

Progress, Elitism and Ideology in *Point Counter Point* as a Novel of Ideas

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Throughout Huxley's forty-year career as a novelist there was always an identifiable connection between the ideas he wanted to convey and the literary medium and technique through which he sought to convey them. As his ideas metamorphosed so did his approach to writing. As a result, Huxley is a moving target for those who would categorize his work, either in intellectual or stylistic terms. The challenge confronting students of Huxley is to place any given Huxley work in the context of the author's evolving worldview at the time.

After *Brave New World* (1932), *Point Counter Point* (1928) is undoubtedly Huxley's most widely read and most controversial novel. There is no consensus among critics concerning what the novel tells us about the nature of Huxley's thoughts as the first decade of the interwar period drew to a close. Neither is there a consensus about its literary merit. The work nonetheless provides an important freeze-frame of a pivotal moment in Huxley's development as a social and political thinker, and as an experimenter in literary form. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to examine the ideas contained in *Point Counter Point*, their mode of expression, and their place in the context of Huxley's earlier and later work.

Ultimately, what kind of novel one judges *Point Counter Point* to be depends very much upon whom one takes to be its central character. If it is Philip Quarles, the novelist within the novel, the work becomes the *reductio ad absurdum* of the novel of ideas, in

which the central preoccupation is the genre itself—a disengaged, even solipsistic, exercise, and an essentially derivative one at that—having been preempted by André Gide in *Les Faux Monnayeurs* in 1925. If, instead, it is Maurice Spandrell, then the novel is largely a continuation of Huxley's earlier commentaries on the degeneration of British culture in the wake of the Great War, and on the risibly diminished claims of the privileged classes to social leadership. But if the central character is Mark Rampion, *Point Counter Point* becomes a major event in Huxley's career—a transitional rather than a terminal novel, one that not only marks the closing of Huxley's earliest identifiable literary phase but one that also previews the next phase into which Huxley was already passing. All three candidates are indeed plausible. But Quarles and Spandrell merely represent two of the novel's many counterpointed types. By contrast, Rampion, though himself a type, is assigned a judgmental role. He is a commentator on the human condition and a would-be healer of those destructive schisms in the psychological makeup of humankind that were so evidently coming to preoccupy Huxley at the time. That is Rampion's claim to centrality in the novel, and it is this role that establishes *Point Counter Point*'s transitional quality.

George Woodcock, a Canadian anarchist literary critic, and himself something of a disciple of Huxley's from the early to the mid-1930s, proposed a basically chronological tripartite classification of Huxley's work: the Peacockian novels of the 1920s, which are taken to conclude with *Point Counter Point*; the novels of conversion and regeneration, marked principally by *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* (1939), and *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944); and the utopias *Brave New World* (1932) and *Island* (1962). It is easy to understand why *Point Counter Point* is

often grouped with its three predecessor novels. In those works, Huxley borrowed liberally from the model suggested by Thomas Love Peacock in novels such as *Headlong Hall* (1816) and *Nightmare Abbey* (1819), in which social archetypes are placed in more-or-less sequestered settings, much like the manor houses favored by Huxley, and then set to talking about the world from their various and often conflicting viewpoints. *Crome Yellow* (1922), *Antic Hay* (1923), and *Those Barren Leaves* (1925) all address themes that were to be perennials in Huxley's work and prominent in *Point Counter Point*. But the crucially important elements of discernible continuity should not be allowed to obscure the innovation that characterizes Huxley's fourth novel. In the earlier works Huxley's approach is no more than that of a satirist. While *Point Counter Point* undoubtedly retains an important satirical quality, it also introduces into Huxley's work a powerful didacticism—a diagnosis of, and prescription for, the maladies Huxley found in the post-War human condition. And it is that conversion from satire to didacticism that establishes *Point Counter Point* as a new departure in Huxley's writing.

There is another important reason why *Point Counter Point* is often more closely associated with the Peacockian satires than with the most positive and prescriptive works of the 1930s, namely that Huxley was shortly thereafter to abandon the worldview that the novel expresses. *Point Counter Point* is Huxley's fullest literary expression of his engagement with D.H. Lawrence, and with Lawrentian vitalism as both a social and an aesthetic philosophy. Unlike the Peacockian novels, it has a discernible perspective and motivation, as would all of Huxley's subsequent novels. That the basis of his novels' inspirational content was to change—essentially from vitalism to mysticism—does not

detract from the fact that, from *Point Counter Point* onwards, Huxley's fiction sought to provide solutions for the social ills exposed in the earlier novels.

It was perhaps inevitable that an intellectual as engaged as Huxley would eventually take on this more positive role. Like other writers of his generation, he was compelled to grapple with the implosion of the pre-War writers' universe. Paul Fussell captured the rupture between pre- and post-War literary culture in the following terms:

Indeed, the literary scene is hard to imagine. There was no *Waste Land*, with its rats' alleys, dull canals, and dead men who have lost their bones: it would take four years of trench warfare to bring these to consciousness. There was no *Ulysses*, no *Mauberry*, no *Cantos*, no Kafka, no Proust, no Waugh, no Auden, no Huxley, no Cummings, no *Women in Love* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. There was no "Valley of Ashes" in *The Great Gatsby*. One read Hardy and Kipling and Conrad and frequented worlds of traditional moral action delineated in traditional moral language (23).

As indicated by Fussell, Huxley's early novels form a crucial part of the British canon of the 1920s. The first post-War decade witnessed the flowering of literary modernism, the central preoccupation of which was with loss, decline, debasement, and above all with fragmentation—the principal theme to which *Point Counter Point* is devoted. The pervading sense of loss was induced not least by the grim death toll among young writers themselves during the course of the war. But beyond the destruction of so much writing talent, long before it had developed its full potential, there was also the loss of the ideals that had characterized so many of the pre-War poets. In December 1914, Rupert Brooke had written:

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. (ll. 1–3)

Brooke himself died ingloriously of dysentery and blood poisoning on a troopship bound for Gallipoli in 1915. The ideals and values he and his writing personified were soon buried under an avalanche of anti-war writing from poet-soldiers, most prominently Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, and Ivor Gurney. These men raged against what they saw as the dishonesty of the war's motives (what Owen termed "The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori*" [ll. 27–28]), the squalor and disease of the trenches, the incompetence of the British military leadership, and the barbarity of modern methods of combat, including poison gas and tank warfare.

