can just as easily visualize the replacement of too little order by too much—the emergence of a Brave New World.

Yet, at the same time, I share John F. Kennedy's optimism. We have it in our power to create the kind of world that most of us would like to see. Thus far in our history science and technology have been injected into our society in a rather haphazard manner, guided largely by the rather obvious motives of winning wars, living longer and making money. But we who are scientists know that if science and technology are properly channelled, birth-rates can be lowered, starvation can be eliminated in the world, and resources can be developed to the point where virtually all major regions of the world can be self-sufficient. Mankind's powers are vast. Our main difficulty is that we don't really recognize this fact. If we are optimists, we believe that if we let nature take its course, the affairs of the world will work themselves out satisfactorily. If we are pessimists we believe that nothing we do as individuals will prevent the final great calamity.

The destinies of our ancestors were greatly affected by technological developments, but our ancestors did not recognize that fact. So slow were the developments, ways of life did not change perceptibly from one generation to the next. The leaders in ancient times had only to examine the technological status

quo. They could accept the level of technology as it existed at that time, confident that their grandchildren would live in the same technological environment as had their own grandfathers. To be sure, technological change played a major role in the eventual extinction of some peoples and cultures and in the rise of power of others. But the pace of development was so slow that no individual could really be blamed for failure to look into the future.

Today, of course, the situation is quite different. Our technological environment is changing very rapidly, and every such change must be taken into account when we make decisions which affect the future of our nation and of mankind.

During the thousands of years when most men were farmers and when, as a consequence, most leaders of nations were more or less directly familiar with farming problems there was no real immediate need for special farming advisors who would warn about future developments and make suggestions as to long-range policy. But today we are confronted by an entirely different situation. Whether we like it or not, our future is being determined in large measure by scientific and technological developments. It is imperative, under the circumstances, that governmental and intergovernmental decisions be made in the light of a full understanding of the situation. I do not mean to imply that *only* scientific and technological developments and decisions are involved. Obviously the social and political problems loom as large as they ever have throughout mankind's history. I am stressing that a new and rapidly increasing component has been added to the system and that it is essential that political decisions be made taking that component fully into account. This means, of course, that the scientifically and technically trained person must be consulted and indeed often made a part of the decision-making process.

To put it bluntly—lawyers, politicians, diplomats and generals are no longer able to run the international aspects of the affairs of state by themselves. In this period of rapid technological change and scientific advance there must be a substantial technological input into decision-making, and a fuller awareness among decision-makers of the new picture and new framework

of ideas about nature, and man's place and role in it, which science is giving us. But gradually corrective actions are being taken. Indeed, we have come a long distance since that day in 1940 when representatives of the United States Navy were approached by some physicists from Columbia University and informed of the possibilities of nuclear fission, which had just been discovered. The Navy declined to investigate the matter further on the grounds that the idea was simply too far-fetched.

We now have in the United States a Science Advisor to the President, and one to the Secretary of State. Scientists head the Atomic Energy Commission, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. There are Science Advisors in the departments of Defence, Interior and Commerce and in the Agency for International Development.

It is absolutely clear that science and technology are here to stay as an important part of government, with particular reference to our relations with other nations. This raises serious problems concerning our training of the kinds of men who must be called upon to make decisions in the years ahead.

We are suffering from the fact that we are living in an age of specialization—yet our decisions require the wisdom which is associated with broad knowledge. Intellectual robots simply cannot be entrusted to solve the life-and-death problems which confront us today—whether they be legal robots, political robots or scientific or engineering robots.

Our scientists and engineers must be given considerably broader training in the non-scientific aspects of life and history than we have thus far given them. I am not asking that they know everything about everything. But I do ask that our educational system instil in them a curiosity and an awareness concerning the political and social nature of the human world about them and concerning the sweep of history. I also ask that we instil in those persons who are not going to be scientists or engineers a curiosity and an awareness concerning the world of nature. They should know something about what science is, how it operates, and the effect it is having upon human destiny.

Today we have it in our power to understand the world about us and to transform it into one in which all people can lead free,

abundant and useful lives. But we cannot make use of that power unless we have persons with the vision and breadth of knowledge to do the job, who will accept both Aldous Huxley's specific warnings and his general pleas for fuller awareness of human possibilities, bad as well as good, but who will also share the late President Kennedy's conviction that our problems are soluble.

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Humphry Osmond

IT is eleven years now since I made that improbable journey to Hollywood. I was working in a mental hospital on the Canadian Prairies aver 2,000 miles away. Although I had kept a copy of Aldous Huxley's splendid anthology *Texts and Pretexts* by me during the London blitz, on Atlantic convoys in a destroyer escort, and it still goes with me on my wanderings, I had never expected to meet its formidable author. Indeed, had I thought about it, I would have doubted whether we would have much in common, for then as now, my main interest and preoccupation was the care, treatment and betterment of patients suffering from schizophrenia.

Dr John Smythies and I had collaborated in a piece for the *Hibbert Journal* on the present state of psychological medicine. Aldous read it; enjoyed it; and sent us a characteristically friendly and encouraging letter written in his bold black hand that sloped slightly across the paper. He added that he hoped we would visit him when we were next in California. Neither John nor I were sufficiently acclimatized to North America to feel that 2,000-3,000 miles was no particular barrier to meeting; that was before the jet plane had eroded our spatial sense entirely.

However within about a month of that first letter I was on my way to California to be the guest of Aldous and Maria Huxley. I had been sent quite unexpectedly to attend the American Psychiatric Association meeting then being held in Los Angeles. I remember feeling both a little embarrassed and proud when I said that I would not need an hotel because I should be staying with them.

Maria told me how it came about. One morning at breakfast, Aldous looked up from his mail and said, "Let's ask this fellow Osmond to stay." Maria was surprised because Aldous rarely suggested asking anyone to stay and she had never heard of "this fellow". Aldous enlightened her, "He's a Canadian

psychiatrist who works with mescalin." Maria replied, "But he may have a beard and we may not like him." Aldous thought for a bit, and said, "If we don't like him we can always be out." Maria did not feel this was a good solution. However, Aldous's invitation indicated that, although I would be very welcome to stay, the nature of his work made it necessary for both of them to be out a great deal. I was intrigued, especially since he stated that he was interested in our work and might even become a subject if that were possible. I was also apprehensive, but my wife pointed out, "It will only be for a few days, and you can always be kept late by an A.P.A. session".

The invitation was an honour and an opportunity. I was most curious to meet this notable man whose ideas I had criticized from a safe distance, but I am not a literary person and found the prospect daunting. I reached the Huxleys' home on Kings Road not far from Sunset Boulevard, tired and worried. I had not been able to find out about the rules of bringing mescalin into the United States. When I discovered them some years later I realized I had reason to be concerned. I also felt shy and awkward; I doubted whether I could sustain the sort of talk to which I supposed the Huxleys were used.

Maria put me at ease immediately. She was not at all formidable. On her part, she was relieved that I was beardless. She said: "I knew that you and Aldous, being Englishmen, would get along well." To Maria, Englishmen were largely incomprehensible except to each other.

Aldous glided towards me from the cool darkness of the house into the sunshine of the front porch. He seemed to be suspended a fraction of an inch above the ground like one of Blake's allegorical figures. He was very tall. His head was massive, finely shaped, with a splendid brow. His gaze, from his better eye, was keen and piercing, but seemed to be focussed a little above and beyond me. His handshake was sketchy and uncertain, as if he did not enjoy the custom, and this was indeed so, for the thin-skinned, lightly built, slender people whom Sheldon calls cerebrotonic do not relish physical contact overmuch. His voice was clear and beautifully modulated with a penetrating, almost birdlike, quality of which I became fully aware a few

days later at the A.P.A. meeting. We were standing in the foyer outside the main hall when Aldous's voice cut through the hubbub like a knife-blade, "But Humphry, how incredible it is in a Marxist country like this . . .". It was 1953 at the height of the McCarthy era. Marxist was a diabolical word in the city of the angels.

What impressed me from the start and continued to do so through the years of our friendship was the kindness and tolerance of this man, whose writings had sometimes led me to suppose that he would be disillusioned, cynical and even savage.

It took some time to understand that Bertie meant Bertrand Russell, that Tom Eliot was T. S. Eliot, and Lawrence was, of course, D.H. Maria told me that when she was typing the manuscript of *Lady Chatterley*, Lawrence came to her one day distressed and embarrassed, he blurted out, "Maria, you must never use that word again." Maria asked what this forbidden word might be and Lawrence with reluctance spoke the now familiar four-letter word. "But Lawrence," she protested, "you're always using it in *Lady Chatterley*. Besides it is a very good word." Lawrence explained gently that she must no longer use the word because "It would shock Aldous. It is not a good word at all, and anyway it would never do." Maria was puzzled because Aldous had not seemed in the least distressed by the word, but since Lawrence clearly was, she stopped using it. They both always spoke very warmly of Lawrence.

I had expected Aldous to be well informed, but from the first meeting to our final one in Stockholm last year, I never ceased to be astounded and delighted by the range, boldness, flexibility and sheer playfulness of his splendid mind. When he was at ease he would toss ideas about with the grace, elegance and sense of fun that a trained dolphin has playing with a ball. Whether we were at a scientific meeting, sight-seeing in New York, visiting the great burying-ground of Forest Lawns, walking on the Surrey Commons which he loved so much, bowling along the Mohave desert, threading our way towards the Athenaeum where, he said, "You can hardly hear yourself think for the whine of political, academic and ecclesiastical axes being ground", or on a shopping expedition to Ohrbach's, Aldous would be dis-

cussing both serious and trivial matters with his immense fund of expert knowledge. He loved a good gossip, on every variety of subject—the latest scientific discovery, theological principles, books, paintings, new developments in sewage treatment, Utopias, the water-supply system of Los Angeles (a particular favourite of his), the effect of mass-produced clothing on social and political systems, parapsychology, or the future of megalopolis—always provided that it gave him occasion to reflect and comment upon the infinite strangeness of life. Although he was very well informed he was always learning more, and the best tribute one could get was his delighted, "How absolutely incredible!"

Those who did not know him, or were not well acquainted with the particular subject he was discussing, might be misled into supposing that his knowledge was superficial, for he wore his great learning lightly and was never pompous. He looked upon himself as an educated man doing his best to keep up with the times in which he lived, and thought it was natural that he should do so. I think he was well aware that he was immensely intelligent and gifted, but he did not consider this something for pride or conceit. What he was proud of was that he could earn his living by his pen, an occupation which he enjoyed and for which he had a craftsman's love and concern. He looked upon himself as a writer who should be able to communicate with all kinds of people, not only the sophisticated or the erudite. He never felt it beneath him to write for the films or popular magazines. At one time he was planning to turn *Brave New World* into a musical because he thought its ideas would get across better that way. He wrote for *Playboy* and *Daedalus*, for *Life* and *Encounter*, and considered they were equally acceptable channels of communicating with people. He wrote to and enjoyed meeting interesting men and women everywhere and seemed equally at home with sages, scientists, millionaires, gurus, playwrights and administrators as with the crankiest and oddest people. And they all seemed to find enormous enjoyment in his critical, detached, wise, yet kindly and enthusiastic intelligence.

I took Aldous to one of the main sessions of the conference.

He sat there paying the keenest attention, crossing himself devoutly every time Freud's name was mentioned. In *Brave New World*, the Saviour was called 'Our Ford', or as certain people for some unexplained reason preferred to call him, 'Our Freud'. Here was a congregation, including many pious Freudians, so Aldous was kept busy. Luckily my psychiatric colleagues were so absorbed by the incantations that no one noticed him.

When the meeting ended, mescalin came up, for I had admitted bringing some with me. Maria assured me that Aldous was looking forward to taking it, for she had guessed correctly that 'you Englishmen' had avoided discussing the matter. Their family doctor was not opposed. He had no liver disease. In spite of remarks that I sometimes heard about 'unfortunate mystical trends in his later years', I found him, both then and subsequently, shrewd, matter-of-fact and to the point; but of course the history of mysticism, in spite of popular notions to the contrary, concerns large numbers of practical, hard-headed and socially effective people.

Aldous had got a dictaphone for the occasion. I could see no decent way out and we agreed to do the experiment. I had a restless night. Next morning, as I stirred the water and watched the silvery white mescalin crystals swirling down and dissolving with a slightly oily slick, I wondered whether it would be enough or too much. It was a delicious May morning in Hollywood, no hint of smog to make the eyes smart, not too hot. Yet I was uneasy. Aldous and Maria would be sad if it did not work, but what if it worked too well? Should I cut the dose in half? The setting could hardly have been better, Aldous seemed an ideal subject, Maria eminently sensible, and we had all taken to each other, which was very important for a good experience; but I did not relish the possibility, however remote, of being the man who drove Aldous Huxley mad. My fears were groundless. The bitter chemical did not work as quickly as Aldous had rather impatiently expected. It slowly etched away the patina of conceptual thinking; the doors of perception were cleansed, and Aldous perceived things with less interference from his enormous rationalizing brain. Within two and a half hours I could see that it was acting and after three I knew that all would do

well. Aldous and Maria were greatly pleased. So was I, as well as being much relieved.

Three days later I flew back to Canada to find the prairies gripped in a late blizzard. I had enjoyed myself and looked forward to Aldous's report, which he worked up into a widely known book—*The Doors of Perception.* From then on we usually saw each other at least once a year and were always writing. I have by me now his last letter, written on October 15, 1963. He was discussing the outline of a study of human potential upon which we were jointly engaged. It is characteristic of him. ... "But being like the old man of Thermopylae who never does anything properly I can't lay my hands on the carbon of it." The letter ends, "I feel I shall never again be good for anything, but I hope and think this state of affairs will pass in due course (it will pass—the only motto good for every human situation, good or bad)."

