Aldous Huxley was one of those conscious writers of the present century who employed the medium of art particularly the novel, to discover a solution to the ills of modern life. In his novels, guided by his keen interest in mystical experience, he begins to explore its efficacy for the problems besetting the contemporary society. After his conversion to mysticism in 1936, Huxley came to the conclusion that the spiritual malady of modern man lies in his excessive attachment to time. This modern pointlessness is due to man's reliance on the scientific picture of the universe. The scientific picture is nothing more than an over simplified abstraction imposed on the vast complexities of the universe. The scientific picture excludes all that is wonderful and mysterious in reality.

Huxley believes that science deals with abstraction and compartmental knowledge and reflects its inability to view life as an organic whole. He writes:

From the world we actually live in, the world that is given by our senses, our intuitions of beauty and goodness, our emotions and impulses, our moods and sentiments, the man of science abstracts a simplified private universe of things possessing only those qualities which used to be called 'primary'. Arbitrarily, because it happens to be convenient; because his methods do not allow him to deal with the immense complexity of reality, he
selects from the whole of experience only those elements which can be weighed, measured, numbered or, which lend themselves in any other way to mathematical treatment. Reality as actually experienced contains intuitions of value and significance love, beauty, mystical ecstasy, intimations of godhead. Science did not and still does not possess intellectual instruments with which to deal with these aspects of reality.

It shows that science does not possess the necessary intellectual instruments to grasp the vision of the artist, the religious consciousness of the saint, and the qualitative values which provide life with meaning and purpose. Huxley gives unique importance to aesthetic, moral and religious experiences which have been completely ignored by the modern scientists. These experiences enrich our life and "sometimes explicitly, but much more often by implication", suggest the peace "that passeth all understanding".

Huxley strongly felt that man can attain to eternity only by following the mystical path advocated by the mystics of all races and climes. In Ends and Means, Huxley has systematically developed his ideas in mysticism. He regards mysticism as a definite shade or form of heightened states of consciousness. It is an ordered movement towards a higher level of reality involving a conscious and permanent union with the Absolute or close identification with the Infinite. It is the realisation of ultimate reality that leads man to salvation. Huxley treats mysticism as "a system of education" and, therefore, prescribes certain ethical, intellectual and spiritual disciplines to achieve the mystical state of consciousness. He advocates that "meditation is ......... the
technique of mysticism. Properly practised with due preparation, physical mental and moral, meditation may result in a state of what has been called 'transcendental consciousness' - the direct intuition of and union with an ultimate spiritual reality that is perceived as simultaneously beyond the self and in some way within it...........n^5.

In The Perennial Philosophy, Huxley develops a systematic exposition of his mystical philosophy. It is a valuable document for the understanding of Huxley's ideas on mysticism. The perennial philosophy lifts the veil of maya, and makes man aware of the abiding reality, behind the shifting shadows of phenomenal world. Huxley arrives at this conviction through sheer logical argument and empirical analysis. He accepts the existence of ultimate reality which is "ineffable in terms of discursive thought," but can be "directly experienced and realised by the human being". That is why mystics of the world emphasize different ways to reach salvation.

Huxley writes:

That so many philosophers and mystics, belonging to so many different cultures, should have been convinced, by inference or by direct intuition, that the world possesses meaning and value is a fact sufficiently striking to make it worthwhile at least to investigate the belief in question. He insists that "the end of human life is contemplation, or the direct intuitive awareness of God". Huxley recommends the Buddha's 'Eight-fold-path' for achieving this ideal state of consciousness. He writes: "Complete deliverance is
conditional on the following: first Right Belief in the all too obvious truth that the cause of pain and evil is craving for separative, egocentred existence....... Such are the means which it is within the power of the human being to employ in order to achieve man's final end and be saved⁹. In the Introduction to Swami Prabhavananda's and Christopher Isherwood's translation of The Song of God, Huxley has stated the true goal of the mystic quest. He says "man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground"¹⁰. According to Huxley this state of eternal peace and 'unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground' can only be attained through mystical experience.

In Eyeless in Gaza (1936) Huxley advocates the traditional way of apprehending ultimate reality. Anthony Beavis, disgusted with his earlier life of sexual irresponsibility, ultimately realises that the way out is only through contemplation or meditation. In fact Huxley's attitude towards sex as evidenced by his early fiction has been one of disgust. Wherever man and woman meet and indulge in sexual act, they experience nothing but disillusion and disgust. In a way Huxley, like T.S. Eliot, reflects the spiritual disillusionment of modern life through the degeneration of sex. Sex in early ages had been associated with creativity and moral responsibility. The sexual degeneration in modern life is in a way, symbolic of the spiritual degeneration of modern life.
In *Antic Hay*, Gumbril junior proposes to sell his 'pneumatic trousers by means of a spiritual message'. Such trousers, he observes, 'protect the great nerve centres of the spine,' 'the seat of dark,' powerful sense and sex life. He is overwhelmingly in love with Emily. She reciprocates his love and longs for a healthy relationship. He makes an appointment with Emily but on the way he meets Myra Viveash who hinders the fulfilment of his love. Viveash makes him succumb to temptation: "We lunch at Verry's Theodore, or I shall never, never speak to you again". When Gumbril's physical desire for transient satisfaction is consummated, it is followed by disappointment and moral degeneracy. Gumbril's affair with Viveash destroys his happiness in life because, Emily, who wanted to establish a deeper emotional relationship with him, turns hostile.

