

PETER FIRCHOW

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Wells and Lawrence in Huxley's *Brave New World*

H. G. WELLS'S FUTURE has finally caught up with him and, by an irony that he would have been among the first to appreciate, it has forgotten him. Not altogether selflessly, but with an astonishing literary energy and determination, he toiled half a century, drawing up blueprints of a future filled with gadgets and—to use Orwell's phrase—enlightened sun-bathers. What a pity that he did not live to see the Costa Brava swarming with tanned nudity and transistor radio sets. For a whole generation of readers growing up between 1900 and 1930 this little, fat, and jolly man, half prophet and half huckster, became identified with the shape of things to come. The very mention of the future, J. B. S. Haldane noted in 1924, necessarily evoked his name. Only Jules Verne rivaled him as a writer of scientific romances, and Verne's future was already fading into reality by the time Wells reached the peak of his popular success in the early twenties.

Not surprisingly therefore, Wells was a favorite target for those who did not share his confidence in the future or in science. As Mark Hill-egas has suggested in his interesting study of Wells's literary enemies, *The Future as Nightmare*, to be against Utopia and to be against Wells were, during the first half of this century, very nearly synonymous. To this rule, Aldous Huxley was no exception. Nor did Huxley take any special pains to hide the fact that in *Brave New World* he was, among other things, blasting Wells. On the contrary, Wells is one of only two contemporary writers to be mentioned by name in the novel—thinly disguised as "Dr. Wells"—the other being Shaw. In at least one letter dating from the period during which he was working on the novel, Huxley openly avowed his aim to expose the "horror of the Wellsian

Utopia," and some thirty years later he even named Wells's *Men Like Gods* (1923) as the inspiration for a parody which later "got out of hand and turned into something quite different from what I intended."¹

Somewhere behind *Our Ford* and *Our Freud*, then, lurks *Our Wells*. He bears rather the same relation to *Brave New World* that Leibniz does to *Candide*, for—rightly or wrongly—Huxley identified Wells, as he wrote in a letter to T. S. Eliot, with "Wellsian Progress,"² with the doctrine that man can live by technology alone, and with the presumption that men could come to be like unto gods. Wells, in Huxley's view, had merely shifted the tense of Pangloss' best-of-all-possible-worlds from the present into the future. For the skeptical Huxley, as for the skeptical Voltaire, the real world was a fallen one.

Ironically, the apple which Wells proffered modern man was a Huxleyan growth. Before becoming a novelist and a Fabian socialist, Wells had been a biologist, trained for a brief time by the great T. H. Huxley himself. Wells had imbibed natural selection at the fountainhead, but natural selection, as Darwin's bulldog knew, had at least left Nature in the place of the vanished divinity, whereas artificial selection, in the form now proposed by Wells, left only man. Perhaps this is why Wells appears in *Brave New World* as a doctor rather than in any other guise. What the grandfather had given, the grandson now hoped to take away. Poetic, or at least novelistic, justice would be done.

Wells was deeply offended by *Brave New World*, interpreting the attack personally and blustering about Huxley's "betrayal" of the future. Even as late as 1940, it still rankled sufficiently for him to go out of his way, in *The New World Order*, to denounce that "Bible of the impotent genteel, Huxley's *Brave New World*"; and in the same year he told Klaus Mann that he thought Huxley was a "fool." Wells believed that he had been misrepresented by this "disagreeable fantasy."³ His resent-

¹ Aldous Huxley, *Letters*, ed. Grover Smith (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 348; and George Wickes and Ray Frazer, "Aldous Huxley," *Writers at Work, The "Paris Review" Interviews, Second Series* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963), p. 165. That Huxley knew and, in some sense, even admired Wells's scientific fantasies is confirmed by his essay, "If My Library Burned Tonight," *Home and Garden*, XCII (November 1947), 243. It is perhaps also worth noting that *Men Like Gods* was reviewed in *Nature* by Julian Huxley, who was later to collaborate with Wells on *The Science of Life* (1931). (Where it has seemed to clarify the argument, I have provided dates of first publication).

² Huxley, *Letters*, p. 380.

³ Derek Patmore, *Private History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1960), p. 154; H. G. Wells, *The New World Order* (Knopf, 1940), p. 126; and Klaus Mann, *Der Wendepunkt, Ein Lebensbericht* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1952), p. 439. Huxley and Wells did, however, continue to correspond occasionally, and in late 1933 Huxley even joined Wells as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals.

ment, one must in all fairness admit, was not altogether unjustified. Anyone who has the stamina to read through the mass of Wells's scientific fantasies will soon discover that he was not always a facile optimist, especially in his earlier books. In *The Time Machine* (1895), for instance, one of the best known of them all, he draws a remarkable portrait of man's eventual degeneration and extinction. Nor was the early Wells unaware of the dangers of science. The pursuit of scientific knowledge for its own sake and without reference to a system of moral value leads to disaster in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) and in *The Invisible Man* (1897). And in two other, related works, "The Story of Days to Come" (1899) and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), he demonstrates in detail how worlds controlled by technical ingenuity and moral ineptitude can go dangerously awry. Even in *Men Like Gods* and *A Modern Utopia* (1905), Wells warns against states which, no matter how ideal in other respects, prefer uniformity to individuality. As his own unconventional life amply testifies, he was all for individual freedom. "I am neither a pessimist nor an optimist at bottom," he declared in 1934, and one is rather tempted to agree with that verdict.⁴