Aldous was keenly interested in the relationship between physique and temperament and was a close friend of Dr William Sheldon, one of the notable pioneers in this field. Through him I got to know Sheldon, who told me that Aldous was one of the very few people who really understood what he was getting at. On one of our shopping expeditions in Orbachs, Los Angeles, Aldous introduced me to the art of escalator somatotyping. People on escalators are unselfconscious, unaware of scrutiny and at their ease. As we were wafted by them passing in the opposite direction, Aldous would call out, "Humphry, did you see that marvellously somatotonic woman with the Aztec features?" He himself illustrated the limitations imposed by constitution on even the liveliest imagination when he said, "You know, I can't imagine what it would be like to be Joe Louis." I had assumed that with his deep understanding of temperament he would have had little difficulty in entering the great boxer's world. This is a world in which everything focusses upon those few highly ritualized and timeless moments in the ring; moments of truth for which a great boxer lives and during which he is truly alive. But to Aldous, lightly boned, poorly muscled, linear, slender and cerebrotonic, with his sensitivity to pain and awareness of the possibility of injury,

that anyone could possibly enjoy watching or participating in this bone-smashing, brain-jarring combat, with its bruising impact of bodies, seemed incomprehensible.

Not long after my second visit to Los Angeles Maria died. Knowing that her time was short, she told me how worried she was about Aldous; but in the event he proved more resourceful and adaptable than she and most of his friends had expected.

He introduced me to many people to whom he thought our work would be interesting and from these introductions there have been many developments. For instance, that which he gave me to Mrs Eileen Garrett has resulted in a variety of studies relating parapsychology and psychopharmacology. And from this again there have been exciting new developments in hypnosis, a favourite subject of Aldous's. And with his brother Julian, my colleague Professor Abram Hoffer and I have been exploring some of the genetic advantages of being schizophrenic. In our work with psychedelics (mind-manifesting or mind-revealing substances) Aldous advocated a cautious boldness, advising the explorers to do good stealthily, and to avoid publicity. Unfortunately his counsel was not always taken.

When we met in New York he usually dashed into a gallery, and flitted from picture to picture peering through his little spyglass, and always seeing things which I, with my much better sight, had never observed.

It was when he was writing *Island* that I learnt about the cancer that was to kill him. That was in November 1960, the day of the Presidential election, and I had flown up to see him in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was lecturing. He looked worn, tired, and pale. He told me that he had had a cancer of the tongue, but that his doctor thought it had a good chance of responding to treatment with radium needles. He had considered surgery, but learning that it would almost certainly interfere with his speech, had decided against it. He asked me not to discuss this with other members of his family because they would worry and it would not help him. He then dismissed the matter and read me the chapter from *Island* dealing with the Moksa medicine, the use of psychedelics for helping people prepare themselves to change in a changing world, teaching them how

to learn to change for the better and how to prepare themselves for dying. It is packed with his finest ideas, which will repay much study and consideration, and which have still to be fully appreciated.

Early in 1961, he and Laura lost their new home in a furious brush fire, and all his possessions, including his books and papers, were burned. It was a sort of death, a stripping away of everything. As he said later, "I took it as a sign that the grim reaper was having a good look at me." Yet he weathered this too, and on his visits to England in 1961 and 1962, although lath-thin, so that you felt a gust of wind would blow him away, he was wonderfully lively.

Only a year before he died he stood outside the house where he was born in Charterhouse School in Surrey, and was touched and surprised that the present owner recognized him and invited him in. He found it hard to be a public figure and to take himself seriously as a great man. He told me it was uncomfortable being eulogized because he either felt like laughing or looking round to get a glimpse of the admirable person for whom the nice speeches were being made. He did, however, enjoy his reception in Rio de Janeiro, where every day of his stay one of the papers had a column headed *O Sabio—The Sage*. "It is the only place in the world where anyone wants to read a literary gent's opinion about things in general day after day." While he found Brasilia tiring and rather inhuman, the high point of this visit was his flight up the Amazon to see a tribe of stone age Indians. He was welcomed by one of the splendid anthropologist officers of the Indian Service, who hearing the name Huxley asked, "Sir Julian?", and on being told, "No, Aldous," burst into tears of joy. I think he esteemed no tribute higher than this one.

Last August in Stockholm at the World Academy, he was transparently pale and had been unsure whether he could come at all. The cancer had returned but had been beaten back again for the while. Yet he worked zealously to persuade members of the Academy to study human potential. Having succeeded, he set to and prepared an outline. I sat with him while he was completing this in his hotel room. He was engrossed in his task.

Watching him I felt that I might never see him again, and so took some pictures of the master craftsman at work. For that deceptively easy conversational style was never accomplished without much careful revision. He told me that it was no easier to write now than it had been twenty-five years ago. He knew of no short-cuts to good writing except repeated rewriting. I was uneasy when we parted, but tried to ignore my misgivings. He was to visit me in Princeton during October, which was only two months away. And in our last few minutes together, we were discussing who should be invited to participate in the new work. But when October came he was too ill to travel. The borrowed time gained by x-ray treatment had run out and soon my dear friend, the wise and gentle triphibian, for that was his own definition of man, was no more.

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Max Cutler

THE reader of these recollections will quite naturally wonder why I, a surgeon, a specialist, a practical individual, should be writing about a literary man, a man whose gift was to write about things in general or about people who were either creations of his imagination or men whose inner life he interpreted. What am I doing among these other contributors, nearly all of whom are themselves authors or artists or philosophers? I hope that what I am going to say about Aldous Huxley, as I recall my relationship with him, will provide an answer to these questions.

Most of us have learned by the time we are mature that friendship is not so much a matter of time. Liking is made by long acquaintance. But deep friendship much more resembles a sudden biological mutation. Whether or not there can be love at first sight there is no doubt that strong friendship can be precipitated almost instantly. For what is friendship? It has three ingredients (if I may paraphrase my friend Gerald Heard): admiration, companionship, confidence.

I had long felt admiration for Aldous Huxley. Even my limited acquaintance with his work revealed a mind with an endless range of interest. There seemed to be almost nothing about which he could not be curious. Yet it was equally apparent that on that vast circumference of 360 degrees through which his mind swept, there were sectors of particular concern. For instance, health and the whole issue of medicine was surely one of his chief areas of investigation. This was to provide an instant intellectual companionship for us. And the third ingredient, confidence, we both felt at once on the occasion of our first meeting. So was our friendship begun and on such a basis it could not but grow.

People who know I was his doctor frequently ask me how Aldous faced death. He faced it as he faced life: with dignity and courage.

There is a time in a fatal illness when the shadow of death clouds every meeting of doctor and patient. It is no longer a question of how long but how soon. The doctor has done everything professionally possible and now his concern can only be for the comfort and morale of his patient.

I still remember Aldous Huxley, on the day before he died, saying to me in that wonderfully mellow voice, "The universe of the sick is so different from the universe of the well." It was typical of him: there was no bitterness in his observations, only the dispassionate objectivity of the scientist. We talked for a while of the nature of cancer—the disease that was to end his life within hours—but there was no trace of self-pity on his part, or sympathy on mine. Ours was a conversation between two scientists. Although he was a layman, Aldous had an incredible fund of medical knowledge.

That visit with him, like all my others over a period of three years, was stimulating and challenging. Although I was the doctor, it was he who kept up my morale and that of his wife, Laura.

Throughout his long illness he was convinced that science—the pure art which was so much a part of his life—would keep him alive at least long enough to write one more novel. Only once did he admit to himself or to his wife that there was a chance he might die. On that last morning he said to Laura, "If I should die . . ." and he dictated a minor change in his will.

It must be remembered that his was not always an easy life. But he took ailments in his stride as well as with humour. He had no vision in one eye and from the age of twenty-three had only partial vision in the other. Nevertheless, he got around remarkably well and read without glasses when he was in the proper light. It was only when he was in poor light that he used a reading-glass. Last year he visited our ranch in Beaumont, California, where he met my family, including my fourteen-year-old daughter, Nancy, who must wear glasses. Aldous was concerned over the plight of a pretty young child with poor vision. Later in the evening he took Nancy aside to show her a trick he had developed of cutting a slot in paper and reading words through it. He promised that when he had time he would

send her one of his own 'reading guides'. It arrived a few days later.

I first met Aldous in 1954, when I was called in as a consultant for his first wife, who had breast cancer. He wanted to know if I thought it wise for them to take a trip to Europe. I recommended it, because the cancer had spread too far to be stopped. Mrs Huxley died soon after the trip, but the pleasures of the tour made their last months together happy instead of tragic.

It was some years later before I heard from Aldous again. He had remarried. In 1960 his wife, Laura, telephoned to say that Aldous had been in a hospital for tests and observation. A diagnosis of cancer of the tongue had been made and radical surgery was recommended. Aldous immediately packed and left the hospital. "I will not consider this type of extensive and mutilating surgery," he said. "Isn't there something else that can be done?"

At a meeting in my office he said that he and his wife were opposed to surgery, which meant an unsightly mutilation, including removal of half the tongue, and would have made speech extremely difficult. There was only one alternative: the use of radium.

During my visits with him at the hospital, I began to discover what a remarkable man he was. His interest in his own case was minimal, but he had a tremendous interest in the creative aspects of science and medicine. He considered his own illness as a curious phenomenon which extended his own capacity for experience. We never discussed the possibility of his death, because at that time it was remote, but I know that he considered death as meaningless; it was life that was meaningful to him and life should be lived to its fullest.

Although I had read many of his books since our first meeting, and considered him a scientist, I now began to think of him instead as being a humanist—one for whom the proper study of mankind is man. His knowledge of the human aspects of medicine put me to shame. Although his vision was poor, he had managed to read innumerable volumes on medicine and his knowledge of the creative people in medicine was astounding.

The tongue healed completely, but within a year and a half

it was necessary for me to remove a cancerous gland from Aldous' neck for diagnosis. Other glands appeared soon afterwards.

I told Aldous that there was more cancer. He was not alarmed. Instead he led the discussion round to a theory that we had discussed many times: that the body has its own remarkable capacity to destroy cancer cells. "Cancer isn't always the winner," he said. "Perhaps my body is building up its own resistance. If it isn't, there isn't much we can do about it, is there?"

Again we were discussing his own medical problems impersonally and objectively. At about this time he and Laura decided to go on a trip to Europe to see his brother Julian, and to give a series of lectures. When he returned, Aldous was a happy though weak man. The disease was beginning to tire him, but our talks about the nature of the cancer process had solidified in his mind our thesis that the body wins out far more often than we realize and that there is always a chance.

His understanding of the medical as well as human value of such a concept added much to his own morale. I asked him to put his thinking into words for the purpose of a book I am writing on this subject. Although he was becoming progressively weaker and work was more difficult, Aldous was delighted at this suggestion. It was my own, not too subtle attempt at boosting his morale and I know he saw through it. But he felt that the theory was valid (as recent studies have since proved) and he approached the task with such enthusiasm and scientific curiosity that many of our last visits together we spent discussing cancer in general terms.

Never during the difficult days of his illness did he question me too closely concerning his own case. I felt he considered his sickness with the same detachment that he reserved for personal experiments with LSD and mescalin. He observed, noted and reported, but always objectively.

During his last weeks the only complaint he voiced was over the weakness that kept him from working as much as he wanted. He worked in his pyjamas and wrote sitting at a typewriter as long as possible. Then, when he felt too weak to sit up, he would lie in bed and write in large block letters on a yellow folio

pad. If he felt too weak for writing he would dictate into a tape-recorder that stood by his bed.

He was confident that he was going to get well—that science would triumph in the end, as he felt it must. I am sure that in spite of my great efforts not to show concern about him, there must have been times when he sensed my worry. It was then that his true mettle became most apparent. He would ask me question after question about my work and cases, forestalling any attempt on my part to discuss his own condition. He made every effort to keep me from being despondent over the little that could be done for him.

This experience makes me recall an inscription which appears over the doorway of one of the oldest cancer hospitals in England. It reads, "To cure sometimes, to alleviate often, to comfort always."

Finally, there came a day when I felt he had to be hospitalized. He was willing to go to the hospital with one condition: there was to be no publicity. He entered the hospital under an assumed name and was, as always, the perfect patient. The cancer had spread too far. After a brief stay in the hospital he returned home and to his work. The disastrous Hollywood fire of 1961 had burned Aldous and Laura out of their home; his priceless manuscripts had been destroyed along with his souvenirs of a lifetime. They were staying with a friend, Mrs Pfeiffer. Aldous had a bedroom where he worked and slept. It was typical of the gentleman he was that on the final evening one of the last things he said to Laura was, "We can't impose on Jinny any longer. We must leave here." The next day he took a turn for the worse. I was in Beaumont at the time, listening to radio reports of the assassination of President Kennedy. When I received a call from Laura that Aldous was failing I sped back to Beverly Hills, where I joined two of my associates at his bedside.

Many years ago I was asked to see a patient in consultation. The patient was a beautiful young woman in her late thirties, the mother of three children. A breast cancer for which she had undergone surgery some years before had spread to her lungs and the condition was incurable. The patient's family doctor,

in whose offices the consultation was held, had been one of my favourite teachers in the Johns Hopkins Medical School.

As I walked back into the consulting room I said to Dr Hamburger, "What in the world are we going to say to this lovely lady and her husband? How do you handle these tragic problems?" I was seeking advice and guidance. "When I encounter these tragic situations," he said, "I often think of the saying in the Bible, 'Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father'."

One day I told this story to Aldous. Aldous re-phrased the quotation by adding the word 'only' after 'the Father'. I blurted out, "But Aldous, you just can't change the Bible." "Oh, you can't, eh?" he said, "Well, Max, they won't boil you in oil."

This was typical of Aldous. And so the revised version stands in Aldous's preface for my book on Cancer, written by him when he was dying of the disease: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *only*."

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Aldous Huxley in his and the early twenties

Jacob Israel Zeitlin*

WHILE I have proposed 'Aldous Huxley and the Arts' as my subject, most of what I shall refer to are his writings on the arts of painting and etching. Notwithstanding this, I cannot bring myself to label my discussion with such narrow terms. The arts were not separate entities in his considerations. They were the intertwined expression of the spirit and history of man.

The bibliography of Eschelbach and Shober lists forty-two separate essays by Aldous Huxley which one can definitely recognize as dealing with art. They are as varied as was his untrammelled curiosity: *Art & The Obvious; B. R. Haydon; Jacques Callot; Breughel; Decorating Walls with Maps; Toulouse Lautrec's Dictionary Doodles; Edward Lear; Holland, The Geometric; Marie Laurencin; El Greco; The Mind of Leonardo Da Vinci; Sir Christopher Wren; Goya; 'The Prisons'* (of Piranesi)*; The Hanging of Pictures*. This is a sampling.

