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Aldous Huxley in the Age of Global Literary Studies

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Review Article

Aldous Huxley in the Age of Global Literary Studies

Lidan Lin, Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne

Dana Sawyer. *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002. Pp. 208.

Nicholas Murray. *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002. Pp. 496.

C. C. Barfoot, ed. *Aldous Huxley: Between East and West*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001. Pp. 259.

The new century is witnessing a remarkable paradigm shift in literary studies, a shift captured by a few progressively minded critics' move away from a nationalist emphasis on cultural continuity and homogeneity in the study of national literatures toward a global emphasis that recognizes the diverse, heterogeneous, and multicultural constituents that shape Western literature. This paradigmatic change has been succinctly delineated by such critics as Stephen Greenblatt, Giles Gunn, and Paul Jay, who argue that the nationalist model has neglected the divergent cultural constituents of literature and, accordingly, the interconnections between diverse cultural traditions and heritages. They propose to globalize literary studies and urge us to move beyond a rooted sense of cultural legitimacy in order to explore the transnationally diverse influences in literature. For Giles Gunn, interconnections between cultures and literatures still remain quite peripheral within the study of national literatures, although such disciplines as comparative literature have dealt with these interconnections. Gunn thus encourages us to identify "new challenges, issues, and problems for literary studies that have yet to be worked out."¹ Echoing Gunn, Stephen Greenblatt redirects our attention to the ways in which the continuity of national literatures is "intersected, negotiated, [and] blocked"² by the process of globalization. For Greenblatt it is these "disruptive forces, not a rooted sense of cultural legitimacy, that principally shape the history and diffusion of languages [and literatures]."³ For Paul Jay, globalizing literary studies is, in part, an extension of cultural studies, and he predicts that the future of literary studies lies in the "conjunction of these two fields."⁴ In short, literary studies in the new century will be characterized by a continuing move toward a broader view of literature as both an aesthetic and a cultural form, and the study of literature beyond the "restrictive and distorting borders of nation-states."⁵

Against this new intellectual mood, we have begun to see in recent catalogues a few publications that have heroically pushed Western literature out of its usual comfort zone into the new terrain of global connections. They include, but are not limited to, Muge Galin's *Between East and West: Sufism in the Novels of*

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Doris Lessing (SUNY Press, 1997); C. C. Barfoot's and Theo D'haen's edited volume *Oriental Prospects: Western Literature and the Lure of the East* (Rodopi, 1998); Adrian Hsia's *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (University of Michigan Press, 1998); Brenda D. Schildgen's *Dante and the Orient* (University of Illinois Press, 2002); Zhaoming Qian's *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens* (University of Virginia Press, 2002); and David Weir's *Brahma in the West: William Blake and the Oriental Renaissance* (SUNY Press, 2003).⁶ One common feature of these works is the influence of multicultural forces on authors considered canonically Western, an influence that will surprise some in that the kind of Western literature we read, study, and teach on a daily basis is far more diverse, multicultural, and international than we usually think it is. In this sense, the attention to the often hidden, slippery, intricate, and interlocking multicultural roots underneath the flower of Western literature constitutes not only a new understanding of certain individual authors but of such larger literary movements as Romanticism, modernism, and feminism, to which these authors belong.⁷

If these books can be applauded for illuminating literature as a hybrid location where diverse cultural discourses negotiate their voices, leave their echoes, and play out their influences, then we can add to this list three new books about twentieth-century British author Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), of which two are biographies and one is a collection of essays. In their common, yet unique ways, these three books acknowledge rather than suppress echoes in, and influences on, Huxley's life and works by paying proper attention to his lifelong dialogue with the mystical traditions of the East, which constitutes the core of his philosophy and underpins his literary works.

The biographies by Dana Sawyer and Nicholas Murray break new ground by including narratives about Huxley's encounter with Eastern mysticism, and the collection edited by C. C. Barfoot joins them by devoting half of the essays to Huxley's Eastern connections. Sawyer's and Murray's inclusion of Huxley's encounter with the ancient wisdom of the East is highly significant because previous biographers of Huxley, including Sybille Bedford, have regularly excluded it from Huxley's personal and intellectual activities and, accordingly, have inaccurately portrayed Huxley as an author whose life and works are exclusively shaped by Western literary, intellectual, and cultural traditions.⁸ The incomplete or, rather, distorted biographical profile of Huxley is now corrected by Sawyer and Murray. The essays in Barfoot's collection situate Huxley in the cross-cultural contexts of East and West and, in so doing, clearly suggest that the Huxley who wrote *Brave New World* was merely going through a particular phase of his growth as a novelist and philosopher when writing it, and that it is by no means Huxley's best novel.