But to yield wholly to this temptation would be wrong. The early Wells is quite a different creature from the middle Wells, and even the warnings of the early period are more warnings against capitalist science than against science as such. Until the last two years of his life, when he took it all back and asked for an epitaph reading "God damn you all: I told you so,"⁵ Wells had always been enough of a socialist and meliorist to believe that democracy, reason, and science would in the long run triumph over selfishness and willful ignorance. Like a kind of socialist Christ, the Sleeper at the end of *When the Sleeper Wakes* takes upon himself the injustices of this world and, sacrificing his own life, destroys the forces of oligarchy and ushers in the age of scientific socialism. The relish with which Wells contemplates the coming of this secular paradise is perhaps best conveyed by the conclusion of "A Story of the Days to Come," where a dying oligarch goes to seek help from a young doctor. "'Why should we save you in particular?'" the doctor asks.

"You see—from one point of view—people with imaginations and passions like yours have to go—they have to go."

⁴ H. G. Wells, *Seven Famous Novels* (Garden City Publishing Co., 1934), p. ix.

⁵ Quoted in W. Warren Wagar, *H. G. Wells and the World State* (Yale University Press, 1961), p. 48.

"Go?"

"Die out. It's an eddy."

He was a young man with a serene face. He smiled at Bindon. "We get on with research, you know; we give advice when people have the sense to ask for it. And we bide our time."

"Bide your time?"

"We hardly know enough yet to take over the management, you know."

"The management?"

"You needn't be anxious. Science is young yet. It's got to keep on growing for a few generations. . . . Some day—some day, men will live in a different way." He looked at Bindon and meditated. "There'll be a lot of dying out before that day can come."⁶

When this sort of doctor finally succeeds, he becomes, one suspects, either a ranking member of the scientific-socialistic samurai of *A Modern Utopia* or else a Fordian Dr. Wells.

What Huxley questioned in Wells's future worlds was not the good intentions, but the bad conclusions. Was it really possible for all men to be equal, as Wells and the socialists seemed to maintain? If, by means of genetic control and artificial selection, as in *Men Like Gods*, "every individual is capable of playing the superior part, who will consent," Huxley asked in *Proper Studies*, "or be content to do the dirty work and obey? The inhabitants of Mr. Wells's numerous utopias solve the problem by ruling and being ruled, doing high-brow and low-brow work, in turns . . . an admirable state of affairs if could be arranged . . . though personally, I find my faith too weak." If men could be bred into gods, Huxley argued, they would also quarrel like gods, with a consequent and ineluctable *Götterdämmerung*. All order is hierarchical order. Cut the great chain of being and you cut yourself adrift. "States function as smoothly as they do," Huxley concludes, "because the greater part of the population is not very intelligent, dreads responsibility, and desires nothing better than to be told what to do. . . . A state with a population consisting of nothing but these superior people could not hope to last for a year."⁷

The dream of universal equality is, in Huxley's view, just that: a dream. When you try to put the dream into practice, you get—what? A nightmare. This, in sum, is the meaning of the so-called Cyprus Experiment in *Brave New World*, in which a population of twenty-two thousand Alpha-plus men and women are given the run of the island

⁶ H. G. Wells, *Tales of Space and Time* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1900), pp. 240–41.

⁷ Aldous Huxley, *Proper Studies* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), pp. 281–82.

and complete control over their own destinies. Within twenty years—after massive infighting—the three thousand survivors petition to be re-admitted into the Fordian world.

Huxley's chief objections, then, to Wells are that he is unrealistic, that his estimate of human nature is completely out of whack, and that his prophecies about the future are therefore dangerously misleading. Not that Wells alone is to be held responsible; he is merely the most visible exponent of a whole complex of attitudes, linking science with socialism and democracy. To some degree at least, Wells belongs to that class of old-style Utopians whose conviction it was, as Huxley observed in 1931, that all one had to do was "get rid of priests and kings, make Aeschylus and the differential calculus available to all, and the world will become a paradise." But for Huxley democracy and universal education are not the philosopher's stone, turning lead into gold. Only science can perform this trick, and its price for doing so is prohibitive. Hence, Huxley argues—referring no doubt to himself and to the novel he was just then in the process of writing—"contemporary prophets have visions of future societies founded on the idea of natural inequality, not of natural equality . . . of a ruling aristocracy slowly improved . . . by deliberate eugenic breeding"; and further and even more directly pertinent to the hierarchical society of *Brave New World*, Huxley foresees the next generation's utopia being based on an intellectual caste system "accompanied by a Machiavellian system of education, designed to give the members of the lower castes only such education as it is profitable for society at large and the upper castes in particular that they should have."⁸

To be sure, in both *Men Like Gods* and *A Modern Utopia*, there is an active program of eugenics, and in the latter there is even something of a caste separation between the "samurai" and the rest of the population, with further subdivisions within the samurai themselves. However, the samurai are a purely voluntary aristocracy, as are the more loosely organized "intelligences" who direct social and psychological affairs in *Men Like Gods*. A voluntary aristocracy on this scale, however, must have struck Huxley as an absurdity, as at best the equivalent of a voluntary bureaucracy, which is the function of the Alpha individuals in the Fordian world. To ensure stability, the ultimate control of a society must be vested in a very few hands, a condition which is true not merely of

⁸ Aldous Huxley, *Music at Night* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), pp. 150–52.

the stable Fordian state but also of the stable Pueblo Indian community.

