

**‘Psycho-Physical Wholes’: The Influence of F. M.
Alexander and William Sheldon on Aldous Huxley’s
Works**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Leavey".

James Leavey

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Abstract

Aldous Huxley's writings, which exhibit his avid interest in all areas of knowledge, including the arts, the sciences, religion, politics, philosophy and psychology, display a tendency to adopt, and attempt to synthesise, the ideas of others, as well as a willingness to embrace unorthodox thinkers. This thesis examines how the works of Aldous Huxley were influenced by two men whose ideas focused upon the relationship between the mind and body: Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955), inventor of the mind-body therapy known as the Alexander Technique, and Dr William Sheldon (1898-1977), a constitutional psychologist who developed a theory of mind-body types.

The phrase 'psycho-physical wholes' in the thesis title is taken from a letter from Huxley to E. S. P. Haynes in March 1945: 'Sheldon considers human beings as they really are – psycho-physical wholes or mind-bodies'.¹ This is the central theme of the thesis; it will examine how Alexander's and Sheldon's particular conceptions of human beings as psycho-physical entities were profoundly influential upon Huxley's writings. The thesis as a whole thus provides an important contribution to the study of Huxley's conception of the relationship between mind and body, and the works he wrote which were impacted by this conception. It provides a contribution to the understanding of the influences that helped to shape the works of Huxley. It sheds further light on the origins of Huxley's ideas and characters, thus providing additional insight into the often unorthodox ideas that influenced the works of writers and intellectuals in the interwar and postwar period.

¹ *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. by Grover Smith (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), p. 516, (25 March 1945).

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List of Abbreviations

For full details, see Bibliography.

All works by Aldous Huxley unless indicated.

BNW : *Brave New World*

CCC : *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (F. M. Alexander)

DP : *The Doors of Perception*

EG : *Eyeless in Gaza*

EM : *Ends and Means*

GE : *Grey Eminence*

GG : *The Genius and the Goddess*

I : *Island*

MSI : *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (F. M. Alexander)

PP : *The Perennial Philosophy*

TMHS : *Time Must Have a Stop*

UCL : *The Universal Constant in Living* (F. M. Alexander)

US : *The Use of the Self* (F. M. Alexander)

VHP : *The Varieties of Human Physique* (William Sheldon)

VT : *The Varieties of Temperament* (William Sheldon)

Introduction

The Scope of the Thesis

Exhibiting his avid interest in all areas of knowledge, including the arts, the sciences, religion, politics, philosophy and psychology, Aldous Huxley's writings display a tendency to adopt, and attempt to synthesise, the ideas of others, as well as a willingness to embrace unorthodox thinkers. This thesis grew from a study of the many influences on Huxley's writings. My initial process was to examine Huxley's life, work, and various influences, and survey the previous literature on Huxley. Whilst many aspects of Huxley's philosophical development have been studied before, there are certain individuals whose lasting influence on his work has not previously been appraised in detail. I began to research the numerous influences upon Huxley's works, including the individuals whose ideas can be found in his writings.¹ In this thesis, I have chosen to discuss the influence of two men whose ideas were focused upon the relationship between the mind and body. Huxley explicitly endorsed both these men's concepts in his non-fiction, as well as using them in his novels of ideas, despite the fact that the work of both men was rejected by the scientific establishment. In both cases, Huxley discovered their ideas in the mid-1930s, and in both cases, the interconnection between mind and body was the central tenet of their philosophies. They were Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955), inventor of the mind-body therapy known as the Alexander Technique, and Dr William Sheldon (1898-1977), a constitutional psychologist who developed a theory of mind-body types.

¹ A discussion of all the individuals who influenced Huxley's works is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, some of the other figures, such as Gerald Heard and Jiddu Krishnamurti, could become the subject of my future writings, utilising some of the research I have already conducted whilst writing this thesis.

The phrase ‘psycho-physical wholes’ in the thesis title is taken from a letter from Huxley to E. S. P. Haynes in March 1945, a quotation from which forms an epigraph to the section of the thesis on the influence of William Sheldon: ‘Sheldon considers human beings as they really are – psycho-physical wholes or mind-bodies’.² This is the central theme of the thesis; it will examine how Alexander’s and Sheldon’s particular conceptions of human beings as psycho-physical entities were profoundly influential upon Huxley’s writings. The thesis as a whole thus provides an important contribution to the study of Huxley’s conception of the relationship between mind and body. It provides a contribution to the understanding of the influences that helped to shape the works of Huxley. It sheds further light on the origins of Huxley’s ideas and characters, in so doing providing additional insight into the often unorthodox ideas that influenced the works of writers and intellectuals in the interwar and postwar period.

My methodology is a comparison of the *texts* of Alexander and Sheldon with the *texts* of Huxley. The focus is on the textual influence, rather than biographical detail, which is presented briefly where relevant. To emphasise the necessity of textual evidence for the influences, I will mention one of my earlier areas of research that did not become part of the thesis. When I began examining figures with whom Huxley became associated, the Swami Prabhavananda, head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, with which Huxley became involved, was initially included in my research. However, as I researched further, I encountered a problem in that Prabhavananda’s writings express the ideas of Vedanta, ideas which Huxley was familiar with through other channels, such as his own reading, and therefore the degree to which Huxley was influenced by Prabhavananda, and the degree to which he was influenced by the gaining of knowledge of Vedanta from other sources, is impossible to ascertain. Both Alexander and Sheldon, on the other hand, had original ideas that are presented in their published writings and can subsequently be observed in Huxley’s, allowing an

² *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. by Grover Smith (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), hereafter *Letters*, p. 516, (25 March 1945).

analysis of their influence on Huxley to be conducted. This thesis examines this evidence.

Thus, this is not a study of a writer engaging, consciously and/or unconsciously, with his literary antecedents, such as discussed by Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence*.³ This thesis is examining the work of non-fiction writers, who believed themselves to be discoverers and explicators of scientific fact, and how their unorthodox views were consciously, explicitly, publicly endorsed by Huxley in his non-fiction and articles, as well as being used in his construction of his fiction. This study is not intended as a contribution to influence-theory but as a modestly empirical but still substantial contribution to Huxley Studies within the context of intellectual history. The fact that Huxley explicitly endorsed these men, publicly acknowledging their influence upon him, means that the concept of influence, implying agency and a chronological transference of ideas, is definitely applicable here. The empirical evidence exists that in both cases, the ideas of one person are being subsequently adopted by someone else. However, the concept of influence is obviously a complex one, and this thesis avoids a simplistic view of influence, as I outline the ways in which Huxley's views became aligned with these men's ideas, and also the ways in which they did not, as well as highlighting that such appropriation is an active, rather than passive, process, as I detail the sometimes subtle, sometimes major ways in which Huxley's attitude toward, and presentation of, these concepts diverged from their original expression in Alexander's and Sheldon's writings. I also consider how Huxley endeavoured to integrate these figures' concepts into his own agendas and beliefs, at times attempting to combine their ideas with other doctrines and techniques within his own philosophical synthesis, sometimes in ways at odds with the intentions of the ideas' originators.

The thesis is divided into two parts, the first of which discusses the influence of Alexander (as it is Alexander's influence that can be observed first in Huxley's works), the second the influence of Sheldon. Finally, a concluding section

³ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

will assess the overall impact of these individuals on Huxley's writings. The thesis studies Huxley's writings from 1935, the year Huxley first met Alexander, onwards, for signs of the influence of these men. Even Huxley's earlier works are at times discussed, for the purposes of contextualising the effects of the subsequent influence of these figures. This study, whilst detailed, is not exhaustive; it examines many examples of the influence of these men, but it does not discuss *every* example. I attempt to provide an overview of each man's influence on Huxley's work, both fiction and non-fiction. The thesis examines Huxley's novels and essays, but not all of Huxley's post-1935 novels and essays are discussed, as I focus on the writings deemed most relevant to the study of these influences upon Huxley. The thesis does not discuss Huxley's drama, poetry, and short fiction. All of Huxley's plays written in the post-1935 period were adaptations of his earlier short fiction or novels, and his screenplays were either adaptations of others' works or of his own novels. Huxley's poetry and short story collections were all published before the influence of either of these two men, as were his travel books, and are thus not relevant to my study. References are made in the thesis to both his published articles and his letters, but again, the process is selective rather than exhaustive.

The Context of the Thesis

Huxley was not alone among interwar writers in his attempts to integrate often unorthodox ideas into his works, as, due in part to postwar disillusionment, intellectuals explored alternatives to the prevailing systems of thought and meaning. Chris Baldick, in his study *Literature of the 1920s: Writers Among the Ruins*, in the chapter 'A Literature of Ideas', discusses the tendency, despite many modernist claims to the contrary, of literature of the period to be emphatically influenced by ideas, often of an unorthodox nature. Baldick outlines the key texts that view one of the features of modernism as a release from 'moralistic preaching, didactic

hectoring and opinion-mongering',⁴ such as Henry James' prefaces (1907-1909) to his reprinted novels, James' disciple Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* (1921), the final section of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), the essays of Virginia Woolf in *The Common Reader* (1925), the writings of Ford Madox Ford on James and on Joseph Conrad, and the essays of T. S. Eliot in *The Sacred Wood* (1920) and *Homage to John Dryden* (1924).⁵ However, despite these calls for works to avoid didactically expressing the ideas and philosophies to which their authors subscribed, an interest in, and endorsement of, ideas, including occultist influences and unconventional panaceas, in fact abounded during the writings of the period, as evidenced by, for example, W. B. Yeats' *A Vision* (1926), with its astrological diagrams explaining personality types and human history, and D. H. Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1923), with its philosophies of the nervous system, insisting on cultivation of the energies of the solar plexus and lumbar ganglion to combat modern civilisation's woes.

Huxley, ever the intellectual magpie, was not averse to adopting the views of others as philosophical cure-alls or political panaceas either, as evidenced by, for example, his adoption of D. H. Lawrence's philosophy of 'life-worship' in *Do What You Will* (1929), or his enthusiastic endorsement of Hyacinthe Dubreuil's ideas on decentralization in *Ends and Means* (1937). However, up until the mid-1930s, Huxley's essays, despite displaying an eclectic interest in various philosophies, do not present a consistent philosophical position, and his satirical novels up until this time, whilst brimming with characters expressing competing, contradictory, and at times heterodox ideas, seem only to offer a negative philosophy that views all philosophical positions as equally absurd. But from the mid-1930s, Huxley's outlook, despite continual development, became more consistent, its overriding philosophy being one of mysticism. Huxley became increasingly interested in Indian religion, and how it could be integrated with Western thought (a favourite book of Huxley's at the time was Geraldine Coster's *Yoga and Western*

⁴ Chris Baldick, *Literature of the 1920s: Writers Among the Ruins* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

Psychology).⁶ During the same period, Huxley became involved with the pacifist Peace Pledge Union, as did many other writers and intellectuals of the time, including Bertrand Russell, Siegfried Sassoon, and Huxley's friend, the writer and anthropologist Gerald Heard. Huxley's mystical, pacifist novel *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) reveals these two elements of Huxley's new world-view to be deeply interconnected. At this same time, in 1935, Huxley met Alexander, and two years later, Sheldon. As this thesis will examine, the ideas of Alexander and Sheldon were important components of Huxley's new metaphysical position, one in which a rejection of Cartesian dualism and an insistence upon the interconnection between mind and body were important facets. Both Huxley's essays and his satirical novels demonstrate a greater didacticism from the mid-1930s onwards, as they present a definite philosophical perspective, and the ideas of both Alexander and Sheldon are integral to the philosophy of these works. Both men's ideas became part of Huxley's final philosophical synthesis, and can be seen to influence Huxley until his final works, such as *Island* (1962).

Armstrong's *Modernism, Technology and the Body* and the 'Body-Culture' Vogue

In a work highly relevant to the contexts of my particular study, Tim Armstrong, in his *Modernism, Technology and the Body* (1998), discusses changing attitudes to the body in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

Darwinian science suggested a substrata of primitive material within the body and brain and aroused widespread fears of regression, destabilizing relations between self and world. The body became a more contingent mechanism, incorporating evolutionary survivals [. . .] Such a body might be out of step with the modern, technologically advanced world: diagnoses like hysteria, neurasthenia, even constipation and eye-strain, registered the stress placed on the body by civilization, and suggested that compensatory action was necessary.⁷

⁶ *Letters*, p. 382, (22 July 1934).

⁷ Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 3. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

Alexander's ideas fit precisely into these more widespread preoccupations, as it was Alexander's contention that the modern world produced neurosis in a mind-body not designed to cope with it, as will be discussed later. Armstrong's reference to 'eye-strain' also recalls the W. H. Bates Method of attempting to improve eyesight through eye exercises, a technique also endorsed by Huxley, such as in *The Art of Seeing* (1942). Armstrong writes that:

Modernists with quite different attitudes to social and technological modernity saw the body as the locus of anxiety, even crisis; as requiring an intervention [. . .] It is, as Anthony Giddens puts it, no longer a 'given', it is 'reflexively mobilized' in the way in which the self is.⁸ This is not to say that the body was ever 'innocent' or a stable category; its meanings are always socially constructed. But it does seem clear that [. . .] in the late nineteenth century it begins to harbour and reveal secrets and ambiguities, becoming the site of obscurity and experiment. (4)

The idea of a body in 'crisis' 'requiring intervention' correlates with Alexander's view of his Technique, which he saw as providing an essential intervention to alleviate the current epidemic of mind-bodies in crisis. Huxley also presents his use of the Alexander Technique as an intervention to aid his own malfunctioning mind-body, which mirrors how Dr Miller's Alexanderist methods come to the rescue of Beavis's ailing mind-body in Huxley's novel *Eyeless in Gaza*, both of which will be discussed later.

Armstrong highlights the theme of 'physical reform' (108) apparent in the early twentieth century, of which Alexander and his Technique were a part:

In the first decades of [the twentieth] century the British or American enthusiast for bodily reform could choose among a vast array of methods, ranging from mind-cure techniques to mechanical manipulation: Christian Science, New Thought, Alexander Technique, Fletcherism, the Culture of the Abdomen, colonic irrigation, electric therapies, among numerous eating and exercising regimes, gland treatments, and mechanical devices. The body became the site of techniques which operated externally and internally to regulate and reorganize. (106)

⁸ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 7.

Armstrong cites ‘Bernarr Macfadden’s *Physical Culture*, founded 1889, and his *Encyclopedia of Physical Culture*.’ Quoting from an article by Greg Mullins, Armstrong writes that:

Macfadden ‘tried to change the way Americans ate, drank, sat, breathed, slept, dressed, walked – even how they had sex’, in a programme which slid towards eugenics (readers of *Physical Culture* in 1921 were recommended to read Madison Grant’s *The Passing of the Great Race*).⁹ [. . .] The technological reformation of the body suggested that it could be optimized, that it was ‘perfectible’, as Kenneth Dutton has recently suggested in his study of physical culture.¹⁰ Modernist movements like Futurism and the Bauhaus absorbed the ideals of the gymnasium, and celebrated the efficient, streamlined body.¹¹ [. . .] At the same time, physical culture often elided the question of the relation between external and internal disciplines, between a mechanical and a motivational or expressive model of the body. Would changing the mind radically affect the body (as Christian Science believed)? Might colonic irrigation remove toxins and release the brain from their effects? (106)

The idea that the body is ‘perfectible’ is also one that Alexander shares. His aims are utopian; in his first book *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (1910) he writes: ‘By the application of this principle of conscious control there may in time be evolved a complete mastery over the body, which will result in the elimination of all physical defects’.¹² Armstrong’s references to colonic irrigation are also relevant to Huxley, who undertook such treatments at the advice of Dr J. E. R. McDonagh, who was recommended to Huxley by Alexander.

Armstrong notes that ideas similar to Alexander’s could be found in the writings of other thinkers. He connects Alexander and William James, as both are concerned with *habit*: in James’s case, in the fourth chapter of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890):

For William James, the body is a liminal zone, alternately part of the self and part of the object-world, familiar and strange. What negotiates between these two aspects of the body is the subject of the fourth chapter of *The Principles*

⁹ Greg Mullins, ‘Nudes, Prudes, and Pygmies: The Desirability of Disavowal in *Physical Culture*’, *Discourse*, 15.1 (1992), p. 27.

¹⁰ Kenneth Dutton, *The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Physical Development* (London: Cassell, 1995).

¹¹ Richard Weston, *Modernism* (London: Phaidon, 1996), pp. 129-31.

¹² F. M. Alexander, *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (London: Chaterson, 1910), p. 56, hereafter *MSI*.

of Psychology – habit. James describes habit as thinking which is knitted into the body, inherent in pre-programmed (automatic) actions; it is those functions of the body which are incorporated into the self – a characterization of the body as the penumbra of thought recently expounded by Pierre Bourdieu. Habit is negative only when static: James advocates a conscious extension of the habitual, a training of habit. (106-07)

This is indeed highly similar to Alexander’s ideas, which likewise do not abhor habit as such, but unconscious habit that is not consciously trained and thus cannot be changed and adapted.¹³ Armstrong also notes connections between the Alexander Technique and Mina Loy’s ‘technique for bodily reform: “Auto-Facial-Construction” ’ (120), which was published as a pamphlet in 1919. Armstrong writes that ‘[a]s a physical-culture technique, “Auto-Facial-Construction” can be related to Loy’s interest in Christian Science, given concrete expression in her 1920 programme *Psycho-Democracy*, with its stress on “Psychic Evolution”, the conscious human control of biological and psychological functioning’ (121).¹⁴ These aims are indeed along Alexanderist lines, as he also stressed conscious control of both body and mind. Thus Alexander’s ideas were part of a wider movement of similar concerns, and attempts to combat those concerns with different therapies and techniques.

Huxley’s interest in both Alexander and Sheldon can be read as part of Huxley’s interest in, and a wider movement of interest in, new ways to control and transform the human body, and its future development and evolution. In the case of Huxley, and others, this would include an interest in eugenics (an interest shared by Sheldon), and in the advances in biochemistry. Huxley’s brother, Julian, was also concerned with these trends. Armstrong writes that ‘Julian Huxley wrote in his *Essays of a Biologist* (1923) of the “new extension both of knowledge and of control” (the phrase “extension of control” becomes a keynote) in physio-chemical science, involving “an alteration of the modes of man’s experience” ’ (83).¹⁵

¹³ See Chapter 3 of this thesis for more on this topic.

¹⁴ Mina Loy, *Psycho-Democracy: A Movement to focus human reason on THE CONSCIOUS DIRECTION OF EVOLUTION* (Florence: Tipografia Peri and Rossi, 1920).

¹⁵ Julian Huxley, *Essays of a Biologist* (1923), cited in Brian Stableford, *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), p. 155.

Armstrong also cites many writings of the twenties and thirties, modelled on H. G. Wells's *Anticipations* (1901), that address similar concerns, such as J. R. Haldane's *Daedalus* (1924) and eugenicist Ronald Macfie's *Metanthropos, or the Future of the Body* (1928), among others (83-84). These speculative fantasies of humans' future ability to control and transform their bodies can be seen in Huxley's works, notably in the mirror images of *Brave New World* (1932) and *Island* (1962), which both use body-transforming technologies. In *Brave New World* humans are bred for different functions in society, and the society's inhabitants regularly use the drug *soma* to alter their body chemistry. *Island* also features biochemical transformation of the body by 'mycomystical experts',¹⁶ the 'moksha-medicine' drug (176), pills for potential delinquents (172), and manipulation of the genetics of the population via artificial insemination, using 'superior stocks' (215).

Thus, as can be seen by Huxley's use of these ideas in both a dystopia and a utopia, his attitude towards these possibilities of bodily control and transformation is highly ambivalent. He is excited by the possibilities, but sees the dangers for abuse. Both of these impulses can be observed in his non-fiction writings. In *The Human Situation* (1959, published 1978), in the lecture on 'The World's Future', Huxley writes:

In the field of psychopharmacology we shall probably see extraordinary developments as the result of research in basic metabolism, with the creation of a better environment for the central nervous system and the consequent elimination of a great many mental disorders and psychophysical diseases.¹⁷

Huxley then goes on to discuss the possibilities of eugenics, describing a possible future system using sperm banks, demonstrating both a strong faith in the capability of eugenics programmes to improve the human race, and at the same time outlining grave political dangers if eugenics is applied in some societies and not in others (105).

¹⁶ Aldous Huxley, *Island* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), p. 177. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

¹⁷ Aldous Huxley, *The Human Situation* (New York: Harper, 1977), p. 105. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

Huxley's lifelong interest in instigating improvements to the human body may have been influenced by his early traumas: the death of his mother from cancer in 1908, and the loss of so much of his sight in 1911, both of which demonstrated the body's frailties so clearly to him. His interest in bodily transformation is exhibited not only in his adoption of the Alexander Technique (Huxley wrote in 1942 that the Technique 'demonstrated the possibility, on the physiological plane, of a complete reconditioning'¹⁸), the colonic irrigation undertaken at the advice of the Alexander-recommended Dr McDonagh, and his enthusiastic support for the W. H. Bates Method for improving eyesight through exercises, but also in his general interest in mind-body techniques (for example the methods he cites in *The Human Situation*, such as Gestalt therapy and the techniques of Swiss psychotherapist Vittoz¹⁹), as well as the mind-body techniques of Vedanta such as meditation and yoga, and his experimentation with hallucinogenic drugs. David Dunaway, in his book *Huxley in Hollywood* (1989), discusses what he sees as two distinct phases of Huxley's reconditioning of his own mind-body:

Twice Huxley [. . .] reconditioned his body when it failed him. Each reconstruction coincided with a major philosophical shift and a rebirth of hope. F. M. Alexander's back-straightening exercises had shaken Huxley from his 1935 depression – and inspired his pacifism. Bates's exercises similarly set the stage for his serious study of mysticism.²⁰

Thus Dunaway emphasises the mind-body connection by seeing Huxley's physical alterations as occasioning changes in his thought.

Huxley's interest in Sheldon's ideas was also connected to his fascination with bodily control and transformation. The two men shared an interest in the possibilities of eugenics, as will be discussed in Chapter 8 of this thesis (in Huxley's utopia in *Island*, the inhabitants use Sheldon's system of human types when considering which genetic stock to use for their children). Furthermore, Huxley believed that the greater knowledge of the human mind-body provided by Sheldon's typology could be used to further improve and control the body. In works

¹⁸ *Letters*, p. 473, (1942).

¹⁹ Aldous Huxley, *The Human Situation* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978), p. 146.

²⁰ David Dunaway, *Huxley in Hollywood* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989), p. 167.

such as *The Human Situation*, as will be discussed in Chapter 8, Huxley demonstrated a faith in the potentially transformative effects of applying Sheldon's mind-body theories to future research of, and treatments for, human health problems. When ending his lecture on 'The World's Future', Huxley writes:

In conclusion, it seems quite clear that enormous possibilities lie open to us, that we are on the threshold of profound discoveries within our own nature and in external nature [. . .] It is up to us to decide now whether these conquests of nature and accessions of knowledge are to be used for frightful and inhuman ends, or whether they are to be used to create the kind of progress of which we have dreamed. (107)

Literature Review

The Literature on Huxley:

The literature on Aldous Huxley is extensive and varied, with books, theses and articles focusing on numerous different facets of his life and work. On the subject of contemporary criticism, Eben E. Bass notes the decline in Huxley's popularity among critics in the 1950s, compared with the 1930s and 1940s.²¹ He writes that critics 'ignored' Huxley in the 1950s 'in favor of such writers as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence'.²² Indeed, very few books on Huxley were published in English before the late 1960s, among them Henderson's *Aldous Huxley* (1935), a straightforward overview of Huxley's work up to that point, and Atkins' literary biography, *Aldous Huxley: A Literary Study* (1956, and 2nd edn, rev. 1967). However, in the late 1960s, 'a larger number of books and articles appeared'.²³ Bass highlights the range in tone within this emergent Huxley criticism, 'from adulation to disparagement'.²⁴ Gavin Keulks, in his article 'Aldous Huxley: A Centenary Bibliography' (1996), notes Huxley's continuing 'international reputation' after one

²¹ Eben E. Bass, *Aldous Huxley: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism* (London: Garland, 1981), p. xv.

²² *Ibid.*, p. xi.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

hundred years, and that many countries yearly publish work on Huxley, not just in the U.K and U.S.A. but in Germany, France and Italy.²⁵ Although Huxley scholarship continues to be dwarfed by the work on the great modernist writers of his era, this steady trickle of Huxley criticism continues to exist in the years since Keulks' piece. For example, the *Aldous Huxley Annual*, a journal devoted to Huxley Studies that began in 2001, and the proceedings of the five Aldous Huxley international symposia between 1994 and 2013 are testament to the continuing activity among Huxley scholars.

The many works on Huxley take different approaches. On the biographical side, there is the personal memoir by Huxley's second wife Laura, *This Timeless Moment: A Personal View of Aldous Huxley* (1969), and the anecdote-rich two-part work by Huxley's friend Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (1973, 1974), the most comprehensive biographical study before the twenty-first century. More recent works include Murray's *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual* (2002) and Sawyer's *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (2002), which present more objective, but still admiring, examinations of Huxley's life and work. As regards the full-length critical works, some focus on Huxley as a novelist, such as Bowering's *Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels* (1968), Meckier's *Aldous Huxley: Satire and Structure* (1969), Firchow's *Aldous Huxley: Satirist and Novelist* (1972), May's *Aldous Huxley* (1972), and, more recently, Sion's *Aldous Huxley and the Search for Meaning* (2010). Some of these, such as those of Bowering and Meckier, emphasise the literary achievements of Huxley's full-length fiction, arguing against the more common view, one even proposed by Huxley himself, that he is unsuccessful as a novelist.

However, much Huxley criticism tends to focus upon the ideas present in his work rather than his literary abilities, examining the concepts and philosophies in his writings from various angles. This strain of criticism includes studies of the overall progression of his thought, such as Chatterjee's *Aldous Huxley: A Study*

²⁵ Gavin Keulks, 'Aldous Huxley: A Centenary Bibliography (1978-1995)', *Journal of Modern Literature* 20.2 (1996), 223-38 (p. 223).

(1955; rev.1966), Holmes' *Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality* (1970), and Birnbaum's *Aldous Huxley: A Quest for Values* (1971). These books often look to Huxley's works as evidence of the man's own intellectual and philosophical progression. The various influences on Huxley's thought are another common topic of study, from Indian religion, discussed extensively in, for example, Ghose's *Aldous Huxley: A Cynical Salvationist* (1962) and Chakoo's *Aldous Huxley and Eastern Wisdom* (1981), to Western science, for example in Deery's *Aldous Huxley and the Mysticism of Science* (1996).

Criticism on Huxley is as diverse as Huxley's own oeuvre. Bass, in his bibliography of criticism published in 1981, outlines the major themes of Huxley Studies, including Huxley and French literature, Huxley and D.H. Lawrence, Huxley and the fine arts, Huxley as essayist, Huxley and utopias, Huxley's poetry, Huxley, philosophy and religion, Huxley, literature and science, Huxley and music, Huxley and satire, Huxley and drugs, Huxley and mysticism, and Huxley and Shakespeare.²⁶ Keulks also discusses the 'myriad approaches'²⁷ brought to the study of Huxley's work, referencing Bass's list of central topics of Huxley criticism, and adding the following: Huxley and Indian literature, Huxley and the novel of ideas, Huxley and Hollywood/film, and Huxley and the treatment of women. Keulks notes 'evidence of newer theoretical approaches' in a number of articles discussing Huxley's treatment of women. He adds that 'for better or worse, Huxley seems to have withstood the potential leveling of some 1980s theoretical criticism'.²⁸ It is worth noting that the above lists of topics provided by Bass and Keulks feature many references to the *influences* upon Huxley's work, from French literature to Indian literature to D. H. Lawrence. This is a common focus of Huxley Studies because Huxley's writings are notably influenced by the ideas of others, as his works depict a writer with a voracious desire for knowledge attempting to satisfy his urge to integrate the ideas he discovered into a coherent philosophy. Thus my

²⁶ Bass, p. x.

²⁷ Keulks, p. 224.

²⁸ Ibid.

area of study is a contribution to these analyses of the influences on Huxley's writings, in my case Alexander and Sheldon.

Most full-length critical works on Huxley do not do more than make passing references to the influence of these men. Charles M. Holmes, in *Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality* (1970), mentions Alexander's influence on the character of Miller in *Eyeless in Gaza*, noting that he also contains elements of Dick Sheppard, Gerald Heard and Dr Theodore Pennell.²⁹ Holmes also notes Alexander's influence on *Ends and Means* (119), and on *Adonis and the Alphabet* (176), on both occasions in just one sentence. Holmes mentions in passing that the Alexander Technique is used in *Island* (185, 188), but it is no more than that, a mention: 'Pala makes use of the exercises of Alexander' (185), and 'Alexanderism is introduced early for correct use of the "mind-body" with maximum awareness and minimum strain' (188). Holmes adds that 'the best way of putting on one's clothes' is explained (188), and notes Pala's general insistence, as Mr Menon puts it, on educating ' "the whole mind-body along with the symbol-using intellect" ' (188). This is all that is said on the matter in Holmes's work, amounting to four sentences. On the subject of Sheldon, Holmes outlines Sheldon's types in his consideration of *Ends and Means* (118), in the context of a discussion of how Sheldon influenced Huxley's thoughts on the correct forms of religious practice for different human mind-body types (118-19), but again, it is a brief reference in one paragraph. Holmes also notes that Huxley's discussion of Maine de Biran in 'Variations on a Philosopher' in *Themes and Variations* is informed by Huxley's view of Biran as Sheldon's cerebrotonic type (158), but Holmes mentions this in passing, in one sentence. Holmes also notes that Huxley's utopia in *Island* utilises Sheldon's ideas. Once again, he merely mentions it, that Pala uses 'Sheldon's empirical system in a check of the child's nervous system, muscles and gut' (185), and that these classifications are used to direct children towards their ideal form of religious practice (187).

²⁹ Charles M. Holmes, *Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), pp. 99-100. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

These are the kind of references to my topic of study that are common in the secondary literature on Huxley. It is difficult to be discursive with such references, as almost all of them do no more than note the influence. The influence is mentioned, but without much detail. There is little to engage with or argue against in such material, as I agree with the points being made in, for example, Holmes' work. My goal is to provide more detail on this topic, to conduct new and more in-depth analyses of these influences. However, certain comments from the secondary literature that are related to these influences are referenced from time to time in the thesis, such as Milton Birnbaum's discussion of Huxley's character types, discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, or George Woodcock's comments about Huxley's use of others' ideas, discussed in 'Conclusions'.

Apart from these comments, Woodcock's *Dawn and the Darkest Hour* (1972) is similar to much other Huxley criticism in its treatment of these influences. Woodcock describes Alexander as a 'guru'³⁰ for Huxley, and, like many others, notes his influence on the character of Miller in *Eyeless in Gaza*: 'It is also evident from [Miller's] first remarks to Anthony whom he criticizes for bad posture [. . .] that he contains much of F. M. Alexander' (166). This is the extent of Woodcock's discussion of the matter: one sentence. In the context of writing about *Crome Yellow*, Woodcock states: 'Later, Huxley's interest in psycho-physiological typologies was to lead him into the acceptance of Jung's doctrines of psychological types and, more important, of W. H. Sheldon's theories linking temperament with physique' (58). What Woodcock does not note here is that Huxley *rejects* Jung's model as unsatisfactory once he converts to Sheldon's theories, as will be noted later in this thesis (see Chapter 7). Woodcock acknowledges the influence of Sheldon on *Time Must Have a Stop*, noting that the influence of Sheldon is greater here 'than in any other of his novels' (195). He recognises that the novel's three main characters represent Sheldon's three poles, and also notes how Huxley uses Sheldon's system in the novel to demonstrate the belief that the cerebrotonic type is

³⁰ George Woodcock, *Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Study of Aldous Huxley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. 158. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

the type with the potential proclivity for mysticism (195). Whilst Woodcock's brief references provide a starting point, as do many other references in Huxley criticism, my analysis of Sheldon's influence provides far more detail on the subject.

Woodcock notes that education in Pala 'is based on the ideas of Huxley's favourite unorthodox teachers, Sheldon and Alexander' (236), but again, as I note throughout this literature review, it is just a reference in one sentence, without any fuller discussion.

Peter Bowering's *Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels* (1968) mentions Alexander's influence on *Eyeless in Gaza* and *Island*, but Bowering only references these two Huxley texts, and his analysis amounts to three paragraphs in its entirety. Bowering recognises, as do many, that Dr Miller in *Eyeless in Gaza* is influenced by Alexander, and notes how Alexander's influence on *Eyeless in Gaza* 'marked Huxley's final break with Rampion's or Lawrence's doctrine of "life-worship"'.³¹ As regards *Island*, Bowering notes that the Palanese use Alexander's methods, in one paragraph. Bowering makes two references to Sheldon's influence upon Huxley, but his discussion of this topic is only two paragraphs in length. He notes how in Huxley's utopia of Pala in *Island*, 'the children themselves are taught what to expect of people whose physique and temperament differ from their own' (190), and that this is influenced by Sheldon, and includes a quotation from Sheldon's *The Varieties of Human Physique* describing examples of Sheldon's three mind-body types in nursery school children (190-91). Meckier's work, *Aldous Huxley: Satire and Structure* (1969), has no reference at all to Alexander or Sheldon. Brander, in *Aldous Huxley: A Critical Study* (1970), only makes three brief references to Sheldon. He mentions that Huxley adopted Sheldon's three types, and that Huxley adopted Sheldon's concept of the 'somatonic revolution'. To Alexander, Brander makes no reference at all. May's study, *Aldous Huxley* (1972), notes, in only one sentence, that Huxley was interested in Sheldon's categories. Again, this is just a brief mention. To Alexander he makes no reference

³¹ Peter Bowering, *Aldous Huxley: A Study of the Major Novels* (London: Athlone Press, 1968), pp. 135-36. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

at all. Ferns' study, *Aldous Huxley: Novelist* (1980), again makes only passing references. For example, Ferns notes the influence of Alexander on Huxley on two pages, but again, he merely mentions it. There is no detailed discussion. Similarly, Ferns mentions the influence of Sheldon on Huxley, and outlines Sheldon's theory in a footnote, but he does not study this influence on Huxley's works.

This pattern can be found throughout the literature on Huxley. For example, Birnbaum's *Aldous Huxley: A Quest for Values* (1971), Chakoo's *Aldous Huxley and Eastern Wisdom* (1981), and Deery's *Aldous Huxley and the Mysticism of Science* (1996), all also make only the odd reference to these men, without the fuller analysis that I am attempting. Whilst Birnbaum makes no reference to Alexander, he does discuss Huxley's use of Sheldon's typology more fully (see Chapter 5 of this thesis), rather than just make passing reference to it, but his analysis is still far briefer than my own, acting as an overview rather than an in-depth discussion. The collections of essays on Huxley, such as those edited by Watt (*Aldous Huxley: The Critical Heritage*, 1975), Kuehn (*Aldous Huxley: A Collection of Critical Essays*, 1974), and Meckier (*Critical Essays on Aldous Huxley*, 1996), have no pieces examining the influence of these thinkers on Huxley. Bedford's two-part biography of Huxley, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (1973, 1974) makes more references to these figures than some critical studies do, but these are not sustained analyses of Huxley's writings for the influence of these men's ideas. Murray's biography, *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual* (2002) again provides some information on Huxley's relationships with these figures, and occasionally notes their influence, but their influence is not the focus of his study, and he does not give this topic detailed or systematic treatment. Sawyer's *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (2002) also does not look at the influence of these thinkers in detail. The memoirs of Julian Huxley, *Memories* (1970) and *Memories II* (1973), and Laura Huxley, *This Timeless Moment: A Personal View of Aldous Huxley* (1969), likewise offer only brief references, not detailed analyses. In all these cases, the central point is that all these references to the influence of these men are just that: they are references, not sustained, thorough studies of the topic. These works do not look at the influence of

these individuals in the detail provided by this thesis. They do not provide a comprehensive overview of the way in which these thinkers have influenced Huxley's writings. My goal was to provide a fuller examination of just how and where and when these thinkers' ideas can be seen to influence Huxley's writings throughout his career. Huxley was primarily a philosophical writer, known as an essayist and for his novels of ideas. This thesis aims to make a contribution to Huxley Studies by providing a deeper understanding of the sources of some of these ideas, and how they were synthesised by Huxley into his own works.

A number of dissertations and articles address the relationship between Huxley and these influences. Calcraft, in 'Aldous Huxley's Philosophical Quest as Revealed in the Later Fiction' (1976) and Spencer, in 'The Cosmic Riddle: A Study of Aldous Huxley's Thought' (1971) have both discussed Sheldon's influence in unpublished doctoral theses, but my analyses differ from theirs, and I comment upon connections which they do not. Calcraft's article 'Aldous Huxley and the Sheldonian Hypothesis' (1980) examines Sheldon's influence on Huxley's novel *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944), but I am examining Sheldon's influence across Huxley's entire career, and my analyses of *Time Must Have a Stop* are more detailed than, and different from, Calcraft's. The importance of Alexander's ideas to *Eyeless in Gaza*, and to Huxley's views on mind-body unity in general, is pointed out in Guin Nance's article 'Psyche and Soma: Aldous Huxley and the Mind-Body Connection', where Nance remarks that 'it is [the] ever-expanding awareness of unity, starting with the oneness of mind and body [. . .] that constitutes the central movement of *Eyeless in Gaza*'.³² However, Nance does not supply *any* specific examples from the novel. Again, the article does not go into the subject with the depth that this thesis does.

The Literature by and on Alexander and Sheldon:

³² Guin Nance, 'Psyche and Soma: Aldous Huxley and the Mind-Body Connection', in *The Perennial Satirist: Essays in Honour of Bernfried Nugel*, ed. by Peter E. Firchow and Hermann J. Real (Münster: Lit, 2005), pp. 277-90 (p. 281).

The main focus of my research, besides examining Huxley's works, has been the published writings of the two influencers themselves, with recourse to some books about them for biographical information. Alexander published four books: *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (1910), *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (1923), *The Use of the Self* (1932), and *The Universal Constant in Living* (1941). Though many books about the Alexander Technique contain some biographical information about its creator, the only full biography is Bloch's *F. M.: The Life of Frederick Matthias Alexander: Founder of the Alexander Technique* (2004). Bloch discusses the influence of Alexander upon Huxley, but his focus is a study of the life of Alexander. He does not examine in detail the influence of Alexander throughout Huxley's writings. Similarly, there are many books about the Alexander Technique, but the Technique itself is their focus. Though Huxley may be mentioned as one of the notable supporters of Alexander's work, and though Alexander's influence on Huxley's writing may be noted, these books are not studying Huxley's works in detail for signs of Alexander's influence. Sheldon's two main works of constitutional psychology are *The Varieties of Human Physique* (1940) and *The Varieties of Temperament* (1942). His ideas are also explicated in *Psychology and the Promethean Will* (1936), *The Varieties of Delinquent Youth* (1949), and *Atlas of Men* (1954). There is no published biography of Sheldon, but the literature on Huxley provided me with the necessary information, as well as Carter and Heath's excellent overview of the subject of somatotyping, *Somatotyping: Development and Applications* (1990).

When dealing with literature on these unorthodox thinkers, academic rigour requires a sensitivity to the possibilities of hagiography. However, Bloch's biography fully explores the criticisms as well as the praise of Alexander and his Technique, including the rejection of his ideas by the medical establishment, and Carter and Heath's work does the same as regards Sheldon's somatotype theory and methods. Furthermore, since my focus is on the ideas of these two men as presented in their written publications, and how these ideas can be traced in Huxley's written

publications, the accuracy of any depiction of them and their ideas in other literature is not relevant to my study, though of course it has been borne in mind as I researched.

Part I: The Influence of F. M. Alexander on Huxley's Works

I've always felt that it was vitally necessary for people to have some efficient technique for personal development.

– Letter from Aldous Huxley to Julian Huxley, July 1934.¹

In 1935 Huxley was suffering from ill health, unable to complete his current novel, and plagued by emotional and philosophical self-doubt. It was during this year that he met the Australian therapist Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955), who had developed a technique that purported to improve integration between mind and body. The technique, according to Huxley, improved his physical health, but it also provided the philosophical impetus for the completion of his current project, the novel *Eyeless in Gaza*, transforming it into a work notably different from any Huxley had written before. Huxley continued to endorse Alexander's ideas throughout his life, and one can trace Alexander's influence throughout Huxley's subsequent writings.

After outlining Alexander's ideas, I will then consider Huxley's works before the influence of Alexander, before discussing Huxley's initial lessons with Alexander and the effects of these as described by Huxley. I will then proceed to analyse *Eyeless in Gaza*, the novel Huxley was writing when he began having lessons with Alexander. I will then discuss Alexander's influence on Huxley's subsequent works, first the non-fiction and then the fiction.

¹ *Letters*, p. 382, (22 July 1934).

Chapter 1: Huxley and the Alexander Technique

Alexander and his Technique

There are two main impediments to the study of Alexander. Firstly, his Technique is notoriously difficult to express in writing. Even gifted writers such as John Dewey and Huxley himself struggled to express the kinaesthetic changes that the Technique induced in them. As Huxley writes in *Ends and Means*:

No verbal description can do justice to a technique which involves the changing, by a long process of instruction on the part of the teacher and of active co-operation on that of the pupil, of an individual's sensory experiences. One cannot describe the experience of seeing the colour, red. Similarly one cannot describe the much more complex experience of improved physical co-ordination. A verbal description would mean something only to a person who had actually had the experience described; to the mal-co-ordinated person, the same words would mean something quite different. Inevitably, he would interpret them in terms of his own sensory experiences, which are those of a mal-co-ordinated person. Complete understanding of the system can only come with the practice of it.¹

Secondly, there is a noticeable lack of biographical literature. Alexander was reluctant to write his own memoirs and although he was persuaded to start an account of his life twice, no more than fragments have been found. Despite possessing considerable charisma and charm, he was a secretive, sometimes paranoid individual, concerned that others would steal his ideas, reluctant to hand over control to any institution, and fearful that his convict ancestry and lack of formal education would discredit him. Michael Bloch bemoans the dearth of original sources in his admirable biography, describing how the suspicious Alexander had disinherited his loyal assistants ten weeks before his death.² He entrusted his archives to his younger brother Beaumont, who was uninterested in

¹ Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937), pp. 223-24, hereafter *EM*.

² Michael Bloch, *F. M.: The Life of Frederick Matthias Alexander: Founder of the Alexander Technique* (London: Little, 2004), p. 8. Those who are interested in further biographical information on Alexander are directed towards this work.

the Technique. Beaumont became an hotelier, and the vast majority of Alexander's papers were apparently destroyed in a fire at Beaumont's hotel in the 1960s. Furthermore, despite Alexander's association with many notable individuals, correspondence, diaries or memoirs that refer to these relationships are, for the most part, conspicuous by their absence.

Alexander was born at Table Cape in north-western Tasmania on 20 January 1869. Although no exact dates are known, at some point during 1892³ the young Alexander, a keen amateur orator and actor, was experiencing problems with his voice after a period of ill health. By observing himself in mirrors, he noticed certain habits that were inhibiting his speech and breathing, and eventually surmised that his posture, particularly that of his head, neck and back, had profound effects on his ease of speech, and on his overall health.⁴ Though his methods, derived from such observations, began as an aid to elocution, they became for Alexander and his followers a general technique to learn how to think, move and behave in order to maximise one's physical and mental health. Alexander began to teach his methods, and dedicated the rest of his life to the popularization and refinement of his Technique.

Alexander described his Technique as a 'psycho-physical re-education'.⁵ The key tenets of the Technique can be outlined as follows:

1. The mind and body are a single unit and should be treated as such.

Alexander wrote that '[i]t is impossible to separate "mental" and "physical" processes in any form of human activity' (*US*, 21). For Alexander:

Human ills and shortcomings cannot be classified as "mental" or "physical" and dealt with specifically as such [. . .] All training, whether it be educative or otherwise – i.e., whether its object be the prevention or elimination of defect, error, or disease – must be based upon the indivisible unity of the human organism. (*US*, 22-23)

³ According to Bloch, p. 34.

⁴ See F. M. Alexander, *The Use of the Self* (London: Chaterson, 1932), hereafter *US*, in which Alexander outlines this in detail.

⁵ F. M. Alexander, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (London: Chaterson, 1923; repr. London: Mouritz, 2004), p. 62, hereafter *CCC*.

2. Correct posture, specifically the head-neck-torso relationship, is regarded as essential to physical and mental well-being and proper functioning of the whole organism. Alexander believed that:

A certain use of the head in relation to the neck, and of the head and neck in relation to the torso [. . .] provides the best conditions for raising the standard of the functioning of the various mechanisms, organs and systems.⁶

This is named the ‘primary control’ (*UCL*, 8). Alexander observed that this head-neck-torso relationship was instinctively correct in animals, but that humans had lost this correct posture for optimum mental and physical coordination and awareness. It was Alexander’s contention that this incorrect functioning of the organism accounted for the majority of physical ailments, psychological neuroses and behavioural problems.⁷

3. The inhibition of habitual responses allows one to retrain one’s mind and body. Alexander described the process thus: ‘In response to a given stimulus, we refuse to give consent to a certain activity, and thus prevent ourselves from sending those messages which would ordinarily bring about the habitual reaction’ (*UCL*, 101). This is described in *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* as:

Mentally saying *No* [. . .] This will hold in check the old subconscious orders – the bad habit [. . .] It constitutes the inhibition of the old errors [. . .] Then give the new and correct orders to your general co-ordinations [. . .] Make this a principle of life.⁸

4. It is important to focus on the means whereby a goal can be achieved rather than focusing on the desired end, the latter approach being described disparagingly by Alexander as ‘end-gaining’: ‘“End-gaining” involves the conception and procedure of going *direct for an end* without consideration as to whether the “means-whereby” to be employed are the best for the purpose’ (*CCC*, 11). In other words, one must consider *how* best to achieve a goal before attempting

⁶ F. M. Alexander, *The Universal Constant in Living* (London: Chaterson, 1941; repr. London: Mourtiz, 2000), p. 8, hereafter *UCL*.

⁷ Alexander writes of many health problems he has successfully treated, including cases of ‘paralysis, varicosity, tuberculosis, asthma, adhesions of the lungs, haemorrhage, congenital and other malformations, effects of infantile paralysis, many varieties of throat, nose and ear trouble, hay-fever, chronic constipation, incipient appendicitis and colitis’ (*MSI*, pp. 234-35).

⁸ *MSI*, p. 220.

to achieve it. This applies beyond movement and posture as a general principle of awareness and thought process, which Alexander believed aided mental, physical, and moral functioning and behaviour.

Alexander noted that whilst animals operated successfully by behaving instinctively, humans had evolved the ability to consciously reason whilst simultaneously retaining instinctive behaviours and compulsions. Alexander believed that humans' ability to reason consciously had created new environments to which they were not instinctively adapted. A reliance on an unsatisfactory combination of conscious reasoning and subconscious instinct to guide their behaviour ensued. Alexander insisted that humans relied too heavily on 'subconscious instinct'⁹ when performing activities in life, and that all behaviour needed to be guided by conscious reason: 'Conscious control is imperative [. . .] because instinct in our advancing civilisation largely fails to meet the needs of our complex environment' (*MSI*, 227). His Technique is concerned with developing a more accurate awareness of, and control over, mind, body, action and behaviour, thus achieving more efficient and beneficial thought and action and greater physical and mental health, allowing humans to fulfil their full physical and psychological potential. This re-education cannot occur by any form of imitative or theoretical learning, but through instruction over time by a trained teacher. This is achieved as follows:

1. The teacher identifies the pupil's bad habits.
2. The teacher provides the pupil with mental orders so that the pupil can internally tell him/herself to inhibit old, existing behaviours.
3. The teacher then provides the pupil with the correct mental orders so that the pupil can internally tell him/herself to do the new, correct behaviours, whilst the teacher moves the pupil correctly, so that the pupil learns and feels the connection between these new correct mental orders and the correct movement. These mental orders involve specific actions, such as to relax the neck, keep the head forward and

⁹ His definition of instinct is as follows: 'I define instinct as the result of the accumulated subconscious psycho-physical experiences of man at all stages of his development.' (*MSI*, p. 227), and he defines his use of the term subconscious as meaning 'habits of life' (*MSI*, p. 227).

up, to lengthen the spine and widen the back, which are gradually linked together until they become a co-ordinated whole (CCC, 112-13). The pupil cannot teach him/herself, because his/her 'psycho-physical organism'¹⁰ is not able to observe its own behaviour accurately. It was the teaching process, and the principles behind it, that Alexander believed to be unique, and distinct from any other forms of exercise, posture training, or relaxation and mind-body techniques such as yoga.

Alexander left Australia and moved to London in 1904, and then lived in the U.S.A. from 1914-24. Apart from 1940-43, when he returned to the U.S.A. to live and work, he spent his life from 1925 onwards in England. Although he established a cult following during his time in the U.K. and the U.S.A., his Technique was never adopted by the medical establishment, and Alexander's lack of medical training did not help his cause. Opinions on the validity of his methods vary. In a libel court case that dominated the latter years of his life, Alexander successfully sued Dr Ernst Jokl for publishing an article attacking the Technique's efficacy and scientific validity. Charles M. Holmes, in his book *Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality* (1970), described the Technique as a fad, basing this conclusion on the fact that Alexander's books are 'now all out of print'.¹¹ However, Alexander's books are not the best advertisements for his Technique, and many other readable and well-written books about his teachings have been published by others.¹² Furthermore, in the years since Holmes wrote those words the Technique has grown considerably. There is a Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (STAT), with 4000 registered practitioners as of 2004, and the Technique is now often used in the training of actors, dancers, singers and musicians, and increasingly athletes, in the U.K and elsewhere.¹³ Literature about Alexander and his Technique is full of testimonials from eminent figures who invariably reported great improvements in their physical health upon beginning the Technique. Prominent figures who

¹⁰ This was a common phrase in Alexander's writings, for example see CCC, p. 164.

¹¹ Holmes, p. 100.

¹² For example, see Frank Pierce Jones, *Freedom to Change: The Development and Science of the Alexander Technique*, 3rd edn (London: Mouritz, 1997), and Louise Morgan, *Inside Yourself: The New Way to Health Based on the Alexander Technique* (Stuttgart: Tauchnitz, 1954).