It appears that for Myra Viveash sex is nothing more than a thirst which has to be quenched. But at times, she expresses her attitude towards sex in a quite different way, as is seen, for example, in her conversation with Gumbril:

"Oh dear!" sighed Mrs Viveash. "Charming!" Gumbril protested. ...... love like sheets of silky flame; like landscapes brilliant in the sunlight against a back-ground of purple thunder; like the solution of a cosmic problem; like faith.................. 'Crickey' said Mrs Viveash. ...... Somewhere, somewhere. But in my veins creep the maggots of the pox."

Instead of finding any enduring satisfaction in life, Viveash experiences fatigue and boredom. She finds that nothing in life endures:
Grief doesn't kill, love doesn't kill; but time kills everything, kills desire, kills sorrow, kills in the end the mind that feels them, wrinkles and softens the body while it still lives, rots it like a medler, kills it too at last. Never again, never again.

Coleman, another character in the same novel, is so much fascinated by the spiritual dimension of love that he exposes the horrors of sensuality and debauchery and views them in terms of "total pointlessness, futility and above all its incredible tediousness". His experience of sex ends up in total emotional despair.

In Crome Yellow, Denis is a hyper-sensitive, young ineffectual poet burdened by "twenty-tons of ratiocination" sick of himself, future life in general and the universe as a whole. He is passionately in love with Anne; pure sexual feelings develop in him very vigorously. With a view to conveying his feelings to her, he writes a poem expecting a positive response from her. However, she fails to plumb his intentions. Anne, analyses his malady and says:

"What you need, Denis, is a nice plumb, young wife, a fixed income, and a little congenial but regular work". "What I need is you," That was what he ought to have retorted, that was what he wanted passionately to say. He could not say it.

When Denis actually attempts to make love to Anne "She gently chides him as might an elder sister her brother who is caught attempting to purloin some cookies". Denis is a failure in his relationship with Anne and his carnal desire leads him to utter frustration. While Anne states her attitude towards life through the remark : "One enjoys the pleasant
things, avoids the nasty ones." There is neither any decency or any purpose in her life. She flirts with Ivor Gombauld and would like to flirt with Denis.

In *Those Barren Leaves*, Francis Chelifer believes in the idealistic and spiritual conception of love and attempts to resist the baser passions. But very soon he succumbs to the temptation of Barbara. He expects Barbara to be chaste and pure but she belies his expectations. She is a selfish hypocrite and thirsty for pleasures of the most vulgar kind. Failure to find fulfilment in love renders him unhappy. Barbara has taken her stand in the heart of a wasteland and her life suggests only disgust and meaninglessness. Mrs Aldwinkle in the same novel indulges in all kind of erotic pleasures. She is all along worried about sex and old age. She loves Chelifer, but he has no inclination to turn whole-heartedly to her passions. Like Viveash, she is a sexually frustrated woman.

Huxley, through Calamy, seems to intimate a way out to the problem seeking liberation from that finite consciousness of ours which makes us wander in a world of unrealities, of shadows and of illusions. He feels that so long as one is under the spell of bodily pleasures, one remains inside the world of tumult. He says, "I don't want to succumb to any more little ravishment. It's too stupid; it's too childish"18. He believes that man must strive for salvation here and now and not hereafter. When Cardan questions him about the problem of
physical love, he (Calamy) confidently asserts that his mystical quest would continue without interruption by physical desires. He says that the "natural and moderate satisfactin of sexual instinct," in itself, is no doubt a "matter quite indifferent to morality," but "it is certainly bad" when physical passion "enslaves a mind that feels within itself," the mind should be "free to contemplate and recollect itself" 19. Each character, except Calamy, seems to be fed up with the dull and dreary routine of sexual pleasure.

Huxley's 'Point Counter Point' opens with a depressing condition between Marjorie Carling and Walter Bidlake. We are told that Marjorie is a married woman with whom Walter fell in love more out of pity than out of passion. She had left her husband two years before and started living with Walter without being able to obtain a divorce from her husband. She is with child by him and he is in love with someone else. When the story opens Walter is already fed up with her and is chasing another woman by the name of Lucy Tantamount. He hates Marjorie because she looks ugly, tired and ill. He does not want to live with her any more:

'Oh, why can't she leave me in peace?' He wished it furiously, intensely, with an exasperation that was all the more savage for being suppressed (For he lacked the brutal courage to give it utterance; he was sorry for her, he was fond of her in spite of everything; he was incapable of being openly and frankly cruel - he was cruel only out of weakness, against his will). 'Why can't she leave me in peace?' He would like her so much more if only she left him in peace; she herself would be so much happier....' But all the same why the devil can't she let me do what I want?' 19
Walter now wants Marjorie to leave him to himself and not to bother him with any question about where and why he is going. He finds himself obsessed by a sensual desire for Lucy. He is irresistibly drawn towards Lucy, though he does not understand the secret of her fascination for him. While his love for Marjorie had been spiritual in essence, his love for Lucy is completely sensual and he experiences what he calls "beastly desires" for her. When Walter kisses her for the first time in a taxi, she disengages herself from his embrace and says, 'No, no'. He is, however, not discouraged by her resistance and as Lucy says to herself, he attends upon her with "a dog-like fidelity" and sometimes even looks like "a whipped dog". It would not be wrong to say that Lucy's general attitude towards him even when she has accepted him as a lover is contemptuous. Walter's spirit is at last broken by the utter heartlessness and callousness of Lucy and though the author does not say so in so many words, we can imagine that he now completely gives up Lucy and resumes his relationship with Marjorie though without much enthusiasm.

