

CHAPTER V

ALDOUS HUXLEY ON THE WAY TO MYSTICISM

Aldous Huxley's interests can be divided into three parts: the light and witty satire of his early period, the interest in scientific Utopia and the final mystical period. The change of interest to mysticism begins in Eyeless in Gaza. His final expression of this interest can be seen in Island. Apes and Essence is something of a connection between the two.

In 1936, Huxley wrote Eyeless in Gaza. Although many of the ideas and methods in Eyeless in Gaza are similar to those of Point Counter Point, there are also a number of ideas that show Huxley's new variations in outlook. He shows especially an interest in contemplation, meditation and mysticism. It is doubtful if anyone can explain definitely why he changed his interests to the mystical at this period in his life. It may perhaps be assumed that he did try to show a positive way of life in his early and second stage novels but had never been satisfied with the result. In Antic Hay, Point Counter Point, Crome Yellow and even in Brave New World, the main characters are unsuccessful in life. They find not a positive way of life, but a negative one. Huxley analysed and rejected various ideas and concepts, as for example the scientific Utopia of Brave New World, but always found these ideas were unacceptable as positive ways of life. Island is Huxley's last novel, written in 1962; in it his mystical ideas and his "Perennial Philosophy" appear to offer his final solutions. Mysticism was his final interest

before his death in the year 1963. Whether this also was a temporary phase is a matter of abstract speculation. However, it can be noted that his interest in these subjects was not a sudden one, but a process that can be traced through a large part of Huxley's life.

The interval between Point Counter Point and Eyeless in Gaza was about twelve years. However, Eyeless in Gaza has a number of similarities to Point Counter Point. Both involve the discussion of certain social ideas and both show the main characters searching for a proper way of life. They are still 'novels of ideas' but they are different from those of the early period. He did not write primarily for entertainment any longer. The characters no longer indulge in witty conversation for the amusement of the readers, mainly because Huxley became more serious in intention and pessimistic in tone and outlook. He did not discuss scientific ideas again except to a certain extent in Ape and Essence. Brave New World was in many ways not typical of his approach to the novel. When science, and the abuse of the scientific method, is mentioned in this mystical period, it is only in the most peripheral way.

Huxley's characters had always played a subordinate role to the intellectual content of his novels. The heroes had, indeed, been to a certain extent interchangeable. However, there were certain new characteristics introduced ⁱⁿ to the heroes in Eyeless in Gaza, Ape and Essence and Island. Huxley's previous heroes were unsuccessful in life; and as a result they were pessimistic. Moreover, they were unable to get along with ^{the} society of the twentieth

century. They were lonely people isolated by their failure to find a positive way of life; for example Denis in Cross Yellow, Gabriel in Point Counter Point and the Savage in Brave New World.

The heroes in Eyeless in Gaza, Ape and Essence and Island are different; they are essentially contemplative. They attempt to be non-attached. Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza demonstrates this outlook:

He went on stubbornly playing the part he had long since assigned himself -- the part of the detached philosopher, of the preoccupied man of science who doesn't see the things that to everyone else are obvious.⁵⁸

He pretends to be able to get along with society in a passive and indifferent way. However in his mind, he feels guilt for his various immoral actions but is unwilling or unable to face up to reality. Anthony deceives Joan, his friend's lover, by a mixture of chance and deliberation. He knows that he behaves dishonestly to his friend (Brian) but he ~~does not~~ accept the responsibility; this later causes Brian's death. The spiritual side of his nature repents:

In order that he might be forced, in the midst of this act of detached and irresponsible sensuality, to think of Brian and of the things that Brian had lived for; yes, and he died for, another image suddenly reminded him, at the foot of just such a cliff as that beneath which they had played as children in the chalk pit. Yes, even Brian's suicide, he now realized with horror, even the poor huddled body on the rocks, was mysteriously

⁵⁸ Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968), ch.1, p.7.

implicit in this hot skin.⁵⁹

Huxley shows the psychological process of these alternative feelings; Anthony Beevis looks at the snapshots and as a result his sense of guilt comes to the surface of his consciousness. Like Hamlet, he is a person constantly wrapped in his own contemplations. Also Anthony hated the way his father remarried too quickly. This has a significant effect on his individual psychology. In Point Counter Point, Spandrell also illustrated virtually the same theme; he hated his mother because she remarried and this resulted in the breaking of his idealisation of the mother.

