Chapter VI

Religious Agnosticism : Last Phase

Insatiable curiosity constitutes one of the chief characteristics of the agnostic. The agnostic is never satisfied, and in his quest of certitude, keeps on exploring new and fresh avenues of knowledge. But final certitude never comes to him, for certitude, according to the mystics of all religions, is the fruit of the mystical experience, which is an experience of unity, when the antinomies of reason are transcended, and one experience—a fusion of all conflicting tendencies, in the moment of mystical illumination. The mystic no longer yearns for anything else. Scientia anima which comes to him through intuitus mysticus, the direct, intuitive insight into the nature of reality, brings to an end all doubts and uncertainties, which give birth to an idle, theoretic curiosity. The agnostic remains restless, because, though he believes in the existence of the super-empirical reality, he is unable to transcend his self in a moment of samadhi and seek higher knowledge.

Huxley has advanced from the intellectual agnosticism of the forties, when he believed that reality could never be known, for he did not at that time believe in the intuitive mode of knowledge. He comes to accept the mystical view of the universe, and believes that man can experience
the Divine Ground, through intuitive apprehension, which is the super-logical way of apprehending reality. Faith and reason no longer remain separate, for they seek reconciliation in the mystical experience, which synthesizes all aspects of human nature into an integral unity. But Huxley's synthesis is merely intellectual, and the conflict between passion and reason persists even after his acceptance of mysticism as the only acceptable philosophy for the present age.

Though the Pyrrhonian ataraxia of early fiction is replaced by a firm conviction in the existence of the Divine Ground, agnosticism still persists in later novels. The agnostic has come to the conviction that the modern man is neurotic, restless and disillusioned because he lacks a spiritual dimension to his existence. His joyless existence can be transformed into one of blissful serenity, and he can achieve integration, by maintaining a contact with the Divine Ground. In Eyeless in Gaza, Huxley's early Pyrrhonian agnosticism, which would not allow him to stick to any definite philosophical framework, and expressed itself as the suspension of judgment on all metaphysical questions, is replaced by one-pointedness of a mystic, the "more than human one-pointedness that is the very being of those souls who consciously and consistently pursue man's final end, the knowledge of eternal Reality."

Since Eyeless in Gaza expounds the author's newly-discovered philosophy of mysticism, there is not left much
scope for the display of that mocking agnosticism, which makes fun of religious sanctities in early fiction. Though the principal characters in the novel advocate mysticism, the agnostic strain continues. A.S. Collins observes that the novel seemed to promise "a combination of heart and intellect," but the promise was not fulfilled, for what Huxley's "heart had learnt seemed unable to illuminate his intellectual vision." The intellect refuses to accept the reasons of the heart. Agnosticism, therefore, persists in the novel, but it is associated with the minor characters. Though Anthony Beavis outgrows "the atmosphere of faded agnosticism," which according to George Woodcock, the Beavis family shares with the family of the Huxleys, his father, John Beavis, like Aldous's father, Leonard Huxley, continues to profess agnosticism, as his attitude towards God and immortality. On his way to the church to attend the exequies of his dead wife, John Beavis, in his railway compartment, ruminating over his past life. Behind his closed eyes, he seems to be talking to his dead wife. He expresses his wistful longing to unite with her after his death, in the lines from Henry King's poem "Exequer," only to realize that as a follower of Darwin, he could no longer believe in immortality.

'Stay for me there; I shall not fail to meet thee in that hollow vale.' There was no immortality, of course. After Darwin, after the Fox Sisters, after John Beavis's own father, the
surgeon, how could there be? Beyond that hollow vale there was nothing. But all the same, oh, all the same, stay for me, stay for me, stay, stay!