Lucy is a woman of lax morals. After the death of her husband, she seems to have been flirting with various men, her latest catch being Walter Bidlake. Lucy, as an accomplished coquette, employs all the weapons in her armoury to entangle a man. In the beginning, she does not, for instance, let him kiss her, though she encourages him to pursue her. Then gradually she shows more and more interest in him even though she has no real feeling for him. When Lucy has consented to
be his wife, her attitude towards him is characterised by utter lack of emotional involvement or desire for oneness. Huxley brings this out through emphatic phrases leaving us in no doubt about the essential selfishness and frivolity of the woman:

"She did not want to feel that deep tenderness which is a surrender of the will, a breaking down of personal separateness. She wanted to be herself, Lucy Tantamount, in full command of the situation, enjoying herself consciously to the last limit, ruthlessly having her fun; free, not only financially and legally but emotionally too, - emotionally free to have him or not to have him."

Too much liberty is bad. The result of Lucy's impassioned indulgence is boredom. She is dry, empty and without love. Her sensuality is detached, an object of her conscious will.

Her attitude towards Walter is utterly heartless. She could justly be described as a vamp. At one time, when she was in Paris, she had a love-affair with Spandrell whom she gave up for another man after about a month. Lucy writes a number of letters to Walter from Paris wherein she exultantly describes how an Italian whom she met by chance fascinated her and she had a most delicious sexual experience with him:

"Beautifully savage he looked. And as savage as his looks. The marks are still there where he bit me on the neck. I shall have to wear a scarf for days."

Both Walter and Lucy are thus victims of careless sensuality. Similarly John Bidlake is what Huxley would have called a 'barbarian of the senses.' He has lived his life as
though he had been "a great lover, a great worker, a great eater, drinker, and taker of virginities". As a painter he had been specializing in painting nude women, and regarded painting as "a branch of sensuality". To Hilda, he brought the revelation of her own body and her physical potentialities. As her husband had never been a competent lover, John Bidlake had filled the gap in Hilda's life and had given her the kind of sexual satisfaction which her husband could never have provided. However, neither he, nor Hilda believed in monopolizing each other for good.

John Bidlake has no sense of responsibility. Any arrangement, that binds him down is intolerable to him. He is a flibbertigibbet. For him 'the ideal was to live, emotionally and socially speaking, from hand to mouth without plans, without a status, in good company of one's own daily choosing, not the choosing of others or some dead self'. But in the end his continuous effort to maximize his personal happiness brings him defeat and discomfort. pain and disappointment - that is all the future holds for him. Philip, thus, comments on seeing him at this stage:

Deplorable......... to see an Olympian reduced by a little tumour in his stomach to a state of sub-humanness. But perhaps ............ he was always sub-human, even when he seemed most Olympian perhaps being Olympian was just a symptom of sub-humanity.

Burlap, the editor of the Literary World, is mean in his attitude towards love, sex and marriage. When his wife, Susan, was alive, Burlap had written several articles in praise of
marriage and yet he had often been unfaithful to Susan. His relations with Susan have been described in a ironical vein:

His life with Susan was a succession of scenes in every variety of emotional key. He would chew and chew on some grievance until he had poisoned himself into a passion of anger or jealousy. Or else he would pore over his own shortcomings and grow objectively repentant, or roll at her feet in an ecstasy of incestuous adoration for the imaginary mother-baby of a wife with whom he had chosen to identify the corporal Susan. And then sometimes...

Susan dies and a few days later Burlap travels down to Birmingham to meet Miss Cobbett, a clerk in the Insurance Office. Being a school-mate of Susan, Burlap offers her a secretarial job. She agrees and consequently falls a prey to his pretensions. Miss Cobbett is an admirable woman of principle, as passionate in her moral loyalties as in her love. She is, therefore, filled with mixed feeling of resentment and pity—resentment for Burlap’s hypocrisy and pity for her own helplessness. Burlap treats her as though she were just a machine for taking down letters and copying articles. Miss Cobbett arouses in him only ‘the vague adolescent itch of desire’ which any woman could satisfy. He, therefore, starts loving Beatrice, another young woman, with whom he behaves as a disguised Platonic lover:
'It was the soft young-girlish, tremulous core of her that Burlap caressed with that delicate touch of spirit fingers from the Great Beyond. She felt no fears, or at least only such faint breathless flutterings of her still almost Childish flesh as served to quick her happiness.... At the first touch the round breast shuddered; it had its private terrors within Beatrice's general happiness and sense of security. But patiently, gently, unalarming, the spirit hand repeated its caress again, again, till the reassured and at last eager breast longed for its return and her whole body was alive with the tingling ramifications of the breast's desires. In the darkness the eternities prolonged themselves.'

Burlap is a modern vulture, a low-class adventurer without all finer feelings, a spiritual leech, 'a parasite that feeds on a living host and always the choicest he can find'.

Similarly, Sidney Quarles, is a seducer of his servants, secretaries and peasant girls. All his love, all his being is lust and lust alone. He makes his prey suffer bitterly. Gladys, his secretary, is with child by him. It is she who exposes him:

'Because I know you were frightened...... frightened that people might find out what you were really like. You dirty old...... giving yourself such airs, as though you was the Prince of Wales. And then taking a girl to dinner at the Corner House. And blaming everybody else, worse than a person, when you're no better than a dirty old pig yourself. Yes, a dirty old pig, that's what you are. Saying you loved me, indeed I know what that sort of love is. Why, a girl isn't safe with you in a taxi. No, she isn't. You filthy old beast!'