In these writings there are ample proofs of his ability to apply the apparatus of the *Kunstforscher*, the specialist art analyst, to his subjects. Let us consider two passages in *After Many a Summer*, in which he proves his capacity to use the yardsticks of the trade. "... The light came on, revealing a Dutch lady in blue satin sitting at a harpischord—sitting, Jeremy reflected, at the very heart of an equation, in a world where beauty and logic, painting and analytical geometry, had become one ..." "The young lady in satin still occupied her position of equilibrium in a perfectly calculated universe. The distance of her left eye from the left side of the picture was to its distance from the right eye as one is to the square root of two minus one; and the distance of the same eye from the bottom of the picture was equal to its distance from the left side. As for the knot of ribbons on her right shoulder—that was precisely at the corner of an imaginary square with the sides equal to the longer of the two golden sections into which the base of the picture was divisible. A deep

* One of a number of addresses at a Memorial Meeting in the University of California, Los Angeles, February 27th 1964.

fold in the satin skirt indicated the position of the right side of this square, and the lid of the harpsichord marked the top. The tapestry in the upper right-hand corner stretched exactly one-third of the way across the picture and had its lower edge at a height equal to the base. Pushed forward by the browns and dusky ochres of the background, the blue satin encountered the black-and-white marble slabs of the floor and was pushed back, to be held suspended in mid picture-space, like a piece of steel between two magnets of opposite sign. Within the frame nothing could have been different; the stillness of that world was not the mere immobility of old paint and canvas; it was also the spirited repose of *consummated perfection*." We need not be told that he is speaking of an imaginary Vermeer; he is in fact speaking of the essence of all Vermeers.

Elsewhere I have had occasion to speak of his limited vision. In spite of that he could sweep his eyes over the largest fresco or the most minute etching and capture their slightest detail. Laura Huxley tells me that he often surprised her by noticing such small things as the necklace or earrings she was wearing. She observed that much depended on the light.

Some of his finest flights on art are to be found as incidental passages in his novels and biographies. Let me quote from the absolutely Olympian take-off on how Rubens might have painted Richelieu being treated for haemorrhoids in the otherwise deeply serious *Grey Eminence*:

"Robed in great cataracts of red silk, Richelieu kneels in the right foreground and rolls up his dark impassive eyes towards a heaven in which, in the top left-hand corner and at an altitude of about two hundred and fifty feet, the Holy Trinity and the Virgin look down from their soft cloud, considerably foreshortened, but with an expression of the liveliest benevolence. Poised only a foot or two above the Cardinal's head, St Fiacre descends, much bearded and in the ragged homespun appropriate to anchorites. One hand is raised in benediction and in the crook of his other arm, he carries his emblems—a slice of Brie cheese, a shillelagh and a miniature four-wheeler. From aloft, he is followed by a squadron of cherubs, nose-diving and banking above a delightful landscape where, in the distance, the siege

of La Rochelle is in full swing. Immediately above and behind the Cardinal, Louis XIII stands at the head of a flight of steps, his left hand on his hip, his right supported by a long malacca cane. Trailing pink draperies, Victory hovers over him, while the livid form of Heresy grovels in the middle distance. At the bottom of the canvas, immediately below the Trinity and a plane or two behind the nearest foreground, we see a group consisting of Father Joseph at prayer, Sacred Theology in blue and white satin and, representing Literae Humaniores, a young woman from Antwerp, with no clothes on, pointing at a marble slab, upon which we read a Latin inscription alluding to the foundation of the Académie Française.... But, alas, this splendid work was never painted; the bones of St Fiacre were taken back to Meaux and the unhappy Cardinal continued to suffer the tortures of the damned."

In the same book we find his painfully realistic treatment of Callot's *Miseries of War:* ". . . Decorously, impassibly, with a meticulous care for detail and a steady preoccupation with formal elegance, he sets before us, first the handsome preliminaries to a campaign—the troops in parade-ground order under their standards—then the campaign itself—battles between opposing armies and, at greater length and in more detail, the sufferings of the civil population at the hands of marauding soldiers, the ferocious attempts of their commanders to enforce discipline. From etching to etching we follow the artist's record of pillage, murder, arson, rape, torture and execution. The little figures in their slouched hats, their baggy pantaloons, their high boots turned back below the knee in a loose, wide cuff of leather stand there frozen in the midst of the most atrocious activity, but always (thanks to Callot's supremely unexpressionistic manner) with the air of dancers holding a pose in a ballet. In one plate it is an inn that is being robbed. In another, the soldiers have turned highwaymen. A third shows the hall of a great house; half a dozen of the ruffians are breaking open the chests and closets, and in the background, another holds down a lady, while his companion, without troubling to remove his hat, prepares to violate her; to the right a group is standing around a bonfire made of broken furniture, above which the master of

the house has been hung head downwards from a hook in the ceiling, while a son, perhaps, or a too faithful servant sits on the floor, tightly bound, his feet roasting in the flames and the swords of his tormentors at his back. It is horrible; but the horror is sterilized by Callot's style into the choreographic symbol of horror."

Out of this almost impersonal description there emerges pity; pity and disgust at the brutalization of men which war produces and men transmit to one another. This is art criticism at its highest level, where history and philosophy mingle to produce poetry.

In *The Doors of Perception* Huxley speaks of the problem of transcending our individual isolated universes. He makes us aware that it is by the symbols of art that we come nearest to leaping the barrier. It is interesting to observe how he refers to his own observations, while under the influence of mescalin, of previously experienced art. He says, "Table, chair and desk came together in a composition like something by Braque or Juan Gris."

If I had never known him personally, if I had read nothing else of his, I would still be his ardent champion for what he wrote of Pieter Breughel the Elder in 1925. It was then still fashionable to look upon Breughel with disdain. The *Künstler-doktors* of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with their reigning doctrines of formalism had dismissed him with scant courtesy. Formalism, as Huxley pointed out, is important. But it is not the whole of the consideration which should be brought to the appreciation of an artist's works. He was able to make evident that Breughel had all the merits of a formalistic painter, but what made him hard to take for the professors of aesthetics were his comments on humanity. Huxley then proceeded, as no one had before, to analyze Breughel's landscapes. Of his Snow Scenes, he says:

". . . . A snowy background has the effect of making all dark or coloured objects seen against it appear in the form of very distinct, sharp-edged silhouettes. Breughel does in all his compositions what the snow does in nature. All the objects in his pictures (which are composed in a manner that reminds one

very much of the Japanese) are paper-thin silhouettes arranged, plane after plane, like the theatrical scenery in the depth of the stage. Consequently in the painting of snow scenes, where nature starts by imitating his habitual method, he achieves an almost disquieting degree of fundamental realism. Those hunters stepping down over the brow of the hill towards the snowy valley with its frozen ponds are Jack Frost himself and his crew. The crowds who move about the white streets of Bethlehem have their being in an absolute winter, and those ferocious troopers looting and innocent-hunting in the midst of a Christmas card landscape are a part of the very army of winter, and the innocents they kill are the young green shoots of the earth."

His insight is well displayed on *Christ Carrying the Cross.* Breughel's dramatic appeal is achieved by his position as a human onlooker at Golgotha on a certain Spring morning in the year A.D. 33. It is a brutal crowd, gathering to enjoy a spectacle of blood and beastliness, that Breughel shows us. Except for the little group of weeping women in the foreground, it is unrelieved by any of the tragic conventions. This kind of realism needed the understanding of anthropology and folkways, as well as of aesthetics, that Huxley was able to provide. Nearly forty years have passed and his judgments of Breughel's worth have become the acknowledged canons of the connoisseurs.

"In human life the extreme of anarchy is messiness, the extreme of tidiness an army or a penitentiary. Anarchy is the enemy of liberty, so is mechanical efficiency." These are Huxley's words from his essay on Piranesi's *Prisons*, which I was fortunate to publish in 1949. In treating of this set of monumental fantasies he speaks of those metaphysical prisons whose seat is within the mind, whose walls are made of nightmare and incomprehension, whose chains are anxiety and their racks—a sense of personal and even generic guilt. More technically he characterizes them as "remarkable for being the nearest approach to 19th century abstract art". Piranesi, he says, "uses architectural form to produce a series of intricate desgins—designs which resemble the abstractions of the cubists . . . but which have the advantage of combining enough subject matter, enough literature to express the pure and terrible states of spiritual confusion."

How much autobiography, I wonder, is contained in these lines? For Huxley certainly suffered from these states of spiritual anxiety and confusion.

Several years ago I came to see him shortly after his house had burned down with all of his books, manuscripts, letters, and notebooks. He said to me, "You are looking at a man without a past." For him as a writer, his past was contained in his written records. It was difficult to give up this storehouse of records upon which he depended for his writing. But the true source of his creativeness lay undestroyed within him. That was a past that was imbedded in his very being and he found it again, as always, the true well of his creativeness.

I wonder what the Huxley of 1963 would think of an essay he published in *Along The Road* in 1925, entitled 'The Best Picture'? Being young, he was much more positive, and yet as one reads it today one is convinced that in all sincerity the *Resurrection* by Piero della Francesca in Borgo San Sepulchro was, to him, the greatest picture in the world. I say, to him, because, as he says, Piero's preoccupations "are a kind which I am by nature best fitted to understand . . . a worship of what is most admirable in man . . . human dignity", and "he is everywhere intellectual . . . all emotions have been digested by the mind into a grave intellectual whole". Finally, he says, "The whole figure is expressive of physical and intellectual power. It is the resurrection of the classical ideal incredibly much grander and more beautiful than the classical reality."

How could I more properly close my remarks than by echoing him? He was indeed by nature best fitted to appreciate Piero's masterpiece. For in him most truly had the emotions been digested by the mind into an harmonious whole. Aldous Huxley by his encompassing of all that man has created in the arts, was himself the resurrection of the classical ideal, grander and more beautiful to behold.

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Raymond Mortimer

WE went up to Balliol in 1913 as fellow-freshmen. With T. H. Huxley as grandfather, and Matthew Arnold as great-uncle, Aldous was intellectually porphyrogenite, and had arrived from Eton with a scholarship. I came from a home given up to golf and bridge, and from a school that was even more philistine, nor had I managed to win even an exhibition. Backward and gauche, I found him formidably sophisticated, and did not get to know him well. The war took me to work in a French hospital, and him to teach at Eton. We were both contributors to a short-lived Oxford magazine, *The Palatine Review*—he with a brilliant story, *Eupompus Found Pleasure in Numbers*, I with a callow essay on Heredia, a French poet who was already outdated. We met again in London soon after Armistice (probably I think through Tommy Earp), and I remember our dining together at the old White Tower Restaurant one evening, when he introduced me to Clive Bell, who became one of my closest friends.

My memory being exceptionally bad, I can't describe how my acquaintance with Aldous turned into an intimate friendship. But soon I was staying for a month or so every year with him and his Belgian wife Maria, in their villa at Sanary near Toulon. In those days he was shy except with those who shared his intellectual or aesthetic interests. She was finely intelligent but not at all a blue-stocking. I liked her enormously, and was lucky enough to be one of the comparatively few with whom they both felt entirely at ease (Eddy Sackville-West was another). Once I arranged to meet Aldous and Maria in Brussels, where they had been staying with her family, and then we did a little tour together, by train, in Germany. At Cassel, a city that then had fine French architecture as well as a great museum, he gazed with horrified amusement, I remember, at the ugliness of the natives in their Sunday best. A similar mixture of fascination and disgust informed his attitude to sex, as all his readers know.

In those years he used to paint with great excitement; and it was always a joy to look at pictures and architecture in his company.

A great friend of the Huxleys at Sanary was a pretty, fair German girl, who has since earned a high reputation as a writer, Sybille Bedford. Once they took me to luncheon at Hyères with Edith Wharton, a square figure like a cottage piano, who would talk about nothing more interesting than her dog and her garden. Aldous used to alarm almost everyone who did not know him well. But I found it the greatest fun to be with him: his talk was an enchantment, brimming with accurate information on the most recondite subjects, gloriously amusing, and also imaginative. According to rumour, he had read right through the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and I shouldn't have put it beyond him. I remember him already in those days talking about peyotl, the cactus that produced mescalin, about which he was to write two books. But he did not then feel, or at any rate reveal to me, any interest in religion, except as a potent influence upon history and individuals. He treated it usually as one further example, one might say, of human irrationality. In *Jesting Pilate*, for instance, he made clear his repugnance to 'the Wisdom of the East'.

By accident I may perhaps have been partly responsible for his modifying this attitude, for I believe that it was I who introduced him to Gerald Heard, an old friend of mine, whom I loved for his Anglo-Irish wit, his charm, his fantasy and his self-forgetting kindness. Aldous had already been fascinated by D. H. Lawrence, admiring the spontaneity of his poetic response to nature, but utterly rejecting his anti-scientific philosophy: he did not understand how so intelligent a man could believe that the moon was only a short distance from the earth. Gerald Heard, by contrast, was always talking about the latest theories of the scientists, often culled from their periodical, *Nature*. He had no scientific training, however, and always seemed to me far more speculative than critical. I never imagined that he could influence the thought of such a sceptic as Aldous, who had a far more powerful intellect. Nor am I sure even now how far he did so. Their friendship in any case was fostered by converging beliefs. They both became pacifists, and went off to live in California.

Geography thus separated me from two of my closest friends, a hateful impoverishment. But when I went to the United States after the war, I found my friendships with them intact. Gerald Heard had become a sort of *swami* with followers all over the country, and might have treated me as a horrid survivor from his unregenerate past. Instead he gave me the warmest welcome, and I stayed with him in Los Angeles, the nastiest city I have ever visited. He remained just as amusing as ever, and just as amusable. Aldous I saw in New York. Convinced by the theories of a certain Bates, he was now refusing to wear spectacles, and his wife had loyally followed his example. I remember each of them trying vainly to look up a number in the telephone directory. One night we went together to look at the sky-signs in Times Square. I was struck by the contrast between the splendour of the spectacle and the triviality of the goods that it advertised. Aldous characteristically made a less superficial comment: "To provide this show, how many men, I wonder, have to spend their whole working life underground?" I recall also his question about the paintings of Jackson Pollock, which we were both seeing for the first time: "Is there any reason why they should not be smaller or larger instead of ending just where they do?"