The typical persona of Huxley's early fiction, a rationalist and agnostic, becomes the chief spokesman of Huxley's perennial philosophy in later novels. His chief function is to persuade and convert the agnostics into practising mystics. Propter has such a role to play in After Many A Summer. He tries to convince Jeremy Pordage of the truth and value of the mystical experience. But Jeremy is an intellectual agnostic, who substitutes aestheticism for his disbelief in the existence of God. He seems to stand for Huxley's early position, when he recognized aestheticism as the only valid attitude towards reality. Though Huxley later on progresses from aestheticism to mysticism, for, in his own words, "it was through the aesthetic that I came to the spiritual," Jeremy does not show any such spiritual evolution in his character. For Jeremy, all talk about mysticism is sheer waste of time. It is precisely for this reason that he always tries to keep Propter at a distance, for the latter always harps on the same theme, whenever he finds an occasion to exchange his views with others. He believes in living in a civilized way, without ever bothering his head over the insoluble, metaphysical propositions, which no amount of rationalization can ever prove true. He is irritated by Propter's talk:
Jeremy listened with growing discomfort and a mounting irritation. His fears had been justified; the old boy was launching out into the worst kind of theology. Eternity, timeless experience of good, time as the substance of evil—it was bad enough, God knew, in books; but fired at you like this, point-blank, by somebody who really took it seriously, why, it was really frightful. Why on earth couldn't people live their lives in a rational, civilized way? Why couldn't they take things as they came?... But no, they had to gibber about eternity and all the rest. That sort of stuff always made Jeremy want to be blasphemous—to ask whether God had a boyau rectum, to protest like the Japanese in the anecdote, that he was altogether flummoxed and perplexed by position of Honourable Bird.6

As an agnostic, Jeremy finds it difficult to accept Propter's assertion that the mystic feeling is distinct from other human feelings, for it is egoless, and is the result of the unitive experience, when the subject and the object merge into unity. Jeremy cannot accept such an experience as cannot be the object of knowledge, and therefore cannot be logically justified.

Talking about the normal human feeling, Propter comments:

'They meant themselves,' said Mr. Propter. Jeremy saw the opportunity for a counter-attack and, with a promptitude unusual in him, immediately took it. 'Doesn't the same thing apply to your feelings about eternity, or whatever it is?' he asked. 'Of course it does,' said Mr. Propter. 'Well, in that case, how can you claim any validity for it? The feeling means itself, and that's all there is to it.' 'It means itself,' Mr. Propter agreed. 'But what precisely is this "itself"? In other words, what is the nature of the feeling?' 'Don't ask me,' said Jeremy with a shake of the head and a comically puzzled lift of the eyebrows. 'I really don't know.'7
Jeremy remains an agnostic, for he believes that the human mind can never know "itself," and the real nature of reality will always elude its grasp. He, of course read all the books on mysticism which Huxley suggests to his readers in his essay "Readings in Mysticism." He had read Sankara and Eckhart, the Pali texts and John of the Cross, Charles de Condran and the Bardo, and Patanjali and the Pseudo-Dionysius, not for the avowed purpose of exploring the nature of reality, but because he would have thought himself "barbarously uneducated" if he had not read the literature on mysticism. He lacks faith, which, according to the mystics, is most essential to cross the gulf that separates mysticism from rationalism. As a rationalist, he believes that from the strictly epistemological point of view, it is not possible for the human mind, to grasp the real nature of things. When Propter visits Jeremy's study, the latter hands him some writings of Molinos, the seventeenth-century Spanish theologian because Propter is interested in the subject. When Propter, by chance, opens the book at a page, where Molinos talks about the inability of the human mind to know the thing-in-itself, Jeremy is all exultation, for he finds a justification of his agnosticism.
Jeremy almost laughed. The coincidence that Mr. Propter should have picked on the same passage as had caught Dr. Obispo's eye that morning gave him a peculiar satisfaction. 'Pity he couldn't have read a little Kant,' he said. 'Dios en si seems to be much the same as Ding an sich. Unknowable by the human mind.'