Sidney, like John Bidlake, in the end suffers from an acute fear of death. He believed "he was going to die, because there was at least a part of his mind that desired to die. These
complications of the last weeks had been too much for him, and the future promised to be worse."

It is interesting to note that all the characters are alike, sex-crazy and lust-ridden. For them the sexual act is a mere pleasure of the body, a carnal act and not a means by which love is expressed and life perpetuated. They are condemned to anxiety, despair, passion and restlessness. The reason for this anxiety lies in the fact that they are spiritually weak, crippled and cramped. Through them Huxley, perhaps, strives to indicate that unhappiness invariably results if sensuality overwhelms spirituality.

Most of Huxley's characters succumb to the temptations of carnal pleasures and consequently experience disappointment, moral degeneracy and physical decrepitude. In 'Eyeless in Gaza'. Anthony Beavis indulges in heartless sensual pleasures with Helen and Mary Amberley, although he knows that sensuality is trivial and transient. The two incidents that lead Anthony to disgust and a Psychological crisis are: when a dead dog falls from an aeroplane on the terrace where he is making love with Helen and their naked bodies are covered with the spattered blood of the animal. Helen refuses to see Anthony again and marries a German revolutionary and secondly, when he seduces Joan, his friend Brain's fiancee. He becomes a psychosomatic patient and life appears to him meaningless and sordid.
In the same novel Mary Amberley, the twentieth century free woman, exhibits sexual depravities of the worst kind. She says: "One's always doing the things one doesn't want—stupidly, out of sheer perversity. One chooses the worst because it is the worst". She stoops to lucid passion and ultimately ends up with abortion and hypodermic syringe.

Helen Amberley, the daughter of Mary Amberley, is reading on abortion from the Encyclopaedia: "If a woman...... administers to herself any poison or other means to procure her own miscarriage, she is guilty of.......,". Helen finds Mary Amberley engaged in "filling a hypodermic syringe from a little glass ampoul". Mary tells Helen, "It's all Gerry's fault,'........' everything's his fault".

Gerry is lover of both Helen and Mary Amberley. The mother and the daughter are the victims of the same man. The scene that follows presents a topsy-turvy chaos of moral values. Huxley writes:

Answering quite a different question, parring a reproach that had never been made, 'I could not help it', Mrs. Amberley replied. 'It was like this'. She made a little movement with hand that held the hypodermic syringe. 'You mean', said Helen speaking very slowly, and as though overcoming an almost invincible recalcitrance, 'you mean he was'............ 'he was your lover?'

The strangeness of the tone aroused Mrs. Amberley, for the first time since their conversation had begun, to something like a consciousness of her daughter's real, personal existence. Turning she looked at Helen with an expression of astonishment. 'You did not know ?' Confronted by that extra-ordinary pallor, those uncontrollably trembling lips, the older woman was
seized with a sudden compunction. 'But darling, I'm sorry. I did not imagine.......... You are still so young; you don't understand. You can't........ But where you are going? Come back! Helen! The door slammed. Mrs. Amberley made a move to follow her daughter, then thought better of it, and instead, resumed the interrupted task of filling her hypodermic syringe.

In *Time Must Have A Stop*, Veronica Thawle indulges all sorts of hideous acts. Eustace Barnack is another cynical character in this novel who embodies the philosophy of pointlessness.

In *After Many A Summer*, Virginia Maunciple loves Jo-Stoyte because she believes that: "In the world in which she had lived, it was axiomatic, that a man who could make a million dollars must be wonderful. Parents, friends, teachers, newspapers, radio, advertisements - explicity or by implication, all were unanimous in proclaiming his wonderfulness". She becomes a double-crosser and starts loving Dr. Obispo and Pete. She detaches sex from values.

From the preceding analysis, it is evident that Huxley was engaged in documenting the agony, despair and sordidness of the modern age. Huxley seems to make it clear that the spiritual decay of modern life is due to the degeneration of love into what has been aptly described as loveless loving.

II

Though Huxley's attitude towards sex was characterized by disgust, for sex reminds man that he is basically an animal
and spirit is an unnecessary adjunct to the body. Huxley had, no doubt, begun to realise that it was foolish to neglect the physical side of life. However, he was certainly influenced by Lawrentian ideas. D.H. Lawrence was one of the few people for whom Huxley felt 'real respect and admiration'. 'Of most other eminent people I have met' writes Huxley, 'I feel that at any rate I belong to the same species as they do. But this man has something different and superior in kind not degree'.

Aldous Huxley saw Lawrence as a liberator, an apostle of sexual emancipation, a great artist. Disgusted with the cant he heard in his youth about Christian love and self-mortification, Lawrence derided all restraints on sexual life — religious, moral or merely social — in so far as they were based on prejudices. For him sex was the starting point of human life, of all creation, and an exceptionally important facet of human relationship. Mark Rampion in 'Point Counter Point', to some extent, stands for the Lawrentian philosophy, when he stresses that vitalism alone can bring about integration to the schismatic, modern sensibility. Rampion is convinced that man is not only spirit, he is also a child of nature, an animal species who is always driven by his appetites and passions. At one point in the novel, Rampion says to Spandrell:

'If men went about satisfying their instinctive desire only when they genuinely felt them, like the animals you're so contemptuous of, they'd behave a damned sight better than the majority of civilised
human beings behave today. It isn't natural appetite and spontaneous instinctive desire that make men so beastly. It's the imagination, it's the intellect, its principles, its tradition and education. Leave the instincts to themselves and they'll do very little mischief.'}

In other words, what is thought to be "best and noble" in human beings - namely intellect and imagination - can lead them only to disaster; what is most typically animal, the instinctive drive to physical survival, can never do harm. The important point to be told here is that instead of denying our physical urges and to repress them, we should establish real cordiality with them. Life must be lived as though it were 'life in a world of living people'. Here Rampion says the most interesting and inspiring things to Spendrell:

'This demaned Soul' ....... 'this demaned abstract soul - it is like a kind of cancer, eating up the real, human, natural reality, spreading and spreading at its expense ......... The cancer may have a beautiful shape; but damn it all, the body's more beautiful. I don't want your spiritual cancer'.