I found him as delightful as ever then, and on the later occasions when he came to London. Unlike his fellow-expatriates, Christopher Isherwood and Wystan Auden, he had not even changed his English accent: his voice and articulation remained the most exquisite I have ever known. He had mellowed, however, with age, and was better able to establish contact with those who were not intellectuals. His convictions had obliged him to speak in public about such problems as nuclear warfare and over-population. Although he was still amused as well as appalled by human folly, the profound sweetness of his character had now become manifest. Balzac has always seemed to me ridiculous in his belief that the good cannot be clever, and the clever cannot be good. I could disprove this from experience by many examples, of whom Aldous is the most conspicuous.

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Sybille Bedford

THE house in California is burnt down, the house in the South of France is still standing. The VILLA HULEY; a young mason had painted the words on the gateposts in huge green letters meaning to please them, and Aldous and Maria had let it go and the passing French read it out to one another in their own way and walked on. It was their home of the 1930s, left behind when they went to America and went for good, vaguely shot at during the war, sold for a song soon after. By some quirk of circumstances no one else has lived there; the house is empty (or at least it was so when I went there not long ago); on that overrun, that built-up coast—the suburb of Europe as Aldous enjoyed calling it—it stands unchanged, untouched.

It is shut up of course, and in disrepair. The paint is off the shutters and the garden is a tangle. For the stranger by the fence there may not be much to see; a whitewashed house of no particular style, pleasant enough, if of uncertain proportions (the Huxleys had not built, they had merely knocked down walls and added according to their reasonable needs); for the visitor from the past, the survivor, that enclave still bears the marks of the life that was once lived there.

There is the eucalyptus tree and the stumpy palm from which the hammocks used to swing. Here they came out into the timeless summer nights. Aldous; Maria; Matthew, then a small boy; the friend or two who usually stayed at the house. Beethoven's First Piano Concerto played by Schnabel on the brief records of the hand-wound gramophone, and presently silence, leaves, the sky; then, as animation struck him, Aldous talking in his clear voice, clear as a bell. . . . There is the East terrace nobody really used because it had been built on to the room Aldous worked in and when he emerged the sun was gone, and on that weedy patch Maria grew her scented tuberoses and the artichokes she rose at dawn to comb (to rid them of some insect, we supposed), that Mauresque cube was the garage that housed the fire-engine

red, three-seater Bugatti she drove with such exquisite precision, skill and at that time—speed. ("The only *new* sensation this wretched century has produced," Aldous would say with relish. He loved speed, which for him meant being driven fast. Indeed, the flash of the Bugatti roaring up the coast-road whirling Aldous off to Toulon was an heroic sight.) And above the garage there is still the studio Aldous had built for himself when he began to paint regularly (after his return from Mexico in 1934, I think). In summer he painted every day in the blazing Mediterranean noon between lunchtime and tea. He had the flat roof white-washed to reflect the sun and noted with satisfaction that the temperature inside did go down two degrees centigrade. Aldous liked to have a model, so Maria, or Sophie, their niece, a little girl of Matthew's age who spent most of her holidays with them, or a friend, would sit for him. To make things pleasant for the sitter one of us would always read aloud. Aldous, too, liked to paint and listen at once. Maria, whose English had a very individual cadence, had acquired a knack of reading extremely fast and without any expression whatsoever. Considering that what we read was never short—*Anna Karenina*, *Joseph Andrews*, a half shelf of Henry James—this was probably just as well. Victoria Ocampo, who often came to stay, read excellently, but covered less ground. Moreover, as she was so very beautiful, she was required to sit rather than read. Once Aldous thought he would like to have a go again at *The Egoist*, but after one or two sessions Meredith was given up as unsuitable to high-speed reading.

The current of the house went with Aldous's working day. Breakfast was at about ten o'clock and everybody came down for it. There was China tea and it did not taste like tea in France because the Earl Grey was sent from Piccadilly and the water had been filtered. Aldous and Maria throughout their lives had an ambivalent attitude toward food, Maria sometimes going through periods of positive revulsion, yet what was set before one in their house was never less than decent and good, and often quite delicious. It could also be eccentric. They were apt to fall for diets. At one time it had been the Hay Diet (no mixing of proteins and starch at any one meal), and when that had been

abandoned they still stuck for some reason to the Hay breakfast formula, either eggs *or* toast. So for many years after there were two bare boiled eggs each one morning and no bread at all; toast, butter and jam next morning, but no egg. The jam was home-made and often rose or quince. Maria would have been up and about for hours; Aldous, still a bit groggy with sleep, was comfortably silent. There was no post. The one delivery was at noon and even then nobody seemed to wish to look at it at once. There were no papers. No *Times*, no *New Statesman*; in fact, Aldous took no English newspaper at all, though I remember seeing an occasional copy of the *Continental Mail.* He subscribed to one Paris daily, I believe it was the now defunct socialist *L'Oeuvre*, and that also arrived later in the day. Yet Aldous always seemed to know pretty much what was going on—something Baldwin had said, the unemployment figures, Musso's new speech, a French scandal, "Poor old Tardieu . . .", "Those Nazi lunatics . . .". His comments were summary and resigned; at once detached and concerned. "Of course, if people *will* go in for nationalism. . . ." There were, inevitably, stacks of literary reviews sent to him from all over the world. These for the most part remained not only unread but unopened. The only periodicals that came to him on his own initiative were *Nature* and (I am almost certain) *The Lancet.*

Soon after ten, Aldous got up without a murmur and went into his room; the door shut behind him. It was a good-sized room, almost square, with well-shuttered windows on two sides and book-cases up to the ceiling. The floor was red-tiled and bare. There was a roll-top desk with a swivel chair, a very long chaise-longue and one deep arm-chair. Here, on a portable typewriter, he wrote *Music at Night*, *Beyond the Mexique Bay*, *Texts and Pretexts*—perhaps the most serene of his books—*The Olive Tree*, and a large part of *Eyeless in Gaza*. It was a good room, with its easy privacy and pacing space; it had everything a writer needed, including the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* Once during some months when the Huxleys were away, I myself worked in that room and I have never known a better.

There was a gong for luncheon. In summer one bathed first,

walking the few minutes down to the pebbly beach in the bay, deserted at that hour. The children were already in the water. Aldous was usually cheerful, anchored still, one felt, in his morning's work, but ready for the break, willing to join the talk. From June into September, they swam every day and sometimes again at night, but there was never any oiling or lying in the sun. One walked back, dressed—Aldous: khaki shorts, sandals, Egyptian cotton shirt—and ate lunch. This was neither hurried nor long. Aldous might tell some stories. He was well up on the local lore, on General Rose who at ninety built a folly for his mistress in the hills, on the new street named Boulevard du Plaisir Prolongé. There were often guests. The house ran easily, with a very characteristic civilized simplicity. In those years they still had the Italian servants who had followed the Huxleys on their move from Italy: Rina, plump, who was caught once with her hand in the pudding and who married early, her young sister Camilla, savagely shy, and later on Giulia with her Roman profile and inflexible probity. Maria loved them. They loved Maria and the master, il signore. "*E tanto buono!*" they would say: he is so *good.* They, too, were part of the tone: the courtesy, ease and dignity of all human commerce in that house.

After luncheon, the studio, or in the cooler seasons, the rarer hours of sunshine, the long walks. It was aways fun to go for a walk with Aldous. He saw everything, the caterpillar on the twig, the colour of the hills, and he enjoyed it so. Return; ten minutes for tea. China tea again and, invariably, ginger-nuts. Then once more, until about seven or half-past, work. On Thursdays Aldous had to write his bread-and-butter article for an American magazine. It think it was *Vanity Fair* and I think he was paid the now incredible sum of £10. He could write on whatever he liked. Maria used to explain that this arrangement came to £500 a year and that it ran the house and car for them. (Although they always lived in decent comfort, the Huxleys were inclined to spend less on themselves than they spent on others. Each was extremely generous, giving easily and forgetting about it afterwards. They must have kept or regularly helped about a dozen people.) Aldous did not like that weekly

stint. The family presumption ran that he was always grumpy on a Thursday morning. In fact, he was too even-tempered and controlled to show anything except perhaps a slightly more marked withdrawal. Yet those days must have been a strain; the effort of slicing into a new subject, the worry of getting it down in time, to say nothing of interruption of work in progress. By evening it was done, for Maria to drive to the post-box at Bandol for the last collection.

Aldous used to complain about himself as a fairly slow writer in terms of Arnold Bennett's daily thousand. Actually, he must have averaged 500 words a day, and that with very great regularity. Every day that Aldous was at home, every day he was not on a journey, he worked. He worked on Sundays. There was never any question of doing otherwise. To me, then an adolescent with a passionate aspiration to the literary life, this appeared to be a universal rule like the forty-hour week. Unless ill or travelling, a writer wrote in the mornings and between tea and dinner. I never heard the word *holiday*. Unfortunately there have been long stretches in my life when I failed to adhere to this iron, or perhaps golden, rule, but even now I cannot be happy on any evening after I have so failed; and when I work I work very much within these hours and I have never been able to look on Sundays other than as working days.

At dinner there was a sense of relief, of being lightly *en fête*; one of Aldous's recreations then was dining with friends—in his own house at Maria's looking-glass-topped dinner-table, at Edith Wharton's or the Charles de Noailles' at Hyères, at his Sanary and Bandol neighbours, at the Kislings', the Willie Seabrooks', at my mother's and stepfather's, at the Meier-Graefes' at St-Cyr. And the picnics, those Huxley picnics at sun-down on beach, in olive grove, on cliff, where Matthew and Sophie and the fast and handsome Sanary young mingled with startled middle-aged French and ruffled eminent German refugees. Never shall I forget the sight of Mrs Wharton, rotund, corsetted, flushed and beautifully dressed, Paul Valéry and Mme Paul Valéry, frail sexagenarians, being led by Aldous up a goat-track on a rock face to the nonchalantly chosen picnic ground. There would be fried rabbit, zucchini flowers, and bottles of iced

punch—white wine, lemon, rum—made up by Aldous himself. There would be games. Sometimes Aldous sang. In his happiest mood it would be:

I'll sing you Twelve' O
Green grow the Rushes O.

It seemed a good life for a writer. For some time it had a sense of solidity to it. I believed that it would go on for ever, that this was what life should be, could be made to be. Aldous probably knew that it could not. As the years passed the bad news came in: National-Socialism, the Abyssinian War, the Spanish Civil War. . . . Even without approaching war the Villa Huley life would have come to an end. Aldous was turning more evidently to other things. Yet those years must have been good ones for him; years of stable health and tranquil work, healing years between two wars, between the damaging events of his early life and the struggle and losses later on. They *seemed* happy years. I was too young to know. To me then it was Aldous's intelligence that was the *ne plus ultra*; I was dazzled (and long influenced) by his work; what I cared for was the intellectual surface, the rest I took for granted: Aldous and Maria never exchanging a harsh word, the atmosphere of order, gaiety and grace they had created; took for granted Aldous's *unfailing* good-will, his patience, his readiness to help, the absence in him of any trace of pretentiousness or pomposity, his inability to lie or hate, to form a petty thought or a malevolent emotion; his fortitude. Only now, can I see him then as the man who practised what he later preached. *Era tanto buono.*

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Isaiah Berlin

THE Classical and History Middle and Upper Eighth forms at St Paul's School were, in the middle and late nineteen-twenties, an unusually sophisticated establishment. This was not directly induced by the masters, who were (with one exception—an obscure, eccentric, devoted contemporary and follower of Lytton Strachey) solid, sentimental and unimaginative. While the most civilized among them recommended Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, Gilbert Murray, Flecker, Edward Thomas, Sassoon and the *London Mercury*, we read Joyce, Firbank, Edward Carpenter, Wyndham Lewis, Schiller's Logic, Havelock Ellis, Eliot, *The Criterion* and, under the impulsion of Arthur Calder-Marshall whose elder brother was then in America and favoured them, the works of H. L. Mencken, Carl Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson; we also took an interest in Cocteau, *transition*, the early surrealists. We looked down on *Life and Letters*, edited by Desmond MacCarthy, as tame and conventional. Among our major intellectual emancipators were J. B. S. Haldane, Ezra Pound, Aldous Huxley.

I cannot myself claim to have been liberated by anyone; if I was in chains then, I must be bound by them still. But, as men of letters—led by Voltaire, the head of the profession—rescued many oppressed human beings in the eighteenth century; as Byron or George Sand, Ibsen and Baudelaire, Nietzsche, Wilde and Gide and perhaps even Wells or Russell have done since, so members of my generation were assisted to find themselves by novelists, poets and critics concerned with the central problems of their day. Social and moral courage can, on occasion, exercise a more decisive influence than sensibility or original gifts. One of my own contemporaries, a man of exceptional honesty, intellectual power and moral responsiveness, inhibited and twisted by an uncertain social position and bitter puritanism on the part of his father, was morally freed (as others have been by psycho-analysis, or Anatole France, or living among Arabs)

by reading Aldous Huxley: in particular *Point Counter Point*, and one or two short stories. Light had been thrown for him on dark places, the forbidden was articulated, intimate physical experience, the faintest reference to which used to upset him profoundly and affect him with a feeling of violent guilt, had been minutely and fully described. From that moment my friend advanced intellectually, and has become one of the most admired and productive men of learning of our day. It is not this therapeutic effect, however, that appealed to the young men of my generation so much as the fact that Huxley was among the few writers who, with all his constantly commented upon inability to create character, played with ideas so freely, so gaily, with such virtuosity, that the responsive reader, who had learnt to see through Shaw or Chesterton, was dazzled and excited. The performance took place against a background of relatively few, simple, moral convictions; they were disguised by the brilliance of the technical accomplishment, but they were there, they were easily intelligible, and like a monotonous, insistent, continuous ground bass slowly pounding away through the elaborate intellectual display, they imposed themselves on the minds of the boys of seventeen and eighteen —still, for the most part, eager and morally impressionable, no matter how complex or decadent they may in their naïveté have conceived themselves to be.

I suspect that the impact diminished as the ground bass—the simple repetitive pattern of Huxley's moral and spiritual philosophy—became increasingly obsessive in his later novels, and destroyed the exhilarating, delightfully daring, 'modern', neo-classical upper lines of the music, in combination with which alone his novels seemed such masterpieces. The grave, noble, humane, tolerant figure of the 'forties and 'fifties inspired universal respect and admiration. But the transforming power—the impact—was that of the earlier, 'cynical', God-denying Huxley, the object of fear and disapproval to parents and schoolmasters, the wicked nihilist whose sincere and sweetly sentimental passages—especially about music—were swallowed whole, and with delight by those young readers who supposed themselves to be indulging in one of the most dangerous and

exotic vices of those iconoclastic post-war times. He was one of the great culture heroes of our youth.