In twelve chapters, Sawyer offers an indispensable reference for the study of Huxley by situating him in the full multicultural context. Rather than provide a detailed narrative of Huxley's life, as biographers usually do, Sawyer presents a selective account by focusing on the most important stages in and influences on Huxley's life. The first two chapters, "Three Crises" and "Garsington," foreground his family heritage that draws on the influences of scientific figures, including Huxley's brother Julian and his grandfather, Thomas Huxley, and literary figures, such as the uncle-in-law, Matthew Arnold, and his fictive mother. As Sawyer suggests, these two seemingly incompatible cultural forces nurtured the roots of many of Huxley's philosophical ideas, including his critical, yet receptive attitude toward science, intellect, and emotions. Like his grandfather and brother, Huxley endorsed the scientific basis of Darwin's theory of evolution, yet he deemed the theory too callous, too empty of humanity and compassion. From this hybrid family heritage, Huxley also inherited the tradition of the public intellectual seeking knowledge to serve the public good. Thus, from his early life onward, Huxley displayed a passionate commitment to the improvement of society.

The next chapter on D. H. Lawrence is appropriately placed because Lawrence, beside Thomas Huxley and Matthew Arnold, cast a profound influence on Huxley before he met Gerald Heard. Here Sawyer not only outlines the development of their friendship, but he perceptively suggests what Huxley liked about and learned from Lawrence and where he disagreed with him. Huxley shared Lawrence's rejection of what Friedrich Nietzsche termed the Apollonian

mode of being subservient to the order of the mind and his espousal of the Dionysian mode of being that responds to the spontaneous impulses of the blood and the flesh. Both men agreed that things were going wrong, and neither Christianity nor a philosophy that was to replace it could offer solutions. Both men felt the need to return to a more immediate experience of being by connecting the self to the dark mystery of the Other surrounding us. But Huxley did not agree with Lawrence that science and intellect were wholly useless since Huxley believed that both could be made to serve the good of the world.

The next chapter, on *Brave New World*, is nicely linked to the previous chapter by illuminating the extent to which Lawrence's influence contributed to the composition of the novel. As Sawyer suggests, Huxley shared Lawrence's aversion for the process of industrialization that turns humans into mechanical objects. As Sawyer writes: "[H]ere we find Huxley in agreement with Lawrence who believed that 'men that sit in machines, among spinning wheels, in an apotheosis of wheels' often become machines themselves" (75). Both Huxley and Lawrence believed that "work ... can cause us to shirk our first duty to life, which is to live" (Sawyer 75). Sawyer also illuminates the extent to which Huxley's disapproval of H. G. Wells's utopian novel *Men Like Gods* and Henry Ford's autobiography *My Life and Work* spurred the composition of the novel.

In the chapter "Coming to America," Sawyer appropriately devotes much space to Huxley's new friendship with Gerald Heard, who provided "not only a new primary friendship, after the one with Lawrence, but also a new primary influence one he believed could help him uncover the first principle he so deeply believed was needed" (Sawyer 92). That principle is the mystic continuity of being or non-dualism promoted by Hindu Vedantism, namely, the idea that Brahman, the outer physical reality, is identical with Atman, the inner spiritual self. Huxley had been looking for that principle since his early twenties, and by the time he wrote *Those Barren Leaves* in 1925 he still did not know the nature of the truth he was searching for. Thus we find Calamy, the mystical hero of the novel, renouncing the quotidian world to meditate in the mountains in order to discover that truth. It is through Heard that Huxley gained familiarity with the Vedanta philosophy and willingly embraced its non-dualism. Heard also persuaded Huxley to come to America, where Huxley found another source of enlightenment: the Hollywood Vedanta Center and its guru, Swami Vivekananda. On the one hand, Huxley's contact with the Vedanta Center deepened his understanding of Hinduism; on the other hand, it confirmed his belief in the uselessness of organized religions.