Jeremy seems to vindicate his agnostic position, by seeking support from the Kantian view of knowledge, which limits human cognition to phenomena, and asserts that reality, the thing-in-itself, can never be the object of knowledge, and therefore, reality remains for ever unknowable by the human mind. Propter admits that so far as "the ordinary human personality is concerned, Kant is perfectly right in saying that the thing in itself is unknowable." Propter suggests that the Ding an sich cannot be comprehended by "a consciousness dominated by an ego." He asserts that reality can be directly experienced by those who can eliminate the ego from the consciousness, and who can climb from the human level on to the level of eternity. At the mystical level the impasse no longer exists. Huxley says that "Kant was right only as regards minds that have not yet come to enlightenment and deliverance," and that to "such minds Reality...presents itself as it is darkened, tinged and refracted by the medium of their own individual natures." The direct insight into the nature of things is not possible for Jeremy, because he does not believe, as Huxley does, in the renunciation
of his intellectual cleverness, which acts as a stumbling block in the way to attain that state of mind, when in a flash, all that has been mysterious, unknown and inaccessible to the rational mind, may become quite clear. Jeremy remains an incorrigible agnostic, whom no amount of edification, can make a convert to mysticism. When Propter stops his endeavours, to convert him to perennial philosophy, Jeremy heaves a sigh of relief, for he has been spared from the exhortation of a spiritual bore.

Another mocking agnostic in this novel, is Sigmund Obispo, the scientist, whose agnosticism stands as a strong foil to Propter's mysticism. Keith M. May calls him "the Mephistopheles of After Many A Summer," because he not only tempts Joe Stoyte with the promise of longevity but also because he knows the hollowness of his claims, to seek the mystery of existence, through the laboratory, and yet reacts to his understanding evilly. Peter Bowering observes that Dr. Obispo and Mr. Propter are "symbolic manifestations of the material, spiritual motifs" of Huxley's early fiction, and that Dr. Obispo is "a crude personification of scientific materialism." Obispo is an agnostic, who represents in his character, the conflict of passion and reason, the main theme of Huxley's early fiction. He cultivates cynical hedonism, for he thinks, that ideals are mere result of various kinds of physical malformation.
Peter Firehow observes that even his name - Sigmund Obispo - signifies the conflict of reason and passion. Firehow writes: "Even his name symbolizes the self-division...on the one hand, the Sigmund of Freudian materialistic explanations of spiritual life; on the other, the Spanish bishop's (Obispo) repressed religious and idealistic nature." There is no doubt that Obispo and Jeremy, when opposed to Propter, are made to look comic and ridiculous, they nevertheless represent a part of the mind of their author.

Eustace Barnack professes agnosticism toward the religious belief in the existence of God, and the immortality of human soul. His favourite philosopher is the nineteenth-century agnostic, Ernst Haeckel who admits that the "essence of substance becomes more mysterious and enigmatic the deeper we penetrate into the knowledge of its attributes," and that we "do not know the "thing in itself" that lies behind these knowable phenomena." Haeckel explains away the human soul as merely a physiological abstraction like 'assimilation' or 'generation,' and dismissed the God of popular religions as a "gaseous vertebrate." It is this phrase which Eustace uses in the novel, to defend his agnostic and hedonistic approach to life, against the appeals of the mystic, Bruno, who according to Eustace, "would like everybody to believe in the Gaseous Vertebrate." Eustace, like Huxley, seems to have inherited agnosticism from his family. Huxley writes: "In the Barnack family
Haeckel's definition of God had been a standing joke for the past forty years." Eustace brands the mystic's assertion, that during the moment of ecstasy, the soul is united with God, as the "solid vertebrate united with the Gaseous." He shows no belief in Hereafter, for him dying is dying. It is a fact that the agnostic must accept without any demur. When Bruno Rontini, the mystic, tries to convince him about spiritual regeneration and the immortality of the human soul, Eustace at once checks him: "'No nonsense about immortality! None of your wishful thinking'!" Whereas Eustace takes special delight in mocking at eternal verities, his brother John Barnack is an agnostic, who prefers to mind his own business, and never takes any interest in religious problems. When his son, Sebastian tries to convince him of Bruno's mystical ecstasies, and says that "'one of the things that struck me most was that Bruno could somehow convince you that it all made sense,'" John replies in the typical agnostic vein: "'If one's wise, one doesn't ask whether it makes any sense. One does one's work and leaves the problem of evil to one's metabolism. That makes sense all right.'"