When I met him in 1935 or 1936, in the house of a mutual friend, Lord Rothschild, in Cambridge, I expected to be overawed and perhaps sharply snubbed. But he was very courteous and very kind to everyone present. The company played intellectual games, so it seemed to me, after nearly every meal; it took pleasure in displaying its wit and knowledge; Huxley plainly adored such exercises, but remained uncompetitive, benevolent, and remote. When the games were over at last, he talked, without altering his low, monotonous tone, about persons and ideas, describing them as if viewed from a great distance, as queer but interesting specimens, odd, but no odder than many others in the world on which he seemed to look as a kind of museum or encyclopaedia. He spoke with serenity and disarming sincerity, very simply. There was no malice and very little conscious irony in his conversation, only the mildest and gentlest mockery of the most innocent kind. He enjoyed describing prophets and mystagogues, but even such figures as Count Keyserling, Ouspensky, and Gourdjief, whom he did not much like, were given their due and indeed more than their due; even Middleton Murry was treated more mercifully and seriously than in the portrait in *Point Counter Point*. Huxley talked very well: he needed an attentive audience and silence, but he was not self-absorbed or domineering, and presently everyone in the room would fall under his peaceful spell; brightness and glitter went out of the air, everyone became calm, serious, interested and contented. The picture I have attempted to draw may convey the notion that Huxley, for all his noble qualities, may (like some very good men and gifted writers) have been something of a bore or a preacher. But this was not so at all, on the only occasions on which I met him. He had great moral charm and integrity, and it was these rare qualities (as with the otherwise very dissimilar G. E. Moore), and not brilliance or originality, that compensated and more than compensated for any lack-lustre quality, and for a certain thinness in the even, steady flow of words to which we all listened so willingly and respectfully.

The social world about which Huxley wrote was all but destroyed by the Second World War, and the centre of his interests appeared to shift from the external world to the inner life of men. His approach to all this remained scrupulously empirical, directly related to the facts of the experience of individuals of which there is record in speech or in writing. It was speculative and imaginative only in the sense that in his view the range of valuable human experience had often been too narrowly conceived; that the hypotheses and ideas which he favoured about men in their relations to each other and to nature, illuminated the phenomena commonly described as paranormal or supernormal better than much conventional physiology or psychology, tied as they seemed to him to be to inappropriate models. He had a cause and he served it. The cause was to awaken his readers, scientists and laymen alike, to the connections, hitherto inadequately investigated and described, between regions artificially divided: physical and mental, sensuous and spiritual, inner and outer. Most of his later writings—novels, essays, lectures, articles—revolved round this theme. He was a humanist in the most literal and honourable sense of that fearfully abused word; he was interested in, and cared about, human beings as objects in nature in the sense in which the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century had done. His hopes for men rested on the advance of self-knowledge: he feared that humanity would destroy itself by over-population or by violence; from this only greater self-understanding would save them—above all, understanding of the intimate interplay of mental and physical forces—of man's place and function in nature—on which so much alternate light and darkness seemed to him to have been cast both by science and by religion.

He was sceptical of all those who have tried to systematize the broken glimpses of the truth that had been granted to mystics and visionaries, of whom he thought as uncommonly sensitive or gifted or fortunate men whose power of vision could be cultivated and extended by devoted, assiduous practice. He recognized no supernatural grace; he was not a theist, still less an orthodox Christian believer. In all his writings—whether inspired by Malthusian terrors, or by hatred of coercion and

violence, or by opposition to what he called idolatry—the blind worship of some single value or institution to the exclusion of others, as something beyond rational criticism or discussion, or by Hindu and Buddhist classics, or by Western mystics and writers gifted with capacity for spiritual or psychological insight—Maine de Biran, Kafka, Broch (Huxley was a remarkable discoverer of original talent), or by composers, sculptors, painters, or by poets in all the many languages that he read well—whatever his purpose or his mood, he always returned to the single theme that dominated his later years: the condition of men in the twentieth century. Over and over again he contrasted on the one hand their new powers to create works of unheard of power and beauty and live wonderful lives—a future far wider and more brilliant than had ever stretched before mankind—with, on the other hand, the prospect of mutual destruction and total annihilation, due to ignorance and consequent enslavement to irrational idols and destructive passions—forces that some individuals had, and all men in principle could, control and direct. Perhaps no one since Spinoza has believed so passionately or coherently or fully in the principle that knowledge alone liberates, not merely knowledge of physics or history or physiology, or psychology, but an altogether wider panorama of possible knowledge which embraced forces, open and occult, which this infinitely retentive and omnivorous reader was constantly discovering with alternate horrors and hope.

His later works, novels and tracts—the frontiers were at times not clear—were everywhere respectfully received; respectfully, but without marked enthusiasm. Those who saw him as a latter-day Lucian or Peacock complained that the wit, the virtuosity, the play of facts and ideas, the satirical eye, had disappeared; that the sad, wise, good man who lived in California was but the noble ghost of the author who had earned himself an assured place in the history of English letters. In short, it was alleged that he had turned into a lay preacher, who, like other poets and prophets, had been abandoned by the spirit, so that, like Newton and Robert Owen, Wordsworth and Swinburne, he had ended with little to say, and went on saying it

earnestly, honourably, tediously, to an ever-dwindling audience. Such critics were mistaken in at least one fundamental respect: if he was a prophet, he was so in a literal sense. Just as Diderot's *Le Rêve de d'Alembert* and the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* (particularly the former) anticipated biological and physiological discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and expressed in the form of audacious speculation some of the major advances in the natural sciences, so Aldous Huxley, with that special sensibility to the contours of the future which impersonal artists sometimes possess, stood on the edge of, and peered beyond, the present frontiers of our self-knowledge. He was the herald of what will surely be one of the great advances in this and following centuries—the creation of new psycho-physical sciences, of discoveries in the realm of what at present, for want of a better term, we call the relations between body and mind; a field in which modern studies of myth and ritual, the psychological roots of social and individual behaviour, the relations of the physiological and the logical foundations of linguistics, as well as the phenomena of paranormal psychology, psychical therapy and the like, are but the earliest and most rudimentary beginnings.

Huxley was well aware of this. There is a sense in which he knew that he stood on the frontier between the old astrology that was passing and the new astronomy that was beginning in the sciences of man; and he therefore bore the frequent accusations of betraying his original rationalism in favour of a confused mysticism, of a sad collapse into irrationalism as a means of escape from his own private miseries and the bleakness of his particular world, of a weak abandonment of his old belief in the clear, the precise, the tangible, for the comforting obscurity of hazy, facile, pseudo-religious speculation—he bore these charges with great sweetness and patience. He was perfectly aware of what was being said: no one could have composed a better caricature of precisely these attitudes if he had wished. He persisted not because of some softening of a once gem-like intellect, but because he was convinced that his chosen field was the region in which the greatest and most transforming advance would be made by mankind.

On the last occasion on which I met him, he would—at least in public—speak of nothing but the need for the re-integration of what both science and life had divided too sharply: the restoration of human contact with non-human nature, the need for antidotes to the lop-sided development of human beings in the direction of observation, criticism, theory, and away from the harmonious development of the senses, of the 'vegetative soul', of that which man has in common with animals and plants. Others have spoken of this. The great modern protest against alienation springs as much from a sense of isolation from natural processes as from lack of social harmony and common purpose. But Huxley did not, it is evident, believe in the possibility of repairing the texture through institutional change, whether gradualist or revolutionary; nor solely through psychological therapy, though he attached great importance to it. He believed that there were regions in the world, among primitive peoples and in non-European cultures, where forms of life persisted, or had at any rate not been wholly lost, the re-discovery of which would offer a shorter and surer path, based as it was on tradition and experience, than Acts of Parliament or social revolutions or mechanical inventions, or even educational innovations in which he deeply believed. Much of what he said may one day seem vague or unreal in the light of the future experiences of men. Much of it, too, may prove delusive, or fantastic as often happens with pioneers and those who have an intuitive sense of what is to come. But I must own that I think him wholly right to have directed his excellent mind towards the problems of psycho-physical relationships and the control of mental—or what he would have preferred to call spiritual—factors, in which he thought that the Indians, ancient and modern, had advanced beyond the West.

His warnings, whether in *Brave New World*, which is certainly the most influential modern expression of disillusionment with purely technological progress, or in his other novels and essays, and his premonitions, even at their flattest and least artistic, have enough genius to have created a new *genre*—the pessimistic, frightening Utopia—a vision of the unintended consequences of what a good many uncritical liberals and

Marxists still conceive—in Mr E. H. Carr's complacent words —as 'old-fashioned belief in progress'. These novels create a genuine uneasiness by getting near the bone (the rotting bone, he would have said) of the contemporary experience of the West. He was a victim of a deep and universal malaise, against which he rightly perceived that too many contemporary antidotes were and are useless because they are too practical and therefore too short-sighted, or operate with concepts which are too shallow, too crude and ephemeral, too vulgar and insulting to the nature of man, particularly to those—to him all-important—still concealed and neglected powers in it, about which he wrote. He was conscious of this fatal inadequacy in much contemporary politics, sociology and ethics. There is no coherent body of doctrine, no systematic exposition in his works. But that he had a sense of what men stood and stand in need of, and a premonition of the direction in which, if mankind survives at all, it will be moving—of that I feel convinced. If I am right, justice will one day be done to those very pages over which even his admirers at present shake their heads, some sadly, others patronizingly.

I was delighted to meet him in India in 1961, when he and I found ourselves as delegates at the same congress in New Delhi. He spoke on his usual theme, the poet as *vates*, a man with powers of discerning what other eyes could not see, of the poet's claims to prophetic powers in a literal sense. He was received, of course, with immense respect in a country with which his beliefs gave him special ties. We—Huxley, the American delegate Mr Louis Untermeyer and I—went to a reception at which six or seven hundred students came to do him homage and collect his autograph. There was dead silence as he stood, distinguished and embarrassed, looking beyond their heads. An ironical young man broke the silence with some such words as these: "After the late Mr Gandhi the Taj Mahal is certainly the most precious possession of the Indian people. Why then, did you, Mr Huxley, in your book *Jesting Pilate*, speak in so disparaging a fashion of it? May I enquire, Sir, if you continue to adhere to this unfavourable view?" Huxley was amused and faintly put out. He said that perhaps he had spoken a little too harshly about the

Taj Mahal, that he had not intended to wound anyone's feelings, that aesthetics was an uncertain field, that tastes were incommensurable, and then he gradually slid from this perilous ground to his central Tolstoyan belief—the unnatural lives that men lead today. But he wondered afterwards whether perhaps he had been unjust, and so we decided to re-visit Agra. We travelled separately: he and his wife with the well-known Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand; my wife and I in a separate car. We met in Agra and went together to Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's dead city. Huxley adored it. He moved with the slow sure-footed, slightly gliding steps of a somnambulist: his grave and urbane charm was moving and very delightful.

On the way to Fatehpur Sikri, he described his earlier visit to India in the 'twenties, when he had stayed with one of his Oxford contemporaries, now a member of the Upper House in India, a distinguished man who had welcomed him on this occasion too. He described Jawaharlal Nehru's father, Motilal, who, he said, was a man of exquisite appearance and manners, and sent his shirts to be washed in Paris; he had belonged to the rich and power-loving aristocracy that had sought to use Gandhi for its purposes; but they found that he had outwitted them, that the attempt to harness this great force, or at any rate the flood of popular emotion which Gandhi had brought into being, proved fruitless, that Gandhi ended by controlling them and not, as they had hoped, the other way about. Huxley described the relations of these distinguished and autocratic Brahmins to Gandhi with a kind of benevolent irony, even-toned, slow, deliberate and exceedingly entertaining. He went on to an elaborate enumeration of the wiles and strategems that he used, whether in California or in India, to escape the bores by whom his life was menaced. He was very simple, very serene, very easy to talk with. The fact that, a few weeks before, his house and all his books had been destroyed by fire seemed hardly to trouble him at all, nor did he by the slightest allusion reveal the fact that he knew that he was suffering from a mortal disease; he complained of his eyesight—his old, familiar infirmity—but said nothing about the cancer that was ultimately to end his life.

When he finally saw the Taj Mahal again, he relented; and decided that it was not as unsightly as he had supposed, but on the contrary, but for the minarets—'chimney pots' which he still thought a mistake—it was a creditable building after all. We spent the evening together; I think that Monsieur Guéhenno, the French writer, was also there part of the time. Guéhenno, a melancholy, interesting and idealistic man, was not likely—nor did he intend—to raise anyone's spirits; the lights in the hotel were very low owing to some permanent power failure. One might have thought that the whole occasion would be one of extreme, if dignified, gloom and depression. But it was not. Huxley was simple, natural and unselfconscious, what he said was unusual and absolutely authentic. Everything about him was so sincere and so interesting that the occasion was wholly enjoyable, and inspired, at any rate in me, a lasting affection and a degree of respect bordering on veneration.

Huxley had spent a great deal of his time collecting facts; he much preferred to be told facts rather than opinions—opinions he could form for himself. But despite this, he did not, contrary to common belief, talk like an encyclopaedia. Nor were the hatred of the flesh, the puritanical streak, the ascetic's obsession with scatological detail which his writings sometimes betray, ever in evidence; nor was his conversation strewn with oddly assorted bric-a-brac of abstract knowledge; nor did he ever behave like a writer conscious of his status as a great man. He was courteous, serious and charming, and his movements and his words possessed a dignity and humanity wholly unrelated to the popular image of him in the 'twenties. He seemed to be more interesting, and his thought, despite his deliberate manner, seemed to be more direct, spontaneous, and moving, more personal and authentic than his writings, which even at their best have something mechanical and derivative. But the recollection that will remain in my mind for the rest of my life is that of a wholly civilized, good and scrupulous man, and one of the greatest imaginable distinction.