Helen, the heroine in Eyeless in Gaza, turned from her husband, Lodwidge, to another man because of his lack of interest in her:

But Hugh didn't want her to be a good wife, didn't want her, so far as she could see, to be anything. A divine presence in a place divine. But the place was his letters; she was present, so far as he was concerned, only at the other end of the postal system. He didn't even want her in bed -- or at any rate not much, not in any ordinary way. Green belts, indeed!⁶⁰

Helen's situation is a parallel of Rosie's in Point Counter Point; Rosie was ignored by her physiologist husband, Shearwater, and then she turns to Gumbriel for comfort^{ing} her. Both Helen and Rosie are victims of that sense of loneliness and mental isolation which is a common theme in Huxley.

⁵⁹ Ibid., ch.2, p.19.

⁶⁰ Ibid., ch.29, p.257.

In Ape and Essence, the characterization is different from Huxley's normal delineation; the hero, Dr. Poole, is perhaps the only really positive main character in Huxley's novels. For a start he is less pessimistic than any of the other heroes. His interest in biology is the theme that is to reappear in Island. Though the characterization of Dr. Poole in Ape and Essence is comparatively limited, it does however show a mixture of withdrawn contemplation mixed with guilt. Dr. Poole hates the seasonal mating Day (Belial Day) but he finally and inevitably makes love with Loola. Neither before or after this event does he show any formal approval for such behaviour:

But why, why does he have to relax with Loola? Vile brute and faithless strumpet! But there is at least one consolation -- and to a shy man, plagued with desires he dares not act upon, a very great consolation: Loola's conduct is the proof of an accessibility which, in New Zealand, in academic circles, in the neighbourhood of his Mother, could only be furtively dreamed about as something altogether too good to be true.⁶¹

The idea of the conditioning of human beings is re-introduced ^{to} this novel; it had already been discussed in Brave New World. The people in South California were, more or less, conditioned by the state. All of them regarded women as the Vessels of the Unholy Spirit. No one in that territory argued against this idea. Their beliefs were completely conditioned. The state of being conditioned is shown again in Island in a different form.

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Aldous Huxley, Ape and Essence, op. cit., p.104.

The characters, especially the main characters in both Eyeless in Gaza and Ape and Essence, show an interest in contemplation; this idea is the first step to mysticism. Huxley began to show his early interest in mysticism as the idea that meditation could give people spiritual insight and thus the state of enlightenment might follow. In Island, meditation is practised by the characters; appearing mainly in the non-verbal education and the practicality of people in Pala.

Huxley's intention in writing Ape and Essence and Island was clear. In Ape and Essence, Huxley portrayed the world after the Third World War. Nuclear and atomic bombs were used and they brought great disaster and destruction to the world. Everything was destroyed, both in a physical and a mental way; babies were deformed and retarded. Huxley attacked the scientists' irresponsibility in particular and the concept of war in general. He produced an ironical Utopia out of the destruction.

It has already been mentioned that Huxley was in many ways a moralist in his outlook, this facet of his character even appearing indirectly in such early novels as Crome Yellow. His moralistic outlook now appears clearly in Island. The characters act as mouthpieces for his religious and political ideas; these theories often being set out at great and inartistic length. In fact they are rather like a series of sermons on different ideas. Huxley's continued search for a "positive" way of life is stated again in the form of the Utopian ideals in Island. Ranga says:

'... Here in Pala we haven't allowed them

to happen, so the joke hasn't been played on us. We've had good sanitation for the best part of a century -- and still we're not overcrowded, we're not miserable, we're not under a dictatorship. And the reason is very simple: we chose to behave in a sensible and realistic way.'

'How on earth were you able to choose?' Will asked.

'The right people were intelligent at the right moment,' said Ranga. 'But it must be admitted -- they were also very lucky. In fact, Palo as a whole has been extraordinary lucky. It's had the luck, first of all never to have been anyone's colony....'⁶²

Island is essentially didactic in tone:

'And yet,' said Susila, 'in a certain sense that advice is excellent. Eating, drinking, dying -- three primary manifestations of the universal and impersonal life. Animals live that impersonal and universal life without knowing its nature. Ordinary people know its nature but don't live it and, if ever they think seriously about it, refuse to accept it. An enlightened person knows it, lives it and accepts it completely. He eats, he drinks and in due course he dies -- but he eats with a difference, drinks with a difference, dies with a difference.'⁶³

In analysing the concept of a positive way of life, Huxley sees that there can be various dilemmas involved in the search for such a life. He is once again brought back to the question of individuality in a conditioned society which is one of the main themes in Brave New World:

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Aldous Huxley, Island (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968), ch.6, p.84.