While introducing Sebastian to Bruno, Eustace warns the former that the latter will "probably try to convert" him. The warning comes true. Sebastian, disillusioned and maimed by the war, comes to embrace...
mysticism, under the guidance of his spiritual preceptor, Bruno. But his conversion does not ring true. His conversion, like Huxley's, remains purely intellectual, for his personality radiates no saintliness, which perhaps could convince his agnostic father about the possibility of the experience of the super-conscious, super-empirical reality. Huxley failed to turn out a religious character because, as Christopher Isherwood puts it, "the truly comprehensive religious novel could only be written by a saint - and saints, unfortunately, are not in the habit of writing novels."23

Paul De Vries visits the leading universities of Europe, to seek co-operation of the most significant people, to set up an international clearing house of ideas to arrive at a scientific-religious-philosophic synthesis. He is in search of the integrating principle that may bridge "the gap between the phenomena of spiritualism and the phenomena of psychology and physics."24 He is in search of a synthesis, "a thought-bridge that would permit the mind to march discursively and logically from telepathy to the four-dimensional continuum, from poltergeists and departed spirits to the physiology of the nervous system."25 Whereas Paul De Vries fails to strike a synthesis, Huxley suggests his own working hypothesis, which can explain most of the odd facts of human
existence. In his essay "Mother" Huxley says:

If you were to combine Jung with F.W.H. Myers, and if you were then to enrich the product with the theories of Tantrik Buddhism and the practices of Zen, you would have a working hypothesis capable of explaining most, perhaps indeed all, the unutterably odd facts of human experience and, along with the hypothesis, a set of operational procedures, by means of which its unlikelier elements might be verified.26

Huxley finally accepts Buddhism, for its essentially pragmatic approach towards the religious experience. Buddhism recognizes no personal God, and does not concern itself with insoluble metaphysical problems. Huxley writes: "Among the early Buddhists, the metaphysical theory was neither affirmed nor denied, but simply ignored, as being meaningless and unnecessary."27 Buddhism, Huxley says, concerns with the immediate experience of 'liberation' or 'enlightenment'. Buddhism appeals to Huxley, the intellectual, for it is a philosophy based on the principle of operational verification, which the logical positivists apply to test the validity of an assertion. Assertions which do not lend themselves to operational verification are neither true nor false, but without meaning. Huxley writes about the Buddha:

'Where mysticism was concerned, however, his operationalism was complete. He would not make assertions about the nature of ultimate reality because it did not seem to him that the corresponding set of mystical operations would admit of
Mystical operations, he believed, yielded a sufficient answer to such psychological questions as What is liberation? or What is enlightenment? They did not, in his opinion, yield a sufficient answer to the questions What is Brahman? Or What is God. 28

Buddhism appeals to the agnostic, for it does not advocate religious 'faith' which, according to Huxley, "is a belief in propositions which we know we cannot verify, even if we should desire to do so," and which is "an act of the intellect moved to assent by the will."29 The perennial philosophy appeals to him, for "there is no need to willed assent to propositions known in advance to be unverifiable."30 Buddhism, like Christianity, does not advocate an assent to the unverifiable propositions, like the Athanasian Creed or the doctrine of the Immaculata Conception, which cannot be verified in experience. The Buddha was a transcendental pragmatist, who did not advocate any metaphysical theory, but emphasized the importance of liberation through experience. Buddhism, because of its transcendental agnosticism, has greater appeal to the intellectual, who fails to accept on faith the metaphysical assertions of religion. Hence Huxley's advocacy of tantric agnosticism in Island.