The relation of *Brave New World* to Wells's fantasies is (with the exception of a number of technological details to be dealt with later) of a rather general nature. Though it may have started out as a parody of *Men Like Gods*, Huxley is quite right in insisting that *Brave New World* ended up as something quite different. It is no *Shamela* to Wells's *Pamela*. The only major areas at which the two novels intersect concern the emotions and the Savage. In Wells's utopia, as in Huxley's dystopia, deep feeling is either nonexistent or reprehensible. The explosion which kills three Utopians and temporarily opens their world to Wells's mouthpiece, Barnstaple, and a few other less tractable earthlings occasions no grief among their fellows. Pity, in this Utopia of pseudo-Nietzschean supermen, is a virtually unknown vice practiced furtively by degenerate throwbacks to primitive modern man.⁹ For the rest there is an athletic, no-nonsense attitude about the mental and emotional lives of these demi-gods, which must have struck a responsive satirical cord in Huxley. "The daily texture of Utopian life," a revealing passage reads, "was woven of various and interesting foods and drinks, of free and entertaining exercise and work, of sweet sleep and of the interest and happiness of fearless and spiteless love-making."¹⁰ That last item about the love-making, especially, evokes one of the principal features of Fordian civilization.

Barnstaple himself has no importance for *Brave New World*, except insofar as his solitary condition at the end of the novel suggests that of the Savage. Ironically, Barnstaple, bald, pudgy, middle-aged and married, suffers from neglect where the Savage ails from surfeit. "The loveliness of the Utopian girls and women," Wells rather sympathetically observes, "who glanced at him curiously or passed him with a serene indifference, crushed down his self-respect and made the Utopian world altogether intolerable to him."¹¹ No fearless and spiteless love-making for him, alas. But one of the other earthlings does seem to have a more vital connection to Huxley's satire, a certain Rupert Catskill who is a thinly veiled caricature of Winston Churchill. Catskill is the most energetic and articulate devil's advocate in the novel. He roundly denounces the serenity of the Utopians to their own faces, calls theirs a life

⁹ H. G. Wells, *Men Like Gods* (Macmillan, 1923), p. 287.

¹⁰ Wells, *Men Like Gods*, p. 266.

¹¹ Wells, *Men Like Gods*, p. 291.

unfit for heroes, lacking in drama and opportunity to experience man's full potential. Eventually he even seizes an outlying castle and proposes to fight to the finish against a degenerate future.

Catskill and his companions, including Freddy Mush (Edward Marsh) and Lord Barralonga (Lord Beaverbrook), are clearly meant to be throwbacks to a feudal past (hence the castle). And of course they are meant to be ridiculous. So they are, but in the event only marginally more so than their opponents. And here appears another parallel to Huxley's world: Catskill's objections to utopia resemble closely those of the Savage, and like Catskill, the Savage also makes an attempt to overthrow the established authority and also prefers the past to the future. Perhaps even the lighthouse to which the Savage retires may be intended as an echo of Catskill's castle. And if so, then we are faced with the somewhat mind-boggling project of young Winston as the sire of a New Mexican savage.

However, more even than *Men Like Gods*, *Brave New World* resembles *When the Sleeper Wakes*. Like Huxley's novel, this work is also more an attack on, than an idealization of, the future. "Here was no Utopia, no Socialistic state," the Sleeper is made to realize early on in this novel.¹² Without entering into the details of its rather absurd, Bellamy-like plot, one can say that the whole quality of the civilization it depicts is quite Fordian. The countryside, for instance, has disappeared from consciousness altogether and daily life has become exclusively urban. The "squat" building of thirty-four stories which sets the scene for the opening of *Brave New World* would fit in nicely here. So would the attitude, at any rate among the managing class, to pleasure and sex. There are, for instance, the so-called Pleasure Cities, "strange places, reminiscent of the legendary Sybaris, cities of art and beauty, sterile wonderful cities of motion and music, whither repaired all who profited by the fierce, inglorious, economic struggle that went on in the glaring labyrinth below."¹³ Like the Savage, the Sleeper is repelled (and fascinated) by the sexual licence of the new world, refusing offers to inspect a pleasure city more intimately. Like the Savage again, he despises women who make advances. He wants a woman to love rather than merely make love to. And like the Savage he resists all attempts to tamper with the essence of his personality. Invited to submit to the local

¹² H. G. Wells, *When the Sleeper Wakes* (Harper's, 1899), p. 69.

¹³ Wells, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, p. 167.

hypnotic personality controllers, the Sleeper refuses, preferring "very keenly to remain absolutely himself." Similarly, the bosses of the new bureaucracy, the "prominent officers of the Food Trust" and "the controller of the European Piggeries" leave him as unimpressed as the Archsongster of Canterbury does the Savage.¹⁴ What they both value is depth of experience, rather than breadth, and for them the two are mutually exclusive. In the jargon of contemporary sociology, they are inner-directed.