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Ibid., ch.11, p.193.

'Which is better,' Will wondered aloud as he followed Vijaya through the dark temple, out into the noonday glare, 'which is better -- to be born stupid into an intelligent society or intelligent into an insane one?'⁶⁴

In the novels Eyeless in Gaza, Ape and Essence and Island, Huxley introduces the idea of reconciliation between two opposing concepts, also the idea of harmony. Huxley thought that if reconciliation took place instead of conflict, human happiness would be the result. Ape and Essence clearly indicates Huxley's awareness of the lack of reconciliation, on a moral and ethical basis, between scientific knowledge and its practical usage. Man invents the atomic bomb and various other devices and uses them to kill each other despite their potential beneficial use in the industrial and medical fields. He was also analysing the concept of morality and the relationship between science and conventional religion. Huxley was very aware that the gap between them seemed to be growing wider; the two outlooks seemed to offer no apparent impulse towards mutual harmony. An aspect of this idea is indicated in Antic Hay, Brave New World and Eyeless in Gaza, where a number of Huxley's characters are faced with a sense of the gap between belief and action; the sense that one ought not to behave in a particular way, but nevertheless continues in the same way; Anthony Beavis in Eyeless in Gaza is an example. He knows that he ought to tell the truth to Brian about his unsuitable relationship with

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Ibid., ch.11, p.193.

Brian's lover, Joan, but Anthony dare not confess his guilt. He realizes that he should not let himself sink into a love affair with Joan, but he finally does so. Anthony and his uncle are atheists, this being a contrast to Mrs. Foxe and her son Brian who were liberal Christians. In the range of religious and irreligious viewpoints offered in Eyeless in Gaza, Huxley was not, however, making specific value judgements between various kinds of religious experience; he was analysing their relative contribution to a satisfactory way of life. Various twentieth century secular doctrines are introduced and discussed in Eyeless in Gaza for the same reason; the conflict between such doctrines as Fabianism, the rule of an Aristocracy, and Marxism is used as a kind of testing ground for various levels of idealism and morality. Huxley also refutes the blind belief in progress as a universal panacea. The discussion of progress initiates a discussion of the most radical method of social change: revolution. The concept of freedom was often related to the idea of revolution:

'... Revolution's delightful in the preliminary stages. So long as a question of getting rid of the people at the top. But afterwards, if the thing's a success -- what then? More wireless sets, more chocolates, more beauty parlours, more girls with better contraceptives.' He shook his head. 'The moment you give people the chance to be piggish, they take it -- thankfully. That freedom you were talking about just now, the freedom at the top of the social ladder -- it's just the licence to be a pig; or alternatively a prig, a self-satisfied pharisee like my father....'⁶⁵

⁶⁵Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza, op. cit., ch.21, p.207.



Another point about politics is the lack of any form of cohesive harmony between the theory and the practical manifestation of that theory. The regime that is called a democracy in Ape and Essence is in fact an oligarchy. The state belonged to the Proletariat in theory, but the proles had no practical rights to rule or to show a sense of free will. In Brave New World, the Savage had hope in the proles but it was useless and in vain. Huxley's works are pessimistic in comparison with other writers'. George Orwell wrote about the future world in 1984 and he did leave the hope for the future to the proles. Huxley usually doesn't suggest other alternative choices. His people in Brave New World, Island and Ape and Essence have no free-will; therefore, to hope for them is in vain; having no sense of independent will they are permanently enslaved by their own acceptance. The analysis of this difference between the seeming and the reality of the political world is expressed in Huxley's usual ironic way:

The chief cuts him short.
'this is a Democracy,' he says. 'We're all equal before the Law. And the Law says that everything belongs to the Proletariat -- in other words, it all goes to the State. And what's the penalty for robbing the State?' The man looks up at him in speechless misery. 'What's the penalty?' the chief bellows, raising his whip.
'Twenty-five lashes,' comes the almost inaudible reply.⁶⁶ (the author's Underlining)