Such ideas about the body which must be seen as presented intentionally and favourably by Huxley, appear to be taken from Lawrence's ideal - his belief in living a natural, spontaneous and intuitive life. In a letter written to Earnest Collings on the 17th January 1913 Lawrence says:

'My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle.'

Though Huxley has captured much of the Lawrentian philosophy in Rampion, yet it will be wrong to assume that Rampion is a complete portrait of Lawrence. Huxley confesses: "Have I
'done' Lawrence? No Kingham (in 'Two or Three Graces') was concocted before I knew him - at least I'd only seen him once, during the war. Rampion is just some of Lawrence's notions on legs". Huxley finds that in the works of Lawrence, this conflict between the body and the spirit is, to a large extent, resolved. Through his characters, Lawrence seems to emphasize that the mental faculties should remain in clear balance with the physical. Huxley puts this into the mouth of Rampion:

"No body's asking you to be anything but a man. A man, mind you. Not an angel or 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 the body and instinct and all that's unconscious and earthly and mysterious at the other. Balanced." 41

Despite his enthusiasm for Lawrentian vitalism, Huxley could not accept the idea that intellect is inferior to blood. This is quite evident from the fact that Lawrence did not take a sympathetic view of Rampion, and called him "a gas-bag" 42. It would be a mistake to run away with the idea that Rampion is belittling the mind. He clashes with Philip Quarles, who shares some attributes of his author's personality, not because he wants to belittle the mind but because Quarles overemphasizes it and denies the body. Philip Quarles is impressed by what Rampion says to him. Here he comes to a tentative conclusion: "Like him, I mistrust intellectualism, but intellectually I disbelieve in the adequacy of any scientific or philosophical theory, any abstract moral principle ..... The problem for me is to transform a detached intellectual scepticism into a way of harmonious all round
living"[1]. In order to find out the solution of this problem Huxley must have sensed the usefulness of something in the acceptance of Life rather than its renunciation.

However, the Lawrentian cult of animal innocence of the primitive man was sadly contradicted by Huxley's visit to Central America. Huxley says: "The advance from primitivism to civilization from mere blood to mind and spirit, is a progress whose price is fixed; there are no discounts even for the most highly talented purchasers"[II]. Therefore, the reversion to a state of animal innocence is not possible. Huxley, however, learnt from Lawrence, that in any process of spiritual evolution, human body is as important as the mind.

In fact, right from the dawn of civilization, we have been asked again and again to repress and hold back our normal bodily urges and our scriptures have 'endless miles of sermons on this score' where as the reality is that there is nothing of greater value in human life than the fundamental and all-compelling instinctive drive. Subpression cannot free us from the sexual feeling; on the contrary, it leads to worse obsessions with it and distorts 'a way of harmonious allround living'. Huxley conveys this through Philip: "The repressed functions don't die; they deteriorate, they revert to primitiveness". It was perhaps this conviction which later led him to investigate the possibility of mystical experience through mind-changing drugs and sexual experience.
Despite the fact Huxley's early attitude towards sexual experience was one of disgust, there are references in his early fiction also where he toys with the idea that perhaps sex can be a means of transcendence or spiritual regeneration. The Monster in the play in 'Antic Hay' perhaps expresses Huxley's desire for an ideal sex relationship:

'Somewhere there must be love like music. Love harmonious and ordered: two spirits, two bodies moving contrapunctually together. Somewhere the stupid, brutish act must be made to make sense, must be enriched, must be made significant.'

Dennis in 'Crome Yellow' thinks perhaps pleasure "is one of the mystical roads to union with the infinite, and women, 'the broad highway to divinity'". Chelifer in Those Barren Leaves urges Calamy not to retire to mountains in quest of truth, but to explore simultaneously both the temptation and the universe. To the ascetic ideal of renunciation, which Calamy desires to embrace, Chelifer retorts that there have been "religions that prescribed indulgence" as a means of spiritual salvation. In 'Crome Yellow' Huxley seems to explore the possibilities of mystical experience through the ecstasies of love-making and sexual feelings. Huxley puts this in the mouth of Denis when he confides to Anne, "Beauty has something to do with truth and goodness. I have to say that art is the process by which one reconstructs the divine reality out of chaos. Pleasure is one of the mystical roads to union with the infinite - the ecstasies of drinking, dancing and love-making".
Marry, in the same novel, is fully advanced in sexual matters, she is acquainted with the works of Havelock Alice and Freud. She applies Freudian analysis to her dreams. Here she explains to Anne:

'That is just it,' ...... 'I am afraid of them. It's always dangerous to repress one's instincts. I'm beginning to detect in myself symptoms like the ones you read of in the books. I constantly dream that I'm falling down wells; and sometimes I even dream that I'm climbing up ladder.'

According to Freudian psychology, 'falling down' or climbing up ladder' is a symbolic of the desire for sexual intercourse. A little deep thinking reveals that the rhythmic character of climbing and the accompanying increase in excitation - the shortening of the breath as the climber ascends - characterise sexual intercourse as well.