When the Sleeper Wakes also contains a remarkable series of technological anticipations of the Fordian world, many of which have been recently catalogued by Mark Hillegas.¹⁵ There is an "International Crèche Syndicate," which falls half-way between a day-care center and a Hatchery and Conditioning Center; there are even infant "incubating cases," a feature which the Sleeper finds particularly disgusting; and there is transatlantic transport vaguely analogous to Huxley's passenger rockets, along with "babble machines" to drum propaganda into the captive minds of the masses. One could go further, as Hillegas has done, and ransack other Wells novels for more similarities. In *A Modern Utopia*, criminals and deviants are exiled to islands, much as in Huxley's novel; and in *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), there is a termite-like society in which "every citizen knows his place. He is born to that place, and the elaborate discipline of training and education and surgery he undergoes fits him at last so completely to it that he has neither ideas nor organs for any purpose beyond it."¹⁶ Even Huxley's free-martins are matched by the large majority of neuter Selenites.

It is clear that Huxley borrowed a number of the technological aspects of his Utopia from Wells, but it would be dangerous to assume that Wells was Huxley's only or even primary source of scientific information. In the immediate Huxley background, one should remember, were his brother Julian and various sometime friends such as J. B. S. Haldane, Bertrand Russell and J. W. N. Sullivan. And in any case, the technological details, whether Wellsian or no, are not what matter most. They are only the most superficially memorable aspects of Huxley's novel, and as he himself soon realized, he had blundered badly by missing out on one of the most obvious ones, atomic energy. But while

¹⁴ Wells, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, p. 216.

¹⁵ Mark Hillegas, *The Future as Nightmare, H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians* (Oxford, 1967), p. 111ff.

¹⁶ H. G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon* (London: George Newnes, 1901), p. 304.

this omission is surprising, it certainly does not vitiate the continuing force of his satire. Is Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* no longer of interest because a thorough exploration of the globe has turned up no islands inhabited by Houyhnhnms?

"It would be easy," Huxley wrote in 1931, no doubt a little self-consciously, "but quite uninteresting to catalogue the errors of past prophets. The only significant parts of their prognostications, the only parts of them which we can usefully compare with contemporary prophesings, are the forecasts of political and social organization. Coaches may give place to airplanes, but man remains very much what he was—a mainly gregarious animal endowed with a certain number of anti-social instincts. Whatever tools he uses, however slowly or quickly he may travel, he must always be governed and regimented."¹⁷ Despite all the gadgetry, in other words, the proper study of the novelist remains man. That is why a remark like Gerald Heard's about *Brave New World* being "obsolete because of the growth and findings of subsequent research" seems quite beside the point.¹⁸ So, for that matter, is Hillegas' conclusion that Huxley "is against Utopia not only because it would mechanize human life but because it would give abundance and leisure to everyone, making these no longer the special privilege of people like Huxley himself."¹⁹ Huxley, it is true, made no secret of his suspicion of democracy and of the machine, especially when in combination—see, for instance, Scogan's remarks on this subject in *Crome Yellow* or the essay "Revolutions" in *Do What You Will* (1929). After his first traumatic experience of the U.S.A. in 1926, that suspicion grew even more intense. But surely not, as Hillegas asserts, for selfish reasons. After all, a great deal of Huxley's intellectual and artistic life prior to *Brave New World* (and following it) was taken up with the effort to find an adequate solution to the wearisome condition of this chiefly gregarious but intermittently anti-social creature called man. *Brave New World* is no exception. It is no mere what-would-it-be-like-if-pigs-could-fly fantasy, but a bitter attack on a kind of mentality which was seeking to destroy man and replace him with an anthropoid beast or an anthropoid machine. That after all was the point of the epigraph which Huxley had chosen for his novel from Berdyaev's *The End of Our Time* (1927).

¹⁷ Huxley, *Music*, pp. 149–50.

¹⁸ Gerald Heard, "The Poignant Prophet," *The Kenyon Review*, XXVII (Winter 1965), 57.

¹⁹ Hillegas, *Future*, p. 120.