Remember that phrase of Karl Marx:
'Force is the midwife of Progress'? He

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Aldous Huxley, Ape and Essence, op. cit., pp.48 - 49.

might have added -- but, of course -- Belial didn't want to let the cat out of the bag at that early stage of the proceeding -- that Progress is the midwife of Force. Doubly the midwife, for the fact of technological progress with the instruments of ever more indiscriminate destruction, while the myth of political and moral progress serves as the excuse for using those means to the very limit.⁶⁷

In Island, the idea of reconciliation is the main theme; Huxley wanted to show his Utopia based on a sense of mystical awareness. There is an effective compromise between science and religion. This concept ~~does~~ not appear in Eveloss in Gaza, Brave New World and the early novels such as Antic Hay and Point Counter Point. But in Island knowledge and practical life are harmonized. For example the Scottish doctor, Dr. Andrew MacPhail and the Palanese king join to create a world embodying the best of both aspects. The result is Pala, a perfect Utopia. In Brave New World, religion is eliminated when science dominates but this isn't so in Pala; the practical and the abstract are united in mutual harmony.

The people in Pala practise birth-control in order to keep their national economy at a suitable level. Besides, they are satisfied with their regime, a so-called democracy. It does seem that the idea of democracy shown in Island is too idealistic to be practical: there is a case to be made that Huxley produces an amalgamation of various ideals, political doctrines and ethical

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Ibid., p.94.



concepts without really offering a political explanation of how they can be applied.

This somewhat mixed grouping of political and social ideas has its philosophic and religious counterpart in his Perennial Philosophy. He chose what he considered the best concepts from a variety of philosophies and combined them into a practical outlook aimed at the improvement of all people. Sometimes his philosophy becomes far-fetched because of his desire to accumulate all major viewpoints. In Eyeless in Gaza, Huxley does not state any favouring of a specific religion. For example, He discusses Christianity and Buddhism together as different aspects of the same central experience:

Christian God and the Buddhist's primal Mind -- interpretations of concrete experiences, the Buddhist being the rationalization of a state further removed from the normal than the Christian. Christians, of course, have often experienced the state and found great difficulties in explaining it in orthodox terms. Both conceptions are legitimate -- just as both macroscopical and microscopical views of matter are legitimate. We look at the universe with a certain kind of physio-mental apparatus. That apparatus can respond only to certain stimuli. Within relatively narrow limits, it is adjustable. The nature of the facts which each of us perceives as primary....⁶⁸

In Ape and Essence, the Perennial Philosophy is only briefly referred to; as when Huxley suggested sexual matters could be rationalised. But in Island, the Perennial Philosophy is a primary element. He chose and adapted ideas from Christianity, Mahayana

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Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza, op. cit., ch.44, p.331.

Buddhism and Tantra, mixing all these ideas to create a eclectic universal philosophy. The Non-Verbal Education in Pala can illustrate this eclecticism. Applied biology and hypnotism are used to educate children. All actions are transformed to become a form of Yoga. All children are conditioned as they were in Brave New World; but in Pala it is spiritual conditioning. The Yoga of love or Maithuna is set a school syllabus for children. The primary aim of this theory of Yoga is for the gaining of self-awareness. All are taught in order to make children grow to be happy in their society.

The idea of applied biology attracted the interest of Julian Huxley, Aldous Huxley's brother. He said in his Essays of a Humanist (1964):

'... in the educational systems of underdeveloped territories, children should be introduced to science by the biological way of ecology and physiology and their applications in conservation and health, not by way of physics and chemistry and their applications in technology and industry.'⁶⁹

Possibly Huxley got the idea of applied biology in teaching from his brother. Will and Mr. Menon talk about such education:

'Psychology, Mendelism, Evolution -- your education seems to be heavily biological,' said Will.

'It is,' Mr. Menon agreed. 'Our primary emphasis isn't on physics and chemistry; it's on the science of life.'⁷⁰

A deep acceptance of the importance of mysticism was the

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Peter Bowering, op. cit., p. 186.