Huxley's friendship with Heard and his learning at the Vedanta Center undoubtedly laid the foundation for his own mystical philosophy. Sawyer, then, is justified in devoting the next chapter to the background and the main ideas of *The Perennial Philosophy*, Huxley's most important philosophical treatise. Drawing on such Eastern mystical religions as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, as well as on Christian mysticism, Huxley argues that there exists "a particular mystical truth which is 'the Highest Common Factor underlying all the great religions and metaphysical systems of the world'" (Sawyer 124), an argument that echoes Doris Lessing's perception of the great religions of the world.⁹ That truth, as Huxley himself elucidates in *The Perennial Philosophy*, consists of "the metaphysics that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being."¹⁰ This truth, Huxley said, would solve "the fundamental problem [of alienation that] makes love and humility ... enormously difficult and [even] impossible."¹¹ In his 1925 letter to Robert Nichols, his English and American publisher, Huxley spoke of his concern with the Western malaise he had diagnosed and his intent to find a cure for it: "What's to be done about it? That's the great question. Some day I may find some sort of an answer. And then I may write a good book, or at any rate a mature book" (Letters 246). It was twenty years after his letter to Nichols that Huxley completed the mature book he had intended to write, a book that contains the answer he had been searching for. However, by presenting his truth of enlightenment, Huxley was not forcing a closure to the debate about spiritual truth; he was simply suggesting a way for human beings to move out of darkness toward "the source of sweetness and delight" (Sawyer 125). Neither did he want his book to be regarded as a bible; rather, he wanted it to be used by people as a guide to

find "their own meaning in life" (Sawyer 125).

In the next chapter, "Science, Liberty, and Peace," Sawyer offers an account of how Huxley came to write his second most important philosophical treatise. Believing that centralized control of science and technology by government can impinge upon human freedom and jeopardize peace, Huxley favored small autonomous and cooperative communities that had enough food and energy. In the following two chapters, Sawyer details Huxley's experiences with psychedelic drugs and the loss of his first wife, Maria Nys, and his second marriage to Laura Archera. The next chapter, titled "Timothy Leary," recollects Huxley's friendship with Timothy Leary, a psychologist from Harvard who shared Huxley's enthusiasm about psychedelics and, because of that, was dismissed from his academic post. In his reference to *Island* in this chapter, Sawyer notes the double irony of the novel's critical failure: critics deemed the novel shallow and too preachy (182) and its publication success: the novel went through many printings and is still in print. Sawyer's book closes with a sharp summary of Huxley's mystical philosophy. Sawyer's selective approach works well in presenting what we might call "the essential Huxley." The remarkable coherence he has built between chapters provides helpful signposts to those unfamiliar with Huxley. Because of the selective approach, however, certain details of Huxley's life, some trivial, others less so, are left out. Ideally, there should be more commentaries about Huxley's literary and philosophical works, given the large corpus of works he produced, but the book's relatively short length seems to have made the task impossible.

Murray's biography, which is longer than Sawyer's and shorter than Sybille's (778 pages), consists of thirty-seven short chapters. It may be helpful to see Murray's book as a sort of transition between Sybille and Sawyer in that Murray fills part of the gap left by Sybille by including sketchy accounts of Huxley's contact with and knowledge of Eastern mystical religions and of key figures and events like Gerald Heard and the Hollywood Vedanta Center. The inclusion of these accounts, no matter how incomplete they are, supplements the deficiency of exclusion engendered by Sybille. However, Murray's gap-filling appears limited because these brief and sketchy accounts do not do justice to Huxley's longtime and serious inquiry into Eastern mysticism. For example, Murray's references to Heard and to the Vedanta Center are made in passing, which certainly undermines the important influences Heard and the Vedanta Center had on Huxley. Murray's commentary on *The Perennial Philosophy* is brief and superficial. When discussing Huxley's works, Murray seems unaware of the central role Eastern wisdom has played in some of them. For example, Murray makes no mention of the influence of Eastern wisdom on *Those Barren Leaves* and *Eyeless in Gaza*, as if these two novels were products shaped entirely by Western traditions, although Murray does briefly mention Huxley's use of Buddhism in *Island*. Since Murray's book contains more biographical details than Sawyer's and fewer than Sybille's, it will be a useful reference if read with theirs.

Barfoot's book consists of twelve essays organized into two parts. The first part, which contains four essays, situates Huxley in the Western context and deals with his family connections, his early fictions, his interest in science and the issue of modernity, and his experiments with drama. The second part, which covers the remaining eight essays, with the essay on Huxley's poetry as transition, situates Huxley in the Eastern context and deals with his later interest in oriental mysticism and psychedelic drugs. Before commenting on the individual essays, I offer a few general remarks regarding the merits and weaknesses of the organization of the book. The collection appropriately opens with Bernard Bergonzi's essay on Huxley's relationship with his aunt Mary Ward or Mrs. Humphry because it sheds light on why Huxley became a writer. The remaining essays deal with an impressive range of Huxley's works, including his fiction, essays, poetry, and drama; it is impressive because Huxley's poetry and plays have received little critical attention, and Huxley as a poet and dramatist is almost forgotten. Finally, Barfoot is justified in assigning more essays to the second part of the collection since Huxley's inquiry into Eastern mysticism constitutes his central concern, and the inclusion of such inquiry reminds the reader of the hybrid and multicultural quality of Huxley's works.

One difficulty I have with the organization of the book is the division of Huxley's life and works into Eastern- and Western-oriented phases. As the editor's preface suggests, this method is based on the assumption that Huxley's life and

works can be divided neatly into early and later periods and that Huxley's inquiry into Eastern wisdom began at a later stage in his life. This assumption is problematic since Huxley's interest in Eastern wisdom began around 1920, when he was twenty-six, an interest clearly reflected in his short stories "Along the Road" and "The Death of Lully." This interest sustained Huxley from his middle years to the very end of his life. In this sense, to treat Huxley's Eastern connections as pertaining to his later life is less than accurate and even misleading since those unfamiliar with Huxley might come under the impression that the early Huxley was a stranger to Eastern mysticism. Having pointed out the organizational difficulty, I must note that it is somewhat alleviated by the fact that some of the essays in the first part, such as James Sexton's essay on Huxley's plays and Barfoot's article on Huxley's poetry, do suggest the faint echoes of Eastern wisdom. My other difficulty with the organization is that it is not clear why the essay on Huxley's poetry, rather than the essay on his plays, is singled out as a transition between Eastern and Western contexts since logically and chronologically the plays were published after the poetry.

Overall, the quality of the essays is impressive, and the contributors are clearly conversant with their topics. My comments, therefore, will focus on a few representative pieces. Bernard Bergonzi's essay "Aldous Huxley and Aunt Mary," which begins the collection, deserves a special mention. Offering an account of Huxley's "interesting and quite complex" relationship with his aunt, Bergonzi suggests that such complexity can be seen in Huxley's ambivalent responses to Mary's writing. On the one hand, Huxley greatly admired her craft as a Victorian-style novelist, an admiration well attested by his own words: "My aunt, Mrs. Humphry, was a kind of literary godmother to me. I used to have long talks with her about writing; she gave me no end of sound advice. She was a very sound writer herself, rolled off her plots like sections of macadamized road" (qtd. in Bergonzi 10). Bergonzi thus summarizes Mary's literary influence this way: "[I]t is literally due to Mary Ward that there is a writer whose name is Aldous Huxley" (10). On the other hand, Huxley grew impatient with the ways in which Mary indulged in portraying the social manners of aristocrats, as he wrote to his father in 1915: "I see the inevitable earl's daughters, with the usual appendages, butlers and footmen and heavy dinners, are coming into Aunt M's book again. Why can't she resolutely keep them out? How much better this book wd. Have been had she made it a study of don-life in the 80s?which she wd. Be particularly competent to deal withinstead of the usual politico-Debrett clap-trap" (qtd. in Bergonzi 11). Clearly, Mary's appeal to Victorian mannerism clashes with Huxley's anti-Victorian mood as manifest in his early novels like *Antic Hay* and *Those Barren Leaves*. Huxley even went so far as to model some of his less than laudatory characters on his aunt, such as the satirically edged Mrs. Fox in *Eyeless in Gaza*.

Barfoot's essay "Huxley on the 'Bus': From The Burning Wheel to the Yellow Mustard Seed" surveys Huxley's poetry written between 1916 and 1931. As Barfoot suggests, Huxley's verse in general is "fluent, comprehensively descriptive; it is traditional in form and manner (metrical and rhyming); it is loftily ambitious in feeling and thought" (78). Many of Huxley's poems resonate with the wasteland mood shared by many turn-of-the-century modernist writers. Keenly aware of the "many twisted darkneses ... darkness of lust and avarice, of the crippled body and the crooked heart" (qtd. in Barfoot 77), Huxley's speaker is often tormented by a sense of disgust and despair intertwined with momentary vision and hope, a swing of mood that culminates in "The Yellow Mustard." It seemed to Huxley that the paradox of life, symbolically figured by the burning wheel of cycle, perpetually crucified human beings on the double axes of the yearning for peace and quietude and the yearning for passion and pain. Although Huxley was eagerly searching for escape from the trap of the burning wheel and from the modern "squalor of our personal ends and means" (qtd. in Barfoot 97) in his poems, he still did not know the path that would lead to escape. But, as Barfoot suggests, there is a latent evocation of "recondite Eastern styles of wisdom" (97) in these poems, an evocation that anticipates Huxley's later turn to Eastern wisdom. Since neither Sawyer nor Murray has indicated the exact time Huxley began his study of Eastern wisdom, it is hard to say whether Huxley was consciously writing under the influence of Eastern wisdom or whether he was simply expressing a sentiment compatible with that wisdom during this period. Either way, Barfoot is to be credited for drawing our attention to the continuity of the Eastern

influence in Huxley's works.