Romantic nationalism had given a generation its sense of meaning, and war had taken it away. But, as Christopher Isherwood recounted in his autobiographical memoir *Lions and Shadows* (1938), those too young to have served would face post-War traumas of their own. Isherwood wrote about men of his age cohort having a war complex, consisting of guilt at never having met the challenges of maturity and virility that the war represented (75–76). In the early 1920s, revulsion at war coexisted paradoxically with frustration at having been denied the experience. In either case, the crisis of meaning occasioned by the war was inescapable.

Into the perturbing cultural void of the post-War period rushed a highly developed intellectual pessimism, at the root of which was the conviction that four years of internecine warfare had induced nothing short of a European civilizational crisis. Since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, European culture had been animated by a belief in unilinear historical progress. Modern progressive thought has its origins in the Cartesian revolution in scientific method, after which it became possible to conceive of scientific knowledge as cumulative. As it systematized our understanding of the natural world,

science would provide for the amelioration of the human condition in both material and moral terms. Progressivism reached its apotheosis in the positivism and scientism of the century of industrialism's relative peace between 1815 and 1914.

But the chaos and destruction of a four-year war that claimed the lives of nine million people, and far surpassed the American Civil War as the bloodiest in human history, placed against the idea of progress a question mark that has never since been completely erased. This is not to say that confidence in progress had not been strained prior to the Great War. In the specifically British context, leading Victorian critics such as Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and William Morris had protested against the social and cultural consequences of the Industrial Revolution. In "Dover Beach" (1867) Huxley's great-uncle Matthew Arnold had lamented what he saw as the recession of faith and the growth of moral uncertainty in the age of science and reason. The Boer War (1899–1902) had revealed as physically unfit for military service much of the urban proletariat, and the labor unrest of 1911–12 dramatically illustrated the class conflict inherent in industrial society. Concern grew over the destructive potential of technology previewed in the Anglo-German naval arms race, and even the sinking of the *Titanic* in April 1912 was widely interpreted as a lesson in the hazards of scientific hubris.¹ The Great War did little more than bring this diverse array of anxieties into sharp and concentrated focus. As George Dangerfield wrote in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935), the war "hastened everything . . . but it started nothing" (viii).

One work in particular captured the impending sense of cultural doom occasioned by the war. In *The Decline of the West*, published between 1918 and 1922, the German philosopher Oswald Spengler countered the prevailing unilinear conception of historical

development with a cyclical interpretation that emphasized the successive, not progressive, rise and decline of entire cultural systems. Spengler's argument was that cultures pass through a lifecycle broadly comparable to that of biological organisms. As historical interpretation, this was by no means original, having important antecedents in the work of the eighteenth-century philosopher of history Giambattista Vico, and also in nineteenth-century thinkers such as Nikolai Danilevsky and Friedrich Nietzsche. But the poignancy and resonance of Spengler's cyclical historical analysis lay in his thesis that the West had now entered the terminal phase of its cycle. In other words, a culture predicated on limitless progress and infinite possibility had reached an endpoint—a claim that appeared to have considerable plausibility at the end of the war. In Huxley's native Britain, the historian Arnold J. Toynbee, inspired by Spengler, began to assemble his own cyclical analysis of historical development in the monumental twenty-eight volume *Study of World History*.

With confidence in progress severely damaged, there was renewed intellectual interest in more skeptical and pessimistic conceptions of human nature. In particular, the writings of T.E. Hulme, especially his posthumously published essay collection *Speculations* (1924), received renewed attention. Hulme attacked the rational humanist confidence in progress, alleging that its central misunderstanding was its conviction that human failings were ultimately attributable to dysfunctional social organization. For Hulme, there were undeniable perennials in human nature, including an ineradicable propensity towards wrongdoing. It was simply an error to suppose that better human beings would result from societal improvements. Tradition and authority were the only means of keeping the harmful propensities of human nature in check.² This return to the

pre-Enlightenment perception of human beings as fallen, or inherently flawed, creatures is very much in evidence in Huxley's writing. As he wrote in the introduction to his essay collection *Proper Studies* (1927), "The modern conception of human nature is far closer to the traditional Catholic conception than to that of Helvétius or Godwin, Babeuf or Shelley" (xiv). But the fullest and most influential expression of Spenglerian and Hulmean pessimism was undoubtedly T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922). There will likely never be a critical consensus as to Eliot's motivations in the poem. Indeed, Eliot himself denied any attempt at commentary on the current condition of Western civilization, and claimed merely to have tried to give vent to a prevailing misanthropic mood. "Various critics," he wrote, "have done me the honour to interpret the poem in terms of criticism of the contemporary world, have considered it, indeed, as an important bit of social criticism. To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling" (cited in V. Eliot 1)." We know that Eliot wrote the poem in a state of mental and physical exhaustion. But New Criticism and its successors have warned us against expressive criticism's tendency towards the "biographical fallacy," or the reliance on authors' personal circumstances as the principal means of interpreting their work. *The Wasteland* immediately took on a significance in social criticism far beyond its author's intent, as young writers interpreted it as simultaneously an expression and an indictment of their times. Eliot resisted his elevation to the status of spokesman for a lost generation, though he had to concede that "I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned" (cited in Martin 8). In his essay on "Hamlet and His Problems" (1919), Eliot developed his famous theory of the objective correlative, according to which art can only express emotion through

creating “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately invoked” (124–25). For all his disclaimers, then, Eliot’s elucidation of such a theory only three years in advance of writing *The Wasteland* increases the temptation to interpret the fragmentariness of the poem’s structure and the sense of alienation, meaninglessness, and alienation created by its content as Eliot’s commentary on the condition of Western civilization as he then saw it. As Samuel Hynes put it, “*The Wasteland* was an important factor in the process by which the post-war generation became aware of itself and its situation. It was part of their effort towards self-definition” (26–27).