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Christopher Isherwood

I FIRST met Aldous Huxley in California, during the early summer of 1939. The Huxleys, Gerald Heard and another close friend named Christopher Wood had moved out there from Europe to settle, two years previously. They formed a group which had expanded to include some very different kinds of people; Charlie Chaplin, for example, and Krishnamurti, Anita Loos, Paulette Goddard, Edwin Hubble, Greta Garbo. One didn't think of Maria Huxley as being what is usually meant by a 'great' hostess; yet, in her charmingly haphazard way—by accident, almost—she created some historic parties. At that period, the Huxleys lived in Santa Monica, not far from the beach, in an extraordinarily sinister house which was built and furnished in a style that I can best describe as log-cabin decadent. The place was so dimly illuminated that a lady to whom I had just been introduced once said to me, "will you light my cigarette so I can see your face?" Its art treasures included a painting of a giant ape carrying off a virgin in torn veils, and several fetishistic pictures of 'cruel' high-booted ladies, probably German in origin. Neither Maria nor Aldous seemed to have made any attempt to alter the décor, which had been dreamed up by their fun-loving landlord; their own lives were quite without relation to it and they showed you around with civilized humour, as though they themselves were merely house-guests.

Aldous's physical appearance took me by surprise. I had expected somebody resembling the skinny, thickly bespectacled, spider-like intellectual of the early photographs. (Or had I made my private image of the young author of *Crome Yellow*, *Antic Hay* and *Point Counter Point* to match my opinion of the books themselves? I am one of those who maintain that nearly all of Huxley's best work was done in the latter, American half of his life.) In any case, the Aldous in his middle forties whom I now met in the flesh was slender but not at all skinny, and the insect-

look I had discovered in his photographs now seemed to me to be more of a bird-look, benevolent and quick with interest in his surroundings. He no longer wore spectacles. When he talked, his beautifully sensitive features seemed literally to shine with enthusiasm. He was interested in so many subjects that he could talk to anybody—anybody, that is, who was also interested. Thus he could thoroughly enjoy the company of children and teenagers, scientists, ranchers, actresses, priests and professors. It was only in the presence of the indifferent, the insincere and the double-talker that he became uncomfortable and aloof.

Aldous's clothes were usually informal. But he wore everything well, and when he put on a suit he looked marvellously distinguished. It was not in his character to be consciously dressy; but he was never careless and I think he must have had a certain affection for some of the things he wore. For instance, he had kept a tie from Paris for more than twenty years and would remark that it was 'like an early Rouault'.

Aldous had given up using spectacles because he had become a convert to the Bates Method of Visual Re-education; he describes it in *The Art of Seeing*. I have neither the authority nor the inclination to express a personal opinion on this subject; I merely record that I have seen people who were discussing it become enraged to the point of incoherence and I can well believe that it has sometimes been the cause of fist-fights. And the Bates battle was mild in comparison to the battle over mescalin and lysergic acid which broke out about fifteen years later, after Aldous had published *The Doors of Perception*, and still rages. Indeed, Aldous was the most 'engaged' of writers; he was always getting involved in controversies, from conscientious objection to the Chessman case. He never hesitated to play an active part in them, either; he joined his son Matthew on a picket-line outside a movie studio on one occasion and went up to Sacramento on several others, to bring pressure to bear on the State Legislature. Yet, in the midst of the struggle, he never seemed fanatical or even particularly excited. Courteous in argument and calmly assured, he maintained an air of objectivity which nevertheless wasn't in the least superior. Only, when

confronted by some truly awful instance of stupidity or prejudice, he would sometimes utter a wild little laugh, raising his arms and letting them fall again to his sides in a gesture of amused despair.

Not unnaturally, people who knew Aldous tended to judge the whole Bates Method by the condition of his eyesight; some claimed that the Method had improved it, others passionately denied this. To me, one of the most mysterious things about Aldous was what he could see and what he couldn't, and how, exactly, he saw what he saw. How much did he actually see and how much did he cognize, by some kind of built-in radar? You watched him cross a street. You didn't want to embarrass him by taking his arm and yet you were tense with anxiety, for he seemed like a blind man. Then, to your astonished relief, he would put his foot firmly on to the opposite sidewalk, which you would have sworn he hadn't seen. I remember once standing with him outside his house at Llano in the Mojave Desert and being surprised when he remarked on the beauty of the sierras which rose far away along the horizon. And once, while we were out driving, he called to Maria to stop the car because there was a clump of mariposa lilies, at least a hundred yards from the highway. I hadn't even noticed them. On the other hand, it must be recorded that he had one serious fall, while walking on a hillside road, which could not have happened to a man with normal vision.

Aldous and Maria both loved the desert. Indeed, Aldous was attached to California by a love for the terrain itself; this was perhaps his strongest reason for remaining there in later years. But life at Llano had its problems. The irrigation-water was owned by a rancher who lived higher up the mountain; it was released into your garden along a system of ditches on certain days only, between certain hours. The Huxleys had their own gasoline-engine for generating electric light. (To eliminate the fire hazard, it was sunk in a pit in the middle of the yard and covered by a trapdoor. On this trapdoor, Maria had placed an otherwise unwanted terra cotta bust of Gerald Heard by way of ornament, and the pit was therefore known as 'Gerald's Tomb'.) Maria would beg you to use a candle if you wanted to read during

the night. One night I forgot and flipped the light-switch; the engine started with a clatter like a motor-bike and woke everybody else up. Then there were the coyotes, which would send their bitches to lure away the male ranch-dogs and then set on them and kill them. (A few ranch-dogs were said to have been so big and strong that they killed their attackers and thereafter ran wild as leaders of the pack.) And there were the rattlesnakes; Aldous would go for long walks, and Maria was always afraid that one of them would lash out at him from underneath a mesquite bush. But the danger to which Aldous finally fell a victim was less apparent. One day, Maria found a pretty flower which had been washed down the hillside by a rainstorm. She planted it outside Aldous's study window. It proved to be a species of ragweed and it gave him an allergic rash all over his body. This, I believe, was one of the several mishaps which made the Huxleys decide to give up the Llano house and return to live in Los Angeles.

Aldous was an exceptionally sensitive human instrument, and his health was correspondingly variable. One week he would look fresh and healthy and even robust; the next, wan, shattered, almost spectral. He suffered from all kinds of ailments; but they seemed to interest him quite as much as they distressed him. He would talk about them at length, objectively and without complaining. "I feel curiously *deconstellated*," he told me once, after being given a new type of injection. Both he and Maria were great connoisseurs of doctors; it sometimes seemed to their friends that they were prepared to consult absolutely anyone, at least once, in a spirit of disinterested experimentation.

Actually, this fearless curiosity was one of Aldous's noblest characteristics, a function of his greatness as a human being. Little people are so afraid of what the neighbours will say if they ask Life unconventional questions. Aldous questioned unceasingly, and it never occurred to him to bother about the neighbours. They laughed at him for consulting unlicensed healers and investigating psychic phenomena; and it was true that many of the healers proved to be wrong and many of the mediums frauds. That was unimportant, from Aldous's point of view. For his researches also brought into his hands some very

odd and precious pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of Truth; pieces that may not be officially fitted into the main pattern and recognized as scientifically respectable for many more years to come.

Not long before my arrival in California, Heard and Huxley had met Swami Prabhavananda, a Hindu monk of the Ramakrishna Order, who had founded a centre in Hollywood for the study and practice of Vedanta philosophy. Later, Heard introduced me to him. This was a contact which had far-reaching effects on the lives of all three of us. In Huxley's case, it was widely represented as the selling-out of a once brilliant intellect. As a matter of fact, it actually enlarged Huxley's already vast intellectual horizons by introducing him to mystical experience as a fact, a phenomenon of existence. Thus he was led to an intensive study of the phenomenon and its occurrence, throughout the ages, among the adherents of all the major religions. And thus he was moved to write one of his greatest books, *The Perennial Philosophy*.

In September 1942, I heard Aldous make a personal statement to a small group of people on the relation between his concern with mystical religion and his art. I wrote down some of it verbatim, and I think it is well worth repeating here; the very artlessness of its expression, so unlike the lucidity and polish of Aldous's written work, seems to me to convey something of his live personality.

"I came to this thing in a rather curious way, as a *reductio ad absurdum*. I have mainly lived in the world of intellectual life and art. But the world of knowing-about-things is unsatisfactory. It's no good knowing about the taste of strawberries out of a book. The more I think of art I realize that, though artists do establish some contact with spiritual reality, they establish it unconsciously. Beauty is imprisoned, as it were, within the white spaces between the lines of a poem, between the notes of music, in the apertures between groups of sculpture. This function or talent is unconscious. They throw a net and catch something, though the net is trivial. . . . But one wants to go further. One wants to have a conscious taste of these holes between the strings of the net. . . . Now, obviously, one could never possibly give it up."

That last sentence has the ring of an emotional intensity which Aldous very seldom displayed—to me, at any rate. In a world of back-slappers and soul-barers, he avoided superfluous physical contacts and unasked-for confessions. When he was suffering the pain of Life most keenly, he said least—during the worst days of the war, for example, or Maria's slow death from cancer, or the loss of his house and papers by fire. As for the public performances of others, they amused him merely; he did not find them disgusting, perhaps because he was so entirely incapable of such behaviour. I went with him once to see a producer who was interested in having us write a film on some religious theme. (It was never written.) This gentleman lectured us on God with authority and monotony for about half an hour. We listened politely. As we were leaving, Aldous murmured to me, "He's almost *too* spiritual, don't you think?"

I got the impression that Aldous regarded the art of the novel as a necessary nuisance. He had things to say in fictional form, but the weaving of the fiction bored him. He would often hold forth on the futility of literature in general. The great masters expressed themselves marvellously, of course—but what was the point of it all? What was it all *about*? One night, he was talking to me like this at a party and thoroughly enjoying himself: Homer was terribly overrated, Dante was hopelessly limited, Shakespeare was such a stupid man, Goethe was such a bore, Tolstoy was so silly, etc, etc. Suddenly a look of uneasiness came over his face, "You know, I must confess, I've never read Lope de Vega. . . ."

"I have," I told Aldous.

"And what about him? Is he any good?"

Eager to play my part in the game and not be a spoilsport, I answered, "He stinks."

And Aldous exclaimed, with unfeigned relief, "Oh, I *am* glad to hear you say that!"

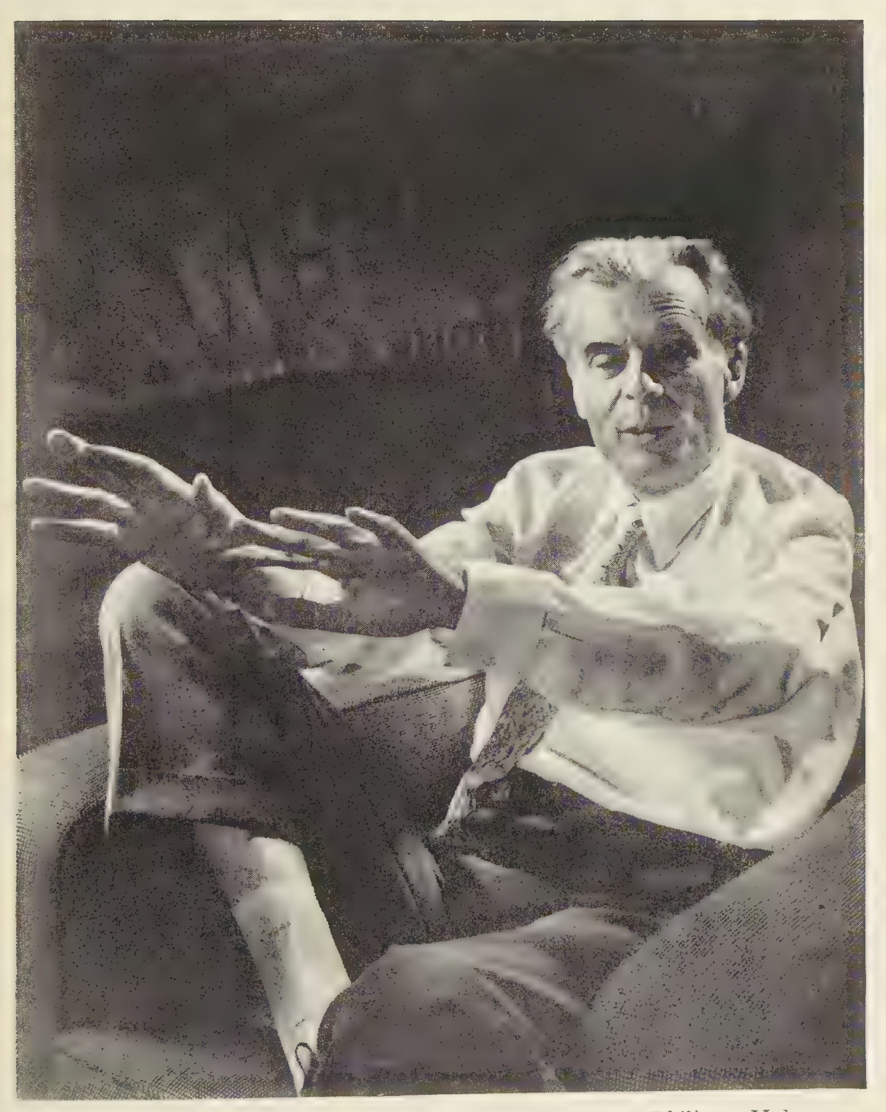
It is hardly necessary to add that this kind of talk was no more than a reaction, and a most healthy one, against the official idolatry of the arts which (Aldous was fond of saying) is one of our modern substitutes for religion. He could be amusingly perceptive about academic art-jargon. Describing how some

professors had been talking to him about D. H. Lawrence and how he hadn't been able to understand a single word they said, he added, "They've invented their own absolutely unintelligible technical language because they feel they have to justify their existence by pretending that literature is a branch of science."

He seldom talked to me specifically about his own work. A note in my diary, January 9th, 1940, reveals that Aldous was then already considering the subject-matter of what was to be, twenty-two years later, his last novel, *Island*. There is also a reference to another project he described, a novel which "explores the problem of the meaning of words and the utter inadequacy of all existing language". In January 1944, I was taking him to see a typist I had recommended to type *Time Must Have a Stop*. I asked him what the new novel was about. He thought carefully before replying, "It's a curiously *trivial* story, told in great detail, with a certain amount of *squalor*."