II

Island sums up the kind of world-view Huxley had finally come to acquire, after years of arduous,
mental struggle. Huxley knew that he was nearing the end of his terrestrial pilgrimage, and before his death, he was anxious to give his readers the kind of philosophical synthesis, he felt could provide joy and peace to modern man. To seek love, joy and peace which are the fruits of the spirit, and to avoid hate, unceasing restlessness and chronic misery, the Arch-Vicar in *Ape And Essence* suggests to Dr. Poole the synthesis of all that is best and noble in the East and the West.

'Just think, if they'd made the best!' squeaks the Arch-Vicar. 'Eastern mysticism making sure that Western science should be properly used; the Eastern art of living refining Western energy; Western individualism tempering Eastern totalitarianism.' He shakes his head in pious horror. 'Why, it would have been the kingdom of heaven.'

It is the "kingdom of heaven" which Huxley tries to create, by synthesizing Eastern mysticism and Western science, in his utopian vision, *Island*. Anthony Burgess brands the novel as "a hopeless dream in a foundering world," to show that the kind of ideal society Huxley paints in the novel, is not viable in the present day world. But the fact remains that Huxley calls this novel "a pragmatic dream," to emphasize that the fantasy contains "practical instructions for making the imagined and desirable harmonization of European and Indian insights become a fact." Julian Huxley aptly observes that Huxley regarded this novel "as one of his major
contributions to serious thought," and that 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." From this observation, it becomes quite evident that the novel embodies Huxley's philosophy of existence.

The reader is introduced to this ideal world of the Pala island, through Will Farnaby, a decadent journalist, who is cast ashore when his boat capsizes in the storm. Born in Bloomsbury, having acquired the typical English school education, an intellectual turned journalist, disillusioned by the war, Will Farnaby is an agnostic, who has lost faith in God, and always utters a "scatological laugh" at the sanctities of life. The Swiftian disgust, which Karl and Magalaner find as Huxley's reaction towards the general rung of mankind, is found in Farnaby as well. To Farnaby, human beings are like maggots, because his liberal education, which he brands as a training in "Pure and Applied Pointlessness" has not given him anything, to overcome his abhorrence of the people. He remains a paranoid, for his pyrrhonic training has not taught him to face death, especially the unnatural death, which remains an insoluble enigma to the intellectual agnostic. Like his author, Farnaby has an obsession with death, which he calls the "Essential Horror," mainly because he has not learnt to face it the Eastern way. Death remains something
accidental, unpredictable and, therefore, baffling to his agnostic mind.

Farnaby is a mocking agnostic whose "hyena laughs" hide an immense despair with life. His cynicism is due to his failure to seek any meaning in life, which ends in death. He comes to know of the Eastern way of looking at death, as the culmination of life, and the release of consciousness into the Clear Light of the Void, and therefore, an occasion for the spirit to seek salvation from the transient world of flux and decay. He has the occasion to observe Lakshmi's dying, who is fully prepared for her final journey, according to the instructions of the *Bardo Thödol*. Her face is distorted by no metaphysical terrors as was the face of his dying aunt; and no yawning hells terrify Lakshmi's spirit, at the time of its release from the body.

Though Farnaby is convinced of the value of Eastern philosophy, for it offers a satisfying solution to the enigma of death, yet he remains an impeccable agnostic. To every positive affirmation, that the Palanese make about life and the universe, Farnaby juxtaposes his agnostic assertion, saying that he is "the man who won't take yes for an answer." The fact that this assertion takes place at a number of places in the novel, shows that his agnosticism is deep-rooted, and that he is not one to lose quite easily his negative and
nihilistic approach to existence. He has all the negative attributes of Huxley's early heroes, and believes that in the absence of any belief, "one remains an aesthete, one likes to have the 'no' said with style."43