⁷⁰Aldous Huxley, Island, op. cit., ch.13, p.218.

final state that Huxley reached before his death in 1963. He began to think that through meditation and self-awareness man could reach truth and God. The real beginning point of mysticism in Huxley can be seen in Eyeless in Gaza. On the sun-roof, Anthony is with Helen Ledwidge. A dog comes falling from the sky. Huxley used to say that dog could be reversibly read as God. Because of this bloody dog (or God) Anthony is made to remember past actions and a sense of guilt follows. He re-examines his past actions to see whether they are right or wrong. There is an indication that contemplation is important because it is a method of self-education, a further means of gaining greater self-awareness and self-control. Anthony's father told him about a kind of meditation:

... But if you don't think about her, you condemn her to a second death. The spirit of the dead lives on in God. But it also lives on in the minds of the living -- helping them, making them better and stronger. The dead can only have this kind of immortality if the living are prepared to give it them. Will you give it her, Anthony?⁷¹

In Aps and Essence, Huxley shows other ideas in mystical terms. In talking about the God of Evil, Belial, he says that everyone must pay respect to IT because no God of goodness can possess human beings but evil. There is no mention of overt or formal worship of even such a perverse kind in Island. The "religion" of the island is mysticism based on the working of the individual mind. Spiritual insight, self-awareness and contemplation

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Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza, op. cit., ch.9, p.72.

enable man to be enlightened. The idea of self-awareness appears very often in Island:

Good being is knowing who in fact we are; and in order to know who in fact we are, we must first know, moment by moment, who we think we are and what this bad habit of thought compels us to feel and do. A moment of clear and complete knowledge of what we think we are, but in fact are not, puts a stop, for the moment, to the Merichean charade. If we renew, until they become a continuity, these moments of the knowledge of what we are not, we may find ourselves all of a sudden, knowing who in fact we are.⁷²

Hypnotism is used in Pala. Children learn it to shut off their pain or suffering by auto-hypnosis or self-determination. Besides, hypnotism is utilized in purging fear and creating various exercises in visual imagination. For example, Will is hypnotized by Mary Sarojini to purge the feeling of fear and by Susila to shut off the pain.

The philosophy of Pala is basically an adaptation of various tenets from other philosophies and religions, especially those involving any form of meditation and spiritual power. Tantra teaches the acceptance of the value of life and of not renouncing the world. That is why Huxley developed the ideas of Yoga as an integral part of all actions. All actions, if you transform them into Yoga, will enlighten you in some way. This is the main idea of Tantra. The idea of "suchness" is a part of the beliefs in Pala. "Suchness" teaches man to look at things as they are without any

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Aldous Huxley, Island, op. cit., ch.5, p.39.

prejudice or colouring. Huxley takes as an example the discussion between Buddha (Gautama) and Mahakasyapa; Buddha advised Mahakasyapa to notice a flower; he could understand the implications that were hidden in the flower. It was difficult for others listening to the Buddha to reach or understand the Suchness; but in Fale children are from an early age encouraged to develop such an awareness:

'... , there's no answer that can be put into words. So we tell the boys and girls to stop thinking and just look. "But don't look analytically," ... "Don't look as scientists, even as gardeners. Liberate yourselves from everything you know and look with complete innocence at this infinitely improbable thing before you. Look at it as though you'd never seen anything of the kind before, as though it had no name and belonged to no recognizable class. Look at it alertly but passively, receptively, without labelling or judging or comparing. And as you look at it, inhale its mystery, breathe in the spirit of sense, the smell of the wisdom of the other shore."⁷³

In Island, one can find various inaccuracies about Buddhism. Perhaps Huxley misunderstands because he was wrongly informed. They are not major errors; three or four examples will indicate the kind of mistakes. Susila, who masters in Perennial Philosophies and applied religious ideas, explains some ideas to Will:

'Thank goodness,' she said, 'there was never any blood in Buddhism! Gautama lived until eighty and died from being too courteous to refuse bad food. Violent death always seems to call for more....'⁷⁴ (the author's Underlining)

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Ibid., ch.13, pp. 225-226.

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Ibid., ch.7, p.100.

In fact Buddha's death was not caused by bad food. At the end of his life (at the age of eighty), Buddha realized in advance that he would die soon. His last meal was served by a wealthy man who had faith in Buddha. Buddha was seriously ill. Although that food was succulent and excellent, it was the wrong food for Buddha; the food itself was not bad. The man who offered the food was rich, so why should he offer bad food to Buddha, to whom he paid much respect?