James Sexton's essay "Aldous Huxley's Three Plays, 1931-1948" examines *The World of Light* (1931), *No More Than Ever* (1932), and *The Gioconda Smile* (1948). The common theme, as Sexton suggests, concerns "the question of soul-making or the attempt to enlarge one's moral stature" (59), as each of the three protagonists of the plays strives to forge a soul and thereby to extricate himself from a kind of death-in-life. Despite using a variety of dramatic genres—comedy, tragi-comic discussion, psychological thriller—Huxley asks the same question: "How is one to live?" (59). Sexton also draws a parallel between the soul-searching motif in *Eyeless in Gaza* and the soul-making theme in these three plays. In *The World of Light*, Huxley dramatizes the tension between "rational spirituality" represented by Hugo and Mr. Wenham and "the Dionysian alternative" (Sexton 64) represented by Bill Hamblin. By the end of the play Hugo decides to "escape from the illusory monolithic systems of Wenham and Enid towards that of the anti-rationalist Bill Hamblin" (Sexton 67). Huxley's other two plays continue to explore "the existential theme of *The World of Light*" (Sexton 69). Here Sexton perceptively traces "the metaphysical roots of *The Gioconda Smile*" to "the third chapter of Huxley's *Grey Eminence* [autobiography, which] summarizes the fundamentals of metaphysical thought from the time of the *Upanishads*. The key terms of this chapter appear and re-appear in *The Gioconda Smile* with a frequency and sameness that precludes coincidence" (71), and the character Libbard is an enlightened guru, a Dr. Miller figure in *Eyeless in Gaza*. Like Barfoot, then, Sexton is to be credited for noting the continuity of Eastern influence in Huxley's works.

Geoff Jaeger's essay "The Palanese Way: Engaged Enlightenment in Aldous Huxley's *Island*" defends Huxley against the criticisms of such critics as Krishan Kumar, who faults Huxley for sacrificing art for the sake of moral didacticism.¹² Jaeger argues that in *Island* Huxley designs textual strategies that "engage" as well as "instruct the reader" (116), "as the Bodhisattva figure would" (113). Evoking Wolfgang Iser's reader response theory, Jaeger asserts that the reception of a text "will depend upon its ability to meld with the individual experience of that reader, who is then free to make up his or her mind, more likely to agree with the author who has created a text which 'establishes itself as a correlative in the reader's consciousness'" (119). Jaeger then observes that "in assuming the role of Bodhisattva, Huxley does not automatically establish this 'correlative' in the mind of a Western reader. Rather, through his persistent comparison of Eastern and Western lifestyles, he constantly invites both Farnaby and the reader to become one of his disciples" (119). Yet, in order to engage the reader, Iser insists, the author must manipulate the text so that the reader's position will be properly guided. Jaeger concludes that "it is this feature of the text that too many Western critics evaluate as purely didactic rather than engaging" (119). Well conceived and well argued, Jaeger's essay offers a new perspective regarding Huxley as a "didactic preacher." However, I wish to contest Jaeger's claim that in *Island* Huxley monolithically "promote[s] Eastern principles" (113) in order to critique Western society, as Charles Baudelaire, W. B. Yeats, and T. S. Eliot might have preferred.¹³ More accurately, Huxley created Pala by embracing the strengths of Eastern mysticism and Western science while rejecting the flaws of the East (overpopulation, totalitarianism, poverty, etc.) and the West (capitalism, militarism, nuclear family, etc.). Pala is thus a hybrid assimilation of both Eastern and Western cultures.