Emily in 'Antic Hay', who shrinks from any form of sexual act, provides Gumbril with a first glimpse of what may be described as mystical experience:

'The eternity had been renewed, the enchantment prolonged. There was no need to think of anything now but the moment. The past was forgotten, the future abolished. There was only this secret room and the candle light and .......... happiness of being two.'

Here Gumbril seems to love Emily with a passion almost religious. Under the impact of D.H. Lawrence's philosophy of the body, Huxley, in the late nineteen twenties did not hesitate to reject the mystic's contempt for the ideal of spontaneous and natural living. He looked on the world as a marvellous creation which he wanted to enjoy as much as he could. All the ascetic dogmas and moral inhibitions seemed to
him quite meaningless. Rejecting the orthodox attitude towards love and sex, he believes that love is, in reality, a sex appeal: the communicating of a sense of beauty. In 'Do What You Will,' Huxley remarks:

Innumerable gods have sanctioned and forbidden innumerable kinds of sexual behaviour, and innumerable philosophers and poets have advocated the return, to the most diverse kinds of 'nature' ....... In any given human society, at any given moment, love ........ in the result of the interaction of the unchanging instinctive and physiological material of sex with the local conventions of morality and religions.\(^5\)

According to Huxley, though love is essentially rooted in sex, divine ecstasy as well. Huxley is quite dissatisfied with the present day attitude towards sex and love-making. He emphasizes Lawrence's 'new mythology of nature' and especially, his concept of 'natural love' as genuine and human rather than sensual. Moreover, Aldous Huxley admires Lawrence for he was "always intensely aware of the mystery of the world and the mystery was always for him a 'numen', divine"\(^4\).

It would be important to note that Huxley's attitude towards mysticism, in his early writings, was negative. He took mysticism, in the words of George Woodcock, "to criticise to debunk, to mock" \(^5\). In his essay, 'Vulgarity in Literature, he approvingly quotes a friend who opined that mysticism was 'misty schism.' In his later writings, he, however, comes to believe that mysticism alone can provide a
satisfying philosophy for modern man. Perhaps his mood of self-disgust and the shattering experiences of his early life made him accept the conviction that time is evil, and joy and peace are the fruits of mystical experience. His blindness, his mother's death, his brother Trev's death by suicide - all these experiences shook his faith in life. Moreover, the Western Myth of automatic progress through science and technology - towards a man-made Utopia disappointed him and hence, he rejected it. Repelled by the ills of Western civilization, which he attributed to the failure of Christianity, Huxley turned to the study of 'Vedantic and Buddhist' philosophy. In his letter to Jullian Huxley dated the 22nd of July 1934, he wrote:

Have also read rather an interesting book published this spring by Oxford University Press - Yoga and Western Psychology, by a woman called Geraldine excellent summary and analysis of Patanjali's teaching and a comparison between it and the recent developments of psychoanalysis. I've always felt that it was vitally necessary for people to have some efficient technique for personal development .......... people who are mentally and spiritually undeveloped ........

Anthony Beavis, the hero of Huxley's 'Eyeless in Gaza' is failed with self-disgust and eschews reality to live in a world of irresponsible sexuality. It is under the benign influence of Dr. Miller, who professes a belief in Vedanta and Zen Buddhism, that Anthony finally undergoes some kind of mystical experience and achieves peace from "pride and hatred and anger, peace from cravings and aversions, peace from all the separating frenzies". It appears that Huxley has extracted much material for his philosophy of non-attachment.
from Buddhism and Hinduism.

Huxley was temporarily dissatisfied with Oriental Mysticism when he made a tour of the Far East. He was highly exasperated by his visit to India. He maintains that spirituality is "the primal course of India", and brands Oriental mystics as the "false prophets from the East". He found India 'a queer country - a nightmare, out of which I am really rather glad to escape'. Later in 'Jesting Pilate' (1926) Huxley writes:

no doubt, in America, the way of Gautama has all the appearance of the salvation. One is all for religion until one visits a religious country .......... To Travel is to discover that everybody is wrong'.

Similarly, Philip Quarles in Point Counter Point who is also a spokesman of Huxley, thinks:

'What a comfort it will be to be back in Europe again! And to think there was a time when I read books about Yoga and did breathing exercises and tried to persuade myself that didn't really exist. What a fool!'Fortunately, in 1937, Huxley and Gerald Heard paid a visit to California in order to settle there and formed a group which included Krishnamurti, Anita Loos, Charlie Chaplin, Christopher Isherwood, Edwin Hubble and Greta Garbo, became a distinguished member of the Vedantic Society and directed his entire energy to the exposition of the Vedantic philosophy. In California he came in contact with Swami Prabhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission who made him accept the positive line of spiritual faith. In his later years,
Huxley became immensely interested in Oriental philosophy. He has elaborated the Vedantic concepts of *tat-twam-Asi* (Thou Art That) and Buddhist Concept of *Tatha* or suchness in later writings.

Liberation from bondage to *Samsaric* existence can be achieved provided man directs his efforts to the realisation of the divine reality which is within him. Propter in *After Many A Summer* (1939) says: "Hope begins only when human beings start to realize that the Kingdom of heaven .......... is within and can be experienced by any body who's prepared to take the necessary trouble"\(^6\). Propter talks about the inner-self and the illusory nature of the phenomenal reality in terms of vedanta. But after the publication of *After Many A Summer*, Huxley's mysticism shifts towards Buddhism, especially Tibetan Lamaism. Consequently contemplative mysticism gives place to sexual mysticism.