Huxley and his generation wrote in the shadow of the poem for the rest of the decade. Huxley’s earliest published works, the verse collections *The Burning Wheel* (1916) and *The Defeat of Youth* (1918), were characterized by an idealism that was to be noticeably absent when he embarked on his career as a novelist during the 1920s. Throughout that decade Huxley was, as Woodcock put it, “fascinated as well as repelled by the life of meretricious intellectuality and futile moneyed gaiety” he saw around him (13). *The Wasteland* as social and cultural analysis provides the framework for Huxley’s Peacockian trilogy of novels. As Harold Watts wrote, “Huxley, from *Crome Yellow* onward, was chief among those who introduced a generation to the bitter necessity of disillusionment: a state of mind which, as the success of Huxley’s novels indicated, was much to their liking” (45). Such a reading is confirmed by Arnold Bennett, who, in reviewing *Point Counter Point*, protested that “The book is almost, if not quite, wholly destructive. It is a very formidable and uncompromising attack on the society which it

depicts, and there are few or no implications which might pass for constructive criticism. The ground is littered with the shapeless rubble of demolished images. Never was ruin so ruthlessly accomplished” (174–75).

Yet the overall tone of the novel is, of course, considerably lighter than Bennett’s assessment would imply. Cyril Connolly credited Huxley with being “a modern Petronius,” and agreed that the excoriating satirical devices that the *Satyricon* had turned against Nero’s Rome were wholly appropriate for a critique of the increasingly degenerate English ruling classes (153–55). Similarly, in a particularly favorable review, the American journalist Robert Morss Lovett announced that “*Point Counter Point* is the modern *Vanity Fair*, and Mr. Huxley is the Thackeray *de nos jours*” (159–60). There are certainly important similarities between Huxley and Thackeray’s commentaries on the self-obsession and moral turpitude within the English elites. But Huxley is much more concerned than is Thackeray with the state of social, political, and scientific ideas in the epoch and society he describes. In that sense, *Point Counter Point* more closely resembles George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871). But Lovett’s comparison is too insightful to lose altogether, and perhaps *Point Counter Point* is best thought of as the *Vanity Fair* of the novel of ideas, combining as it does the levity of social satire with the dissection of a contemporary intellectual life in flux.

There is, of course, an important controversy in Huxley studies about Huxley’s status as a novelist of ideas. The question inevitably raises definitional issues. To begin with, we need to distinguish between the novel of ideas and the social novel. The central concern of the social novel is the impact of the socioeconomic and political environment on the course of characters’ lives. Obvious examples would include Harriet Beecher

Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855), or John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). Ideas—in these examples, slavery, industrialism, and distributive justice—obviously play an important part in the social novel, but they tend to be subordinate to the characters' experience of their immediate material conditions and personal relationships. Viewed from this perspective, Huxley never wrote a social novel.

A novel of ideas is one in which the author's central objective is the exploration of contrasting and contending modes of thought. As Huxley puts it, via Philip Quarles, "Novel of ideas. The character of each personage must be implied, as far as possible, in the ideas of which he is the mouthpiece. In so far as theories are rationalizations of sentiments, instincts, dispositions of soul, this is feasible" (294). Technically, in this kind of novel, as Frederick J. Hoffman wrote, ideas are used "in default of characterizations" (8). This is to say that all the major characters in a novel of ideas are stock characters, or types, whose sole function is to embody a given perception of the world. Samuel Johnson's *The History of Rasselas* (1759), Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), or Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) are all cases in point, as are Peacock's works and Huxley's various tributes to them.

Point Counter Point's preoccupation with ideas is evident, as is its use of types. Lord Edward Tantamount is the personification of socially disengaged scientism; Illidge is the socialist; Rampion represents the vitalist; Spandrell is vitalism's nihilist negation; Philip Quarles the desiccated and isolated intellectual; Carling is the religious hypocrite; Lucy Tantamount is the sexually emancipated woman of the 1920s; and so on. Some of these characters also stand in for actual individuals: Lord Edward Tantamount is arguably

the biologist J.S.B Haldane; Rampion is unmistakably D.H. Lawrence, or at least a caricature of him; Lucy Tantamount is thought to be Nancy Cunard; and Quarles embodies many of Huxley's more negative self-perceptions. But these biographical resemblances in no way detract from the characters' functions as spokespeople for ideas. Huxley's commitment to the use of stock characters was strongly reinforced by his later discovery of *The Varieties of Temperament* by the American psychologist and anthropometrist Dr. William Sheldon, and by Jung's works on personality types.

The problem of Huxley's standing as a novelist of ideas arises not out of his concern for ideas as such but from his interest in the novel as a form of expressing them. Huxley himself acknowledged that he was not naturally at home with the novel, and Hoffman argued that there was throughout Huxley's writing of the 1920s a kind of creative tension between the novelist and the essayist, with the essayist gradually coming to the fore in the later novels. Writing in 1946, Hoffman contended that "Huxley is no longer a novelist. His recent novels are lengthy essays, to which are added entertainments. But his novels of the 1920s *are* novels or ideas—ideas clothed, ideas given flesh and bone and sent out into a world in which they may test themselves" (17).

Such a view will not encounter much critical opposition: Huxley's performance as a novelist is generally thought to have peaked with *Point Counter Point* and to have gone into decline after his most autobiographical work, *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936). Furthermore, even the earlier novels are best understood when read in conjunction with the collections of essays that Huxley published in parallel with them. In the case of *Point Counter Point*, the relevant collections are *Proper Studies* (1927) and *Do What You Will* (1929). Taken together, these three books present a clear picture of Huxley's worldview as the decade

came to a close. The themes he engages include a preoccupation with intellectual and social elites; the necessary coexistence of a multiplicity of perspectives on reality; skepticism regarding modernist meta-narratives and the political ideologies to which they gave rise; the social and moral hazards of scientific amorality and hubris; and a disdain for monotheistic religion and its tendency towards puritanism and hypocrisy.