Farnaby's contact with the Palanese makes him aware of the shallowness of the aesthetic or hedonistic approach to life. The people of the island profoundly impress him, for they do not have "the faintest desire to land on the backside of the moon," but only "the modest ambition to live as fully human beings in harmony with the rest of life on this island at this latitude on this planet."44 Their copper-coloured, healthy bodies, and faces ever bubbling with mirth, present a strong contrast to the speed-crank, motorized, television-addicts of the industrialized West. These people are happy because they do not suffer from the schism in the soul, caused by the conflict of faith and reason, which in the West has resulted, to quote D.S. Savage, in the "basic disjunction of personality."45 The Palanese enjoy a unified sensibility because they have never attached an inordinate importance to hair-splitting metaphysical subtleties. The Palanese, who stand for Huxley's philosophy, are agnostics, for they "don't believe in God."46 Since the island has enjoyed a kind of geographical isolation, they have been able to keep their culture intact from foreign influences. They are, as Ranga, the exponent of their
philosophy, puts it, "still Buddhists or Shivaites — that is, when we're not Tantrik agnostics." Since Farnaby is an agnostic, Ranga's use of the term 'agnostic,' astonishes him, and he anxiously enquires: "Is that what you are?" Will inquired. 'A Tantrik agnostic?' 'With Mahayana trimmings,' Ranga qualified.47

Farnaby comes to know that the philosophy of the Palanese is a blend of Eastern philosophy and Western thought. Dr. Andrew MacPhail, who was practising medicine at Madras, was invited by the native ruler of the Pala island to attend on him during his illness. It was at that time that the meeting of the two minds —Eastern and Western — took place. Dr. Andrew was an atheist who was lucky enough to escape his father's imposing Calvinism. Well-versed in Hume, Gibbon, La Mettrie, and Cabanis, the sceptical thinkers of his time, Dr. Andrew came to meet the Raja of Pala, a tantrik mahayanist. The Occident, with its belief in scientific materialism, and its sceptical approach towards eternal verities, and the Orient with its profound faith in the possibility of experiencing the mystery, in a state of samadhi, come to influence each other. It results in a synthesis of the two cultures. The blend of the two cultures — the scientific and the religious, gives rise to tantrik agnosticism, a kind of agnostic philosophy, when the belief in God and other metaphysical entities is dispensed with, but the faith in the possibility of
of experiencing the Nirvanic bliss is retained. The tantrik agnostics of Pala do not believe in elaborate theologies, which blind the spirit to the real nature of the universe. Since theology is the product of human reason, it is bound to postulate a conflict between good and evil. Moreover, theological wranglings have always resulted in intolerance and oppression. Wisdom never makes any insane separateness between man and Nature, between Nature and God, and between the flesh and the spirit, for wisdom is the name of an integral vision of life, when the opposites of theology are blended into a harmonious unity. Shanta tells Farnaby that the conflict exists so long as the mind does not transcend the ordinary distinction of subject and object, and does not become aware of the unitive state of consciousness. She condemns theology, for it magnifies the clash of faith and reason.

"Enter the Gods of Light, enter the Prophets, enter Pythagoras and Zoroaster, enter the Jains and the early Buddhists. Between them they usher in the Age of the Cosmic Cockfight - Ormuzd versus Ahriman, Jehovah versus Satan and the Baalim, Nirvana as opposed to Samsara, appearance over against Plato's Ideal Reality. And except in the minds of a few Tantriks and Mahayanists and Taoists and heretical Christians, the cockfight went on for the best part of two thousand years."48

Theology encourages the conflict between the human and the divine, the flesh and the spirit, and thus has caused endless misery to the human spirit. Theological
notions are the product, not of the insight of saints, but of the busy phantasy of the theologians who, having no first-hand intimation of reality, interpret the experience of prophets, in the light of reason, which cannot do without the distinction of the subject and the object. Susila MacPhail tells Farnaby, that the belief in God, after life etc., is not at all necessary, to spiritual experience. Talking about resurrection, which is the doctrine of central significance in Christianity, Susila remarks:

"That's one of the questions the Buddha always refused to discuss. Believing in eternal life never helped anybody to live in eternity. Nor, of course, did disbelieving. So stop all your pro-ing and con-ing (that's the Buddha's advice) and get on with the job."49