In *Ends and Means* Huxley believes that "sexual activities sometimes make for a realisation of the individual's unity with another individual and through that other individual, with the reality of the world ........."\(^6\). He seems to agree with what Nikolai Bardyaev observes: "In man's sexuality, we perceive the metaphysical roots of his being"\(^6\). Perhaps Huxley thinks that contemplation is not possible in an environment which is totally determined by machine. J.B. Coats rightly observes that contemplation "becomes increasingly more difficult in an age whose tempo is
determined by machine". The later Huxley seems to seek Salvation through sexual experience.

In the sexual act the individual goes out of himself to the other in a unity of 'being-with-other'. Arthur Gibson is right in maintaining that "the mystery of sex is the mystery of total contact between created existents". Huxley praises D.H. Lawrence's advocacy of sexual experience, for it brings, says huxley, "the immediate, non-mental knowledge of divine otherness". Island (1962) contains Huxley's mature understanding of Tantric exercises and Buddhist philosophy. In Island everybody is a Tantric Buddhist. Each one practises sex as a Tantric sacrament. Sex had been an unfailing source of pessimism in Huxley's earlier novels and this sudden change of attitude is totally the outcome of the influence of Tantric philosophy. Tantric Buddhism provided Huxley with a spiritual dimensions to overcome his obsession with the human body which "came always between him and his spiritual vision". About the ideal of Tantric Buddhism, Huxley wrote in a letter to Timothy Leary:

"... the basic ideal seems to me the highest possible ideal-enlightenment, not apart from the world ....... but within the world, through the world, by means of the ordinary process of living. Tantra teaches a yoga of sex, a yoga of eating (even forbidden foods and drinking forbidden drinks). The sacramentalizing of common life, so that every event may become a means whereby enlightenment can be realised, is achieved essentially, through constant awareness."
It seems reasonable to believe that the impact of Tantric Mysticism led Huxley to the conviction that human body can be a means of salvation.

IV

In 'Island' Huxley expresses his ideas about religion, sex and education. In this novel, we find that Pala is a Tantric Island and the tantric Buddhists of Pala employ maithuna, sexual experience, as a means of spiritual realisation. Like Tantrikas, the Palanese do not neglect or deny the needs of the body; they do not think of the body as something not divine. Tantra has taught them to give up 'this attitude of hostility' to the body. Sir John Woodroffe elaborates this tantric ideal in the following words:

The Kularnava Tantra says that man must be taught to rise by the means of those very things which are the cause of his fall ........... Man falls through the natural functions of drinking, eating and sexual intercourse. If these are done with feeling (Bhava) and under the conditions prescribed, then they become (it is taught) the instruments of his uplift to a point at which such ritual is no longer necessary and is surpassed."

Ranga, a young inhabitant of the island, explains to Will about the tantric view of existence:

'If you are a Tantric, you don't renounce the world of deny its value; you don't try to escape into a Nirvana apart from life, as the monks of the Southern School do. No, you accept the world, and make use of it; you make use of everything that happens to you, and of all the things you see and hear and taste and touch, as so many means to your liberation from the prison of your-self'."
Huxley thinks that sex is a natural activity and like many other natural activities, it has a transcendental and esoteric side which can be fruitfully utilized to reveal to man the mystery of the universe. The tantrics believe that Lord Siva enunciated the tanets of their philosophy for the benefit of those who are incapable of leading the rigorous self-denial of ascetic way. For them, there is nothing profane about the body or bodily function for everything in the universe is identical with Shiva. The human body is 'Brahma-pura', the city of God. Isvara or God himself enters into the universe as jiva. The 'maha-vakya', "That thou art", means that the ego (which is regarded as jiva only from the stand point of apparently conditioning limitations of Isvara) is Brahman. 'Tat-tvam-as, thou art That', is the philosophy of the Palanese. Ranga tells Will Farnaby that 'tat tvam asi', 'thou art That', is the heart of all our philosophy.

Like Tantric Buddhist, Huxley seems to believe that sex contributes to one's advancement towards self-realization. Trisna (craving), the greatest obstacle to enlightenment, is made an ally; an expression rather than repression of natural sexual desire is emphasized. The tantric approach, according to Heinrich Zimmer, is characterized by acceptance rather than refusal for it believes in the use of things considered unholy and, therefore, undesirable. In 'Island', Huxley employs 'maithuna', sexual experience, as a means of Salvation and in other words, one can obtain mukti (Salvation) through bhukti (enjoyment). Maithuna (the ritual copulation) can lead
man to the portals of ultimate bliss, which is the reward of the spiritual experience. "What is Maithuna?" Here Huxley makes Radha explain maithuna to Will Farnaby:

"What is maithuna?" "May be you'd better ask Radha" Will turned to the little nurse, "What is it?" "Maithuna", she answered gravely, "is the Yoga of love" "Sacred or profane?" "There's no difference" That's the whole point, "Ranga put in, "When you do maithuna, profane love is sacred love". "Buddhatvan Yoshidyonisansritan", the girl quoted. "None of your Sanskrit! What does it mean?" "How would you translate Buddhatvan, Ranga?" "Buddhaness Buddheity, the quality of being enlightened". Radha nodded and turned back to Will. "It means that Buddhaness is the Yoni". "In the Yoni" Will remembered those little stone emblems of the Eternal Feminine that he had bought ...... at Benares ...... "Literally in the Yoni?" he asked "Or metaphorically?" "What a ridiculous question"! said the little nurse and she laughed at her clear, unaffected laugh of pure amusement. "Do you think we make love metaphorically? "Buddhatvan Yoshidyonisansritan" she repeated. It couldn't be more completely and absolutely literal."