Aldous and Maria had seemed an inseparable couple. We all dreaded the long-term effects of bereavement on Aldous and were relieved when he married again. He seemed very happy as he told me about the wedding, which took place at a drive-in chapel at Yuma, Arizona, in March 1956, with what Aldous described as 'a broken-down cowboy' for a witness. "Really," he exclaimed, "there are so many delightful and intelligent and unusual people in the world!" Then—how characteristically—he added, "and so many unspeakably awful ones!"

In 1961, the house into which Aldous and Laura had moved after their marriage was destroyed by a brush-fire. Driven by veering winds, the flames darted about the hillside with fiendish caprice; the house immediately behind the Huxley's was unharmed. Certain journalists, with the unmotivated falsehood which sometimes makes their trade seem purely evil, wrote that Aldous had shed tears and had had to be restained from rushing into the flames to rescue his archives. Aldous was naturally indignant about this. As a matter of fact, both Aldous and Laura behaved with a self-discipline worthy of an Asian philosopher; when they saw that the fire was out of control and that nothing more could be done, they got into their car and drove quietly away. Aldous told me, with ironical relish, that the television



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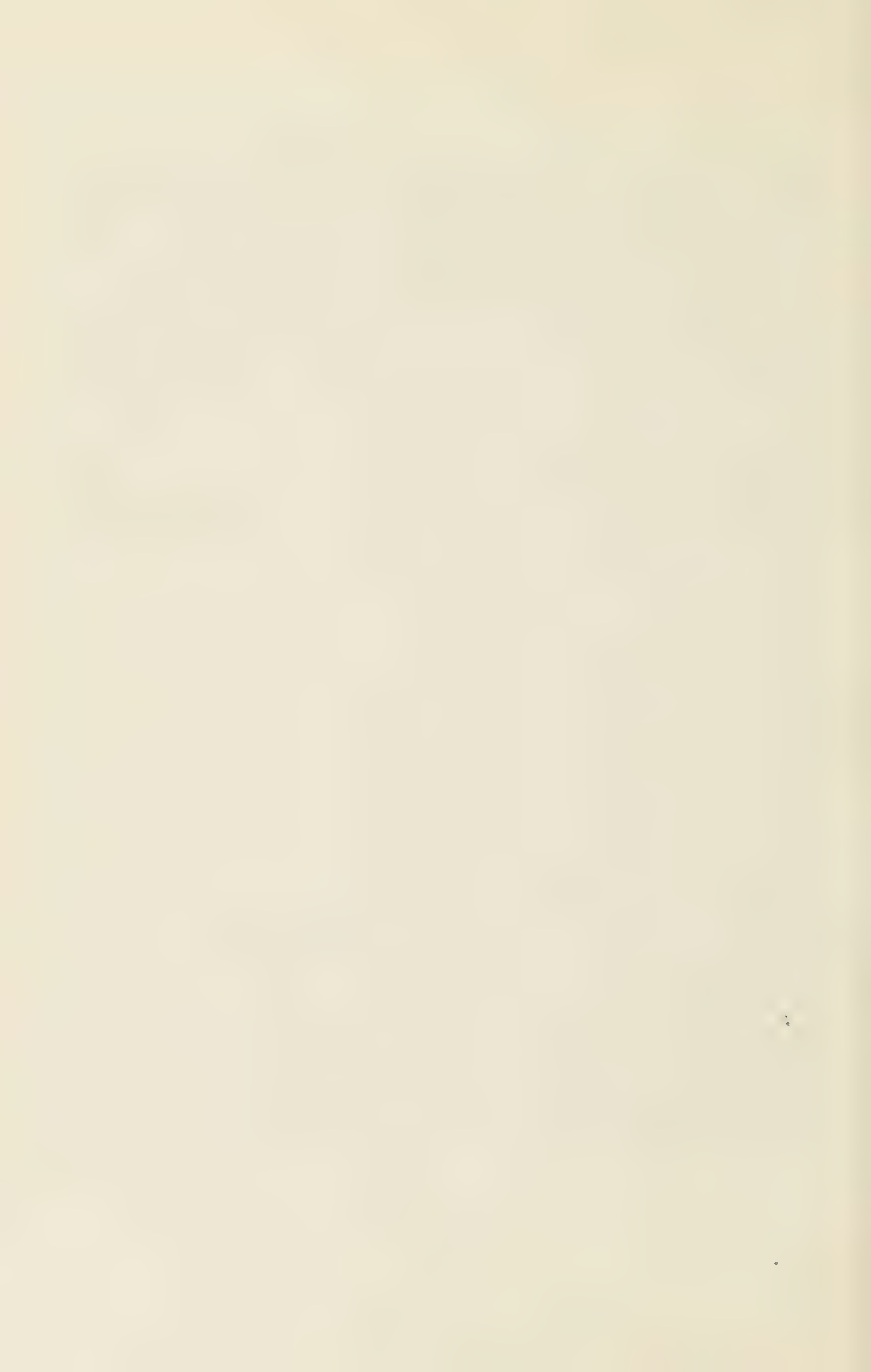
Aldous Huxley in California, 1958



trucks arrived at least twenty minutes before the fire engines.

In August 1962 I went with him to visit an aeronautical plant in Los Angeles where a moon-rocket was being worked on. The plant executives were full of resounding phrases about Man's great mission and destiny in Outer Space. Aldous sat listening, his head slightly bowed, ghost-pale, aloof. He was like a ghost they had raised to speak to them of the future—but they hadn't bargained for what they heard. For now he began to prophesy, telling them that, in all probability, the astronauts would bring back with them from the moon some virus which would wipe out everybody in the world. Then, having brought them down to earth with a bump, he added to their discomfort by asking them why they wanted to waste money trying to get to the moon instead of doing something about the approaching population explosion, here at home.

My final memories, except for the last one, are happy. After the fire, Aldous and Laura spent much of their time at the home of their friend Virginia Pfeiffer. She, too, had lost her house in the same fire and had moved, with magnificent assurance, into another quite near by. Aldous went for walks around the Hollywood reservoir with its wooded islands, which he had always loved; he was constantly busy on various literary projects; he had fun with Virginia's delightful adopted children; he and Laura travelled widely and returned to tell us stories of Brazil and India and Europe at pleasant supper-parties. We heard rumours that he had had cancer of the tongue and been cured. I didn't inquire further because I didn't want to think about it.

Then, on November 5th, 1963, I visited him at the Cedars of Lebanon hospital, where he had been taken for a few days of tests or treatment. Just before I went into his room, the surgeon told me that his condition was hopeless; the cancer was spreading rapidly.

Aldous looked like a withered old man, grey-faced, with dull blank eyes. He spoke in a low, hoarse voice which was hard to understand. I had to sit directly facing him because it hurt him to turn his head. And yet—seeing what I saw and knowing what I knew—I could still almost forget about his condition while we talked, because his mind was functioning so well.

I was nervous at first and talked at random. I mentioned Africa, and Aldous said that all the new African nations would soon be governed by their armies. I mentioned V. V. Rozanov's *Solitaria*, which I had just been reading. Aldous promptly quoted a passage from it, in which Rozanov says that "the private life is above everything . . . just sitting at home and even picking your nose, and looking at the sunset". I told him a silly story—not at all the kind of story I would normally have told him—about Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin playing golf. He laughed at it, quite heartily.

Laura had told me that Aldous did not realize how sick he was. But now he began to speak about old age, and I couldn't help suspecting that this was a kind of metaphor, a way of referring to his own death. He spoke of it almost with petulance, as a wretched hindrance which prevented you from working. He told me that he did not think he would ever write another novel. "I feel more and more out of touch with people." And he added that when one is old one is absolutely cut off from the outside world. I told him, quite sincerely, that I have the impression that, as I grow older, my character gets worse and worse. This made him laugh a lot—not, I think, because he disbelieved me but because he found the statement somehow reassuring. We parted almost cheerfully. I had hoped to see him at least once or twice again, but even the surgeon's prognosis was an over-estimate. Aldous died that same month, on the 22nd, not knowing that Kennedy had been shot that morning. It is good that he was no longer in hospital but back in Virginia's home, with Laura by his side. And one of his fears, at least, was unfounded. He was able to work right up to the day before the end, dictating the last part of an article on Shakespeare. He was not accustomed to dictation, yet the flow of thought was as clear as always; only a couple of small corrections were necessary before it could be published.

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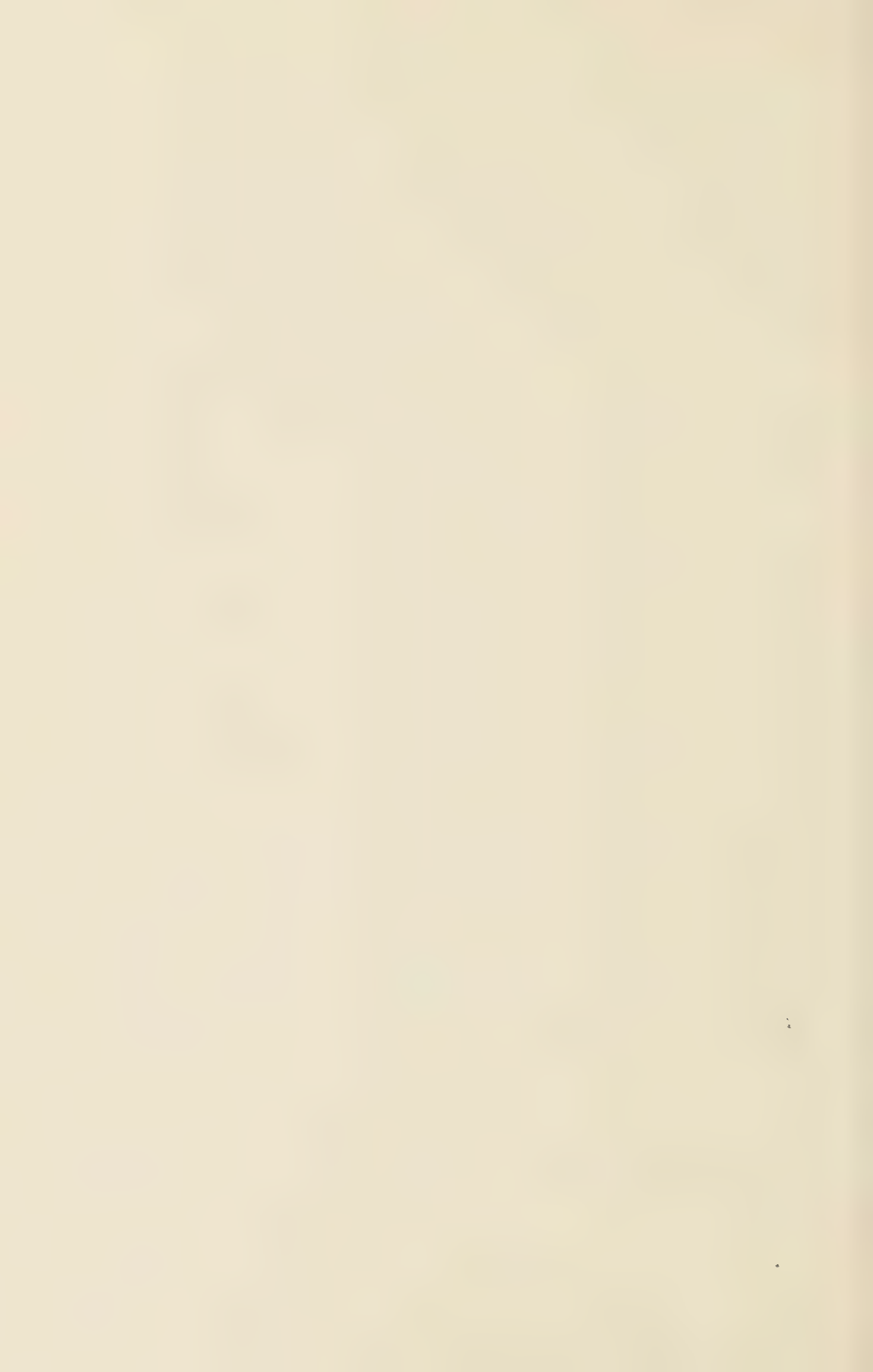
SHAKESPEARE AND RELIGION

by Aldous Huxley



Shakespeare and Religion

A NAME that is a household word, and a word that is on everybody's lips. How simple and straightforward! But then the enquiring mind starts to ask questions. Who precisely was Shakespeare? And what are the sorts of phenomena to which we apply the words 'religion' and 'religious'?

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask. Thou smilest and art still.

True enough, the poet penned no memoirs; he merely left us Shakespeare's Complete Works. Whatever else he may have been, the author was a genius-of-all-trades, a human being who could do practically anything. Lyrics? The plays are full of lyrics. Sonnets? He left a whole volume of them. Narrative poems? When London was plague-ridden and the theatres, as hotbeds of contagion, had been closed, Shakespeare turned out two admirable specimens, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. And then consider his achievements as a dramatist. He could write realistically in the style of a dispassionate and often amused observer of contemporary life: he could dramatise biographies and historical chronicles; he could invent fairy stories and visionary fantasies; he could create (often out of the most unpromising raw material) huge tragic allegories of good and evil, in which almost superhuman figures live their lives and die their often sickening deaths. He could mingle sublimity with pathos, bitterness with joy and peace and love, intellectual subtlety with delirium and the cryptic utterances of inspired wisdom.

And what about 'religion'? The word is used to designate things as different from one another as Satanism and satori, as festish-worship and the enlightenment of a Buddha, as the vast politico-theologico-financial organisations known as churches and the intensely private visions of an ecstatic. A Quaker silence is religion, so is Verdi's *Requiem*. A sense of the blessed All-

Rightness of the Universe is a religious experience and so is the sick soul's sense of self-loathing, of despair, of sin, in a world that is the scene of perpetual perishing and inevitable death.

Our many-faceted Shakespeare commented on religion in almost all its aspects. Here, for example, is what Shakespeare, the detached and amused observer of the Human Comedy, has to say about popular religion—religion as it is apprehended and practised by the more ignorant and simple-minded members of his society. The passage I have chosen is taken from that marvellous scene from *Henry V* in which the Hostess tells Bardolph of the passing of Sir John Falstaff.

BARDOLPH: Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, either in heaven or in hell!

HOSTESS: Nay, sure, he's not in hell: he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. 'A made a finer end, and went away, an it had been any christom child; 'a parted ev'n just between twelve and one, ev'n at the turning o' th' tide: for after I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and 'a babbled of green fields. "How now, Sir John!" quoth I, "what, man! be o' good cheer." So 'a cried out "God, God, God!" three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet.

