

HUXLEY'S BIOGRAPHY

Aldous Leonard Huxley was born at Godalming, Surrey, England, on July 20th, 1894. He belonged to a family of great talent. Thomas Henry Huxley, a great scientist and biologist, was his grandfather. He was the third son of Leonard Huxley. His mother was a niece of Matthew Arnold. Educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, his intention was to be a doctor. He was, however, prevented by an eye infection which made him almost blind for a time. It has been said that this period had so great a psychological effect on Huxley that it also coloured his future life and outlook. Later his eyes partly recovered. He finished his English course at Oxford and took his degree in 1915. Later, he worked as a journalist and dramatic critic before devoting himself entirely to his own writings.

From the year 1923-1930, he went to Italy; associating during that time with D.H. Lawrence. In 1934, he made a trip to central America and finally settled permanently in California in 1937. He continued writing until his death in 1963.

Huxley was remarkable for his wit, intelligence, and wide learning. This last quality was the product of a wide-ranging and omnivorous reading habits. A further element in his character was the influence of the two major wars during his lifetime. Though not affected personally by the war, owing to his partial blindness, he was nevertheless doubly influenced by these events. He was a pacifist and he was also one of that generation of writers reduced

to cynicism by the savage farce of the first World War and its ineffectual ending; an ending which did nothing towards producing the new "golden age" so freely promised.

Huxley began his profession of writing novels and essays in this period of the twenties; a period overshadowed by the recent horrors of the war. This period might be called a period of disillusion. Huxley illustrated this point and other problems in the social background of his novels. He was also interested in science. His novels were written primarily as the vehicles to put across all these ideas. He attacked his contemporaries and the decadence of society in that period. The futility and hollowness of human beings and their deeds were basic themes in his novels. He was something of a puritan; he often displays hatred for the physical aspects of love. He praised mental love as a pure love. He displayed a savage disgust for those of his fellow creatures for whom morality was meaningless.

His early prominent novels, such as Antic Hay and Point Counter Point, were satires on contemporary society. In Brave New World, he demonstrated the possibility of a future world that could happen if men still did not beware of scientific totalitarianism. His book titled After Many a Summer was awarded The Tait Black Prize.

Huxley began to write in the year 1921 and he wrote incessantly during his lifetime. He wrote novels, essays, drama and poems. His personality was rather complex. The range of his ideas was very wide, certainly wider than any other writers of his age. In the last

period of his life, Huxley became more serious in tone, lessening the tone of satiric wit, and turned to mysticism. Perhaps one of the ironies of Huxley's life was that in 1920 he was a leader of the moderns, and in 1960 he had become an upholder of traditional values.

The list of his works.

Novels:

Crome Yellow (1921)
Antic Hay (1923)
Those Barren Leaves (1925)
Point Counter Point (1928)
Brave New World (1932)
Eyeless in Gaza (1936)
After Many a Summer (1939)
Time Must Have a Stop (1944)
The Genius and the Goddess (1955)
Island (1962)

Verses:

The Burning Wheel (1916)
The Defeat of Youth (1918)
Leda (1920)
Selected Poems (1925)
Arabia Infelix (1929)
The Cicadas (1931)

Short Story Collections:

Limbo (1920)
Mortal Coils (1922)
Little Mexican (1924)
Two or Three Graces (1926)
Brief Candles (1930)

Essays and other writings:

On the Margin (1923)
Along the Road (1925)
Jesting Pilate (1926)
Essays New and Old (1926)
Proper Studies (1927)
Do What You Will (1929)
Vulgarity in Literature (1930)
The World of Light (drama) (1931)
Music at Night (1931)
Texts and Pretexts (1932)
Retunda (a selection from the author's writings) (1932)
Beyond the Mexique Bay (1934)
Gray Eminence
The Devils of Loudun } both are historical studies.
The Doors of Perception & Heaven and Hell (1954)
Brave New World Revisited (1959)
Collected Essays (1960)
On Art and Artists (1961)
Literature and Science (1963)

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