The genre, the form, and the substance of *Point Counter Point* are all determined by Huxley's restriction of range to the intellectual and social elites. Although some novels, such as Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854), blur the line between the novel of ideas and the social novel by allowing characters to stand not only for ideas but for (often conflicting) socioeconomic vested interests, *Point Counter Point* never comes close to this, simply because its sociological scope is too narrow. Such interjection of non-elites as there is appears intrusive and threatening. In an early street scene, Walter Bidlake, notionally sympathetic to the Labor cause, collides with a man in the street who then shouts after him: "The right thing would have been to turn around and give the fellow back better than he gave. His father would have punctured him with a word. But for Walter there was only flight. He dreaded these encounters, he was frightened of the lower classes" (11). We learn that Bidlake continues to be troubled by recollections from childhood of a visit to the home of his family's sickly gardener. When once again invaded by the scene he lights a cigarette to "disinfect his memory" (14). And when subjected to one of Illidge's rants against the rich, Bidlake asks whether they are "more horrible than the poor?" (52)

The novel's contrapuntal style, borrowed from music, juxtaposes ideas and lifestyles, but only as they are embodied in characters drawn from the English upper

class. This failure to encompass the full spectrum of English society may diminish Huxley's standing as a satirist when viewed against the broader and more elaborate social tapestries woven by his contemporaries George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. But in one obvious sense the class focus is unsurprising. Huxley himself was not only a product of the English upper classes, he was also the grandson of Darwin's champion T.H. Huxley, the great-nephew of the cultural critic Matthew Arnold, and the son of two educators. Consequently, he belonged naturally to the intellectual elite. He wrote, therefore, as authors are supposed to write—about what he knew.

Huxley was certainly of the elite, but was he an elitist? This question was reactivated by the success of John Carey's study *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (1992). Reviving an argument first advanced by John Harrison in the 1960s, Carey alleges that literary modernism originated as a defense mechanism devised by the intelligentsia in order to protect itself against the crude appetites of the newly literate masses: "The intellectuals could not, of course, actually prevent the masses from attaining literacy. But they could prevent them reading literature by making it too difficult for them—and this is what they did" (16). Carey illustrates his case with particular reference to the death of Leonard Bast under a collapsing bookcase in E.M. Forster's *Howard's End* (1910), a remarkably unsubtle warning of the dangers of educational upward mobility. The episode has something approaching an equivalent in *Point Counter Point*, when Huxley borders on ridicule in his treatment of Miss Fulkes's efforts at intellectual self-improvement, culminating in her abandonment of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* for a copy of *The Mystery of the Castlemaine Emeralds* (188–89).

In Carey's analysis, the literary modernists refused to recognize the humanity of the general public, most of who were leading barely conscious lives. A truly human existence was held to be possible only on the basis of the creative development of the autonomous individual. True humanity cannot therefore be realized in the masses, who are essentially somnambulant conformists. As Eliot wrote of the crowd flowing across London Bridge in *The Wasteland*, "I had not thought death had undone so many." Working from such a conception of the current state of humanity, argues Carey, the literary modernists went on to indulge themselves in fantasies about the totalitarian subjugation of the masses, or even their physical extermination, as in the case of Wells's *War of the Worlds* (1898).

Carey lists Huxley amongst the worst offenders, principally on account of his serious interest in eugenics and his membership of the Eugenics Society (13). Textual support for Huxley's elitism, particularly in the 1920s, is by no means lacking. In terms similar to Eliot, Francis Chelifer, the diarist and eugenicist in *Those Barren Leaves*, records his view that most people showed little sign of "the conscious rational virtues that ought to belong to a being calling itself Homo Sapiens" (106). More ominously, in the earlier *Crome Yellow*, Mr. Scogan holds forth on the irrationalism of the masses and their susceptibility to leadership by extremists: "Wherever the choice has had to be made between the man of reason and the madman, the world has unhesitatingly followed the madman. For the madman appeals to what is fundamental, to passion and the instincts; the philosopher to what is superficial and supererogatory—reason" (111).

For Scogan, the survival of civilization required the complete reorganization of society on rationalist terms broadly comparable to those envisioned in Plato's *Republic*:

at the top would be the “Directing Intelligences” who are free from “the mental bondage of their time”; immediately beneath them in the hierarchy would be the “Men of Faith” to serve as propagandists in the rationalist cause; and, finally, “the Herd,” whose only function is to take direction (114). Scogan’s fabulism even anticipates one of the core themes of Huxley’s rationalist dystopia *Brave New World*. “An impersonal generation,” he predicts, “will take the place of Nature’s hideous system. In vast state incubators, rows upon rows of gravid bottles will supply the world with the population it requires” (22).

But Scogan, despite his undoubted origins in Huxley’s eugenicism, is not Huxley—he is, in fact, mischievously crafted to resemble the rationalist philosopher Bertrand Russell. Huxley’s own views on elitism are presented more directly in *Proper Studies*. In the Introduction he acknowledges his intellectual debts to the Italian sociologist and economist Vilfredo Pareto, and in particular to his mammoth *Treatise on General Sociology* (1915–19) (xviii). Along with his fellow Italian Gaetano Mosca, and the Russian Moisei Ostrogorski, Pareto was a principal architect of elitism as a systematic political philosophy. The central proposition of elite theory is that the unequal distribution of human talent is a given, and regardless of society’s mode of organization, a select few will always establish themselves as a small governing class over and above the generality of humankind.³ Another Pareto contemporary, Robert Michels, in his famous “iron law of oligarchy,” sought to show that even democratic organizations committed to equality could not avoid their own capture by internal elites.

The interwar elite theorists were writing in a tradition that originated in the mid-nineteenth-century opposition to the extension of the franchise, such as those expressed in Carlyle’s famous essay on “Chartism” (1839), and continued in the late-century

concerns about the new electorate's mass irrationality and susceptibility to demagoguery typified in Gustave Le Bon's *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895) and in *Human Nature in Politics* (1908), by another of Huxley's acknowledged influences, Graham Wallas. These concerns were intensified by the supposed effects of the Great War on mass psychology, to the extent that even democrats such as the leading Liberal theorist L.T. Hobhouse could write, as early as 1915, that whereas the "Victorian age believed in law and reason," the Great War demonstrated that that its "sons have come in large measure to believe in violence, and in impulse, emotion, or instinct" (cited in Greenleaf 277).

Huxley was indisputably among those for whom civilization was threatened by mass unreason and mediocrity. But his relationship to the ascendant elite theory, and to its embodiment in Carey's interpretation of literary modernism, is complex. In one important respect, Carey even contradicts his own case in relation to Huxley when he cites Wyndham Lewis's condemnation of him (along with Shaw and Wells) for "complicity with the dreariest of suburban library readers" (191). This concedes much ground to Huxley's most recent biographer, Nicholas Murray, who is expressly concerned to defend Huxley from Carey's charges (9–10).