"There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me," Lord Tennyson earnestly affirmed, "than in half the creeds." Samuel Butler was more interested in Falstaff, Bardolph, the Hostess and all the rest of them—they were the products of an Age of Faith. For them, the Christian Scheme of Salvation was a self-evident truth, and in their minds the Last Judgment and Hell-fire were unquestionable realities. So was Abraham's bosom, or was it King Arthur's bosom? After all, what difference did it make? A bosom is a bosom, and both names began with A. Their appetite

for faith was omnivorous and could swallow anything. All the same, "I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with such thoughts yet." The doubt in honest faith is deep indeed.

Honest faith in God, angels and saints implied a corresponding faith in the Devil, evil spirits and the witches, sorcerers and magicians who collaborated with them. Shakespeare lived in an age when preoccupation with the foul Fiend and his human allies was more than ordinarily intense. Vivid descriptions of witchcraft and rules for its repression had been set forth, in the last decade of the fifteenth century, by two learned Dominicans, Father Kramer and Father Sprenger, whose *Malleus Maleficarum* or *Hammer of Witches*, was to remain a standard textbook for nearly 200 years. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in Protestant and Catholic countries alike, incredible numbers of witches and sorcerers were arrested, tortured, hanged or burned alive. Like the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries (including his sovereign lord, King James I, who was the author of a learned work on witchcraft), Shakespeare certainly believed in sorcery and the possibility of collaboration between human hearts and devils. But this faith was tempered by common sense and dispassionate observation. Thus Glendower claims that he can call spirits from 'the vasty deep'. "Why, so can I," says Hotspur "or so can any man; But will they come when you do call for them?" The vasty deep is alive with spirits, and it is possible to establish communications with them—possible, but, as a matter of observable fact, very difficult. Magic works, but is notoriously unreliable even in the hands of those who have contracted their souls away to the Devil.

Most late medieval and early modern writers are anti-clerical—playfully anti-clerical like Chaucer, who writes of the Friar, 'there is none other incubus but he', or else savagely anti-clerical like Ulrich von Hutten or the Franco Sacchetti of the *Trecento Novelle*. Shakespeare, on the contrary, has no constant bias against the clergy. He knew, of course, that established churches and the regimes they support are great machines for consolidating power and acquiring wealth; he knew that gold

This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless th' accurst;
Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves,
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With senators on the bench . . .

The fact was obvious and deplorable, but he preferred not to harp on it.

Religion is not merely a complex of behaviour-patterns and organizations. It is also a set of beliefs. What were Shakespeare's beliefs? The question is not an easy one to answer; for in the first place Shakespeare was a dramatist who made his characters express opinions which were appropriate to them, but which may not have been those of the poet. And anyhow did he himself have the same beliefs, without alteration or change or emphasis, throughout his life?

The poet's basic Christianity is very beautifully expressed in *Measure for Measure*, where the genuinely saintly Isabella reminds Angelo, the self-righteous Pillar of Society, of the divine scheme of redemption and of the ethical consequences which ought to flow from its acceptance as an article of faith—ought to flow but, alas, generally do not flow!

Alas, alas!
Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgement, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new-made.

These lines, I would say, express very clearly the essence of Shakespeare's Christianity. But the essence of Christianity can assume a wide variety of denominational forms. The Reverend Richard Davies, a clergyman who flourished toward the end of the seventeenth century, declared categorically that Shakespeare had 'died a papist'. There is no corroborative evidence of this, and it seems on the face of it unlikely; but almost anything is

possible, especially on a death-bed. What is certain is that Shakespeare did not live a papist; for, if he had, he would have found himself in chronic and serious trouble with the law, and vehemently suspected of treason.... (The casuists of the Roman curia had let it be known that the assassination of the heretic Queen Elizabeth would not be a sin; on the contrary, it would be registered in the murderer's credit column as a merit.) There is, therefore, every reason to suppose that Shakespeare lived a member of the Church of England. However, the theology which finds expression in his plays is by no means consistently Protestant. Purgatory has no place in the Protestant world-picture, but in *Hamlet* and in *Measure for Measure* the existence of Purgatory is taken for granted.

I am thy father's spirit, says the Ghost to Hamlet,

> *Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,*
> *And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,*
> *Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature*
> *Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid*
> *To tell the secrets of my prison-house,*
> *I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word*
> *Would harrow up thy soul;*
> *freeze thy young blood;*
> *Make thy two eyes, like stars, start*
> *from their spheres. . . .*

In *Measure for Measure*, Claudio gives utterance to the same fears. Death is terrible not only in its physical aspects, but also and above all because of the awful menace of Purgatory.

> *Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;*
> *To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;*
> *This sensible warm motion to become*
> *A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit*
> *To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside*
> *In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;*
> *To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,*
> *And blown with restless violence round about*

The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling! 'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

In *King Lear*, the poet presents us with another world-picture that is neither Catholic nor Protestant. Purgatory exists, but not hereafter. Purgatory is here and now.

I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead. . . .

Whatever else he may have been, Shakespeare was not a precursor of Dr Norman Vincent Peale. Indeed, during the years of his artistic maturity—the years that witnessed the production of *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure* and *King Lear*, he would seem to have passed through a spiritual crisis that made any facile kind of positive thinking or positive feeling impossible. Other great writers have passed through similar crises—Dickens, for example, and Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy's negativism resulted in a religious conversion and a change of life. Dickens cured himself of despondency by plunging into amateur theatricals. How Shakespeare managed his private life we do not know.

All that we know is that if he did indeed go through a dark night of cosmic despair, he was poet enough to be able (in Wordsworth's words) to recollect the emotion in creative tranquillity and to use his experience as the raw material of a succession of tragic dramas that were followed, during the last years of his professional career, by a series of romances, in which strange and improbable adventures are acted out in an atmosphere of acceptance, of forgiveness, of a conviction that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, God's in his heaven and all's right with the world. But on the way to the final serenity of *The Tempest*, what horrors must be faced, what

miseries endured. Keats wrote of Shakespearean tragedy as being the record of 'the fierce dispute between damnation and impassioned clay'. But there is much more in these dramas than the classical battle between instinct and duty, between personal desires and the tradition-hallowed ideals of religion. The Shakespearean hero has to fight his ethical battles in a world that is intrinsically hostile. And this intrinsically hideous universe is shot through with moral evil—evil on the animal level, on the human level, on the supernatural level. Thus the 'soiled fitchew' is the bestial caricature of womanhood; for in woman, 'but to the girdle do the gods inherit, beneath is all the fiend's'.

And men are capable of greater wickedness even than women. 'Use every man after his desert, and who would 'scape whipping?' There is, no doubt, some kind of moral order. The good go to Heaven, the evil to Purgatory and Hell. And even here on earth it can sometimes be observed that 'the gods are just and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us'. But divine justice is tempered by divine malignity. 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods—they kill us for their sport.' And to the effects of divine malignity must be added those of man's wickedness and stupidity, and the workings of a blind fate completely indifferent to human ideals and values. Sickness, decrepitude, death lie in wait for everyone.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player.
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

The speaker is Macbeth; but Macbeth as we know him is Shakespeare's creation, and it was Shakespeare who put the words of this summing up of the case against human life into Macbeth's mouth. Between the thought of the dramatist and of

the dramatis persona there must have been if not an identity, at least an affinity.

Unlike Milton or Dante, Shakespeare had no ambition to be a systematic theologian or philosopher. He was not concerned to 'justify the ways of God to Man' in terms of a set of metaphysical postulates and a network of logical ideas. He preferred to 'hold the mirror up to nature'. It was a many-faceted mirror that changed with the passage of time, and the nature it changed, reflected and recorded was a pluralistic mystery. What he gives us is not a religious system; it is more like an anthology, a collection of different points of view, an assortment of commentaries on the human predicament offered by persons of dissimilar temperament and upbringing. Shakespeare's own religion can be inferred in many cases from hints dropped by his characters.

Interpreters of Shakespeare have divided his career into four sections—first, a time of the workshop during which the young playwright was busily engaged in perfecting his technique. The second, the time in the world when the mature technician was using his powers to dramatize history, assorted fiction and biography. Third, the time in the depths, which is the period we have just been discussing, when Shakespeare produced the series of black, unhappy allegories from *Hamlet* to *Measure for Measure*; and finally the time on the heights. This time on the heights we must now consider.

In our religious context, what is the significance of these later plays? What are we to make of this description of Shakespeare's career? There is certainly a change of mood, there can be no doubt of this. A greater acceptance, a greater openness to the strange anomalies of life. But exactly what does this correspond to in the general history of religious experience? Let us take the case of *The Tempest*, by far the best known and most popular of these latest plays—what did Shakespeare mean by *The Tempest*? We presume that this was the last of his plays, but we cannot be absolutely sure of this, nor can we be sure of the fact that he himself had intended it to be the last. This makes it very difficult to accept the hypothesis that in *The Tempest* Shakespeare was giving a kind of symbolic account of his own career. For he is Prospero. Prospero is the enchanter, the creator

of visionary poetry, and in the end after exercising his enchantment with extraordinary success, he goes back to his dukedom at Milan, resolved to throw his magic wand and his book of charms overboard and to live out the remainder of his life on the ordinary level of human experience. But after all, the return of the successful actor to his native place where he would live out the remainder of his life, a solid pillar of society, and the return of a deposed duke to his sovereignty, where he would have to exercise an almost godlike judgment over the destinies of his subjects—these things do not have much in common.

If indeed *The Tempest* was written as an allegory of Shakespeare's life, it was a far-fetched allegory, one which leaves us wondering why this great master of the art should have been unable to find something more suitable. But at the same time we have to remember that the fact that Prospero was an enchanter is a most disturbing one in relation to religion. Enchantment, the use of magic, has always occupied an ambiguous position in religion. Religion calls for opening up the self, the letting that which is more than the self flow through the organism and direct its activities. Magic, on the other hand, is an attempt to establish the complete mastery of the self over everything. It is a technological device making the self all-powerful and so imitating God. But in no religion has this kind of *hubris* or overweening pride been considered admirable, and although supernormal powers may manifest themselves spontaneously on the way towards enlightenment, yet all the Masters of the spiritual life have insisted that they are not important, and that they must, if the aspirant is to go forward, be abandoned.

Prospero, of course, knows this perfectly well and, in the very end of the play, does abandon these powers. But for the greater part of the play we are shown him as a magician—a white magician it is true, but a white magician capable of considerable malice towards the unfortunate Caliban. A white magician who is capable of using a great deal of ingenuity in the preparation of tricks to catch his enemies. He has had the insight into the ultimate nature of things and knows what must be done and what must be left undone.

Our revels are now ended, these our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Prospero is here enunciating the doctrine of Maya. The world is an illusion, but it is an illusion which we must take seriously, because it is real as far as it goes, and in those aspects of the reality which we are capable of apprehending. Our business is to wake up. We have to find ways in which to detect the whole of reality in the one illusory part which our self-centred consciousness permits us to see. We must not live thoughtlessly, taking our illusion for the complete reality, but at the same time we must not live too thoughtfully in the sense of trying to escape from the dream state. We must continually be on our watch for ways in which we may enlarge our consciousness. We must not attempt to live outside the world, which is given us, but we must somehow learn how to transform it and transfigure it. Too much 'wisdom' is as bad as too little wisdom, and there must be no magic tricks. We must learn to come to reality without the enchanter's wand and his book of the words. One must find a way of being in this world while not being of it. A way of living in time without being completely swallowed up in time.

Hotspur, as he is dying, sums up the human predicament with a few memorable words:

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

We think we know who we are and what we ought to do about it, and yet our thought is conditioned and determined by the

nature of our immediate experience as psycho-physical organisms on this particular planet. Thought, in other words, is Life's fool. Thought is the slave of Life, and Life obviously is Time's fool inasmuch as it is changing from instant to instant, changing the outside and the inner world so that we never remain the same two instants together.

Thought is determined by life, and life is determined by passing time. But the dominion of time is not absolute, for 'time must have a stop' in two senses, from the Christian point of view in which Shakespeare was writing. It must have a stop in the last judgment, and in the winding up of the universe. But on the way to this general consummation, it must have a stop in the individual mind, which must learn the regular cultivation of a mood of timelessness, of the sense of eternity.

We are all well on the way to an existential religion of mysticism. How many kinds of religion! How many kinds of Shakespeare!

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(Continued from front flap)

exercise, or a chemical—that might expand the human animal's perception or potentialities. He was as comfortable with Charlie Chaplin as with Igor Stravinsky or Krishnamurti; he would talk to a child, a dolphin, a banker and a medical seminar with the same exuberance and seriousness.

This amazing many-sidedness is revealed most strikingly in this collection of essays by Aldous Huxley's friends, all outstanding people in their own right. Each of the contributors saw a slightly different Huxley, and each has recorded that image in highly personal terms. What emerges is not a series of prim, respectful memoirs, but an exhilarating celebration of a man of genius. Throughout the book is the endless bubbling of Huxley's good humor and wit. Near the end of his life, when his home and all his possessions were destroyed in a California brush fire, his reaction was, "It was quite an experience, but it did make one feel extraordinarily *clean*."

This volume has a particular value for all collectors of Aldous Huxley's work, because it includes his last piece of writing, "On Shakespeare and Religion," completed only a few days before his death.

The following are contributors to this volume:

SIR KENNETH CLARK

STEPHEN SPENDER

LORD DAVID CECIL

SIR JULIAN HUXLEY

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(extract from a letter to the editor)

THE HON. SIR STEVEN RUNCIMAN

T. S. ELIOT

SIR OSBERT SITWELL

LEONARD WOOLF

JULIETTE HUXLEY

NAOMI MITCHISON

GERVAS HUXLEY

ANDRÉ MAUROIS

PROFESSOR DENNIS GABOR

VICTORIA OCAMPO

YEHUDI MENUHIN

ANITA LOOS

DR. ROBERT M. HUTCHINS

GERALD HEARD

PROFESSOR HARRISON BROWN

DR. HUMPHRY OSMOND

DR. MAX CUTLER

JACOB ISRAEL ZEITLIN

RAYMOND MORTIMER

SYBILLE BEDFORD

PROFESSOR SIR ISAIAH BERLIN

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD