

Aldous Huxley

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Aldous Leonard Huxley (26 July 1894 – 22 November 1963) was a British author, most famous for his novel *Brave New World*. He was the grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley and younger brother of Julian Huxley.

See also:

Brave New World.

File:Aldous Huxley.gif
 To see ourselves as others see us is a most salutary gift. Hardly less important is the capacity to see others as they see themselves.

Contents

- 1 Quotes
 - 1.1 *Proper Studies* (1927)
 - 1.2 *Do What You Will* (1928)
 - 1.3 *Point Counter Point* (1928)
 - 1.4 *Music at Night and Other Essays* (1931)
 - 1.5 *Brave New World* (1932)
 - 1.6 *Ends and Means* (1937)
 - 1.7 *Words and Their Meanings* (1940)
 - 1.8 Introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita (1944)
 - 1.9 *The Doors of Perception* (1954)
 - 1.10 *Heaven and Hell (essay)* (1954)
 - 1.11 *Brave New World Revisited* (1958)
- 2 Attributed
- 3 Misattributed
- 4 Quotes about Huxley
- 5 External links

Quotes

- The proper study of mankind is books.
 - *Crome Yellow* (1921), Ch. XXVIII.
- Ours is an industrial civilization, in which no society can prosper unless it possesses an elite of highly trained scientists and a considerable army of engineers and technicians. The possession and wide dissemination of a great deal of correct, specialized knowledge has become a prime condition of national survival. In the United States, during the last twenty or thirty years, this fact seems to have been forgotten. Professional educationists have taken John Dewey's theories of 'learning through doing' and of 'education as life adjustment,' and have applied them in such a way that, in many American schools, there is now doing without learning, along with courses in adjustment to everything except the basic twentieth-century fact that we live in a world where ignorance of science and its methods is the surest, shortest road to national disaster. During the past half century every other nation has made great efforts to impart more knowledge to more young people. In the United States professional educationists have chosen the opposite course."
 - from "Knowledge and Understanding" in *Collected Essays* (1958)

- **When will you women understand that one isn't insanely in love? All one asks for is a quiet life, which you won't allow one to have.**
 - *The Gioconda smile.*

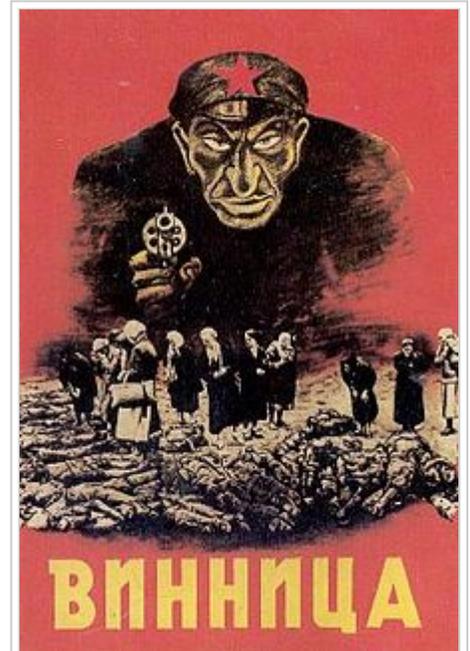
- **'There are quiet places also in the mind', he said meditatively. 'But we build bandstands and factories on them. Deliberately — to put a stop to the quietness. ... All the thoughts, all the preoccupations in my head — round and round, continually What's it for? What's it all for? To put an end to the quiet, to break it up and disperse it, to pretend at any cost that it isn't there. Ah, but it is; it is there, in spite of everything, at the back of everything.** Lying awake at night — not restlessly, but serenely, waiting for sleep — the quiet re-establishes itself, piece by piece; all the broken bits ... we've been so busily dispersing all day long. It re-establishes itself, an inward quiet, like the outward quiet of grass and trees. It fills one, it grows — a crystal quiet, a growing, expanding crystal. It grows, it becomes more perfect; it is beautiful and terrifying ... For one's alone in the crystal, and there's no support from the outside, there is nothing external and important, nothing external and trivial to pull oneself up by or stand on ... There is nothing to laugh at or feel enthusiast about. But the quiet grows and grows. Beautifully and unbearably. And at last you are conscious of something approaching; it is almost a faint sound of footsteps. **Something inexpressively lovely and wonderful advances through the crystal, nearer, nearer. And, oh, inexpressively terrifying. For if it were to touch you, if it were to seize you and engulf you, you'd die; all the regular, habitual daily part of you would die ... one would have to begin living arduously in the quiet, arduously in some strange, unheard of manner.**
 - *Antic Hay* (1923).

- **I'm afraid of losing my obscurity. Genuineness only thrives in the dark. Like celery.**
 - *Those Barren Leaves* (1925).

- What the cinema can do better than literature or the spoken drama is to be fantastic.
 - "Where are the Movies Moving?" in *Essays Old and New* (1926).

- Proverbs are always platitudes until you have personally experienced the truth of them.
 - Part IV: America, *London* (<http://books.google.com/books?lr=&id=iy0SkXPxsF8C&q=%22Proverbs+are+always+platitudes+until+you+have+personally+experienced+the+truth+of+the+m%22&pg=PA207#v=onepage>), *Jesting Pilate: The Diary of a Journey*, (1926).

- **Too much consistency is as bad for the mind as it is for the body. Consistency is contrary to nature, contrary to life. The only completely consistent people are the dead.** Consistent intellectualism and spirituality may be socially valuable, up to a point; but they make, gradually, for individual death.
 - "Wordsworth in the Tropics" in *Do What You Will* (1929).



The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human.



At least two thirds of our miseries spring from human stupidity, human malice, and those great motivators and justifiers of malice and stupidity, idealism, dogmatism and proselytizing zeal on behalf of religious or political idols.

- Single-mindedness is all very well in cows or baboons; in an animal claiming to belong to the same species as Shakespeare it is simply disgraceful.
 - *Do What You Will* (1929).
- **The poet is, etymologically, the maker.** Like all makers, he requires a stock of raw materials — in his case, experience. Now experience is not a matter of having actually swum the Hellespont, or danced with the dervishes, or slept in a doss-house. It is a matter of sensibility and intuition, of seeing and hearing the significant things, of paying attention at the right moments, of understanding and co-ordinating. **Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.** It is a gift for dealing with the accidents of existence, not the accidents themselves. By a happy dispensation of nature, the poet generally possesses the gift of experience in conjunction with that of expression.
 - *Texts and Pretexts* (1932), p. 5.



Words are good servants but bad masters.

- **It is man's intelligence that makes him so often behave more stupidly than the beasts. ... Man is impelled to invent theories to account for what happens in the world. Unfortunately, he is not quite intelligent enough, in most cases, to find correct explanations.** So that when he acts on his theories, he behaves very often like a lunatic. Thus, no animal is clever enough, when there is a drought, to imagine that the rain is being withheld by evil spirits, or as punishment for its transgressions. Therefore you never see animals going through the absurd and often horrible fooleries of magic and religion. No horse, for example would kill one of its foals to make the wind change direction. Dogs do not ritually urinate in the hope of persuading heaven to do the same and send down rain. Asses do not bray a liturgy to cloudless skies. Nor do cats attempt, by abstinence from cat's meat, to wheedle the feline spirits into benevolence. Only man behaves with such gratuitous folly. It is the price he has to pay for being intelligent but not, as yet, intelligent enough.
 - *Texts and Pretexts* (1932), p. 270.
- To his dog, every man is Napoleon; hence the constant popularity of dogs.
 - *Readers Digest* (1934).
- Death is the only thing we haven't succeeded in completely vulgarizing.
 - *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936).
- **The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human.**
 - *The Olive Tree* (1936).
- History teaches us that war is not inevitable. Once again, it is for us to choose whether we use war or some other method of settling the ordinary and unavoidable conflicts between groups of men.
 - *What Are You Going To Do About It? The case for constructive peace* (1936).
- **All war propaganda consists, in the last resort, in substituting diabolical abstractions for human beings. Similarly, those who defend war have invented a pleasant sounding vocabulary of abstractions in which to describe the process of mass murder.**
 - "Pacifism and Philosophy" (1936).



It is a bit embarrassing to have been concerned with the human problem all one's life and find at the end that one has no more to offer by way of advice than "Try to be a little kinder."

- **My sympathies are, of course, with the Government side, especially the Anarchists; for Anarchism seems to me more likely to lead to desirable social change than highly centralized, dictatorial Communism.**
 - *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War* (1937) edited by Nancy Cunard and published by the *Left Review*.
- As for 'taking sides' — the choice, it seems to me, is no longer between two users of violence, two systems of dictatorship. Violence and dictatorship cannot produce peace and liberty; they can only produce the results of violence and dictatorship, results with which history has made us only too sickeningly familiar. **The choice now is between militarism and pacifism. To me, the necessity of pacifism seems absolutely clear.**
 - *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War* (1937) edited by Nancy Cunard and published by the *Left Review*.
- The Quaestor turned back the pages until he found himself among the Pensées. “We are not satisfied,” he read, “with the life we have in ourselves and our own being; we want to live an imaginary life in other people’s idea of us. Hence all our efforts are directed to seeming what we are not. We labor incessantly to preserve and embellish this imaginary being, and neglect that which is really ours.” The Quaestor put down the book, ... and ruefully reflected that all his own troubles had arisen from this desire to seem what in fact he was not. To seem a man of action, when in fact he was a contemplative; to seem a politician, when nature had made him an introspective psychologist; to seem a wit, which God had intended him for a sage.
 - “Variations on a Philosopher” in *Themes and Variations* (1943), p. 2.
- **Facts are ventriloquists' dummies.** Sitting on a wise man's knee they may be made to utter words of wisdom; elsewhere, they say nothing, or talk nonsense, or indulge in sheer diabolism.
 - "Bruno Rontini" in *Time Must Have A Stop* (1944).
- **There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.**
 - *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944).
- **Happiness is not achieved by the conscious pursuit of happiness; it is generally the by-product of other activities.**
 - Essay "Distractions I" in *Vedanta for the Western World* (1945) edited by Christopher Isherwood
- **Most human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted.**
 - "Variations on a Philosopher" in *Themes and Variations* (1950).
- A belief in hell and the knowledge that every ambition is doomed to frustration at the hands of a skeleton have never prevented the majority of human beings from behaving as though **death** were no more than **an unfounded rumour**, and survival a thing beyond the bounds of possibility.
 - *Themes and Variations* (1950).
- **At least two thirds of our miseries spring from human stupidity, human malice, and those great motivators and justifiers of malice and stupidity, idealism, dogmatism and proselytizing zeal on behalf of religious or political idols.**
 - *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* (1952).
- **The trouble with fiction... is that it makes too much sense. Reality never makes sense.**
 - "John Rivers" in *The Genius and the Goddess* (1955).
- **You can't worship a spirit in spirit, unless you do it now.** Wallowing in the past may be good literature. As wisdom, it's hopeless. **Time Regained is Paradise Lost, and Time Lost is Paradise Regained. Let the dead bury their dead. If you want to live at every moment as it presents itself, you've got to die to every other moment.**
 - John Rivers in *The Genius and the Goddess* (1955).

- Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards.
 - "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow" in *Adonis and the Alphabet* (1956); later in *Collected Essays* (1959), p. 293.
- We may not appreciate the fact; but a fact nevertheless it remains: we are living in a Golden Age, the most gilded Golden Age of human history — not only of past history, but of future history. For, as Sir Charles Darwin and many others before him have pointed out, we are living like drunken sailors, like the irresponsible heirs of a millionaire uncle. At an ever accelerating rate we are now squandering the capital of metallic ores and fossil fuels accumulated in the earth's crust during hundreds of millions of years. How long can this spending spree go on? Estimates vary. But all are agreed that within a few centuries or at most a few millennia, Man will have run through his capital and will be compelled to live, for the remaining nine thousand nine hundred and seventy or eighty centuries of his career as *Homo sapiens*, strictly on income. Sir Charles is of the opinion that Man will successfully make the transition from rich ores to poor ores and even sea water, from coal, oil, uranium and thorium to solar energy and alcohol derived from plants. About as much energy as is now available can be derived from the new sources — but with a far greater expense in man hours, a much larger capital investment in machinery. And the same holds true of the raw materials on which industrial civilization depends. By doing a great deal more work than they are doing now, men will contrive to extract the diluted dregs of the planet's metallic wealth or will fabricate non-metallic substitutes for the elements they have completely used up. In such an event, some human beings will still live fairly well, but not in the style to which we, the squanderers of planetary capital, are accustomed.
 - "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow" in *Adonis and the Alphabet* (1956); later in *Collected Essays* (1959), p. 293.
- **That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach.**
 - "A Case of Voluntary Ignorance (<http://www.christiebooks.com/ChristieBooksWP/2013/11/a-case-of-voluntary-ignorance-by-aldous-huxley/>)" in *Collected Essays* (1959).
- Of course I base my characters partly on the people I know — one can't escape it — but fictional characters are oversimplified; they're much less complex than the people one knows.
 - Interview (<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4698/the-art-of-fiction-no-24-aldous-huxley>), *The Paris Review* (1960).
- All gods are homemade, and it is we who pull their strings, and so, give them the power to pull ours.
 - Vijaya in *Island* (1962).
- **One Folk, One Realm, One Leader. Union with the unity of an insect swarm.** Knowledgeless understanding of nonsense and diabolism. And then the newsreel camera had cut back to the serried ranks, the swastikas, the brass bands, the yelling hypnotist on the rostrum. And here once again, in the glare of his inner light, was the brown insectlike column, marching endlessly to the tunes of this rococo horror-music. **Onward Nazi soldiers, onward Christian soldiers, onward Marxists and Muslims, onward every chosen People, every Crusader and Holy War-maker. Onward into misery, into all wickedness, into death!**
 - *Island* (1962).
- Never give children a chance of imagining that anything exists in isolation. Make it plain from the very beginning that all living is relationship. Show them relationships in the woods, in the fields, in the ponds and streams, in the village and in the country around it. Rub it in.
 - *Island* (1962).
- **Words are good servants but bad masters.**
 - As quoted by Laura Huxley, in conversation with Alan Watts about her memoir *This Timeless Moment* (1968), in Pacifica Archives #BB2037 [sometime between 1968-1973]
- **Maybe this world is another planet's Hell.**

- As quoted in *Peter's Quotations: Ideas for Our Time* (1979) by Laurence J. Peter, p. 239.
- **It is a bit embarrassing to have been concerned with the human problem all one's life and find at the end that one has no more to offer by way of advice than 'Try to be a little kinder.'**
 - As quoted in *What About the Big Stuff?: Finding Strength and Moving Forward When the Stakes Are High* (2002) by Richard Carlson, p. 293.
- Who lives longer? the man who takes heroin for two years and dies, or a man who lives on roast beef, water and potatoes 'till 95? One passes his 24 months in eternity. All the years of the befeater are lived only in time.
 - *The Shortcut: 20 Stories To Get You From Here To There* (2006) by Kevin A Fabiano, p. 179.
- Music is an ocean, but the repertory is hardly even a lake; it is a pond.
 - Interview, *Time* magazine, December 1957.

Proper Studies (1927)

- **Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.**
 - "Note on Dogma".
- Those who believe that they are exclusively in the right are generally those who achieve something.
 - "Note on Dogma (<http://books.google.com/books?id=gcfPAAAAMAAJ&q=%22Those+who+believe+that+they+are+exclusively+in+the+right+are+generally+those+who+achieve+something%22>)".
- **That all men are equal is a proposition which at ordinary times no sane individual has ever given his assent.**
 - "The Idea of Equality".
- The more powerful and original a mind, the more it will incline towards the religion of solitude.
- Defined in psychological terms, a fanatic is a man who consciously over-compensates a secret doubt.
 - "The Substitutes for Religion, The Religion of Sex".

Do What You Will (1928)

- There are many kinds of gods. Therefore there are many kinds of men.
 - "One and Many," p. 3.
- To talk about religion except in terms of human psychology is an irrelevance.
 - "One and Many," p. 3.
- Jehovah, Allah, the Trinity, Jesus, Buddha, are names for a great variety of human virtues, human mystical experiences, human remorse, human compensatory fantasies, human terrors, human cruelties. If all men were alike, all the world would worship the same God.
 - "One and Many," p. 3.
- Confronted, when the weather is fine and I am in propitious emotional circumstances, with certain landscapes, certain works of art, certain human beings, I know, for the time being, that God's in his heaven and all's right with the world. On other occasions, skies and destiny being inclement, I am no less immediately certain of the malignant impersonality of an uncaring universe. Every human being has had similar experiences. This being so, the sensible thing to do would be to accept the facts and frame a metaphysic to fit them. But with that talent for doing the wrong thing, that genius for perversity, so characteristically human, men have preferred, especially in recent times, to take another course. They have either denied the existence of these psychological facts; or if they have admitted them, have done so only to condemn as evil all such experiences as cannot be reconciled in a logical system with whatever particular

class of experiences they have chosen, arbitrarily, to regard as "true" and morally valuable. Every man tries to pretend that he is consistently one kind of person and does his best consistently to worship one kind of God. And this despite the fact that he experiences diversity and actually feels himself in contact with a variety of divinities.

- “One and Many,” pp. 3–4.
- Out psychological experiences are all equally facts.
 - “One and Many,” p. 5.
- From the internal reality, by which I means the totality of psychological experiences, it [science] actually separates us. Art, for example, deals with many more aspects of this internal reality than does science, which confines itself deliberately and by convention to the study of one very limited class of experiences—the experiences of sense.
 - “One and Many,” p. 5–6.
- To the gross senses the chair seems solid and substantial. But the gross senses and be refined by means of instruments. Closer observations are made, as the result of which we are forced to conclude that the chair is “really” a swarm of electric charges whizzing about in empty space. ... While the substantial chair is an abstraction easily made from the from the memories of innumerable sensations of sight and touch, the electric charge chair is a difficult and far-fetched abstraction from certain visual sensations so excessively rare (they can only come to us in the course of elaborate experiments) that not one man in a million has ever been in the position to make it for himself. The overwhelming majority of us accept the electric-charge chair on authority, as good Catholics accept transubstantiation.
 - “One and Many,” pp. 8–9.
- It is because we are predominantly purposeful beings that we are perpetually correcting our immediate sensations. But men are free not to be utilitarianly purposeful. They can sometime be artists, for example. In which case they may like to accept the immediate sensation uncorrected, because it happens to be beautiful.
 - “One and Many,” p. 11.
- One right-thinking man thinks like all other right-thinking men of his time—that is to say, in most cases, like some wrong-thinking man of another time.
 - “One and Many,” p. 12.
- Why did it occur to anyone to believe in only one God? And conversely why did it ever occur to anyone to believe in many gods? To both these questions we must return the same answer: Because that is how the human mind happens to work. For the human mind is both diverse and simple, simultaneously many and one. We have an immediate perception of our own diversity and of that of the outside world. And at the same time we have immediate perceptions of our own oneness.
 - “One and Many,” p. 12.
- There has been a general trend in recent times toward a Unitarian mythology and the worship of one God. This is the tendency which it is customary to regard as spiritual progress. On what grounds? Chiefly, so far as one can see, because we in the Twentieth Century West are officially the worshippers of a single divinity. A movement whose consummation is Us must be progressive. Quod erat demonstrandum.
 - “One and Many,” p. 16.
- The modern world is still suffering from the native incapacity of the Jews to be political. The art of making and preserving a City, which we call be the Greek name, “Politics,” was never an indigenous growth among the Hebrews. The City of the Greeks and the other civilized nations of antiquity was hateful to them. Their ideas were essentially anti-political. The politics of Judaea, when there were any, were borrowed from the Egyptians and Babylonians and, later, from the Greeks. These borrowings were regarded with violent disapproval by the champions of Hebrew orthodoxy, who objected to organized civilization on two grounds. Some, like Amos, hated it just because it was civilization and not nomadic barbarism. It was in the desert that God had made his covenant with the Chosen Race, and in the desert there was nothing else to think about but

God. So, Back to the Desert! was their war-cry. Others, the Ebionites, objected to civilization because it was hierarchical, because it made for social inequality. They gave prophetically indignant utterance to the envious hatred of the poor in cash and in spirit against the rich and talented and cultured. A pious and universal mediocrity was their ideal.

- “One and Many,” pp. 17–18.
- There was a time when I should have felt terribly ashamed of not being up-to-date. I lived in a chronic apprehension lest I might, so to speak, miss the last bus, and so find myself stranded and benighted, in a desert of demoddedness, while others, more nimble than myself, had already climbed on board, taken their tickets and set out toward those bright but, alas, ever receding goals of Modernity and Sophistication. Now, however, I have grown shameless, I have lost my fears. I can watch unmoved the departure of the last social-cultural bus—the innumerable last buses, which are starting at every instant in all the world’s capitals. I make no effort to board them, and when the noise of each departure has died down, “Thank goodness!” is what I say to myself in the solitude. I find nowadays that I simply don’t want to be up-to-date. I have lost all desire to see and do the things, the seeing and doing of which entitle a man to regard himself as superiorly knowing, sophisticated, unprovincial; I have lost all desire to frequent the places and people that a man simply must frequent, if he is not to be regarded as a poor creature hopelessly out of the swim. “Be up-to-date!” is the categorical imperative of those who scramble for the last bus. But it is an imperative whose cogency I refuse to admit. When it is a question of doing something which I regard as a duty I am as ready as anyone else to put up with discomfort. But being up-to-date and in the swim has ceased, so far as I am concerned, to be a duty. Why should I have my feelings outraged, why should I submit to being bored and disgusted for the sake of somebody else’s categorical imperative? Why? There is no reason. So I simply avoid most of the manifestations of that so-called “life” which my contemporaries seem to be so unaccountably anxious to “see”; I keep out of range of the “art” they think is so vitally necessary to “keep up with”; I flee from those “good times” in the “having” of which they are prepared to spend so lavishly of their energy and cash.
 - “Silence is Golden,” p. 55.
- If good music has charms to soothe the savage breast, bad music has no less powerful spells for filling the mildest breast with rage, the happiest with horror and disgust. Oh, those mammy songs, those love longings, those loud hilarities! How was it possible that human emotions intrinsically decent could be so ignobly parodied.
 - “Silence is Golden,” p. 59.
- In the old dramas it was love that had to be sacrificed to painful duty. In the modern instance the sacrifice is at the shrine of what William James called “the Bitch Goddess, Success.” Love is to be abandoned for the stern pursuit of newspaper notoriety and dollars.
 - “Silence is Golden,” p. 61.
- The film concludes with ... the most nauseatingly luscious, the most penetratingly vulgar mammy song that it has ever been my lot to hear. My flesh crept as the loud speaker poured out those sodden words, the greasy, sagging melody. I felt ashamed of myself for listening to such things, for even being a member of the species to which such things are addressed.
 - “Silence is Golden,” p. 62.
- To aspire to be superhuman is a most discreditable admission that you lack the guts, the wit, the moderating judgment to be successfully and consummately human.
 - “Spinoza’s Worm,” p. 75.

Point Counter Point (1928)

- Several excuses are always less convincing than one.
 - Ch. 1.

- Lord Edward was not listening to his assistant. He had taken his pipe out of his mouth, he had lifted his head and at the same time slightly cocked it on one side. He was frowning, as though making an effort to seize and remember something. He raised his hand in a gesture that commanded silence; Illidge interrupted himself in the middle of his sentence and also listened. A pattern of melody faintly traced itself upon the silence... Pongileoni's bowing and the scraping of the anonymous fiddlers had shaken the air in the great hall, had set the glass of the windows looking onto it vibrating; and thus in turn had shaken the air in Lord Edward's apartment on the further side. The shaking air rattled Lord Edward's *membrane tympani*; the interlocked *malleus, incus*, and stirrup bones were set in motion so as to agitate the membrane of the oval window and raise an infinitesimal storm in the fluid of the labyrinth. The hairy endings of the auditory nerve shuddered like weeds in a rough sea; **a vast number of obscure miracles were performed in the brain, and Lord Edwards ecstatically whispered "Bach!"** He smiled with pleasure, his eyes lit up. The young girl was singing to herself in solitude under the floating clouds. And then the cloud-solitary philosopher began poetically to meditate. "We must really go downstairs and listen," said Lord Edward. He got up, "Come," he said. "Work can wait. One doesn't hear this sort of thing every night."

 - Ch. 3

- Ever since his mother's second marriage Spandrell had always perversely made the worst of things, chosen the worst course, deliberately encouraged his own worst tendencies. It was with debauchery that he distracted his endless leisures. He was taking his revenge on her... He was spiting her, spiting himself, spiting God. He hoped there was a hell for him to go to and regretted his inability to believe in its existence. ...it was even exciting in those early days to know that one was doing something bad and wrong. But there is in debauchery something so intrinsically dull, something so absolutely and hopelessly dismal, that it is only the rarest beings, gifted with much less than the usual amount of intelligence and much more than the usual intensity of appetite, who can go on actively enjoying a regular course of vice or continue actively to believe in its wickedness. Most habitual debauchees are debauchees not because they enjoy debauchery, but because they are uncomfortable when deprived of it. **Habit converts luxurious enjoyments into dull and daily necessities.**

 - Ch. 17.

- **The course of every intellectual, if he pursues his journey long and unflinchingly enough, ends in the obvious, from which the non-intellectuals have never stirred.** ...The thoroughly contemptible man may have valuable opinions, just as in some ways the admirable man can have detestable opinions. ...Many intellectuals, of course, don't get far enough to reach the obvious again. They remain stuck in a pathetic belief in rationalism and the absolute supremacy of mental values and the entirely conscious will. You've got to go further than the nineteenth-century fellows, for example; as far at least as Protagoras and Pyrrho, before you get back to the obvious in which the nonintellectuals have always remained. ...these nonintellectuals aren't the modern canaille who read the picture papers and... are preoccupied with making money... They take the main intellectualist axiom for granted—that there's an intrinsic superiority in mental, conscious, voluntary life over physical, intuitive, instinctive, emotional life. The whole of modern civilization is based on the idea that the specialized function which gives a man his place in society is more important than the whole man, or rather is the whole man, all the rest being irrelevant or even (since the physical, intuitive, instinctive and emotional part of man doesn't contribute appreciably to making money or getting on in an industrialized world) positively harmful and detestable. ...The nonintellectuals I'm thinking of are very different beings. ...There were probably quite a lot of them three thousand years ago. But the combined efforts of Plato and Aristotle, Jesus, Newton and big business have turned their descendants into the modern bourgeoisie and proletariat. **The obvious that the intellectual gets back to, if he goes far enough, isn't of course the same as the obvious of the nonintellectuals. For their obvious is life itself and his recovered obvious is only the idea of that life. Not many can put flesh and blood on the idea and turn it into reality. The intellectuals who, like Rampion, don't have to return to the obvious, but have always believed in it and lived it, while at the same time leading the life of the spirit, are rarer still.**

 - Ch. 26. Note: the character Mark Rampion, a writer, painter and fierce critic of modern society, is based on D. H. Lawrence

Music at Night and Other Essays (1931)

- **After silence that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.**
 - "The Rest is Silence".
- **For in spite of language, in spite of intelligence and intuition and sympathy, one can never really communicate anything to anybody.**
 - "Sermons in Cats the musical".
- I met, not long ago, a young man who aspired to become a novelist. Knowing that I was in the profession, he asked me to tell him how he should set to work to realize his ambition. I did my best to explain. 'The first thing,' I said, 'is to buy quite a lot of paper, a bottle of ink, and a pen. After that you merely have to write.'
 - "Sermons in Cats".
- Speed, it seems to me, provides the one genuinely modern pleasure.
 - *Wanted, A New Pleasure.*
- If we could sniff or swallow something that would, for five or six hours each day, abolish our solitude as individuals, atone us with our fellows in a glowing exaltation of affection and make life in all its aspects seem not only worth living, but divinely beautiful and significant, and if this heavenly, world-transfiguring drug were of such a kind that we could wake up next morning with a clear head and an undamaged constitution-then, it seems to me, all our problems (and not merely the one small problem of discovering a novel pleasure) would be wholly solved and earth would become paradise.
 - *Wanted, A New Pleasure.*
- **Experience teaches only the teachable...**
 - *Tragedy and the Whole Truth.*
- Half of the human race lives in manifest obedience to the lunar rhythm; and there is evidence to show that the psychological and therefore the spiritual life, not only of women, but of men too, mysteriously ebbs and flows with the changes of the moon. There are unreasoned joys, inexplicable miseries, laughters and remorse without a cause. Their sudden and fantastic alternations constitute the ordinary weather of our minds. These moods, of which the more gravely numinous may be hypostasized as gods, the lighter, if we will, as hobgoblins and fairies, are the children of the blood and humours. But the blood and humours obey, among many other masters, the changing moon. Touching the soul directly through the eyes and, indirectly, along the dark channels of the blood, the moon is doubly a divinity.
 - "Meditation on the Moon".
- How shall we define a god? Expressed in psychological terms (which are primary-there is no getting behind them) a god is something that gives us the peculiar kind of feeling which Professor Otto has called "numinous". Numinous feelings are the original god-stuff from which the theory-making mind extracts the individualised gods of the pantheon.
 - "Meditation on the Moon".

Brave New World (1932)

- Chronic remorse, as all the moralists are agreed, is a most undesirable sentiment. If you have behaved badly, repent, make what amends you can and address yourself to the task of behaving better next time. On no account brood over your wrong-doing. **Rolling in the muck is not the best way of getting clean.**
 - Foreword, to the 1946 edition.
- **Unless we choose to decentralize and to use applied science, not as the end to which human beings are to be made the means, but as the means to producing a race of free individuals, we have only two alternatives to choose from:** either a number of national, militarized totalitarianisms, having as their root the terror of the atomic bomb and as their consequence the destruction of civilization (or, if the warfare is limited, the perpetuation of militarism); or else one supra-national totalitarianism, called into existence by the social chaos resulting from rapid technological progress in general and the atomic revolution in particular,

and developing, under the need for efficiency and stability, into the welfare-tyranny of Utopia. You pays your money and you takes your choice.

- Foreword to the 1946 edition.
- Of course some sort of general idea they must have, if they were to do their work intelligently — though as little of one as possible. For particulars, as every one knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils. Not philosophers but fretsawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.
 - Ch. 1.
- Sleep teaching was actually prohibited in England. There was something called liberalism. Parliament, if you know what that was, passed a law against it. The records survive. Speeches about liberty of the subject. Liberty to be inefficient and miserable. Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole.
 - Ch. 3.
- You can't consume much if you sit still and read books.
 - Ch. 3.
- The greater a man's talents, the greater his power to lead astray. It is better that one should suffer than that many be corrupted.
 - The Director, in Ch 10.
- Well, I'd rather be unhappy than have the sort of false, lying happiness you were having here.
 - John, in Ch. 12.
- The optimum population is modeled on the iceberg — eight ninths below the water line, one ninth above.
 - The Controller, Mustapha Mond, in Ch. 16.
- I'm interested in truth, I like science. But truth's a menace, science is a public danger. As dangerous as it's been beneficent. ... It's curious ... to read what people in the time of Our Ford used to write about scientific progress. They seemed to imagine that it could go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. Knowledge was the highest good, truth the supreme value; all the rest was secondary and subordinate. True, ideas were beginning to change even then. **Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasise from truth and beauty to comfort and hapiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't.** And, of course, whenever the masses seized political power, then it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered. Still, in spite of everything, unrestricted scientific resarch was still permitted. People still went on talking about truth and beauty as though they were sovereign goods. Right up to the time of the Nine Years' War. *That* made them change their tune all right. What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled — after the Nine Years' War. People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for.
 - Mustapha Mond, in Ch. 16.
- God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness.
 - The Controller, Mustapha Mond, in Ch. 17.
- People believe in God because they've been conditioned to believe in God.
 - The Controller, Mustapha Mond, in Ch. 17.

Ends and Means (1937)

- **So long as men worship the Caesars and Napoleons, Caesars and Napoleons will duly rise and make them miserable.**

- In recent years, many men of science have come to realize that the scientific picture of the world is a partial one — the product of their special competence in mathematics and their special incompetence to deal systematically with aesthetic and moral values, religious experiences and intuitions of significance. Unhappily, novel ideas become acceptable to the less intelligent members of society only with a very considerable time-lag. Sixty or seventy years ago the majority of scientists believed — and the belief caused them considerable distress — that the product of their special incompetence was identical with reality as a whole. Today this belief has begun to give way, in scientific circles, to a different and obviously truer conception of the relation between science and total experience.
- The masses on the contrary, have just reached the point where the ancestors of today's scientists were standing two generations back. They are convinced that the scientific picture of an arbitrary abstraction from reality is a picture of reality as a whole and that therefore the world is without meaning or value. But nobody likes living in such a world. To satisfy their hunger for meaning and value, they turn to such doctrines as nationalism, fascism and revolutionary communism. Philosophically and scientifically, these doctrines are absurd; but for the masses in every community, they have this great merit: they attribute the meaning and value that have been taken away from the world as a whole to the particular part of the world in which the believers happen to be living.
- Our conviction that the world is meaningless is due in part to the fact (discussed in a later paragraph) that the philosophy of meaninglessness lends itself very effectively to furthering the ends of political and erotic passion; in part to a genuine intellectual error - the error of identifying the world of science, a world from which all meaning has deliberately been excluded, with ultimate reality.
- For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom; we objected to the political and economic system because it was unjust. The supporters of these systems claimed that in some way they embodied the meaning (a Christian meaning, they insisted) of the world. There was an admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt: we could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. Similar tactics had been adopted during the eighteenth century and for the same reasons... The men of the new Enlightenment, which occurred in the middle years of the nineteenth century, once again used meaninglessness as a weapon against the reactionaries. The Victorian passion for respectability was, however, so great that, during the period when they were formulated, neither Positivism nor Darwinism was used as a justification for sexual indulgence.
- First Shakespeare sonnets seem meaningless; first Bach fugues, a bore; first differential equations, sheer torture. But training changes the nature of our spiritual experiences. In due course, contact with an obscurely beautiful poem, an elaborate piece of counterpoint or of mathematical reasoning, causes us to feel direct intuitions of beauty and significance. It is the same in the moral world.
- **A man who has trained himself in goodness come to have certain direct intuitions about character, about the relations between human beings, about his own position in the world — intuitions that are quite different from the intuitions of the average sensual man.**
- It is only when it takes the form of physical addiction that sex is evil. It is also evil when it manifests itself as a way of satisfying the lust for power or the climber's craving for position and social distinction.
- Wherever we turn we find that the real obstacles to peace are human will and feeling, human convictions, prejudices, opinions. If we want to get rid of war we must get rid first of all of its psychological causes. Only when this has been done will the rulers of the nations even desire to get rid of the economic and political causes.
- It often happens that reforms merely have the effect of transferring the undesirable tendencies of individuals from one channel to another channel. An old outlet for some particular wickedness is closed; but a new outlet

is opened. The wickedness is not abolished; it is merely provided with a different set of opportunities for self-expression.

Words and Their Meanings (1940)

- A great deal of attention has been paid ... to the technical languages in which men of science do their specialized thinking ... But the colloquial usages of everyday speech, the literary and philosophical dialects in which men do their thinking about the problems of morals, politics, religion and psychology — these have been strangely neglected. **We talk about "mere matters of words" in a tone which implies that we regard words as things beneath the notice of a serious-minded person. This is a most unfortunate attitude.** For the fact is that words play an enormous part in our lives and are therefore deserving of the closest study. **The old idea that words possess magical powers is false; but its falsity is the distortion of a very important truth. Words do have a magical effect — but not in the way that magicians supposed, and not on the objects they were trying to influence. Words are magical in the way they affect the minds of those who use them.** "A mere matter of words," we say contemptuously, forgetting that words have power to mould men's thinking, to canalize their feeling, to direct their willing and acting. **Conduct and character are largely determined by the nature of the words we currently use to discuss ourselves and the world around us.**
 - Quoted as the opening passage of "BOOK ONE: The Functions of Language" in *Language in Thought and Action* (1949) by S. I. Hayakawa, p. 3.

Introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita (1944)

Huxley's introduction to *Bhagavad-Gita : The Song of God* (1944) as translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood

- More than twenty-five centuries have passed since that which has been called the Perennial Philosophy was first committed to writing; and in the course of those centuries it has found expression, now partial, now complete, now in this form, now in that, again and again.** In Vedanta and Hebrew prophecy, in the Tao Teh King and the Platonic dialogues, in the Gospel according to St. John and Mahayana theology, in Plotinus and the Areopagite, among the Persian Sufis and the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance — the Perennial Philosophy has spoken almost all the languages of Asia and Europe and has made use of the terminology and traditions of every one of the higher religions. But under all this confusion of tongues and myths, of local histories and particularist doctrines, there remains a Highest Common Factor, which is the Perennial Philosophy in what may be called its chemically pure state. This final purity can never, of course, be expressed by any verbal statement of the philosophy, however undogmatic that statement may be, however deliberately syncretistic. **The very fact that it is set down at a certain time by a certain writer, using this or that language, automatically imposes a certain sociological and personal bias on the doctrines so formulated. It is only in the act of contemplation when words and even personality are transcended, that the pure state of the Perennial Philosophy can actually be known. The records left by those who have known it in this way make it abundantly clear that all of them, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Hebrew, Taoist, Christian, or Mohammedan, were attempting to describe the same essentially indescribable Fact.**
 - The original scriptures of most religions are poetical and unsystematic.** Theology, which generally takes the form of a reasoned commentary on the parables and aphorisms of the scriptures, tends to make its



In regard to man's final end, all the higher religions are in complete agreement. The purpose of human life is the discovery of Truth, the unitive knowledge of the Godhead.

appearance at a later stage of religious history. The *Bhagavad-Gita* occupies an intermediate position between scripture and theology; for it combines the poetical qualities of the first with the clear-cut methodicalness of the second... one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind.

- At the core of the Perennial Philosophy we find four fundamental doctrines.

First: the phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness — the world of things and animals and men and even gods — is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent.

Second: human beings are capable not merely of knowing *about* the Divine Ground by inference; they can also realize its existence by a direct intuition, superior to discursive reasoning. This immediate knowledge unites the knower with that which is known.

Third: man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. It is possible for a man, if he so desires, to identify himself with the spirit and therefore with the Divine Ground, which is of the same or like nature with the spirit.

Fourth: man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground.
- Suso has even left a diagrammatic picture of the relations subsisting between Godhead, triune God and creatures. In this very curious and interesting drawing a chain of manifestation connects the mysterious symbol of the Divine Ground with the three Persons of the Trinity, and the Trinity in turn is connected in a descending scale with angels and human beings. These last, as the drawing vividly shows, may make one of two choices. They can either live the life of the outer man, the life of the separative selfhood; in which case they are lost (for, in the words of the *Theologia Germanica*, “nothing burns in hell but the self”). Or else they can identify themselves with the inner man, in which case it becomes possible for them, as Suso shows, to ascend again, through unitive knowledge, to the Trinity and even, beyond the Trinity, to the ultimate Unity of the Divine Ground.
- The second doctrine of the Perennial Philosophy — that it is possible to know the Divine Ground by a direct intuition higher than discursive reasoning — is to be found in all the great religions of the world. A philosopher who is content merely to know about the ultimate Reality — theoretically and by hearsay — is compared by Buddha to a herdsman of other men's cows. Mohammed uses an even homelier barnyard metaphor. For him the philosopher who has not realized his metaphysics is just an ass bearing a load of books. Christian, Hindu, Taoist teachers wrote no less emphatically about the absurd pretensions of mere learning and analytic reasoning.
- The unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground has, as its necessary condition, self-abnegation and charity. Only by means of self-abnegation and charity can we clear away the evil, folly and ignorance which constitute the thing we call our personality and prevent us from becoming aware of the spark of divinity illuminating the inner man.
- The spark within is akin to the Divine Ground. By identifying ourselves with the first we can come to unitive knowledge of the second. These empirical facts of the spiritual life have been variously rationalized in terms of the theologies of the various religions. The Hindus categorically affirm that *Thou art That* — that the indwelling Atman is the same as Brahman. For orthodox Christianity there is not an identity between the spark and God. Union of the human spirit with God takes place — union so complete that the word deification is applied to it; but it is not the union of identical substances. According to Christian theology, the saint is “deified,” not because Atman *is* Brahman, but because God has assimilated the purified human spirit in to the divine substance by an act of grace. Islamic theology seems to make a similar distinction. The Sufi, Mansur, was executed for giving to the words “union” and “deification” the literal meaning which they bear in the Hindu tradition. For our present purposes, however, the significant fact is that these words are actually used by Christians and Mohammedans to describe the empirical facts of metaphysical realization by means of direct, super-rational intuition.