Central to Murray's case is Huxley's essay "Art and the Obvious," published in the collection *Music at Night* (1931). Here Huxley lamented the distance that had grown up between the literary avant-garde and the mass of ordinary people, alleging that producers of modern art, in protest at the treatment in popular art of the themes cared about by the masses, had themselves retreated from those themes. The result, argued Huxley, was that "much of the most accomplished modern art is condemning itself to

incompleteness, to sterility, to premature decrepitude and death” (31). In this piece, Huxley appears further from the literary modernists, with whom Carey groups him, than from the mass readership of his time. Indeed, Huxley’s writing is much more accessible than that of most of the literary modernists with whom Carey is concerned. And while Huxley’s characters are drawn from a restricted social circle, his depiction of those characters is satirical rather than celebratory. The unique nature of Huxley’s elitist dilemma is that he doubts the leadership capacities of the existing elites and, given his assessment of the current state of humanity in the mass, he fails to find any immediate cause for hope in the further democratization of society.

Yet those who would try to completely exonerate Huxley on the elitist question must ultimately fail. Huxley’s prose frequently contains foreign language quotations and classical allusions that the reader is simply expected to know. Furthermore, the argument in “Art and the Obvious” is double-edged, in that it is just as critical of the quality of popular art as it is of artistic obscurantism. In his essay “On Grace,” Huxley’s Pareto-influenced elitism finds its most vivid expression. He takes issue with two prominent French anti-elitists, the historian Michelet and the socialist philosopher and poet Péguy, who insist that it makes no sense to think in terms of the “elect” and the “non-elect.” Huxley asks: “For are there not, in the very nature of things, certain doors which, for some people, must always remain closed, certain unescapable and foredoomed damnations, certain inevitable elections?” (82) His argument is that to deny natural inequality is as absurd as it is to deny the law of gravity. But once again Huxley’s approach to inequality is not celebratory. Rather, he argues for an acceptance of inequality as a fact, so that society will be better able to make moral responses to it:

certain social gulfs can be fenced round with legislation. We can make it possible for one man not to have political powers that are not shared by his fellows. We can abolish extremes of wealth and poverty. We can give all children the same education. The operation of the law of Grace will, by these means, be limited; but we can no more abolish the law itself than we can abolish the law of gravitation. (83)

Having said this, Huxley urges his readers to understand that there are limits to any leveling exercise: “For though we can prevent one man from having more money than another, we cannot equalize their congenital wealth of wits and charm, of sensitiveness and strength of will, of beauty, courage, special talents” (84). In the earlier *Proper Studies*, Huxley had been dismissive of the notion that greater equality could be engendered through the amelioration of environmental conditions. Such amelioration would leave intact the essential basis of inequality, which is heredity: “Environment no more creates a mental aptitude in a grown boy than it creates the shape of his nose” (17).

In *Point Counter Point*, Huxley’s elitism is stated in Philip Quarles’s musings on the nature of the novel of ideas. Quarles is the novelist-within-the-novel and, with the possible exception of Anthony Beavis in *Eyeless in Gaza*, the Huxley character who perhaps most closely represents the author himself. Via Quarles, Huxley tells us that the novel of ideas is an inherently elitist undertaking: “The chief defect of the novel of ideas is that you must write about people who have ideas to express—which excludes all but about 0.01 per cent of the human race” (294). The elitist tone here is undeniable, with 99.99 percent of the human race deemed to be without an intellectual life. But in much of the criticism of *Point Counter Point*, the passage is rarely cited in full. It continues: “Hence the real congenital novelists don’t write such books, But then, I have never pretended to be a congenital novelist” (295).

Huxley's concern here is less to damn the masses than to convey his often-reiterated feelings that he was never comfortable working in the medium of the novel. Indeed, his real scorn is for that 0.01 percent of humankind for whom life is primarily intellectual: "The great defect of the novel of ideas is that it's a made-up affair. Necessarily; for people who can reel off neatly formulated notions aren't quite real; they're slightly monstrous. Living with monsters becomes rather tiresome in the long run" (295). The point of this famous passage on the novel of ideas, therefore, is self-deprecation on the part of Huxley as a representative of the kind of intellectual for whom intellectualism does not provide a greater understanding of the world but, rather, acts as a barrier to the full appreciation of the human experience.

The central problem with Quarles's character, Huxley tells us, is his almost complete failure to understand the nonintellectual life—the realm in which most human experience takes place. He is, as Huxley judged himself to be, the "cerebrotonic" type identified by William Sheldon. Quarles's wife Elinor believes him to be as detached from his fellow human beings as are chimpanzees, who unsuccessfully reach upwards towards human thought much as Philip reaches downwards towards human emotion and instinct. His detachment from the normal range of human emotions is most starkly illustrated when the Quarles's chauffeur accidentally runs over a dog that is pursuing another dog. The only effect of the accident on Philip is that it leads him into a meditation on the cycle of the sex drive in animals. Philip, his mother reveals, has never been any different, and his isolation was exacerbated by a permanent leg injury dating from childhood—which may have isolated Philip in much the same way as the eye disease *keratitis punctata* isolated the young Huxley. Discussing him with Elinor, his mother had once said that

Philip was “the very last person such an accident ought to have happened to. He was bon far away, if you know what I mean. It was always too easy for him to dispense with people. He was too fond of shutting himself up inside his own private silence. But he might have learned to come out more if that horrible accident hadn’t happened. It raised an artificial barrier between him and the rest of the world” (295).

Elinor doubts she can ever change him, and she is reconciled to “making the best of his kindness, his rather detached and separate passion, his occasional and laborious essays at emotional intimacy.” He is, she says, “almost human,” and “an intellectual tourist in the realm of feeling” (77–78). This less-than-human quality of the intellectual contrasts sharply with the claims of super-normalcy Carey’s literary modernists allegedly made for themselves.