In *Point Counter Point* there is a description of a painting by a character named Mark Rampion (based on D. H. Lawrence) which depicts the evolution of man. It begins with a miniscule monkey and passes, via various stages of primitive man, through Greece, Rome and the Renaissance, with the figures growing ever larger as they approximate the present. "The crescendo continued uninterrupted through Watt and Stevenson, Faraday and Darwin, Bessemer and Edison, Rockefeller and Wanamaker to come to a contemporary consummation in the figures of Mr. H. G. Wells and Sir Alfred Mond. Nor was the future neglected. Through the radiant mist of prophecy the forms of Wells and Mond, growing larger and larger at every repetition, wound in a triumphant spiral clean off the paper, toward Utopian infinity."²⁰ Needless to say, Lawrence never painted such a picture, though as we shall see there was something in Lawrence that makes it appropriate for Huxley to have attributed it to him. The most obvious allusion here is to Wells's *Outline of History* (1920) which, as A. J. P. Taylor has remarked, tries heroically and fails dismally to trace an evolutionary moral "progress" in the history of mankind. Less obviously, there is another allusion—one which explains the otherwise rather puzzling linkage of Wells to Sir Alfred Mond—to *William Clissold* (1926), the massive novel in which Wells first broached his notion of an "Open Conspiracy." This romantic idea of having the modern movers and makers of business and politics combine to seize power and create the World State represented something of a departure from Wells's usual brand of nonconformist socialism. But then there had always been in Wells a kind of permanently adolescent admiration for the sheer daring and imagination of the capitalist entrepreneur—witness the rather mixed feelings with which the Ponderevo business empire is treated in *Tono-Bungay* (1909). Besides, Wells's disillusion in *William Clissold* is not so much with the ideals of socialism as with the sorry lot of ineffective sentimentalists who are identified with it. "Clissold's direction," John Maynard Keynes noted in his review of the book, "is to the Left—far, far to the left; but he seeks to summon from the Right the creative force and the constructive will which is to carry him there."²¹

Without mentioning him specifically and by name, it was clear that

²⁰ Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1928), pp. 290–91.

²¹ Reprinted in H. G. Wells, *The Critical Heritage*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 288.

Wells had a man like Alfred Mond in mind for the job of chief open conspirator. Mond came from a distinguished scientific and financial family: his father had founded the highly successful Mond Nickel Company, partially on the basis of scientific discoveries of his own; his brother, Sir Robert Ludwig Mond, was a distinguished chemist and administrator. Alfred Mond himself expanded his father's company into one of the largest and most powerful industrial enterprises in Britain and eventually fused it and other related concerns in 1926 into Imperial Chemical Industries, which, after Ford Motor Company, was probably the largest privately owned corporation in the world. But Mond was not satisfied to remain a mere businessman. He also pursued a successful political career, serving as an MP from 1906 to 1928, first as a Liberal and later as a Tory. He fitted Clissold's bill precisely, all the more so because, despite his conservatism, he was known to favor such progressive ideas as profit-sharing and because he attributed his success, above all, to his ability to make his workers believe that his interest was also their own.

That Huxley was not alone in associating Wells's name with Mond's is evident from Philip Gibbs's *The Day After Tomorrow* (1927). According to Gibbs, Wells "seems to have lost faith in the advance of democracy to a flower-strewn Utopia with *Men like Gods*, and in his recent work [*William Clissold*] suggests that human progress can only be attained by an intellectual aristocracy of very rich men, remarkably like Sir Alfred Mond, who will create enormous trusts, discipline the lower classes, and create a new heaven on earth by scientific organization and divinely inspired committee meetings."²²

There is no first-hand evidence that Huxley had read *William Clissold*. The only novel by Wells, aside from the scientific fantasies, which Huxley mentions in his correspondence or in his (prophetic) essay "If My Library Burned Tonight," is *Tono-Bungay*, and he found that disappointing. That he had some knowledge of *William Clissold* is, however, strongly suggested by his connection of Wells with Mond. But if he had not read the novel, what was the source of his knowledge? The answer, I think, is provided by *Point Counter Point*: from D. H. Lawrence.

Lawrence had not merely read *William Clissold*, he had reviewed it—though only the first volume—in 1926 for *Calendar of Modern Letters*. He condemns the latter half of the book as a duller resumé of the

²² Philip Gibbs, *The Day After Tomorrow* (London: Hutchinson, 1927), p. 235.

Outline of History in words that seem to presage Rampion's drawing: "Cave men, nomads, patriarchs, tribal Old Men, out they all come again, in the long march of human progress. Mr. Clissold, who holds forth against 'system,' cannot help systematising us all into a gradual and systematic uplift from the ape."²³ Lawrence's verdict was that Wells's novel was not a work of art, which in a way is odd because Lawrence was generally sympathetic to Wells, in part because he felt that he and Wells had had similar social obstacles to face and overcome. Perhaps what Lawrence resented here even more than Wells's lack of art was his glorification of the modern businessman.

It is tempting to think of Lawrence and Huxley discussing and condemning Wells together, especially the Wells of *William Clissold*; but again there is no real evidence that they did. There is only the hint of *Point Counter Point* and, even more tantalizing, the poem "Wellsian Futures" in *Pansies* (1929):

When men are made in bottles
and emerge as squeaky globules with no bodies to speak of,
and therefore nothing to have feelings with,
they will still squeak intensely about their feelings
and be prepared to kill you if you say you've got none.²⁴

What makes this poem especially interesting with regard to Huxley (aside from the fact that *Brave New World* contradicts it outright) is that there is nothing about babies made in bottles anywhere in Wells. Huxley, on the other hand, had already raised the possibility twice, once in *Crome Yellow* and again in *Proper Studies* (1927), and Lawrence had certainly read the latter book. There is more than a slight possibility, therefore, that Lawrence got the scientific information for his poem from Huxley. (That he should have hit on the idea independently is unlikely, though he might just have found it in J. B. S. Haldane's *Daedalus* [1923].) There is some circumstantial evidence to support this hypothesis in Julian Huxley's *Memories* (1970), where Huxley's brother mentions lively discussions of "evolutionary and physiological ideas, including the idea of mankind's genetic improvement."²⁵ These discussions took place at Diablerets in the winter of 1927-1928, when Lawrence was also present. In fact it was almost certainly at one of these sessions that Lawrence delivered his famous outburst against evolution.