¹³ Bloch, p. 243.

endorsed the Technique include literary figures Huxley and G.B. Shaw, the philosopher John Dewey, and the politician Sir Stafford Cripps. The Technique also gained the support of some doctors, and certain scientific studies appear to support it, such as those of Rudolf Magnus and George Coghill.¹⁴ However, the validity or otherwise of the Technique is not the primary concern of this thesis, but rather the influence of Alexander's ideas on Huxley and his work.

The central principles outlined in Alexander's published writings will now be further discussed, in order that his influence on Huxley's works may be subsequently examined. Alexander's first book *Man's Supreme Inheritance: Conscious Guidance and Control in Relation to Human Evolution in Civilisation* (1910) introduces the essential concepts which will then be expressed in various ways, using different examples and examining different applications, in his subsequent three books. The book's title refers to humanity's ability to reason consciously, which Alexander believes can, when correctly employed, overcome physical and psychological disorders: 'Man's supreme inheritance [. . .] is the complete control of our [*sic*] own potentialities' (*MSI*, 11). Alexander begins by outlining his central thesis: the pace of change in urban, industrial civilisation is far too fast for humans to adapt appropriately. The technological advancement of civilisation is at odds with human instincts. Man 'employs his muscles in new ways, in mechanical repetitions of the same act, or in modes of labour which are far removed from those called forth by primitive conditions' (*MSI*, 7), 'primitive conditions' meaning, for Alexander, pre-industrialised culture. 'Today man walks, talks, sits, stands, performs in fact the innumerable mechanical acts of daily life without giving a thought to the psychical and physical processes involved' (*MSI*, 9). The book explains, by using many examples, Alexander's conceptions of the terms 'conscious control' and 'inhibition': 'The point which marks the differentiation of man from the animal world [. . .] is first clearly evidenced in the use of the reasoning, intellectual powers of inhibition [. . .] The inhibition of the subconscious animal powers' (*MSI*, 35). One chapter discusses the training of children in the

¹⁴ Bloch, p. 132, p. 170.

Technique, revealing a keen interest in education shared by Huxley. Alexander criticises both traditional education and modern tendencies towards ‘free expression’, both being seen as harmful (*MSI*, 108-56).

The book gives an insight into why Alexander met with opposition from the medical establishment. Not only is his Technique difficult to explain in writing rather than demonstration (a point Alexander himself often makes¹⁵) but his attempts to ground the results of his practical discoveries in a theoretical basis are hampered by his insufficient understanding of the ideas he draws on, especially to a modern reader. He often refers to ‘evolution’ (*MSI*, 2), but this understanding is based not on Darwin but on the Victorian philosopher Herbert Spencer (*MSI*, 40), who believed that physical evolution progressed in conjunction with the progression of civilisation, and these hypotheses are connected with other racist views on ‘the savage black races’ (*MSI*, 72). However, he also writes that he hopes the benefits of his Technique ‘will not be confined to any one race or people’ (*MSI*, 235). Alexander uses these ideas in conjunction with his own in order to suggest that humans are heading towards a new stage of evolution where behaviour can be controlled by conscious reason rather than by instinct. These ideas, intended to add philosophical weight to his practical technique, in fact work to discredit it.¹⁶

‘The growth and progress of intellectual control’ (*MSI*, 30) is the aim, so that humanity can overcome the influence of the ‘subconscious’, a term Alexander applies to both universal instincts *and* personal habits, ‘a composite of animal instincts and habits acquired below the plane of reason either by repetition or by suggestion’ (*MSI*, 34), in effect any impulse that does not originate from conscious reason. He also equates the subconscious with ‘the savage state’ (*MSI*, 6): ‘From the savage to the civilised state man passed’ (*MSI*, 9). Bloch sees Alexander as aligned

¹⁵ For example in *US*, pp. 19-20, where he espouses the benefits of being guided through the principles by a teacher, as Huxley was.

¹⁶ Alexander’s ideas are part of a wider movement of progressive evolutionary thought, which, as Armstrong points out in *Modernism, Technology and the Body*, ‘projects a future of human adaptation and improvement’ (79-80). The views of Huxley’s friend Gerald Heard on psychic evolution outlined in, for example, Heard’s *The Emergence of Man* (1931) also reflect this theme.

with Freud in viewing the subconscious as a repository of negative forces.¹⁷ However, despite this similarity, Alexander's view is much more optimistic, even utopian than Freud's, as noted earlier, for Alexander believes his method of 'conscious control' can defeat the negative influence of the subconscious: 'By the application of this principle of conscious control there may in time be evolved a complete mastery over the body, which will result in the elimination of all physical defects' (*MSI*, 56). His 1910 preface ends on a similarly utopian note: 'Every man, woman and child holds the possibility of physical perfection; it rests with each of us to attain it by personal understanding and effort' (*MSI*, x).

In his second book, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (1923), Alexander repeats his argument that 'man has been and still is unable to adapt himself quickly enough to the increasingly rapid changes [. . .] which we call civilisation' (*CCC*, 4). Alexander believes that this leads to defective senses, and poor co-ordination of the 'psycho-physical mechanism', and that this is the fundamental cause of humanity's individual, and thus by extension social, problems. 'Humans cannot progress satisfactorily in civilisation whilst they remain dependent upon subconscious (instinctive) guidance and control' as this leads to 'the gradual development of imperfections and defects in the use of the human organism' (*CCC*, 3). Alexander further defines his use of the term 'instinct': 'the word "instinct" is used [. . .] to indicate established habits, inherited or developed' (*CCC*, 3). He discusses the distinction between the desired goal of sensory and psycho-physical alertness and the usual understanding of the term 'concentration' (*CCC*, 174). He stresses the importance of individual solutions: 'the mass is made up of individuals', and thus societal change can only come about by 'individual teaching and individual work' (*CCC*, 97). This is another area where Alexander and Huxley were in alignment, the belief that social change and improvement not only usefully, but necessarily, begin with individual change and self-improvement. Alexander also iterates his firm belief in preventative measures as opposed to cures, whenever possible, because cures are 'end-gaining' (*CCC*, 53). This links with the

¹⁷ Bloch, p. 90.

fundamental tenets of his Technique: when one performs an action, one must not focus on the end result, but on the process, the means required, to achieve that result. As previously mentioned, Alexander applies this principle beyond specific physical actions, expanding it to a general philosophical position. Thus cures for psychological disorder, such as psychoanalysis, are, according to Alexander, ‘end-gaining’ and thus unsuccessful. Huxley’s writings, as will be discussed shortly, show a similar application of the concepts of the Alexander Technique to human behaviour in the widest philosophical sense, this concept being alluded to in the title of Huxley’s work *Ends and Means* (1937).

Alexander discusses his concept of ‘sensory appreciation’. This is defined as ‘all sensory experiences which are conveyed through the channels of sight, hearing, touch, feeling, equilibrium, movement, etc., and which are responsible for psychophysical action and reaction throughout the organism’ (CCC, 23). Humans’ ‘sensory appreciation’ has become impaired, and the Alexander Technique can correct this problem. Alexander often offers examples in his books of the degree to which humans have incorrect sensory appreciation, the degree to which they are not accurate judges of their own body, movement or behaviour, and that one’s instructions to the body often do not fulfil the intention, despite beliefs to the contrary:

Take the case of a person who persists in putting his head back whenever he makes an attempt to put his shoulders back. Ask him to put his head forward and keep his shoulders still, and it will be found that, as a rule, even though he may put his head forward as asked, he moves his shoulders also. Ask him to put his head forward whilst the teacher holds his shoulders still, and the pupil, as a rule, will put his head back instead of forward. In practically every instance, be the pupil adult or child, the attempt to carry out this simple request will be unsatisfactory, owing to the pupil’s harmful interference with the general adjustment and use of the organism and limbs, due to unreliable sensory appreciation. (CCC, 25)

For Alexander, his Technique improves sensory awareness, and reactions to internal and external stimuli, and thus affects not only movement but emotions and opinions:

Our sensory peculiarities are the foundation of what we think of as our opinions, and [. . .] nine out of ten of the opinions we form are rather the result of what we *feel* than what we think. Our emotional defects are also linked up with our sensory peculiarities [. . .] Our approach to life generally, our activities, beliefs, emotions, opinions, judgements [. . .] are conditioned by [. . .] preceding conceptions, which are [themselves] associated with the individual use of the psycho-physical mechanisms and conditioned by the standard of reliability of our individual sensory appreciation. (*CCC*, 96)

It is Alexander's contention that 'we all think and act [. . .] in accordance with the peculiarities of our own psycho-physical make-up' (*CCC*, 96), and thus we cannot assimilate new ideas that do not fit in with our existing perceptions. Therefore education, moral and religious instruction, sermons, and indeed communication of any kind will fail to have the desired effect because 'correct apprehension and reliable sensory appreciation go hand in hand' (*CCC*, 97). Thus one's conception of anything one is told is filtered through, and thus influenced by, one's 'sensory appreciation', with wildly varying degrees of reliability. Alexander relates a case study of a young girl who was unable to walk properly. When Alexander corrected her posture, she felt she was all 'out of shape' (*CCC*, 94-95). Thus Alexander insists that everyone needs to learn his Technique in order to develop reliable sensory appreciation.

Alexander's subsequent books reiterate his central points in various ways. His third book, *The Use of the Self* (1932), concludes by focusing on the importance of education, a priority he shared with Huxley. Alexander would like his Technique to become 'the basis of an educational plan' that could lead to:

The substitution of reasoning reactions for those instinctive reactions which are manifested as prejudice, racial or otherwise, herd instinct, [. . .] rivalry etc., which [. . .] have so far brought to nought our efforts to realise goodwill to all men and peace upon earth.¹⁸

Alexander's fourth and final book, *The Universal Constant in Living* (1941), discusses the wider application of his teachings, seeing them as a way to improve society by improving the individual. The book includes many testimonials and quotations from others, including appreciations by doctors testifying to the

¹⁸ *US*, p. 109.

Technique's efficacy. Indeed, Alexander quotes from Huxley's *Ends and Means* in the book (*UCL*, 98), and also includes an article by Huxley on training British soldiers in the Technique (*UCL*, 56-59).

Alexander was always a cult figure, with prominent supporters, such as John Dewey, but also criticsers, such as Ernst Jokl, as mentioned above. Huxley always affirmed his belief in the importance of Alexander's ideas in his writings from the mid-1930s onwards, regardless of Alexander's positive or negative reception by others. But Huxley also showed in his writings that he felt that the Alexander Technique was not a cure-all, and that it should be used in conjunction with other methods and techniques, as will be discussed later.

Huxley's Works before the Influence of Alexander

There are several traits observable in Huxley's writings before his first meeting with Alexander in 1935 that are instructional in revealing why he embraced the Alexander Technique so wholeheartedly. A preoccupation with the connection, or disconnection, between the mind and the body was a recurring theme of Huxley's writings, even before his encounter with Alexander. *Limbo* (1920), one of his earliest publications, includes the play 'Happy Families', where Huxley expresses this division so strongly that these two aspects are represented by two different characters. Charles M. Holmes describes the play as follows: 'The two families in the play are really only two maladjusted selves [. . .] Aston J. Tyrell, capable only of learned discourse, has a black brother to express his sensuality'.¹⁹ Huxley's early writings often express the different aspects of human beings, including mind and body, as fundamentally separate and disconnected. In *Do What You Will* (1929), he describes human beings as 'a vast colony of souls [. . .] souls of individual cells, of organs, of groups of organs, hunger-souls, sex-souls, power-souls, herd-souls'.²⁰ Huxley's philosophy, as outlined in *Do What You Will*, is an acceptance of the lack

¹⁹ Holmes, p. 18.

²⁰ Aldous Huxley, *Do What You Will* (London: Chatto and Windus), pp. 140-41.

of unity within human beings, an attempt to delight in it rather than be disturbed by it. One can be ‘by turns excessively passionate and excessively chaste [. . .] at times a positivist and at times a mystic’. Any expression of the self is not unified or timeless, but only ‘momentarily true’.²¹ Since it is impossible to unite the multifarious aspects of the mind-body, one should indulge fully in all the discordant elements of oneself. However, once Huxley met Alexander, the therapist’s practical approach to mind-body unity, and his concept of the mind-body as a unified, enduring self that could be taught to function correctly, took over as Huxley’s new ideal. Huxley’s interests in personal development, and the relations between the psychological and the physical, were also apparent in his reading on the subject of Indian philosophy. In a letter he wrote to his brother Julian in July 1934, quoted at the start of this part, Huxley recommends a book on *Yoga and Western Psychology* by Geraldine Coster.²²

Vulgarity in Literature (1930) gives further insight into the mind-body issue for Huxley. He ‘cannot accept the Classicists’ excommunication of the body’, and asserts ‘that literature should take cognizance of physiology and should investigate the still obscure relations between the mind and its body’.²³ Huxley expresses here a consistent view in his writings, that the body and physiology are vitally important in any examination of humanity and human psychology, be it artistic or scientific in its method of enquiry. Alexander, along with William Sheldon, would give him a technique to ‘take cognizance of the physiology’ and ‘investigate the still obscure relations between the mind and its body’. In *Vulgarity in Literature* Huxley also admits to the perversity of his desires: ‘For a self-conscious artist, there is a most extraordinary pleasure [. . .] in proceeding, deliberately and with all the skill at his command, to commit precisely those vulgarities, against which his conscience warns him and which he knows he will afterwards regret.’²⁴ As will be discussed later, this expression of Poe’s ‘Imp of the Perverse’ is also a problem for Anthony

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-83.

²² *Letters*, p. 382, (22 July 1934).

²³ Aldous Huxley, *Vulgarity in Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), pp. 260-65.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 265-67.

Beavis, the protagonist of *Eyeless in Gaza*, the novel Huxley was writing when he first met Alexander, and it is a trait that the Alexander Technique is designed to help combat.

There was another aspect of Huxley's world-view, revealed in his works before he met Alexander, that would have made him open to Alexander's approach. Huxley's early non-fictional works always focused on the *psychological* individual. For example, *Proper Studies* (1927) explores the problems of society from the point of view of individual psychology. Thus every individual must be trained 'to realize all his potentialities and become completely himself.'²⁵ Huxley's analysis of the individual psychologies of literary figures in *Do What You Will* illustrates this same impulse. Alexander's approach, focusing on the mind and individual change as the way to progress society and humanity, fits this pre-existing tendency of Huxley perfectly. (Indeed, seventeen years earlier, and unbeknown to Huxley, Alexander had also written of a similar hope: 'The physical, mental, and spiritual potentialities of the human being are greater than we have ever realised [. . .] [Our] supreme inheritance [. . .] is the complete control of our own potentialities' (*MSI*, 11).) Charles M. Holmes suggests that it was the 'deliberate, self-conscious mental element' to the Alexander Technique which made it so attractive to Huxley: 'Habituated for years to the free ranging of his mind, with sceptical negativism as a corollary or result, Huxley apparently found congenial answers to his needs in the control and the consciousness stressed by Alexander, the discipline rationally understood'.²⁶ However, this focus on the rational, self-conscious mind would co-exist, for Huxley, with a mystical belief in the power of direct, immediate experience that transcended conscious thought. This brought him into conflict with the central tenets of Alexander's philosophy, as will be discussed later.

Huxley's interest in Alexander's ideas can also be seen in the context of his lifelong concern with education and educational theories. A. A. Mutalik-Desai's essay 'Aldous Huxley as Educator' notes Huxley's key essays on education: one

²⁵ Aldous Huxley, *Proper Studies* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927), p. 99.

²⁶ Holmes, p. 100.

titled 'Education' in *Proper Studies*, another titled 'Education' in *Ends and Means*, 'The Education of an Amphibian' in *Adonis and the Alphabet*, and 'Education for Freedom' in *Brave New World Revisited*, all of which are referred to in this thesis.²⁷ Huxley's fiction also demonstrates his strong interest in education, never more so than in his final novel *Island*, where he presents in his utopia his vision of an ideal education system. Huxley's critiquing of existing educational systems, that can be found throughout his writings, often returns to certain themes, such as the importance of recognising human difference and tailoring education appropriately. The thrust of his criticism that is most relevant to the Alexander Technique is Huxley's focus on traditional education's lack of emphasis on *non-verbal education*, something which Huxley saw as a grave oversight, as his essay on the subject in *Adonis and the Alphabet* particularly illustrates. Huxley's distrust of merely intellectual knowledge is a theme that can be found throughout his work, not just explicitly, as in his 'The Education of an Amphibian' essay, but also implicitly in his satirical depiction of intellectuals throughout his fiction, exposing all the stupidity and personality flaws that their academic intelligence does nothing to alleviate, and indeed may in fact exacerbate. Learning the Alexander Technique was the first such process of 'non-verbal education' that Huxley underwent personally, and he was so affected by it that he continued to promote both it, and other educational techniques that he believed were similar, throughout his life, as this thesis will discuss.

Huxley and Alexander

Huxley began a course of daily lessons with Alexander in November 1935. The impact was immediate and dramatic, and is one of the Alexander success stories often mentioned in books about the Technique. Huxley had developed writer's

²⁷ A. A. Mutalik-Desai, 'Aldous Huxley as Educator', in *Aldous Huxley, Man of Letters: Thinker, Critic and Artist: Proceedings of the Third International Aldous Huxley Symposium, Riga 2004*, ed. by Bernfried Nugel, Uwe Rasch and Gerhard Wagner (Berlin: Lit, 2007), pp. 79-92.

block attempting to complete his current novel, *Eyeless in Gaza*. This in turn led to financial worries and concerns about his future career. As will be discussed, *Eyeless in Gaza*, as well as being technically challenging, dealt with many painful events from Huxley's own life, such as his mother's death and brother's suicide, as well as providing a searching examination of Huxley's own shortcomings in the portrait of the protagonist, Anthony Beavis. Huxley was also undergoing a philosophical crisis, as the satirical cynicism on which he had built his literary reputation began to dissatisfy him. As Sybille Bedford remarked: 'He suddenly felt he must develop. Negative cynicism was not enough.'²⁸

Additionally, Huxley's physical health was also poor. He suffered from fatigue, insomnia, indigestion and muscular pains. He was six feet four-and-a-half inches tall, and found it difficult to support his long, bony frame comfortably. Nicholas Murray notes a number of comments from Huxley's friends and acquaintances on this subject. Virginia Woolf once described him as 'that gigantic grasshopper Aldous folded up in a chair close by.'²⁹ Sewell Stokes described him as 'a tall sad tulip, whose head rests a little too heavily on its stalk.'³⁰ These are revealing quotations, for they betray two facets of Huxley's posture that Alexander would abhor. Woolf's description of him as 'folded up' contradicts Alexander's insistence on a straight, lengthened spine and widened back. Stokes' analogy accurately parallels Alexander's awareness of the strain that the heavy human head can put on its accompanying body if it is not correctly aligned. In Alexanderist terms, Huxley's posture was inhibiting the correct functioning of his body and mind, causing him both physical and psychological distress.

This physical awkwardness, not helped by his poor eyesight, was accompanied by social unease. Despite his mental and verbal facility, he suffered from an increasing discomfort with public speaking. Frank Pierce Jones describes a literary dinner where Huxley was scheduled to speak: 'Huxley stood up first after

²⁸ Nicholas Murray, *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual* (London: Abacus, 2002), p. 287, Bedford in conversation with the author.

²⁹ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf. Vol.3, 1925-30*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth Press, 1980) (1 July 1926), p. 93.

³⁰ Sewell Stokes, *Hear The Lions Roar* (London: Harold Shaylor, 1931), p. 206.

lighting a large cigar. Whether from the tobacco or the stress of speaking he suddenly jack-knifed forward and had to be carried out by three of the male guests.³¹ By 1930 Huxley desired to speak for the Peace Movement, but was too fearful to commit to a public lecture. Overall, biographer Nicholas Murray describes Huxley as being ‘in the grip of a feeling of utter physical and artistic dysfunction.’³²

Within one month of learning the Technique, Huxley was able to speak publicly for the first time in years. His health also improved dramatically. By early 1936, according to Huxley himself, he no longer suffered from insomnia, fatigue, high blood pressure, or eczema.³³ Maria Huxley wrote that Huxley’s ‘old enemy of insomnia is checked and by the man Alexander’.³⁴ Huxley also attributed his improved health to Dr J. E. R. McDonagh, a specialist recommended to him by Alexander, who advised colonic irrigation and a special diet, and whose ideas Huxley also incorporated into *Eyeless in Gaza*.³⁵ Huxley wrote that ‘the method for mastering the primary control of the organism devised by F. M. Alexander, has been profoundly important to me’.³⁶ It ‘demonstrated the possibility, on the physiological plane, of a complete reconditioning’.³⁷ Thus whether or not these changes were indeed due to the Alexander Technique, there is no doubt that Huxley believed his adoption of Alexander’s methods to be highly and beneficially transformative. But Huxley did not just see the Technique as an aid to better health. Alexander’s ideas affected Huxley’s thinking in the long-term. Within three months of Huxley being exposed to Alexander’s teachings, *Eyeless in Gaza* was finally finished. It was a work in which the influence of Alexander was highly apparent.

³¹ Jones, p. 55.

³² Murray, p. 287.

³³ *Letters*, p. 402, (19 March 1936).

³⁴ *Letters*, p. 400, (21 February 1936).

³⁵ *Letters*, p. 402, (19 March 1936).

³⁶ *Letters*, p. 473, (1942).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Chapter 2: Alexander's Influence on *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936)

Alexander's influence can be seen immediately in the book Huxley was writing when he first began practising the Technique. *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) is, in many senses, the pivotal work of Huxley's career, and Alexander is undoubtedly one of the major influences on this transformation. The profound nature of the impact of the Technique upon Huxley is suggested in a letter that Maria Huxley wrote to Eugene Saxton, Huxley's American publisher, in 1936. She writes that Alexander had made 'a new and unrecognisable person of Aldous, not physically only but mentally and therefore morally. Or rather, he has brought out, actively, all we, Aldous's best friends, know never came out either in the novels or with strangers'.¹ Written during the period of personal transformation suggested by the above quotation, *Eyeless in Gaza* presents the personal transformation of its central character, and also reveals a transformation in Huxley's writing, as the novel is unlike any he had written before.²

Eyeless in Gaza is also Huxley's most autobiographical novel. This is recognised by many Huxley scholars. Nicholas Murray justifies this approach when he writes:

Anthony Beavis [is] a character very similar to Huxley himself – and the exploration of guilt and remorse centres on certain incidents (a brother's suicide, a father's remarriage) which are mirrored in Huxley's [...] One thing Huxley could not do was to deny the echoes and parallels because they were immediately recognised by others [...] Given that Huxley was self-confessedly inept at devising plots and attending to the normal business of the novelist – inventing, in short – it is neither reductive nor crass to discuss these 'originals'.³

¹ *Letters*, p. 400, (21 February 1936).

² At this same time, that is, in the last few months of 1935, Huxley converted to 'positive pacifism' with Gerald Heard and joined the Peace Pledge Union, founded by Dick Sheppard, Canon of St Paul's Cathedral. The pacifist theme is also an important element of *Eyeless in Gaza*.

³ Murray, pp. 294-95.

A key theme of the novel, and of all Huxley's work, is elucidated at the start of Chapter 2. Anthony Beavis writes in his diary: 'Like all other human beings, I know what I ought to do, but continue to do what I know I oughtn't to do'.⁴ Huxley is identifying the problem as practical rather than theoretical: humans know, in theory, the right course of action, but are unable to translate that knowledge into correct conduct; in other words, they lack *control*. (A month later, Beavis again focuses on the importance of knowing 'how to carry out our good intentions' (150).) Beavis makes clear that he does not see this problem as limited to himself, or to certain individuals of his temperament. It is, he believes, a fundamental characteristic of humanity, for he prefixes his admission with the phrase: 'Like all other human beings' (8). Beavis remarks that this admission sums up 'every biography' (8). The implication is that this is a fundamental human problem, and that if a solution were to be found, its effect on humanity would be profound.

Thus what is required is a method to facilitate the translation of right intention into right behaviour. This is exactly what the Alexander Technique is concerned with. Compare with this quotation from Alexander:

Most of us know *what* we ought to do (ends), but are sadly lacking in knowledge of *how* to do ("means-whereby") [...] belief in ideals [...] however admirable in theory, [is] not based upon knowledge of the self as the instrument of the "doing" required for putting them into practice. (*UCL*, 170)⁵

Huxley depicts this theme in the novel. Mary Amberley is addicted to both morphia and her lover Gerry Watchett: ' "Do you think I *want* to do this? [...] I hate it, I absolutely hate it. But I can't help it" ' she says of her morphia addiction, which she likens to her desire for Gerry. She ' "knew he was a beast" ', but ' "still cared for him" ' (293). Whilst some characters act when they know they should not, others are unable to act when they wish to. Hugh Ledwidge knows what he *wants* to say to Helen Amberley, but cannot say it. This happens several times: 'He didn't know

⁴ Aldous Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), p. 8, hereafter *EG*. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

⁵ Although this quote is taken from Alexander's work of 1941, these principles were integral to his thought and Technique when he introduced them to Huxley in 1935.

what to say to her – or, rather, knew, but couldn't bring himself to say it' (178). He is not in control of his mind-body; earlier, he wishes to make a remark to her, but 'his vocal cords would not do it' (119). Here is the physical and psychological anxiety and neurosis which the Alexander Technique is designed to aid (control of vocal cords being a specific problem for Alexander). Huxley's characters lack, as Alexander would put it, 'conscious control' (*MSI*, 227).

Alexander links all negative aspects of human behaviour to incorrect use of the psycho-physical mechanism, to the dominance of the subconscious instinct over conscious reason. He speaks of 'unhealthy desires', for example: 'We all know of cases of men and women who eat or drink more than is good for them, and we also know that only a small number of them are able to master their unhealthy desires in these directions' (*MSI*, 58). Mary Amberley also says: '“I did what I didn't want to do [. . .] One's always doing things one doesn't want – stupidly, out of sheer perversity. One chooses the worse just because it is the worse”' (290). This instinct is central to the plot of the story, as Beavis ends up kissing Brian Foxe's wife Joan, an act which has tragic consequences. In doing so, Beavis experiences 'a perverse revelling in an action known to be stupid, dangerous, wrong' (335). This is the same impulse that Huxley admits to experiencing in *Vulgarity in Literature*, and it is an impulse the Alexander Technique is concerned with controlling.

Huxley, as well as presenting this problem as central to his characters' destructive behaviours, also depicts the alternative to this, as Beavis begins to achieve mastery over this damaging tendency, learning how 'to inhibit undesirable impulses' (213). Beavis's salvation arrives in the form of anthropologist Dr Miller, a character infused with the characteristics of a number of men whom Huxley admired, but no man looms larger in his presentation of Miller than Alexander. Not only does Miller espouse Alexanderist ideas, he also instructs Beavis in a mind-body technique that, as recounted by Beavis, corresponds precisely with Alexander's. In Chapter 49, Huxley's description of Miller correlates with Alexander's appearance: 'He was an elderly little man, short and spare, but with

fine upright carriage that leant him a certain dignity' (363).⁶ Huxley's description underlines the importance of the postural ideas which Alexander practised. By his connection of 'upright carriage' and 'dignity', Huxley relates a description of posture to a suggestion of positive moral qualities. This hints at his, and Alexander's, conviction that correct control of the mind-body leads to a general improved functioning that affects not just health but behaviour, choices and awareness. Later, Miller is again specifically described as an 'erect figure' (375), again emphasising the correct posture espoused by Alexander.

Miller not only looks like Alexander, but speaks like him, commenting almost immediately after meeting Beavis on his poor posture: '“Stooping, as you do. Slumped down on your mule like that – it's awful. Pressing down on your vertebrae like a ton of bricks [. . .] And when the spine's in that state, what happens to the rest of the machine?”' (365). As previously mentioned, Alexander focused on the importance of the spine as part of the 'primary control' of body and mind, affecting the whole organism. Miller's description of the mind-body as a 'machine' is also a common term in Alexander's writings, for example 'the human machine' (*MSI*, 192). Beavis's poor health mirrors Huxley's before his meeting with Alexander: problems with his 'guts', with 'fatigue' (346), and with 'eczema' (365). Miller surmises that Beavis has 'chronic intestinal poisoning' (365), and recommends a course of 'colonic irrigation' and a special diet (366). This is further evidence of Alexander's indirect influence, as Miller adopts the hypothesis of the aforementioned Dr McDonagh, who treated Huxley on Alexander's recommendation.

Miller then goes on to diagnose Beavis' mind-body division, using Alexander's concepts: 'You've got an unconscious body. An efficient thinking apparatus and a hopelessly stupid set of muscles and bones and viscera' (368). Likewise, Alexander criticises 'lack of control over, and improper and inadequate use of, the component parts of the different mechanisms of the body, limbs and

⁶ Compare with Frank Pierce Jones' description of Alexander when he met him in 1940: 'He was shorter than I expected, but had an easy, upright carriage.' In Jones, p. 64.

nervous system' and 'incorrect pose of the body and chest poise, and therefrom consequent defects in the standing and sitting postures, the interference with the normal position and shape of the spine, as well as the ribs, [. . .] the vital organs, and the abdominal viscera' (*MSI*, 333). One of Alexander's key phrases used here, 'improper use', is also used by Huxley in the novel, as Beavis reiterates Miller's teachings (212). Miller focuses, like Alexander, on the importance of bodily awareness, describing Beavis's body as 'hopelessly unaware of all it does and feels' (9). His description of a body that 'doesn't know how to use itself' (9) echoes the title of Alexander's third book, *The Use of the Self*, published four years earlier. When Miller gives Beavis 'a lesson in use of the self' (11), Miller's instructions involve 'learning to sit in a chair, to get out of it, to lean back and forward' (11). This use of the act of getting in and out of a chair as a basis for postural instruction is exactly that used by Alexander (e.g. *CCC*, 114-15). Huxley transplants the concepts he has learned from Alexander wholesale into his fiction, as Beavis discusses the teachings of Miller: 'Become conscious, inhibit, cease to be a greedy end-gainer, concentrate on means: tiresome non-existence turns into absorbingly interesting reality' (212-13). The concept of increased enjoyment of everyday activities through heightened awareness is a theme of Alexander's works too. Compare Huxley's words with the following from Alexander: 'We have been taught that all the ordinary, most necessary, and therefore most oft-repeated acts of life should be automatic and unconscious'. The 'increasing awareness' that the Technique brings 'introduces a special interest and pleasure into the most ordinary acts of life' (*CCC*, 198).

Beavis has 'always refused to utter in public.' Miller advises him to '“achieve co-ordination, use yourself properly; you'll be able to speak in any way you please. The difficulties, from stage fright to voice production, will no longer exist”' (11). Miller links the mind and body, neuroses (stage fright) with physical problems (voice production). The two can be solved simultaneously by achieving correct co-ordination. The mention of public speaking is also significant, for it provides further evidence of *Eyeless in Gaza*'s autobiographical nature. As

mentioned above, Huxley had great difficulty speaking in public. A reference to Alexander's experiences is also implied, for it was problems with voice production in Alexander himself which led to his discovery and development of his Technique. Miller preaches Alexander's beliefs when he asserts: 'If you take lessons [in speaking] before you're well and physically co-ordinated, you'll merely be learning yet another way of using yourself badly' (11). Miller is echoing Alexander's insistence that all activity is counter-productive until one has retrained the mind-body out of its bad habits. Throughout his writings, Alexander iterates that all activities and learning are useless if not harmful until his Technique is learnt:

'Don't do this, but this' says the teacher [. . .] He forgets that in 'doing something else' the pupil must use the same machinery which, *ex hypothesi*, is working imperfectly, and that he must be guided in his action by the same erroneous conceptions. (*MSI*, 206)

Thus for Miller, as for Alexander, his technique is a fundamental teaching without which other teaching will be at best unproductive, at worst harmful.

Though Huxley, like Alexander, emphasises personal transformation, he also depicts this process beginning with the intervention of an outside influence, in this case Miller. Likewise, Alexander insisted that his Technique requires a teacher, at least initially. Because 'the perceptions and sensations of all who need respiratory and physical re-education are absolutely unreliable', 'the teacher must himself place the pupil in a position of mechanical advantage' (*MSI*, 275-77). When Beavis states: 'Miller then gave me a lesson in use of the self'(11), the seeming contradiction of receiving lessons from another about oneself derives from Miller's, and Alexander's, belief that most humans are destructively unaware of their own natures. As Alexander writes:

The majority of [...] defects have come about by the action of the patient's own will operating under the influence of erroneous preconceived ideas and consequent delusions, exercised consciously or more often subconsciously [...] These conditions can be changed by the same will directed by a right conception implanted by the teacher. (*MSI*, 216)

The novel also raises the theme of ends and means, one which would preoccupy Huxley throughout his life and indeed would be the title of his work of

the following year. Again, this concern is central to Alexander's teachings. As previously discussed, one of the key concepts of the Technique is the insistence on focusing on the 'means-whereby' an action is to be accomplished, rather than on the ends to be achieved, known as 'end-gaining'. Likewise, Miller insists that 'means determine ends' (272) throughout the book. Beavis, influenced by Miller, several times outlines the dangers of educating people 'to think of ends and disregard means' (297). This issue is discussed at various points throughout the novel (e.g. 111, 331, 399-400). Huxley expresses this principle in its broadest sense, expanding it beyond personal motivations and seeing its truth in social forces. Helen Amberley's fervent belief in Communism as a viable route to a better society, in contrast to Beavis's insistence upon pacifism, provides Huxley with another opportunity to discuss the ends and means issue. Beavis writes in his journal: 'I said our ends were the same, the means adopted, different. For her, end justified means; for me, means the end. Perhaps, one day, I said, she would see the importance of the means' (212). Beavis argues that a violent communist revolution will never succeed in achieving a peaceful society because: 'Means determine ends; and must be like the ends proposed. Means intrinsically different from the ends proposed achieve ends like themselves, not like those they were meant to achieve' (211). In his next diary entry, Beavis makes explicit his belief that this underlying principle governs both individual and social change. He uses the metaphor of violent revolution, a phrase that could equally apply to social, collective forces, to describe incorrect and inefficient behaviour in the individual: 'Refuse to be hurried into gaining ends by the equivalent (in personal, psycho-physiological terms) of violent revolution; inhibit this tendency, concentrate on the means whereby the end is to be achieved; then act' (212). This is a succinct summation of the central teachings of the Technique: the principle of inhibition of the habitual response, followed by focus on the 'means-whereby', and finally action.

Alexander cannot be credited with introducing the preoccupation with the relationship between ends and means to Huxley, it first being outlined in *Do What You Will* (1929), but it is thus another element of Alexander's ideas which would

have appealed to Huxley, as it resonated with his pre-existing preoccupations. But Alexander's focus on this theme, and Huxley's experience of it in action through his practice of the Alexander Technique, reinforced its importance, as is evidenced by the two books Huxley published after meeting Alexander. It is surely no coincidence that this central constituent of Alexander's teachings becomes an important theme in *Eyeless in Gaza* and the main theme of *Ends and Means*.

Beavis defines neurosis as being an example of bad 'use of the self', of 'wrong use', borrowing Alexander's terminology once again (213). What distinguishes those who develop neuroses from those who do not is 'bad physical posture', which is described as a 'keystone' of the neurotic personality, decreasing 'resistance' to mental maladies (213). Beavis writes of the mentally ill in terms of their posture, including the central focus of Alexander, the 'stooping back' and 'sunken head' (213). (This Alexanderist perspective on mental abnormality resurfaces in *Ends and Means*, where Huxley focuses on neurotics as being 'physically uncontrolled' (*EM*, 221), again focusing on the lack of conscious control over the physical organism as being central to the dysfunction.) Beavis proclaims, rather extravagantly, that Miller's technique is a cure-all for mental health problems, ending 'neurotic anxieties and depressions – whatever the previous history' (213). Humans are not slaves to their past experiences, repressed anxieties, and conditioning, doomed to repeat undesirable behaviours - the negative effects of one's past can be removed wholesale leading to new, more positive behaviour. If one can 're-educate' the mentally ill in 'correct physical use', 'the neurotic personality collapses. And in its place is built up a personality in which all the habits of physical use are correct' (213).

Beavis, influenced by Miller, highlights another Alexanderist preoccupation, as outlined earlier: that human beings' individual mind-bodies are suffering due to the circumstances of modern industrial civilisation: 'The conveniences of urban life are bought at a high physiological and mental price' (296-97). He also discusses the failures of the education system, his use of Alexander's language in this context revealing his belief that the Technique is essential for productive education: 'An

education that allows you to use yourself wrongly is almost valueless' (297). A word used several times in the book is one also used by Alexander (for example, *MSI*, 11), 'potentialities' (212, 330, 338). Beavis, thanks to Miller's Alexanderist teachings, now has faith in positive human potential, and that this potential is 'actualizable' (338). Even humans acting in evil ways are not irredeemably evil, they are merely 'refusing to actualize' their 'potentialities for goodness' (330). Beavis insists on the only solution for humankind in Alexanderist terms: 'There is no remedy except to become aware of one's interests as a human being, and, having become aware, to learn to act on that awareness. Which means learning to use the self and learning to direct the mind' (297). Beavis repeatedly returns to his Alexanderist concerns, declaring that 'any serious attempt at the construction of a genuinely human being' requires 'construction from within, by training in proper use of the self – training, simultaneously, physical and mental' (344). Even external social and economic reforms should be devised in the context of the knowledge that 'the individual can modify himself' (344).

Alexander's aforementioned concept of 'sensory appreciation', and his insistence that 'we all think and act [. . .] in accordance with the peculiarities of our own psycho-physical make-up' (*CCC*, 96), that 'our approach to life generally, our activities, beliefs, emotions, opinions, judgements [. . .] are conditioned by [. . .] preceding conceptions, which are [themselves] associated with the individual use of the psycho-physical mechanisms and conditioned by the standard of reliability of our individual sensory appreciation' (*CCC*, 96), is mirrored in Beavis's journal when he writes:

We look at the universe with a certain kind of physico-mental apparatus [...] The nature of the facts which each of us perceives as primary and given depends on the nature of the individual instrument and the adjustment we have been brought up, or deliberately choose, to give it. (337)

Beavis, like Alexander, sees the mind and body as one, as the 'physico-mental apparatus', and as the determiner of an individual's perception of reality. Beavis states that facts are 'modifiable by anyone who chooses to modify the perceiving mechanism' (338). He also hints at the conscious control of the mind-body that the

Alexander Technique purports to offer: ‘We can adjust our instrument deliberately, by an act of the will’ (338). Beavis’s belief that the ‘perceiving mechanism’ determines one’s experience and thus, in turn, one’s philosophy, combined with his belief that this can be consciously controlled, is empowering for him:

We can will modifications in the personal experiences which underlie our philosophy [...] So that one can see, for example, irredeemable senselessness and turpitude, or else actualizable potentialities for good – whichever one likes; it is a question of choice. (338)

Thus these Alexanderist concepts aid Beavis in attaining and retaining a more positive view of life and humanity.

If the ‘psycho-physical mechanisms’ affect our ‘beliefs’, as Alexander contends, then Miller’s ‘insistence on the correlation between religion and diet’ (366) is highly Alexanderist. ‘“We think as we eat” he says. When Beavis finds this concept amusing, Miller remarks that this is because Beavis is a ‘“dualist” ’ (367), who is unaware of the interconnected nature of his mind and his body. Huxley, like Alexander, is concerned with the mind-body connection, and thus with the psychological impact of physiology. This theme is apparent in the novel, when Staithes discusses a recurring theme in Huxley’s works, the omissions in imaginative literature. Mark complains that literature neglects ‘those small physiological events that decide whether day-to-day living shall have a pleasant or unpleasant tone’ (343). Excretion, digestion, menstruation, illnesses, disabilities, pleasant sensations, all have the power to ‘make or mar the day’ (343). Staithes thus emphasises the interconnectedness of the body, mind and emotions, a central concern of Alexander’s work. Miller displays the same belief when he states: ‘“How can you expect to think in anything but a negative way, when you’ve got chronic intestinal poisoning?” ’

Alexander’s ideas helped Huxley to develop a more positive view of a unified mind and body. Though Huxley could also have been exposed to theories of the unity of mind and body in his reading on Indian religion, especially the principle

of yoga,⁷ this theme is also, as stated above, a central focus of Alexander's teachings. The pre-conversion Beavis, paralleling Huxley's previous published views, denies the unity of the human self. Beavis discusses the matter with Brian Foxe:

‘Well, why shouldn't one make the best of both worlds? [. . .] Of *all* the worlds. Why not? [. . .] I don't value single-mindedness. I value completeness. I think it's one duty to develop all one's potentialities – *all* of them. Not stupidly stick to only one'. (77-78)

When Foxe says: ‘“You're contradicting yourself” ’ Anthony laughs and replies: ‘“That's one of the privileges of freedom” ’ (79). Here Beavis talks about developing his potentialities, not in the Alexanderist sense that he uses it later, as mentioned above, but in the sense of revelling in one's contradictions. When Beavis is describing the attitude of a ‘Higher Lifer’ (110), the position of the detached intellectual which he ultimately rejects as destructive, he describes one of its goals as to ‘become just the succession of your states’ (112). This is essentially the same view of human nature that Huxley outlined in *Do What You Will*, as discussed earlier. When Beavis is making notes for his *Elements of Sociology* on the nature of personality, he again presents the human being as consisting of multiple selves: ‘People discuss my “personality”. What are they talking about? Not *homo cacans*, nor *homo erectans*, not even, except very superficially, *homo futuens*. No, they are talking about *homo sentiens* (impossible Latin) and *homo cogitans*’ (89). What is interesting is that in *Eyeless in Gaza*, completed under the influence of Alexander, this previous view of Huxley's, of an un-unified self, is presented not as an embracing of all aspects of oneself, but as a position which allows Beavis to avoid committing to anything, keeping him detached from life. And importantly, this detachment is not celebrated in the novel, but is presented as being destructive to himself and others (for example, he is detached from his emotions, not giving Helen the love she desires (99), and is detached from his body, which is affecting his health, according to Miller (368)).

⁷ As mentioned above, he had read Geraldine Coster's book *Yoga and Western Psychology* in 1934 (see *Letters*, p. 382, (22 July 1934)).

One of the ways that this attitude, seeing humans as consisting of multiple, separate, fluctuating, un-unified selves, manifests in the novel is that Beavis sees the mind and body as fundamentally separate. We are ‘homo cogitans’, but also ‘homo cacans’. This view affects Beavis’s behaviour. Before his meeting with Miller, Beavis’s treats bodily pleasure in a detached way, rather than experiencing with his whole organism, his whole mind-body. He sees Helen as having ‘no existence except in the context of pleasure’ (99), and for him, sex is merely ‘detached, physical satisfaction’ (210). Beavis is a man who experiences a ‘divorce between the passions and the intellect’ (56). This separating of mind and body is apparent in Beavis’s language: ‘“What *is* the most personal thing about a human being? *Not his mind – his body*”’ [my emphasis] (95). This dualist statement is made before Beavis’s meeting with Miller. But once Beavis has met Miller, and his behaviour undergoes changes as he puts Miller’s teachings into practice, this is reflected in his language. Instead of a phrase such as ‘*Not his mind – his body*’, Beavis begins to use terms such as ‘mind-body’ (e.g. 400) or ‘physico-mental’ (e.g. 337), and ‘psycho-physiological’ (e.g. 212), reflecting a new belief in mind-body unity. Furthermore, Huxley’s adoption of Alexander’s use of the phrase ‘the self’ in the singular, and his presentation of this view in the novel as both correct and positive, suggests that Alexander’s ideas had helped Huxley to believe that there was, at the very least, one aspect of the ‘self’ that was constant, rather than viewing any conception of a ‘self’ as being only ‘momentarily true’.⁸ Humans possess a permanent self: you are not ‘just the succession of your states’ (112). This is the change that Beavis undergoes within the novel, from the perspective that Huxley had outlined in *Do What You Will*, that of accepting, and delighting in, lack of consistency or continuity within the self, to an Alexanderist position where there is at least a part of oneself that persists, that develops, that can be taught correct ‘use’ and thus improved.

Beavis, though rejecting religious notions of sin, remarks: ‘But that doesn’t mean, of course, that persistent tendencies to behave badly don’t exist, or that it

⁸ *Do What You Will*, pp. 282-83.

isn't one's business to examine them, objectively, and try to do something about them' (9). The Alexander Technique is concerned precisely with bringing destructive 'persistent tendencies' into the arena of conscious awareness so that they can be altered. The fact that Beavis sees these tendencies as an alternative view of what religion would call 'sin' reveals that he is not just referring to physical bad habits, but moral behaviour. Beavis insists that the methods that Miller teaches him comprise 'a technique for translating good intentions into acts, for being sure of doing what one knows one ought to do' (11). Beavis discusses the progression of Miller's Alexanderist technique: 'Beginning with physical control and achieving through it (since mind and body are one) control of impulses and feelings' (10). Huxley did not only express this view through the mouthpiece of Beavis. His other writings similarly expound the belief that control of the body acts as a stepping stone to self-control in general. As he states in *Ends and Means* the following year: 'Physical self-awareness and self-control leads to, and to some extent is actually a form of, mental and moral self-awareness and self-control'.⁹ He reiterates this point four years later, in his review of Alexander's *The Universal Constant in Living* for *The Saturday Review of Literature*: 'Training in inhibition and conscious control would provide men and women with the psychophysical means for behaving rationally and morally'.¹⁰ (Maria Huxley, too, who also had lessons with Alexander,¹¹ suggests this principle at work in the quotation used at the start of this chapter, when she writes that Alexander had made 'a new and unrecognisable person of Aldous, not physically only but mentally and therefore morally', suggesting that she also believed physical, mental and moral behaviour to be interconnected.)¹²

Alexander likewise contends that his Technique leads to greater control over not just the body but behavioural tendencies. The student of the Alexander

⁹ *EM*, p. 326.

¹⁰ Aldous Huxley, 'End-Gaining and Means Whereby' in *Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 October 1941, repr. in Wilfred Barlow (ed.), *More Talk of Alexander* (London: Gollancz, 1978), pp. 149-53 (p. 152).

¹¹ *Letters*, p. 400, (21 February 1936).

¹² *Ibid.*

Technique can ‘apply in practice to his activities in the outside world the very principles concerned with the process of inhibition which he has applied to the use of his psycho-physical self’ (*CCC*, 124). Alexander believed that:

Examination of the misguided majority would reveal the fact that they were badly co-ordinated, and that psycho-physical conditions were present which would lead an expert to expect an overbalanced state in one direction or another, a domination of conscious reasoned control by subconscious unreasoned desire. (*MSI*, 58)

Alexander applies this equally to over-indulgence or ‘criminal tendencies’ (*MSI*, 61). However, his Technique can re-educate how to control behaviour by conscious control: ‘Such cases may be readily and successfully dealt with on a basis of conscious guidance and control in the spheres of re-education, readjustment, and co-ordination’ (*MSI*, 58-59). Alexander thus links mind-body co-ordination and correct functioning with moral functioning, just as Huxley does in *Eyeless in Gaza*.

In the following passage, Beavis discusses in more detail how this process of increased bodily awareness in turn influences behaviour in general:

Awareness and power of control are transferable. Skill acquired in getting to know the muscular aspect of the mind-body can be carried over into the exploration of other aspects. There is increasing ability to detect one’s motives for any given piece of behaviour, to assess correctly the quality of a feeling, the real significance of a thought. Also, one becomes more clearly and consistently conscious of what’s going on in the outside world, and the judgement associated with that heightened consciousness is improved. Control also is transferred. Acquire the art of inhibiting muscular bad use and you acquire thereby the art of inhibiting more complicated trains of behaviour. (213)

Huxley does not just recount this aspect of Alexander’s theory in the novel, he demonstrates it in practice, using it as an integral part of his portrayal of Beavis’s psychological and moral transformation. Huxley depicts the exact process described in the passage above as occurring in Beavis’s daily life. Take the following extract from Beavis’s journal, written after he has been instructed in the correct ‘use of the self’ by Miller:

I found myself talking to Purchas and three or four of his young people [. . .]
There I was, discoursing in a really masterly way about the spiritual life, and

taking intense pleasure in that mastery, secretly congratulating myself on being not only so clever, but also so good – when all at once I realised who I was [. . .] The discovery of what I was doing came suddenly. I was overcome with shame. And yet – more shameful – went on talking. Not for long, however. A minute or two, and I simply had to stop. (253)

Here is, first, the increased ‘awareness’, the ‘increasing ability to detect one’s motives’ (213), which Beavis states occurs through the practice of Miller’s technique, and which he sees as the essential precursor to any positive change in behaviour. Huxley’s choice of words here is revealing. Beavis states: ‘I found myself talking’, this phrase highlighting that Beavis is not acting consciously, he is not utilising Alexanderist ‘conscious control’. Huxley’s language shows how Beavis, and human beings in general, behave unconsciously, ruled by habit and unexamined motivations.

Once Beavis has become aware of his behaviour, he is not initially able to change it. He follows his old pattern, unable to inhibit his bad habit: ‘I was overcome with shame. And yet - more shameful – went on talking’. This is the central problem outlined in Chapter 2: ‘I know what I ought to do, but continue to do what I know I oughtn’t to do’ (8). However, this is where Beavis’s Alexanderist lessons allow him to overcome this problem, to change his behaviour and move beyond his existing habits. His increased awareness of his ‘motives’ means that he breaks the old pattern after ‘a minute or two’.¹³ Eventually his profound awareness of what he is doing forces him to ‘control’, to practise ‘the art of inhibiting [...] behaviour’ (213): ‘I simply had to stop’ (this is such a central tenet of Alexander’s work that a book on his Technique, by multiple authors, is entitled *Knowing How To Stop*).¹⁴ Here is one of Alexander’s fundamental concepts, inhibition, being used not just for correct postural co-ordination, but to alter behaviour. This passage is a precise depiction of the Alexander Technique in action, and is an example of how his ideas have affected Huxley’s novel in a profound way. Huxley is depicting the

¹³ The ‘increasing ability to detect one’s motives’ (213) that Beavis sees as an important result of practising Miller’s technique is depicted elsewhere too: ‘I used to think I had no will to power. Now I see that I vented it on thoughts, rather than people’ (112).

¹⁴ (London: Chaterson, 1946).

Technique as an aid to moral improvement, presenting its mechanics as an important element in the transformation of the main protagonist, which acts as the central theme of the novel. Thus Alexander's concepts are integral to Huxley's depiction of Beavis's development as a character, and this depiction is infused with Alexanderist language.

A month earlier in the chronology of the novel comes another example. Again, Beavis's new Alexanderist focus on becoming aware of his feelings and motivations, and then changing his thoughts and behaviour, is depicted as providing an essential component of his ability to remain positive about himself and his hopes for a better world. Beavis has given a speech on pacifism in front of five hundred people, but is depressed as he feels it has not been effective. Staithe agrees, and says, as quoted in Beavis's journal: "Might as well go and talk to cows in a field". The temptation to agree with him was strong. All my old habits of thinking, living, feeling impel me towards agreement. A senseless world, where nothing whatever can be done' (109). Here Huxley, like Alexander, focuses on 'old habits' as the negative forces that prevent improvement of the individual and thus society. Here the habits in question are Beavis's negative, cynical views of the world, of humanity, of the possibility of positive change occurring in human beings, individually or collectively. But the Alexander Technique purports to allow one to notice old habits, that in this case are profoundly affecting Beavis's perspective on the world and thus his behaviour, and change them consciously. Again, Beavis suddenly becomes aware of what he is doing. He notices his thought process and consciously changes it to a more positive outlook:

With Mark last night I caught myself taking intense pleasure in commenting on the imbecility of my audience and human beings at large. Caught and checked myself. Reflecting that seeds had been sown, that if only one were to germinate, it would have been worth while to hold the meeting. Worth while even if none were to germinate – for my own sake, as an exercise, a training for doing better next time. I didn't say all this. Merely stopped talking. (110)

Again, here is the emphasis on stopping what one is doing, of inhibition, as a powerful and sufficient technique of self-improvement.¹⁵

Thus, it is Miller and his Alexanderist technique that gives Beavis faith that he can overcome negative impulses and behaviours, and that one is able to *choose* a better way of thinking and behaving. Miller states: ‘ “It’s a question of choosing something right instead of something wrong” ’ (378). By the end of the novel’s chronology, Beavis believes the same: ‘ “If you want to be, you can. It’s a matter of choosing. Choosing and then setting to work in the right way” ’ (399). Consciously changing oneself, one’s thoughts and behaviour, is now viewed as possible. Huxley’s depiction of his characters’ inability to check their impulses, in conjunction with Beavis’s gradual increased ability to do so, provides a more subtle way of integrating the ideas of others, in this case Alexander, into his novels than his other common approach, using a character as a mouthpiece, such as Miller, or Propter in the subsequent *After Many a Summer*. It allows Huxley to show, rather than tell. This is a more aesthetically successful integration of Alexander’s ideas into the novel than Miller’s Alexanderist preaching.

Alexander’s deep distrust of the unconscious, his view of the conscious mind as humanity’s greatest asset, and his insistence upon the importance of individuals consciously controlling their behaviour, is reflected throughout the novel. Characters are often portrayed as acting unconsciously, caught in destructive patterns, addictions and habits of behaviour. As mentioned above, Mary Amberley is addicted to both morphia and Gerry Watchett, and Beavis describes his tendency towards indifference to others as a ‘bad habit’ (254). Beavis discusses this theme explicitly in his journal. He writes of how easy it is to behave ‘unconsciously’, but also that ‘unconsciousness is no excuse’ (254). Thus both bad habits, and a lack of awareness of these habits, are seen as central to human failings. This is highly Alexanderist, as the Alexander Technique aims specifically to remove bad habits

¹⁵ Given that the occasion is Beavis speaking on behalf of the pacifist cause, the parallels with Huxley himself, who did likewise, give further weight to an interpretation of Beavis’s character, and character development, as being at least partially autobiographical. (The Reverend Purchas in the novel is often viewed by critics as a version of Dick Sheppard, Canon of St Paul’s Cathedral and founder of the Peace Pledge Union.)

and increase self-awareness. Miller's advice to Beavis sums up Alexander's approach in six words: '“It's better to do it consciously”' (367). The post-Miller Beavis describes himself as being 'more aware' (212). He becomes conscious of where he is focusing his awareness, and that he has a choice in this matter. For example, he can choose to 'focus attention on sensual satisfactions', or not (211). This increasing awareness of where he is focusing his attention, and his discovery that he has a choice, is highly Alexanderist. The Alexander Technique is precisely concerned with allowing people to consciously choose the focus of their attention, such as on the means rather than the ends of a physical act, in turn aiding general mental awareness and control. Beavis highlights what he sees as the two fundamental results of practising Miller's technique: 'Increased awareness and increased power of control [...] awareness and control' (212). As shown above, these two qualities are exactly those which Huxley depicts as developing within Beavis, even in passages of the novel not directly discussing Miller's mind-body lessons, but those depicting Beavis's behaviour *after* having had those lessons. He becomes more aware, and this leads to greater control over his behaviour. As Alexander writes when recounting his experience with a pupil: 'The gaining of control of the simple psycho-physical evolutions in which we were engaged during the lessons meant sooner or later the gaining of control in the practical spheres of his daily life' (CCC, 125). Few sentences express Beavis's conversion to an Alexanderist perspective on how to right the wrongs of humanity more succinctly than the following: 'The power to cure bad behaviour seems essentially similar to the power to cure bad co-ordination' (214). Beavis sees the process as the same, as the result of his instruction in Miller's Alexanderist mind-body technique.

Beavis writes in his diary that 'Miller says of old age that it's largely a bad habit. Use conditions function' (54). Thus Miller, like Alexander, sees the physical and psychological symptoms associated with old age as brought about by incorrect psycho-physical habits. Here we have two Alexanderist preoccupations: the formation of bad habits, and their replacement with more positive mind-body behaviours, and a concern with the correct 'use' of the mind and body, the specific

word ‘use’, as mentioned above, being found throughout Alexander’s works. The belief that the symptoms traditionally associated with old age are avoidable is also an Alexanderist view. Alexander’s view was that many physical symptoms of old age were psychological in origin, that lack of conscious psycho-physical control ‘induces stagnation in the organism’, which ‘becomes more and more pronounced with advancing age’ (CCC, 198-99). Humans become:

Mere automatons, repeating day by day the same round of psycho-physical activities [...] whilst, at the same time, the defects and imperfections in the general use of the mechanisms upon which this activity depends become more and more pronounced. This means that with the approach of age a condition of deterioration and stagnation is being gradually cultivated throughout the organism generally. (CCC, 199)

Alexander warned of the ‘stagnation’ caused by ‘fixed habits’ (CCC, 199), and observed people ‘gradually limiting themselves, more and more as time goes on, within certain specific spheres of activity’ (CCC, 199). Many of *Eyeless in Gaza*’s characters are stuck in fixed habits, ‘specific fields of activity’, such as Beavis’s detached intellectualism, or his father’s grief rituals (126), or Mary Amberley’s addictive behaviour. Mary becomes bored and discontented, despite her pursuit of pleasures, such as sex, and excitement, such as her manipulation of Anthony and others. Here is Huxley’s depiction of unconscious, ‘end-gaining’ living. Because Alexander viewed correct psycho-physical use as the key to happiness, he saw those uneducated in his Technique ‘gradually lose the capacity to take conscious interest in and derive pleasure from those normal and useful activities of life in the sphere of doing, hearing, seeing etc’ and thus ‘seek satisfaction in less normal and less useful activities, and create an undue and harmful demand for specific excitements and stimulations’ (CCC, 199). Mary Amberley’s behaviour throughout the novel is the living embodiment of Alexander’s words. For Mary:

The world was a place where all amusing and exciting things seemed [...] to have stopped happening. There was nothing for it but to make them happen. That was why she went on at Anthony about what she called ‘Joan’s treatment’, went on and on with a persistence quite out of proportion with any interest she felt in Joan, or in Brian Foxe, or even in Anthony – went on

simply in the hope of creating a little fun out of the boring nothingness of the time. (261)

Alexander believed that the opportunities for continual growth and development in psycho-physical control that his Technique provided allowed ‘enduring happiness, with its accompanying sense of satisfaction and contentment’ (CCC, 198) to be achieved, rather than ‘the growing need among subconsciously controlled people for *specific* pleasure, with all its attendant shortcomings of unrest and excess’ (CCC, 198):

Conscious fundamental psycho-physical processes do not end; they are continuous, and therefore connote real growth and development. This applies to all the acts of life, and the establishment of of the psycho-physical uses which are associated with the processes of constructive conscious control and continuous growth herein involved is inseparable from that psycho-physical manifestation which we call ‘happiness’. (CCC, 198)

This is portrayed in the novel through Beavis’s development:

At today’s lesson with Miller found myself suddenly a step forward in my grasp of the theory and practice of the technique. To learn proper use one must first inhibit all improper uses of the self [...] Knowing good and bad use – knowing them apart. By the ‘feel’. (212)

As mentioned above, this development, for Beavis, transforms daily life from something ‘tiresome’ to something ‘absorbingly interesting’ (212).

Alexander felt that ‘growth’ should ‘continue through life’ (CCC, 199), and warned of the dangers of believing that one has ‘grown up’, the ‘consciousness that we have ceased to grow’ (CCC, 200):

Our psycho-physical plan of development must be fundamentally one of continuous growth [. . .] The realisation of some new experience in psycho-physical functioning does not bring a sense of finality, with the consequent loss of interest, but is a clear indication that a step forward has been made in growth and development, which is again a stepping-stone to the next stage of advancement, and so on. (CCC, 200-01)

Beavis likewise sees life as a process of perpetual positive growth and change, in specifically Alexanderist terms. Compare Alexander’s words above with the following from Beavis:

‘Any process of change is a lifetime’s job. [...] Take the mind-body mechanism, for example. You begin to learn how to use it better; you make an advance; from the position you’ve advanced to, you discover how you can use it better still. And so on, indefinitely.’ (400)

Beavis expands this Alexanderist principle beyond its specific, postural beginnings, applying it to social relations:

‘It’s the same when one tries to change one’s relations with other people. Every step forward reveals the necessity of taking new steps forward – unanticipated steps, towards a destination one hadn’t seen when one set out. Yes, it lasts a lifetime.’ (400)

Alexander’s insistence that humans can change for the better is reflected in the changes in Beavis, discussed above, and also in how this improves his relationship with Helen. The final chapter reveals their relationship to have moved beyond the ‘detached, physical satisfaction’ (210) of the time when they were lovers. Helen announces that it is exactly a year since her partner was killed. Anthony’s response, or more accurately lack of it, is revealing: ‘Anthony said nothing. Anything he could say would be an irrelevance, he felt, almost an insult’ (398). Here is Beavis’s increased sensitivity to others being shown, once again, by his new-found Alexanderist ability to *inhibit* his behaviour, to *not* act. When Helen speaks of possibly having sex with another man to ‘“commemorate this anniversary”’, she looks at Beavis’s face, ‘trying to detect in it the signs of anger, or jealousy, or disgust. Anthony smiled back at her’ (401). This is Beavis’s new, more compassionate self.

Helen admits: ‘“I disgust myself”’ (399), demonstrating an increased level of self-awareness that could provide the basis for growth. There are signs that Beavis’s new approach to life is influencing Helen. ‘“Perhaps I shall come and listen to you”’ she says of Beavis’s pacifist meeting, even though she had earlier been dismissive of Miller’s pacifism (273). If Helen becomes influenced by Beavis’s point of view, she may take up Miller’s Alexanderist technique too, and thus the number of people possessing this tool for self-transformation will grow. If one person changes, this affects his/her relationships with others, who themselves

may change, influencing yet others in turn. Huxley is demonstrating his and Alexander's belief that larger social change begins with individual self-improvement.

Beavis views writing his journal as a way, along with Miller's mind-body technique, of increasing his self-awareness. He describes self-knowledge as 'an essential preliminary to self-change' (9), again expressing the formula that increased awareness leads to positive behavioural changes. But it is also possible that Beavis uses Miller's technique to distance himself from his emotions and motivations, to observe them analytically, as his detached metaphor for the above process, 'pure science and then applied' (9) implies. Perhaps Beavis likes the distancing effect of observing his feelings and tendencies, as a way of remaining aloof from them. Later in the novel, discussion of the supposedly increased mind-body integration of the whole human being brought about by Miller's technique again co-exists with praise of its ability to allow the mind to *rule* over the body and emotions: 'The power to inhibit and control. It becomes easier to inhibit undesirable impulses [. . .] Easier to [. . .] be patient, good-tempered, kind, unrapacious, chaste' (214). This repression of aspects of behaviour, such as violence and sexuality, implies not an integration but an attempt to distance the individuals' mind from other aspects of him/herself that he/she does not want to address.

Therefore, although the Alexander Technique has the supposed aim of inner integration, there is also the possibility that these concepts of mental control can in fact lead to greater inner division and repression. This repressive impulse is also apparent in Huxley's *Ends and Means*, where he describes Alexander's methods as 'a technique [. . .] to inhibit undesirable impulses and irrelevance on the emotional and intellectual levels respectively' (*EM*, 223-24). This aspect of Alexander's approach is also evident in his own writings: 'With the continued use of these processes of reasoning, uncontrolled impulses and "emotional gusts" will gradually cease to dominate, and will ultimately be dominated' (*CCC*, 144). Indeed, Alexander responds to this very criticism in his work:

There has just come to my knowledge an interesting objection to the importance which I attach to the process of inhibition as a primary and fundamental factor in the technique of the scheme I advocate, and the objection is made on the ground that this use of inhibition will cause harmful suppression in the individual concerned [. . .] The stimulus to inhibit [. . .] in this case comes from within, and the process of inhibition is not forced upon the pupil. This means that the pupil's desire or desires will be satisfied, not thwarted, and that there will be present desirable emotional and other psychophysical conditions which do not make for what is known as suppression in any form. (CCC, 122-23)

Whatever the truth, it is unsurprising that a technique promising control over one's emotions would be attractive to Huxley, a man who regarded his own 'besetting sin' to be 'the dread and avoidance of emotion'.¹⁶

At one point in the novel, Huxley explicitly references his new teacher. Beavis writes that Miller believes in 'training, along F. M. Alexander's lines, in use of the self' (10). However, Miller couples Alexanderist techniques with 'a non-theological praxis of meditation' inspired by the views of Gerald Heard. However, Alexander detested Heard and all his ideas, including any form of meditation which he believed catered to the unconscious, when it was the rational, conscious mind that was humanity's greatest asset. As Edward Maisel states:

[Alexander] looked indifferently away from any religious, occult, mystagogical or esoteric sanction of his work. Yoga, meditation, hypnosis, autosuggestion and the like [. . .] he regarded as catering to levels of the unconscious, a species of 'demoralization'. His absolute detestation of Gerald Heard as a purveyor of these enormities (apart from the fact that Heard did not come to him as a pupil) sprang from his stern rationalist bias. 'You see', he explained, 'a person cannot capitulate to sub-conscious guidance to the extent which "meditation" demands in practice, without seriously affecting the psychophysical self in reaction to living.'¹⁷

It is a great irony that Huxley, such a consistent endorser of Alexander's work, should also be committed to, and even link the Alexander Technique with, mysticism, which Alexander abhorred. In fact, the four techniques mentioned above as being dismissed by Alexander: yoga, meditation, hypnosis, and autosuggestion,

¹⁶ *Letters*, p. 390, (13 January 1935).

¹⁷ *The Resurrection of the Body: The Essential Writings of F. Matthias Alexander*, ed. by Edward Maisel (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), pp. xliii-xliv.

are all part of Huxley's final vision of a utopian society in *Island*, in which they are used alongside the Alexander Technique. Whilst seeing their potential for misuse, Huxley also writes of the potentially positive effects of all of them throughout his later works.

Indeed, Huxley's interest in both the Alexander Technique and other techniques, such as yoga, run in parallel, and are connected, both being facets of Huxley's fascination with mind-body techniques and methods of self-improvement. Huxley cannot help connecting the Technique to other practices he is familiar with. Unlike Alexander, who saw his Technique as unique, Huxley was always looking for connections. Beavis writes: 'In Evan-Wentz's last book on Tibet I find among "The Precepts of the Gurus" the injunction: "Constantly retain alertness of consciousness in walking, in sitting, in eating, in sleeping" ' (213). Again, Huxley is relating the Technique to religious practices that would have been anathema to Alexander. However, Huxley praises Miller's Alexanderist technique for providing the practical tools so uncommon in descriptions of right action. Beavis criticises the above injunction because 'like most injunctions' it is 'unaccompanied by instructions as to the right way of carrying it out' (213). On the other hand, with Miller's technique 'practical instructions accompany injunctions; one is taught how to become aware'(213). Huxley sees the Alexander Technique as being conceptually aligned, in some ways, with Buddhism, but as being more effective, because its instructions are more specifically defined. Beavis is criticising injunctions without instructions as they focus on the desired ends, but without providing information on the means-whereby these ends can be achieved.

Beavis reveals that Miller's Alexanderist teachings are changing his views on human behaviour in a fundamental way, causing him to reinterpret Pavlov:

Conditioned reflex. What a lot of satisfaction I got out of old Pavlov when I first read him. [. . .] It seemed, I remember, to put the lid on everything. Whereas actually, of course, it merely restated the doctrine of free will. For if reflexes can be conditioned, then, obviously, they can be re-conditioned. Learning to use the self properly, when one has been learning to use it badly – what is it but re-conditioning one's reflexes? (54)

The suggestion is that the conclusions Beavis had drawn from Pavlov, that humans were all slaves to already conditioned behaviours, had allowed him to take a detached, irresponsible approach to his life, in the knowledge that there was no way to change his tendencies. However, Beavis now sees this view as erroneous, because Miller's lessons in how to re-educate the mind and body have instilled a new belief that one can change one's behaviour, that one can improve oneself, and thus have greater control over one's own destiny. This transformation in Beavis's thinking leads directly from the teachings that, as presented in the book, are highly Alexanderist, and Beavis again uses highly Alexanderist language: 'Learning to use the self properly' (54).

Beavis reveals how his view of humans as incapable of positive change had justified his lack of proactive behaviour: 'If men had always behaved either like half-wits or baboons, if they couldn't behave otherwise, then I was justified sitting in the stalls with my opera-glasses. Whereas if there were something to be done, if the behaviour could be modified...' (10). Alexander believed that human beings *could* 'behave otherwise', and that behaviour *could* 'be modified.' He saw human beings' 'supreme inheritance'¹⁸ as the ability to move beyond animalistic behaviours via conscious control and self-awareness. This new approach changes Beavis's writings, just as it does Huxley's. Whereas previously Beavis's work of sociology was planned to be 'a picture of futility', much like Huxley's previous satires, he now believes 'a description of [...] behaviour and an account of the ways of modifying it would be valuable' (10). *Eyeless in Gaza*, through its depiction of how Beavis modifies his behaviour, does just this, as do many of Huxley's subsequent works.

Alexander comments on the inadequacy of social and political change in the absence of individual development: 'One of the most startling fallacies of human thought has been the attempt to inaugurate rapid and far-reaching reforms in the religious, moral, social, political, educational, and industrial spheres of human activity' without considering 'the individuals by whose aid these reforms can be

¹⁸ The title of Alexander's first book, *Man's Supreme Inheritance*.

made practical and effective' (*MSI*, 11). Beavis, influenced by Miller, is convinced of the same point. There is no solution to a better world 'if the plan is mainly economic and political. But think in terms of individual men, women, and children [. . .] there is then a hope' (296). In Chapter 23, Beavis again iterates this view he shares with Alexander, that social transformation requires personal transformation: 'People will behave justly and pacifically only if they have trained themselves as individuals to do so' (211). He also reinforces his view, confirmed by his experiences with Miller, that mind and body are inseparable: 'The training must be simultaneously physical and mental'(211). He makes it clear that this training he describes is Alexanderist by the use of Alexander's language, as the training needs to involve '[k]nowledge of how to use the self and of what the self should be used for' (211). Beavis insists, as does Alexander above, that social reforms alone, without any consideration of the individual, will fail, and he specifically cites the technique that, as described in the novel, bears all the hallmarks of Alexander's, as the means by which he acquired faith in the possibility of the progress of humanity:

Hitherto preventive ethics had been thought of as external to individuals. Social and economic reforms carried out with a view to eliminating occasions for bad behaviour. This is important. But not nearly enough. Belief that it is enough makes the social-reform conception of progress nonsensical. The knowledge that it is nonsensical has always given me pleasure. Sticking pins in large, inflated balloons – one of the most delightful of amusements. But a bit childish; and after a time it palls. So how satisfactory to find [. . .] a method of achieving progress from within as well as from without. Progress, not only as a citizen, a machine-minder and machine-user, but also as a human being. (213-14)

Thus, in the passage above, one can see Huxley, through the mouthpiece of Beavis, saying goodbye to the Pyrrhonian scepticism that characterised his earlier satires, to 'sticking pins in large, inflated balloons', and ushering in a new phase of his writing, a phase which exhibited, despite pessimism and frustration, a belief in humanity's positive potential. Given that Miller's technique so clearly resembles Alexander's, given the highly autobiographical elements of the novel and the character of Beavis specifically, and also given the content of Huxley's non-fiction of the period, to be discussed shortly, the implication of this quotation is that it was

the Alexander Technique which gave Huxley faith that there were ways to improve the individual, and thus society.

Huxley's discovery of Alexander's ideas combined with other influences at the time, including pacifism and Indian religion, to lead Huxley to a new-found faith in humans' capacity for individual, beneficial change, and thus, by extension, the possibility of positive change for humanity. This had a fundamental effect on *Eyeless in Gaza*, and all of Huxley's subsequent work, not only in the nature of its ideas but also aesthetically and stylistically. *Eyeless in Gaza* was an attempt to integrate Alexander's ideas into a fictional work. This contributes to the novel's didactic nature. It contributes to the language and philosophical position of the novel's ideal character and, subsequently, its central character, who in turn, it is suggested, may yet influence other characters. It forms an important part of the central character's development, and the nature and depiction of that development, and thus the overall narrative progression, including the positive conclusion. These issues will now be discussed.

Whilst possessing many elements of Huxley's earlier satires, *Eyeless in Gaza* also has a set of ideal values, which are communicated and embodied by an ideal character, as well as a central character who undergoes transformation as the result of this ideal character and his values. Huxley's subsequent novels, whilst still satirical, would not debunk every philosophical position portrayed, but *all but one*, which would be presented as correct, and all others wrong. In contrast to Huxley's previous novels, which sceptically presented the views of all the various characters as flawed, *Eyeless in Gaza* is a novel with a point to make, with a defined position: pacifist, mystical, and devoted to self-improvement, a position which is presented as superior to other ways to live one's life. Beavis's debates with Staites (who cynically refers to Miller as Beavis's 'neo-Jesus avatar' (211)) on the nature of humanity are not unlike the debates between characters of different philosophical positions in Huxley's earlier satirical novels. Staites does not believe in humans' ability to self-improve: ' "Swine will be swine" '(211). Anthony, however, now has a belief, like Alexander, in humanity's positive 'potentialities' (211). The change

here is that Anthony's perspective is presented as positive and life-enhancing, and it is his perspective that the book ends upon, a position of hope, without a hint of irony or cynicism: 'He knew now that all would be well' (409). The only characters who end the novel in a positive position are those who follow this approach, Miller and Beavis. As noted above, there may also be hope for Helen, who, after more attempts by Beavis to convert her, may come to one of the pacifist meetings. The novel also features, in Beavis, a central character who undergoes positive transformation. This transformation, engendered by Miller and his Alexanderist lessons, creates a juxtaposition of Beavis's earlier and later selves, emphasised by the novel's non-chronological structure. Beavis's later self also provides the novel with a hopeful ending. For a Huxley novel to end, as mentioned, with the phrase: 'He knew now that all would be well' (409) marks a major change in his novel writing.

Alexander and his ideas undoubtedly contributed to the decreased ambivalence of Huxley's work. *Eyeless in Gaza* features, in Miller, a character who speaks at length about his particular philosophy and who is presented entirely positively, without being satirised. Because of these new elements of Huxley's novel writing, many of which would become the norm from this work onwards, his writing becomes more didactic. In his 1994 introduction to *Brave New World*, David Bradshaw identifies what he terms 'the rich ambivalence' of the novel as being a central element of its success.¹⁹ After *Eyeless in Gaza*, readers of Huxley novels would be left in no doubt as to Huxley's opinion on which characters, and which philosophical positions, were right and which wrong. From this point, Huxley's works would be criticised for a tendency to preach. Huxley's anti-novelistic tendency to tell rather than show, which, though always present in his works, had been compromised by his own philosophical confusion, had free rein once Huxley had found a set of values in which he believed.

¹⁹ David Bradshaw, 'Introduction', in *Brave New World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), p. x.

However, *Eyeless in Gaza*'s lack of ambivalence is a special case; the novel is more satisfying as a narrative than previous or subsequent works precisely because of the character development of Beavis, which is presented sincerely and movingly. Subsequent novels which aimed for a similar effect, depicting a character moving from cynicism to a new-found faith, such as Will Farnaby in *Island*, were less convincing. Farnaby the cynic and Farnaby the mystic were both written by Huxley when he was sure of his philosophical beliefs. Beavis's development was written, and rewritten, concurrently with undeniably significant developments in Huxley's thought, including his conversion to Alexander's teachings. These circumstances of composition make the novel one of the most complex of Huxley's career. Unlike his earlier novels' cynical detachment, or his later novels' didacticism, *Eyeless in Gaza* represents, to some extent, an account of Huxley's own transformation in philosophy, as it was occurring. The novel's autobiographical nature gives it a power that Huxley, a writer whose literary gifts were not tailored to the creation of deep characterisation, was unable to produce elsewhere.

Thus Huxley's novels from *Eyeless in Gaza* onwards, notably *After Many a Summer*, *Time Must Have a Stop*, and *Island*, become both more optimistic and more pessimistic in tone. They are more optimistic in the sense that they often present the view, by at least one character, that there are workable solutions for humanity, that there are ways to improve the world and techniques to change one's behaviour, and this view is not satirised or shown to be wrong. However, Huxley's later works at times possess an even more pessimistic tone than his earlier Pyrrhonic works because they represent Huxley's frustration that humanity is not using these solutions. Instead of the earlier detached cynicism, or frivolous delight in exposing human pretensions, is found a deeper pessimism and impatience with humanity's failings, precisely because Huxley is now less detached, and believes positive change is possible. This theme is actually discussed by the character of Bill Propter in Huxley's next novel, *After Many a Summer*:

‘One should be profoundly pessimistic about the things most people are optimistic about – such as applied science, and social reform, and human nature as it is in the average man or woman [...] One should be profoundly optimistic about the thing they’re so pessimistic about that they don’t even know it exists – I mean, the possibility of transforming and transcending human nature [...] by the use of properly directed intelligence and goodwill.’²⁰

The novel itself reveals Huxley to be in the same position. Unlike in his earlier satires, Huxley does offer hope in the form of the character of Propter, a man who represents the actualizable positive human being, and who also preaches a mystical philosophy (which includes Alexanderist ideas) that offers a way out of humankind’s misery. However, most of the characters in the novel do not follow Propter’s lead, and Huxley’s presentation of their self-obsessed, deluded, neurotic existences is even more biting than before. Any way other than mine, Huxley states implicitly, will fail. Because a solution is given, Huxley’s satire takes the form of a cautionary tale, a moral fable, rather than expressing his own inability to find a solution and his mockery of those that believe there is one. Huxley is now portraying what happens if one does, or does not, follow the correct path. This new approach begins with *Eyeless in Gaza*, and, as this chapter has shown, the influence of Alexander was integral to these changes.

²⁰ Aldous Huxley, *After Many a Summer* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1939), p. 245.

Chapter 3: Alexander's Influence on Huxley's Non-Fiction 1937-63

Huxley referenced Alexander specifically at various times in his post-*Eyeless in Gaza* non-fiction, as well as referring to Alexanderist themes. This chapter examines the influence of Alexander on Huxley's non-fiction, noting the thematic convergences and areas of alignment between the two men, as well as examining the ways in which their philosophies, and views of the Technique itself, were divergent.¹

After incorporating Alexander's ideas into his fiction in *Eyeless in Gaza*, *Ends and Means* (1937) features the first endorsement of the Alexander Technique in Huxley's non-fiction works. In the work, Huxley offers his views on ways to improve society, and the Alexander Technique is an important element of this vision. Indeed, Alexander used quotations from *Ends and Means*, where Huxley discusses and praises the Technique, in his own final book, 1941's *The Universal Constant in Living* (UCL, 98). When the Alexander Technique teacher Frank Pierce Jones states that Huxley 'did the most to bring the Technique to the attention of the reading public',² he also remarks that many, including himself, came to Alexander's teachings via *Ends and Means*:

A whole succession of new pupils (myself included), who would probably never have heard of the Alexander Technique if it had not been for Huxley's endorsement in *Ends and Means*, began having lessons either with F. M. in London or with A. R. [Alexander's brother] in Boston or New York.³

The book's title reflects a theme that preoccupied Huxley and that Alexander had reinforced. As discussed, the theme had already been an important element of

¹ *Grey Eminence* (1941), 'Variations On a Philosopher' in *Themes and Variations* (1950), and *The Devils of Loudun* (1952), are historical studies that contain novelistic elements. However, I have discussed them in the non-fiction chapter as they are based upon actual, rather than created, people and events.

² Jones, p. 53.

³ Jones, pp. 56-57.

Eyeless in Gaza. The theme can be found throughout *Ends and Means*,⁴ but its core is outlined succinctly in Chapter 1, that ‘the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced’ (9). For Huxley, this was a universal truth which applied to individuals, personal relations and larger social forces.

Ends and Means provides further evidence that Huxley and Alexander were aligned on many issues, such as Alexander’s insistence that societal change is dependent upon individuals (e.g. *CCC*, 97), which is also prevalent throughout *Ends and Means* (e.g. 127), and Alexander’s contention that ‘we all think and act [. . .] in accordance with the peculiarities of our own psycho-physical make-up’ (*CCC*, 96), which Huxley likewise expresses (166). Huxley asserts that ‘intelligence cannot function properly where it is too often or too violently interfered with by the emotions, impulses and emotionally charged sensations’ (265). This view is also expressed in Alexander’s writings, as discussed earlier (e.g. *CCC*, 144). Huxley repeats his conviction, discussed in the *Eyeless in Gaza* chapter above, that ‘if we can learn the art of conscious inhibition on the physical level, it will help us to acquire and practise the same art on the emotional and intellectual levels’ (222). Huxley sees humans’ ‘power of inhibiting emotion’, which is ‘much greater than that of most other animals’, as being one of their finest characteristics (265-66). Thus it is not hard to see why Huxley found the Alexander Technique so appealing.

Ends and Means discusses a major theme of both Huxley’s and Alexander’s writings: the problem of ‘how to translate mere theory and platonic good resolutions into actual practice’ (168), insisting that people need ‘some technique by means of which they can be sure of giving practical effect to their good intentions’ (214). This theme, which was also a major component of *Eyeless in Gaza*, can also be found elsewhere in *Ends and Means* (e.g. 308). Huxley expresses hope, as he did in *Eyeless in Gaza*, that a man can ‘re-condition himself’ (177). When Huxley writes of his ideal, non-violent communities of the future, he insists that ‘the individual can be taught, and taught to teach himself, how to repress his

⁴ For example, *Ends and Means* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937), pp. 25-26, p. 52. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

tendencies towards rapacity, bullying, power-seeking and the like' (150). Huxley's conviction that such negative human impulses can be controlled by correct training is highly influenced by his experiences with Alexander. The concept that the training is both instilled from without, and also worked on by the individual from within, is also consistent with Alexander's method.

Huxley's chapter on education shows his close alignment with Alexander's ideas. Huxley's criticisms of both traditional education's restrictions and of 'modern' education, which gives children 'too much freedom' (178), concur with Alexander's views on this subject (*MSI*, 108-56). Huxley posits that 'the education of the body' 'must underlie and accompany all the other forms' (219). He writes that 'mind and body form a single organic whole' (219). He later discusses how 'mental states' affect physical health, and references a book by McDonagh, the aforementioned doctor recommended to him by Alexander (258). Huxley's Alexanderist conviction in the interconnection of mind and body is also revealed in his endorsement of William Sheldon's 'psycho-physical type[s]' (194), which will be discussed in the next part of the thesis.

Huxley iterates the Alexanderist proposition that 'modern urban life' makes humans 'physically' 'maladjusted' (222). He writes that:

The body is the instrument used by the mind to establish contact with the outside world. Any modification of this instrument must correspondingly modify the mind's relations with external reality. Where the body is maladjusted and under strain, the mind's relations, sensory, emotional, intellectual, conative, with external reality are likely to be unsatisfactory. (220)

This concurs with Alexander's discussion, quoted earlier, of the importance of correct psycho-physical 'sensory appreciation' and how humans' 'psycho-physical mechanisms' affect their conceptions of reality (*CCC*, 96). Huxley adds that this maladjustment of the body will also prevent a satisfactory 'internal reality', prevent contact with 'that more-than-self [...] God, the Law, the Light, the integrating principle of the world' (220). Thus Huxley defines the aims of Alexander's psycho-physical Technique not only in Alexander's terms, but also in his own mystical

ones. Huxley highlights that the importance of ‘bodily postures’ is found among both Eastern and Christian mystics, again making connections between Alexander’s ideas and those of mysticism (220-21). However, when Huxley discusses all the requirements that any body training system should have: freeing the body from maladjustment and strain, increasing awareness, producing the ability to inhibit, allowing intellectual, emotional and physical ‘conscious control’ (220-223), he describes Alexander’s as ‘the only system of physical education’ of which he is aware that fulfils all the necessary criteria (223).

Huxley then proceeds with a full, official endorsement of the Technique, referring the reader to the three books which Alexander had published up to that time (223), and emphasising several of Alexander’s central tenets. He asserts that the Technique cannot be fully expressed in words, that it can only be understood in practice, that it requires a teacher, along with the effort and full co-operation of the student (223). He writes that it provides ‘relief from strain’ and ‘improvement in physical and mental health’ (223), that it aids ‘proper physical integration’, and that it is both a curative and preventative measure (222-23). He references Alexander’s concepts of inhibition and end-gaining, and discusses the ‘general heightening of consciousness’ which he believes the Technique induces (223). He gives his personal testimonial as to the Technique’s efficacy, insisting that ‘it gives us all the things we have been looking for in a system of physical education’ (223). Huxley believes that an important facet of the Alexander Technique is its ability to inhibit ‘irrelevance on the emotional and intellectual levels’ (224). In subsequent works, such as *Grey Eminence* (1941), Huxley expressed the opinion that such mental distractions were a fundamental obstacle to self-improvement.⁵ Huxley concludes his *Ends and Means* chapter on education by writing of the Alexander Technique that ‘we cannot ask more from any system of physical education’ (224), and that it is essential ‘if we seriously desire to alter human beings in a desirable direction’ (224).

⁵ Aldous Huxley, *Grey Eminence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1941; repr. 1956), pp. 66-70, hereafter *GE*.

The main development in Huxley's use of Alexander's ideas in *Ends and Means* is that Huxley discusses the Technique in the context of spirituality, whereas in *Eyeless in Gaza* it was more its moral application that was emphasised. Beavis did not discuss Miller's Alexanderist technique as a prerequisite to 'enlightenment', to 'non-attachment', in *Eyeless in Gaza*, as Huxley does in *Ends and Means* (221). Huxley frames the entirety of *Ends and Means* with the proposition that non-attachment is the ultimate goal for all human beings, and that his book is about methods to achieve this:

It is difficult to find a single word that will adequately describe the ideal man of the free philosophers, the mystics, the founders of religions. 'Non-attached' is perhaps the best. The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possessions. Non-attached to the objects of these various desires. Non-attached to his anger or hatred; non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, social position. Non-attached even to science, art, speculation, philanthropy. Yes, non-attached even to these. (3-4)

Huxley sees the aim of physical education, as of all education, and all of life, as 'producing non-attachment' (220). Throughout *Ends and Means*, Huxley emphasises the importance of 'awareness' (e.g. 125). He writes that 'the remedy is to be sought in awareness' (317), that 'good is that which heightens awareness' (323), and he criticises lack of awareness in humans as a major obstacle to growth. This position aligns Huxley not only with Alexander but also with religious mysticism. Huxley describes 'unawareness' as 'one of the main sources of attachment and evil' (221), and thus the Alexander Technique for improving awareness becomes, for Huxley, a device for increasing non-attachment. The Alexander Technique increases physical control, and those who are 'physically uncontrolled' cannot achieve 'non-attachment', 'enlightenment', 'mystical union with God' (221). Thus Huxley's stated aims for the use of the Alexander Technique, to recondition the mind-body for 'union with God', are *not* those of Alexander himself. Huxley once again endorses the Alexander Technique in *Ends and Means*' final chapter (326), but he also warns of the perils of self-development without a recognition that the ultimate aim is to transcend the personality, to

obliterate the individual ego: ‘The development of personality may be regarded as an end in itself or, alternatively, as a means towards an ulterior end – the transcendence of personality through immediate cognition of ultimate reality’ (326). Huxley saw all methods of self-improvement, including the Alexander Technique, as a means to increased awareness and an improved personality, in order that one might *transcend* personality; as a means to a mystical end, rather than as an end in itself.

Thus the view of the Alexander Technique implied in this passage is that although it is highly effective and useful, it is ultimately limited. In *Grey Eminence*, Huxley writes that ‘the only method capable of transforming the personality’ is ‘that of the contemplatives’ (*GE*, 291). This suggests that Huxley believes that mystical practices can truly transform a human’s personality as they become united with God, whereas the Alexander Technique, though helpful, does not transform the personality, only improves it, increasing its positive aspects and inhibiting its negative ones. ‘For the radical and permanent transformation of personality only one effective method has been discovered – that of the mystics’, Huxley writes (*GE*, 290). Thus, whilst Huxley wrote that the Alexander Technique and mystical practices were the ‘only two solutions’ for ‘bridging the gap between idealistic theory and actual practice’,⁶ he believed that only ‘the mystic’s technique’ offered the possibility of ‘transcending personality’, which he saw as the ultimate goal.⁷

Huxley describes the methods of ‘Indian ascetics’ as ‘very valuable’ (233), and describes these practices as forms of ‘conscious control’ (232). Thus, he uses Alexanderist language to describe practices which, as discussed earlier, Alexander specifically disparaged. However, Huxley also sees these methods as potentially dangerous (232-34). His conclusion is that these methods should be avoided, and the Alexander Technique used instead, at least until more research has been done on the other methods (243). However, he is rejecting these other techniques on the grounds that they are potentially dangerous, not because he has a fundamental

⁶ Huxley, ‘End-Gaining and Means Whereby’, p. 150.

⁷ *Ibid.*

distrust of the methods involved as catering to the unconscious, unlike Alexander (e.g. *MSI*, 56). Huxley's openness to beneficial unconscious processes is in stark contrast to Alexander's distrust. Again, in *Ends and Means*, Huxley praises faith healing (259), whereas Alexander criticises it for 'deadening the objective or conscious mind' (*MSI*, 52). Thus the mysticism Huxley espoused in works such as *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945) is in opposition to Alexander's teachings, as he dismissed mysticism as catering to the unconscious. Huxley, though admitting that their effects can be beneficial, neutral or harmful, does see positive potential in the use of various types of 'spiritual exercises', which are not Alexanderist.⁸ Thus Huxley does not see any incompatibility between these techniques and Alexander's methods, unlike Alexander himself. However, whilst suggesting that physical asceticism may aid spiritual advancement, Huxley warns of the potential harmful effects of 'physical austerities', and the 'supernormal powers', or 'Siddhis', he believes are associated with them, believing them to be possibly 'dangerous to health' (99-100). Alexander, as outlined above, was also distrustful of these practices.

In *The Perennial Philosophy* Huxley writes that 'mind affects its body' and of 'the reaction upon the physical organism of emotional states' (26), and uses the phrases 'psycho-physical' (e.g. 273) and 'mind-body' (e.g. 214). This belief in the interconnectedness of mind and body was a concept integral not only to Alexander's teachings but also to the Indian religions which so influenced Huxley, and which were a major influence on this work. There is one passage in the book that particularly utilises Alexander's concepts and terminology. Huxley diagnoses bodily problems, 'degenerative changes in particular organs, such as the heart, kidneys, pancreas, intestines and arteries' as 'among the consequences' of 'wrong uses of the psycho-physical organism' (230). Thus, within a work where Alexander's direct influence is not particularly noticeable, this sentence provides a clear reminder that Huxley is still thinking in Alexanderist terms. Here, Huxley

⁸ Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 274, hereafter *PP*. Subsequent parenthetical page references are from this work unless and until otherwise stated.

links Alexander's concepts with Chinese religion: 'Most of these degenerative diseases are due to the fact that civilised human beings do not, on any level of their being, live in harmony with Tao, or the divine Nature of Things' (230). Again, Huxley connects Alexander's ideas with other, older, religious concepts. Here is Huxley's inclusive mission, central to *The Perennial Philosophy* itself, of integrating ideas from disparate times and places, of revealing the underlying similarity in multifarious thought systems. He explains the same fundamental human problem, using both the language of Alexander and the language of Tao. Huxley has integrated Alexander's ideas into his own wider, mystical, religious world-view. (Huxley's specific reference to 'civilised human beings' is in line with Alexander's contention that modern civilisation had exacerbated 'wrong use', as humans were living in ways to which they were not psycho-physically adapted).

Huxley's non-fiction works, whilst not necessarily referencing Alexander directly, often contain elements of Alexanderist themes and language. *Themes and Variations* (1950), for example, exhibits several of the Alexanderist themes that can be found throughout Huxley's works: the conviction that the mind and body must be viewed as one,⁹ (including the Alexanderist assertion that happiness, for the philosopher Maine de Biran, depended on the 'state of his psycho-physical organism' (88)), the emphasis on the means-whereby ends are to be achieved (41, 48, 55), and the problem of translating good intentions into acts, of being able to inhibit behaviours one knows to be wrong (30, 82-83, 143-44). *The Devils of Loudun* (1952) similarly reveals Huxley still tackling Alexanderist concerns, but without specifically referencing Alexander or his teachings. Huxley notes his continuing interest in the connections between mind and body, 'the way in which human minds are associated with that highly organised vortex of cosmic energy known as a body'.¹⁰ Huxley comments on humans' largely unconscious behaviour,

⁹ For example, see Aldous Huxley, *Themes and Variations* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950; repr. 1954), pp. 7-8, 68-69, 97, 88-89, 93, 106, 115, 136-37. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

¹⁰ *The Devils of Loudun* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952; repr. London: Penguin, 1971), p. 173. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

‘the quasi-hypnotic trance in which humans live’ (25). He believes that orators, such as ‘great preacher[s]’, even if their cause is good, deepen this state among their listeners, that their power appeals to the ‘irrational’ part of humans, ‘the least creditable elements in human nature’ (25). Here is Huxley, and Alexander’s, distrust of the irrational, unconscious elements of humanity. Huxley sees, like Alexander, a lack of conscious control among humanity, and is concerned that this makes people easily manipulated. Alexander, expressing the very same concerns, discusses how ‘religious bodies’ use ‘emotional appeal’ to achieve their effects, which ‘encourages people to rely more and more upon instinct and ever less and less upon thinking and reasoning’ (*UCL*, 154). The ‘rousing of mass emotion’ is always ‘dangerous’, as it can ‘induce people to do what it would never have occurred to them to do under the guidance of thinking and reasoning’ (*UCL*, 154). Alexander believed that those trained in his Technique are less likely to be manipulated by ‘emotional reactions’, that they have conscious control over their behaviour and thus can hold ‘tendencies in check, [and] cannot easily be influenced by others to the extent of becoming mere puppets’ (*UCL*, 173). Huxley also writes in *The Devils of Loudun* of that central theme of *Eyeless in Gaza*, and of Alexander’s work: the inability to act on good intentions, humans’ ‘paradoxical temptation to do the exact opposite of what they know they ought to do’ (36). Huxley writes of removing ‘bad habits’ and ‘impulses’ (93), but this time in the context of Christian mysticism. He still has ends in alignment with Alexander, but in this work he is examining other, different means to those ends. Here he examines prayer as a method of vanquishing ‘bad habits’ and ‘tendencies’ (244).

In *The Doors of Perception* (1954), Huxley criticises predominantly verbal education,¹¹ and discusses ‘psycho-physical’ teaching, methods for ‘increasing the acuity of human perceptions’ (52). The Alexander Technique is concerned with precisely these areas. Huxley mentions Gestalt therapy, which, according to Bloch,

¹¹ *The Doors of Perception* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), p. 52. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

was itself influenced by Alexander's work.¹² Huxley bemoans the lack of attention given by intellectuals to 'the arts of being directly aware of the given facts of our existence' (53), to finding out how to become 'more perceptive, more intensely aware of inward and outward reality' (54), and of how humans' 'psychological malpractices' can make them 'physically ill' (54). Again, these are all highly, though not exclusively, Alexanderist concerns. Huxley identifies 'constant and unstrained alertness' as the ideal mental state. Likewise, Alexander is concerned with this same state (*CCC*, 174). However, the premise of *The Doors of Perception* can be seen as inherently in opposition to Alexander's teachings, an endorsement of the benefits of drug-induced altered states of consciousness being the complete antithesis of Alexander's insistence upon the use of conscious reason. Huxley writes positively of the effects of peyote, which creates a 'religious experience' which is 'direct and illuminating, more spontaneous, less the home-made product of the superficial, self-conscious mind' (49). This could hardly be further from Alexander's conviction that the conscious mind and its ability to reason were 'man's supreme inheritance' (*MSI*, 11), and that subconscious, or unconscious, influence on experience was dangerous and damaging.

This is one of the fundamental differences in the philosophies of Alexander and Huxley, which stems from Huxley's conversion to mysticism. Whilst Huxley saw potential dangers in the subconscious and unconscious levels of the mind, he also saw great positive potential in their utilisation. Huxley believed in positive forms of 'self-transcendence' (50), whereas Alexander believed that the aim was 'the growth and progress of intellectual control' (*MSI*, 30). For Alexander, as discussed earlier, there are the animal instincts, the subconscious human instincts, and superior to all these is conscious reason. Huxley, however, believes in a yet superior level, a form of direct intuition or awareness, distinct from conscious thought:

Systematic reasoning is something we could not, as a species or as individuals, do without. But neither, if we are to remain sane, can we possibly do without direct perception, the more unsystematic the better, of the inner

¹² Bloch, p. 243.

and outer worlds into which we have been born. This given reality is an infinite which passes all understanding and yet admits of being directly and in some sort totally apprehended. It is a transcendence belonging to another order than the human, and yet it may be present to us as a felt immanence, an experienced participation. (54-55)

Huxley writes of ‘those Other Worlds of transcendental experience, where the soul knows itself as unconditioned and of like nature with the divine’ (50). Huxley’s belief in mysticism meant that he did not see the conscious mind as ‘man’s supreme inheritance’, but as something useful but, ultimately ‘superficial’ (49), because it is related to the human ego, which he believed must be transcended. The idea of knowing spiritual, religious truths by ‘direct perception’ (54) is, to Huxley, a more advanced, greater form of knowledge than that achieved by the intellect alone. Thus Alexander’s vision of human evolution via a technique which allows much greater conscious control over one’s behaviour is at odds with Huxley’s view of human evolution as requiring a move *beyond* conscious reason to ‘transcendental experience’ of ‘the divine’ (50).

The essay collection *Adonis and the Alphabet* (1956) features Huxley returning to a number of themes that preoccupied both himself and Alexander. Huxley once again refers to ‘psychosomatic disease’,¹³ showing his continued concern with the mind-body connection. He reiterates his Alexanderist position on the nature of ends and means: ‘The nature of the universe is that ends can never justify means. On the contrary, the means always determine the end’ (22). (Huxley makes this point again later in the chapter (35).) He relates this principle to historical forces, seeing it at work in the aftermath of the First World War (22), as well as in the ineffectiveness of education that does not consider the means by which the child attempts to achieve his/her ends, namely ‘the child’s psycho-physical instrument’ (22). Huxley also returns to one of his most oft-discussed themes, that humans ‘know theoretically what they ought to do, but go on doing the

¹³ *Adonis and the Alphabet* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956), p. 18. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

opposite all the same' (42), a problem which, as previously discussed, the Alexander Technique is concerned with resolving.

Alexander criticises the common 'obsession for clinging blindly to the orthodox and familiar' which hampers our 'growth and development' (*UCL*, 149), and regards this impulse as being 'due to habits of thought which orthodox methods of education do little to correct and much to encourage' (*UCL*, 149). Similarly, Huxley's first two essays in this collection are concerned with not relying solely on established knowledge, but instead considering unorthodox educational approaches, Alexander's among them. Huxley criticises the 'unregenerate end-gaining', the 'activity for activity's sake', which is encouraged by 'the Progressive Educationists' (25). Alexander likewise criticised progressive education (*MSI*, 108-56). The theme of Huxley's first essay, 'The Education of an Amphibian', is non-verbal education, an area which Huxley feels is under-valued and under-explored. The essay is infused with Alexander's ideas and language. Throughout, and at other times in the essay collection, Huxley, like Alexander, presents the removal of cognitive, perceptual, intellectual, emotional, and moral 'bad habits' as of central importance (e.g. 33, 52, 65). Huxley identifies the fundamental question as being 'how can we educate the psycho-physical instrument, by means of which we learn and live?', identifying the 'psycho-physical instrument' as being the most important aspect of life in general and education in particular (19). He writes that 'the notion that one can educate young people without making any serious attempt to educate the psycho-physical instrument, by means of which they do all their learning and living, seems on the face of it radically absurd' (37). Huxley regards 'the kinesthetic' sense as being 'the most fundamental' in terms of 'awareness', and believes it must be trained (19).

Huxley writes a four-page endorsement of Alexander and his methods within this essay, restating many of the fundamental principles of Alexander's work, and describing the Alexander Technique as 'absolutely necessary to education' (21). He writes of 'using [the] psycho-physical instrument improperly' (19), of 'urban-industrial civilisation' making humans' kinesthetic sense debauched,

even though they do not realise it (19-20), of the interconnectedness of the physical and mental: ‘physical events condition mental events’ (20), of the dangers of ‘bad habits’ (22), and of the fact that any system of education which does not use Alexander’s methods is ineffective if not harmful (21). Twenty years after he first discovered it, Huxley complains that educators, even those enamoured of the Alexander-endorsing John Dewey, refuse to introduce the Alexander Technique into the education system (21). In the field of educational failure Huxley identifies ‘the fundamental cause of causes’ as ‘improper use and loss of the natural standard of psycho-physical health’ (22). He uses the phrases ‘end-gainers’, ‘the psycho-physical means whereby’ (22), ‘the use of the self’ (25) and ‘psycho-physical organisms’ (26). He refers to and recommends Alexander’s four books (20). He also reveals that he believes that ‘physiologists and zoologists’ in ‘other fields’ have confirmed Alexander’s work, thus attempting to give credence to the Technique (20).

Alexanderist ideas can also be found within Huxley’s discussions of other topics within the essay collection. When he is discussing Loutrec’s exceptional visual memory, he questions whether this is a gift given to very few, or an ability which all have that is not achieved because of ‘some improper use of our minds and bodies’ (244). Here is an example of how deeply Alexander’s language and ideas have become integrated into Huxley’s thought. In amongst an unrelated essay, Alexander’s concept of ‘improper use’ emerges, leading Huxley to consider what various human potentialities it may be preventing, and regarding it as a possible source of many different human failings.

Adonis and the Alphabet shows that, once again, whereas Alexander believed his Technique to be original and superior, Huxley looked for connections. Huxley refers to others who, like Alexander, discuss how ‘the conscious will’ can be ‘used to inhibit indulgence in the bad habits which have come to seem natural’ (25), including Luigi Bonpensiere (25), Dr Eugen Herrigel (25), and Jiddu Krishnamurti (33), the latter of which Huxley had met and befriended when he

moved to California in 1938.¹⁴ In his discussion of various varieties of non-verbal education, Huxley also praises Dr W. H. Bates' eye exercises (27),¹⁵ which Alexander believed were 'end-gaining' and thus harmful,¹⁶ and recommends suggestion and hypnosis (32), which Alexander regarded as dangerous (*MSI*, 52). Huxley discusses the negative impact of mental 'distractions', such as emotional responses and 'emotionally charged memories', and mental techniques to negate their destructive effects (69). This is precisely what Alexander aimed to combat, as he wrote that his Technique can help to eradicate 'unduly excited fear reflexes, uncontrolled emotions and fixed prejudices' (*CCC*, 134). But in this instance Huxley does not discuss the Alexander Technique, but another that has the hallmarks of Jiddu Krishnamurti's approach.

In a discussion of 'mystical wisdom' (70), Huxley writes of the importance of self-knowledge, including awareness of one's 'hidden motives', and of one's 'thinking, [one's] physical functioning' (70). He stresses the need to be 'aware of what you do and think' (70). The Alexander Technique is concerned with cultivating precisely this awareness. The reference to 'hidden motives' recalls Beavis's discovery that Miller's Alexanderist technique gave him an 'increasing ability to detect one's motives for any given piece of behaviour' (*EG*, 213). But in *Adonis and the Alphabet* Huxley finds these ideas in both modern psychotherapy and ancient religion. What Huxley once presented, in *Eyeless in Gaza*, as the positive effects of Miller's Alexanderist teachings, is presented in *Adonis and the Alphabet* as effects that can be achieved by a variety of methods. Huxley even suggests that extensive research needs to be conducted to find out 'which are the most important items in a programme of psycho-physical training' (38). This quotation suggests that Huxley saw many options and possibilities in this area, and does not display a faith that the Alexander Technique is sufficient.

¹⁴ Huxley was introduced to the spiritual philosopher Krishnamurti by Gerald Heard. Krishnamurti was based at Ojai, near Huxley's Los Angeles home, and became part of the Huxley circle.

¹⁵ Huxley devoted an entire book to praising Bates' methods, *The Art of Seeing* (Chatto and Windus: 1943).

¹⁶ Bloch, p. 189.

Adonis and the Alphabet reveals that Huxley viewed the process and ultimate goal of the Alexander Technique in a different way to Alexander himself. Huxley connects Alexander's ideas to a conception of human beings as both 'a conscious self' and, 'below the threshold of consciousness', 'five or six [...] not-selves' (16-17). These are the personal subconscious not-self of habits and repressed impulses, the 'vegetative soul' not-self (17) that is in charge of the body, the not-self of 'insights and inspirations' (17), the not-self of archetypes, the not-self of visionary experience, and the 'universal Not-Self, [...] the Holy Spirit, the Atman-Brahman' (18). He thus describes the kinesthetic sense as 'the main line of communication between the conscious self and the personal subconscious on the one hand and the vegetative soul on the other' (19). He defines bad habits as 'the conscious ego and the personal sub-conscious interfer[ing] with the normal functioning of the deeper not-selves' (23). Thus Huxley characterises the Alexander Technique as a process of returning to a natural, intuitive state in the mind-body, an allowing of the unconscious 'vegetative soul' to run the psycho-physical proceedings:

If we wish to educate the psycho-physical instrument, we must train people in the art of getting out of their own light [. . .] That which must be relaxed is the ego and personal subconscious, that which must be active is the vegetative soul and the not-selves which lie beyond it. (23)

This is Huxley's language, not Alexander's. Here Huxley combines Alexander's ideas with his own systems of thought. It is a sign of how deeply Huxley has absorbed Alexander's concepts that he incorporates them into his own beliefs; that, as well as using Alexanderist language, he also discusses Alexander's ideas using concepts and language, and in contexts, not used by Alexander himself. Huxley links Alexander's ideas with the concept of 'animal grace' and 'spiritual grace', the respective lower and higher levels of unconscious grace that Huxley believes the conscious human can receive. For Huxley, the Alexander Technique, by restoring psycho-physical balance, enables the conscious self to 'receive the animal grace of physical health and the spiritual grace of insight' (23). Thus Huxley, by connecting Alexander's ideas to his own notions about the benefits which the self can receive

from various ‘not-selves’, presents the Alexander Technique as inducing not only physical health, a benefit Alexander himself discussed, but also ‘spiritual grace’, an area *not* discussed by Alexander. Huxley is combining Alexander’s concepts with his own spiritual convictions.

Huxley’s language is revealing of his philosophical divergences from Alexander. When he writes that to achieve correct psycho-physical functioning is to ‘receive the animal grace’, this suggests a passive process, where the ‘conscious ego’ is the obstacle which must be overcome, as it ‘interfere[s] with normal functioning’ (23). Thus Huxley describes the Technique as a surrendering to natural unconscious processes, rather than, as Alexander describes it, an assertion of ‘conscious control’, preventing unconscious processes from being our ‘master’ (*MSI*, 87-92). Alexander believed not in the grace receivable from the unconscious, but that ‘the conscious mind must be quickened’ (*MSI*, 52), that all human activity and thought must be brought under the active jurisdiction of the conscious mind. Alexander actually describes humans as ‘too close to the animal plane of evolution’, because of their ‘tendency to react as creatures of impulse’ (*UCL*, 154). Thus even though Alexander saw mind-body control as being instinctively correct in animals, he did not see humans’ return to psycho-physical health as a return to animal instinct (which he regarded with suspicion (*UCL*, 154)), or as submission to unconscious ‘animal grace’, but as a state achieved by application of the conscious mind. Huxley views not only the process of the Alexander Technique, but also its ultimate goal, differently from Alexander. He writes that we must use our ‘conscious will’ to prevent ‘bad habits’ (24), as Alexander does, but he adds that the purpose of this is to prevent the greater, unconscious elements of human beings, the ‘inner lights’, from being ‘eclips[ed]’ (24). This is a decidedly un-Alexanderist statement. Thus Alexander and Huxley, although they are describing the same technique, conceptualise and articulate it differently due to their divergent belief systems.

Alexander describes the ‘adherents of religious and other sects’ as having ‘self-hypnotic’ tendencies (*UCL*, 151-52), which are dangerous because they are

unconscious and instinctive, and prevent the use of conscious ‘reasoning processes’ (UCL, 152). In *Adonis and the Alphabet*, Huxley similarly discusses how religious rituals can become merely ‘conditioned reflex[es]’ (64), forms of ‘post-hypnotic suggestion’ (64). Thus Huxley, like Alexander, believes in the importance of conscious reason, as his support of traditional intellectual, scientific education (e.g. 44-46) makes clear. However, he also insists on the positive power of unconscious processes, in the beneficence of the unconscious ‘not-selves’ (25). He believes in ‘letting go as a person in order that the immanent and transcendent Unknown Quantity may take hold’ (65). Huxley’s position as regards the relative merits of the conscious and unconscious mind is clarified further when he states:

This does not mean, of course, that the conscious self can ever abdicate its position as knower, reasoner and maker of moral judgements. What it does mean is that we must give up the insane illusion that a conscious self [...] can do its work singlehanded [...] Proficiency in any field comes to those who have learned how to place the resources of their consciousness at the disposal of the Unconscious. (24)

Thus for Huxley, the ideal is for conscious will and unconscious grace to work together harmoniously. Huxley’s conversion to mysticism meant that he did not value conscious thought and reason as highly as did Alexander, as is highlighted when Huxley disagrees with Descartes:

My existence does not depend on the fact that I am thinking; it depends on the fact that, whether I know it or not, I am being thought – being thought by a mind much greater than the consciousness which I ordinarily identify with myself. This fact is recognized by the tennis pro as it is recognised by the mystic, by the piano teacher as by the yogin, by the vocal coach as by the Zen master and the exponent of mental prayer. If I get out of my not-selves light, I shall be illumined. (24)

When Huxley describes this relinquishing of the conscious self as being at work in different activities, in the first instance of each phrase he provides examples of areas where the Alexander Technique has been applied: to sport, music and voice production. But Huxley sees the precise same principle at work in the instances in the second half of each phrase, as used by the mystic, the yogin, the Zen master, and the exponent of mental prayer. Huxley is describing the Alexander Technique

and its effects as something similar to those of mysticism, rather than something radically opposed to and different from them, as Alexander maintained.

In *Brave New World Revisited* (1958), Huxley discusses Alexanderist themes without specifically referring to Alexander. He restates his belief in the importance of focusing on the means by which ends are achieved, in this case in political life. The result if ‘personal ends are subordinated to organizational means’ is demonstrated by the regimes of ‘Hitler and Stalin’.¹⁷ He again expresses his conception of body and mind as inseparable, using the terms ‘psycho-physical’ (137) and ‘mind-body’ (140). He insists that theories of ‘human behaviour’ that ignore ‘the individual mind-body’ are ‘inadequate’ (140). He also expresses his fears, previously discussed in *The Devils of Loudun*, of how ‘non-rational’ propaganda can appeal to ‘passions, blind impulses, unconscious cravings or fears’ (51). His emphasis on this propaganda, and the reactions that it arouses, as being non-rational (51, 145, 146), tallies with Alexander’s focus on the rational mind and similar distrust of unconscious, emotional reactions. As discussed above, Alexander expressed a similar concern that those who do not have a technique such as his to enable them to be aware of, and in control of, their unconscious motivations, feelings and impulses, will be easily manipulated (e.g. *CCC*, 173). However, although Alexander criticised hypnosis and suggestion as being ‘harmful’, as ‘deadening the objective or conscious mind’ (*MSI*, 52), Huxley, despite being concerned about their possible abuse by dictators (e.g. 129), does see positive possibilities in their utilisation in *Brave New World Revisited* (e.g. 126-129). Once again, Huxley did not see exploring the potential of anything other than the conscious mind as necessarily dangerous, as Alexander did.

In Huxley’s series of lectures at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1959, entitled *The Human Situation*, Huxley and Alexander’s divergent views on the unconscious are again apparent. Huxley describes ‘the unconscious’ as ‘both

¹⁷ *Brave New World Revisited* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958; repr. 1972), p. 43. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

negative and positive'.¹⁸ He writes of the conscious mind as being 'strictly limited' (150). He discusses various forms of positive 'intervention of the creative unconscious' (161), including genius: 'What may be called genius is the uprush of helpful material from the deep levels of the unconscious' (160), these statements being at odds with Alexander's negative views of impulses not issuing from the conscious mind. When outlining his concerns about the nature of habit, Huxley recognises habits as 'extremely valuable' because 'they permit us to save a great deal of time and to do unimportant things [...] rapidly and efficiently' (245). But they are also 'extremely dangerous' because they make our behaviours fixed and predictable. We react to events 'in terms of something which we learned in the past' (245), and thus become stuck in destructive behaviours and neuroses. Huxley expresses a wish that children could be 'trained to realize the importance both of habit and of non-habit', but admits that 'how exactly this is to be done, I don't know' (245). This is surprising, as Alexander had a very clear position on this issue, which he outlines in *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. His solution to the problem Huxley describes, to achieving the benefits of habit without the drawbacks, is to bring habits under conscious control. In this way they can, according to Alexander, be used to aid efficiency in life, without becoming fixed or harmful:

It is essential to understand the difference between the habit that is recognised and understood and the habit that is not. The difference in its application [...] is that the first can be altered at will and the second cannot. For when real conscious control has been obtained a 'habit' need never become fixed. It is not truly a habit at all, but an order or series of orders given to the subordinate controls of the body, which orders will be carried out until countermanded [...] Thus it will be seen that the difference between the new habit and the old is that the old was our master and ruled us, whilst the new is our servant ready to carry out our lightest wish without question, though always working quietly and unobtrusively on our behalf in accordance with the most recent orders given. (*MSI*, 87-92)

Thus these new habits formed by conscious control are not, like the old, subconscious habits, 'impediments to rapid adaptability, to the assimilation of new

¹⁸ *The Human Situation* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978), p. 152. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

ideas, to originality' (*MSI*, 92). Huxley's admission that he does not know of a solution to his concern suggests that he did not see the Alexander Technique as a full solvent to this issue of habit, as Alexander did.

However, Huxley does endorse the Alexander Technique in these lectures, and discusses many Alexanderist themes: the mind-body connection (154-55), the dangers of bad habits as obstructions to full awareness and growth (245, 248), and the inadequacy of giving 'moral injunctions' in education without mind-body training in how to 'put these injunctions into effect', which Huxley describes as 'one of the grave weaknesses of our current ethical and educational systems' (242). He also sees training 'the mind-bodies which have to do the learning' as essential in order to make any other learning worthwhile (242). However, despite his praise of the Alexander Technique within these discussions, it is presented in the context of an endorsement of a whole selection of mind-body approaches for increasing awareness and 'realizing latent human potentialities' (236), including, again, Gestalt therapy (245) and the Bates method for improving eyesight (242). Huxley's descriptions of some of these other techniques reveal that he, at least, saw them as closely related to Alexander's teachings. Gestalt therapy is described as 'dealing with neurotic problems' by teaching 'people to be aware', to become 'acutely aware of events within the body and events going on in the mind [...] a thoroughgoing training in the basic perceptual awareness which we need in order to exercise all the other functions of the mind-body' (246). This sounds remarkably like the Alexander Technique, and in fact, as mentioned above, may have been influenced by it.¹⁹ Huxley also compares Gestalt therapy to the earlier work by Swiss psychotherapist Vittoz: 'His method was essentially to train his patients to become aware of seemingly the most trivial actions [...] It was a process of becoming aware and learning how to use will and how to be conscious of whatever is being done' (246). Again, the similarities between this description and Alexander's methods are obvious.

¹⁹ Bloch, p. 243.

Huxley also points out that the ideas inherent in Gestalt therapy can be traced back ‘thousands of years’ (245). He sees these techniques not as new creations, but as ‘revivals’ of ‘Buddhist, Tantric and Zen psychology’ (247). Whereas in *Eyeless in Gaza* Beavis criticised ‘“The Precepts of the Gurus”’ for they, unlike Miller’s Alexanderist technique, did not provide instructions to support their injunctions (*EG*, 213), here Huxley writes of the ‘118 exercises in awareness’ offered by the god Shiva in ‘Oriental philosophy’, stating that ‘it is the most comprehensive series of exercises in consciousness that I know of’ and that it ‘will prove to be of very great value’ (247). Here Huxley demonstrates again that he does not see the Alexander Technique as the only solution, but as one among many. He again expresses his urge both to endorse Alexander’s ideas, and to link them to, and combine them with, other practices. The widely-read Huxley observed connections, and highlighted similar ideas from varied sources. This was an impulse not shared by Alexander, who insistently maintained that his Technique was unique. A letter Huxley had written to Margaret Isherwood two years previously reveals a similar message. Huxley writes: ‘It was a pity that old FM had such a one-track mind. For of course there is no panacea, and proper use of the self must be combined with proper diet, proper psychology etc’.²⁰ Huxley then goes on to mention Dr Vittoz in the letter.²¹ Thus, although Huxley would continue to endorse Alexander’s ideas and methods (including in an article published only a month after his letter to Isherwood, ‘The Oddest Science’) it was also clear that he felt that the Alexander Technique, though valuable, was not sufficient.²² Another passage in *The Human Situation* is revealing of Huxley’s attitude. Huxley views the greatest obstacle to awareness as neurosis (243), and that ‘the cure for neurosis, however it is carried out, is some method by which a person may be brought out of his unconscious obsession to a full awareness’ (244). Unlike in *Eyeless in Gaza*, where Beavis

²⁰ Aldous Huxley: *Selected Letters*, ed. by James Sexton (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007), hereafter *Selected Letters*, p. 465, (9 February 1957).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Aldous Huxley, ‘The Oddest Science’, *Esquire*, March 1957, repr. in Robert Baker and James Sexton (eds.), *Aldous Huxley: Complete Essays, Vol. 6* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), pp. 76-83 (pp. 79-80).

discussed Miller's Alexanderist technique as a cure-all for neurosis, here Huxley uses the phrase 'however it is carried out', suggesting that there are many methods of achieving this, not just Alexander's, different in detail but relying upon the same underlying principles.

Chapter 4: Alexander's Influence on Huxley's Fiction 1937-63

Whilst writing *Eyeless in Gaza*, Huxley had discovered the Alexander Technique, and chose to give it a central place in his novel. As discussed above, Beavis's conviction that Miller's Alexanderist technique provided a viable 'method of achieving progress from within as well as from without' (*EG*, 214) is presented as the most important element in Beavis's transformation. Although Huxley's subsequent fiction would never use Alexander's ideas as such a central element of their construction, his later novels still reveal the therapists' influence.

In *After Many a Summer* (1939) the mystic Bill Propter has an Alexanderist view of the mind-body, discussing how mental 'craving and worrying' produces physical ailments by 'impair[ing] the normal functioning of the organism'.¹ This opinion, and the language used to express it, is highly Alexanderist, the words 'organism' and 'functioning' being used throughout Alexander's writings (e.g. *CCC*, 164, and *CCC*, 202 respectively). Propter reiterates the theme of ends and means, that 'trying to do good in the wrong way' has 'frightful results' (151). Propter's mystical discussion of humans' obsessions with 'time' and 'craving' (120) that prevent them from being 'inhabitants of eternity, [...] of transcending personality' (121), is heavily influenced by Vedanta. However, Huxley synthesises this philosophy with Alexander's ideas. He connects these themes to Alexander's concept of 'end-gaining', which is presented as another form of craving and of obsession with future time rather than 'the level of eternity' (120):

Craving even prevents us from seeing properly [...] The harder we try to see, the graver our error of accommodation. And it's the same with bodily posture: the more we worry about doing the thing immediately ahead of us in time, the more we interfere with our correct body posture and the worse, in consequence, becomes the functioning of the entire organism [...] We prevent

¹ *After Many a Summer* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1939; repr. 1950), p. 120. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

ourselves from realizing the physiological and instinctive good that we're capable of as animals. (120-21)

Alexanderist concepts and language abound in this passage. The concept of end-gaining is expressed with the phrase 'the more we worry about doing the thing immediately ahead of us in time, the more we interfere with our correct body posture', and 'bodily posture' is seen as affecting 'the functioning of the entire organism'. The final sentence recalls Alexander's aforementioned view that an animal's mind-body operates correctly instinctively, 'in accordance with the laws of its own being' (120). Once again, though, Huxley's combination of Alexander's ideas with mysticism places him at odds with Alexander's stated intentions, as Propter describes a lack of 'end-gaining', and the correct posture which results from this, as a return to something 'instinctive' and intuitive, rather than, as Alexander envisaged, something achieved by humans through entirely conscious processes. Thus, in Huxley's next novel after *Eyeless in Gaza*, he again presents an ideal, mystic character who also preaches Alexanderist philosophy, albeit to a lesser extent. And Huxley, ever the synthesiser, integrates these Alexanderist views into his own interest in mysticism, despite Alexander's abhorrence of this subject. Huxley's post-*Eyeless in Gaza* faith in the potential for positive individual human progress is also revealed in *After Many a Summer*, as Propter states: 'Any individual has it in his power to refrain from falling, to stop destroying himself. The solidarity with evil is optional, not compulsory' (274).

As discussed earlier, Huxley's post-Alexander novels not only present ideal characters that are living according to Huxley's beliefs, such as *After Many a Summer*'s Propter or *Time Must Have a Stop*'s Bruno Rontini, but also offer depictions of the problems faced by those who do not, or cannot, subscribe to Huxley's philosophy, and do not possess techniques for self-improvement. In *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944), Sebastian Barnack is not in control of his mind-body. He 'wanted to say no to his sensuality and couldn't'.² He thus does not possess the

² Aldous Huxley, *Time Must Have a Stop* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1944), p. 270, hereafter *TMHS*.

tools, purportedly provided by Alexander, to *inhibit* behaviour, which Alexander describes as ‘mentally saying *No*’ (*MSI*, 220). Sebastian sees his body as completely separate and ‘alien’ (*TMHS*, 270), rather than experiencing mind-body unity. He cannot control his behaviour; he cynically charms Mrs Ockham into giving him chocolates, but *afterwards* feels ‘horribly guilty and mean’ (*TMHS*, 2). Beavis, using Miller’s Alexanderist technique, began to be able to notice his negative behaviours *in the moment* and alter them. Sebastian, who has neither the Alexander Technique nor, before his meeting with Bruno Rontini, any understanding of mysticism, does not have this ability. Alexander’s conviction that humans are not evolved to deal with modern industrial society, resulting in maladaptive behaviours, is also expressed by the older, wiser Sebastian: ‘Industrial man – a sentient reciprocating engine having a fluctuating output, coupled to an iron wheel revolving with uniform velocity. And then we wonder why this should be the golden age of revolution and mental derangement’ (*TMHS*, 294).

In the dystopian novel *Ape and Essence* (1948), Huxley’s, and Alexander’s, concern with the nature of ends and means is once again raised. The Arch-Vicar reiterates Huxley’s disgust with the philosophy that ‘“Ideal ends justify the most abominable means”’.³ Earlier in the novel comes the following: ‘Ends are ape-chosen; only the means are man’s’ (11), as Huxley pursues the theme of humans’ conscious reason being employed for nefarious purposes, serving politicians and war-mongers. The unreasoning ‘ape’ is choosing humankind’s ends, and the rational mind is being used to carry these out. Huxley’s imagery of Faraday and Einstein on leashes, controlled by baboons (25, 28), suggests not only science at the service of base human urges but also Alexander’s fear, shared by Huxley, of the rational mind, of conscious reason, controlled by undesirable impulses and instincts. This is precisely what Huxley depicts in the novel, as he presents a world without mysticism or the Alexander Technique. Like Sebastian Barnack in *Time Must Have a Stop*, the character of Dr Poole is a highly intelligent man who lacks the ability to

³ Aldous Huxley, *Ape and Essence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. 94. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

control his baser urges. He cannot, as Beavis began to do in *Eyeless in Gaza*, translate his ‘good intentions into acts’ (*EG*, 11). During an orgy, Poole cannot stop himself from watching, he is ‘drawn irresistibly by a force that is stronger than his will’ (101). Poole’s mind and body are not acting as a unity, but are conflicted; his rational mind, filled with Christian morals, is horrified, but his deeper sexual desires cause him to be fascinated. Huxley describes him as ‘staring out’ at the orgy, ‘avidly and in horror’ (101), depicting his conflicted mixture of disgust and fascination. He is indignant when the Arch-Vicar offers him binoculars, but then ‘all the same, he finally raises the binoculars to his eyes’ (101). In *Eyeless in Gaza*, Beavis, who has been given by Miller the tools for mind-body control, begins to be able to notice his negative urges and change his behaviour, as discussed above. Poole, a man without a technique such as Alexander’s, or any knowledge of the techniques of mysticism, has no control over his mind-body. *Ape and Essence* shows that the issue of mind-body control was a continuing preoccupation and concern of Huxley’s, thus revealing why the Alexander Technique continued to fascinate him.

Alexander’s influence was present until the end of Huxley’s life, as his final novel, *Island* (1962), proves. In this work, Huxley combines many of the ideas, philosophies and techniques that had appealed to him throughout his life to create his vision of an ideal society, the utopian island of Pala. According to Alexander Technique teacher Frank Pierce Jones, Huxley was still studying the Technique during this time: ‘While he was writing *Island* in 1960 he studied the Technique with me [...] Three letters I received from him the year before he died show that his interest had not lapsed’.⁴ The ideas of Alexander are an integral part of the island community, including the education of the children. One of Alexander’s main goals was for his Technique to become a part of standard education: ‘The practical application of the principles of this new method in education and re-education will be invaluable in overcoming the disadvantages and bad habits of our artificial civilised life’ (*MSI*, 340). Mr Menon, the Under-Secretary of Education on Pala,

⁴ Jones, p. 56.

warns of the perils of ‘intensive formal education’ which does not consider ‘the mind-body which has to do the learning and the living’.⁵ He insists that ‘a trained mind-body learns more quickly and more thoroughly than an untrained one’ (238), echoing Alexander’s insistence that mind-body training must be the basis of education, as without it other teaching will be far less productive, if not harmful. Menon speaks of all the questions that must be asked about children, including: ‘“What about his breathing? What about his posture and the way he uses his organism when he’s working, playing, studying?”’ (231-32). The emphasis on posture recalls Alexander’s works, and Alexander devotes three chapters of his first book to ‘breathing’. Again, Alexander’s language is evident, the reference to the use of the organism recalling Alexander’s key phrase, and the title of his third book, *The Use of the Self*, as well as his tendency to describe the human mind-body as the ‘psycho-physical organism’.⁶ Will Farnaby seems to witness the benefits of this mind-body training on movement. He sees the Palanese as having ‘grace of movement’ (p16), and he observes that Mary moves her ‘arms in a gesture that was like a dancer’s’ (9).

When Dr Robert speaks of the importance of physical activity, even for an intellectual, Farnaby questions: ‘“As part of his duties?”’, to which Robert replies ‘“And as part of his pleasure”’ (161). Farnaby responds that such activity would not be pleasurable for him. At this point, Vijaya Bhattacharya begins a discussion that closely resembles Alexander’s ideas:

‘That’s because you weren’t taught to use your mind-body in the right way [. . .] If you’d been shown how to do things with the minimum of strain and the maximum of awareness, you’d enjoy even honest toil [. . .] For example, what’s the proper way of handling yourself while you’re buttoning your clothes? [. . .] We answer the question by actually putting [the children’s] heads and bodies into the physiologically best position. And we encourage them at the same time to notice how it feels to be in the physiologically best position, to be aware of what the process of doing up buttons consists of in terms of touches and pressures and muscular sensations. By the time they’re fourteen they’ve learned how to get the most and the best – objectively and

⁵ *Island*, p. 238. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work, unless and until otherwise stated.

⁶ For example, *CCC*, p. 164.

subjectively – out of any activity they may undertake. And that's when we start them working.' (161-62)

Although Alexander's name is not mentioned, this passage is infused with his ideas and language, including the concept of the 'mind-body' as a single unit, and the insistence that one can be 'taught' and instructed in its correct 'use'. The idea that there is a 'right way' to use the mind-body is a fundamental tenet of Alexander's approach, and its fundamental goal is to increase 'awareness' and minimise 'strain'. The goal of the Technique is, in Alexander's words, to 'enable the individual to stand, sit, walk, breathe, digest, and in fact live with the least possible expenditure of vital energy' (*MSI*, 179), and 'the human subject [. . .] should be able to direct his powers to a definite ordained end with less physical strain' (*MSI*, 227). The notion that there is a 'proper way' of undertaking all everyday actions, from a mental and physical standpoint, is central to Alexander's teachings. The aim of Alexander is to put humans into the 'physiological best position'. Indeed, the idea that such a position exists is Alexanderist. Huxley's phrasing here, specifically mentioning 'heads and bodies', references Alexander's core teaching, mentioned above, that it is the relationship between the head and the rest of the body that is most crucial to correct posture. This phrase also symbolically represents the two areas, mind and body, that the postural changes aim to bring into harmony, supposedly leading to both greater mental awareness and greater physical health. Vijaya's technique of 'actually putting their heads and bodies' into position is, as mentioned earlier, exactly the technique used by Alexander on his patients: 'I am able to re-adjust and to teach others to re-adjust the human machine with the hands; to mould the body, as it were, into its proper shape' (*MSI*, 192). Pala's youth are introduced to Alexander's concepts very early, 'from the first moment they start doing for themselves' (161), revealing how important Huxley still believed these principles to be for healthy development. Once again, this concurs with Alexander's ideas: 'The principle should be applied to children at a very early age' (*CCC*, 62).

Whilst this passage reveals Huxley's continuing endorsement of Alexander's work, a later speech by Dr Robert reveals once again their fundamental disagreement:

'I ought to have made it clear that concrete materialism is only the raw stuff of a fully human life. It's through awareness, complete and constant awareness, that we transform it into concrete spirituality. Be fully aware of what you're doing, and work becomes the yoga of work, play becomes the yoga of play, everyday living becomes the yoga of everyday living'. (168-69)

Robert's focus on the importance of mental awareness whilst carrying out everyday actions is a central component of Alexander's teachings. However, Huxley notices the links with the spirituality of Vedanta, where similar concepts are found. Alexander's view of yoga was, as recounted earlier, unsympathetic. In his discussion of the conscious will and its ability to control the body, Alexander speaks of 'an Indian Yogi' who was studied by Professor Max Müller at Cambridge, and who was able to:

Stop the beating of his own heart at will and suffer no harmful consequences. Let it be clearly understood, however, that that I have no sympathy with these abnormal manifestations which I regard as a dangerous trickery practised on the body, a trickery in no way admirable or to be sought after. The performances of the yogis certainly do not command my admiration, and the well-known system of breathing practised and taught by them is, in my opinion, not only wrong and essentially crude, but I consider that it tends also to exaggerate those very defects from which we suffer in the twentieth century. (*MSI*, 56)

Compare this with Huxley's 1941 article for the *Saturday Review of Literature*, 'End-gaining and Means Whereby', where he states: 'the Alexander Technique for the conscious mastery of primary control is now available, and [. . .] *it can be combined in the most fruitful way with the technique of the mystics*' [my emphasis].⁷ Indeed, the entire theme of Huxley's article 'A Psychophysical Education' is to link Alexander's approach with the 'non-attachment' behaviour of

⁷ Aldous Huxley, 'End-Gaining and Means Whereby' in *Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 October 1941, repr. in Wilfred Barlow (ed.), *More Talk of Alexander* (London: Gollancz, 1978), pp. 149-53 (p. 152).

‘the mystics’.⁸ Compare Alexander, who writes of ‘detachment’ as an idea long in use by mystics, but which only his Technique can truly achieve (*UCL*, xxix). Huxley considered the meditation and breathing techniques of Vedanta and Buddhism to be compatible with Alexander’s approach, whereas Alexander saw his method as fundamentally different from the mysticism of Indian philosophy. Huxley always saw similarity and compatibility where Alexander perceived difference. *Island* shows how Huxley’s first practical experience, through Alexander, of a technique for improving mind-body awareness had led him to explore other, related techniques, whilst still valuing Alexander’s method. This results in many Alexanderist themes being expressed, but not always in the context of an Alexanderist technique.

The goal for the Palanese is to be ‘fully conscious of what you’re doing and experiencing’ (168), so ‘one won’t be compelled by one’s unconscious to do all the ugly, absurd, self-stultifying things that one so often finds oneself doing’ (210). These are very Alexanderist aims, including a negative view of unconscious desires and habits. The phrase ‘finds oneself doing’ recalls Beavis’s phrase from *Eyeless in Gaza* when describing his behaviour before he used Alexanderist methods to become more self-aware: ‘I found myself talking’ (*EG*, 253). The ‘Old Raja’s *Notes on What’s What*’, which outline the ‘underlying principles’ of Palanese society (36), dismiss both ‘concentration’ and ‘spiritual exercises’ (38), as Alexander does (e.g. *CCC*, 174, and *MSI*, 56, respectively). The Raja describes being aware as ‘the only spiritual exercise worth practising’ (38). The Alexander Technique is certainly concerned with maintaining awareness without concentration, but the Raja does not specify an Alexanderist method. The Palanese use a number of different approaches, Alexander’s among them, to improve their awareness. Menon describes several different techniques used to give children ‘a training in applied physiology and psychology [. . .] A training of the whole mind-body in all its aspects’ (237). Radha speaks of teaching ‘the unfortunate neurotic’ how to undo ‘his old bad

⁸ Huxley, ‘A Psychophysical Education’, in Wilfred Barlow (ed.), *More Talk of Alexander* (London: Gollancz, 1978), pp. 65-68 (p. 66).

habits', about teaching him 'to be a little more conscious in his everyday life' (73). These are phrases which describe Alexander's aims, but they are not expressed when describing an Alexanderist technique. As had been discussed in earlier Huxley fiction and non-fiction, the importance of mind-body awareness is also a central concern of other philosophies, including those of India, another major philosophical influence on Huxley's utopia. Radha reveals the Palanese concern with 'the quality of your feelings and thoughts and perceptions' (74). Likewise, Alexander writes of the importance of perception and how this affects thoughts and feelings (e.g. *CCC*, 96). In Pala, children are 'asked to notice how their feelings and desires affect what they experience of the outer world', to learn that '[w]hat my ears and my eyes record is one thing; what the words I use and the mood I'm in and the purposes I'm pursuing allow me to perceive, make sense of and act upon is something quite different' (237). Again, these ideas are similar to those expressed by Alexander (e.g. *CCC*, 96), but also by other philosophies, including Buddhism. Huxley's positive view of the *letting go* of the conscious mind to allow the unconscious self to work its wonders, such as self-heal (103), once again reveals Huxley and Alexander's differing views of the unconscious. The Palanese also use 'hypnotism' (61) and 'auto-suggestion' (72), which Alexander criticised for being dangerous, unconscious processes (e.g. *MSI*, 52). In fact, Radha specifically criticises Western, Freudian psychology's obsession with only the negative effects of the unconscious and not the 'positive unconscious' (73).

In the mix of ideas and methods in Pala, we find Alexanderist themes intertwining with non-Alexanderist practices. Alexander's recurring criticism of existing education, that it instructs children to behave without instructing them *how* to do so, is raised in *Island* (105), along with Alexander's concern with 'how to bridge the gap between theory and practice, between your New Year's resolutions and your actual behaviour' (105), an abiding theme of Huxley's work. As in other novels, this theme of how to 'implement [...] good intentions' (106) is not only discussed, but depicted by the novel's characters. It is presented as a central problem for Farnaby, whose discussion of this issue with Susila MacPhail leads him

to consider his own uncontrollable impulses, such as his desire for sex with Babs which leads to him hurting his wife Molly and, in his mind, becoming at least partially responsible for her death (106). At one point, he imagines calling out to his upset, departing wife, but does not actually do so (3). Will is a man ineffective at both inhibiting his undesirable impulses and enabling his desirable ones. When thinking of his self-loathing and sexual compulsions, he speaks sarcastically of a man being ‘free [...] to do what he doesn’t like’ (78). But unlike in *Eyeless in Gaza*, where this theme of implementing good intentions was heavily linked with Miller’s Alexanderist technique, this theme is discussed in *Island* in the context of self-hypnosis (104-06), which Alexander would see as the complete opposite of his teachings, being a utilisation of the unconscious mind. Another example comes when Ranga becomes angry, but then checks himself and laughs. His new state of awareness is achieved, however, by his girlfriend tweaking his ear (77). Thus Huxley again shows that he does not believe Alexander’s to be the only solution to this problem.

Huxley’s use of Alexander’s ideas in his final novel confirms Huxley’s continuing belief in, and endorsement of, Alexander’s principles at the end of his life, almost thirty years after he first encountered them. It also shows conclusively that Huxley did not see the Alexander Technique as a complete solution to the problems of humanity, as Alexander himself did. By presenting Alexander’s ideas as part of an interlocking web of complementary ideas and techniques that form the manifesto of Pala, Huxley presents in fictional form his beliefs about what is necessary for a successful society:

‘*Patriotism is not enough. But neither is anything else. Science is not enough, religion is not enough, art is not enough, politics and economics are not enough, nor is love, nor is duty, nor is action however disinterested, nor, however sublime, is contemplation. Nothing short of everything will really do.*’ (148)

Unlike its inventor, Huxley did not see the Alexander Technique as sufficient. Huxley’s urge was to integrate philosophies from disparate and eclectic sources to form what was, for him, a holistic vision. *Island* demonstrates that Huxley had

integrated Alexander's ideas into a general view of the importance of the mind-body connection that is revealed in his adoption of William Sheldon's mind-body types and his integration of the spiritual theory and practice of various strains of Vedanta and Buddhism. But as this section has shown, Huxley's meeting with Alexander in 1935 was one of the most important of his life. Despite their philosophical differences, Alexander provided Huxley with a basis for greater optimism about the relationship between mind and body, and a new-found faith in humans' capacity for self-transformation, influencing Huxley's thought and writings for the rest of his life.

Part II: The Influence of William Sheldon on Huxley's Works

Sheldon considers human beings as they really are – psycho-physical wholes or mind-bodies.

– Letter from Aldous Huxley to E. S. P. Haynes, March 1945.¹

Many accounts of Huxley note that he met the constitutional psychologist Dr William Herbert Sheldon (1898-1977) in Chicago in 1937.² However, according to Carter and Heath, Sheldon ‘spent two years (1934-36) in England and Europe’, where he not only ‘visited Kretschmer, Freud, Adler and Jung’ but ‘became acquainted with prominent British intellectuals such as Aldous Huxley, Julian Huxley, Gerald Heard, Christopher Isherwood and Bertrand Russell’.³ It was, however, in 1937 that the influence of Sheldon upon Huxley’s works became apparent, in Huxley’s *Ends and Means*, and it was not until the 1940s that Huxley’s use of Sheldon’s ideas became detailed and systematic, as his entire world-view became influenced by Sheldon’s theories. In a letter Huxley wrote to his brother Julian in December 1937, it is clear that he was highly impressed by Sheldon personally, as well as highly enamoured of his ideas:

I met in Chicago a very remarkable man called Sheldon, a psychologist [. . .] who has evolved, I believe, a genuinely scientific conception of psychological types [. . .] His book will be out in a few months and I suspect it will prove to be of first-rate importance.⁴

In a later letter in 1943, Huxley urges Julian to read Sheldon’s work and describes Sheldon’s theory as ‘by far the best of its kind ever produced [. . .] it is obviously

¹ *Letters*, p. 516, (25 March 1945).

² Huxley had sailed to New York with Gerald Heard in April 1937.

³ J. E. Lindsay Carter and Barbara Honeyman Heath, *Somatotyping: Development and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 5-6.

⁴ *Letters*, p. 428, (6 December 1937).

very important'.⁵ As with F. M. Alexander, the interconnection between mind and body was central to Sheldon's ideas, but in Sheldon's case, he attempted to study this supposed interconnection in the context of human types.

Sheldon's theory will now be outlined, and then, after considering Huxley's works before the influence of Sheldon, his influence on Huxley's writings will be examined. Whilst separating the discussions of Huxley's fiction and non-fiction has benefits in terms of aesthetic distinctions, hence its use in my Alexander part, for this part I have chosen to examine Sheldon's influence upon Huxley's writings chronologically, the better to present the development of Huxley's use of Sheldon's ideas.

⁵ *Letters*, pp. 486-87, (4 March 1943).

Chapter 5: Huxley and Sheldon's Theory of Human Types

Sheldon's Theory of Somatotypes

Born in Warwick, Rhode Island, Sheldon was also a noted numismatist, but it was his controversial work as a constitutional psychologist, producing a theory of mind-body types, that would come to fascinate Huxley. Sheldon's theories of constitutional psychology were published in two companion volumes, *The Varieties of Human Physique* (1940) and *The Varieties of Temperament* (1942).¹ Sheldon attempted to produce a system for classifying the human body in terms of three extremes of physique, and classifying the human personality in terms of three extreme personality types. Sheldon's research was conducted at the universities of Chicago and Harvard. After carrying out detailed multiple measurements of the physiques of 4000 young men using photographs, he identified what he considered to be the three primary components of physique: endomorphy, mesomorphy and ectomorphy.² The three terms refer to the three germ layers of embryonic development: the endoderm, which becomes the digestive tract, the mesoderm, which forms muscle, heart and blood vessels, and the ectoderm, which develops into skin and the nervous system. In brief, endomorphy is a heavier, fatter physique, mesomorphy refers to a muscular body, and ectomorphy denotes a slim build with thin limbs. Although some elements of these categories could be subject to change by environmental factors such as diet and exercise, some remain fixed, such as bone structure. The degree to which an individual's body expressed the qualities of each of the three categories of physique was determined by a combination of many

¹ On the subject of psychology, Sheldon also published *Psychology and the Promethean Will* (1936), *The Varieties of Delinquent Youth* (1949), and *Atlas of Men* (1954).

² See William Sheldon, *The Varieties of Human Physique* (New York: Harper, 1940), p. 5, hereafter *VHP*.

measurements and the application of a set of formulae. The result was then denoted by a three digit number known as the somatotype. The somatotype numbers represented the individual's degree of endomorphy, mesomorphy and ectomorphy respectively, using a scale of seven. Thus, an extreme endomorph would be represented by the configuration 7-1-1, a pure mesomorph by 1-7-1, and an acute ectomorph as 1-1-7. Similarly, a somatotype of 3-1-6 would illustrate a severe ectomorph with some strong endomorphic elements.³

The three extremes of personality were labelled viscerotonia, somatotonia, and cerebrotonia. In *The Varieties of Temperament*, Sheldon outlines the twenty central behavioural traits of each type. For example, viscerotonic qualities include 'relaxation in posture and movement', 'love of physical comfort', 'love of eating', 'tolerance' and 'complacency'.⁴ Somatotonic traits include 'assertiveness in posture and movement', 'love of physical adventure', 'love of dominating', and 'competitive aggressiveness'. Cerebrotonia is characterised by 'physiological overresponse', 'mental overintensity', 'emotional restraint', a 'love of privacy', and 'sociophobia'. However, it is important not to oversimplify these categories, which are not only considerably complex in themselves (Sheldon goes into considerable detail describing the traits of each group⁵) but also work within the context of Sheldon's three digit classification, providing the opportunity for an individual to fall anywhere along the scale in all three categories, rather than being defined solely by one extreme. The classification process involved interviewing the subjects, with the interviewer assessing the subject's degree of possession of each of the sixty traits, eventually calculating a three digit denotation of temperament, as with the physique rating.

The third stage of Sheldon's process was his supposed demonstration of an interrelationship between an individual's physical and behavioural type, as he claimed that there was a strong correlation between endomorphy and viscerotonia,

³ See Sheldon, *VHP*, pp. 58-65, and a summary in William Sheldon, *The Varieties of Temperament* (New York: Harper, 1942), p. 7, hereafter *VT*.

⁴ See Sheldon, *VT*, p. 26. All subsequent references to the behavioural traits of the three types, including quotations that do not possess a page number, are from this page, unless otherwise stated.

⁵ See Sheldon, *VT*, pp. 31-94.

mesomorphy and somatonia, and ectomorphy and cerebrotonia. Sheldon's is the sort of neat, all-encompassing theory that appealed to Huxley. As Nicholas Murray comments: 'Too readily, sometimes, Huxley would happen on the work of a thinker with a Big Idea – such as William Sheldon and his theory of human types – and immediately see in it a comprehensive and sufficient explanation'.⁶ Indeed Huxley described Sheldon's theory as 'the first serious advance in the science of man since the days of Aristotle'.⁷ Sheldon's study, however, was based on only 200 individuals, all young, and all male, making it hardly a representative sample. Other researchers attempted to replicate, or otherwise, Sheldon's findings.⁸ As L.G.A. Calcraft assesses in *Science*: 'These [studies] were rarely conclusive, and in general failed to corroborate Sheldon's findings to the full, although his work was often presented in a favourable light.'⁹ A proposed connection between physique and psychological tendencies was not a new idea. Sheldon himself outlines his predecessors in this area of enquiry, from Hippocrates to the more recent studies of Viola and Kretschmer.¹⁰ However, it was specifically Sheldon's work in this area that became highly influential upon Huxley's works, as this part of the thesis will examine.

Carter and Heath's *Somatotyping*: A Strong Critique of Sheldon's Methods

Sheldon's work was critiqued by many and he was only highly regarded by a small group of loyal followers. Carter and Heath's *Somatotyping: Development and Applications* (1990) provides interesting information on Sheldon's methods. Heath herself collaborated with Sheldon, whilst Carter later worked with Heath to produce a modification of Sheldon's typology of physique, which has become 'a useful,

⁶ Murray, p. 357.

⁷ *Letters*, p. 516, (25 March 1945).

⁸ For a list of subsequent connected studies, see L.G.A. Calcraft, 'Aldous Huxley and the Sheldonian Hypothesis', *Science*, 37 (1980), 657-71, p. 660, n. 7, and Holmes, p. 219, n. 51.

⁹ Calcraft, 'Aldous Huxley and the Sheldonian Hypothesis', p. 660.

¹⁰ Sheldon, *VHP*, pp. 10-28.

widely used research tool for the study of human somatic variation',¹¹ and has been used, for example, in sports applications (ix).¹² The book mentions how Sheldon's terminology was popularised by Huxley, in works such as *Ends and Means* (3), which I will discuss in detail later in this chapter. Carter and Heath praise Sheldon for his innovative and influential ideas, but criticise his methods:

In the 1940s Sheldon moved away from strict typology by introducing the concept of three continuous variables to describe human physical variation. However, his promising somatotype method came to be virtually abandoned because of its rigidity of technique and insistence upon an immutable somatotype. (26)

Carter and Heath relate an anecdote about an event that harmed Sheldon's subsequent academic reputation. In 1936, Sheldon apparently had 'an emotional crisis involving a girl he called "Starlight" ' (6):

He said he was 'engaged' to her. When she unexpectedly married another man, he wrote to the new husband an emotional, ill-advised and threatening letter. Its outraged recipient widely distributed copies of the offending document in high academic circles. The repercussions from this incident prejudiced Sheldon's opportunities for academic appointment for the rest of his life. Several loyal colleagues at various institutions arranged for him to share space for carrying out his research and for writing his books. But after 1936 he held no formal, salaried academic posts. Thereafter, he was dependent upon his own resources and privately obtained funds to pay research assistants and to meet other expenses. (6)

Carter and Heath's book is scathing of Sheldon's methodology, stating that he was 'intransigent about the slightest modification of his method' and 'resisted use of currently accepted statistical analyses of his data' (14). Ironically, given his resistance to any changes to his methods of somatotype measurement, he later developed 'a new somatotype method, which he called the Trunk Index method [. . .] Apparently he wholly abandoned his original somatotype method in favour of his new classification, the Trunk Index, though little has been published about it' (14-15). Carter and Heath also remark that '[i]n conversation [Sheldon] showed open

¹¹ Carter and Heath, p. 26. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

¹² A number of other methods of somatotyping have also been produced from modifications of Sheldon's concepts, outlined in Chapter 2 of *Somatotyping*.

contempt for all the human species except those of certified Anglo-Saxon lineage' (15), and they deplore his 'racism and male chauvinism' (15). Sheldon's claims were consistently attacked, for example by Howard Meredith, and by J. M. Tanner.¹³ Carter and Heath summarise the objections:

There were indeed four persistent criticisms: (1) the somatotype changes, (2) somatotyping is not objective, (3) there are two, not three, primary components, for endomorphy and ectomorphy are essentially the inverse of each other, and (4) somatotyping omits the factor of size. (33)

An example of Sheldon's dishonest manipulation of data is given in the book, when noting the problems Heath encountered when working with Sheldon on *Atlas of Men*:

When Sheldon chose examples of the various somatotypes at successive ages he found that there were discrepancies between the height-weight ratio indicated for the 4-4-4 somatotype at age 40, for example, and the photograph he felt was the best example; or, he found that the subject who met the height-weight criterion was 50 years old instead of 40. Heath was astonished to see that Sheldon simply altered the age or height-weight ratio to meet the criteria of his extrapolated tables! Sheldon's insistence upon the reality and actual existence of the polar extremes of somatotype (e.g. 1-1-7, 7-1-1) led to really serious difficulties. He could have presented existing examples close to the extremes, and described the polar extremes as conceptual, but as yet not encountered. Instead, when he could find no subjects who met the exact criteria for 1-1-7, he asked Heath to trim a little from each view of a somatotype rated as 1½-2½-7. (12)

Despite Sheldon's intention to make Heath a co-author of *Atlas of Men*, she subsequently decided to 'forego the co-authorship. Soon afterwards Sheldon found a woman medical student who [. . .] followed his instructions without apparent reservation' (12). Heath still had faith in Sheldon's typological framework, however, despite strong misgivings about his methods:

In addition [Heath's] concern about Sheldonian somatotype methodology was already growing. She had established that she could match his somatotype ratings almost perfectly when she applied his criteria and ignored her contradictory anthroposcopic impressions. She was confident that the

¹³ See H. V. Meredith, 'Comments on *Varieties of Human Physique*', *Child Development* 11 (1940), 301-09, and J. M. Tanner, *The Physique of the Olympic Athlete* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964, p. 37.

underlying schema for somatotyping was sound and that somatotyping was potentially a valuable research tool. But she also knew that the potential could not be realised without methodological modifications. (12-13)

Heath, in collaboration with Carter, subsequently devised a modification of Sheldon's somatotype principles, known as the Heath-Carter method, which built on Sheldon's work but made significant changes to Sheldon's initial ratings methods, which were deemed inaccurate. One of the most significant departures from Sheldon's hypothesis was an objection to his insistence that somatotypes at a future age could be accurately predicted, insisting that in fact the evidence showed that an individual's somatotype could vary dramatically throughout life. Most significantly, the Heath-Carter method is a 'quantitative description of the present shape and composition of the human body' (15), and is not concerned with temperamental correlations.

Sheldon had plans to publish an *Atlas of Women* in the mid-1950s, but 'it was apparent that Harper and Brothers and other publishers had no interest in undertaking the proposed *Atlas of Women*' (14). Carter and Heath also state that Sheldon 'so isolated himself from all but [a] handful of dedicated friends that there was no one who would provide legitimate validation or practical application of his ideas' (15). It is clear from Huxley's writings that he remained one of those 'handful of dedicated friends' which Carter and Heath describe, continuing to support Sheldon's ideas despite the criticism that came his way for doing so, fully aware that it was an unorthodox view (see Chapter 8). Sheldon once told Humphry Osmond that Huxley 'was one of the very few people who really understood what he was getting at'.¹⁴

Huxley's Works before the Influence of Sheldon

¹⁴ *Aldous Huxley: A Memorial Volume*, ed. by Julian Huxley (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), p. 119.

It is easy to see why Sheldon's ideas would have appealed to Huxley. He was already interested in the mind-body interconnection, as his adoption of Alexander's ideas, discussed in the previous section of the thesis, and his interest in Vedantic ideas such as yoga, made clear. Anthony Beavis in *Eyeless in Gaza* writes that '[w]e look at the universe with a certain kind of physico-mental apparatus'.¹⁵ The concept that one's physique and mind, combined together, defines and determines one's view of the world, a view reinforced by Alexander, thus also prepares the ground for Huxley's conversion to Sheldon's system. The Alexander-influenced *Eyeless in Gaza* emphasises the importance of the body and the ways in which it affects the mind and emotions. Imaginative literature ignores 'those small physiological events that decide whether day-to-day living shall have a pleasant or unpleasant tone' (343). Excretion, digestion, and menstruation, can 'make or mar the day' (343), physical 'sensations' can produce great 'happiness' (343). Huxley was concerned with the *psychological impact of the physiology* even before Sheldon, and this was one of the reasons that he accepted Sheldon's work so enthusiastically.

Huxley had also long been interested in the concept of human types. *Proper Studies* (1927) is a good example, in which he praises Jung's *Psychological Types*.¹⁶ Huxley would later reject Jung's classifications in favour of Sheldon's, as will be discussed later. In *Proper Studies*, Huxley displays a complete conviction in the existence of human types, and that these types are at least to some degree inherent, that there are certain 'functions' to which certain people are 'naturally adapted to perform' (136). Society thus cannot treat, and educate, all individuals in the same way (115). Huxley views a greater understanding of human types as an ideal for society:

When psychological education is less rudimentary than it is at present, people belonging to different types will recognize each other's right to exist. Every

¹⁵ *Eyeless in Gaza* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), p. 337, hereafter *EG*. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

¹⁶ *Proper Studies* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927), p. 42. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

man will stick to the problems, inward and outward, with which nature has fitted him to deal; and he will be restrained, if not by tolerance, at least by the salutary fear of making a fool of himself, from trespassing on the territory of minds belonging to another type. (78)

This vision will come to fruition in Huxley's depiction of the utopian society of Pala in *Island* (1962), and Sheldon's ideas will be fundamental to this process in the novel. Huxley's belief, even before his discovery of Sheldon's work, that an understanding of the psychology of individual human beings was the route to an understanding of society and thus its improvement, would lead him to view any, to him, scientifically valid analysis of human psychological difference as of great importance. In *Eyeless in Gaza*, Beavis writes in his journal: 'Which gives a man more power to realize goodness – belief in a personal or an impersonal God? Answer: it depends. Some minds work one way, some another' (*EG*, 373). Huxley is already considering how different personality types will have different attitudes towards religion. This view will also be reinforced and expanded in conjunction with Sheldon's ideas.

Milton Birnbaum discusses Huxley's use of character types in Chapter 4 of his *Aldous Huxley: A Quest for Values*.¹⁷ Birnbaum sees Huxley's use of character types as placing Huxley in the grand literary tradition of, for example, Jonson, Milton, Bunyan, Richardson, Thackeray, and Dickens (44). Birnbaum classes Huxley's various character types into four groups: the three Sheldonian types, and what he terms the '“ideal” character' (44). Interestingly, he even uses Sheldon's terminology to describe characters from novels which Huxley wrote before meeting Sheldon, even though these characters are not necessarily described by Huxley as adhering to the physical traits of Sheldon's types. For example, ignoring the physical side of Sheldon's system, Birnbaum classes Denis Stone in *Crome Yellow*, Shearwater in *Antic Hay*, Calamy in *Those Barren Leaves*, Philip Quarles, Walter Bidlake, and Lord Tantamount in *Point Counter Point*, Bernard Marx and the

¹⁷ Milton Birnbaum, *Aldous Huxley: A Quest for Values* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971), pp. 43-61. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

Savage in *Brave New World*, Anthony Beavis and Brian Foxe in *Eyeless in Gaza*, Pete in *After Many a Summer*, Sebastian Barnack in *Time Must Have a Stop* and Will Farnaby in *Island* all as cerebrotonics (46-47). Birnbaum notes that these are all ‘male intellectuals’ (47). But whilst there are indeed characters with cerebrotonic-like tendencies in Huxley’s works before the influence of Sheldon, it is the physical-temperamental correlation that is so key to Sheldon’s theory.

Birnbaum does recognise this, and provides a disclaimer:

It should [. . .] be kept in mind that Huxley’s character types appear in his novels long before the Sheldonian classifications were published [. . .] What Sheldon did was to codify a general theory concerning human types that Huxley (and other artists before him) had already created. Since these types appear as moral rather than physical types, we do not find the kind of physical description that should accompany the delineation of the Sheldonian classifications. (45)

But it is precisely the ‘physical description’ that makes Huxley’s later types specifically Sheldonian.

Huxley’s earlier, pre-Sheldon characters may resemble Sheldon’s model, such as Quarles and Webley in *Point Counter Point* resembling Sheldon’s cerebrotonic and somatonic respectively, but that is because Huxley’s pre-Sheldon characters are often established character types, and Sheldon’s three poles fit into the long history of character types in fiction. In early Huxley novels, one often cannot tell if a character who resembles one of Sheldon’s temperaments is conforming to Sheldon’s physical predictions, because, as Birnbaum rightly notes, ‘Huxley is not very concerned with physical description’ (46). Huxley’s pre-Sheldon novels do indeed at times contain characters who conform to Sheldon’s somatotypes. For example, Bernard Marx in *Brave New World* is presented as both ectomorphically ‘slender’¹⁸ and cerebrotonically self-conscious (*BNW*, 77) and indecisive (*BNW*, 195). However, though the Savage is ‘suffering’ because he can never, in the World State, ‘be quietly alone’ (*BNW*, 214), a highly cerebrotonic

¹⁸ *Brave New World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), p. 57. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

impulse, his body is not described as clearly ectomorphic. Lenina describes the Savage as having a ‘really beautiful body’ (*BNW*, 105), but other than this description, which is not suggestive of conformity to Sheldon’s system, Huxley does not provide enough information to diagnose the Savage’s physical somatotype accurately. These examples are representative of Huxley’s characterisation before the influence of Sheldon. Though characters at times align with Sheldon’s predictions, they also do not, and Huxley does not always give clear physical and psychological descriptions. However, from the 1940s onwards, once Sheldon had published *The Varieties of Human Physique* and *The Varieties of Temperament*, Huxley’s attribution to his characters of Sheldonian collections of personality traits, correlated with the particular type of physique which Sheldon would thus predict, became, for the most part, clear and systematic.

In his later novels Huxley often *does* give key physical descriptions to clearly delineate his characters as belonging to one of Sheldon’s types. Huxley’s construction of characters that conform precisely, both physically and temperamentally, to Sheldon’s specific descriptions in *The Varieties of Human Physique* and *The Varieties of Temperament*, sometimes even using the same words and phrases (as will be discussed later), and with great consistency, is what provides strong evidence that Huxley was using Sheldon’s theories as a guide to character construction, rather than just using generic character types. (This evidence is also supported by the fact that Huxley praised Sheldon’s work in both his non-fiction publications and his letters, as will also be discussed.)

Sheldon’s Influence on Huxley’s Works 1937-43

In *Ends and Means* (1937), in his chapter on ‘Inequality’, Huxley first discusses economic inequality, but then states that ‘[t]here is also the more formidable, the less remediable inequality which exists between individuals of different psychological types [...] The universes of two individuals may be profoundly

dissimilar'.¹⁹ Huxley emphasises both the irreconcilable differences between people and that an important component of these differences is innate: 'Nature as well as nurture has set great gulfs between us. Some of these gulfs are unbridged and seemingly unbridgeable; across them there is no communication' (164). He then begins to elucidate the history of attempts to classify humans into types, where he includes his first reference to Sheldon.

When discussing *Ends and Means*, George Woodcock notes that some of the arguments are similar to those that Huxley had already put forward in *Proper Studies*, and that 'Huxley repeats, now with the support of W. H. Sheldon's theories of physiopsychological types, the contention put forward in *Proper Studies* and tacitly withdrawn in *Point Counter Point*, that men are unequal in their capabilities'.²⁰ This is true, although it is not specifically Sheldon's mind-body types theory that suggests inequality, as it does not imply that any person of one type is any more 'capable' than that of another type, just that they have differing personalities, abilities, and strengths and weaknesses to which they are prone. However, in a broader sense, Sheldon's emphasis on the inherited and unchangeable elements of human beings did strengthen Huxley's belief in inherent human difference, and thus, by extension, unequal human capabilities, as this thesis will discuss.

Although Huxley uses Sheldon's terms in the chapter, there is none of the trumpeting of Sheldon's system as the finest of its kind as there is in later Huxley works such as *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945). Huxley does state that 'it seems probable that, with the latest work in this field, we may be approaching a genuinely scientific description of human types' (165). The fact that there are such things as human types is never questioned; Huxley had been convinced of that before his introduction to Sheldon's concepts, but he does feel the matter is becoming more scientifically validated. However, his phrasing: 'it *seems probable*', 'we *may be approaching*' [my emphases] remains cautious. Huxley discusses the fashion for

¹⁹ *Ends and Means* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937), pp. 163-64. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

²⁰ Woodcock, pp. 173-74.

certain types of temperament and personality at certain times and places, but apart from one reference to somatonia, he uses the Greek system of the four humours in this discussion. He views fashion for certain temperaments as ‘manifestly silly’ (165), because ‘membership of one or other of the psycho-physiological species is hereditary and inalienable’ (165). Like Sheldon, Huxley focuses on the unavoidable, inherited elements of human behaviour. In his discussion of temperaments, Huxley sometimes uses the terms of the four humours and sometimes Sheldon’s terms. Since the former system has four classifications and the latter three, Huxley’s views on this matter do not seem to be fully formed. Later works would emphatically envisage and support Sheldon’s three pole system. Huxley also mixes Sheldon’s concepts with those of Stockard: ‘The rotund and jolly “lateral” type is worlds apart from the unexpansive, inward-turning “linear”’. The “viscerotonic” man simply can’t imagine why the “cerebrotonic” shouldn’t be a good mixer, like himself’ (166). However, this quotation does show that by *Ends and Means*, Huxley was familiar with Sheldon’s terms, and the concept of physical and temperamental correlation, even if Huxley had not yet adopted Sheldon’s system as his central philosophy in the area of human types.

Huxley also attempts to show how the correlation between physique and temperament is already understood instinctively by humans, by mentioning its presence in existing phrases in English. The viscerotonic ‘“has a warm heart”; his “reigns move”, his “bowels yearn.”’ The cerebrotonic is ‘“a highbrow” and “has no guts.” (Rich treasures of physiological psychology lie buried in the language of the Old Testament and even in schoolboys’ slang!)’ (166). Despite Huxley’s deterministic attitude, emphasising his belief in the inherent, innate ‘gulfs which separate human beings of unlike temperaments’ (168), he does believe that humans have free will in choosing how to interact with those who are different from themselves. He insists that there is always ‘common ground’ (167) to be found. One must interact with humans unlike ourselves with ‘courtesy and consideration’ (167), and attempt to build bridges amongst those with different temperaments:

Human beings may be separated [...] across great gulfs of temperamental dissimilarity. But it is always in their power to move away from the territories in which these divisions exist; it is always possible for them, if they so desire, to find in the common world of action, the site for a broad and substantial bridge connecting even the most completely incommensurable of psychological universes. (168)

Huxley writes that social reforms need to encourage this ‘bridge-building’ (168). (He will present his ideal society in *Island* (1962) as doing just that.) Huxley uses Sheldon’s concepts again when discussing the ease with which those of the same type may interact, and the greater moral effort necessary for interaction with those of another type:

Men and women of different types can establish contact with one another only in action, and only on condition of reciprocal good behaviour. Men and woman of the same type are psychologically commensurable. Communication between them is, of course, facilitated by reciprocal good behaviour; but even when the behaviour is bad, even when they dislike and mistrust, they can understand one another. (170)

Huxley then goes on to give examples of this based upon Sheldon’s ideas (170). Thus Huxley’s belief in different human types, a belief that was beginning to be strengthened by Sheldon’s ideas, informs his view of human nature, the difficulties of human interaction, and the nature of an ideal society that can combat these difficulties.

Huxley returns to Sheldon’s types in his chapter on ‘Education’. He believes that the first course of action to remedy the ‘defects in our educational system’ is to accept ‘the fact that human beings belong to different types’ (193), and that these types are ‘congenitally’ present (193). Huxley writes of the differing educational needs of Sheldon’s three types (193), and he views accurate assessment of ‘psycho-physical type’ (194) as something which should be an essential part of the education system. This is a view he would explore further later, including, again, in his final novel, *Island*. Sheldon’s terms also appear at times in Huxley’s chapter on ‘Religious Practices’, where he discusses the types of religious behaviour most likely to suit Sheldon’s somatotypes. Huxley refers to the active, energetic ‘somatotonic type’ as finding ritual dances the most ‘satisfying form of religious

experience (235), and thus ‘Christianity [...] made a great mistake when it allowed the dance to become completely secularized’ (232). Emotional viscerotonics like the path of devotion to a personal god (235). Huxley insists, though, that the highest form of religious experience is ‘having direct experience of an ultimate reality that is impersonal’ (235), and that this can only be acquired by ‘arduous training’ (235) a task which viscerotonics and somatotonics find difficult if not insurmountable: ‘The genuine mystical intuition may be an experience which it is all but impossible for many people belonging to these psycho-physiological types ever to have’ (235). This theme will be addressed more fully in later Huxley works, such as *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944) and *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945), but even in 1937, Sheldon’s ideas are beginning to influence Huxley’s thoughts on religion heavily.

After Many a Summer (1939) was the first Huxley novel to be published once Huxley had knowledge of Sheldon’s somatotype system, but Huxley’s description of the physique and personality of his characters is not systematically Sheldonian. Jeremy Pordage displays a number of traits of Sheldon’s cerebrotonic. He is a scholar, a very cerebrotonic occupation, and can be uncomfortable with interactions with people, preferring quiet, introverted detachment: ‘Cradled in the back seat of the car, out of range, he hoped, of the chauffeur’s conversation, Jeremy Pordage abandoned himself to the pleasure of merely looking’.²¹ He can be self-conscious and embarrassed: ‘He began to blush with embarrassment’ (10). Sheldon describes a tendency to blush as a cerebrotonic trait (*VT*, 72). However, Pordage is not described as an ectomorph. For example, he is balding (43), which Sheldon describes as being common among the opposite *endomorph*ic physique (*VT*, 38) but *not* among the ectomorph (*VT*, 277). Similarly, Bill Propter displays cerebrotonic traits, such as a desire for introverted, solitary meditation (99-100), but his physical description fits with Sheldon’s mesomorph, as he is ‘a large man, broad-shouldered’ (18), and Sheldon described broad shoulders as a mesomorph quality (*VT*, 39). The characters in Huxley’s subsequent novel *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944),

²¹ *After Many a Summer* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1939; repr. 1962), p. 4. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

written after Sheldon had published his two main works of constitutional psychology, *The Varieties of Human Physique* (1940) and *The Varieties of Temperament* (1942), would adhere much more closely to Sheldon's physical and temperamental correlations. *After Many a Summer* also shows signs of Huxley's views, touched upon in *Ends and Means*, that viscerotonic types are unlikely to gain spiritual enlightenment. Propter remarks that 'perhaps there's something intrinsically wrong with fat. For example, there isn't a single fat saint' (21). Although one cannot definitively conflate the views of Propter and Huxley, Propter's expression of many views expressed by Huxley in his non-fiction, when coupled with Huxley's comments in *Ends and Means*, suggest that Huxley considers the gregarious, fat endomorphic viscerotonic type as not suited to the discipline and non-attachment required to achieve saintliness. Once again, Huxley applies Sheldon's ideas when thinking about religion and human potential. These are themes which Huxley will explore further in subsequent works.

In *Grey Eminence* (1941) Huxley demonstrates his belief that it is important to consider the nature of individual personalities when examining history. In this biography of Père Joseph, Huxley writes on a subject that will become a recurring theme in his writings: the importance of examining 'psychological' factors along with 'sociological, political' and 'economic' ones in order to explain the causes of historical events (16).²² Huxley criticises historians for 'over-simplification' (16): 'Men are reduced to convenient abstractions. The varieties of temperament, talent and motivation are flattened into uniformity' (16). Thus Huxley would view a science of human temperaments, which is what Sheldon claimed to have created, as of great use in historical analysis. Huxley's presentation of Père Joseph in *Grey Eminence* is consistent, both physically and temperamentally, with a mixture of Sheldon's cerebrotonic and somatonic types. For example, Huxley describes him as having a 'gaunt' face, fitting with Sheldon's description of the thin ectomorph (VT, 42-45), but also as having the 'firmness of the jaw' which would correspond

²² *Grey Eminence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1941; repr. 1956), p. 16. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

with Sheldon's mesomorph (VT, 40). The fact that he is a monk suggests the introversion of Sheldon's cerebrotonic, who has a 'need for solitude' (VT, 26). He thinks to himself: 'He repeated to himself' (2), and is 'engrossed in his melancholy thoughts' (2). But he is also a 'strong man, a man of firm will' (2), tallying with Sheldon's 'assertive' (VT, 26) somatotonic type. It is Joseph's mix of being 'at once active and introverted' (20) that fascinates Huxley, as this is what drives Joseph to be both friar and political statesman:

He loved to be up and doing, but he loved at the same time to be left alone, so that he could think his own thoughts [...] Hatred and anger too, were an important element of that private world of his; but they existed, even in childhood, behind an iron wall of self-control. (20-21)

Here is the 'love of privacy', 'love of solitude', and 'emotional restraint' (VT, 26) of Sheldon's cerebrotonic, coupled with 'the energetic characteristic', 'aggressiveness', and 'need of action' (VT, 26) of the somatotonic. Huxley writes that a part of Joseph was 'a contemplative', but that there was another 'part that craved for action' (282-83). This is, in Sheldonian terms, a cerebrotonic/somatotonic conflict. However, Huxley does not use Sheldon's somatotype terms in *Grey Eminence*.

Huxley's examinations of historical figures, such as in *Grey Eminence*, or in *Themes and Variations* and *The Devils of Loudun*, to be discussed later, often presented them as bearing out Sheldon's somatotype theories (although without referring to Sheldon or his terms except in *Themes and Variations*). These character depictions are obviously a different matter from the completely created characters of Huxley's novels, as records exist, to varying degrees, of these people's behaviours, appearance and temperament. However, the possibility of Huxley mingling the imagined with historical accuracy, or focusing only on the aspects of these figures that aligned with Sheldon's system, must be considered. What is certainly true is that Huxley's depiction of historical figures often tallied with Sheldon's ideas. Huxley's next novel, however, would reveal the influence of Sheldon to a greater extent than any of his previous works.

Chapter 6: Sheldon's Influence on *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944)

Time Must Have a Stop was the first Huxley novel to be written after Sheldon's publication of *The Varieties of Human Physique* (1940) and *The Varieties of Temperament* (1942). In a letter to Grace Hubble in May 1944, Huxley describes Sheldon's work as '[a] major contribution to a genuine science of man [. . .] The books provide a new and extremely efficient instrument for thinking about human affairs in all their multifarious variety'.¹ Revealingly, in this same letter Huxley not only mentions that he is writing an article on Sheldon's work, but asks Hubble to proof read his new novel, *Time Must Have a Stop*.² Huxley was clearly using this 'new and extremely efficient instrument' when constructing his novel, systematically applying Sheldon's theory when creating its characters. The evidence to support this view will now be presented and discussed.

Firstly, Huxley creates three main characters who exhibit, for the most part, the qualities of Sheldon's three somatotypes in their extreme form: John Barnack demonstrates somatonia, his brother Eustace viscerotonia, and John's son Sebastian cerebrotonia. What makes Huxley's adoption of Sheldon's ideas even more clear is that Sheldon's coupling of behavioural traits with physical appearance is also duplicated by Huxley with remarkable consistency. John Barnack is described mesomorphically as 'powerful',³ with 'broad strong shoulders' (36) and a 'brown leathery face' (32), just as the muscular mesomorph is described by Sheldon as having 'broad' shoulders (*VHP*, 39) and 'leathery' skin (*VHP*, 41). Sheldon describes the parallel somatonic personality as displaying 'assertiveness in posture and movement', and John is duly described as 'upright and assertive' (35).

¹ *Letters*, p. 505, (10 May 1944).

² *Letters*, pp. 504-05, (10 May 1944).

³ Aldous Huxley, *Time Must Have a Stop* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1944), p. 298, hereafter *TMHS*. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

Sheldon's somatotonics have an 'unrestrained voice' and are prone to 'general noisiness'. John 'slam[s]' the door (51), but by his subsequently polite manner Huxley makes clear that it is not because he is angry, merely that he possesses a natural, unrestrained noisiness. John is depicted as having a 'loud, authoritative [...] voice' (33) and 'loud [...] laughter', described as a 'startling explosion' (32).

Sebastian's opinion of his father is that '[y]ou never knew from his expression what he was feeling or thinking' (32-33). John 'would look at you straight and unwaveringly, his grey eyes brightly blank' (33). There is not 'the faintest symptom of surprise, or pleasure, or any other emotion' (32) observable in his face, tallying with Sheldon's description of a somatotonic: there is 'rigidity and immobility of expression', and 'the individual tends to fix a direct, unchanging stare upon the person addressed' (*VT*, 54). John gives 'all his tasks' 'the same focussed attention [...] the same [...] meticulous care' (34-35). Thus he lives in the moment, and he is focused on the external world. This also fits with Sheldon's writing on somatotonics: they 'live in the present' (*VT*, 48) and they 'lack introspective insight' (*VT*, 260): 'The mind is objective, extensive, extraverted. The mental focus is directed exclusively on the "outer reality"' (*VT*, 64).

Sheldon views the somatotonic as having 'physical courage for combat' and Huxley describes John as being 'like an athlete going into combat' (34). Sheldon's somatotonic is 'energetic', with a 'love of physical adventure' and the 'need and enjoyment of exercise'. Thus John is described as having 'inexhaustible energy' (300), he has 'the posture of an athlete poised on the brink of action' (52). He is 'a great mountain-climber [...] a great four-mile-an-hour walker' (36). The energetic need for action of a somatotonic type is reflected in the cerebrotonic Sebastian's exasperation that his father is 'a great everything [...] If only he'd take a rest sometimes!' (36). (Sheldon's somatotonics possess a 'low sleep requirement' (*VT*, 257).) But by the end of the novel Sebastian sees John as having a 'bitter sense of grievance against a party and a government that had left him all these years in the ranks, without office or any position of authority' (298), suggesting the somatotonic 'lust for power'. As will be discussed further later, Eustace also sees John's political

‘ “Idealism” ’ as disguised ‘ “will-to-power” ’ (54). Sheldon describes somatotonics as having a ‘love of dominating’, and likewise John is described as ‘dominating’ (29), with a ‘commanding voice’ (298). He ‘peremptorily ordered [Sebastian] to stay where he was’ (34), and ‘tersely put Sebastian in his childish place’ (34), suggesting the somatotonic ‘callousness’.

Despite John’s extreme somatotonic nature, he also possesses some elements of cerebrotonia. There is a hint of the cerebrotonic temperament in Huxley’s description of John as gaining ‘a certain pleasure in thwarting the too explicit manifestations of desire’ (29). This suggests an element of cerebrotonic restraint and asceticism combined with a somatotonic desire to dominate others; he is ‘hard on others because even harder on himself’ (29). Alice Poulshot is exasperated when John ‘lost his temper in that awful suppressed way of his, and then pretended it was moral indignation’ (52). The attempted suppression of anger suggests, again, an element of cerebrotonic restraint; John possesses an intellectual, cerebrotonic devotion to the socialist cause, and the tireless ‘energetic characteristic’ of the somatotonic to carry out that devotion through external action. But Huxley intimates, through the views of other characters, that John’s idealistic socialism has become a platform through which he can pursue his somatotonic desire for dominion over others. Sheldon writes of the somatotonic’s ‘psychological callousness [...] A singular insensitivity, especially to the less obvious or subtler needs and desires of other personalities in the environment’ (*VT*, 57). Compare with Sebastian on John:

His father had always been too busy, too completely identified with his work and his ideas, to be very much aware of other people. He knew them as the embodiments of legal problems, as particular examples of political or economic types, not as individual men and women. (304)

This is a description of John’s somatotonic nature, but it also suggests some cerebrotonic elements to John’s personality: his preoccupation with ‘ideas’, ideas which drive his somatotonic tireless activity.

Eustace’s physique fits Sheldon’s description of the endomorph. He is self-confessedly ‘ “fat” ’, with a face ‘like a loose rubber mask sagging from the bones,

flabby and soft' (38-39). Indeed, Huxley often uses the word 'soft' when describing Eustace: he has 'soft' hands (40), and he 'lowered his soft bulk into a sitting posture' (39), in line with Sheldon's definition of endomorphy as referring to 'roundness and softness of body' (*VHP*, 37). Eustace also displays the corresponding behavioural traits of the viscerotonic. Sheldon's viscerotonic is one who possesses an amiable and extraverted personality, and Huxley duly describes Eustace as 'hearty' (39), 'genial' (40) and 'jovial' (89). 'Complacency' is a central trait of the viscerotonic, and Eustace is described as 'complacent' (40). When Eustace asserts that '“just keeping out of mischief”' is '“the greatest of all the virtues”' (52), he further demonstrates the relaxed complacency of the viscerotonic type. Eustace's philosophical position is that 'the truly wise man [. . .] refrains from doing anything' (83). Viscerotronics have a love of childhood and children (*VT*, 47), and they cry easily (*VT*, 254), and thus, for example, the youthful 'Seb's "purity" touched him [Eustace] so profoundly, [...] moved him almost to tears' (111). As Sheldon would predict (*VT*, 26), Eustace has no trouble achieving deep 'dreamless sleep' (62). Sheldon writes that the viscerotonic possesses 'a manifest desire to embrace the environment and to make its substance one with the substance of the individual's own person. At the most unsublimated level this is the drive to ingest and to assimilate food' (*VT*, 248). Sheldon also writes that the viscerotonic enjoys the effects of alcohol (*VT*, 26). Huxley introduces Eustace with the phrase 'Sherry-glass in hand' (38), and throughout the novel, he is depicted eating, drinking and smoking (e.g. 42, 46, 51, 62, 64).

Viscerotronics have a 'love of physical comfort'. Thus Eustace 'let himself sink more deeply into the upholstery of the sofa. Closing his eyes, he tenderly kissed the end of his cigar and sucked' (52). Eustace also possesses a 'mobile looseness of [...] mouth' (38), as with the viscerotonic's 'relaxation of the body [...] and all the muscles of facial expression' (*VT*, 31). His sister remembers him as a boy: 'Those parted, childish lips [...] you couldn't look at him without feeling that you'd like to mother him' (38). But now it makes her 'shudder', because of 'its combination of senility and babyishness, of the infantile with the epicurean' (38).

Compare with Sheldon's description of the viscerotonic's 'relaxed protrusion of the lips' which 'often brings to mind the picture of infantilism' (*VT*, 43). Sebastian likens Eustace's cigar-smoking to a suckling baby (51). Thus two qualities of Sheldon's viscerotonic somatotype, the 'orientation towards childhood' and the aforementioned sensual self-indulgence, are connected here to serve Huxley's comedic purposes. This imagery of Eustace's cigars being 'teats' is also used at other times in the novel (e.g. 122). Sheldon describes viscerotonics as being orally fixated (*VT*, 31).

Eustace enjoys 'luxury and leisure' (44), and his love of fine clothes, food and material goods is also shown (e.g. 62-63), in line with Sheldon's pronouncement that: 'Viscerotonic ecstasy lies in the achievement of a "real" surrounding made up of nice things that taste good, smell good, look good, sound good, feel good' (*VT*, 253). Compare with Huxley's description of Eustace's drawing-room:

A faint spicy perfume of potpourri haunted the air, and the lamps that hung from the coffered ceiling were reflected, in innumerable curving high-lights, from surfaces of porcelain and silver, turned wood and sculptured bronze and ivory. Mountains of glazed chintz, enormous armchairs and sofas [. . .] (113)

This description also recalls Sheldon's discussion of those with the corresponding endomorphic physique: 'The endomorph likes soft, overstuffed furniture, deep abysslike chairs, inner spring mattresses, luxurious general furnishing, and ceremonial eating equipment' (*VHP*, 251). Eustace enjoys 'the refinements of life' (119), as he puts it: '[Eustace] swallowed the last mouthful of his second helping of fish, and, leaning back in his chair, looked round with pleasure at the beautifully appointed table, at the Empire furniture, at the Domenichino landscape over the mantelpiece [. . .]' (119). Eustace describes his combinations of art as a 'delicious salad' (114), a very viscerotonic phrase to use, with its connotations of sensual, specifically gastronomic, pleasure. Thus Sheldon's ideas influence the language of Huxley's characters. Significantly, Eustace follows this phrase with the pronouncement: ' "Let's go and eat" ' (114). Viscerotonic enjoy the 'socialization

of eating', and Eustace treats the prospect of eating a 'solitary meal' 'mournfully' (84).

Sheldon writes that 'viscerotonia means earthiness' (*VT*, 248): 'The viscerotonic wants to dig in, to establish himself in a good place on his earth, and to feel the warming and nourishing earth juices flowing in his veins' (*VT*, 253). The viscerotonic's love of earthly pleasures leads, according to Sheldon, to the viscerotonic having, unlike the other two somatotypes, a strong fear of death (*VT*, 94, 47). Sure enough, Eustace does likewise (66, 133). Huxley uses this trait when he writes of Eustace's after-death experiences. It is Eustace's viscerotonic tendencies that make him long to reincarnate into a body again: 'He remembered the warm delicious sense of being full of food and drink, and the feel of flesh, the aromatic smell of cigar smoke' (261). Like a typical viscerotonic, Eustace is deeply attached to the material, sensual experiences of life, and thus resists abandoning his individual awareness: 'There was no alternative [. . .] except giving in to the light, except dying out into the silence. But anything rather than that, anything, anything. . . .' (172). He holds on to his earthly experiences, to memories of 'sensualities' (172), such as the prostitute 'Mimi as she squatted on the divan, short-legged, opaquely white against the garish cushions' (168). Like a typical gregarious viscerotonic even after death, Eustace enjoys the sudden awareness of 'other awarenesses [. . .] cosily similar to his own' (172) when the séance is being conducted. His attachment to the world of sensation means that he experiences its return, via the body of the medium, as 'salvation': 'He was in possession of something infinitely precious [. . .] a set of bodily sensations' (173), 'the blissful experience of sensation' (179). Huxley describes Eustace's desire to return to the bodily sensations that are receding as a 'hunger' (179), a word with typically viscerotonic associations. Sheldon's somatotypes are deeply affecting the content of the novel here. A later passage in the novel again focuses on Eustace's savouring of bodily sensations when he experiences the medium's body: 'The processes of digestion were sleeplessly going forward. That seemed to bring the ultimate reassurance, to perfect and consummate his sense of paradisaical cosiness' (257-58).

Sheldon specifically mentions the viscerotonic's 'pleasure in digestion': for Eustace, digestion is 'paradise'. 'Cosiness' also is a very viscerotonic word, with its suggestions of comfort, pleasure and satisfaction.

Sebastian Barnack has a 'small body' (14), is 'frail' (27) and 'slender' (32), and is described as a 'small [...] creature' (1), a classic physical example of an ectomorph (*VHP*, 5). Even his hair adheres to Sheldon's writings. Sebastian is described as 'giving his rebellious hair a final brushing' (142), just as Sheldon describes the ectomorph as having hair that is 'unruly, hard to comb, keep in place, tends to grow forward, or in several directions' (*VT*, 45). Sebastian also possesses the corresponding cerebrotonic personality. When the reader is first introduced to Sebastian, he is in the reading room of a library, and thus engaged in quiet, solitary activity, in line with the cerebrotonic's low tolerance of noise (*VT*, 260), 'sociophobia' and 'love and respect for words' (*VT*, 90). (Sebastian's love of poetry is also established early in the novel (3).) A cerebrotonic has 'vocal restraint' (26), and Sebastian makes 'a faint inarticulate noise of assent' (36-37) and his breathing is 'almost imperceptibly soft' (61). Cerebrotonics have 'trembling lips' (*VT*, 77), as does Sebastian (25, 58). Cerebrotonics are described by Sheldon as having 'bright eyes' (*VT*, 76), and, sure enough, Sebastian's 'eyes were bright' (109). Sebastian appears younger than he is (2, 240), which is also a quality of the cerebrotonic (e.g. *VT*, 87). Significantly, Sebastian feels this is a curse: 'To be seventeen, to have a mind which one felt to be agelessly adult, and to look like a Della Robbia angel of thirteen - it was an absurd and humiliating fate' (2). This is entirely in line with Sheldon's cerebrotonic, who feels uncomfortable with childhood and has a 'deep wish to be older' (*VT*, 93).

Sebastian also displays the introversion associated with the cerebrotonic personality; he has 'preoccupying thoughts' and talks to himself (1), reflecting the cerebrotonic's preoccupation with the 'inner life' (*VT*, 88). His internal life is difficult to ignore: 'With an effort, Sebastian exorcised his memories' (232). He is often 'lost [...] in the labyrinth of his own miseries' (30), 'brooding on his reasons for being angry and miserable', and thus becomes unaware of the world around

him: 'Sebastian looked up with a start. Uncle Eustace . . . in his preoccupation with his own affairs he had forgotten all about him' (40). Later, '[a] touch on the elbow startled him out of his abstraction' (225), and subsequently he is '[s]tartled, and at the same time annoyed', by an 'unwelcome interruption', and comes 'to the surface from the depths of his absorbed abstraction' (241). Sheldon delineates a 'love of privacy' as one of the primary characteristics of the cerebrotonic, and Sebastian turns 'irritably to see who had trespassed on his sacred privacy' (278). Sebastian displays the 'restraint' and 'inhibited social address' of the cerebrotonic, which makes him uncomfortable with overly demonstrative social interaction: 'Inertly, Sebastian suffered himself to be hugged. He felt horribly embarrassed' (213). He possesses the cerebrotonic's 'sociophobia'; he is described as 'shy' (17), and as displaying 'timidity', experiencing 'the humiliating dumbness and incoherence with which he was afflicted whenever he found himself in strange or impressive company' (17), and 'that paralysing embarrassment which always assailed him when he spoke to strangers' (232). Throughout the novel, Huxley emphasises Sebastian's cerebrotonic shyness, which causes him to have difficulty expressing himself despite his active mind: 'The realisation that he was making a deplorable impression [. . .] increased his shyness to the point of rendering him speechless. But his mind continued to work' (40). Sheldon describes the cerebrotonic as having a tendency towards verbal stumblings (*VT*, 72), and Huxley's Sebastian makes a 'deprecating, inarticulate noise' (115), and has a tendency to stammer (e.g. 20, 183, 250). Cerebrotonics are also quick to blush (*VT*, 73), and Huxley reproduces this too: 'Sebastian flushed and bit his lip' (48), he has a 'reddening face' (49), and, later, 'Sebastian blushed' (183, 242).

When meeting Veronica Thwale, Sebastian imagines being able to look at her 'firmly and commandingly! Like his father' (115), the way he did in his 'day-dreams', but 'he was still as shy as ever' (115). Thus Huxley contrasts the somatotonic traits of John (the somatotonic, as mentioned earlier, 'tends to fix a direct, unchanging stare upon the person addressed' (*VT*, 54)), with the cerebrotonic traits of Sebastian, the qualities Sebastian would like to have with those he has in

reality: ‘His glance faltered, and at last flinched away’ (115). Sheldon writes that cerebrotonics avoid the direct stare of others (*VT*, 76). Huxley reiterates this trait elsewhere: Sebastian ‘averted his eyes’ (183), and ‘averted his face’ (232), and has an ‘averted face’ (243). Sebastian wishes that he had ‘that presence of mind in which, at moments of crisis, he was always so woefully lacking’ (29), tallying with Sheldon’s remarks that the cerebrotonic suffers from a tendency towards inaction and ‘paralysis [. . .] in crucial or emotional situations’ (*VT*, 278). Cerebrotonics are prone to procrastination and an inability to make decisions (*VT*, 88). Likewise, Sebastian *thinks* about acting, but often holds back: he desires to kiss Veronica Thwale, steels himself, and then cannot do so (224). Sheldon describes cerebrotonics as ‘hesitant’ (*VT*, 77), and Huxley uses the exact same word to describe Sebastian (e.g. 174). It is these traits which prevent Sebastian from telling the truth about his selling of the drawing and keeping his promise to Rontini to be honest about his actions. Several times he is about to explain, and is working up the courage to do so, but his hesitancy and shyness inhibit him (e.g. 254).

Cerebrotonics’ true feelings are hard to read from their external demeanour (*VT*, 265), in line with their inherent ‘love of privacy’ and ‘secretiveness’. Thus Sebastian ‘uttered a well-simulated expression of astonishment’ (32), he ‘inwardly [...] smiled an ironic smile’ (233). When he has a ‘studiously straight face’ he is actually ‘chuckling to himself’ (233). He demonstrates the cerebrotonic ‘indirect[ness] of manner’ (*VT*, 77): he considers that ‘he must ask for the dinner-jacket – but in such a way that his father wouldn’t think that he really longed for it [...] it would take good acting to bring it off’ (29). Sheldon also writes of the cerebrotonic’s changeable mental state (*VT*, 265). Huxley presents Sebastian as consistently possessing this trait: the ‘virtuosity of the old Professor’s talk delighted him’, but then his ‘feelings towards it underwent a change’ (35), he moves to throw away chocolates, but then changes his mind (2), he ‘started to put the letter away in his pocket, then decided after all to see what the man had to say’ (226).

Sebastian is outwardly embarrassed when he meets strangers, for example when he first meets Rontini, but ‘meanwhile, inside his skull, the observer and the

phrase-maker were busily at work' (232). Here we have a whole host of cerebrotonic traits: sociophobia, the contrast between outer appearance and inner thoughts, a detachment as regards one's surroundings, including other people (Sebastian is an 'observer'), a love of words, and a busy mind. Another passage provides a further catalogue of cerebrotonic traits:

Gloomily Sebastian turned [. . .] Thank God, the coast was clear. He tiptoed across the hall and started to climb the stairs. On the last step he halted. A sound had caught his ear. Somewhere, behind one of those closed doors, people were talking [. . .] Sebastian was still hesitating. (251)

Sebastian is 'gloomily' preoccupied with his own thoughts and emotions, he is happy that he does not have to engage in social interaction, he moves quietly and in a restrained manner, he is sensitive to sounds, and he is hesitant.

Sebastian possesses the nervous disposition of the cerebrotonic (*VT*, 271), who is easily nauseated (*VT*, 70): he feels 'sick' and experiences 'nausea' when having to meet his headmaster, and when attempting to approach a prostitute (23-24), and again, when he is about to ask his father for a dinner-jacket, he experiences the 'physiological overresponse' of the cerebrotonic: 'He felt sick, and his heart was beating violently [. . .] the nausea' (31). He feels 'quivering streaks of dizziness and a faint nausea' (129) from drinking alcohol, just as Sheldon writes that alcohol causes, in cerebrotonics, a feeling of internal strain, dizziness, and increased fatigue (*VT*, 45). Cerebrotonics also have a 'sensitivity to tobacco' (*VT*, 278) as does Sebastian (10). Cerebrotonics experience, according to Sheldon, 'hypereroticism [. . .] quick, intense sexual excitability' (*VT*, 254), just as Sebastian experiences 'frenzied' sexual 'excitement' (25). Sheldon describes jealousy as 'a fatal curse of cerebrotonia' (*VT*, 37), and Sebastian is 'overcome with a fury of jealousy' (164).

Given the cerebrotonic's love of words, one might assume that they would make excellent creative writers. Sebastian's composition of poetry (e.g. 51) would suggest this. Sheldon does indeed write of the cerebrotonic's alertness to different shades of a word's meaning, and their careful use of words (*VT*, 90). But in fact, according to Sheldon: 'Cerebrotonic people rarely write fiction. When they do, it is generally too involved to be readable. But they often spend their lives "on the

verge” of writing fiction’ (VT, 90). The cerebrotonic writer considers too many ‘ramifications and alternatives to every phrase’ (VT, 90). Sheldon is discussing fiction rather than poetry, which is Sebastian’s art form of choice, but Sebastian does tell ‘extraordinary stories’ (12), suggesting he also has a talent for fiction. If so, Sebastian’s facility as a creative writer, where ‘a fire-works display of lovely phrases began to blaze and crackle in his mind’ (19), is a point where Huxley departs from Sheldon’s description of the cerebrotonic.

Sheldon’s cerebrotonic has less clearly delineated boundaries between his actual experiences and ‘phantasy life’, which can be very rich (VT, 88). This is reflected in, for example, Sebastian’s fantasy of his lover ‘Mary Esdaile’ (e.g. 17), which he creates so expertly that Susan believes it to be true. Sebastian’s cerebrotonic fantasy life leads to his internal perception of reality becoming more real to him than the external truth. When he believes that the consequences of his lies about the drawing he had sold will be removed by Rontini recovering the drawing from Weyl, he thinks: ‘The lie itself would be as though it had never been uttered. Indeed, for all practical purposes, one could now say that it never *had* been uttered’ (240). When Rontini retrieves the drawing, ‘[s]o completely had [Sebastian] convinced himself that Bruno would succeed, and that all his troubles were already over, that the actual sight of the drawing left him almost indifferent’ (241). Having imagined the drawing recovered, the imagining becomes Sebastian’s reality, and thus the actual occurrence of the event has no meaning for him. The fact that the cerebrotonic’s inner life is more real to him than the outer world (VT, 88) is captured perfectly by Huxley when he describes Sebastian’s romantic, poetic, view of the Methodist Chapel as seen at night. Sebastian is attempting to concoct a plan to enable him to acquire a dinner-jacket. He keeps ‘his eyes fixed upon the pavement at his feet’ (30), demonstrating his preoccupation with his inner world at the expense of his external surroundings. Even when he does notice his external environment, he projects his own thoughts onto it: ‘He raised his head, as though the perfect, the irresistible plan were up there in the murky sky’ (30). But then he sees the chapel, the view of which at night, with its ‘bright little details and

distinctions fading upwards into undifferentiated mystery’, gives him a ‘strange, inexplicable elation’ (30):

Hideous, in the day-time, beyond belief. But an hour later, when the lamps were lit, as lovely and significant as anything he had ever seen. Which was the real chapel – the little monstrosity that received the Reverend Wilkins and his flock on Sunday mornings? Or this unfathomably pregnant mystery before him [. . .] The questions admitted of no answer, the only thing you could do was to re-formulate them in terms of poetry. (30-31)

The sight of the chapel does indeed cause Sebastian to begin to compose a poem, on how he sees ‘the beauty of holiness’ (30) in the chapel at night. All the characteristics of the cerebrotonic are in place in this passage: not only the propensity for inner thoughts informing the perception of the external world, and again the love of words, but also the ‘quest for understanding’, for ‘answers to some of the riddles of life’ (VT, 93). This passage also correlates with Sheldon’s assertion that the often sociophobic cerebrotonic becomes ‘affectionately attached to *things*, reads human qualities and feelings into them, and often focuses deep affection upon things that are not human’ (VT, 255): Sebastian has such affection for the chapel that he calls it ‘*his* chapel’ (30). Here Huxley provides a great sense of Sebastian’s inner life, and Huxley is using his conception of Sheldon’s cerebrotonic to do so. This is an instance of Huxley using another’s ideas to aid him in effectively creating a character, rather than merely using a character as a mouth-piece for another’s philosophy, and is thus an example of another’s ideas having a beneficial rather than damaging aesthetic effect on a Huxley work. Later in the novel, Sebastian sees ‘trees and grass’ as ‘glowing with supernatural significance’ (248). Both of these occasions show signs of the introverted cerebrotonic’s predilection for mysticism, as a type less concerned with materialism or the external world than either somatotonics or viscerotonics, that will be tapped by the similarly cerebrotonic Bruno Rontini later in the novel.

Rontini suggests that Sebastian worships words, rather than God: ‘“The Gospel of Poetry [. . .] In the beginning were the words, and the words were with God, and the words *were* God.”’ This love of words is, as previously mentioned, a

specifically cerebrotonic trait (VT, 90). Sebastian resolves, under the influence of Rontini, to ‘live with people and real events and not so exclusively with words’ (250). Huxley is depicting a character endeavouring to overcome the particular sins of his Sheldonian somatotype. Thus when Huxley incorporated Sheldonian theory into his increasingly mystical philosophy, he used it to explore the potential obstacles in achieving lasting self-improvement and mystical enlightenment. During the 1940s, most notably in *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945), Huxley writes of the importance of relinquishing the ego in order to achieve true spiritual growth. For example, in the chapter ‘Mortification, Non-Attachment, Right Livelihood’ he writes: ‘The divine eternal fullness of life can be gained only by those who have deliberately lost the partial, separative life of craving and self-interest, of egocentric thinking, feeling, wishing and acting’.⁴ Thus Huxley is able to use Sheldon’s work to define the nature of the self or ego for each individual. This definition of the qualities of the individual ego that need to be overcome, in Sheldonian terms, can be observed in *Time Must Have a Stop* in Chapter 30, where Sebastian considers the moral weaknesses to which he is immune, and those to which he is prone:

It is wonderfully easy to escape the vices towards which one doesn’t happen to be drawn. I hate sitting long over meals, am indifferent to ‘good food’ and have a stomach that is turned by more than an ounce of alcohol; no wonder, then, that I am temperate. And what about the love of money? Too squeamish and retiring to want to show off, too exclusively concerned with words and notions to care about real estate or first editions or ‘nice things’, too improvident and too sceptical to be bothered about investments [. . .] And for someone with my musculature, my kind of gift and my disastrous capacity for getting away with murder, the lust for power is even less of a problem than the lust for money. (275-76)

Here Sebastian discusses the viscerotonic and somatotonic vices to which he, as a cerebrotonic, is not drawn. He then describes his cerebrotonic weaknesses: ‘But when it comes to the subtler forms of vanity and pride, when it comes to indifference, negative cruelty and the lack of charity, when it comes to being afraid and telling lies, when it comes to sensuality . . .’ (276). Some of the cerebrotonic flaws which Sebastian highlights here represent the potentially negative side of the

⁴ *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 96.

cerebrotonic ‘need for solitude’ and ‘sociophobia’: an indifference to his/her fellow human beings. One cannot help but be reminded of some of Huxley’s own self-assessments in his letters. In these admissions, the personal failings he describes are often of a cerebrotonic nature. In a letter to Flora Strousse in 1932, he admits to a ‘fear of the responsibilities of relationships’,⁵ and in another letter to his father Leonard in the same year, he confesses that: ‘I know how to deal with abstract ideas but not with people’.⁶ Three years later, in a letter to Kethevan Roberts, he reveals more of his self-criticism: ‘My besetting sin, the dread and avoidance of emotion, the escape from personal responsibility, the substitution of aesthetic and intellectual values for moral values – of art and thought for sanctity’.⁷ Here Huxley highlights the failings not only of himself, but of the protagonists of many of his novels, from Anthony Beavis in *Eyeless in Gaza* to Will Farnaby in *Island*. These qualities correspond exactly with Sheldon’s ‘mentally overintense’ and ‘sociophobic’ cerebrotonic.

Sebastian’s cerebrotonic nature aids him in analysing himself, a trait of the cerebrotonic (*VT*, 88): ‘How awful he was!’ (250). He feels ‘self-hatred and remorse’ (250). But the cerebrotonic mind is just as likely to become detached from reality as to self-analyse, and this detachment can become an escape from confronting oneself: ‘Gradually his mood had modulated out of its original ethical urgency into another key – out of the exaltation of repentance and good resolutions into the bliss of detached poetical contemplation’ (250), into a ‘somnambulistic detachment’ from ‘reality’ (251). This issue is discussed when Sebastian first meets Rontini. Sebastian begins thinking about his behaviour, about the causes and consequences of his lies, as recommended by Rontini, but instead gets distracted by the composition of a poem about the issues (239-47): ‘He began to think of the lies he had told and of all their ramifying antecedents and consequences’ (239). ‘Suddenly [...] he perceived how well this notion of the genealogy of offences would fit into the scheme of his new poem’ (240). Thus Sebastian becomes lost in

⁵ *Letters*, p. 357, (19 February 1932).

⁶ *Letters*, p. 361, (12 September 1932).

⁷ *Letters*, p. 390, (13 January 1935).

‘absorbed abstraction’ (241). Rontini suggests it may have been more productive to ‘“have spent your time making out your own genealogy, instead of writing” ’ (243). But Sebastian again has found it hard to resist abstraction and ‘detached poetical contemplation’ (250).

The other characters in the novel also conform to Sheldon’s system. Daisy Ockham is ‘fat’ (2), and has a ‘soft face’ (2, 198), both characteristics of the endomorph (*VHP*, 37), and she has the corresponding viscerotonic personality. She loves food (e.g. 1), and is ‘yearningly maternal’ (1): for her, being a mother had been ‘the richest, the intensest living’ (195). Both of these are viscerotonic qualities (*VT*, 33, 47). Veronica Thwale sees Ockham as ‘fairly itching with unsatisfied motherhood’ (214). Indeed, Ockham’s maternal instincts are so strong that her dead son ‘had been the living sacrament, the revelation, the immediate experience of divinity’ (198). This coupling of religious and maternal feeling is also expressed by Sheldon when describing the viscerotonic: a central component of this somatotype’s psyche is the importance of family, ‘the sacredness of “mother” ’ (*VT*, 47). Ockham displays no emotional inhibition, another viscerotonic trait (*VT*, 17). Indeed, Canon Cresswell accuses her of being a ‘self-indulgent emotionalist’ (198), and she describes herself as a ‘dreadful old sentimentalist’ (199). She cries easily: her ‘tears overflowed’ (2), she has ‘tears in her eyes’ (198), ‘her eyes filled with the tears that came to her so easily’ (213). A tendency to cry unreservedly is described by Sheldon as a viscerotonic trait (*VT*, 254). Another is generosity (*VT*, 37), a quality also displayed by Ockham when she offers to give Sebastian a great many books ‘that had been in her husband’s library’ (202). In considering her amiable disposition, Sebastian thinks she is ‘like Uncle Eustace’ (203). Thus Huxley even has another character within the novel draw attention to the similar personality of two characters whom Huxley has constructed as the same somatotype.

Veronica Thwale is described as a typical ‘small’ and ‘slight’ (*VHP*, 43) ectomorph, with ‘slender arm[s]’ (232), a ‘small [...] hand’ (166), and small breasts (116). True to Sheldon’s system, she also displays corresponding cerebrotonic traits. As mentioned, Sheldon lists ‘bright eyes’ (*VT*, 76) as a quality of

cerebrotonics, and Huxley uses this exact phrase to describe Thwale (202), just as he used it to describe Sebastian. Huxley also writes that Thwale ‘averted her eyes’ (73) when talking to Eustace, again using the same exact phrase he used to describe Sebastian’s similarly cerebrotonic behaviour. The ‘vocal restraint’ of cerebrotonics is also in evidence: she speaks ‘softly’ (218), and is described as having ‘delicate [. . .] laughter’ (149). Thwale also possesses the cerebrotonic’s ‘poor sleep habits’: ‘“I was awake half the night!”’ (224). Sheldon describes the cerebrotonic’s ‘slight working’ of the lips and mouth, their trembling lips (*VT*, 77). Similarly, ‘the corners’ of Thwale’s mouth ‘quivered’ (116). Thwale exhibits the cerebrotonic’s love of privacy and secrecy. She admits to Eustace that she draws ‘“secretly”’ (73), and when he asks why, she replies that: ‘“Secrecy’s such fun just for its own sake”’ (73). She ‘“wouldn’t even write a laundry list with somebody else in the room”’ (73). Cerebrotonics ‘like doors closed’ (*VT*, 81), and Thwale remarks of her discomfort with the fact that the door of her late husband’s study was ‘“never shut”’ (73). She displays the indirectness (*VT*, 77) and inscrutability (*VT*, 77) of her somatotype, believing that ‘[i]t was most necessary to keep other people in ignorance of what one was really feeling’ (210). The cerebrotonic has intense feelings, but does not express them outwardly (*VT*, 76). Thwale is outwardly ‘serene’ (65), but has intense sexual desire (e.g. 223). Another passage reveals cerebrotonic traits: ‘She took a sip of coffee, delicately wiped her mouth, bit off a morsel of her toast and butter and, when she had swallowed it, wiped her mouth again’ (224). Thwale shows the restraint of the cerebrotonic, taking only a ‘sip’ and a ‘morsel’. She takes a small amount of food and waits until she has swallowed before continuing, and Sheldon writes that cerebrotonics have ‘overly sensitive swallowing and gagging reflexes’ (*VT*, 278).

Paul De Vries is a ‘slender’ (85) ectomorph, and possesses the cerebrotonic love of words and abstractions: ‘Organismic [...] The blessed word released him out of cramping actuality into the wide open spaces of the uncontaminated idea’ (89). ‘When one’s mind is busy with really important, exciting ideas’ thinks De Vries, ‘one can’t be bothered with the trivial little events of daily life’ (164).

However, De Vries also displays the equally cerebrotonic passionate sexuality, which can be at odds with his intellectual convictions. He is filled with ‘passion’ (167) for Thwale, to whom he directs a ‘tremulous little smile of the most intense yearning’ (165). Here are multiple cerebrotonic traits: the ‘trembling lips’ (*VT*, 77), the restrained facial expression (*VT*, 77) of a ‘little smile’, and the ‘intense yearning’ suggesting the ‘hypereroticism’ (*VT*, 254) of this temperament.

Bruno Rontini is portrayed as both a ‘bony’ (108, 237) ectomorph, and a cerebrotonic: he has a ‘quiet voice’ (104, 233) and loves ‘solitude’ (98). At one point, his spiritual reverie is curtailed by ‘the sound of his cousin’s voice’, which ‘brought his attention back again to what was happening in the shop’ (104). This is very similar to Huxley’s depiction of Sebastian’s inner life, as discussed above, thus drawing attention to Rontini and Sebastian’s similar temperaments, and thus also providing hints of their future friendship and Rontini’s later influence on Sebastian.

Huxley’s adoption of Sheldon’s somatotype system is apparent in his depiction of all the novel’s characters, not only the central ones. In the interests of brevity I will give just one example for both physique and temperament. For example, Tom Boveney is ‘three feet wide, two feet thick’ (20), suggesting endomorphy, and is characterised by his ‘friendliness’ (21), a trait of the corresponding viscerotonic type. Dr Pfeiffer is endomorphically ‘obese’ (8), and likes cigars (8), displaying the oral fixation of the corresponding viscerotonic. Alice Poulshot has the ‘slender’ (38) physique of the ectomorph, and she values ‘self-denial’ (39) highly, demonstrating the tendency towards ‘restraint’ of the cerebrotonic temperament. Fred Poulshot has the ‘narrow shoulders’ (45) of the ectomorph (*VHP*, 42), and is scrupulously ‘economical’, a cerebrotonic trait (*VT*, 37). Even the passing descriptions adhere to Sheldon’s typology. A customer who briefly enters Rontini’s shop is clearly delineated as having both the ‘frail’ (100) body and ‘childish face’ (99) of the ectomorph, as well as the ‘shy’ (99) and ‘nervous’ (100) cerebrotonic disposition. The woman who lays ‘an arm round the child’s [the Weyls’ son’s] shoulders’ is described as ‘big’ (261), the suggestion of

an endomorphic physique accompanied by a display of maternal care, a central quality of the viscerotonic temperament (*VT*, 47).

Although Huxley depicts most characters in *Time Must Have a Stop* as pure examples of one of Sheldon's three poles, a few characters show signs of being a mixture of two types. But even here, Huxley remains true to Sheldon's hypothesis by imbuing these characters with the correct corresponding mix of personality traits. Gabriel Weyl is described mesomorphically as 'broad-shouldered' (77), but also, in Eustace's after-death vision of the future, as endomorphically 'paunchy and bald-headed' (259) (Sheldon associates baldness with the endomorph (*VHP*, 38)). Thus Huxley also has him displaying personality traits of the corresponding somatotonic and viscerotonic types. For example, he can be somatotonically aggressive (243), or viscerotonically demonstrative (77). In fact, readers well-versed in Sheldon's typology would be able to predict the fiery temper that will be revealed to be lying behind the affectionate manner, on the basis of his physical description. Carlo Malpighi is described ectomorphically as a 'tall bony young man' (264), but he is also described as 'large-boned' and as having 'big hands' (265), qualities of the mesomorph (*VHP*, 39). And, true to Sheldon, he thus displays elements of both the cerebrotonic and the somatotonic personality types. He shows 'more resignation to the interruption [of his reading] than delight at seeing a customer' (80), and he is 'quiet' (82) and 'hesitant' (83), all suggesting cerebrotonia. But he also displays somatotonic 'aggressiveness', revealing his capacity to be 'menacing' and use his 'fists' (265). Malpighi's cerebrotonic tendencies mean that he is susceptible to Rontini's mystical preaching (82-83), but, when upset at how Sebastian's actions have led to Rontini's imprisonment, his reaction is revealing. Huxley describes Malpighi's 'big hands' which 'kept clenching and unclenching' (265). His cerebrotonic tendencies are attempting to restrain him from acting out his somatotonic desire towards 'aggressiveness' and 'combat'. Eventually, his somatotonic tendencies win out, and he gives Sebastian 'a back-handed blow in the face' (265). This is interesting, as Huxley's physical description of Malpighi, as outlined above, presents him as showing signs of what

Sheldon would term dysplasia, referring to the possession of a mixture of different somatotypes in different parts of the body, which Sheldon's studies suggested was more common in 'delinquent boys than in nondelinquent of the same age' (*VT*, 255). Sheldon adds that delinquent boys also tend to have a mix of cerebrotonia and somatonia (*VT*, 255), which is precisely the combination with which Huxley imbues the violent Malpighi. Here is an example of Huxley using Sheldon's ideas in a very precise way to construct his characters, and indeed events, in the novel. However, although John, as mentioned above, has hints of cerebrotonia in his personality, the information the reader receives about his physique represents it as entirely mesomorphic in nature, correlating with his predominantly somatonic temperament.

The above analyses provide detailed evidence for the influence of Sheldon, revealing the extent to which Huxley was using Sheldon's ideas as the basis for his characterisation. There are, however, some minor deviations from Sheldon's system. De Vries and Professor Cacciaguida, who are both presented as cerebrotonic ectomorphs (De Vries is described above, and Cacciaguida has a 'narrow chest and shoulders' and 'thin little legs' (33)), are depicted as frequent smokers. Cacciaguida 'lights a cigarette' with 'nicotine-stained fingers' (33), and De Vries smokes 'hungrily' (88), yet Sheldon predicts a dislike of tobacco among cerebrotonics (278). Huxley's physical descriptions do not always follow Sheldon's to the letter. Huxley's descriptions of characters' faces, in particular, are sometimes not in line with Sheldon's predictions for the type. For example, Thwale has an 'oval' face (65), but cerebrotonic faces tend to have, according to Sheldon, a 'triangular appearance, with the apex at the delicately pointed chin' (*VHP*, 43). Sometimes characters exhibit traits not associated with their type: for example, Daisy Ockham is depicted as having trouble sleeping (225), uncharacteristic for a viscerotonic. However, these moments are rare, and overall the adherence to Sheldon's classifications, as demonstrated above, is remarkably detailed, consistent and systematic.

How Huxley Uses Sheldon's Ideas in *Time Must Have a Stop*

Thus Huxley is using Sheldon's works of constitutional psychology as guide books to the physical and psychological elements of humanity, in order to construct his fictional world of characters and relationships. I will now examine in more detail how Huxley uses Sheldon's system in the novel. Firstly, Huxley creates parallels between characters of the same somatotype. As has been touched upon already above, he sometimes connects characters by utilising the same words and phrases to describe them. As well as the examples given earlier, he also writes of the cerebrotonic De Vries's 'intentness' (85) and of the similarly cerebrotonic Thwale's 'intentness' (65), the word 'intent' being specifically used by Sheldon to describe cerebrotonics on multiple occasions (*VT*, 76, 87). Huxley writes that De Vries 'stared unseeingly at the patch of Chinese carpet between his feet' (166), demonstrating that De Vries is cerebrotonically consumed by his inner thoughts and feelings, and thus does not see the world around him. Huxley uses the exact same phrase to describe Sebastian's behaviour: 'Sebastian stared unseeingly' (263), depicting Sebastian's similar absorption in his inner life and thus exclusion of the external environment. Once again, two characters of the same somatotype are linked by the use of the same language to describe them. Huxley gives both Bruno Rontini and Sebastian the same quality on consecutive pages, 'bright eyes' (108-09), which is the exact same phrase used by Sheldon to describe cerebrotonics (*VT*, 76). Huxley thus suggests the similarity between Sebastian and Rontini that will become apparent later when Sebastian becomes influenced by Rontini's mysticism, which can be seen as a highly cerebrotonic philosophy, as will be discussed later. As mentioned earlier, Huxley even links the two main examples of viscerotonia in the novel, Eustace Barnack and Daisy Ockham, by having Sebastian comment on the essential similarity in their natures (in the context of its relation to his cerebrotonic disposition): 'Her most precious gift was that she never made you feel shy. In that respect she was like uncle Eustace; and in both of them, it seemed to Sebastian, the secret consisted in a certain absence of pretentiousness' (203). John

Barnack and Carlo Malpighi are both somatotonic/cerebrotonic mixes, and thus display some similar tendencies. Their cerebrotonic natures mean that both are driven by intellectual, abstract ideas: John has his socialist ‘political principles’ (56) and Malpighi is similarly motivated by ‘theoretical socialism’ (82). But unlike the pure cerebrotonics, such as Sebastian or De Vries, who are happy to remain in the world of ideas (except, in typically cerebrotonic fashion, when it comes to sex), John and Malpighi’s somatotonic side creates a strong desire to *act* upon their intellectual convictions, to impact upon the world. Thus not only is John engaged in politics, Malpighi has also been involved in political activism, ‘to put up some kind of resistance to the all-pervading tyranny’ (82).

It is with contrasts between somatotypes, however, that Huxley is most concerned. Huxley uses his somatotyping of his characters to further a trait that was inherent even in his earliest novels: the technique of comparing and contrasting the different and often conflicting perspectives and world-views of the characters. Sheldon provided Huxley with a way of systematically analysing and expressing what had always been a theme of his novels, and what he had explicitly articulated in *Ends and Means*: that humans live in separate, often ‘incommensurable [. . .] psychological universes’,⁸ and, despite being in each other’s company, have experiences of their interactions which are profoundly different. Later, in *The Doors of Perception* (1954), Huxley again writes on this theme:

We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves [. . .] 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. Sensation, feelings, insights, fancies – all these are private and, except through symbols and at second hand, incommunicable [. . .] From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes.⁹

Huxley often uses free indirect discourse to express this. For example, take the sentimental, religious, viscerotonic Daisy Ockham interacting with the intellectual,

⁸ *EM*, p. 168.

⁹ *The Doors of Perception*, pp. 3-4, hereafter *DP*.

cerebrotonic Sebastian. Ockham transplants the feelings for her dead son onto Sebastian:

Imagine poor little Frankie, all alone in a harsh, indifferent world, with nobody to love him as she alone was capable of loving him! To the love in her heart there was added an overpowering compassion.

Blancmange, Sebastian was thinking [of Ockham]. Blancmange with Jesus sauce. (199-200)

One of the clearest contrasts is between John and Sebastian. For example, when the two interact, somatonic John is ‘hard’, where cerebrotonic Sebastian is ‘sensitive’ (56); John is ‘resolute’, whilst Sebastian is ‘nervous’ (57). Somatonics have a fear of old age (VT, 68), and an ‘orientation toward the goals and activities of youth’, whereas cerebrotonics have a deep wish to be older (VT, 93), and Huxley focuses on this contrast by presenting John *as viewed by* Sebastian: ‘At sixty-five his father was still trying to be what he had been at fifty-five, forty-five, thirty-five [. . .] by straining to remain unmodified, [he] had transformed himself into a gruesome anomaly’ (299). Sebastian, as a cerebrotonic, sees this as wrong: ‘The world was full of septuagenarians playing at being in their thirties or even in their teens, when they ought to have been preparing for death, ought to have been trying to unearth the spiritual reality’ (299). (Sheldon writes that cerebrotonics have an interest both in death (VT, 74) and, as previously mentioned, in searching for ‘answers to some of the riddles of life’ (VT, 93).) Sebastian's description of being in ‘an age that had invented Peter Pan and raised the monstrosity of arrested development to the rank of an ideal’ (299) references Huxley's belief, expressed in other works, such as *The Perennial Philosophy*, that the modern world had undergone a ‘somatonic revolution’ (VT, 255), to use Sheldon's phrase, with somatonic traits, such as an ‘orientation toward the goals and activities of youth’, increasingly, and destructively, considered the ideal.

The cerebrotonic/viscerotonic contrasts are also emphasised. When Tom Boveney, displaying the demonstrative behaviour of the viscerotonic, touches Sebastian by patting ‘his shoulder affectionately’, and giving ‘his shoulder a reassuring squeeze’ (20), Sebastian displays the typically cerebrotonic sociophobic

annoyance at this behaviour (*VT*, 38): ‘Sebastian positively hated the great lout for his officious friendliness’ (21). In one passage, Huxley depicts Sebastian as engaged in sexual ‘day-dreaming’ (127), a highly cerebrotonic activity (*VT*, 89), and Eustace as viscerotonically enjoying the sensual pleasures of his brandy and cigar (126-27). Using Huxley’s terminology from his appendix to *The Devils of Loudun*, both are ‘self-transcending’ via their own somatotype paths.¹⁰ Ockham and Thwale are contrasted in Chapter 22, where Ockham’s uninhibited outpourings of emotion (‘Her eyes filled with the tears that came to her so easily, her voice took on a vibrancy of emotion’ (213)) are juxtaposed with Thwale’s attempts to conceal her emotions: ‘It was most necessary to keep other people in ignorance of what one was really feeling’ (210). Thwale is cerebrotonically detached from those around her: ‘From between the curtains of her spiritual private box, Mrs. Thwale observed it all and was delighted with the play’ (214). She thinks of seducing Sebastian as a cerebral exercise, ‘an interesting scientific experiment’ (214). Whereas Ockham is viscerotonically, unselfconsciously engaged, physically and emotionally, with those around her: ‘Impulsively, Mrs. Ockham put an arm round Sebastian’s shoulders and drew him towards her’ (213).

When Eustace and De Vries eat together in Chapter 8, the viscerotonic/cerebrotonic contrast is fully displayed. The following interaction provides a good example. On the subject of Einstein, De Vries remarks: ‘“Could any subject be more exciting?”’, to which Eustace replies: ‘“None – unless it’s the subject of lunch when the clock says half-past one.”’ (85). This exchange offers a very concise presentation of the cerebrotonic/viscerotonic dynamic. De Vries agrees that food is important, ‘but with an obvious lack of all conviction’ (85). He then, revealingly, brings even the discussion of sensual satisfaction back into the realm of abstract philosophy: ‘“The stomach has its reasons, as Pascal would say.”’ (85). Throughout the meal, Eustace continually attempts to change the focus of the conversation to sensual enjoyment, be it the food they are eating or the discussion of art (e.g. 86), whereas De Vries’s conversation is entirely concerned with abstract

¹⁰ *The Devils of Loudun*, p. 315.

ideas (e.g. 89). Where Eustace is delighting in his food (e.g. 86), De Vries is so absorbed in the ideas he is attempting to convey to Eustace that his plate of lasagne is left ‘almost untouched’ (88). Furthermore, Eustace is alert to the earthy, practical realities lurking beneath De Vries’s abstraction. For example, he is quick to ascertain, when De Vries remarks upon Thwale’s ability to understand Einstein, that De Vries is attracted to Thwale (86). Eustace has no patience with De Vries’s attempts to sanction his typically cerebrotonic sexual desires by describing non-marital sex among intellectuals as ‘modified celibacy’ (91), ending the meal by reciting sexual limericks to De Vries, because he wishes to ‘clear the air of philosophic cant and bring the philosopher down to the good old human barnyard, where he still belonged’ (92).

In Chapter 5, when Sebastian attempts to ask his father, in the presence of Eustace, Alice and Susan, for a dinner-jacket, Huxley contrasts the different characters’ personalities and perspectives, using both direct speech and free indirect discourse to present the reader with the points of view of all those present. John’s refusal to buy Sebastian a dinner-jacket is based on his political principles, which derive, in theory, from a humanitarian concern for equality. However, John displays no humanity towards his own son, his refusal being ‘sarcastic’ (56) and ‘contemptuous’ (58). Huxley also reveals that John’s harsh tone is partly derived from Sebastian’s similarity to John’s late, hated wife: ‘John Barnack looked in silence at his son – looked intently at the image of the childish wife who had betrayed him’ (58). Thus Huxley reveals that beneath the veneer of the lawyer arguing his case for equality lies personal resentment, which uses the mask of political principles to bully others. In this way John is behaving like a typical somatonic, who displays both a ‘love of dominating’ and ‘callousness’. Sebastian displays cerebrotonic nervousness in asking his bullying father for the dinner-jacket, displaying once again the typically cerebrotonic nausea: ‘Sebastian’s heart started to beat violently, he felt all at once rather sick’ (56). Eustace displays typical viscerotonic amiability, and rapport with younger people (*VT*, 47), by attempting to support Sebastian against John. Susan, meanwhile, is an onlooker on the scene, and

she displays her viscerotonic maternal tendencies towards Sebastian, who, like the typical cerebrotonic (*VT*, 87), looks younger than he is: ‘He looked like a little boy. A little boy in distress [...] Susan was overwhelmed by loving pity’ (58). Huxley presents the often irreconcilable differences in both personality and perspective between these extreme examples of the different somatotypes, which render constructive interaction and communication between the types so difficult, by describing Alice’s efforts to mediate between the different ‘island universes’ (*DP*, 4): ‘The hardness and the principles [of John] were facts; and so was Sebastian’s sensitiveness. Her policy was to try to keep the two sets of facts from colliding. But the attempt, on this occasion, was worse than fruitless’ (56).

Huxley does not present one somatotype as right and another wrong, instead depicting the complex combination of positive and negative traits that each possesses. John’s bullying nature is condemned by others, and Sebastian’s sensitivity is viewed with compassion by, for example, Alice and Susan, as shown above. However, Sebastian’s cerebrotonic introversion does lead to a very insular world-view. John is right when he suggests that Sebastian is not thinking of others, that he has ‘“no sense of social responsibility” ’ (57). Sebastian’s self-absorption, his ‘preoccupation with his own affairs’ (40), is depicted throughout the novel. His lack of consideration of the effects of his actions on others even leads to his careless talk to Weyl and thus Rontini’s imprisonment. Sheldon remarks that cerebrotonics often have a poor awareness of others (*VT*, 40). Eustace, meanwhile, displays the ‘generosity, both of material goods and of emotion’ (*VT*, 37) associated with the viscerotonic type. The former is exhibited, for example, by Eustace giving Sebastian the Degas drawing (126), and the latter is also displayed, as Eustace demonstrates kindness and affection towards others, even those he disagrees with, such as Malpighi, whose loyalty to Rontini he finds ‘touching’ (81), or to his sister Alice, for whom he is ‘overcome by pity’ (48). However, his viscerotonic complacency is also apparent, as he insists that ‘“Just keeping out of mischief” ’ is ‘“the greatest of all the virtues” ’ (52). John, however, reminds Eustace that he has a ‘“comfortable holding in the Yangtze and South China Bank” ’, and is thus

growing rich ‘ “on exploitation in China and Japan” ’, and that his ‘ “jute shares” ’ are earned for him ‘ “by Indians who are getting paid a daily wage that wouldn’t buy more than a third of one of your cigars” ’ (53).

John, on the other hand, could not be accused of being complacent, pursuing political activities which he believes are for the good of humanity. And yet his behaviour towards those around him has none of the warmth or intrinsic affection that Eustace displays, and, unlike Eustace, he has no patience with those whose views he disagrees with, being quick to anger (e.g. 52). John sees Eustace’s ‘ “cynical realism” ’ as ‘ “the intelligent man’s best excuse for doing nothing in an intolerable situation” ’ (52), and Eustace views John’s political idealism as ‘ that noble Roman toga that political gentlemen drape over the will-to-power when they want to make it look respectable’ ’ (54). John and Eustace’s philosophical positions are deeply rooted in their respective somatotypes. Eustace’s amiability combined with complacency, and John’s active, energetic achievement combined with emotional callousness, precisely correspond, as discussed above, to Sheldon’s conception of the positive and negative traits of the viscerotonic and somatotonic somatotypes respectively.

Both John’s and Eustace’s arguments are presented. Eustace also argues for the merits of his viscerotonic philosophy of life over the other two approaches, with some conviction, as will be discussed later, despite the fact that John’s criticisms of his approach are valid. Huxley has integrated Sheldon’s mind-body types into his continued exploration of the best way for humans to live their lives. He does not present either brother as being entirely right or wrong, displaying an admirable lack of didacticism, especially given the increase in this tendency in his work from *Eyeless in Gaza* onwards. However, such restraint is only temporary, as *Time Must Have a Stop* does feature an ideal character, who extols an ideal, third way through this debate. The exchanges between John and Eustace serve as a prelude to the philosophy of Bruno Rontini. Rontini’s views on this subject are relayed to Eustace by Carlo Malpighi:

‘There’s only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that’s your own self [...] So you have to begin there, not outside, not on other people. That comes afterwards, when you’ve worked on your own corner. You’ve got to *be* good before you can *do* good – or at any rate do good without doing harm at the same time. Helping with one hand and hurting with the other – that’s what the ordinary reformer does.’ (83)

Here is the criticism of the somatotonic approach, as represented by John. Eustace reveals once again his viscerotonic perspective: ‘“Whereas the truly wise man” ’ he replies, ‘ “refrains from doing anything with either hand” ’ (83). But the viscerotonic approach is also criticised, as Malpighi corrects him: ‘ “The wise man begins by transforming himself, so that he can help other people without the risk of becoming corrupted in the process” ’ (83). The presentation of helping others as the ultimate goal therefore also opposes the insularity of the cerebrotonic. Thus Huxley, through the philosophy and character of Rontini, presents the self-transforming power of mysticism as a way for humans to overcome the limitations and negative tendencies of their inherent Sheldonian somatotypes. And thus revealingly, Huxley signals his ideal character by the fact that, even though he may be presented as predominantly one somatotype, he, unlike the other characters, displays positive traits of *other somatotypes* as well. Rontini, as outlined above, is displayed as a ectomorph and a corresponding cerebrotonic. However, unlike the typically nervous cerebrotonic, he is ‘serene’ (232), and his ‘compassionate tenderness’ (238) is a positive quality Sheldon would associate with the viscerotonic, not the cerebrotonic.

However, it is surely not an accident that the mystic Rontini is portrayed as primarily cerebrotonic, as Huxley had already written elsewhere in his non-fiction that mysticism was a path more easily taken by this type (e.g. *EM*, 235). Hence it is the cerebrotonic Sebastian, whom Rontini suggests might one day become a ‘Franciscan’ (238), who eventually becomes a convert to Rontini’s philosophy (as well as the partially cerebrotonic Malpighi), whilst others, such as the viscerotonic Eustace, or the somatotonic John, reject it to the end. Mysticism can be seen as a highly cerebrotonic philosophy of life, based as it is upon solitary, internal experience, quietness, contemplation, restraint, and rejection of viscerotonic

materialism and somatonic desire for power. Eustace the bon viveur and John the politician are both too concerned with the external, material world to be attracted to mysticism, which is both anti-materialistic and focused upon internal experience. Huxley presents both John and Eustace as wrong in this rejection. Eustace's scoffing at spirituality is revealed to be mistaken when Huxley writes of his after-death experiences, and John's pursuit of external gratification in the world of politics, believing spirituality to be ' "all nonsense" ' (304), leaves him a 'bitter' (298) old man. Here is Huxley's representation of the effects of trying to improve the world without improving oneself. Thus whilst Rontini represents the mystical ideal, it is through the character of Sebastian that Huxley demonstrates the possibility of self-improvement. Sebastian's development during the novel, under the influence of Rontini, allows Huxley to express his belief that having an inherited temperament does not preclude one from being able to change one's behaviour, and thus that a belief in mind-body types does not necessarily imply a fully deterministic outlook. But significantly, it is a *cerebrotonic* character who is able to achieve this development. The somatotonics and viscerotonics in the novel are not depicted as undergoing any change in their attitude or behaviour in any way.

The somatonic approach to life, as in other works, such as Huxley's subsequent *The Perennial Philosophy*, receives the harshest criticism from Huxley. Malpighi, again influenced by Rontini, tells Eustace of the consequences of attempting 'to do good without being good' (83), and thus, implicitly, the dangers of John's chosen path, a man who is supposedly acting for the greater good, but who does not display compassion or empathy. Malpighi refers to the French Revolution:

'The men who made it had the best of intentions; but these good intentions were hopelessly mixed up with vanity and ambition and insensitiveness and cruelty [...] What had begun as a movement of liberation degenerated into terrorism and a squabble for power, into tyranny.' (83)

The qualities singled out as obstacles to the success of such a venture: ambition, insensitiveness, cruelty, and desire for power, are all characteristics of the somatonic type, and they are all, as shown above, qualities that John is either

shown to have, or is accused of having by others. Huxley's anti-somatotonic stance is reflected in the fact that John's character is presented almost entirely negatively in the novel, whereas at least some positive qualities of both Eustace and Sebastian are represented. Eustace's inherent good-natured kindness is emphasised, and Sebastian develops positively from the self-obsessed adolescent he is presented as at the novel's start.

John's position, the somatotonic position, is also given the least attention by Huxley. Not only is John a far less central character in the novel compared to Sebastian and Eustace, but the reader receives far more information about the inner lives of both Sebastian and Eustace, often through free indirect discourse. Sebastian's point of view is presented often throughout the novel, for example at the start of Chapter 1, and Eustace's point of view is also presented extensively, for example in Chapter 7. In contrast, John's inner life is hardly presented at all. The reader is given a few insights, such as the previously discussed point that Sebastian's strong physical resemblance to his mother fuels John's harshness towards him (58), but very little compared to the extensive passages devoted to the inner workings of Sebastian and Eustace. Take Chapter 5, where the reader is given more information on John's possible motivations *from the views of the other characters* than from himself, and these views are negative. Alice Poulshot, as mentioned above, comments on how John 'lost his temper in that awful suppressed way of his, and then pretended it was moral indignation' (52), Eustace believes that John's underlying motivations reside in a 'will-to-power' (54), and Susan views him as 'cruel' (58). Even the introduction of John's character is conducted from the point of view of Sebastian (Chapter 3), and the reader's perspective on John as an old man is also entirely framed by Sebastian's view of him (Chapter 30). For example, John is presented as 'bitter' (298) in later life because of his unfulfilled desire for power. But this is a view of John from the perspective of Sebastian. The reader has no indication of how reliable Sebastian's view is. But since it is all the reader is given, it is the only impression available of John's state, and Huxley's more positive presentation of the older Sebastian, who has come to respect the

philosophy of Huxley's ideal character, Rontini, adds further weight to Sebastian's perspective on his father. Thus the reader has a more external view of John; he is presented from the outside, or as others see him, not as he sees himself. Hence the reader is less inclined to empathise with him.

A possible factor affecting Huxley's choice in presenting far less of John's inner life is that, according to Sheldon, somatotonics are indeed relatively unaware of their inner lives. As mentioned above, Sheldon writes of somatotonics that they 'lack introspective insight' (*VT*, 260), that, for somatotonics, 'the mind is objective, extensive, extraverted. The mental focus is directed exclusively on the "outer reality"' (*VT*, 64). However, when observed in the context of Huxley's anti-somatotonic stance revealed not only in this novel but in other writings discussed in this thesis, Huxley's decision, whether conscious or unconscious, to give his exponent of somatotonia less attention, and present him less positively, than the other two main somatotype representatives, invites the conclusion that Huxley was simply less sympathetic, and empathetic, towards the somatotonic type. This is also reflected in the overall distribution of somatotypes in the novel, which contains predominantly cerebrotonic (e.g. Rontini, Tendring) or viscerotonic (e.g. Ockham, Boveney) characters. The only other characters who have some somatotonic elements are Weyl and Malpighi. Furthermore, cerebrotonics, such as Rontini, and viscerotonics, such as Ockham, are presented, as mentioned above, as having at least some positive qualities, whereas of the other at least partially somatotonic characters, Malpighi is violent, and Weyl expresses 'fury' (243) and is responsible for Huxley's ideal character being imprisoned. Thus once again, even among the less central characters, the novel is less focused on, and has less positive depictions of, somatotonia, in comparison with the other two somatotypes.

Sebastian's point of view, and thus the cerebrotonic position, is expressed the most in the novel. As with Huxley's decision in his depiction of John, this is in line with Sheldon's ideas, as Sheldon writes that cerebrotonics have a very rich inner life (*VT*, 88). However, taken in the context of Huxley's central characters often displaying personality traits which Sheldon would describe as cerebrotonic,

one can see the focus on Sebastian as simply symptomatic of Huxley's greater interest in the cerebrotonic type, and, once he became interested in mysticism, his belief that this type was more predisposed to transformation through mysticism (Sebastian is, as mentioned, the character who undergoes the most transformation in the novel). Huxley's greater interest in, and empathy towards, the cerebrotonic type was at least partly due to his belief that he himself was predominantly cerebrotonic.¹¹

So far, this discussion has considered how Huxley used Sheldon's ideas to create characters and examine relationships. But Huxley also refers to Sheldon's system, without actually using Sheldon's terminology, by having the characters in the novel themselves express Sheldonian views. One of the characters to do so is Rontini. There is a hint of Sheldonian emphasis on inherited personality in his remark that ' "Having intense emotions is just a matter of temperament" ' (281). Rontini's analysis of the customer in his shop is highly Sheldonian in nature. He observes the customer as a type, as the 'frail and nervous temperament' (100), thus linking a physical quality of Sheldon's ectomorph with a quality of Sheldon's corresponding cerebrotonic. On the basis of this diagnosis, Rontini infers a range of other personality traits that he expects the man to possess, all of which equate with Sheldon's description of the cerebrotonic type, such as a strong sexual desire and 'phantasy' life, and a tendency to be 'furtive' and 'secret' (100). De Vries also makes a Sheldonian comment when he remarks that ' "[s]noring is always indicative of relaxation [...] That's why thin nervous people so seldom . . ." ' (173), at which point Mrs Gamble cuts him short. Here, again, is the connection of the 'thin' ectomorphic physique with the corresponding 'nervous' cerebrotonic disposition, along with the belief that this mind-body type does not tend to snore, a point specifically made by Sheldon himself (*VT*, 262).

¹¹ For example, see *The Human Situation* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), pp. 134-35, which will be discussed later.

However, the main example of a character becoming a mouthpiece for Huxley's expression of Sheldonian philosophy in the novel is the case of Eustace in Chapter 12. During an after-dinner discussion with Sebastian, he states:

‘If I had the knowledge, or the energy, I’d write an outline of world history. Not in terms of geography, or climate, or economics, or politics. None of these is fundamental. In terms of temperament. In terms of the eternal three-cornered struggle between the Old Man of Moldavia, the Old Man of Corsica, and the Old Man of Port Royal.’ (121)

Eustace's splitting of humans into three types, even using Sheldon's chosen word 'temperament', signals Sheldon's influence even more overtly than Huxley's Sheldonian characters. (Even Eustace's admission that he does not have the energy to put his idea into action is indicative of the viscerotonic personality of which he is an extreme example, with its emphasis on 'relaxation'.) In the above quotation Eustace refers to Confucius, Napoleon, and Pascal respectively, and, despite not using Sheldon's terminology, is correspondingly equating them with Sheldon's viscerotonic, somatotonic and cerebrotonic types. Eustace's comments reveal Huxley using Sheldon's theory to examine the problems of civilisation. Eustace views temperament as the most important tool in understanding humanity. In typical Huxley fashion, Eustace's conception of civilisation prioritises the *individual personality* rather than large forces such as economics and politics. Here is an individual, psychological, view of history, that Sheldon's work helped Huxley to formulate.

Eustace sees these three types reflected in himself, his brother and Rontini. He bemoans the fact that the viscerotonic type has not been able, for the most part, to impact upon world affairs, which have been controlled by somatotonics and cerebrotonics:

‘The moral codes have always been framed by people like your father – or, at the very best, people like Bruno. People like me have hardly been able to get a word in edgeways. And when we do get our word in – as we did once or twice during the eighteenth century – nobody listens to us seriously. And yet we demonstrably do much less mischief than the other fellows. We don't start any wars, or Albigensian crusades, or communist revolutions. “Live and let live” – that's our motto. Whereas their idea of goodness is “die and make to die” –

get yourself killed for your idiotic cause, and kill everybody who doesn't happen to agree with you.' (120)

Thus the 'tolerance' and 'amiability' of the viscerotonic is no match for the intellectual ideals of the cerebrotonic and the aggressive action of the somatotonic. Eustace notes that a moral compass led by a cerebrotonic like Rontini represents 'the very best' case scenario. But the theoretical ideas of the cerebrotonic, whose introversion can potentially lead to a detachment from humanity, can be dangerous if combined with the somatotonic love of power (as suggested by Huxley's depiction of both John and Malpighi discussed above): 'Violence and rapine, practised by proselytizing bullies and justified in terms of theology devised by introverts. And meanwhile the poor Old Men of Moldavia got kicked and abused by everybody' (121). The viscerotonics, or, as Eustace names them here, 'the Old Men of Moldavia', 'had to be content with registering a protest, with applying the brakes, with sitting down on their broad bottoms and refusing to move unless dragged' (122). Here Huxley connects the viscerotonic, relaxed qualities of 'sitting down' and 'refusing to move' with the correspondingly endomorphic physique of 'broad bottoms'. For Eustace, the only predominantly viscerotonic society has been 'perhaps among the Pueblo Indians [. . .] a society where it was bad form to nourish ambitions, heretical to have a personal religion, criminal to be a leader of men, and virtuous to have a good time in peace and quietness' (122). Eustace invests Confucius with viscerotonic qualities: ' "He'd just want to enjoy himself quietly and have good manners – 'the cult of Decorous Behaviour.' " ' (121). In expressing his endorsement of viscerotonic Confucianism, Eustace highlights the negative aspects of the other two temperaments:

'Unfortunately, China was also full of Buddhists and Taoists and miscellaneous war-lords. People with bullying temperaments, and people with inhibited, scrupulous temperaments. Horrible people like Napoleon, and other horrible people like Pascal. There was an Old Man of Corsica who would not believe in anything but power. And an Old Man of Port Royal who tortured himself by believing in the God of Abraham and Isaac, not of the philosophers. Between them, they don't give the poor Old Man of Moldavia a dog's chance. Not in China or anywhere else.' (121)

Eustace is expressing a bias towards his own temperament and against the other two. The ‘bullying’ somatotonics and the ‘inhibited’ cerebrotonics are treated with equal scorn.

Eustace further assesses religions in terms of temperaments: ‘Christ, of course, had been an Old Man of Port Royal. So were Buddha and most of the other Hindus. So was Lao-Tsu’ (121). As the dialogue continues, Eustace’s criticism becomes increasingly directed specifically at the somatotonic type. He fears a worrying trend in society towards the greater supremacy of somatotonics over both viscerotonics and cerebrotonics:

And recently the old men of Port Royal had begun to be treated as badly as those of Moldavia. Nobody reads Bentham any more; but equally nobody now reads A-Kempis [. . .] The philosophy of action for action, power for the sake of power, had become an established orthodoxy. (122)

Here Eustace is referring to what Sheldon termed ‘the somatotonic revolution’ (*VT*, 255), the belief that somatotonic qualities were becoming, increasingly, both the ideal and the norm since the early twentieth century, a theory to which Huxley subscribed, and which he would discuss in future non-fiction works. Eustace’s references to Napoleon, Pascal, Christ, Confucius, Buddha, Hinduism, Lao-Tsu, Mahomet, Epicurus, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Fielding, Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and A-Kempis (all in Chapter 12) in the context of his discussion of the three temperaments, coupled with Huxley’s writings elsewhere on the subject, demonstrate that Huxley had integrated history, religion, philosophy and literature into his Sheldonian conception of the world. The ideas presented here, such as the somatotyping of religions (e.g. *VT*, 256), and the view that the combination of somatotonia and cerebrotonia is potentially destructive (e.g. *VT*, 255), had both already been presented in Sheldon’s *The Varieties of Temperament*. There are some differences in their analyses, though: Eustace classes the Buddha as what Sheldon would term cerebrotonic (121), but Sheldon himself wrote that Buddhism is viscerotonic in nature (*VT*, 256).

Eustace’s praising of the viscerotonic approach to life is presented logically and seemingly without irony by Huxley, suggesting that Huxley is presenting more

than one approach, both Eustace's and Rontini's, as valid. This is highly unusual in Huxley's works once he converted to mysticism. The explanation stems from Huxley's above-discussed philosophy, expressed by Malpighi in *Time Must Have a Stop*, but reiterated in other Huxley works, that: ' "You've got to *be* good before you can *do* good – or at any rate do good without doing harm at the same time" ' (83). As Eustace states: ' "Hell isn't merely paved with good intentions; it's walled and roofed with them. Yes, and furnished too" ' (120). Here Eustace's views align with Huxley's. The difference is that Eustace's approach is motivated by a cynicism as regards human nature, whereas Huxley's is based upon a cynicism as regards human nature *dispossessed from mysticism*. Huxley wrote on multiple occasions of his belief that attempts to do good, if one is not in possession of a high degree of awareness and compassion, will fail. As he writes in *Grey Eminence*: 'It is a matter of experience and observation that actions undertaken by ordinary unregenerate people, sunk in their selfhood and without spiritual insight, seldom do much good'.¹² Unless one is 'very far advanced along the way of perfection' one 'should as far as possible refrain from action' (*GE*, 286). Thus Huxley is genuinely supportive of the viscerotonic approach in the absence of mystical aspirations, believing it better to avoid action, since at least this will not do any *harm*. If one is not a highly developed human being, it is better just 'keeping out of mischief' (52). However, in *Time Must Have a Stop*, through the character of Rontini and by the description of Eustace's after-death experiences, Huxley presents this viscerotonic complacency as only a partial understanding, as it ignores the spiritual dimension of life and the possibility of self-transformation. Huxley suggests here, though, through Eustace's attack on cerebrotonic-fuelled somatotonic action, that non-mystical viscerotonic tendencies will do less harm than non-mystical cerebrotonic or somatotonic tendencies.

In his non-fiction works, such as *Brave New World Revisited* and his *Human Situation* lectures, Huxley suggests that an understanding of humans' inborn mind-body differences, such as that provided by Sheldon, can encourage an attitude of

¹² *Grey Eminence*, pp. 285-86, hereafter *GE*.

understanding and tolerance, an awareness of how others think and feel differently. Whilst Huxley's depiction of widely varying characters in *Time Must Have a Stop*, who all have their positive and negative traits, may support this belief to some extent, Huxley's more negative and distanced presentation of both John Barnack, and somatotonics in general, demonstrates the dangers of such typologies, such as the negative pigeonholing of certain types of people and behaviours, that are also inherent. Rather than offering equal respect for all mind-body temperaments, *Time Must Have a Stop* suggests a hierarchy for Huxley in his presentation of the three mind-body poles: cerebrotonics are the most likely to progress as human beings, viscerotonics are complacent, but at least do less harm than the dangerous somatotonics.

Eustace expresses a philosophy of three human types elsewhere in Chapter 12. He starts discussing with Sebastian the differences in their respective temperaments, the cerebrotonic's love of the abstract ideal and the viscerotonic's enjoyment of earthly pleasures; as always, Sheldon's terms are not used, but the parallels are clear: "People like you aren't really commensurable with the world they live in. Whereas people like me are completely adapted to it" (127-28). Eustace expresses to Sebastian his psychological analysis of the viscerotonic and cerebrotonic types personified by himself and his listener: "You could always argue that you live more intensely in your mental world-substitute than we who only wallow in the real thing [...] But the trouble is that you can't be content to stick to your beautiful *ersatz*" (128). The earthly realities of, for example, sex, "still tempt you; and they'll go on tempting you, all your life. Tempting you to embark on actions which you know in advance can only make you miserable" (128). Thus cerebrotonics live in the world of the abstract and the fantastical, but have desires for the real, sensual world. This is in complete agreement with Sheldon's above-discussed views on the cerebrotonic, who has a vivid fantasy life combined with strong sexual desires.

Eustace's words are demonstrated by Sebastian's behaviour in the novel. He has intense sexual longings, like a typical cerebrotonic, such as his day-dreams

about girls (e.g. 127), but he, as Eustace discusses, is tempted to explore this in the real world, such as his affair with Thwale, who embodies his fantasy woman, Mary Esdaile. However, as Eustace predicts, he is disappointed by the actuality of sex, both in his experience with the prostitute (23-27) and in his sex with Thwale: ‘In his fancy, love had been a kind of gay, ethereal intoxication; but last night’s reality was more like madness. Yes, sheer madness; a maniac struggling in the musky darkness with another maniac’ (223). As Eustace remarks, those of Sebastian’s temperament are attracted to, but not comfortable with, sensual reality: ‘“You’re not at home with these lumpy bits of matter. They depress you, they bewilder you, they shock you and sicken you and make a fool of you” ’ (128). (Similarly, Rontini predicts that his cerebrotonic customer’s sexual experiences will be, despite his strong sexual desire, ‘disappointing, even a bit repulsive’ (100).) The disappointment of ‘“real life” ’ for those with a ‘“creative imagination” ’ (127), as commented on by Eustace, is a theme that can be found throughout the novel. Sebastian imagines that he had explained earlier about Eustace’s bequest of the Degas painting to him, but then becomes aware of the reality rather than the fantasy: ‘But the reality was as painfully and humiliatingly different from these consoling fancies as the blue tart had been from Mary Esdaile’ (219-20). When Sebastian receives a letter, ‘a hope was born, grew and, in an instant of time, was transformed into a conviction, a positive certainty that the letter was from that man at the art gallery’ (223). But it is not. Sebastian believes his own hopeful fantasy, and is then again disappointed by reality.

De Vries, another of the novel’s cerebrotonics, displays similar problems. Just as with the depiction of Sebastian’s inner life, De Vries’s conflicts precisely express Eustace’s analysis of the cerebrotonic temperament. De Vries loves Thwale:

To the point of being haunted by the thought of her, of being possessed by the lovely demon of her desirableness [. . .] He was thinking, resentfully, how the demon would break in upon him while he was reading [. . .] Even the most excitingly new and important books were powerless against the obsession [. . .] And yet he had always sworn to himself that he would never get married,

that he'd give all his time and thought and energies to this great work of his.
(166)

De Vries is living in the abstract world of his 'new and important books' (166), but Eustace's words to Sebastian are equally applicable here:

'You're not at home with these lumpy bits of matter [. . .] And yet they still tempt you; and they'll go on tempting you, all your life. Tempting you to embark on actions which you know in advance can only make you miserable and distract you from the one thing you can do properly, the one thing that people value you for.' (128)

Thus Huxley utilises a combination of both showing and telling in his use of Sheldon's ideas in *Time Must Have a Stop*, displaying the characters' outer appearance and inner lives in a way which conforms to Sheldon's typology, whilst also using the character of Eustace to provide, in Chapter 12, a more explicit discussion of the Sheldonian ideas and themes already present implicitly throughout the novel.

Sebastian, once influenced by Eustace, also displays an understanding of Sheldonian types. When thinking about the various causes and consequences of destructive behaviours, he writes a poem that refers to the sins of both the viscerotonic and cerebrotonic types:

The mild sluggard murders while he snores,
And Calvin [. . .]
Murders in pulpits, logically, for a syllogism. (241)

Thus the viscerotonic destroys with his complacency, the cerebrotonic with his intellectual convictions. The phrase 'mild sluggard' suggests the viscerotonic nature, and it is worth noting that Eustace is described as having 'exasperating mildness' (52). Sebastian's reference to Calvin recalls Eustace's use of him, and in both cases Calvin is being used as a byword for cerebrotonia.

Thus, as revealed in the above discussion, Sheldon's ideas fundamentally affected the world-view presented both implicitly and explicitly in *Time Must Have a Stop*, and, as shown above, also affected the language, imagery, characterisation, and, via the characterisation, the behaviour, interactions and ultimate fates of the

characters, and thus the narrative, in the novel. As this chapter has shown, Huxley uses Sheldon's system not only to construct characters, but to link characters, to compare and contrast characters, to depict relationships, and to present characters' contrasting internal lives. The reader is presented with both the positive and negative traits of the characters, and is given insight into their thought processes and the motivations behind their behaviour, and Sheldon's ideas are profoundly influential on both of these elements.

Huxley is not subtle in his adoption of Sheldon's somatotypes. He is highly repetitive in his use of Sheldon's traits. For example, Sebastian is often blushing, and Eustace is repeatedly eating and drinking. Indeed, Huxley repeats the same somatotype-related phrases, such as Sebastian being 'embarrassed' (e.g. 213) or 'blushing' (e.g. 242) so many times he could be accused of overstatement. However, Huxley does present characters of the same Sheldonian temperament as being at the same time different from one another, demonstrating the potential variation and complexity within one somatotype. For example, Sebastian and Thwale represent different variations on the cerebrotonic. They display similarities, such as attempting to hide their feelings (32, 210), and possessing strong sexual desire (223), their secret affair combining both traits. They also both display a detachment from others (Huxley uses the word 'detached' to describe them both several times e.g. 232, 250), but this quality is expressed differently by the two. Thwale cultivates her detachment, and consciously enjoys it (e.g. 214), whereas Sebastian's detachment stems unintentionally from his vivid imagination and tendency to day-dream (e.g. 127). Bruno Rontini is an example of a more positive, well-developed cerebrotonic, whereas the customer who enters his shop, though also presented as cerebrotonic, is, at least in Rontini's opinion, a victim of many of the negative traits of the cerebrotonic disposition (100). Sebastian is presented as somewhere in between the two extremes, and he advances significantly in Rontini's direction over the course of the novel. Thus Huxley shows the differences even between similarly extreme examples of the same somatotype, as well as the similarities. Whilst Huxley's emphasising of his characters' Sheldonian traits is at

times overstated, it is when he uses certain characters, especially Eustace, to act as a mouthpiece for Sheldon's ideas, that his use of Sheldon's work becomes most overly didactic. However, Eustace's speeches in Chapter 12 are perfectly in line with Huxley's aim to produce novels of ideas.

Huxley's choice to present most of the characters in the novel as pure examples of one of Sheldon's three extremes does not necessarily stem naturally from an adoption of Sheldon's system for the purposes of characterisation, but was a decision made by Huxley when deciding how to use Sheldon's ideas. It is an interesting choice, as an examination of Huxley's letters clearly demonstrates that Huxley understood the more complex nature of Sheldon's hypothesis. In a letter to Julian in December 1937, he writes: '[Sheldon] has evolved, I believe, a genuinely scientific conception of psychological types – or rather of the typological factors present in varying amounts in different individuals'.¹³ Again, in a letter to Hubert Benoit in March 1950, Huxley describes Sheldon's conception as 'describing physique, temperament and their interrelations in terms of continuous and measurable variations within a tri-polar system'.¹⁴ In other letters he refers to the term 'human types' being inaccurate 'since variation is continuous within the race', and to 'the Sheldonian extremes and [. . .] the commoner specimens in the middle'.¹⁵ This understanding is also apparent in his subsequent non-fiction work, *The Perennial Philosophy*, where he makes some revealing comments on the subject:

Human beings, [Sheldon] has shown, vary continuously between the viable extremes of a tri-polar system [. . .] Any given individual is a mixture, in varying proportions, of three physical and three closely related psychological components [. . .] Within the general population [. . .] variation is continuous, and in most people the three components are fairly evenly mixed. Those exhibiting extreme predominance of any one component are relatively rare. And yet, in spite of their rarity, it is by the thought-patterns characteristic of these extreme individuals that theology and ethics, at any rate on the theoretical side, have been mainly dominated.¹⁶

¹³ *Letters*, p. 428, (6 December 1937).

¹⁴ *Letters*, p. 621, (16 March 1950).

¹⁵ *Letters*, p. 655, (10 October 1952), and p. 845, (2 February 1958).

¹⁶ *The Perennial Philosophy*, pp. 149-53, hereafter *PP*.

Thus Huxley was not concerned in *Time Must Have a Stop* with accurately presenting Sheldon's conception of how these three mind-body poles would realistically be expressed in the human population. Huxley's approach is indicative of his urge to communicate ideas rather than accurately reflect human personalities in his fiction. Huxley always displayed a tendency towards caricature in his characterisations, from his early satires to his novels as spiritual treatises. Thus Sheldon's model merely provides a systematic framework for this already inherent tendency of his fiction. These characters are intended to be, to some extent, archetypes, representing particular extremes of temperament and point of view, for the purposes of contrast. In *Time Must Have a Stop*, Huxley attempts to examine larger questions of 'theology and ethics' by presenting the behaviour and 'thought-patterns characteristic of [. . .] extreme individuals'. Thus Huxley integrated Sheldon's concepts into the expression of conflicting viewpoints that already characterised his novels of ideas.

Huxley's perspective on his own abilities as a novelist became informed by Sheldon's ideas. A letter to E. S. P. Haynes in 1945 reveals that Huxley's view of himself as a cerebrotonic ectomorph had affected his views on his own writing:

I remain sadly aware that I am not a born novelist, but some other kind of man of letters, possessing enough ingenuity to be able to simulate a novelist's behaviour not too unconvincingly. To put the matter physiologically, I am the wrong shape for a story teller and sympathetic delineator of character within a broad social canvas. The fertile inventors and narrators and genre painters have all been rather burly genial fellows. Scott looked like a farmer. Balzac and Dumas were florid to the point of fatness. Dickens was athletic and had a passion for amateur theatricals. Tolstoy was an intellectual moujik. Dostoevsky was physically tough enough to come through imprisonment in Siberia. Conan Doyle was a barrel. Wells is a tub. Dear old Arnold Bennett was a chamber pot on spindly legs and Marcel Proust was the wreck of congenital sleekness. So what chance has an emaciated fellow on stilts? And of course this is no joke. There is a real correlation between shape and mind.¹⁷

As previously mentioned, Sheldon wrote in *The Varieties of Temperament* that 'cerebrotonic people rarely write fiction' (VT, 90). He writes that fiction writers

¹⁷ *Letters*, p. 516, (25 March 1945).

‘need to be partially dissociated from [their] own subconscious awareness’ (VT, 90), and that the ideal novelist is a mix of somatotonic action and viscerotonic feeling, unhampered by strong cerebrotonic inhibition, citing Dumas, Conan Doyle and H. G. Wells as examples (VT, 90). Huxley clearly took Sheldon’s words to heart. Huxley’s description of great novelists as being ‘burly genial fellows’ aligns with Sheldon’s views, ‘burly’ implying mesomorphy and ‘genial’ viscerotonia. Huxley emphasises either endomorphic ‘fatness’ or the ‘athletic’ ability of the mesomorph in his characterisation of other great novelists. He also refers to the same authors as Sheldon when discussing the matter. The suggestion is that whilst some somatotonic detachment from one’s subconscious aids the creative process, the ‘sociophilia’ and ‘orientation to people’ associated with the viscerotonic enable a greater understanding of, and empathy with, other human beings, and thus to a greater ability to effectively create and develop fictional characters. (Huxley had clearly given much thought to this Sheldonian view of literature, as Eustace Barnack in *Time Must Have a Stop* also refers to various men of letters and their corresponding temperaments. ‘Boccaccio and Rabelais and Fielding’ (122), for example, are described as being, in all but name, viscerotonics.) In contrast, the introverted, ‘private’, ‘sociophobic’ cerebrotonic has less ability, Huxley believes, when it comes to understanding and communicating with his/her fellow human beings, traits which impede his/her ability to write fiction. The cerebrotonic prefers the abstract, theoretical world, what Anthony Beavis in *Eyeless in Gaza* would call the ‘High Life’ of ‘the detached philosopher’.¹⁸ Thus the cerebrotonic writer is more suited to essaying and philosophising, and attempts at novel-writing are likely to be ideas-led. Thus Sheldon’s work helped to reinforce Huxley’s acceptance of his own traits as a writer. Huxley’s self-assessment that he is not ‘a born novelist’ also suggests another reason for his use of Sheldon’s system: it provided him with both physical and behavioural guidelines with which to create fictional characters, thus helping with the creative process.

¹⁸ EG, p. 3.

Sheldon's somatotypes became such an important analytical tool in Huxley's conception of human nature that categorising people according to Sheldon's system became a habit. In *Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume*, Dr Humphry Osmond relates how Huxley used to engage in what he termed 'escalator somatotyping': 'People on escalators are unselfconscious, unaware of scrutiny and at their ease. As we were wafted by them, passing in the opposite direction, Aldous would call out "Humphry, did you see that marvellously somatotonic woman with Aztec features?"'¹⁹ This anecdote offers an insight into the degree to which Sheldon's conception influenced not only Huxley's creation of fictional characters, but his assessment of people he encountered throughout his life. This can also be observed in his discussion of possible illustrations to accompany his 1944 article on the subject in a letter to Frederick Allen: 'The fat, endomorphic family man [. . .] giving his brood an airing in the baby carriage; the football team entirely composed of big-boned, large-faced mesomorphs [. . .] The massive mixtures of endomorphy and mesomorphy who sing at the opera'.²⁰

The above extracts demonstrate further the extent to which Sheldon's ideas had become a fundamental component of Huxley's view of both himself and humanity at large. The phrase in Huxley's letter to Haynes, 'a born novelist', also implies a highly deterministic mindset. Sheldon's theory necessarily implies a high degree of determinism, since it emphasises the inborn mind-body as the determiner of human behaviour. Huxley's *Harper's Magazine* article of November 1944 endorsing Sheldon's theory reveals the extent to which Huxley viewed humans as being ruled by Sheldonian determinism:

Of three men with the same high degree of somatotonia one may become a suavely efficient executive, another a professional soldier of the explosive, blood-and-guts variety, and the third a ruthless gangster. But each in his own way will be aggressive and power-loving, daring and energetic, extraverted and insensitive to other people's feelings. And no amount of training, no effort of the will, will serve to transform them into relaxed and indiscriminately

¹⁹ *Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume*, ed. by Julian Huxley (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), p. 119.

²⁰ *Letters*, p. 508, (19 July 1944).

amiable viscerotonics, or into inhibited, hyperattentive, and introverted cerebrotonics.²¹

Huxley's language is unequivocal. Neither the individual 'will', nor any outside attempts to impose change through 'training', can alter the essential nature of a human being. He reiterates this point in his next work *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945):

It is impossible for one kind of physical constitution to transform itself into another kind; and the particular temperament associated with a given physical constitution can be modified only within narrow limits. With the best will in the world and the best social environment, all that anyone can hope to do is to make the best of his congenital psycho-physical make-up; to change the fundamental patterns of constitution and temperament is beyond his power.²²

A novel such as *Time Must Have a Stop*, which, to a reader familiar with Sheldon's work, depicts the characters' behaviours as driven by their mind-body constitution, thus presents an inherently deterministic world-view, with mysticism, as discussed earlier, the only avenue for positive self-change and self-determination. Yet Huxley has Rontini state that ' "what you are depends on three factors: what you've inherited, what your surroundings have done to you, and what you've chosen to do with your surroundings and your inheritance" ' (246). In fact, Sheldon believed that his outlook was not fatalistic, as its understanding allowed the development of 'every individual *according to the best potentialities of his own nature* [. . .] Its end result is to increase, not decrease the individual's opportunity for accomplished living' (VT, 438). Thus, a belief in Sheldon's work does not imply that the individual cannot seek to improve him/herself, merely that he/she must do so via an avenue suited to his/her particular temperament. This issue would become a theme of Huxley's next major publication, *The Perennial Philosophy*, another Huxley work where the influence of Sheldon was highly evident.

²¹ Aldous Huxley, 'Who Are You?', *Harper's Magazine*, November 1944, p. 520.

²² *PP*, p. 147.

Chapter 7: Sheldon's Influence on *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945)

By the mid-1940s, Huxley was firmly converted to Sheldon's taxonomy as a science of human behaviour. His endorsement of Sheldon's work in his discussion of mysticism entitled *The Perennial Philosophy* is stronger than it was in *Ends in Means*, and his use of Sheldon's ideas is more complex and wide-ranging. This chapter provides a commentary on the Sheldonian influences on this Huxley work, and will examine both how Huxley attempts to synthesise Sheldon's theory with the philosophy of Vedanta, and the ways in which Huxley uses Sheldon's ideas to explore religious, social and political concerns.¹

At the start of Chapter 8, entitled 'Religion and Temperament', Huxley asks: 'What precisely is the relation between individual constitution and temperament on the one hand and the kind and degree of spiritual knowledge on the other?'.² Huxley describes this issue as 'very important', and one to which mystics have also, according to him, 'given a great deal of attention' (146). Huxley's admission that '[t]he materials for a comprehensively accurate answer to this question are not available – except, perhaps, in the form of that incommunicable science, based upon intuition and long practice, that exists in the minds of experienced "spiritual directors"' (146) reveals that he did see limits to Sheldon's scientific model. This quotation also demonstrates Huxley's belief that Sheldon was not making a new discovery but merely couching in scientific terms a system of knowledge that was already understood and had been used in practice for centuries. However, despite

¹ The philosophy of Vedanta is an interpretation of the Vedas (c. 1500 – 500 BC), the most ancient Indian scriptures, and it forms the basis for most modern schools of Hinduism. The key Vedantic texts are the four *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

² Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945; repr. New York: HarperCollins, 2004), p. 146. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

regarding the current available data as too ‘incomplete’ to allow a precise explanation, he does deem the information available to be ‘highly significant’ (146).

One of the ways in which Sheldon’s theory was compatible with Vedanta was that Vedantic philosophy asserted that one’s essential nature dictated one’s understanding of knowledge and thus one’s personal development. As Huxley states in his introduction to *The Perennial Philosophy*: ‘Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing’ (vii-viii). This view is an example of the influence of Vedantic philosophy, which views the knower (*Rishi*), the known (*Chhandas*) and the process of knowing (*Devata*) as being in fact a unity (*Samhita*) and thus interrelated. This is referenced by Huxley again at the start of Chapter 8: ‘All knowledge, as we have seen, is a function of being. Or, to phrase the same idea in scholastic terms, the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower’ (146). Thus the nature of the knower will influence his perception of the known. The implication of this philosophy is that Huxley views one’s essential nature, expressed by Sheldon’s somatypes, as a defining influence on the way one experiences the world, and as integral to, and hugely influential upon, one’s gaining of further knowledge.

Huxley again reveals his complex view of human nature, sometimes belied by his often extreme use of Sheldon’s somatypes. He sees the variation within human temperaments as ‘a vast territory, still imperfectly explored, a continent stretching all the way from imbecility to genius, from shrinking weakness to aggressive strength [. . .] from self-revealing sociability to taciturn misanthropy and love of solitude’ (146-47). The phrase ‘imperfectly explored’ again implies that Huxley sees Sheldon’s initial studies on the subject as only a starting point. Huxley uses the metaphor of horizontal and vertical planes to represent the moral virtue and constitutional temperament of an individual respectively. Thus:

From any point on this huge expanse of possible human nature an individual can move almost indefinitely up or down [. . .] But where horizontal movement is concerned there is far less freedom. It is impossible for one kind of physical constitution to transform itself into another kind; and the particular

temperament associated with a given physical constitution can be modified only within narrow limits. (147)

This metaphor represents Huxley's conviction that whilst the individual has the free will to make the best or worst moral *use* of his/her particular temperament, his/her ability to change his/her temperament is extremely restricted.

Huxley discusses the history of the classification of human types, 'in terms of which human differences could be measured and described', including the Hindu caste system, which Huxley describes as a 'psycho-physico-social' categorisation (147). Huxley also refers to the Hippocratic system of the phthisic and the apoplectic, the four humours, and the four qualities. He refers to the 'various physiognomic systems of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' and the work of Kretschmer, Stockard, and Viola (147). These are the same reference points discussed by Sheldon himself in *The Varieties of Human Physique*.³ Huxley makes it clear that he views these systems as inadequate, notably the 'crude and merely psychological dichotomy of introversion and extraversion' (147). Here Huxley attacks any system that does not integrate the physical and the psychological. Sheldon's system, which makes this integration the essential component, is thus regarded by Huxley as 'more comprehensive, more flexibly adequate to the complex facts than all those which preceded it' (147). This quotation reveals that it is Sheldon's combination of well-defined classifications with a flexible, complex approach to the interactions between, and variations within, these classifications that so appeals to Huxley.

Huxley examines the limits and inaccuracy of the conception of the polar opposites of introversion and extraversion in order to show the superior nature of Sheldon's system. He relates these two extremes to the Catholic paths of Martha and Mary, as representing the paths of salvation through action and contemplation respectively. But Huxley sees the bipolar system as being insufficient:

Like all such dichotomies, whether physical (like Hippocrates' division of humanity into those of phthisic and those of apoplectic habit) or psychological (like Jung's classification in terms of introvert and extravert), this grouping of

³ See *VHP*, Chapter 2, 'The Main Historical Thread', pp. 10-28.

the religious into those who think and those who act, those who follow the way of Martha and those who follow the way of Mary, is inadequate to the facts. (148)

Here Huxley reveals that Sheldon's theory has caused him to reject Jung's conception of two attitudes as expressed in his *Psychological Types* (1921), a work Huxley had previously praised.⁴ Again, Huxley implies that in actual practice, notably in 'the best Catholic writing on prayer and the best Catholic practice in the matter of recognising vocations and assigning duties' (148), the types that Sheldon identifies are intuitively understood. However, they have remained 'implicit and unformulated' (148). Huxley insists that the Hindu, Vedantic system has a more accurate *tripolar* system: 'The ways leading to the delivering union with God are not two, but three – the way of works, the way of knowledge, and the way of devotion' (148). Huxley then relates these three paths to Sheldon's three somatotypes. He describes the physical and psychological traits of the three types utilising the same language and phrases as Sheldon.⁵ The key point for Huxley is the deficiency of the simple contrast of introversion and extraversion:

How inadequate is the Jungian conception of extraversion, as a simple antithesis to introversion. Extraversion is not simple; it is of two radically different kinds. There is the emotional, sociable extraversion of the viscerotonic endomorph – the person who is always seeking company and telling everybody just what he feels. And there is the extraversion of the big-muscled somatotonic – the person who looks outward on the world as a place where he can exercise power, where he can bend people to his will and shape things to his heart's desire. (150-51)

Thus for Huxley, Sheldon's system is superior to all others. Huxley believes that it uses 'empirically determined procedures' (150) and, unlike many other classifications that are physical *or* psychological, Sheldon's is both and observes correlations between the two.⁶ For Huxley, who was already converted to the

⁴ For example, Huxley praises Jung's *Psychological Types* in *Proper Studies*, p. 42.

⁵ Compare *PP*, p. 150, with *VT*, p. 26.

⁶ The inadequacy of only recognising the polar opposites of introversion and extroversion, the greater accuracy of Sheldon's tripolar system, and the connections, for Huxley, between Sheldon's three types and the spiritual paths of Vedanta, are all also discussed in *The Human Situation*, pp. 67-69.

concept of the mind-body as a single unit, as his endorsement of F. M. Alexander proved, this was of vital importance.

Huxley's descriptions of the three temperaments reveal how Sheldon's model had influenced Huxley's perspective on vocation: the viscerotonic type he describes as exemplified by 'the genial extraversion of the salesman, the Rotarian good mixer, the liberal Protestant clergyman', whilst the somatotonic is 'the engineer who works off his lust for power on things, [. . .] the sportsman and the professional blood-and-iron soldier, [. . .] the ambitious business executive and politician, [. . .] the dictator, whether in the home or at the head of a state' (151). As was similarly revealed in *Time Must Have a Stop*, Sheldon also clearly influenced Huxley's view of literature and literary characters: Pickwick is a viscerotonic, Hotspur a somatotonic, and Hamlet and Ivan Karamazov cerebrotonics (151). Huxley also relates the mythology of the Upanishads to Sheldon's system when he describes Virochana as 'the demonic being who is the apotheosis of power-loving, extraverted somatonia' (208).

With the knowledge that Huxley regarded himself as a cerebrotonic, his description of this temperament in *The Perennial Philosophy* further reveals his sense of his own inadequacies:

Each in his own way, the viscerotonic and the somatotonic are well adapted to the world they live in; but the introverted cerebrotonic is in some sort incommensurable with the things and people and institutions that surround him. Consequently a remarkably high proportion of extreme cerebrotonics fail to make good as normal citizens and average pillars of society. (152)

But this is combined with some praise for the positive possibilities of the type:

But if many fail, many also become abnormal on the higher side of the average. In universities, monasteries and research laboratories – wherever sheltered conditions are provided for those whose small guts and feeble muscles do not permit them to eat or fight their way through the ordinary rough and tumble – the percentage of outstandingly gifted and accomplished cerebrotonics will almost always be very high. Realising the importance of this extreme, over-evolved and scarcely viable type of human being, all civilisations have provided in one way or another for its protection. (152)

These quotations reveal Huxley's ambivalent relationship with the somatotype he considered himself to be, as he simultaneously deprecates and elevates this temperament.

Huxley describes what he sees as a correlation between the paths to God outlined in the *Bhagavad Gita* and Sheldon's categories:

The path of devotion is the path naturally followed by the person in whom the viscerotonic component is high [. . .] The path of works is for those whose extraversion is of the somatotonic kind, those who in all circumstances feel the need to "do something" [. . .] Finally, there is the way of knowledge [. . .] This is the way to which the extreme cerebrotonic is naturally drawn. (152-53)

Thus the path of devotion is suited to the viscerotonic because:

His inborn tendency to externalize the emotions he spontaneously feels in regard to persons can be disciplined and canalized, so that a merely animal gregariousness and a merely human kindness become transformed into charity – devotion to the personal God and universal good will and compassion towards all sentient beings. (152)

Here Huxley makes the Vedantic distinction between the indefinable, inexpressible Godhead known as *Brahman*, which Huxley refers to throughout *The Perennial Philosophy* as the Divine Ground, and *Ishwara*, the personal God, who 'contains all the divine qualities of love, mercy, purity, justice, knowledge and truth', and can thus be worshipped.⁷ Therefore the sociable, emotionally expressive viscerotonic can direct these same impulses towards a love of the personal God.

Likewise, the somatotonic is suited to the path of works because his/her 'craving for action' can be channelled into 'work without regard for the fruits of work, in a state of complete non-attachment to self. Which is, of course, like everything else, a good deal easier said than done' (152). Again, it is possible to note a much higher level of dissatisfaction from Huxley as regards the somatotonic path. Unlike his descriptions of the other two paths, he focuses on the negative qualities of the 'unregenerate somatotonic' type who is filled with 'aggressiveness', and even after he suggests the positive way forward for this type, he ends the above

⁷ *Bhagavad-Gita*, trans. by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda (London: Phoenix House, 1967), p. 176.

quotation by emphasising the difficulties in channelling this temperament in a positive manner. The cerebrotonic type, on the other hand, is suited to the way of knowledge, where he must attempt:

The modification of consciousness, until it ceases to be ego-centred and becomes centred in and united with the Divine Ground [. . .] His special discipline consists in the mortification of his innate tendency towards introversion for its own sake, towards thought and imagination and self-analysis as ends in themselves rather than as means towards the ultimate transcendence. (152-53)

Here Huxley identifies the failings of many cerebrotonic characters in his novels: their pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, rather than as a means of self-improvement, and, ultimately, spiritual enlightenment. His attempt to show the similarities between Sheldon's research and religious ideas aims to reinforce the conception that these are timeless and universal truths. Sheldon's ideas are endorsed by ancient sources of religious knowledge, and the religious wisdom is supported by the modern scientist making similar distinctions.

Huxley, as mentioned earlier, observes the anomaly that although individuals who epitomise the extremes of each temperament are rare, philosophical, theological and ethical systems that exemplify one of the three extremes have dominated. He offers the explanation that 'any extreme position is more uncompromisingly clear and therefore more easily recognised and understood than the intermediate positions' (153). He adds that: 'These intermediate positions, it should be noted, do not in any sense contain or reconcile the extreme positions; they are merely other thought-patterns added to the list of possible systems' (153). Thus, for Huxley, every individual's particular combination of Sheldon's three temperaments will engender a distinct and corresponding religious propensity. Huxley draws on the Vedantic concept of *dharma*, meaning both an individual's intrinsic nature and 'the law of righteousness and piety' (153). This leads to a statement that combines Vedantic and Sheldonian thought:

The implications of this double meaning are clear: a man's duty, how he ought to live, what he ought to believe and what he ought to do about his beliefs –

these things are conditioned by his essential nature, his constitution and temperament. (153)

Therefore following one's intrinsic nature is the moral thing to do, stresses Huxley. Consequently, Sheldon's conception aids not only self-understanding, but, through this, provides a path to self-improvement, and a more morally correct life. Later, Huxley asserts the importance of following a path in life suitable to one's 'psycho-physical make-up', linking this with the caste system (273). Again, Sheldon's theories and Vedanta were highly compatible and mutually supportive for Huxley.

Huxley makes clear that though the religious paths may be different, the goal of all is the same: union with 'the Godhead' (154):

The lower forms of religion, whether emotional, active or intellectual, are never to be accepted as final. True, each of them comes naturally to persons of a certain kind of constitution or temperament; but the *dharma* or duty of any given individual is not to remain complacently fixed in the imperfect religion that happens to suit him; it is rather to transcend it, not by impossibly denying the modes of thought, behaviour and feeling that are natural to him, but by making use of them, so that by means of nature he may pass beyond nature. (154-55)

Huxley goes into further detail as regards the path of each Sheldonian temperament, beginning with the cerebrotonic: 'The introvert uses "discrimination" (in the Indian phrase), and so learns to distinguish the mental activities of the ego from the principal consciousness of the Self, which is akin to, or identical with, the divine Ground' (155). Here Huxley links the Vedantic concept of *Atman* with Sheldon's theory. According to Vedanta, *Brahman*, the Godhead, is 'within all creatures and objects'.⁸ When expressed in the phenomenal world *Brahman* is called *Atman*. Thus every human being is in fact *Atman*, but it is his/her individual ego which creates the illusion of separateness from the Godhead. By discriminating between one's ego, defined by its Sheldonian traits, and the *Atman* within, the individual can unite with *Brahman*. As Huxley himself states in Chapter 1 of *The Perennial Philosophy*:

This teaching is expressed most succinctly in the Sanskrit formula, *tat tvam asi* ("That art Thou"); the *Atman*, or immanent eternal self, is one with *Brahman*, the Absolute Principle of all existence; and the last end of every

⁸ *Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 175.

human being is to discover the fact for himself, to find out Who he really is.
(2)

The theories and philosophies that attracted Huxley, including the Alexander Technique and the mystical disciplines of Vedanta, were often concerned with the ability to recognise and prevent bad habits and personal failings, and thus Sheldon's model fits neatly into this conception of self-improvement. Huxley's belief, influenced by Vedanta, that attachment to the individual self, the ego, is the enemy of personal progress, leads to the notion that an understanding and awareness of one's self and one's shortcomings is an integral first step in actively moving beyond them. Thus for Huxley Sheldon's conception, as well as aiding one's understanding of others, acts as a useful tool in this process of increased self-awareness. Huxley describes the spiritual path of the viscerotonic as follows:

The emotional extravert learns to "hate his father and mother" (in other words to give up his selfish attachment to the pleasures of indiscriminately loving and being loved), concentrates his devotion on the personal or incarnate aspect of God, and comes at last to love the Absolute Godhead' (155).

To explain, again, in Vedantic terms, the viscerotonic directs his love for others towards *Ishwara* and from this to *Brahman*. Finally, the somatotonic must redirect his 'lust for power over things, events and persons' into dutiful and moral action, into righteous and beneficial achievement, without need of reward, 'the path of work without attachment to the fruits of work, the path of what St. Francois de Sales calls "holy indifference" ' (155). Here Huxley refers to the fundamental Vedantic concept of non-attachment. As the Swami Prabhavananda states in *Vedic Religion and Philosophy* (1937): 'Throughout, the Gita insists on the performance of the duties of life with a heart free from attachment and thoughts of worldly gain, and devoted entirely to the adoration of God'.⁹

⁹ Swami Prabhavananda, *Vedic Religion and Philosophy* (Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1937), p. 111. Prabhavananda led the Vedanta Society of Southern California, with which Huxley became involved, along with Gerald Heard, when he moved to California in the late 1930s. Huxley was sufficiently impressed by Prabhavananda to be initiated into the Society at the Swami's temple in 1940, but he never became a fully-fledged disciple.

In *The Perennial Philosophy*, Huxley discusses in his non-fiction the theme he had already addressed through Eustace in *Time Must Have a Stop*: the links between the world's religions and Sheldon's temperaments. For example Huxley categorises 'Mohammedanism' and later Christianity as somatotonic, and thus liable to lead to 'holy wars and persecutions' (158). Confucianism, on the other hand, is considered a 'mainly viscerotonic system – familial, ceremonious and thoroughly this-worldly' (158). Thus regarding any one religion as the only truth, rather than a particular conception of truth defined by one or other of Sheldon's temperaments, is regarded by Huxley as inaccurate and dangerous, producing 'inadequate theologies based upon psychological ignorance' (156). This psychophysical attitude to religion means that '[t]he construction of an all-embracing system of metaphysics, ethics and psychology is a task that can never be accomplished by any single individual, for the sufficient reason that he *is* an individual with one particular kind of constitution and temperament and therefore capable of knowing only according to the mode of his own being' (153). Thus Sheldon's theory merges with Huxley's conception of truth, adopted from Vedantic philosophy, as being 'anthological' (153), of the 'right of individuals with different *dharma*s to worship different aspects or conceptions of the divine' (153), depending on their temperament. Huxley argues that is it this attitude that explains the 'almost total absence, among Hindus and Buddhists, of bloody persecutions, religious wars and proselytizing imperialism' (153-54).¹⁰

Huxley's subsequent religious analysis is constantly informed by Sheldon's work. One example that he analyses in Sheldonian terms is Protestantism:

Many Protestant sects have insisted on the necessity, or at least the extreme desirability, of a violent conversion. But violent conversion, as Sheldon has pointed out, is a phenomenon confined almost exclusively to persons with a high degree of somatonia. These persons are so intensely extraverted as to be quite unaware of what is happening in the lower levels of their minds. If for any reason their attention comes to be turned inwards, the resulting self-knowledge, because of its novelty and strangeness, presents itself with the force and quality of a revelation and their *metanoia*, or change of mind, is

¹⁰ Huxley believes Catholicism to be, in practice, focused on several religions, and religious paths, suited to different temperaments, but under the guise of one (see *PP*, p. 154).

sudden and thrilling [. . .] To insist on the necessity of violent conversion as the only means to salvation is about as sensible as it would be to insist upon the necessity of having a large face, heavy bones and powerful muscles. (155-56)

Thus somatonic adherents to this philosophy become complacent, and all others despairing. Sheldon had indeed previously discussed the somatonic's predisposition towards sudden religious conversions (*VT*, 259). Thus Huxley not only borrows an idea from Sheldon's writings, he uses that idea as a starting point for further analyses, elaborating with specific examples.

Huxley then classes Calvinism as cerebrotonic and liberal Protestantism as 'predominantly viscerotonic' (156), again outlining the limitations of religions that express one extreme somatotype. Calvin was 'a cerebrotonic who took his own intellectual constructions so seriously that he lost all sense of reality, both human and spiritual' (156), revealing for Huxley the dangers of the intellectual approach to religion that comes so naturally to Sheldon's 'mentally overintense' cerebrotonic. The viscerotonic's 'orientation to people' can lead, according to Huxley, to the 'heresy' of liberal Protestantism, which 'equates Christianity with an emotional attachment to Christ's humanity or (to use the currently popular phrase) "the personality of Jesus," worshipped idolatrously as though there were no other God' (156). Huxley thus remarks on another way in which somatotypes affect the religious life: 'It is natural for us to think of God as possessed of the qualities which our temperament tends to make us perceive in Him' (156). Even though Huxley has previously remarked on the degree to which Catholicism allows for various religious paths suited to varying temperaments, he criticises Catholicism's 'ignorant and self-centred directors' (156), who enforce religious paths on their followers that are not suitable to their individual somatotypes. Once again, *The Perennial Philosophy* reveals that Sheldon's theory had a profound impact upon Huxley's interpretations of religion.

Huxley comments that the religious, spiritual life in general, 'the idea that such a way exists and can be followed', is something which 'comes most naturally to persons whose temperament is predominantly cerebrotonic' (156). But he is

careful to not imply any superiority: ‘By this I do not mean that the following of this way is easy for the cerebrotonic. His specially besetting sins are just as difficult to overcome’ (156). He designates cerebrotonics as ‘natural monotheists’, whilst viscerotonics and somatotonics are ‘natural polytheists’ (157). He references the work of Dr Radin, whose study of primitive religion identified monotheism with the men of thought and polytheism with the men of action, to support this view. He also suggests that cerebrotonics are drawn to a religion of the ‘*tat tvam asi*, inner-light school’ (157). The implication is that the cerebrotonics’ introverted tendency to look within themselves predisposes them to such a theology. Since Huxley views this theology as the ultimate reality, there is a suggestion of the superiority of the cerebrotonic temperament, particularly when it comes to the religious, mystical life. However, he adds that viscerotonic and somatotonic polytheists can be convinced of the ‘superiority’ of monotheism, because ‘the nature of human reason is such that there is an intrinsic plausibility about any hypothesis which seeks to explain the manifold in terms of unity, to reduce apparent multiplicity to essential identity’(157). One could apply these same words to explain the appeal of Sheldon’s theory for Huxley.

For Huxley, viscerotonics and somatotonics can thus have theoretical knowledge of one God, and then use the spiritual practices best suited to their temperament to come to know this truth in their experience. However, he views this path as extremely difficult:

There are many theoretical monotheists whose whole life and every action prove in reality they are still what their temperament inclines them to be – polytheists, worshippers not of the one God they sometimes talk about, but of the many gods, nationalistic and technological, financial and familial, to whom in practice they pay all their allegiance. (157)

Huxley’s extension of the definition of ‘polytheism’ to include secular ‘gods’ such as nationalism and technology reveals the extent to which he viewed all aspects of civilisation in essentially religious terms.

Huxley’s Sheldonian religious analysis is wide-ranging. He moves into art history, examining images of Christ as predominantly ectomorphic, as had Sheldon

before him (*VT*, 268): ‘In Christian art the Saviour has almost invariably been represented as slender, small-boned, unemphatically muscled. Large, powerful Christs are [. . .] rather shocking’ (157). He identifies Jesus’ message as correspondingly cerebrotonic:

The religion of the Gospels is what we should expect from a cerebrotonic [. . .] The insistence that the kingdom of Heaven is within [. . .] The emphasis laid upon restraint, not merely of overt action, but even of desire and unexpressed intention; the indifference to the splendours of material civilisation and the love of poverty as one of the greatest of goods; the doctrine that non-attachment must be carried even into the sphere of family relationships and that even devotion to highest goals of merely human ideals, even the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, may be idolatrous distractions from the love of God – all these are characteristically cerebrotonic ideas, such as would never have occurred spontaneously to the extraverted power lover or the equally extraverted viscerotonic. (157-58)

All the qualities Huxley mentions are indeed compatible with the introversion and restraint of Sheldon’s cerebrotonic. Huxley then proceeds to outline in brief that which Eustace Barnack expressed a desire to write: an overview of history from a Sheldonian perspective. Central to Huxley’s interpretation is that somatonia is the enemy:

Whereas the cerebrotonic and the viscerotonic cannot do much harm except to themselves and those in immediate contact with them, the extreme somatonic, with his native aggressiveness, plays havoc with whole societies. From one point of view civilisation may be defined as a complex of religious, legal and educational devices for preventing extreme somatotonics from doing too much mischief, and for directing their irrepressible energies into socially desirable channels. (158)

Although Huxley qualifies his statement with the phrase ‘from one point of view’, he is nevertheless using Sheldon’s concepts to help him to understand and interpret the motivations behind the entire history of civilisation. Huxley’s focus is religion and politics, encompassing China, India, Catholic Europe and the Reformation. Throughout, the key theme is the attempts of societies, successful or otherwise, to keep the somatonic impulse in check.

Again, Huxley was influenced by Sheldon in seeing a recent rise in the power of the somatonic archetype: ‘Within the last quarter of a century, there has

been consummated what Sheldon calls a “somatonic revolution” ’ (159). Huxley then proceeds to outline the key symptoms of this shift towards somatonia in the modern world, notably a move from a focus upon contemplation to a focus upon action, and a focus upon the gaining of happiness through the external environment and material and social progress rather than by one’s internal state of mind. He attributes what he sees as the defining trends of modern society to the insidious influence of the somatonic temperament, including materialism, consumerism, the obsession with physical pleasure, and the worship of technology. Huxley bemoans the decline in cerebrotonic traits in society: ‘In traditional Christian education the stress was all on restraint; with the recent rise of the “progressive school” it is all on activity and “self-expression” ’ (160). He criticises the somatonic trait of consumerism and advertising, ‘whose one idea is to persuade everybody to be as extraverted and uninhibitedly greedy as possible, since of course it is only the possessive, the restless, the distracted, who spend money on the things that advertisers want to sell’ (160). Huxley also sees technological progress as a somatonic force, as both a symptom and a cause of the rise in somatonia in society:

The extraverted attention results in technological discoveries [. . .] In their turn, technological discoveries have resulted in mass production; and mass production [. . .] cannot be kept going at full blast except by persuading the whole population to accept the somatonic *Weltanschauung* and act accordingly. (160)

Huxley then links this technological progress to both modern war and fascism, the ultimate and most catastrophic symptoms, and causes, of the ‘somatonic revolution’ (159). Technological progress reflects Sheldon’s description of the somatonic ‘assertiveness’ and ‘lust for power’ over the external, material world, whilst fascism and war epitomise the ‘competitive aggressiveness’ and ‘physical courage for combat’ of this temperament. Huxley is alarmed by current education becoming increasingly influenced by a highly somatonic philosophy: ‘All over the world millions of young men and even of young women are being systematically educated to be “tough” and to value “toughness” beyond every other

moral quality' (161). He is concerned that people are being made to 'feel ashamed of [. . .] relaxed amiability or [. . .] inward-looking sensitiveness', of tendencies towards 'self-restraint and tender-mindedness' (160). In both these phrases, Huxley specifically describes the Sheldonian viscerotonic and cerebrotonic qualities that are required to balance the somatotonic impulses.

In a work written during the later years of the Second World War, Huxley ends the chapter by framing his fears for the future of humanity in Sheldonian terms:

In the past most societies tried systematically to discourage somatonia [. . .] This was a measure of self-defence; they did not want to be physically destroyed by the power-loving aggressiveness of their most active minority, [. . .] to be spiritually blinded by an excess of extraversion. During the last few years all this had been changed. What, we may apprehensively wonder, will be the result of the current world-wide reversal of an immemorial social policy? Time alone will show. (161)

It is indeed this view of the somatotonics as the main threat to society, and the concern over how they can be controlled, that characterises Huxley's writings on the matter elsewhere. He outlines this anxiety in a letter to his brother Julian in March 1943:

There exists, as Sheldon makes clear, a certain percentage of people – he calls them 'Somatotonics' – who are constitutionally aggressive, who love risk and adventure for their own sake, who lust for power and dominance, who are psychologically callous and have no squeamishness about killing, who are insensitive to pain and tirelessly energetic. How can these be prevented from wrecking the world? [. . .] No amount of economic or political rearrangement can change their constitutional tendencies.¹¹

Again, Sheldon has influenced Huxley's conviction that these tendencies are unalterable. Sheldon's ideas are informing Huxley's views on how to improve humanity: 'A revival of cerebrotonic philosophy in some generally acceptable form, with a practical system of sublimational outlets, seems to be the only hope for keeping the constitutional barbarians to some extent harmless and usefully, not

¹¹ *Letters*, p. 487, (4 March 1943).

destructively, employed'.¹² Huxley would subsequently address these issues in fictional form in his final novel, *Island* (1962).

To conclude, Sheldon's ideas are a central component of *The Perennial Philosophy*. This work further shows how Huxley had integrated Sheldon's system into his own religious world-view. Huxley devotes an entire chapter to the subject of temperament in the context of religion, as well as other references throughout the work. He saw Sheldon's system as scientifically expounding great truths about human temperament that had been central to religious traditions, such as Vedanta. However, Huxley also emphasises in *The Perennial Philosophy*, as did Rontini in *Time Must Have a Stop*, that a belief in the inherited mind-body does not mean a denial of the influence of either environmental factors or free will:

A person born with one kind of psycho-physical constitution will be tempted to identify himself with one set of interests and passions, while a person with another kind of temperament will be tempted to make very different identifications. But these temptations (though extremely powerful, if the constitutional bias is strongly marked) do not have to be succumbed to; people can and do resist them. (40)

Thus Huxley presents a world-view where humans are subject to strong inborn mind-body tendencies, but simultaneously have the free will to overcome these tendencies. When Huxley makes the connection between his belief in 'the inborn varieties of temperament' and the Vedantic 'doctrine that there are at least three principal roads to liberation' (297), he asserts that 'even those at the extreme limits of temperamental eccentricity are capable of making use of other ways than that to which they are naturally drawn [. . .] Nobody need be the victim of his peculiar talents' (297-98). When discussing knowledge acquisition, Huxley further clarifies his overall conception of the importance of one's psycho-physical constitution, in the context of other factors: 'The amount and kind of knowledge we acquire depends first upon the will and, second, upon our psycho-physical constitution and the modifications imposed upon it by environment and our own choice' (144). Hence Huxley emphasises that inherent mind-body proclivities are not only

¹² Ibid.

tempered by a co-existing will which exists independently, but can also be modified by that will. The ability of the environment to impact upon the inborn mind-body is also accepted, as it is by Sheldon himself (*VT*, 438).

Chapter 8: Sheldon's Influence on Huxley's Works 1948-63

Ape and Essence's (1948) use of Sheldon's principles is less detailed than in Huxley's previous novel *Time Must Have a Stop*. Nevertheless it still demonstrates plenty of evidence that Huxley envisioned his characterisation in a Sheldonian fashion. For example, whilst *Time Must Have a Stop* has its three main characters representing, for the most part, extreme versions of Sheldon's three types, *Ape and Essence* depicts Poole and Loola as cerebrotonics, the Chief as a somatotonic, and the Arch-Vicar as a viscerotonic. (In this discussion I merely give examples of the novel's characters adhering to Sheldon's typology. There are many other instances in the novel where these traits are apparent, as Huxley repeatedly emphasises the characters' strong somatotype traits.)

Unlike the other main characters in the novel, Poole's physique is not described. He is only referred to as 'not unhandsome'.¹ However, as he is completely composed of personality traits that Sheldon associates with the cerebrotonic, and none that correlate with the other two temperaments, it is possible to definitely class Poole as a cerebrotonic, even though it is unclear whether he has the corresponding ectomorphic physique. Poole demonstrates a full catalogue of cerebrotonic traits, being 'introverted' (144), 'nervous' (104), 'hesitating' (65) and jealous (104). He likes 'poetry' (41), demonstrating the cerebrotonic love of words. He is uncomfortable with (non-sexual) demonstrative behaviour (53). He enjoys privacy, emitting 'a sigh of relief at finding himself once more alone' (44). He 'stammers' (51), demonstrating the cerebrotonic's tendency to 'verbal stumblings' (VT, 72). He is, throughout the novel, prone to cerebrotonic 'shyness' (89), 'embarrassment' (53), and 'blushing' (59), and, like the typical cerebrotonic, avoids

¹ *Ape and Essence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. 40. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

the direct stare of others (59). (Poole is repeatedly ‘blushing’ and ‘avert[ing] his eyes’ (75), as did Sebastian in *Time Must Have a Stop*).

Poole exhibits a conflict between shyness and desire, both of which are cerebrotonic qualities: ‘He reddens and (against his will, for he longs to go on looking at [Loola], averts his eyes’ (60). ‘Under the carapace of academic respectability’ Poole has ‘furtive [. . .] erotic phantasies’ (60), demonstrating the repressed eroticism, tendency to secrecy, and vivid fantasy life of the cerebrotonic. As with *Time Must Have a Stop*’s Sebastian, Huxley writes of Poole’s ‘erotic day-dreams’ (117), just as Sheldon specifically cites day-dreaming as a cerebrotonic trait (*VT*, 89). Poole’s cerebrotonic inhibitions are emphasised by the uninhibited behaviour of those around him during the orgy. When about to have sex with Loola, Poole ‘stretches out his hand, withdraws it, then changes his mind yet again’ (109), simultaneously demonstrating the hesitancy, restraint, sexual desire, and changeable mind of the cerebrotonic. When another man ‘takes Loola in his arms’ (112) during the orgy and carries her away, Poole:

Makes as though to follow, to wreak vengeance [. . .] Then a combination of apprehension and modesty causes him to slacken his pace. If he advances, heaven knows what he may find himself intruding upon [. . .] He comes to a halt and stands hesitant, not knowing what to do. (112)

Here is, again, the ‘apprehensiveness’, the hesitancy, the changeable mind, and the tendency towards inaction and paralysis in crucial situations, of Sheldon’s cerebrotonic. When two other women attempt to have sex with Poole, Huxley presents the inherent conflicts of the cerebrotonic type. Poole ‘hesitates between the inhibitory recollection of his Mother, the fidelity to Loola prescribed by all the poets and novelists, and the warm, elastic Facts of Life’ (112). Here is a typical cerebrotonic’s inherent inhibition, and love of the abstract ideals of literature, competing with his similarly cerebrotonic, and thus intense, sexuality. The sexual orgies of Huxley’s dystopia in fact allow the inhibited Poole to overcome the repression inherent in his cerebrotonic nature.

Huxley provides at least brief physical descriptions of the novel’s other main characters, who all demonstrate the Sheldonian conception of the correlation

between physique and character. Loola is described as a 'slender' (58) ectomorph, and possesses the characteristics of the corresponding cerebrotonic temperament. She is depicted by Huxley as possessing the exact same traits as her future lover Poole, especially 'shyness' (62). She, like Poole, is 'nervous', she 'blushes', she 'turns away' (62). She is 'envious' (133), a cerebrotonic trait. She displays cerebrotonic vocal restraint (e.g. 65) and the tendency, as outlined by Sheldon (*VT*, 72), not only to blush but also to blanch (e.g. 133). Loola is what Huxley's dystopia deems a 'Hot': she experiences sexual desire all the time, instead of just for 'five weeks' of the year, which is the norm (102). Sheldon describes one of the traits of the cerebrotonic as 'hypereroticism' (*VT*, 254), and this is how Loola's desires are viewed by the society in which she lives, which forbids the expression of these feelings. Loola's situation is Huxley's extreme depiction of a repressed cerebrotonic, who experiences 'intense feeling' (*VT*, 76) and strong erotic desire, but is not able to express it outwardly (*VT*, 76). The world of *Ape and Essence* acts as an intensifier of this cerebrotonic aspect of the human condition:

'You don't want to think about those things; but you're one of the unlucky ones – you can't help thinking about them. And you almost go crazy. Thinking and thinking about someone, and wanting and wanting. And you know you mustn't.' (61)

Loola's fear of others knowing of her desires and thoughts, because she will be punished, is a heightened expression of the cerebrotonic's desire for privacy and secrecy: 'Loola glances about her to make sure that nobody is within earshot, then speaks at last almost in a whisper' (62). When Poole illicitly approaches her, she 'starts violently' (133), the secrecy and deception required to continue her relationship with Poole heightening her cerebrotonic nervousness and 'physiological overresponse'. The cerebrotonic's 'mental overintensity', 'apprehensiveness', 'secretiveness of feeling', 'inhibited social address', and 'vocal restraint' are all in evidence in Loola, and are all intensified by her situation within her society. She gives Poole erotic cues, but then fear causes her to change her mind and she 'turns away' (65); her desires cause her to long for a connection but then she becomes self-conscious, another trait of the cerebrotonic (*VT*, 278). Her

‘expression changes’, she ‘suddenly feels’ that she has been ‘too frank’ (65). She ‘resists, then abandons herself’ (66). Again, it is Huxley’s dystopia causing her to act in an even more extremely cerebrotonic way: self-conscious, changeable of mind, torn between desire and inhibition, and concerned about too much self-revelation.

The same process occurs with the similarly cerebrotonic Poole. As an outsider, his perpetual sexual desire also classes him as a ‘Hot’. His love for Loola combined with its forbidden nature also increases *his* cerebrotonic tendencies towards intense longing combined with restraint and secrecy (e.g. 133-35). However, Huxley also depicts Poole’s love for Loola as allowing him to overcome some of the potentially negative traits of his cerebrotonic personality. His feelings for Loola cause him, at times, to lose his cerebrotonic inhibitions and display genuine ‘tenderness’ (65), as well as enabling him to subdue his typically cerebrotonic indecision: ‘Never in all his uncertain and divided life has he thought so clearly or acted so decisively’ (146). There is no mysticism in *Ape and Essence*’s vision of the future, but there is love. Whereas *Time Must Have a Stop* depicted Bruno Rontini’s mysticism as a route out of one’s predetermined constitutional flaws, in *Ape and Essence* Huxley suggests, through the character of Poole, that ‘romantic love’ (122), as well as mysticism, can aid someone in transcending his/her somatotype traits.

The Chief is described mesomorphically as ‘powerfully built’ (46), with ‘full lips’ (46), also a quality of Sheldon’s mesomorph (*VHP*, 42). He is duly somatotonic in temperament, holding a typically somatotonic position of power, and demonstrating the ‘psychological callousness’, ‘ruthlessness’, and ‘freedom from squeamishness’ of the somatotonic (e.g. 48, 53), as well as ‘the unrestrained voice’ (e.g. 49, 54, 55). He consistently demonstrates the somatotonic’s ‘need of action when troubled’; when the Arch-Vicar launches into another speech, the Chief stops him: ‘“We’re trying to *do* something” ’ (131) he insists. The Chief’s obsessions with ‘“war” ’, ‘“engines” ’, and getting ‘“the trains running again” ’ (53) are all somatotonic concerns. War obviously tallies with the ‘aggressiveness’

of the somatotonic, and as Huxley discusses in, for example, *The Perennial Philosophy*, he saw the rise in technology as a somatotonic trend, stemming from the impulse to control the external environment (*PP*, 160-61).

The castrated Arch-Vicar is described endomorphically as ‘fat’ (e.g. 76), and he displays correspondingly viscerotonic tendencies. He is ‘genial’ (99), (as was the viscerotonic Eustace in *Time Must Have a Stop* (e.g. *TMHS*, 40)), and demonstrative (e.g. he ‘pats Dr Poole on the cheek’ (114)). The Arch-Vicar’s viscerotonic ‘amiability’ and ‘orientation to people’ is emphasised. He ‘smiles’, he speaks ‘pleasantly’ and ‘genially’ (113): ‘“I’ve got to be very fond of you” ’ he says to Poole (138). He displays the viscerotonic relaxation and complacency, remarking: ‘“I’m in no hurry” ’ (140). He is described by Huxley as ‘tolerant’ (113) (by the standards of those in Huxley’s dystopia), another central quality that Sheldon ascribes to the viscerotonic (*VT*, 26). Huxley uses the word ‘unctuousness’ (113) to describe this character, a word specifically used by Sheldon himself when delineating the viscerotonic (*VT*, 36). The Arch-Vicar seeks compliments from Poole on his lecture, and expresses ‘pleasure’ when he receives them (137), demonstrating the viscerotonic’s ‘greed for [. . .] approval’. He also displays the viscerotonic love of food and comfort; for example, he ‘reclines’ on a couch, eating pigs’ trotters and drinking wine (87-88). Like a typical viscerotonic, he is generous, and enjoys the ‘socialization of eating’: ‘“Help Yourself” ’, he says to Poole (88). Sheldon describes the endomorph as liking ‘ceremonial eating equipment’ (*VHP*, 251), and the Arch-Vicar eats his pigs’ trotters with ‘a genuine antique twentieth-century forgery of an early Georgian fork’ (88).