But if Huxley is free of the self-satisfaction so characteristic of many of his fellow elitists, he nonetheless appears at points to share with them some of their more unwholesome political views. Carey indicts Lawrence for confessing to Lady Ottoline Morrell his wish for God to destroy the generality of mankind in another Flood, his opinion that “the great mass of humanity should never learn to read and write,” and his fantasy about the construction of “a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace” into which “the sick; the halt and the maimed” could be lured (Carey 12). But Rampion, Lawrence’s *Point Counter Point* analogue, recommends no such direct intervention. Instead, he suggests that the dynamic of industrialism—constantly in the direction of war and revolution—can itself be relied upon to bring about the destruction necessary for the renewal of civilization. It is Quarles who wishes for the exterminary action, if only it were possible. In responding to Rampion’s anti-industrial tirade, Quarles says:

the trouble is that, given our existing world, you can't go back, you can't scrap the machine. That is, you can't do it unless you're prepared to kill off about half the human race, Industrialism made possible the doubling of the world's population in a hundred years. If you want to get rid of industrialism, you've got to get back to where you started. That's to say, you've got to slaughter half the existing number of men and women, Which might, *sub specie aeternitatis* or merely *historiae*, be an excellent thing. But hardly a matter of practical politics. (299)

The question is how we are intended to read this. It seems unlikely that Quarles is a proxy for Huxley here. Or if he is, it is probable that Huxley is engaging in self-reproach for entertaining such an unsavory sentiment: we are no more invited to admire this speech than we are asked to accept Quarles's emotionally flat response to the killing of the dog.

For all Huxley's understanding of the limits of intellectualism, it is the passion for ideas that determines the very structure of *Point Counter Point*. Again it is Philip Quarles who voices the rationalization. Huxley, as the descendant of Victorian intellectual giants, would have had every excuse to adhere to nineteenth-century modes of expression. Yet he was emphatically a modernist in his literary devices. The progress of *Point Counter Point* is an exercise in what Quarles calls "the musicalization of fiction," specifically the contrapuntal juxtaposition of radically contrasting worldviews. Early in the novel, at Lady Tantamount's soirée, the use of counterpoint in Bach is celebrated. Yet the specific inspiration for Quarles is Beethoven: "Majesty alternating with a joke, for example, in the first movement of the B flat major Quartet. Comedy suddenly hinting at prodigious and tragic solemnities in the scherzo of the C sharp minor Quartet" (293). However, the effect of the finished novel as a whole is essentially Cubist—the perception of situations from every conceivable viewpoint simultaneously—despite Huxley's dislike for Cubist art (see "New Romanticism" 217).

Huxley's concern is not limited to the mere rendition of the various ideas presented in the novel. He accepts that his era is characterized by an inescapable diversity of interpretations of reality—that “the activities of our age are uncertain and multifarious. No single literary, artistic, or philosophical tendency predominates” (“New Romanticism” 212)—but *Point Counter Point* is not an anticipation of the postmodern championship of relativism. Rather, it is an evaluative succession of commentaries. Furthermore, it is prescriptive, privileging one perspective over the others, namely Lawrentian vitalism.

The reader is led towards vitalism through the exposure of the flaws in rival ideas and lifestyles. The Huxley of the 1920s embodied the post-War literary intelligentsia's skepticism towards modernist meta-narratives. In titling his 1927 essay collection *Proper Studies*, Huxley was conceding to Alexander Pope that “The proper study of Mankind is Man.” Yet in the Introduction to that volume, Huxley warned against the dangers of casuistry, or the rationalization of conclusions about human nature through specious argument. He traced modern ideological preoccupations with progress, democracy, and equality to eighteenth-century theoreticians and poets, such as Godwin and Shelley, who in turn looked to “the Cartesian axiom that reason is the same and entire in all men” (*Proper Studies* 11). For Huxley, the humanities and the social sciences since the Enlightenment had been distorted by their animating rationalist and egalitarian myths. Writing in essentially Hulmean terms, Huxley dismissed such willful optimism and instead asserted the need to revert to premodern conceptions of human nature:

In certain important respects, however, the dogmas and the practice of orthodox Catholic Christianity were and are more nearly in accordance with the facts than the dogmas and practice of democratic-humanitarianism. The doctrine of Original

Sin is, scientifically, much truer than the doctrine of natural reasonableness and virtue. Original Sin, in the shape of anti-social tendencies inherited from our animal ancestors, is a familiar and observable fact. (*Proper Studies* 19).

Huxley, then, is clearly a part of the reaction amongst his generation of writers against rationalist and positivist confidence. As the 1930s progressed, British writers became increasingly interested in theoretical socialism, the development of the Soviet state in Russia, and in the ideological vortex presented by the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). But towards the end of what F.R. Leavis called the “Red Decade,” a growing number of writers revised their assessment of socialist solutions and in many cases repudiated their relatively short-lived left-wing affiliations.

Huxley’s association with socialism was brief and superficial. Even though he was enrolled in the Socialist Society at Balliol by no less a figure than R. Palme Dutt (later a prominent Communist), Huxley was never ideologically close to his fellow members, all the time insisting that his views were not those of official socialism but closer to Oscar Wilde’s more libertarian vision in *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* (1891) (Murray 44). The very title of Wilde’s essay establishes its distance from the underlying materialist philosophy of mainstream socialist doctrine, and with justification, the piece is often claimed for the anarchist tradition.⁴ Wilde wrote in the vein of what Huxley termed “the genuine Romantics,” who were “democrats and individualists,” and for whom liberty was “the supreme political value” (“New Romanticism” 212–13). By contrast, socialists and communists formed the core of “our modern romanticism,” which for Huxley was simply “the photographic negative of that which flourished during the corresponding years of the last century.” He wrote that:

The men who agitated for the English Reform Bill of 1832, who engineered the Parisian revolution of 1830, were liberals. Individualism and freedom were the ultimate goods which they pursued. The aim of the Communist Revolution in Russia was to deprive the individual of every right, every vestige of personal liberty (including the liberty of thought and the right to possess a soul), and to transform him into a component cell of the great “Collective Man”—that single mechanical monster who, in the Bolshevik millennium, is to take the place of the unregimented “soul-encumbered” individuals who now inhabit the earth. (“New Romanticism” (212–13).

This passage is extremely instructive, in that it reveals the centrality of nonmaterial human welfare in Huxley’s political thought, and it also exemplifies Huxley’s discomfort at his own elitist disdain for the public at large—his “unregimented ‘soul-encumbered’ individuals” are a far cry from Eliot’s walking dead filing across London Bridge.