- In regard to man's final end, all the higher religions are in complete agreement. The purpose of human life is the discovery of Truth, the unitive knowledge of the Godhead. The degree to which this unitive knowledge is achieved here on earth determines the degree to which it will be enjoyed in the posthumous state. Contemplation of truth is the end, action the means.
- **Because machines could be made progressively more and more efficient, Western man came to believe that men and societies would automatically register a corresponding moral and spiritual improvement. Attention and allegiance came to be paid, not to Eternity, but to the Utopian future.** External circumstances came to be regarded as more important than states of mind about external circumstances, and the end of human life was held to be action, with contemplation as a means to that end. These false and historically, aberrant and heretical doctrines are now systematically taught in our schools and repeated, day in, day out, by those anonymous writers of advertising copy who, more than any other teachers, provide European and American adults with their current philosophy of life. And so effective has been the propaganda that even professing Christians accept the heresy unquestioningly and are quite unconscious of its complete incompatibility with their own or anybody else's religion.
- **Many Catholic mystics have affirmed that, at a certain stage of that contemplative prayer in which, according to the most authoritative theologians, the life of Christian perfection ultimately consists, it is necessary to put aside all thought of the Incarnation as distracting from the higher knowledge of that which has been incarnated.** From this fact have arisen misunderstandings in plenty and a number of intellectual difficulties.
- **Human beings are not born identical.** There are many different temperaments and constitutions; and within each psycho-physical class one can find people at very different stages of spiritual development. **Forms of worship and spiritual discipline which may be valuable for one individual maybe useless or even positively harmful for another belonging to a different class and standing, within that class, at a lower or higher level of development.**
- **I have tried to show that the Perennial Philosophy and its ethical corollaries constitute a Highest Common Factor, present in all the major religions of the world. To affirm this truth has never been more imperatively necessary than at the present time.** There will never be enduring peace unless and until human beings come to accept a philosophy of life more adequate to the cosmic and psychological facts than the insane idolatries of nationalism and the advertising man's apocalyptic faith in Progress towards a mechanized New Jerusalem. All the elements of this philosophy are present, as we have seen, in the traditional religions. But in existing circumstances there is not the slightest chance that any of the traditional religions will obtain universal acceptance. Europeans and Americans will see no reason for being converted to Hinduism, say, or Buddhism. And the people of Asia can hardly be expected to renounce their own traditions for the Christianity professed, often sincerely, by the imperialists who, for four hundred years and more, have been systematically attacking, exploiting, and oppressing, and are now trying to finish off the work of destruction by "educating" them. **But happily there is the Highest Common Factor of all religions, the Perennial Philosophy which has always and everywhere been the metaphysical system of prophets, saints and sages. It is perfectly possible for people to remain good Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, or Moslems and yet to be united in full agreement on the basic doctrines of the Perennial Philosophy.**
- **The Bhagavad-Gita is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy.** To a world at war, a world that, because it lacks the intellectual and spiritual prerequisites to peace, can only hope to patch up some kind of precarious armed truce, it stands pointing, clearly and unmistakably, to the only road of escape from the self-imposed necessity of self-destruction.

The Doors of Perception (1954)

The title of this work derives from a statement by William Blake: "**If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite**", and inspired the name of the musical group The Doors.

- To be shaken out of the ruts of ordinary perception, to be shown for a few timeless hours the outer and inner world, not as they appear to an animal obsessed with survival or to a human being obsessed with words and notions, but as they are apprehended, directly and unconditionally, by Mind at Large — this is an experience of inestimable value to everyone and especially to the intellectual.
- Art, I suppose, is only for beginners, or else for those resolute dead-enders, who have made up their minds to be content with the ersatz of Suchness, with symbols rather than with what they signify, with the elegantly composed recipe in lieu of actual dinner.
- **To see ourselves as others see us is a most salutary gift. Hardly less important is the capacity to see others as they see themselves.**
- We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves. The martyrs go hand in hand into the arena; they are crucified alone. Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude. Sensations, feelings, insights, fancies — all these are private and, except through symbols and at second hand, incommunicable. **We can pool information about experiences, but never the experiences themselves. From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes.**
- The really important facts were that spatial relationships had ceased to matter very much and that my mind was perceiving the world in terms of other than spatial categories. At ordinary times the eye concerns itself with such problems as where? — how far? — how situated in relation to what? In the mescaline experience the implied questions to which the eye responds are of another order. Place and distance cease to be of much interest. The mind does its perceiving in terms of intensity of existence, profundity of significance, relationships within a pattern."
- And suddenly I had an inkling of what it must feel like to be mad.
- "Is it agreeable?" somebody asked.

"Neither agreeable nor disagreeable," I answered. "it just is." Istigkeit - wasn't that the word Meister Eckhart liked to use? "Is-ness." The Being of Platonic philosophy - except that Plato seems to have made the enormous, the grotesque mistake of separating Being from becoming and identifying it with the mathematical abstraction of the Idea. He could never, poor fellow, have seen a bunch of flowers shining with their own inner light and all but quivering under the pressure of the significance with which they were charged; could never have perceived that what rose and iris and carnation so intensely signified was nothing more, and nothing less, than what they were - a transience that was yet eternal life, a perpetual perishing that was at the same time pure Being, a bundle of minute, unique particulars in which, by some unspeakable and yet self-evident paradox, was to be seen the divine source of all existence. (page 4-5).

- I strongly suspect that most of the great knowers of Suchness paid very little attention to art... (To a person whose transfigured and transfiguring mind can see the All in every this, the first-rateness or tenth-rateness of even a religious painting will be a matter of the most sovereign indifference.) Art, I suppose, is only for beginners, or else for those resolute dead-enders, who have made up their minds to be content with the ersatz of Suchness, with symbols rather than with what they signify, with the elegantly composed recipe in lieu of actual dinner.
- The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out. He will be wiser but less sure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable mystery which it tries, forever vainly, to comprehend.
- In the days before machinery men and women who wanted to amuse themselves were compelled, in their humble way, to be artists. Now they sit still and permit professionals to entertain them by the aid of

machinery. It is difficult to believe that general artistic culture can flourish in this atmosphere of passivity.

- All that the conscious ego can do is to formulate wishes, which are then carried out by forces which it controls very little and understands not at all.
- The Beatific Vision, Sat Chit Ananda, Being-Awareness-Bliss-for the first time I understood, not on the verbal level, not by inchoate hints or at a distance, but precisely and completely what those prodigious syllables referred to. And then I remembered a passage I had read in one of Suzuki's essays. "What is the Dharma-Body of the Buddha?" ("the Dharma-Body of the Buddha" is another way of saying Mind, Suchness, the Void, the Godhead.) The question is asked in a Zen monastery by an earnest and bewildered novice. And with the prompt irrelevance of one of the Marx Brothers, the Master answers, "The hedge at the bottom of the garden." "And the man who realizes this truth," the novice dubiously inquires, "what, may I ask, is he?" Groucho gives him a whack over the shoulders with his staff and answers, "A golden-haired lion."

It had been, when I read it, only a vaguely pregnant piece of nonsense. Now it was all as clear as day, as evident as Euclid. Of course the Dharma-Body of the Buddha was the hedge at the bottom of the garden. At the same time, and no less obviously, it was these flowers, it was anything that I—or rather the blessed Not-I, released for a moment from my throttling embrace—cared to look at.

