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garding it as she does as essential to fantasy fiction. "Non-empiricism" is not a synonym for "magic." See Ernest Cassirer's *Language and Myth* (English trans. 1946). —SCF.

⁹I borrow the latter term from Suzanne Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* 3rd edn (1947). —SCF.

¹⁰There are many major works of scholarship which confirm my views. I would single out Langer (Note 9), Ernst Cassirer's *An Essay on Man* (1944), Gaston Bachelard's *The Philosophy of No* (English trans. 1968), and Jean Piaget's *Psychology and Epistemology* (English trans. 1971). Recently, Sharon Spencer in *Space, Time, and Structure in the Modern Novel* (1971) has shown the same process—an attempt to transcend naive realism—at work in 20th-century mainstream fiction. —SCF.

¹¹I notice, too, that Ketterer provides only a vague "passim" footnote reference to Frye, not a specific page reference, and indeed I am certain that Frye would not accept this prescription of Ketterer's against the mythological novel as an implication of his own theory. I am even more certain that Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* bears not the slightest relationship to Frye's mythos of winter. Ketterer's analogy is completely artificial, apart from his prejudice against *Left Hand*. —SCF.

¹²"Todorov's Fantastic Theory of Literature," *SFS* 1(1974):227-37. —DK.

¹³Franklin, *Future Perfect: American Science Fiction in the Nineteenth Century* (NY 1966), p3; Delany, "About Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy-Five Words," *Extrapolation* 10(1969):52-66; Russ, "Speculations: The Subjunctivity of Science Fiction," *Extrapolation* 15(1973):51-59. —DK.

William W. Matter

The Utopian Tradition and Aldous Huxley

The study of various touchstones in the history of man's search for the ideal commonwealth affords valuable insight into ideas and ideals that profoundly influenced the utopian thought of Aldous Huxley. *Brave New World*, *Ape and Essence*, and *Island* evidence their author's awareness of, and in many cases his dislike for, major phases in utopian literature. Early writings contain references to mythical islands and to a prehistoric Golden Age that provided a simple but an incredibly congenial life. Such a myth must surely suggest wish-fulfillment and escapist tendencies. Especially in *Brave New World*, Huxley rejects primitivistic and pastoral perfection. Opposed to the escapist utopia of private pleasures is the ideal commonwealth established and maintained by careful regulation. This sort of utopia, of which Plato's *Republic* is the best known example, requires that the individual must offer much of his freedom for the privilege of living in the heavenly city and pursuing the good. Though the *Republic* is much more descriptive than prescriptive, Huxley strenuously objects to the work's seemingly authoritarian stance. He cannot accept the *Republic* as descriptive of the good, and he clearly cannot regard the work as a prescription for attaining desirable goals. According to Huxley's philosophy, it is an example of the type of utopia that must be avoided.

Almost all of the early Greek utopists were highly restrictive. Renaissance writers attempted to expand man's freedom in the ideal commonwealth; but, for the most part, they did so unconvincingly. Criminals are usually punished severely in these utopias because civil disobedience pulls at the closely-knit fabric of the ideal society. For the same reason, all regulations must be steadfastly enforced. War, too, is an integral part of life in the early utopias. Like contemporary residents in less "perfect" countries, utopians often find it necessary to prepare themselves for the danger of attack. Plato's citizens are warriors; More's island is strongly fortified; and Campanella's city is encircled by high walls. Huxley's Pala, in contrast, does not have the

typical defenses; thus it is easily invaded by armored vehicles and foreign troops.

Helpful to peace-time utopian unity and success are the public stores and the common tables that are a part of most early ideal cities, and the community of wives, property, and children described in many such works. Eugenic controls frequently aid in stabilizing the populace. Education, too, is a central concern to Plato, More, Andreae, Huxley, and other utopists. It helps prepare the people for life in the new world.

The gradual development of science intrigued utopian writers and provided them with a tool to make the earthly paradise appear more realizable in fact. As man improved his science, many utopists saw emerging a *deus ex machina*. The steel and iron god of industrialization promised plenty for all. Instead of studiously avoiding luxury as an instrument destructive to unity and stability, theorists of the nineteenth century eagerly welcomed industry and science as benevolent agents supremely equipped to provide abundantly for each member of the ideal society. Still, subjugation of the individual to a central authority that had both the power and the wisdom to administer effectively in a perfect world remained as a central theme in utopian literature.

Certainly, the major elements of utopianism described here did not go unchallenged. Aristophanes and Aristotle viewed the Platonic ideal as exceeding the limits of credibility. Aristotle resorted to a more practical plan of utopianism in his *Politics*, and Aristophanes produced an anti-utopia in which sexual practices are submitted to quite massive indecencies; men and women, as Bernard laments in *Brave New World*, begin to think of themselves and others as meat. With Aristophanes, the most spoiled meat wins the day. In A.F. 632, meat does not spoil; it simply vanishes in the smoke emitted from the body-burning incinerators.

The concept of the noble savage whose social sphere is untainted by cultivated evils represents another deviation from the mainstream of the utopian tradition. The life of Montaigne's cannibals, though, proved distasteful to most authors who constructed ideal commonwealths. The nineteenth century, too, had its rebel utopists. Morris returned to the land, and Butler banned machines from his utopia. The major accent in the nineteenth century, however, was upon industrialization and upon the idea that progress could actually produce the utopia that writers like Bellamy saw waiting for a happy combination of man and machine to realize.

In the early twentieth century, Wells reinforced Bellamy's optimism and speculated upon a world-wide utopia forged from science's successful confrontation with the enemies of progress. One such enemy was Aldous Huxley. He strongly opposed the belief that progress, especially progress through science, would bring about a perfect world. The general view that industry could not fulfill all of man's needs led some utopists to espouse an increasingly popular and pessimistic negation of the machine. Reflective of the mood of the times, dystopian fiction assumed the leading role in the utopian genre. Writers began to question both classical utopianism and the even more positively optimistic utopias of the late nineteenth century. The conflict is excellently described by Negley and Patrick: "Of course, the utopist proclaims the freedom and happiness of the individual in his ideal society, but the reader must ponder the questionable status of the individual in the completely centralized and institutionalized economic or political or religious society. It was fear of the institutionalization of men that alarmed such satirists as Huxley and Orwell."¹ The fear of totalitarian utopias was extremely important to the utopian tradition in the first half of the twentieth century. The doubts voiced by Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell are captured in the following brief passage by Lewis Mumford:

Isolation, stratification, fixation, regimentation, standardization, militarization—one or more of these attributes enter into the conception of the utopian city, as expounded by the Greeks. And these same features remain, in open or disguised form, even in the supposedly more democratic utopias of the nineteenth century, such as Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. In the end, utopia merges into the dystopia of the twentieth century; and one suddenly realizes that the distance between the positive ideal and the negative one was never so great as the advocates or admirers of utopia had professed.²

Satire has always been a part of utopian thought. As numerous critics have observed, the very idea of creating a better world implies that there is something wrong with the present world. Many of the most enduring works in the utopian genre contain sharp criticisms of contemporary society. Instead of taking the reader to utopia and stressing the abuses of the outside world, however, writers of utopian literature began to emphasize the inhumanity of a "perfect" world and to suggest that contemporary society was pleasant by comparison. The twentieth-century dystopian view was not completely new; Aristophanes's anti-utopia is at least as old as the *Republic*. Swift and even More himself at times treated the concept of utopia satirically. For the first time in the history of utopian thought, however, the dystopian viewpoint displaced traditional utopianism as the most significant element in the philosophy of utopian speculations. Until the twentieth century, few authors had labored extensively over satires of utopia. Heretofore, utopia had been in large measure a good place to visit.

But it became increasingly and frighteningly apparent to writers like Huxley that, as Nicolas Berdiaeff remarks, utopia is realizable. Prefaced to *Brave New World* is a comment in French by Berdiaeff which insists that in the new century reasonable men may well search for a way to avoid "utopia" and return, instead, to a society that is less "perfect" but more free. *Brave New World* serves as a powerful warning that man may reach the so-often sought for state of the ideal commonwealth. Huxley's world-wide utopia, though, is considerably less desirable than Wells imagined that it might be. The novel is an attack upon utopianism—an attack that one cannot fully understand unless he has some knowledge of the utopian tradition and the works against which Huxley particularly campaigned. In effect, Huxley says that Plato's republic of rigid stability and unity—a society with little personal freedom and no innovation—is stagnant and unproductive. His literary assault upon the utopian tradition is sweeping and not entirely unjustified. Individuality does indeed frequently disappear behind a facade of utopian order and reason.

Huxley's other major target in *Brave New World* is the nineteenth-century utopia which assumes that scientific progress leads to an ideal world. Huxley, it becomes apparent, is fond of neither mechanization nor the concept of progress. He implies that wholesale industrialization creates men like machines and that too much stress upon progress unjustly sacrifices the here and now for the potentially better tomorrow. In *Brave New World* he rebels against the idea of progress and mechanization, and he disallows the very concept of utopia. Neither the primitive existence of the Indians, the ungoverned agricultural community of Alphas, nor the world-wide utopia can be defined as ideal. The society of A.F. 632 is "perfectly" terrifying to the creative individual who wishes to test the gates of heaven and hell, and who seeks to find doors of perceptions not conveniently opened for perverse purposes by the state. When pleasure and escape become unavoidable goals, Huxley reasons, the individual lives in a nightmarish ideal society that cannot allow him the right to be unhappy.

In his second dystopia, Huxley rescues society from utopia, but the cost is high. In *Ape and Essence* one sees an alternative that science and industry

may provide. The inhabitants of twenty-second century America are even more perverse and pathetically ill-directed than Our Ford could have imagined. Still, there is some promise of a less abnormal life in the "Hot Community"—a community that does not treat sex and love animalistically as the early utopists often did.

It may seem curious that an author who so soundly denounces both traditional and most later utopian efforts could also create one, but Huxley's final utopian insight is predictable from his development toward a philosophy of escape. Huxley was bound ultimately to find his utopia, for he dwelled at length in the very nebulous land of negations. One gets only a hint in his dystopias of what their satisfactory commutation might be.

In many ways Huxley's last novel is traditionally utopian. The ideal commonwealth is an island populated by beautiful people and discovered by a traveller who, after being shipwrecked on paradise, uncovers the attributes of the ideal society—occasionally with skepticism but usually with joy. As Northrop Frye notes: "in utopian stories a frequent device is for someone, generally a first-person narrator, to enter the utopia and be shown around it by a sort of Intourist guide."³ In *Brave New World* it is the Savage who tours utopia. In *Ape and Essence* it is Dr. Alfred Poole who learns of modern conditions, and in *Island* Will Farnaby becomes a disciple of the Palanese system of values. As in *Utopia* and many other similar works, the skepticism of the central character is refuted by the unshakeable logic of a people accustomed to the ideal. Much unlike most utopias, however, the island society of Pala insists upon the rights of the individual for self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-satisfaction. The dominant atmosphere of Huxley's utopia suggests an insistence upon freedom, love, personal pleasures, and a mind-body interaction typical of *News from Nowhere* but completely atypical of most ideal commonwealths. The key to happiness on Pala is the here and now—not a vague promise of future happiness engendered by a trust in progress.

The examination of Huxley's three utopian novels against a background of the utopian tradition allows one to see more clearly those themes that influenced Huxley most. He shows the reader that the ends many utopists have sought, and not the means they employ to achieve these ends, are at fault. After reading *Brave New World*, one might assume that Huxley feels that conditioning infants is always wrong. Upon perusing *Island*, however, one becomes aware that it is only the end toward which conditioning is directed in *Brave New World* that Huxley resents. In *Island*, conditioning for love and not for fear is endorsed. Similarly, after reading Huxley's depiction of the liberal sex practices of the brave new world and the "heat" period of 2108, one might conclude that the author is puritanical with respect to sex. But in *Island* each child is instructed in the yoga of love and is permitted at an early age to have sexual experiences. Again, it is the end toward which sex is directed in *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence* that Huxley deplors. Meaningful sexual relationships, especially those involving a yoga of love, are applauded; only shallow, unthinking adventures in sex are condemned. The worst of the East and the West is discussed in *Ape and Essence*, but Huxley is strongly in favor of a meeting of the best aspects of the East and the West. In *Brave New World* artificial insemination and sperm banks lead to production-line people; in *Island* the same devices of science, employed for humane goals, improve the race. *Ape and Essence* and *Brave New World* are attacks upon man's use of technology. In *Island* science serves man; it does not control him. Similarly, *soma* is evil because it is used for escape; but *moksha*-medicine reveals reality.

The societies of *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence* were directed toward goals which Huxley regards as unprofitable and frequently destructive

to the human spirit. *Island*, on the other hand, describes a society with a sound sense of direction. The key to the change in Huxley's philosophy is found in the 1946 foreword to *Brave New World*. At one time, the author says, he considered man's choice to be between lunacy and insanity. But in his foreword an escape is briefly described. In such a community, Huxley states, "science and technology would be used as though, like the Sabbath, they had been made for man, not...as though man were to be adapted and enslaved to them. Religion would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of man's Final End, the unitive knowledge of the immanent Tao or Logos, the transcendent Godhead or Brahman." Huxley declares that the general notion of a utopian escape was "in the back of my mind at that time [1946], and it has preoccupied me a good deal ever since."⁴ But in *Island* the final realization of the author's preoccupation occurs. It is evident, then, that Huxley's last novel is the result of a gradual progression of his utopian philosophy. Thus all three works are indicative of their creator's awareness of and his reaction to the utopian tradition.

It would be erroneous, however, to insist that Huxley was a careful student of all aspects of utopian literature. He obviously knew the *Republic* well enough to dislike it. He mentions *Erewhon* in *Island*, and he wrote an introduction to a privately printed edition of Butler's novel.⁵ That he was conversant with many of the utopian conventions is attested to both by his fiction and by numerous incidental comments. About *Island* Huxley states: "And then, as in *News from Nowhere* and other utopias, I have another intruder from the outside world, whose guided tour provides a means of describing the society."⁶ His article entitled "Boundaries of Utopia" criticizes utopias like those of Bellamy and Wells that predict a perfect world achieved through progress.⁷ Yet from such indications, which suggest that Huxley knew the history of utopian thought intimately, one cannot logically conclude that he read widely in all of the varied aspects of utopianism. Rather, Huxley was influenced by general impressions of what he did not like in utopia and by occasional utopian works which he found palatable. It is for this reason that a selective survey of utopianism joined with an analysis of Huxley's own versions of the ideal commonwealth is a particularly effective tool of scholarship.

After conducting such a study, one is tempted to offer some conclusions with respect to both utopianism and Huxley. Regarding the former, White observes that "the impulse to create utopias...lies close to the fundamental motives of all human activity."⁸ Moreover, the utopias man creates, as Mumford comments, may be designed primarily for escape or for social reconstruction.⁹ Finally, they may be intended, like the *Ecclesiastusae* and *Brave New World*, as a condemnation of utopian goals. Until mankind reaches a stage where he sees no further need for improvement, however, writers will continue to speculate about utopia. Sometimes they feel as did More that utopia may be impossible to achieve; but man's hopes are more easily equated with Bellamy's plans for actual Nationalism, with Plato's efforts at Syracuse, with the disillusioned Hawthorne at Brook Farm, with John Lennon who imagines a world without possessions and a brotherhood of man,¹⁰ and with the idealistic hippie in his New Mexico commune. Regardless of man's desire to find utopia, though, the history of actual attempts at utopian living, as Frye remarks, makes "melancholy reading."¹¹ It also makes for a considerable amount of reading. Many volumes describe various of man's utopian projects.¹² In the last decade, for example, the hippie movement has taken on the atmosphere of a search for the ideal existence. The numerous communes that have only a tentative existence are suggestive of earlier utopian communities and of the isolated societies which Huxley supports. The commune philosophy, based as it often

is upon a denial of materialism and an emphasis on Eastern ideals, shares those aims with the people of Pala.

In order to establish a long-lasting utopia, however, one must find a way to do away altogether with man's follies and his frailties. Plato employed eugenics and primitive conditioning practices to achieve that goal in his *Republic*. Modern theorists like B.F. Skinner rely upon a more sophisticated conditioning procedure. The belief that humanity can be conditioned to behave properly in a perfect world is viable if one assumes that man is a *tabula rasa*; but if the human mind has innate instincts for experiences less desirable and less perfect than those found in utopia, man will never reach that ideal island. If mankind has, as Conrad suggests, a "heart of darkness," then the desire to witness heroic struggles and to see pain as well as pleasure cannot be removed by conditioning. Huxley is one of the very few utopists to allow heroic struggles and sorrow to enter into the earthly paradise, and his utopia cannot endure the insanity of the world outside. Perhaps utopia is, after all, too good to exist in fact. Perhaps the only way to achieve perfection is to make man less than human as Huxley does in *Brave New World*. The most notable utopias frequently must sacrifice creativity and true art for more practical qualities. Even the old Raga on Pala admits that good literature and the good life are antagonistic (p. 204). The reader remembers that the islanders enjoy the good literature vicariously by reading in a language not their own. *Oedipus in Pala*, as a sample of a native effort, leaves one relieved that the Palanese are not a writing people. Utopists, of necessity, must make oblations to achieve feasibility. Sometimes only the family pet suffers; but at other times the poet is banished, and man must give up his freedom, his individuality, and his creativity for the honor of living in utopia.

In *Brave New World*, Huxley attacks the utopian tradition; he modifies his assault in *Ape and Essence* to include the possibility of escape. In his last novel he describes that escape. From the fact of the unhappy destruction of Palanese values by the Essential Horror in the world, one must conclude that Huxley's opinion of the direction that society insists upon taking has not changed appreciably since he produced his first dystopian work.

NOTES

¹Glenn R. Negley and J. Max Patrick, *The Quest for Utopia: An Anthology of Imaginary Societies* (New York 1952), p8.

²Lewis Mumford, "Utopia, The City and the Machine," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel (Boston 1965), p9.

³Northrop Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (Note 2), p26.

⁴*Writers at Work: The "Paris Review" Interviews*, 2nd Series (New York 1963), p199.

⁵Printed by Pynson printers for the Limited Editions Club in 1934.

⁶*Writers at Work* (Note 4), pp198-99.

⁷Aldous Huxley, "Boundaries of Utopia," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 7(1931):47-54.

⁸F.R. White, *Introduction to Famous Utopias of the Renaissance* (New York 1946), p. viii.

⁹Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (1922; new edn New York 1962), pp1-26.

¹⁰John Lennon, "Imagine" (London: Apple Records, 1971).

¹¹Frye (Note 3), p26.

¹²For further discussion on this point see the following works: W.H.G. Armytage, *Heavens Below* (Toronto 1961); Arthur E. Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America 1663-1829* (Philadelphia 1950); Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth: Utopian Communities in America 1680-1880*, 2nd edn (New York 1966).