²³ D. H. Lawrence, *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beal (London: Heinemann, 1955), p. 136.

²⁴ D. H. Lawrence, *Poems*, I (Geneva: Heron, 1964), p. 501.

²⁵ Julian Huxley, *Memories* (Harper & Row, 1970), p. 160.

If what I have argued here is true, then Lawrence bears a considerable, if indirect, responsibility for the figure of Mond/Wells in *Brave New World*. Nor is that his only responsibility. For just as behind Mond and behind the whole technological world which he controls stands H. G. Wells, so behind the Savage and the New Mexican Pueblo stands D. H. Lawrence.

When Huxley began work on *Brave New World*, he had never been to New Mexico. That he had not seems in fact to have troubled him, since nearly thirty years later he recalled having "had to do an enormous amount of reading up on New Mexico, because I'd never been there. I read all sorts of Smithsonian reports on the place and then did the best I could to imagine it."²⁶ His path passed near New Mexico a couple of years later during the travels described in *Beyond the Mexique Bay* (1934), but he did not actually set foot in the place until 1937.

If, however, Huxley had not been to New Mexico and if, for that reason, he had to do a good deal of boneing up on it, one wonders why he bothered. If it was underdeveloped or non-Western societies he was after, he had already seen several such during his travels in the Far East in 1926. Why then? Perhaps in order to have a peculiarly American locale to match the American flavor of the Fordian world? Yes, possibly, though this suggestion still does not account specifically for New Mexico. Why not Arizona instead, or even Texas or Florida, or any other American state with a sizable Indian population?

The real answer is Lawrence. By the time Huxley came to know him intimately, Lawrence had already, to be sure, closed the New Mexican chapter of his life, but he had by no means forgotten it. "In later years," Huxley wrote in his preface to Knud Merrild's *A Poet and Two Painters* (1938), a memoir about Lawrence in New Mexico by a Dane who had lived there with him, "he [Lawrence] often talked of the place—talked with a mixture of love and dislike; nostalgically longing to be back in that ferociously virgin world of drought and storm, and at the same time resenting its alienness and lunar vacancy."²⁷ New Mexico, it seems safe to assume, existed for Huxley (that is, before he delved into the Smithsonian reports) only insofar as he had heard about it from Lawrence.

Lawrence, however, did not merely talk about New Mexico, he had

²⁶ Wickes, "Huxley," p. 165.

²⁷ Aldous Huxley, "Preface" to Knud Merrild, *A Poet and Two Painters* (London: George Routledge, 1938), p. xvi.

also written of it. Although he saved his best energies for the old Mexico—much to the dismay of Mabel Dodge Luhan who had lured him to Taos to be a sort of combined poet-in-residence and genius loci—he did compose several impressionistic sketches about the Indians and landscape of New Mexico.

The sketch that seems most immediately relevant to the Pueblo section of *Brave New World* is entitled "The Hopi Snake Dance" and gives Lawrence's reaction to the most dramatic of all the Pueblo Indian dances. The outward trappings of the dance seemed to Lawrence merely spectacular circus tricks with snakes dangling from the performers' mouths, but he was profoundly impressed by the gripping rhythmic nature of the ritual, symbolized by the continuous beating of the drum and the pad of human feet. Here was the real heart of the Indian, Lawrence thought, here was his eternal assertion that god and life are one.

The other sketches play variations on much the same theme, usually with a heavy accompaniment of the percussion instruments. Not that Lawrence naively idealizes the life of the Indian. He aggressively demands the "debunking" of the Indian and maintains that "it is almost impossible for the white people to approach the Indian without either sentimentality or dislike."²⁸ Even so, one suspects that Lawrence felt that he himself had managed to achieve the nearly impossible. Certainly he felt that he had made contact with something that was older and stranger and more godlike than anything he had known before. "I had no permanent feeling of religion," he writes in "New Mexico," "till I came to New Mexico and penetrated into the old human race-experience there." And elsewhere in the same essay, he even goes so far as to say that "New Mexico was the greatest experience from the outside world that I ever had. It certainly changed me forever. Curious as it may sound, it was New Mexico that liberated me from the present era of civilization, the great era of material and mechanical development."²⁹

Understatement was, of course, not Lawrence's strong point, but undoubtedly New Mexico left its mark on him. For a brief period, Lawrence even convinced himself that he was an integral part of New Mexico, living high up on his ranch, surrounded by his women and his cow, with the Indians just a few steps away. This is probably the new

²⁸ D. H. Lawrence, *Mornings in Mexico* (London: Martin Secker, 1927), p. 101.

²⁹ D. H. Lawrence, *Phoenix*, ed. E. D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), p. 144 and p. 142.

Mexico about which Lawrence "often" spoke to Huxley, for no matter how strenuously Lawrence might have wished to debunk the Indian, he was an iconophile, not an iconoclast. It was Huxley who was the debunker.