- describing his experiment with mescaline, pp. 18-19.
- "What about spatial relationships?" the investigator inquired, as I was looking at the books. It was difficult to answer. True, the perspective looked rather odd, and the walls of the room no longer seemed to meet in right angles. But these were not the really important facts. The really important facts were that spatial relationships had ceased to matter very much and that my mind was perceiving the world in terms of other than spatial categories. At ordinary times the eye concerns itself with such problems as Where?—How far?—How situated in relation to what? In the mescaline experience the implied questions to which the eye responds are of another order. Place and distance cease to be of much interest. The mind does its Perceiving in terms of intensity of existence, profundity of significance, relationships within a pattern. I saw the books, but was not at all concerned with their positions in space. What I noticed, what impressed itself upon my mind was the fact that all of them glowed with living light and that in some the glory was more manifest than in others. In this context position and the three dimensions were beside the point. Not, of course, that the category of space had been abolished. When I got up and walked about, I could do so quite normally, without misjudging the whereabouts of objects. Space was still there; but it had lost its predominance. The mind was primarily concerned, not with measures and locations, but with being and meaning.
 - describing his experiment with mescaline, pp. 19-20.
- I was looking at my furniture, not as the utilitarian who has to sit on chairs, to write at desks and tables, and not as the cameraman or scientific recorder, but as the pure aesthete whose concern is only with forms and their relationships within the field of vision or the picture space. But as I looked, this purely aesthetic, Cubist's-eye view gave place to what I can only describe as the sacramental vision of reality. I was back where I had been when I was looking at the flowers—back in a world where everything shone with the Inner Light, and was infinite in its significance.
 - describing his experiment with mescaline, p. 22.
- Reflecting on my experience, I find myself agreeing with the eminent Cambridge philosopher, Dr. C. D. Broad, "that we should do well to consider much more seriously than we have hitherto been inclined to do the type of theory which Bergson put forward in connection with memory and sense perception. The suggestion is that the function of the brain and nervous system and sense organs is in the main eliminative and not productive. Each person is at each moment capable of remembering all that has ever happened to him and of perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe. The function of the brain and nervous system is to protect us from being overwhelmed and confused by this mass of largely useless and irrelevant knowledge, by shutting out most of what we should otherwise perceive or remember at any moment, and leaving only that very small and special selection which is likely to be practically useful." According to such a theory, each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But in so far as we are animals, our

business is at all costs to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet. To formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness, man has invented and endlessly elaborated those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies which we call languages. Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born—the beneficiary inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people's experience, the victim in so far as it confirms him in the belief that reduced awareness is the only awareness and as it bedevils his sense of reality, so that he is all too apt to take his concepts for data, his words for actual things. That which, in the language of religion, is called “this world” is the universe of reduced awareness, expressed, and, as it were, petrified by language. The various “other worlds,” with which human beings erratically make contact are so many elements in the totality of the awareness belonging to Mind at Large. Most people, most of the time, know only what comes through the reducing valve and is consecrated as genuinely real by the local language. Certain persons, however, seem to be born with a kind of by-pass that circumvents the reducing valve. In others temporary by-passes may be acquired either spontaneously, or as the result of deliberate “spiritual exercises,” or through hypnosis, or by means of drugs. Through these permanent or temporary by-passes there flows, not indeed the perception “of everything that is happening everywhere in the universe” (for the by-pass does not abolish the reducing valve, which still excludes the total content of Mind at Large), but something more than, and above all something different from, the carefully selected utilitarian material which our narrowed, individual minds regard as a complete, or at least sufficient, picture of reality.

- describing his experiment with mescaline, p. 22-24.
- These effects of mescaline are the sort of effects you could expect to follow the administration of a drug having the power to impair the efficiency of the cerebral reducing valve. When the brain runs out of sugar, the undernourished ego grows weak, can't be bothered to undertake the necessary chores, and loses all interest in those spatial and temporal relationships which mean so much to an organism bent on getting on in the world. As Mind at Large seeps past the no longer watertight valve, all kinds of biologically useless things start to happen. ... Other persons discover a world of visionary beauty. To others again is revealed the glory, the infinite value and meaningfulness of naked existence, of the given, unconceptualized event.
 - describing his experiment with mescaline, p. 26.
- How significant is the enormous heightening, under mescaline, of the perception of color! ... Man's highly developed color sense is a biological luxury—inestimably precious to him as an intellectual and spiritual being, but unnecessary to his survival as an animal. ... Mescaline raises all colors to a higher power and makes the percipient aware of innumerable fine shades of difference, to which, at ordinary times, he is completely blind. It would seem that, for Mind at Large, the so-called secondary characters of things are primary.
 - describing his experiment with mescaline, pp. 26-27.
- We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves. The martyrs go hand in hand into the arena; they are crucified alone. Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude.
 - Page 159.
- We can pool information about experiences, but never the experiences themselves. From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes.
 - Page 159.
- To see ourselves as others see us is a most salutary gift. Hardly less important is the capacity to see others as they see themselves.
 - Page 159.
- I was seeing what Adam had seen on the morning of his creation — the miracle, moment by moment, of naked existence.

- Pages 160-61.
- What the rest of us see only under the influence of mescaline, the artist is congenitally equipped to see all the time. His perception is not limited to what is biologically or socially useful.
 - Page 168.
- The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out. He will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable Mystery which it tries, forever vainly, to comprehend.
 - Page 191.

Heaven and Hell (essay) (1954)

- I was sitting on the seashore, half listening to a friend arguing violently about something which merely bored me. Unconsciously to myself, I looked at a film, of sand I had picked up on my hand, when I suddenly saw the exquisite beauty of every little grain of it; instead of being dull, I saw that each particle was made up on a perfect geometrical pattern, with sharp angles, from each of which a brilliant shaft of light was reflected, while each tiny crystal shone like a rainbow. . . . The rays crossed and recrossed, making exquisite patterns of such beauty that they left me breathless. ... Then, suddenly, my consciousness was lighted up from within and I saw in a vivid way how the whole universe was made up of particles of material which, no matter how dull and lifeless they might seem, were nevertheless filled with this intense and vital beauty. For a second or two the whole world appeared as a blaze of glory. When it died down, it left me with something I have never forgotten and which constantly reminds me of the beauty locked up in every minute speck of material around us.
 - (p. 77-78)

Brave New World Revisited (1958)

All page numbers from the mass market paperback published in the Perennial Library by Harper & Row (1965)

- The soul of wit may become the very body of untruth.
 - Foreward (p. vii).
- The nature of power is such that even those who have not sought it, but have had it forced upon them, tend to acquire a taste for more.
 - Chapter 1 (p. 12).
- Liberty, as we all know, cannot flourish in a country that is permanently on a war footing, or even a near war footing. Permanent crisis justifies permanent control of everybody and everything by the agencies of central government.
 - Chapter 1 (p. 14).
- Democracy can hardly be expected to flourish in societies where political and economic power is being progressively concentrated and centralized. But the progress of technology has led and is still leading to just such a concentration and centralization of power.
 - Chapter 3 (p. 19).
- Never have so many been manipulated so much by so few.
 - Chapter 3 (pp. 19-20).
- Societies are composed of individuals and are good only insofar as they help individuals to realize their potentialities and to lead a happy and creative life.
 - Chapter 3 (p. 20).