Johannes Bronkhorst's essay, "The Perennial Philosophy," defends Huxley's philosophical position against Charles M. Holmes's criticism of that position. Not convinced of the existence of a perennial philosophy, Holmes voices his skepticism: "Unfortunately, the most doubtful of Huxley's claims is that there is a 'perennial philosophy,' a 'highest factor' common to *all* the great religions. The religions themselves do not confirm the claim unless one selects only what one wishes to see" (qtd. in Bronkhorst 177). According to Holmes, the religions that do not support Huxley's claim are Confucianism and Judaism since Huxley did not quote from them in *The Perennial Philosophy*. Taking issue with Holmes head on, Bronkhorst argues that some features are shared by the religious currents upon which Huxley laid the foundation of his philosophy, and one of these features is what Bronkhorst calls "the concept or notion of inaction" (179). Citing Huxley's quotes in *The Perennial Philosophy*, Bronkhorst shows that the concept of inaction is indeed common to Christian mysticism,

Buddhism, the Hindu concept of Karma, and Taoism. While Bronkhorst is persuasive in arguing that the concept of inaction is perennial in this particular sense, he does not explain why this concept is absent in Confucianism and Judaism, and that even if it is absent in them, it can be considered universal. Leaving riddles like this unexplained, Bronkhorst's argument becomes less persuasive.

As Peter Bowering suggests, Huxley's dream was to search for "a more desirable way of life" (19), and for Huxley the realization of that dream begins with the improvement of the individuals, and through the individuals, the improvement of society.¹⁴ Huxley's metaphor for a sound human being is a compassionate amphibian capable of tolerating and appreciating diversity and differences. With his lifelong dialogues with, and appreciation of, a variety of non-Western cultural traditions, Huxley sets an example of a "multiple amphibian" (Murray 455). Yet it is this multiple amphibiousness of Huxley's sympathy for and openness to diversity and difference that poses a challenge to scholars, literary historians, teachers, and students of Huxley, who are familiar only with Western traditions, a challenge that invites them to become as amphibious as the author they study, teach, and read. With their generous attention to the multicultural and international influences on Huxley's life and works, the three books I have commented on promise to prepare us to meet that challenge.

Notes

1. Giles Gunn, "Introduction," *PMLA* 116.1 (2001): 23.

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2. Stephen Greenblatt, "Racial Memory and Literary History," *PMLA* 116.1 (2001): 55.

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3. Greenblatt 62.

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4. Paul Jay, "Beyond Discipline? Globalization and the Future of English," *PMLA* 116.1 (2001): 4344.

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5. Jay 44.

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6. Two books may be added to this list: John G. Rudy, *Wordsworth and the Zen Mind: The Poetry of Self-emptying* (New York: SUNY Press, 1996) and Robert Kern, *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

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7. For example, through the encounters of Pound, Moore, and Stevens with Chinese pictorial art, Zhaoming Qian demonstrates that the kind of modernism manifest in the poetry of Pound, Moore, and Stevens owes its debts to Chinese Taoist painting. Similarly, in *Between East and West: Sufism in the Novels of Doris Lessing*, Galin links Lessing's feminism in *The Golden Notebook* and *The Four-gated City* to her Sufi understanding of the equilibrium between the social and the personal.

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8. See Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1974).

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9. Having read about the religions of the world after completing *The Golden Notebook*, Doris Lessing perceived remarkable affinity among these religions. As she writes: "[A]ll religions and types of mysticism say the same thing in different words: that it is possible for anyone to transcend the little cage which is how some people experience ordinary life, in an effort to come nearer to God, or Allah, or the Almighty, or The Other that Power greater than ourselves Who is not to be made property of any religion, or sect, or arrangement of words" (78; *The Doris Lessing Reader*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1989). Incidentally, in *The World as Will and Idea*, Arthur Schopenhauer frequently draws parallels

between Christianity, Platonism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism (see vol. II 810, 94; vol. III 436, 445, 447, 459, and 452; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

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10. Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944) vii.

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11. Aldous Huxley, *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. Grover Smith (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969) 245.

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12. Like Kumar, Frank Kormode was quite harsh in judging *Island*, calling it "the worst novel ever written" (qtd. in Murray 445).

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13. Like Huxley, Baudelaire, Yeats, and Eliot worried about the modern squalor of Western society, and in their search for remedies to revitalize individuals and Western civilization from being paralyzed by the flower of evil, they all turned to the East and found it to be an ideal antidote. Such a rejection and acceptance model is evident, for example, in Baudelaire's "Invitation to the Voyage," in Yeats's "Sailing for Byzantium," and in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Huxley's attitude toward Eastern wisdom as evidenced in *Island* apparently transcends this model; his is the model of reconciliation, one that seeks to make the best of both Eastern and Western worlds.

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14. Peter Bowering, *Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels* (London: The Athlete Press, 1968).

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