Socialists are usually unflatteringly depicted in Huxley’s novels, as evidenced by the Italian tailor Bojanus in *Antic Hay* or Mark Staithes in *Eyeless in Gaza*. In *Point Counter Point* it is Illidge who represents socialism. He is from the outset presented as distorted and impaired by bitter class resentments, which are directed specifically towards Lord Edward Tantamount, with whom he is a subordinate scientific collaborator. And at an early stage his credibility is undermined by the comic scene in which he almost falls on the stairs. Ultimately, his biggest contribution to the action of the novel is his participation in Spandrell’s murder of Webley, a politically unproductive act of mindless violence. But the high drama of the murder renders it all too easy to overlook the relatively sympathetic rendition of aspects of Illidge’s ideas that derive not from class resentment but from a form of Christian and communitarian socialism: “Money breeds a kind of gangrened insensitiveness. It’s inevitable. Jesus understood. That bit about the camel and the needle’s eye is a mere statement of fact. And remember that other bit about

loving your neighbours” (53). It is the ethical consequences of material inequality that most concern Illidge.

As Robert S. Barker has convincingly shown, Huxley’s own distance from socialism must be seen as an aspect of his rejection of historical determinism of any variety. For Barker, anti-historicism is a major theme of Huxley’s writing between the wars: “Huxley’s depiction of a society numbed by the trauma of the Great War and given up to unvarying hedonistic aims, yet increasingly tempted to wayward forays in the direction of apocalyptic faiths and coercive ideologies, is inseparable from his criticism of historicism” (53). In the essay collection *The Olive Tree* (1937), and consistent with his warnings against casuistry in *Proper Studies*, Huxley writes: “Generalized history is a branch of speculation, connected (often rather arbitrarily and uneasily) with certain facts about the past” (“Historical Generalizations” 137).

Huxley insists that historicist thinking cannot accommodate the necessary relativism demanded by the reality of historical change (i.e., a recognition that judgments appropriate to one era are not often applicable to others), nor the complexity that arises from the contradictions and diversity within each historical age itself. Elsewhere he wrote that historicist thinking also missed the vitally important role played by extraordinary individuals and other contingencies: “Depersonalized, the story of mankind gains in majestic dignity of appearance, but loses, unfortunately, in scientific adequacy and veracity. This august astronomical kind of history just doesn’t happen to be true. Direct observation shows that accidents of the most trivial personal kind may play a decisive part in modifying the thought and behavior of entire communities” (*Beyond the Mexique Bay* 33). For Huxley, grand theories of history, particularly of the teleological variety

(according to which history is progressing towards a knowable end point), were false solutions to the confusion and disillusionment engendered by the post-War crisis of meaning.

In an essay on Bergson, Bertrand Russell distinguished between three different kinds of philosophy: philosophies of feeling, chief amongst which are religious philosophies; theoretical philosophies, such as the totalizing thought systems deriving from the Enlightenment; and practical philosophies, in which the emphasis is action taken towards the resolution of immediate real world problems (56–57). Huxley belongs to the first and third of these categories. His main concern was with the fundamental spiritual contentment—or lack thereof—in humankind, and he was also engaged with the problems of his time. He was not, however, attracted to the great philosophical systems of the modern world, all of which indulged in oversimplification and reductionism.

But Huxley was not drawn to the other rejections of Enlightenment thought presented in *Point Counter Point*. Fascism, though it can be interpreted as having its own totalizing ideology rooted in race and nationality, has its roots in the European Counter-Enlightenment and made its appeal to many who were concerned about the overclaims of rationalist thought. The ascent of fascism to power in Italy in 1922 appeared as a solution to the cultural malaise and fragmentation of post-War Europe, yet the movement offered no attraction to Huxley. During the 1920s, he and Maria Huxley were intermittently resident in Italy, where much of his satire on modern cultural problems, including *Point Counter Point*, was conceived or written. In the words of biographer Nicholas Murray, the Italian fascists first appeared to Huxley “rather as comic opera buffoons than as the stormtroopers of a sinister ideology” (151). But Murray notes that the Huxleys ended

their the Italian dimension of their lives as they began to comprehend the brutality of the regime (especially after a raid on their Florence home in 1925) and to recoil from its acceptance by the Italian masses (277).

The most prominent advocate of the fascist creed in Britain was Oswald Mosley, the former left-wing and proto-Keynesian Labour Member of Parliament. When the Ramsay MacDonald government rejected the 1930 “Mosley Memorandum” on public works, Mosley left Labour and formed the New Party. Inspired by a visit to Italy in 1932, Mosley returned to form the British Union of Fascists. It is generally assumed that Mosley is fictionalized in *Point Counter Point* as Webley, the leader of the British Freemen. Indeed, in *A Change of Heart* (2003), David Izzo’s novelization of the Huxley circle, there is even a confrontation between Huxley and Mosley (re-fictionalized as Wembley) over the latter’s depiction in *Point Counter Point*. However, as Mosley’s son, the critic Nicholas Mosley, has pointed out, Huxley’s novel was published in 1928, when Mosley’s later fascism had not yet taken shape. Indeed, the characterization of Webley must be credited as a remarkable example of political prescience. Nicholas Mosley concedes that the portrait is sufficiently like his father for the murder of Webley to be unnerving (vii).

But *Point Counter Point*’s anticipation of fascism is equally remarkable for its lack of alarmism. As Izzo’s Huxley explains to “Britain’s Mussolini”:

“The character of whom you speak is not ridiculed; his views are presented fairly with a background that explains why one might, in good conscience, believe they are the correct views. The character speaks in quite rational manner, He is attractive, intelligent and he believes what he is saying.” (What Huxley said was true; in fact, the character is far more clever and appealing and brighter than the “dim candle” before him. If Wembley had read the book, he might even be

grateful.) Aldous concluded, “He just happens to be incorrect and misguided.” (19)

There is studied moderation, therefore, in *Point Counter Point*'s presentation of incipient British fascism. What is significant is that Huxley's skepticism about the virtues of democracy, his Pareto-inflected sociological elitism, and fascism's concerns with the problems of Western cultural decline did not combine to tilt him in the direction of fascist sympathies. Even Lawrence, so influential on Huxley's worldview at this stage, had entertained the social and cultural efficacy of strong leadership and personality cults with his Mexican novel *The Plumed Serpent* (1926).