The idea about the Yoga of love is that they transform all actions into Yoga in order to have self-awareness and enlightenment. The method of love-making is practised as a yoga. Everyone can reach his enlightenment even when he is in bed. Mary Sarojini states this idea:

'And the part that made them laugh,' Mary Sarojini went on, 'was where he said the Future Buddha won't have to leave home and sit under the Bodhi Tree. He'll have his enlightenment while he's in bed with the princess.'⁷⁵

(the author's Underlining)

Huxley, maybe, misunderstood the aim of Buddha in seeking truth. The Buddha did not want only self-awareness but he wanted to seek the truth: how the state of being sorrowful and suffering could be eliminated; what was the positive way to lead one's life in an appropriate way; what were the methods to solve unhappiness and suffering; what were the causes of these sorrows? Self-awareness was just one way to understand why their sorrow happened. It was

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Ibid., ch.14, p.251.

not the main point for Buddha because his intention was deeper than that. Therefore, The Future Buddha cannot have his enlightenment through the Yoga of love-making with the princess. This point of Huxley's is irrelevant; he does not understand ^{the} Buddha's own intentions and what ^{the} Buddha wanted to seek. If it is as Huxley understood, how can a man be enlightened while he is making a Yoga of love? It seems improbable that the Yoga of love does not involve pleasurable sensations. One therefore does not get only self-awareness, because the physical touch involved in this method certainly causes sensation. You can be enlightened only by the mind; physical practice cannot enlighten. It is therefore a far-fetched and indeed impossible idea.

Huxley also obviously mixes up various aspects of Brahmanism and Buddhism. He describes the religious rite in which a Buddhist monk appears as a part of a religious ceremony in a Brahman temple. This is impossible because Brahmanists will never let a Buddhist monk who does not belong to their religion appear in their temple. Buddhist monks can go into Brahman temple without being accused as behaving wrongly in their religion because Buddhist monks never depend on material things. It is the mind that is important. The Buddha once used to say that Buddhists should not believe him until they have considered all the ideas he gave them. Huxley wrongly states this point because Brahmanists never let Buddhists ^{to} enter their temple:

Inside the temple there was a cool, cavernous darkness, tempered by the faint daylight filtering

in through a pair of small latticed windows and by the seven lamps that hung, like a halo of yellow, quivering stars, above the head of the image on the altar. It was a copper statue, no taller than a child, of Shiva. Surrounded by a flame-fringed glory, his four arms gesturing, his braided hair wildly flying, his right foot treading down a dwarfish figure of the most hideous malignity, his left foot gracefully lifted, the god stood there, frozen in mid-ecstasy... Above them, on the highest of the altar steps, an old priest, shaven and yellow-robed, was intoning something sonorous and incomprehensible. Leaving Will installed on a convenient ledge, Dr. Robert tiptoed over to where Vijaya and Murugan were sitting and squatted down beside them.⁷⁶

(the author's Underlining)

Towards the end of his life, Huxley's interest was attracted by the use of drugs especially mescaline in order to gain sufficient visual insight to reach the state of perceiving truth:

From what I had read of the mescaline in experience I was convinced in advance that the drug would admit me, at least for a few hours, into the kind of inner world described by Blake and A.E. But what I had expected did not happen. I had expected to lie with my eyes shut, looking at visions of many-coloured geometries, of animated architecture, rich gems and fabulously lovely, of landscapes with heroic figures, of symbolic dramas trembling perpetually on the verge of the ultimate revelation. But I had not reckoned, it was evident, with the idiosyncrasies of my mental make-up, the facts of my temperament, training, and habits.⁷⁷

In Island, Huxley introduces this interest of his. The moksha-medicine is used to create Beatific Visions and the elevation

⁷⁶ Ibid., ch.10, p.169.

⁷⁷ Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1969), p.15.

of consciousness. He puts forward the idea of using drugs in religious ceremonies. In Brave New World, they use Soma (a kind of drug) to comfort themselves. This use of Soma, however, was essentially a negative one; it returned the user to a form of mindless content. Huxley's use of mescaline is connected with his search for knowledge, and a desire to experience more fully a sense of mystical awareness and a heightened sense of reality.

Some critics **observed** that mysticism showed the decline of Huxley as a novelist of ideas. In fact, this suggestion can be acceptable because Huxley tries to express so many facets of the mystic that he often becomes confusing. However, his mystical ideas and his Perennial Philosophy are further manifestations of Huxley's continual search for knowledge and truth.