There are signs that Huxley was debunking Lawrence even when their friendship was at its height. Lawrence must have been at least partly on his mind when Huxley wrote in "The Cold-Blooded Romantics" (1928) that "the modern artist seems to have grown down; he has reverted to the preoccupation of his childhood. He is trying to be a primitive. So, it may be remembered, was the romantic Rousseau. But whereas Rousseau's savage was noble, refined and intelligent, the primitive our modern artists would like to resemble is a mixture between the apache and the fifteen-year old schoolboy."³⁰ Reading this, one is reminded of the scene in "Indians and the Englishman" where Lawrence is confronted in the dusk by an Apache who, he is convinced, wishes to murder him. Here they are, the twin spirits of Lawrence: Natty Bumppo and the primitive blood-consciousness.

Certainly, by the time Huxley was writing *Brave New World*, he was sure that Lawrence's primitive Utopia no longer cut any ice, or certainly no more than Wells's technological one. "In beating the West with an extreme-oriental stick, contemporary writers like Lowes Dickinson and Bertrand Russell have only revived a most respectable literary tradition," Huxley observed in 1931. "The primitive and prehistoric Utopias of D. H. Lawrence and [Grafton] Elliot Smith have as good a pedigree. Our ancestors knew all about the State of Nature and the Noble Savage." It had all been tried before and had failed, so runs the implication, so why try and fail again? Here Lawrence's Utopian vision is degraded (or should one say debunked?) to the point of being just another literary stone piled on an already ruinous edifice. Later on in the essay, Lawrence is degraded even further, to the level of a fad (as he is in *Eyeless in Gaza*). "With every advance of industrial civilization," Huxley predicts, "the savage past will be more and more appreciated, and the cult of D. H. Lawrence's *Dark God* may be expected to spread through an ever-widening circle of worshippers."³¹ Now Lawrence is the fashionable cultist, no longer the prophet of a new religion. And now the connection is made explicit: Lawrence is the savage past.

³⁰ Aldous Huxley, "The Cold-Blooded Romantics," *Vanity Fair*, XXX (March 1928), p. 104.

³¹ Huxley, *Music*, pp. 141-42 and p. 147.

The savage past or the Fordian future? That is the question which *Brave New World* poses. The Malpais (literally "bad country" in Spanish) of prehistory or the ironically "Buenpais" of post-history? The choice is between two evils. Not that Lawrence is to be exclusively identified with the one or Wells with the other; that would be to simplify excessively the complexity of Huxley's vision—and to err by trying to make a partial truth do the work of a whole one. Huxley's Pueblo Indians, closely related as they are to Lawrence's, also have other ancestors. The fragmentary tales they tell derive, for instance, not from Lawrence, but from Frank Cushing's *Zuñi Folk Tales* (1901), which seems also to be the source of many of Huxley's Indian names, including Mitsima and Waihusiva. Not to mention the Smithsonian reports. . . .³²

No, though Lawrence's experience of New Mexico and Lawrence's antipathy to science, to social regimentation, and to promiscuous sexuality surely helped shape the spirit of the Savage, it would be wrong to identify him with Lawrence too completely. For one thing, it is important to note that Huxley transformed the Pueblo Indians, in one respect at least, almost as much as he did our own world. The Pueblo Indians—as the Smithsonian reports, among others, make clear—are anthropologically a separate entity from the Penitentes. According to Elsie Clewes Parsons' massive study of Pueblo Indian religion—not published in book form until 1939 but a considerable proportion of which had already appeared as articles by the end of the twenties—the Penitentes are "an organization [which] the Indians observe with interest as comparable to their own esoteric groups."³³ But there is no mingling of the two, certainly nothing like the fusion that exists in *Brave New World*. Huxley was, of course, aware of this fact and in his foreword described the religion of his Indians as "half fertility cult and half *Penitente* ferocity."³⁴

The fertility cult is Indian, and as one might expect, the snake dance is part of that cult. How closely this feature of Pueblo Indian life was linked with Lawrence in Huxley's mind may be appreciated from H. K.

³² The name "Popé," however, seems to allude to Popé of San Juan, a leader in the great 1680 Pueblo Indian rebellion against the Spaniards. By "Smithsonian Reports" Huxley means the *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, which since 1880 has frequently published detailed studies of Pueblo Indian culture, notably by Tilly E. Stevenson, J. P. Harrington, and Leslie A. White.

³³ Elsie Clewes Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion*, I (University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 159.

³⁴ Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. viii. All further references to this novel will be included in the text by page number enclosed in parentheses.

Haeberlin's observation that "the Great Serpent of the Pueblo is commonly known as the 'plumed serpent.'" So too with the *sipapus*, the openings in the floor of the *kiva*, which play an important part in Huxley's description of the snake dance. It is there that the deities of germination and fertility reside. And associated with these deities are also the wargods, "Püükon and his less important [twin] brother."³⁵

"Püükon" is obviously Huxley's Pookong, but in *Brave New World* his twin brother has been replaced by Christ, and along with Christ have also come the Penitentes. To be sure, there are certain points of historical contact between the native Indian rites and those of the Penitentes, some of which may possibly derive from Spanish influence at the time of the Conquest. Both groups practice fasting, continence, and flagellation. The use of emetics is, however, a peculiarly Indian custom, and though the Indians do practice whipping, it is very mild indeed compared to the Penitentes. The Pueblo Indians would certainly never tolerate sadism of the kind which climaxes the snake dance in *Brave New World*. Their whippings take place at initiation ceremonies only and then always in groups, with each youth accompanied by an adult sponsor who is sometimes also whipped. The maximum number of strokes is usually four, and there is no attempt on the part of the person being struck to conceal pain. Furthermore, no Pueblo Indian would go out alone into the desert and commit an act such as the Savage describes. "'Once,'" he tells Bernard Marx, "'I did something that none of the others did: I stood against a rock in the middle of the day, in summer with my arms out, like Jesus on the Cross'" (93).