- In the course of evolution nature has gone to endless trouble to see that every individual is unlike every other individual.... Physically and mentally, each one of us is unique. Any culture which, in the interests of efficiency or in the name of some political or religious dogma, seeks to standardize the human individual, commits an outrage against man's biological nature.
 - Chapter 3 (p. 21).
- It is in the social sphere, in the realm of politics and economics, that the Will to Order becomes really dangerous.
 - Chapter 3 (p. 22).
- However hard they try, men cannot create a social organism, they can only create an organization. In the process of trying to create an organism they will merely create a totalitarian despotism.
 - Chapter 3 (p. 24).
- Propaganda in favor of action that is consonant with enlightened self-interest appeals to reason by means of logical arguments based upon the best available evidence fully and honestly set forth. Propaganda in favor of action dictated by the impulses that are below self-interest offers false, garbled or incomplete evidence, avoids logical argument and seeks to influence its victims by the mere repetition of catchwords, by the furious denunciation of foreign or domestic scapegoats, and by cunningly associating the lower passions with the highest ideals, so that atrocities come to be perpetrated in the name of God and the most cynical kind of *Realpolitik* is treated as a matter of religious principle and patriotic duty.
 - Chapter 4 (p. 33).
- "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free," said Jefferson, "it expects what never was and never will be."
 - Chapter 4 (p. 34).
- In regard to propaganda the early advocates of universal literacy and a free press envisaged only two possibilities: the propaganda might be true, or it might be false. They did not foresee what in fact has happened, above all in our Western capitalist democracies—the development of a vast mass communications industry, concerned in the main neither with the true nor the false, but with the unreal, the more or less totally irrelevant. In a word, they failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distraction.
 - Chapter 4 (pp. 35-36).
- Assembled in a crowd, people lose their powers of reasoning and their capacity for moral choice.
 - Chapter 5 (p. 42).
- Unlike the masses, intellectuals have a taste for rationality and an interest in facts.
 - Chapter 5 (p. 43).
- The survival of democracy depends on the ability of large numbers of people to make realistic choices in the light of adequate information.
 - Chapter 6 (p. 47).
- The indispensable is not necessarily the desirable.
 - Chapter 6 (p. 48).
- Most kings and priests have been despotic, and all religions have been riddled with superstition.
 - Chapter 6 (pp. 52-53).
- The effectiveness of political and religious propaganda depends upon the methods employed, not upon the doctrines taught. These doctrines may be true or false, wholesome or pernicious—it makes little or no difference.
 - Chapter 7 (p. 63).
- An unexciting truth may be eclipsed by a thrilling falsehood.

- Chapter 11 (p. 104).
- Children are nowhere taught, in any systematic way, to distinguish true from false, or meaningful from meaningless, statements. Why is this so? Because their elders, even in the democratic countries, do not want them to be given this kind of education.
 - Chapter 11 (p. 106).
- Who is going to educate the human race in the principles and practice of conservation?
 - Chapter 12 (p. 112).
- In any race between human numbers and natural resources, time is against us.
 - Chapter 12 (p. 113).
- It is a political axiom that power follows property.
 - Chapter 12 (p. 113).
- At this point we find ourselves confronted by a very disquieting question: Do we really wish to act upon our knowledge?
 - Chapter 12 (p. 116)

Attributed

- **An intellectual is a person who has discovered something more interesting than sex.**
 - As quoted without citation in *Discovering Evolutionary Ecology: Bringing Together Ecology And Evolution* (2006) by Peter J. Mayhew, p. 24.

Misattributed

- The only good that I can see in the demonstration of the truth of "Spiritualism" is to furnish an additional argument against suicide. Better live a crossing-sweeper than die and be made to talk twaddle by a "medium" hired at a guinea a séance.
 - T. H. Huxley in *Life and Letters* Volume 1, p. 249

Quotes about Huxley

- You could always tell by his conversation which volume of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* he'd been reading. One day it would be Alps, Andes and Apennines, and the next it would be the Himalayas and the Hippocratic Oath.
 - Bertrand Russell, in a letter to R. W. Clark, July 1965.
- On the morning of November 22nd, a Friday, it became clear the gap between living and dying was closing. Realizing that Aldous [Huxley] might not survive the day, Laura [Huxley's wife] sent a telegram to his son, Matthew, urging him to come at once. At ten in the morning, an almost inaudible Aldous asked for paper and scribbled "If I go" and then some directions about his will. It was his first admission that he might die ...

Around noon he asked for a pad of paper and scribbled

LSD-try it
intermuscular
100mm

In a letter circulated to Aldous's friends, Laura Huxley described what followed: 'You know very well the uneasiness in the medical mind about this drug. But no 'authority', not even an army of authorities, could have stopped me then. I went into Aldous's room with the vial of LSD and prepared a syringe. The doctor asked me if I wanted him to give the shot- maybe because he saw that my hands were trembling. His asking me that made me conscious of my hands, and I said, 'No, I must do this.'

An hour later she gave Huxley a second 100mm. Then she began to talk, bending close to his ear, whispering, 'light and free you let go, darling; forward and up. You are going forward and up; you are going toward the light. Willingly and consciously you are going, willingly and consciously, and you are doing this beautifully — you are going toward the light — you are going toward a greater love ... You are going toward Maria's [Huxley's first wife, who had died many years earlier] love with my love. You are going toward a greater love than you have ever known. You are going toward the best, the greatest love, and it is easy, it is so easy, and you are doing it so beautifully.'

All struggle ceased. The breathing became slower and slower and slower until, 'like a piece of music just finishing so gently in *sempre piu piano, dolcemente*,' at twenty past five in the afternoon, Aldous Huxley died.

- Laura Huxley in *This Timeless Moment* (1971) as quoted by Jay Stevens in "'Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream' (1987).
- Mr. Aldous Huxley, who is perhaps one of those people who have to perpetrate thirty bad novels before producing a good one, has a certain natural — but little developed — aptitude for seriousness.
 - *The Contemporary English Novelist, La Nouvelle Revue française* (1 May 1927).
- We cannot deny its brilliance, its learning, its honest attempt to answer the big human question.
 - Anthony Burgess, Review of Huxley's *Island*, *Yorkshire Post*, 1964.
- **Aldous Huxley was uncannily prophetic, a more astute guide to the future than any other 20th-century novelist. Even his casual asides have a surprising relevance to our own times.** During the first world war, after America's entry, he warned: "I dread the inevitable acceleration of American world domination which will be the result of it all...Europe will no longer be Europe." His sentiment is widely echoed today, though too late for us to do anything about it. The worst fate for a prophet is for his predictions to come true, when everyone resents him for being so clear-eyed.
 - J. G. Ballard, Prophet of Our Present (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2002/apr/13/biography.aldous-huxley?INTCMP=SRCH>). Review of *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual* by Nicholas Murray. *The Guardian*, 13th April 2002.
- Alice in Wonderland fiend.
 - Walt Disney [1] (<http://www.openculture.com/2014/12/when-aldous-huxley-wrote-a-script-for-disneys-alice-in-wonderland.html>)
- Like a piece of litmus paper, he has always been quick to take the colour of his times.
 - "Author Profile : Aldous Huxley" in *The Observer*, London, February 27th, 1949. Quoted in *The Encarta Dictionary of Quotations*, (2000), p. 459.
- Aldous Huxley's spell was the old Arnold-Huxley spell of an education, disseminated with wit from above. It was imposed by his mastery of the art of conversation.
 - V. S. Pritchett, "Obituary of Aldous Huxley", *The New Statesman*, 6th December 1963.

- Huxley enjoyed the follies of the human mind even as he stoically stood out against them...Shock was one of the luxuries of the Twenties. But for Huxley, perhaps the most accomplished educator of his generation, to shock was to ensure the course of intellectual freedom.
 - V. S. Pritchett, "Obituary of Aldous Huxley", *The New Statesman*, 6th December 1963.

External links

- Brief biography at Kirjasto (Pegasos) (<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/ahuxley.htm>)
- Aldous Huxley at Somaweb (<http://somaweb.org/>)
- Aldous Huxley on the Internet Movie Database (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0404717/>)
- Works by Aldous Huxley (http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Aldous_Huxley) at Project Gutenberg
- "Science, Liberty and Peace" (1946) (<http://ringofpeace.org/cultureandspirituality/sciencelibertypeace.html>)
- Interview in *The Paris Review* No. 23 (Spring 1960) (<http://www.theparisreview.org/viewinterview.php/prmMID/4698>)
- RealPlayer audio file : "The Ultimate Revolution" Address at the University of California, Berkeley (20 March 1962) (<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/VideoTest/hux1.ram>)
- Aldous Huxley on mysticism at www.mysticism.nl (<http://home.wxs.nl/~brouw724/Huxley.html>)
- "What happened to Aldous Huxley" by John Derbyshire in *The New Criterion* Vol. 21, No. 6, (February 2003) (<http://newcriterion.com:81/archive/21/feb03/huxley.htm>)
- Select Quotes of Aldous Huxley (<http://www.kevinstilley.com/aldous-huxley-select-quotes/>)

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