The chief job of the Tantrik agnostic is to seek enlightenment by using all psycho-physical means including maithuna and the moksha-medicine. Farnaby takes the moksha-medicine, under the guidance of Susila MacPhail, and the transfigured vision, that the drug vouchsafes him, convinces him of the philosophy of the Palanese, which, if properly followed, can lead man towards transcendence, when mystery is experienced as mystery. One realizes that after-experience generalizations are not the same thing as the experience. In his last essay "Shakespeare And Religion," Huxley points out that we are "on the way to an existential religion of mysticism"50 which should take into consideration the psycho-physical organism, and must employ all
pharmacological, ecological and psychological means to attain the state of Beatific Vision. This is what the Tantriks of the island do. Huxley, it seems, suggests Tantrik agnosticism as the philosophical framework to achieve the Final End of human life, which, according to him, is the "discovery of Truth, the unitive knowledge of the Godhead." God is no longer necessary for a seeker of spiritual experience. Nor is it imperative for an intellectual to adhere to the dogmas of religion, which can never seek any rational justification. The tantric agnostic believes that the experience of spiritual reality is possible, and that one should try all means to attain this experience.
Notes

1 Huxley, Perennial, p. 55.

2 A.S. Collins, English Literature Of The Twentieth Century, p. 240.

3 Woodcock, Dawn, p. 197.

4 Huxley, Eyesless, p. 37.

5 Huxley, Letters, p. 538.


7 Ibid., pp. 115-116.

8 In his essay "Readings in Mysticism," Huxley suggests a course of reading in the literature of mysticism to his friends and unknown correspondents, who have often pestered him with the query. Please see Vadanta For the Western World, ed., Christopher Isherwood (London: Allen & Unwin, 1951).

9 Ibid., pp. 122-123.

10 Ibid., p. 156.

11 Huxley, Perennial, p. 255.


13 Peter Bowering, Aldous Huxley, p. 149.

14 Peter Firchow, Aldous Huxley, p. 158.
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16 *ibid.*, p.235.


18 *ibid.*, p.42.

19 *ibid.*, p.104.

20 *ibid.*, p.106.

21 *ibid.*, p.305.

22 *ibid.*, p.108.


25 *ibid.*, p.92.


28 *ibid.*, p.48.


30 *ibid.*, p.271.


32 Anthony Burgess, *The Novel Now: A Student's*
Apparently, the key to Huxley's interpretation of the twists and turns of the twentieth century is disgust - disgust for life, for people as individuals, even for ideas, which themselves, he recognizes, must eventually fail. Disgust, not love, pity, or compassion, is central to Crome Yellow, Antic Hay, Point Counter Point, Brave New World, and Eyeless in Gaza; disgust describes his female figures, his intellectuals, and his sensualists.

A Reader's Guide To Great Twentieth-Century English Novels, p.258.

Huxley's characters very often use the word "maggott" to show their abhorrence of the people and their disgust with life. Please see Antic, p.244., Island, p.102.

The frequent occurrence of unnatural deaths in his novels shows that Huxley had an obsession with death. He found it quite difficult to compromise with this insoluble enigma of human life. In Crome Yellow, Sir Hercules administers poison to his wife, and then
commits suicide. Lypiatt, the artist in *Antic Hay* commits suicide, and Grace Elver in *Those Barren Leaves* dies of food-poisoning. In *Point Counter Point*, Phil, the son of Philip Quarles, dies of meningitis, Everard Webley is killed by Spandrell and Illidge; Spandrell is shot dead by the followers of Webley. Licia in *Brave New World* dies an ignoble death; and her son, the Savage commits suicide. Brian Foxe in *Eyeless In Gaza* commits suicide. Pete Boone, the laboratory assistant is accidentally shot dead by Joe Stoyte in *After Many A Summer*. In *The Genius and the Goddess*, Katy and her daughter Ruth die in a car accident, and Molly in *Island* also meets the similar fate.

41 Ibid., p.236.
42 Ibid., p.20.
43 Ibid., p.236.
47 Ibid., p.82.
49 Ibid., p.236.