What is Huxley's point here? Why does he insist on combining an Indian fertility cult with a Christian penitential ritual? If it is merely to suggest that the forces of life are balanced by those of death—Huxley, one remembers, is often accused of Manicheanism—then he could have portrayed that balance with much less effort by means of the Aztecs of the Old Mexico. Sir James Frazer's *Sacrificial God* is full of horrific examples.

Then why? Because, I suspect, he wishes to make a point about the relation of life and death which he could not have done using the Aztecs. The Aztecs practiced human sacrifice in order to preserve the life of their gods; for them death was merely another aspect of fertility.

³⁵ H. K. Haeberlin, "The Idea of Fertilization in the Culture of the Pueblo Indians," *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, III (1916), p. 24 and p. 234.

This is one of the chief reasons why Lawrence rooted his dark god in the *old* Mexican soil. But here again Huxley is debunking Lawrence. Life, Huxley implies, is life, never to be confused with death—unless it is the everlasting life, the life beyond death. Lawrence, as Huxley knew, disliked Christianity and may have feared it. Characteristically, he tried to shut himself off from all contact with the Penitentes during his stay in Taos. As Elliot Fay, who was in Taos at the same time as Lawrence, recalled years later, he would close the windows of his room whenever the Penitentes began their evening chants and cries.³⁶

There is another and perhaps more important reason why Huxley may have chosen to put the Penitentes into his novel. *Brave New World* portrays a future as well as a past which differ from the present in that they have no history. Our Ford's remark that "History is bunk" applies with equal force to the Pueblo and to the London of AF 632. Both are stable societies which can tolerate no change and therefore possess no history. Now, the one relatively stable institution known to the West in modern historical times is the Church. Significantly, Christianity is the most important shared element of both the Fordian and the Pueblo societies.

This may be less apparent in the new world, but it is no less true. The Solidarity Service which forms a counterpart to the Pueblo Snake Dance is an obvious parody of the mass. The loving-cup of strawberry ice-cream soma is based on the bread and wine of the holy communion. ("All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects" [36] is how Mustapha Mond defines soma.) The Solidarity hymns consciously echo Wesley's, and there is even an oblique reference to the Holy Spirit in the "enormous negro dove" at the close of the service. Like the Snake Dance, the Solidarity Service also has an underlying sexual meaning, though here it would be more appropriate to call it a sterility rite. When the drums begin to beat at the Reservation, Lenina's first thought is of the Solidarity Services. "'Orgy-porgy,' she whispered to herself. These drums beat out just the same rhythm" (75).

Christianity is an essential element in both of the worlds Huxley depicts. But—and this is a crucial distinction—it is not the same Christianity. In the one instance, it is the Christianity which maintains that we inhabit a vale of tears and that we should mortify the flesh in this life in order to store up credit in the next; on the other, it is the Christianity

³⁶ Elliot Fay, *Lorenzo in Search of the Sun* (London: Vision Press, 1955), p. 71.

which promises a paradise on earth. The one is Christianity in rags, with flagellation and retreats into the desert; the other Christianity in riches, with everybody "happy" and the peace of the world insured by ten semi-apostolic World Controllers. "Suffer little children," Mustapha Mond admonishes the DHC who has disturbed the little girls and boys at their erotic play.³⁷

At the end of *Brave New World*, secular and fanatic Christianity meet and join. The Savage's flagellation of himself and Lenina, echoing the dance at the Pueblo, merges with the orgy-porgy dance of the visiting Fordians and culminates in a fertility-sterility rite in which the Savage finally yields his principles and himself. The only purification for that sin, he realizes on the following day, is death. Such is the result of the Controller's "experiment." Pueblo is Pueblo, and Ford is Ford, and ne'er the twain shall meet, for if they do disaster ensues. Stability lies at the extremes, not at the middle; in machine and in monster, not in man. The choice is between the chiliastic horrors of the Wellsian future or those of the Lawrentian past, both of which exclude the (by comparison lesser) day-to-day trauma of the Huxleyan—or human—present.

And what does Huxley mean to suggest by all this? Perhaps, as he once wrote to his brother Julian, "all's well that ends Wells."³⁸ To which he might later have added that finishing off Lawrence, as a social philosopher at least, was not a bad idea either.

³⁷ There are other echoes of the Christ story as well. Helmholtz Watson's joining the Savage to fight the Deltas recalls Peter's defense of Christ, just as Bernard Marx's later attempt at dissociation recalls his betrayal.

³⁸ Huxley, *Letters*, p. 103.