Aside from fascism, the other rejection of Enlightenment systematization in *Point Counter Point* is treated far more damningly. Maurice Spandrell is the representative of nihilism, and it is clear from his treatment of Spandrell that Huxley was aware of the dangers of responding to oversimplified meanings with an embrace of meaninglessness itself. *Nihilism* derives from the Latin *nihil*, meaning “nothing,” as in *annihilate*—to reduce to nothing. The term was popularized by Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons* (1862), in which the character Bazarov preaches a creed of total negation. Politically, nihilism aims at the destruction of the state and of the prevailing social and economic order; ethically, it denies the possibility of meaningful discourse about right and wrong and presents morality as a conspiracy of the weak against the strong.

Huxley's Spandrell appears to embody both of these aspects of nihilism. In many respects Spandrell, like his predecessor Coleman in Huxley's *Antic Hay*, resembles the self-destructive Stavrogin in Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed* (1871). Spoilation is his motivation, beginning with the sexual debasement of his young and naïve female

conquests. His depravity provides the denouement for the novel's action, with the killing of Webley, in collaboration with Illidge, as a prelude to his own suicide. The senseless act is little more than the *reductio ad absurdum* of his efforts to offend his prostitute companion by gratuitously beheading the wildflowers with a stick. The grim killing of Webley appears as a quintessentially nihilist act, and Huxley may well have had in mind the shocking child murder by Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb in Chicago in 1924.⁵ The comparison between Spandrell and the motives of the infamous Chicago killers comes earlier in the novel, when Spandrell, in Nietzschean terms, describes Walter Bidlake as "the real type of murderee" and goes on to explain that there is a naturally occurring "victim type as well as a criminal type" (150).

Point Counter Point is clear in its strictures against both the excesses of rationalist philosophy's abstract theorization, and the irrationalism of fascism and nihilism. But it is equally clear that the natural sciences provide no safeguards against these such hazards. Through the Scogan character in *Crome Yellow*, who previewed *Brave New World's* nightmare vision of babies in bottles, Huxley at an early stage voiced concerns about the potential ethical and aesthetic deviations of an unaccountable scientific community. Those concerns reappear in *Point Counter Point* in the form of Lord Edward Tantamount. Tantamount, in contrast to the idealistic Illidge, is a socially disengaged scientist, with little or no interest in the wider societal consequences, if there are any, of whatever his research may produce. His grotesque experiments with newts repel the reader while at the same time appearing to serve no identifiable social purpose. Illidge denounces them as a form of capitalist luxury. But what is perhaps the novel's most explicit social engagement, namely Huxley's proto-ecologism, also has a scientific foundation.

Huxley's impressive anticipation of the concerns of the later environmental movement is voiced first in the form of Elinor's advocacy of birth control as a priority for India, over and above political independence, and also in Edward Tantomount's confrontation of Webley with the problem of phosphate depletion in British agriculture, which was akin to the major causes espoused by British ruralists in the inter-war period.

Once again, it is the dangers of overclaim that Huxley wants to bring to the reader's attention. He sets out the arid detachment of obscure and abstract intellectualism. He warns against the reductionism of rationalist ideologies. He rejects fascist nationalism. He clearly despises the nihilist cult of destruction. And he counsels not against science as such, but against a form of scientism in which science is presented as the solution to all ills and the cause of none. In leading readers down these various blind alleys, Huxley hopes to highlight the escape that may lie along the road of Lawrentian vitalism.

Lawrence offers solutions to the dilemmas raised in novel in much the same as Rampion appears to offer ways out for Quarles. In particular, Rampion embodies the anti-politics that informed Huxley's own position:

“But it's so silly, all this political squabbling,” said Rampion, his voice shrill with exasperation, “so utterly silly. Bolsheviks and Fascists, Radicals and Conservatives, Communists and British Freemen—what the devil are they all fighting about? I'll tell you. They're fighting to decide whether we shall go to hell by communist express train or capitalist racing motor car, by individualist bus or collectivist tram running on the rails of state control. The destination's the same in every case. They're all of them bound for hell, all headed for the same psychological impasse and the social collapse that results from psychological collapse.” (298)

This passage is key to understanding the Lawrentian influence on Huxley and the enduring role it played in Huxley's worldview for the rest of his career as a novelist and commentator. For Huxley, as for Lawrence/Rampion, all human problems, individual and social, are epiphenomena of antecedent problems of the psyche or spirit. Consequently, all meaningful change must commence with willful personal change on the part of individuals (*Island* 36–37).

Huxley stated this position most explicitly in *Beyond the Mexique Bay* (1934), the philosophical travelogue of his experiences in the West Indies, Central America, and Mexico in 1933. In it he lamented that “Almost all history, up to the present, has been written in terms of politics and economics. The fundamentals of human existence—physiology and psychology—are everywhere ignored. It is a case of *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark” (25). Huxley's famous call for a World Psychological Conference, in the same work, is simply a Lawrentian insistence that human spiritual change is a necessary antecedent to meaningful material change.

In conclusion, *Point Counter Point* is an essential starting point in any effort to grasp the nature of Huxley's proposed spiritual revolution. Such a revolution must, Huxley insists, go beyond subscription to creed. In *Island* (1962), his last published novel, Huxley made an important distinction between “belief” and “faith,” in favor of the latter:

Faith is something very different from belief. Belief is the systematic taking of unanalyzed words much too seriously. Paul's words, Mohammed's words, Marx's words—people take them too seriously, and what happens? What happens is the senseless ambivalence of history—sadism versus duty, or (incomparably worse) sadism *as* duty; devotion counterbalanced by organized paranoia; sisters of charity selflessly tending the victims of their own church's inquisitors and crusaders. Faith, on the contrary, can never be taken too seriously. For Faith is the

empirically justified confidence in our capacity to know who in fact we are, to forget the belief-intoxicated Manichee in Good Being. Give us this day our daily Faith, but deliver us, dear God, from Belief. (36–37)

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Notes

¹ See Biel.

² See “Humanism” in Hulme.

³ For an introductory overview of elite theory, see Bottomore.

⁴ See Marshall 175–80. Marshall includes Huxley in his survey of “Modern Libertarians” (570–73).

⁵ This incident, for many emblematic of the modernist moral crisis, has been widely fictionalized in literature and film. It formed the basis of Patrick Hamilton’s stage play *Rope* (1929), which was the basis of Alfred Hitchcock’s 1948 film of the same name. It was also novelized by Meyer Levin in *Compulsion* (1956), which was filmed by Richard Fleischer in 1959. The most recent treatment is Tom Kalin’s film *Swoon* (1992).