According to Tantric philosophy maithuna means transcendent union which does not in any way convey the sense of the gross sexual intercourse. For the Palanese maithuna is the special technique that turns love-making into 'the sexo-yogic disciplinC. Those very aspects of human nature which bind us can act as stepping-stones to spiritual freedom. Maithuna teaches us to explore our senses rather than to suppress them. In the act of Maithuna of sexual asana a man and a woman unite in order to undergo the experience of bliss. Benjamin Walker, on the basis of his study of tantric texts, rightly equates maithuna with meditative trance a 'state of non-duality' in which the veil mystery of the universe is all of a sudden lifted giving a glimpse of ultimate reality to the couple.15
During the act of Maithuna 'the mind aspires to be free, the retention of sexual energy increases inner pressure, thus transmitting the sex force into a potency so powerful that the psychic current is liberated'. This way sexual energy can be harnessed for spiritual purpose. Maithuna is not an easy path for the realisation of divine in man. The ordinary, unregenerate individual can not seek integration through sexual union, unless his ego is annihilated and mind prepared for the sacred ritual. Having a strict, rigorous and ethical system, Maithuna emphasizes as much discipline in "self-naughting" as any other means of Salvation. It enjoins upon the adept, the necessity of mastering three important techniques ...... ekagarta, the concentration on a single point that leads to control of mind, Pranayama, the technique of breath control; and the control of Semen and ova in the human body. Moreover, Tantrism lays emphasis on the role of the Guru who alone is competent to judge the ability of Sadhaka to undergo a successful maithuna. According to Herbert V. Guenther, the Shakt (the worshipper of Sakti) during his bhoga (sexual-union) with woman "must proceed in such a way that his mind does not swerve, for when his jewel like mind swerves ...... perfection will never be accomplished".

Maithuna does not simply mean free sexual love as has been erroneously understood by many Western writers. But Maithuna is a kind of yoga which demands arduous mental and moral discipline. it is as good a way of attaining salvation as the ways of religion.
"Maithuna is also something else. Something even more important"............. "And it's a real Yoga", The girl insisted. "As good as raja, or Karma Yoga, or bhakti Yoga. Infact, a great deal better, so far as most people are concerned. Maithuna really gets them there." "What is there?" Will asked "'There' is where you know." "Know what?" "Know who infact you are........... and believe it or not, "She added, "tat-tvam-asi - thou art That, and so am I : That is me"(...) 

There can be no objection to the acceptance of maithuna as a marga, a way of attaining the mystical experience. The problem is that maithuna is as difficult to practise as Karma Yoga or Bhakti marga to attain salvation. The fact that tantrism is limited to a very minor fraction of population is a proof that this Sexo-Yogic technique is perhaps more difficult than even contemplation. Moreover, this tantric ritual is not meant for all and sundry. The practitioner of maithuna must have undergone a rigorous "apprenticeship" in order to attain perfect self-culture which transmutes the sexual act from a merely sensual experience into a spiritual one, an act leading to self-realisation.79

The sexual experience at the ordinary level may provide moments of intense pleasure, it cannot bring unparalleled joy which Philip Rawson defines as "the joy of Being befor and beyond Genesis"80. The tantrikas, however, were among the first to transform this sex-pleasure into a realisation of infinite bliss. In this connection S.B. Dasgupta writes :

In our ordinary life we have the experience of the most intense pleasure in our sex-experiences. Wide is the difference between this sex pleasure and perfect bliss which is the ultimate nature of the
self and the not-self; yet the distinction can be wholly removed by a total change of perspective and process. The sexo-yogic Saddhana of the Tantrikas is a Saddhana for transforming this sex-pleasure into a realisation of infinite bliss in which the self and the world around are lost in an all-pervading oneness.]

The Tantrics lay considerable stress on a synthesis of bhoga (sexual enjoyment) and yoga (liberation). Maithuna, sexual experience, is an empirical experimental method by which one can transform one's hedonistic urges into a spiritual experience. The Tantric philosophy does not want us to discover the unknown but to realise the known. The Palanese maintain this tantric principle. The genuine religious experience - whether included through meditation or maithuna, though lasting for a short while, brings a permanent transformation in human personality. The spiritual experience brings Saintliness, the highest achievement of the spiritual life. Man enjoys a state of eternal peace for which the Hindu term is Santi. Huxley seems to convey a message to modern man that maithuna can be a means of Salvation. In Island he emphasizes "Maithuna is the organized attempt, to regain that paradise" to achieve the ultimate end of human existence.
Notes and References


2. *ibid*, p. 268.


5. *ibid*, p. 286.


12. *ibid*, p. 179.

13. *ibid*, p. 158.


21. ibid, p. 204.
22. ibid, p. 359.
23. ibid, p. 26.
24. ibid, p. 325.
25. ibid, p. 353.
26. ibid, pp. 171-172.
27. ibid, p. 413.
28. ibid, pp. 364-365
29. ibid, p. 379.
30. Eyeless in Gaza, p. 443.
31. ibid, p. 445.
32. ibid, p. 446.
33. ibid, p. 448.
34. ibid, p. 448-449.
35. After Many a Summer, p. 46.
37. Aldous Huxley, 'Point Counter Point' p. 407.
38. ibid, p. 432.
43. Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point, p. 322.
45. Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point, p. 324.


57. ibid, p. 382.


73. *ibid*, p. 75.

74. *ibid*, pp. 76-77.