The novel’s minor characters also conform to Sheldon’s system. Even a passing mesomorphic ‘burly male’ (111), described as a ‘hulk of bone and muscle’ (112), is somatotonically assertive and aggressive (111-12). Mrs Coulton is both endomorphically ‘stout’ and viscerotonically ‘friendly’ (14). She insists that Tallis is not ‘dead’, but has ‘ “[p]assed on” ’ (15), demonstrating the viscerotonic fear of death. She would ‘ “hate” ’ to be buried in the desert as it would be ‘ “[t]oo lonely” ’ (23), comically displaying her viscerotonic ‘sociophilia’. Despite the reader not

being given a description of his physique, the narrator of the 'Tallis' section displays qualities of the cerebrotonic, such as becoming consumed by his inner 'Romantic fancies' (22). Mrs Coulton implies that the narrator is a '“stuffed shirt”' (19): the restraint of the cerebrotonic is perceived as overly reserved by the naturally friendly and extraverted viscerotonic. Flossie is described as endomorphically 'plump' and as viscerotonically friendly and demonstrative (57), and is later described viscerotonically as 'maddeningly hearty' (132). The love of social enjoyment of the viscerotonic is displayed perversely in Huxley's dystopia when Flossie says: '“Come on boys, let's have some fun”' when ordered to bury Poole alive. There could hardly be a more perverse and extreme expression of the viscerotonic's 'indiscriminate amiability' than Flossie's friendly manner towards a man she was about to kill: '“I hope you're not cross with me because I wanted to bury you?”' (57). (Poole's cerebrotonically restrained lack of display of his true feelings is apparent in his response: '“Oh, no, no, not a bit,” Dr Poole assures her in the tone of one who says he has no objection to the young lady lighting a cigarette' (57).)

As in *Time Must Have a Stop*, Huxley links characters of the same somatotype by the use of the same phrases to describe their traits, such as the soon to be intimately acquainted Poole and Loola both blushing (e.g. 59, 62), and contrasts characters of different temperaments by depicting their interactions with one another. The contrast between the cerebrotonic and viscerotonic is exemplified by the interaction between Poole and the Arch-Vicar. Huxley describes the Arch-Vicar's demeanour using one of Sheldon's central traits of the viscerotonic, 'amiability' (139), and depicts his affectionate manner: he 'chuckles' and 'lays a hand on Dr Poole's shoulder' (138). Poole, in contrast, cerebrotonically 'mumbles' and is 'embarrassed' (138) in response to this demonstrative behaviour. Poole and the Chief represent a clash between extreme examples of a cerebrotonic and somatotonic. Whilst the intellectual Poole is horrified by books being burned for fuel, the Chief is unconcerned (67). The somatotonic concern with practical reality versus the cerebrotonic concern for words and ideas is contrasted. When discussing

the possibilities of producing more food, the Chief is bored by the botanist Poole's wordy theorising (e.g. 129), demonstrating the somatotonic emphasis on practical concerns and action: ‘“Let's cut all the cackle and get down to practical business. What can you do about all this?”’ (130). Here is the somatotonic ‘bold directness of manner’ (VT, 54). The somatotonic has ‘no hesitancy of approach, no beating about the bush, no dependence upon overpoliteness or (viscerotonic) unctuousness’ (VT, 54). Sheldon writes that cerebrotonics think of the future, somatotonics of the present (VT, 48). Huxley depicts this when Poole is discussing the possibilities of increasing soil fertility as late as ‘fifty years’ (130) into the future, whereas the Chief is only concerned with ‘“more food *now*”’ (131).

Thus *Ape and Essence*'s characterisation is *consistently* Sheldonian, unlike any of Huxley's novels before his introduction to Sheldon, or indeed *After Many a Summer*, written before the publication of Sheldon's two major works outlining his taxonomy, and thus *Ape and Essence* provides further compelling evidence of Sheldon's influence on Huxley's fiction. With the exception of the rare occasions when Huxley does not provide a physical description, such as the narrator of ‘Tallis’ and Poole, *all* of the characters' physiques, however briefly mentioned, tally with their temperaments in a precisely Sheldonian fashion. However, Huxley's use of Sheldon's ideas is not as involved or extensive as it was in *Time Must Have a Stop*. *Ape and Essence*'s brevity, combined with its screenplay form, provides less opportunity for insight into the inner lives, the ‘island universes’ (DP, 4), of the characters than Huxley's previous novel. Moreover, unlike in *Time Must Have a Stop*, *Ape and Essence*'s characters do not expound Sheldonian philosophy.

As with *Time Must Have a Stop*, Huxley's use of Sheldon's traits for his characters is, at times, highly repetitive to the point of overstatement. There were certain key words or phrases that Huxley used to signal certain Sheldonian types in *Time Must Have a Stop* that he re-uses here. Poole, like Sebastian in *Time Must Have a Stop*, is often ‘embarrassed’ (e.g. 53), ‘blushing’, and ‘averting his eyes’ (e.g. 75); the Arch-Vicar, like *Time Must Have a Stop*'s Eustace, is ‘genial’ (99). Huxley once again uses Sheldon's system to create characters who are extreme

examples of each of Sheldon's three poles, rather than depicting the complex mixture of traits from all three somatotypes that Sheldon would predict would be found among the majority of individuals. Both the main characters (Poole, Loola, the Chief, the Arch-Vicar) and the lesser characters (the narrator of 'Tallis', Mrs Coulton, Flossie) are clearly presented as purely one of the three temperaments, rather than a mixture of two or all three.

As in *Time Must Have a Stop*, Huxley's use of these extreme Sheldonian somatotypes in order to represent what he saw as archetypal contrasts in human nature is again apparent. The characters' roles in the novel are defined by their Sheldonian temperaments. The endomorphic Arch-Vicar represents viscerotonic complacency, his goal being to uphold the status quo in society. He foresees a negative future, but accepts it as inevitable (132). This is similar to Eustace's attitude in *Time Must Have a Stop*, whose '“cynical realism”' (*TMHS*, 52), as his brother John puts it, leads him to see no point in attempting to change society as his view of human nature is that it is unchangeable. Both Eustace and the Arch-Vicar have an attitude of accepting, and enjoying, things as they are. Likewise, the endomorphic, viscerotonic Flossie is completely accepting of the society in which she lives, representing complete conformity. She is happy to get what she can out of the existing system: '“If you work well”', she says to Loola, '“maybe the Superintendent will let you keep the Nylons. Look at the pair I got this morning!”' (133). The mesomorphic Chief represents, as outlined above, the somatotonic desire to aggressively control both other people and the environment, and is somatotonically focused upon decisive action to achieve things in the present. Huxley once again shows greater interest in, and empathy for, cerebrotonia. The central protagonists, and most sympathetic characters, in the novel are the sensitive cerebrotonics, Poole and Loola, who perceive the horror of Huxley's dystopia, attempt to rebel against it, and are capable of compassion, empathy and love. There is also the suggestion that their romantic love can be a route towards 'holiness' (149). Again, as with *Time Must Have a Stop*, it is the cerebrotonic characters who

are depicted as being able, potentially, to engage with the mystical and religious, with ‘realities that have no name’ (148).

Huxley’s essay collection *Themes and Variations* (1950) shows continued signs of Sheldon’s influence. The essay ‘Variations on a Philosopher’, Huxley’s analysis of French philosopher Maine de Biran, is another example of how Huxley used Sheldon’s ideas as an analytical and creative tool in his biographical and historical works. In works such as this, and others such as *The Devils of Loudun* (1952), Huxley is once again carrying out Eustace of *Time Must Have a Stop*’s aim to examine history and its figures in terms of temperament. In this essay, Huxley downplays the influence of the environment upon individuals, stating that any supposed similarities between people due to ‘cultural style’ are superficial compared to differences due to ‘physique and temperament’.² (Huxley uses the phrase ‘physique and temperament’ later as well (107), and uses the word ‘temperament’ throughout.) Thus one can see how Sheldon’s system contributed to Huxley’s belief, stated in this essay, that people are ‘profoundly unlike one another’, except on the ‘deepest level’ of the ‘spirit’ (35), and that any given period of history, indeed any given society within a given period of history, is highly heterogeneous, consisting of ‘many worlds separated from one another by impenetrable walls of mutual ignorance and misunderstanding’ (33).

Without mentioning Sheldon’s name, Huxley outlines Sheldon’s ideas of a ‘tri-polar system’ for both human physique and three ‘closely correlated’ psychological poles (19). ‘Any individual’ is a mixture of these three extremes, ‘in varying proportions’ (19). The essay examines Biran as an ectomorphic cerebrotonic (Huxley actually uses Sheldon’s somatotype terms (16)), and how the nature of his body, such as his digestion (e.g. 68-69), and of his temperament, such as his introversion (e.g. 16-17), affected his life and philosophy. Huxley describes Biran ectomorphically as, for example, ‘slender, small-boned, thin-muscled’ (16), and depicts him throughout as possessing the qualities of Sheldon’s cerebrotonic,

² *Themes and Variations* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950; repr. 1954), p. 35. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

such as shyness (23), introversion (18), and self-consciousness (35). Huxley's descriptions of Biran's physique and personality consistently and specifically correspond with Sheldon's descriptions of the ectomorphic cerebrotonic. To provide just one of a great many examples, Huxley's imagining of Biran's hatred of rising in the morning is a cerebrotonic trait precisely outlined by Sheldon himself (*VT*, 273).

In one passage, the 'scrawny' Biran's 'introversion' is contrasted with the people of 'strong muscles or [. . .] big bellies', who possess 'extraversion of force or [. . .] facile geniality' (145). Thus extreme physical traits of mesomorphy and endomorphy are linked to the correspondingly somatotonic and viscerotonic varieties of extroversion. This passage, with its contrasting imagery of those who are 'scrawny' and those with 'strong muscles' and 'big bellies', despite not mentioning Sheldon or his system, shows both how strongly Huxley thought of humans as belonging to one of three types, or at least as existing along three poles, and the certainty with which he equated physicality with personality, along specifically Sheldonian lines. Again, without using Sheldon's terminology, Huxley uses literary figures as representatives of Sheldon's somatotypes when stating that 'no single individual can ever be representative of a period, if only for physiological reasons – for a Falstaff cannot represent a constituency of Cassiuses, nor a Scrooge a group of Pickwicks' (35). Huxley shows once again an inherent belief in the importance of physiology in determining human difference.

Huxley examines branches of psychology from the perspective of Sheldonian temperaments. Extreme somatotonics and viscerotonics will be behaviourists, extreme cerebrotonics, such as Biran, 'introspective psychologists' (16). For Huxley, the ideal is a combination of both approaches (19). Huxley goes on to examine how Biran's extreme introversion led to a lack of understanding of others (20), just as Sheldon outlines this trait in cerebrotonics (*VT*, 40). Huxley's description of Biran as representing a typical introverted cerebrotonic provides some insight into Huxley's view of the type which he believed was his own primary temperament. He describes how Biran's introversion made him an 'alien' (16) when

dealing with the external world, a ‘foreigner, far from home in an environment he did not like and with which he was congenitally unfitted to deal’ (15). At times Huxley draws parallels between himself and Biran, such as similar problems with shyness (23). Huxley’s discussion of Biran’s difficulty with ‘public speaking’ (24) recalls Huxley’s own struggles in this area. When Huxley writes that despite Biran’s discomfort in social situations, he continues to attend them, hurrying off ‘to another party, at which he will feel even more of an alien’ (29), it recalls Eustace from *Time Must Have a Stop*’s comments on cerebrotonics, although Sheldon’s term is not used, and their conflict between a desire for, and a discomfort with, the world beyond their inner life, which tempts them ‘to embark on actions which [they] know in advance can only make [them] miserable’ (*TMHS*, 128).

Other essays in *Themes and Variations* reveal the influence of Sheldon. In ‘Art and Religion’, Huxley writes that ‘[e]nvironment is never the sole determinant, and heredity is always at work, producing every variety of physique and temperament’ (154). When discussing baroque art and seventeenth century Catholicism, he writes how the religious used art ‘as an instrument for achieving the various kinds of experience for which their temperaments had fitted them’ (156). Again, the focus is on innate personality traits determining experience. In ‘Variations on a Baroque Tomb’ Huxley insists that the role of heredity, of ‘predestination’ (167), has become understated: ‘Each of us inherits a physique and a temperament’ (167). When writing on Goya, Huxley asserts that ‘the idiosyncrasies of his temperament’ helped to determine his art (224). In all these examples, Huxley’s use of Sheldon’s key words, ‘physique’, and especially ‘temperament’, emphasise Huxley’s urge, whether the discussion be on the subject of philosophy, psychology, history, religion, or art, to discuss the hereditary influences on human beings, both physical and mental, which he and Sheldon believed were being overlooked.

Though Huxley does not mention Sheldon or his terms in *The Devils of Loudun* (1952), his presentation of the historical figures concerned at times conforms to Sheldon’s system. Urbain Grandier is described as having the ‘tall’ and

athletic' build and 'full' lips of Sheldon's mesomorph.³ However, when Huxley describes Grandier's 'temperament' (30), he uses the language of the four humours, *not* Sheldon's three-pole system: Grandier is, 'according to the Constitutional Medicine of his day', a 'sanguine-choleric' (30). Huxley does, however, write that Grandier possessed, like 'many people', a 'congenitally aggressive' nature (23), once again displaying Huxley's belief, like Sheldon, in the innate elements of personality. Huxley depicts Madeleine de Brou as possessing the personality traits of a cerebrotonic. Huxley writes that she is 'quiet' and 'enigmatic', that she prefers to 'think her own thoughts' and to be 'alone', and that she has a tendency to 'repress strong emotions' (48). She has a 'nature' that is 'inward', but her 'passion' is 'violent' (50). Every one of these traits is cerebrotonic in nature. However, Huxley provides no physical description of de Brou.

Philippe Trincant and Jean-Joseph Surin, on the other hand, are presented as clear ectomorphic cerebrotonics. Philippe has the 'thin bony arms' (33) of the ectomorph, and possesses many cerebrotonic traits. For example, she enjoys reading and translates Latin (34), demonstrating the cerebrotonic love and respect for words (*VT*, 90), she feels 'overwhelmed by a [. . .] violent longing' for Grandier (38), exhibiting the typical cerebrotonic strong sexual desire, and she lives in an inner world of 'phantasy' and 'day-dreams' (39), as Sheldon had written of the cerebrotonic's 'rich phantasy life' and propensity for daydreaming (*VT*, 89). For a cerebrotonic, '[r]eality [. . .] is essentially and foremost what he dredges up out of his own mental cellars. The outward reality appears to be secondary' (*VT*, 88), and there is a 'less sharp separation [. . .] between his fully conscious attitudes and his dreaming, his phantasy life' (*VT*, 88). Compare with Huxley on Philippe: 'The gulf between phantasy and the actual had been abolished. Real-life and her day-dreams were momentarily the same' (39). Philippe also demonstrates the cerebrotonic tendency to blush (37, 38), and she 'hesitate[s]' and 'stammer[s]' (38), both habits of the cerebrotonic (*VT*, 77, 72). Huxley also depicts Philippe as experiencing that

³ *The Devils of Loudun* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952; repr. London: Penguin, 1971), p. 13. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

central conflict which Huxley often addresses when presenting his cerebrotonic characters: Philippe, through her abstract, idealised love for Grandier, is attracted to the real, sensual world, is tempted by it, but is disappointed and made miserable by the reality: ‘Inner bliss had given place to the frightening reality of passion avowed and reciprocated’, which ‘brought none of the things she had imagined it would bring’ (40). She had fallen in love with ‘an abstraction’, but had found a ‘demented brute’ (40), and she experiences sex as alienation (40-41). Philippe’s disillusionment, as depicted by Huxley, is very similar to the similarly cerebrotonic Sebastian’s experiences of sex in *Time Must Have a Stop*.

Jean-Joseph Surin’s cerebrotonic traits include being ‘self-conscious’ (70) and a talented writer (71), exhibiting the cerebrotonic love of words. Huxley writes that Surin was an ‘undersized schoolboy’ (71), and he describes him as ‘one of those frail, nervous beings in whom the sexual impulse is powerful almost to a frenzy’ (71), all of which is in line with the ectomorphic cerebrotonic. The latter phrase again shows Huxley’s unquestioning belief in the connections between physicality and personality. Huxley used the same word, ‘frenzy’, to describe the similarly cerebrotonic Veronica Thwale’s passions in *Time Must Have a Stop* (*TMHS*, 223), and will use it again to describe the desires of the cerebrotonic Henry Maartens in *The Genius and the Goddess*.⁴ Once again Huxley repeats certain words, across multiple texts, when delineating characters belonging to the same Sheldonian somatotype.

In *The Doors of Perception* (1954), Huxley references Sheldon’s types when making the argument, mentioned earlier, that all humans live in their own ‘island universes’ (*DP*, 4) and thus cannot fully understand each others’ experience. Thus Sheldon’s system affirmed, specified and developed Huxley’s thoughts on the difficulties of empathy, as discussed in the chapter on *Time Must Have a Stop* above. ‘It seems virtually certain that I shall never know what it feels like to be Sir John Falstaff or Joe Louis’ (*DP*, 5) Huxley writes, referencing Falstaff as a

⁴ Aldous Huxley, *The Genius and the Goddess* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1955), p. 70, hereafter *GG*. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

representative of the viscerotonic type and Louis as a somatotonic, the two types that Huxley, who viewed himself as a fairly extreme cerebrotonic, would find most alien to himself.

Huxley did not always demonstrate complete commitment to Sheldon's ideas in his later fiction works. *The Genius and the Goddess's* (1955) characters conform to Sheldon's typology in some ways, but in other ways do not. For example, the novel's central character, John Rivers, is quite clearly delineated as being a mesomorph. For example, he has a 'square, leathery face' (12), and a 'square brown hand' (7), just as Sheldon predicts a mesomorph to have 'squareness and hardness of body' (*VHP*, 39) and 'leathery skin' (*VHP*, 41). However, Rivers' temperament does not exhibit qualities of the corresponding somatotonia, and in fact displays cerebrotonic traits, such as shyness (e.g. 15).

Henry Maartens and his daughter Ruth, however, are clearly presented as both ectomorphic and cerebrotonic. Ruth Maartens has a '“thin little body”' (34) and '“bony little shoulders”' (19). She experiences constipation (109), a cerebrotonic trait (*VT*, 69), and she displays the cerebrotonic sensitive swallowing reflexes and tendency to blanch (112). She writes poetry (17), demonstrating the cerebrotonic love of words. Sheldon writes that cerebrotonics are careful in their use of words, and alert to different 'shades of a word's meaning' (*VT*, 90), and Ruth demonstrates these exact qualities in a passage where Huxley depicts her consideration of possible words to include in her poem (19). She desires Rivers with '“a focused intensity of yearning”' (65), demonstrating the cerebrotonic's strong sexual desire (Sheldon often uses the word 'intense' to describe cerebrotonics in his writings (e.g. *VT*, 68, 76, 77, 254, 278)). Like a typical cerebrotonic, she has a tendency to be '“jealous”' (e.g. 110), and has a vivid imagination: '“She knew, of course, that it was all nonsense; but how transporting it was to think and act as though it were true!”' (29). Indeed, as with *Time Must Have a Stop's* Sebastian, her inner life can become so vivid as to become her reality. Rivers writes of her suspicion of his affair with her mother: '“She suspected

the worst so vehemently that, in next to no time, she wasn't guessing any more, she *knew* that we were guilty" (118).

Henry Maartens is described ectomorphically as a 'small, thin man' (12), who "looked like the portraits of Pascal" (41), whom Huxley had already used to epitomise the cerebrotonic in *Time Must Have a Stop*. John Rivers describes those of Henry's disposition as "broken reeds" (e.g. 20), which, it becomes apparent, is the phrase that Huxley uses in this novel for ectomorphic cerebrotonics. Huxley is utilising Sheldon's ideas, but not his specific terminology, substituting more informal vocabulary. Sheldon writes that the cerebrotonic often has 'apprehensiveness' concerning their health, even though they are often very healthy, although they do suffer from fatigue (*VT*, 74). Compare with Rivers' declaration that "the broken reeds, like poor old Henry, go on and on, complaining of ill health until they're a hundred", but adding that Henry does suffer from "fatigues" (20). He adds that Henry also suffered from "belly-aches" and "asthma" (20), and poor digestion (*VT*, 273) and shallow, rapid breathing (*VT*, 69) are also qualities which Sheldon assigns to the cerebrotonic. These multiple, precise correlations with Sheldon's writings provide excellent evidence that Huxley was still using Sheldon's ideas, if not completely consistently, throughout this novel.

Rivers also proclaims that "broken reeds [. . .] are apt to be ardent" (70), correlating with the strong sexual desire of the cerebrotonic. Henry is an "indefatigable lover" (41) with an "intensity of passion" (42). According to Rivers, Henry's life is a mixture of predominantly "philosophical and scientific ideas" with only a small amount "of immediate experience, most of it strictly sexual" (70). For Rivers, Henry is conscious only of his laboratory, his library, and sex (70). The cerebrotonic's concern with both the abstract and the erotic is thus encapsulated. Rivers states that "broken reeds are seldom good mixers", utilising the term Huxley uses elsewhere (e.g. *PP*, 151) for the viscerotonic type. Broken reeds are "far too busy with their ideas, their sensuality and their psychosomatic complaints to be able to take an interest in other people" (70). As previously mentioned, Sheldon writes that this lack of awareness of others is a trait

of the cerebrotonic (VT, 40). Though Huxley was never averse to portraying the flaws of the cerebrotonic somatotype, his presentation of Henry Maartens is a particularly unsympathetic depiction of this temperament.

Thus the examples of Ruth and Henry Maartens suggest that Huxley was still using Sheldon's system when constructing his characters, albeit not as consistently as in his previous two novels. However, even Henry displays some deviations from Sheldon's vision of the cerebrotonic. Despite an often poor awareness of others, Sheldon's cerebrotonic is characterised by a high level of self-awareness (VT, 40), yet Henry, according to Rivers, ' "was as little aware of his own humanity as of other people's" ' (71). He also ' "could never conceal what he really felt" ' (61), whereas the opposite is true of Sheldon's cerebrotonic (VT, 265). Here, Huxley's use of Sheldon's ideas in his fictional characterisations is not as slavishly faithful to Sheldon's writings as it was in the 1940s.

Besides his discussion of ' "broken reeds" ', Rivers becomes a mouthpiece for Sheldonian thought at other times in the novel as well. He speaks of:

'One or other of the varieties of the human gorilla. The spindly gorilla [. . .] Or the leather-faced variety – that's me. Or else it's the successful business-man type of gorilla – you know, the kind that looks like a baby's bottom with false teeth.' (49)

Rivers' inherent, Sheldonian assumption that physical qualities are connected to personality traits is apparent here. Later in the novel, Rivers also attacks mainstream psychology, or ' "[p]sychology-fiction" ' (114), as he calls it, for only considering environmental factors and not taking into account ' "the inner Predestination of temperament and character" ' (115). He outlines how his daughter Molly, despite having the same upbringing as his other two daughters, has a very different psychological make-up (114-15). Rivers is discussing one of Huxley's, and Sheldon's, major themes: that the inborn mind-body is underplayed in conventional psychological study. As with *Ape and Essence*, and again in part due to the novel's comparative brevity, *The Genius and the Goddess* contains less detailed comparing and contrasting of the characters, their internal lives, and their interactions with one another, in a Sheldonian fashion, than *Time Must Have a Stop*.

However, Huxley's portrait of the ectomorphic cerebrotonic Henry and Ruth, as well as Rivers' occasionally Sheldonian pronouncements, do reveal the continuing influence of Sheldon's ideas upon Huxley's fiction.

Sheldon's views also contributed to Huxley's fears about the biological state of the human race. In *Brave New World Revisited* (1958), Huxley discusses his concerns that because 'most of the children born with hereditary defects'⁵ survive and reproduce, the genetic stock of the human race is becoming 'of biologically poorer quality' (27). In support of this view, Huxley specifically references Sheldon. Huxley describes Sheldon as a 'competent authorit[ary]' (28) on the matter, who is 'convinced that such a decline has already taken place and is continuing' (28). Huxley subscribes to Sheldon's belief that environmental causes, such as economics, education, religion and culture, are over-emphasised, and that the problem is to a great extent biological in nature. Here is further evidence of how Sheldon's ideas strengthened Huxley's belief that biological determinism was underestimated by the orthodox majority. Both Sheldon and Huxley were interested in the possibilities of eugenics, as will be discussed further later in the chapter.

Sheldon's ideas affected Huxley's opinions on the correct and moral ways to organise society. In *Brave New World Revisited*'s chapter on 'Over-Organisation', Huxley references William Whyte, who discusses what he sees as an emerging new 'Social Ethic', as opposed to a focus upon the individual (40). Huxley writes that this Social Ethic decrees that 'the social whole has greater worth and significance than its individual parts' and 'that inborn biological differences should be sacrificed to cultural uniformity' (40). This philosophy requires that 'man [...] must sacrifice his inherited idiosyncrasies and pretend to be the kind of standardized good mixer that organizers of group activity regard as ideal for their purposes' (41). As previously mentioned, the phrase 'good mixer' is used by Huxley elsewhere, for example in *The Perennial Philosophy* (PP, 151), to describe Sheldon's viscerotonic temperament. As a self-proclaimed cerebrotonic, and as a believer in the variety of

⁵ *Brave New World Revisited* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958; repr. 1972), p. 27. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

human temperaments, this standardisation of an ideal personality, and furthermore, an ideal personality that bears traits opposite to his own, is abhorrent to Huxley. That this position is connected to his belief in temperaments is later explicitly acknowledged: ‘Some people’ have this desire for working socially, ‘others do not. It is a matter of temperament and inherited constitution’ (44).

Thus *Brave New World Revisited* demonstrates that Huxley’s belief in Sheldon’s system informed his opposition to any society or organisation based on a standardised ideal of humanity, without recognising and allowing for differences in temperament. Sheldon’s work provided Huxley with, to him, scientific evidence that this view was fundamentally inaccurate. In a later chapter on hypnotism and suggestion, Huxley returns to the Sheldonian point, one fundamental to *Brave New World Revisited* because it is fundamental to Huxley’s vision of how society should operate, that:

Genetically, every human being is unique and in many ways unlike every other human being [...] In real life there is no such person as the average man. There are only particular men, women and children, each with his or her own inborn idiosyncrasies of mind and body, and all trying (or compelled) to squeeze their biological diversities into the uniformity of some cultural mould. (130-31)

Huxley’s choice of metaphor displays his Sheldonian concern about the unhealthy effects of a person of one temperament compelled, whether from within and/or without, to attempt to live his/her life and define him/herself by the standards and attributes of another. Huxley’s vocabulary is revealing here. He focuses on each individual being unique ‘genetically’. He describes ‘idiosyncrasies’ of both mind and body as ‘inborn’, as ‘*biological diversities*’ [my emphasis]. Again, Huxley emphasises biological, inherited influences over environmental ones. However, since Huxley makes clear that he is opposing the orthodox view, his emphasis on biological factors is, as in Sheldon’s work, an attempt to focus on the areas that are not being considered by others, rather than a denial of the effects of the environment upon the individual. Sheldon himself emphasises in his writings that he recognises the importance of environmental influence, and is merely redressing

the balance of contemporary psychology by focusing on ‘the constitutional factor’ (VT, 438). Indeed, Huxley writes later, in the context of discussing susceptibility to suggestion, that: ‘Environmental factors certainly play their part [...]; but there are also, no less certainly, constitutional differences’ (131).

In his discussion of suggestibility, Huxley writes of a study into the effects of placebos, which suggested that the ‘temperament’ of the participants, rather than such factors as age, gender and intelligence, was of central importance to the effectiveness of the placebo. The placebos were more effective on those who were ‘less critical and suspicious’ (132), and were thus more easily suggestible. Huxley’s description of the personality of these participants tallies with Sheldon’s description of the viscerotonic type. Thus again, even in a passage where Sheldon is not mentioned, Huxley’s use of the word ‘temperament’, along with Sheldon’s ideas of personality, reveals the psychologist’s continuing influence. In the chapter entitled ‘Education for Freedom’, Huxley returns to his criticism of the ‘Social Ethic’ (137), which he sees as a way of making acceptable ‘the evils resulting from over-organization and overpopulation’ (137). Here the connection to Sheldon’s work becomes even more explicit, as Huxley criticises the Social Ethic for not being ‘consonant with what we know about human physique and temperament’ (137). Huxley writes that ‘The Social Ethic assumes that nurture is all-important in determining human behaviour and that nature – the psycho-physical equipment with which individuals are born – is a negligible factor’ (137). Huxley sees this philosophy as being used to maintain ‘that the individual is less important than the group of which he is a member’ (137). Huxley’s use of the term ‘psycho-physical’ again implies his belief, reinforced by both Alexander and Sheldon, that mind and body, temperament and physique, are interrelated. (Huxley later writes that theories of ‘human behaviour’ that ignore ‘the individual mind-body’ are ‘inadequate’ (140).)

Huxley insists that ‘heredity is no less significant than culture’ (137). This conviction drives his views, for if ‘each individual is biologically unique’ then ‘freedom is therefore a great good, tolerance a great virtue and regimentation a

great misfortune' (137). Huxley's exasperation with the overvaluing of environmental factors and the undervaluing of heredity in the assessment of human behaviour is the central theme of the subsequent pages of the chapter. Huxley views this, to him, denial of the true state of things as political, as a pernicious method used by 'dictators, Organization Men and certain scientists' to 'reduce the maddening diversity of men's natures to some kind of manageable uniformity' (137). Huxley fears that this conception that 'human infants are born uniform and that individuals are the product of conditioning by and within the collective environment' leads to the view that liberty is unnecessary and that 'the State would be justified in persecuting the heretics who demanded it' (143-44). Sheldon's ideas strengthened Huxley's focus on the innate differences between human beings; even if humans are raised in a similar cultural environment, they will be unable to, and should not be expected to, all think, feel and behave in the same way. Thus Sheldon's work contributed to Huxley's concern with individual liberty and his opposition to the homogenisation of culture.

Huxley discusses how behaviourist psychologists such as Skinner ignore 'the findings of constitutional medicine', and 'constitutional psychology, in terms of which (and in terms of which alone, so far as I can judge) it might be possible to write a complete and realistic biography of an individual' (139-40). Thus Huxley deems an understanding of Sheldon's field of 'constitutional psychology' to be *essential* ('in terms of which alone') to an understanding of the individual, once again endorsing Sheldon without mentioning his name. Huxley adds that 'some mind-bodies can and do profoundly affect their social environment' (140), dismissing a view of history that does not consider the impact of individuals, instead viewing them as merely products of their environment. Thus Huxley is presenting Sheldon's theory of mind-bodies as central to an accurate study of history, as Eustace Barnack declares, as mentioned above, in *Time Must Have a Stop*, and as Huxley enacts when he uses Sheldon's system to analyse historical figures in works such as *Themes and Variations* and *The Devils of Loudun*.

Huxley continues to express Sheldonian ideas in Sheldonian language in this chapter. He again uses the phrase ‘physique and temperament’, as something that is unique to each individual (141). Huxley finally uses Sheldon’s name and somatotype terms towards the end of the chapter (144), when making the point that innate personality differences cannot be eliminated by ‘cultural ironing’ (144). Thus for Huxley, ‘an education for freedom’ must teach ‘the facts of individual diversity and genetic uniqueness and the values of freedom, tolerance and mutual charity which are the ethical corollaries of these facts’ (145). This sort of education will be provided in Pala, Huxley’s utopian society in *Island* (1962). Thus overall, *Brave New World Revisited* reveals Sheldon to be an important contributor to the philosophy which forms the basis of Huxley’s political, social and educational vision.

In *The Human Situation*, his 1959 series of lectures at The University of California, Santa Barbara, published in 1978, Huxley speaks extensively of Sheldon’s work. When discussing his lectures in a letter to his son Matthew, one of the themes Huxley chooses to highlight is ‘heredity in relation to environment’.⁶ And when initially introducing the central themes of his lectures, he includes: ‘What is the relationship between nature and nurture?’.⁷ Clearly, Sheldon’s ideas are highly relevant to this issue. In the lecture ‘The Ego’, Huxley examines the history of classifying human physiology and temperament, covering Hippocrates, Aristotle, Galen, Rostan, Viola, and Kretschmer. He praises Sheldon’s system as being more thorough and more scientific. He outlines Sheldon’s types, and supplies an interesting specification of his own type not mentioned in his previous discussions:

I happen to be a 1-2-7. That is to say, I have a minimum of endomorphy, a little mesomorphy, which permits me to get around, and the maximum of ectomorphy. This is not a very common type; the types near the middle are commonest. Sheldon once told me that most members of my type are in asylums – I am extremely lucky to be out. (134-35)

⁶ *Letters*, p. 860, (8 January 1959).

⁷ Aldous Huxley, *The Human Situation* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978; repr. London: Flamingo, 1994), p. 2. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work and edition, unless and until otherwise stated.

Huxley reveals his interest in other Sheldonian concepts. He delineates the Sheldon conception of ‘dysplasia’, a disharmony between different regions of the body which Huxley believes ‘play[s] a very important part in juvenile delinquency’, a concept which was used by Huxley in *Time Must Have a Stop*, as previously discussed. Huxley also outlines Sheldon’s concept of ‘gynandromorphy’, a resemblance to the opposite sex, which in extreme cases can also cause ‘great psychological trouble’ (135). He comments on Sheldon’s examinations of schizophrenics as having a high degree of ectomorphy and dysplasia. He gives an insight into his interpretation of the interplay between the environment and Sheldon’s conception of the inherited mind-body: ‘While schizophrenia may be precipitated by traumatic experiences, these experiences are felt to be traumatic because they occur to people in a high ectomorphic region with a high degree of dysplasia’ (140). He adds that ‘[t]here wouldn’t have been such disastrous effects if these people had been shaped differently’ (140). Huxley believes that Sheldon’s theories have ‘enormous sociological importance’ to help prevent and treat mental disorders:

More than 50 per cent of all hospital beds in this country are occupied by schizophrenics. It is our major health problem at the moment, and it is simply not being solved by the kind of psychotherapy which is at present available, largely because psychotherapy has ignored the physical correlates of the disease. (140)

Thus Huxley views Sheldon’s system as more than a useful theoretical construct, but as a way of understanding and thus treating mental disorder. He is convinced of its practical, medicinal, preventative applications.

Huxley considers the tension that underlies an attempt to create, or impose, a manageable society that nevertheless still accepts the infinite variation of human physique and temperament, the conflict between the expression of human diversity and the drive to conformity from without, via law and tradition, and from within, caused by the individual’s desire for acceptance and to imitate the societal ideal (67-68). This can lead to individuals behaving in ways that are in conflict with their

natural mind-body type, with ‘disastrous’ results (68). Huxley comments that according to Sheldon’s findings, the correlation between physique and temperament is so great that even a two point deviation between physical and mental pattern causes ‘very great permanent stress’, and that ‘deviations of more than two points apparently are never found except in mental institutions’ (136). Again, he warns of the dangers of disharmony between one’s mind and body, caused by ‘sociological pressures [that] demand that people behave in a certain way which doesn’t happen to be the way in which their physique would normally “ask” them to behave’ (136). He examines this trend throughout history, and as in previous works he notes the recent shift in the West towards encouraging somatonia rather than, as had previously been the tradition, encouraging cerebrotonia. Huxley expresses sympathy for the introverted cerebrotonic child subjected to ‘progressive education’, which ‘represents an almost exclusive evaluation of the mesomorphic, and to some extent the endomorphic, points of view’ (136):

Unfortunate children who were born with introverted tendencies are made to share and to rush around with others, and they are absolutely miserable, because what they want is privacy, and not to be pushed around with a great herd of other people. But this has become fashionable now. (136)

Huxley addresses this issue again in a later lecture on ‘The Unconscious’, suggesting that it can lead to ‘neurosis’ (154) in the child. Huxley blames Freud, in part, for the ‘“somatonic revolution”’, because he promoted ‘the extraverted way of life’ as ‘the way of health for every man’ (154). In the past education attempted to ‘repress the mesomorph and the endomorph’, to ‘impose stoical restraints upon the overflowing, spill-the-beans endomorph and to impose quasi-physical restraints on the exuberant energy of the mesomorph. You can look at earlier civilizations and see the social patterns which were created for doing precisely this’ (136). Huxley discusses the various ways in which societies have tried to control the negative tendencies of aggressive somatonic types, a favourite theme of his. In the Middle Ages, somatotonics were sent off to fight in religious wars, whilst cerebrotonics could retire to convents and monasteries (136-37). Thus Huxley, as in *The*

Perennial Philosophy, views all aspects of society and culture from the vantage point of Sheldon's theories.

Interestingly, Huxley considers the critiques of a system such as Sheldon's, something he had not addressed in his previous discussions of the subject. His defence of the theory suggests his awareness of the criticism of, and indifference to, Sheldon's work in the almost twenty years since it was published. He describes Sheldon as part of a 'strong unorthodox movement' (63), revealing his recognition that his is a minority view. There is a tone of frustration in Huxley's attacks on psychology's indifference to Sheldon's approach. In the lecture 'How Original is Original Sin?', Huxley bemoans the lack of consideration of the physical, biological, genetic, inherited variation of human beings in psychiatry and psychological study in general, seeing it as an astonishing oversight: 'As it is very important that the doctors of the body should realize that the mind has effects upon the body, so it is important that psychologists should realize that the body has effects upon the mind' (62). Of course it is an oversight that Sheldon corrects, and Huxley again expresses the hope that this research can be utilised to treat psychological disorder:

As we can do something by biochemical means to correct a lowered resistance to infection, so it is perfectly possible that we might, by biochemical or nutritional means, do something to correct or to mask the genetic anomalies that make certain people much more likely to be affected by a psychological trauma than others are. Unfortunately, one finds almost no reference to this at all in the psychological literature; there is instead a kind of dogma, which may be called the dogma of environmental determinism, which almost systematically ignores the physiological factor. (63)

Huxley criticises Freudians for focusing solely on 'the mouth and the anus. It is an absolutely extraordinary fact that the "Freudian materialism of the body" boils down to this incredibly limited preoccupation with such an infinitesimal part of the total physical organism' (139). Sheldon has affected Huxley's conception of the unconscious: 'It is quite pointless to talk about the unconscious unless we see it rooted in the constitutional differences which make us the individuals we are' (142). In strong terms, Huxley attacks Freud, neo-Freudian psychiatrists, and behaviourist

psychologists for being ‘indifferent to the relationship between the psyche and the physique’ (139), for proceeding ‘as though we were disembodied souls or souls connected only with one or the other end of a digestive tube [. . .] and nothing else’ (139).

Huxley again pinpoints the key reasons for his admiration of Sheldon’s approach: it considers both mind *and* body, and the interrelationship between the two. Here Huxley, as elsewhere, attempts to emphasise the complexity and subtlety of Sheldon’s model; that it is not, in fact, about types at all:

What Sheldon has shown is that we are perfectly wrong in thinking of ‘types’ of human beings. The trouble is that the nature of our language is such that we like to think in terms of pigeonholes and substantial types, and it is very difficult to talk about a continuum of any kind [. . .] As Sheldon has shown, and as is perfectly obvious must be the case, human beings do not vary by jumps and therefore cannot be put down as one type or another. Rather, there is a continuous variation among them; and this is not a variation between two poles – we always have a frightful tendency to think in terms of dichotomy – but it is much more realistically described as being a continuous variation within a three-pole framework. (63)

Huxley asserts that Sheldon’s system has ‘always been intuitively understood by dramatists and story-tellers’ (64), and then proceeds to examine Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dickens from this perspective. Again, this can be read as a further attempt to defend Sheldon, by implying that his theory is a universal truth observable in great works of art from various centuries.

Huxley’s and Sheldon’s concern with the importance of heredity led to both having an interest in eugenics. Sheldon discusses the issue of eugenics in *The Varieties of Human Physique*. One of his central points is that he does not believe in ‘attacking the problem from the wrong end’ (*VHP*, 229). By this he means that he thinks ‘encouragement’ of the ‘parentage [that] produces the best children’ (*VHP*, 230), rather than ‘suppressing the unfit’ and ‘eliminating or sterilizing a fringe of unfortunates’ (*VHP*, 229), is the correct way to proceed. The idea of ‘the best children’ is a highly controversial one, which Sheldon does at least acknowledge: ‘It is still difficult to agree on what we shall mean by “best” ’ (*VHP*, 230), but he adds that it is ‘not so difficult or so dangerous’ to decide on what is ‘“worst” ’

(*VHP*, 230). This problematic statement also does not consider who has the right to decide what is ‘worst’. Sheldon believes his approach to be not only more ethical, but more practical in that it has a greater chance of success in implementation: ‘Furthermore, from the standpoint of the practical administration of social controls, encouragement at one end might succeed where discouragement at the other end fails’ (*VHP*, 230). Sheldon does at least say that ‘it does not seem wise to subject an unhappy minority to harsh treatments’ (*VHP*, 229-30). In *The Human Situation*, in the lecture ‘The World’s Future’, Huxley predicts that:

We may [. . .] see the kind of scientific application which the eminent geneticist Professor Hermann Muller speaks about – the application of eugenic methods to the improvement of the human stock. Muller speculates about what he calls “foster parenthood” and the possibility of the creation of a new kind of morality, by which people would think it more important to bear children who were the best possible in the field of nature rather than children who exactly reproduce their parents’ idiosyncrasies and weaknesses. This would be possible through foster parenthood of children conceived by the union of reproductive cells derived from stocks representing the parents’ highest ideal. Sooner or later eugenics will be practised, although it is certainly going to take a tremendous revolution in our present ethical ideas on the subject. It may be added that the first nation that does practise such eugenic methods as Professor Muller advocates will in a few decades be enormously superior to all its rivals – which seems to me yet another reason why we should, as quickly as possible, by hook or by crook, achieve the ‘one world’ ideal; in the context of nationalism eugenics could become an instrument of extraordinary power and extraordinary danger.⁸

Thus because Huxley sees eugenics as both advantageous and inevitable, he regards its universal application as being paramount, to avoid political and humanitarian disaster. Like Sheldon in *The Varieties of Human Physique*, Huxley does not write about the killing or sterilization of those deemed of poor genetic stock, but about the use of ‘ideal’ ‘stocks’ for procreation: in this case, the use of ‘foster parenthood’, an idea that he will express in *Island* with its sperm banks of ‘superior stocks’ (*I*, 215). Huxley’s position invites troublesome questions. What constitutes ‘the best possible in the field of nature’, as Huxley puts it? Who decides who is

⁸ Aldous Huxley, *The Human Situation* (New York: Harper, 1977), p. 105.

‘superior stock’ and who isn’t? This is the same problem with Sheldon’s pronouncements on the subject in *The Varieties of Human Physique*.

At the end of his final lecture, Huxley comments on some of the criticism his lectures have received, and the one issue that he chooses to raise is Sheldon’s theory:

Everybody here has been extremely kind to me. The only criticism I have had has been in reference to some of the people that I thought had made important contributions, such as W. H. Sheldon. I may be wrong, and Sheldon may be wrong, but I happen to think he is right. (238-39)

It is unsurprising that Huxley’s references to Sheldon’s theories provoked disputation, given the degree to which Sheldon and his work were criticised in academic circles, as discussed in Chapter 5. The above quotation reveals Huxley’s awareness of Sheldon’s potential erroneousness, but also his determination, despite criticism and controversy, to declare his belief in Sheldon’s theory. *The Human Situation* lectures show Huxley’s continued willingness to publicly endorse and defend Sheldon’s work as not only accurate, but as a potentially beneficial force in society. Huxley would explore this further in his subsequent novel.

In his last completed novel, *Island* (1962), some of the same views expressed in *Brave New World Revisited* and *The Human Situation* can be observed in the fictional utopia of Pala, either voiced by its inhabitants and/or expressed in its social organisation. Huxley does not just employ Sheldonian characters in the novel, but invests the philosophy of Pala with Sheldonian theory. Huxley’s continued tendency to depict his characters as representing pure, extreme examples of one of Sheldon’s three mind-body poles is again apparent, but it is the use of Sheldon’s theories within Huxley’s imagined society which makes *Island*’s use of Sheldon’s concepts unique among Huxley’s fictional writings. In this work, Huxley utilises the ideas, theories and philosophies that had appealed to him over the decades in order to present his vision of an ideal society. Sheldon’s ideas affect Pala’s conception of medicine, psychology, education, religion, social organisation, and procreation.

Island's characters demonstrate extreme conformity to Sheldon's system. Again, I will illustrate with some examples, but there are many other instances throughout the novel. Will Farnaby is a 'bony'⁹ ectomorph, and is thus cerebrotonic in nature. For example, he is described as ' "sensitive" ' (25), and displays strong sexual desire (4) and jealousy (5). He demonstrates embarrassment and the tendency to blush (123). He 'chuckled inwardly, but kept the straightest of faces' (62), displaying the cerebrotonic tendency to conceal one's true feelings. He does not find 'power' a 'temptation' (69), which again is indicative of cerebrotonia. Dr Robert MacPhail is a 'small', 'spare' ectomorph (14), and an introverted cerebrotonic, focused upon ' "thinking" ' and ' "reading" ' (35). His wife Lakshmi describes her concerns about his ' "[s]hut-offness [...] being absorbed in [...] ideas and not caring a damn for anything else" ' (34). Dugald, MacPhail's eldest son, is described as ' "so strong, such a tyrant, he could have hurt and bullied and destroyed" ' (27), displaying the traits of the mesomorphic somatotonic. He died in a ' "mountain-climbing accident" ' (17), mountain-climbing being a highly somatotonic activity, what with somatotonics' 'love of physical adventure', 'need and enjoyment of exercise', 'physical courage', and 'love of risk'. Indeed, Sheldon specifically describes somatotonics as liking 'high or mountainous country' (VT, 260).

Mr Bahu is 'bony' (59, 70), with an 'almost fleshless' face (52), suggesting ectomorphy, and he demonstrates the cerebrotonic concealment of the inner life: 'What was going on behind that austere [...] mask?' (52). He also admits to having a strong sexual drive (70), another cerebrotonic trait. Madame Buloz is 'plump' and 'sentimental' (52), demonstrating both endomorphic and correspondingly viscerotonic qualities. Ranga is ectomorphically 'lanky' (76) and has a 'scholarship to study biochemistry' (77), a cerebrotonic endeavour. Radha is ectomorphically 'little' (74) and has the strong sexual desires of a cerebrotonic (75). Susila is also ectomorphically 'little' (103), and describes herself as ' "physically and

⁹ *Island*, p. 28. Subsequent page references in parentheses are from this work, unless and until otherwise stated.

temperamentally” ’ like her father, who is ‘ “introverted” ’, prone to ‘ “embarrassment” ’, and has a ‘ “love of privacy” ’ (96), all traits of the cerebrotonic. She is described by Vijaya as ‘ “needing big doses of solitude” ’ (209). She also writes poetry (94), a common trait of Huxley’s cerebrotonic characters, as cerebrotonics have, as discussed earlier, a love of words.

Sheldon writes that the ectomorph has a ‘triangular’ face, ‘with the apex at the delicately pointed chin’ (*VHP*, 43). Huxley uses exactly the same phrase, ‘delicately pointed chin’, when describing Shanta, who has a ‘heart-shaped face that narrowed down from a broad forehead to a delicately pointed chin’ (212). She is also ‘ “exceptionally bright” ’ (214), which could be a suggestion of cerebrotonia. Although Sheldon wrote that the cerebrotonic’s thinking nature should not necessarily be equated with intelligence (*VT*, 274), Huxley often presents his cerebrotonic characters as being highly intelligent, at least academically. Shanta’s status as a cerebrotonic is made more certain by the fact that she describes the ‘ “endomorph and viscerotonic” ’ type as unlike herself *or* her husband Vijaya (213), who is a clear mesomorph, described as one of the ‘ “Muscle People” ’ (172). Thus Huxley uses Sheldon’s terms in *Island*, although more often, as in *The Genius and the Goddess*, he employs Sheldon’s ideas but creates his own more informal terms to describe them, such as ‘ “Muscle Men” ’ (174) and ‘ “marten-people” ’ (235) for mesomorphic somatotonics.

Thus the characters’ physiques align with their temperaments in a precisely Sheldonian manner throughout. Furthermore, almost all of the characters in *Island* represent one pure Sheldonian temperament, with Huxley demonstrating again his tendency to focus to a greater extent upon ectomorphic cerebrotonic characters. As this thesis has detailed, the degree to which the physique and personality traits of Huxley’s fictional characters from the 1940s onwards are specifically aligned with Sheldon’s classifications, consistently, and in great detail, including Huxley at times borrowing words and phrases from Sheldon’s descriptions of his types, provides strong evidence of Sheldon’s influence on Huxley’s characterisation, as does his characters’ expression of Sheldonian thought. Huxley’s degree of adherence to

Sheldon's typology in his character construction from *Time Must Have a Stop* onwards, though not total, is very high.

Huxley's characterisation before his introduction to Sheldon's ideas already demonstrated a tendency towards the schematic, with characters often representing certain points of view within Huxley's ideas-led narratives. Huxley's use of Sheldonian types thus merely provides a specific framework for, and a, to Huxley, scientific justification for, his pre-existing tendency to view people, and to write characters, as 'types'. Despite its detailed utilisation in *Time Must Have a Stop*, Huxley's use of Sheldon's ideas leads to an even more symbolic and schematic characterisation in his later novels. But as mentioned above, Huxley's decision to present almost all of the characters in his last four novels as extreme Sheldonian somatotypes is not, in fact, a representation of what Sheldon would predict in the human population, and thus does not necessarily arise from a use of Sheldon's system to aid characterisation. Huxley's impulse to present Sheldon's types in their extreme form stems from the same impulse he showed in even his earliest satires to present humans with strongly opposing political or religious views. It was a conscious choice made by Huxley to present what he believed Sheldon had identified with his three-pole typology: archetypes of human nature.

The only characters who possess a mixture of more than one somatotype are the Rani and her son, Murugun. The character of the Rani is, in part, Huxley's satirical comment on the dangers of the traditional family, representing the perils of possessive mothers. Both the maternal instinct, and possessiveness, are viscerotonic traits (*VT*, 47, 248), and hence Huxley makes the Rani a predominantly endomorphic viscerotonic. She is endomorphically 'large', with a 'fleshy [...] arm' (47) and 'thick hands' (53), and is duly described viscerotonically as an 'embodiment of maternity' (47). However she is also described as a power-loving 'tycoon' (53), thus also displaying somatotonic tendencies. Murugun is described ectomorphically as 'slender' (48), but has some somatotonic qualities, being eager to gain power (e.g. 42): ' "I'll show them who's the boss" ' (43) he warns at one point. The fact that Murugun's physical description equates to ectomorphy yet his

behaviour is often somatogenic in nature is interesting, as it was the combination of cerebrotonia and somatonia which, as mentioned earlier, Sheldon regarded as potentially dangerous, and common among delinquent boys (*VT*, 255). The seventeen-year-old Murugun fits this prediction, possessing ‘psychological ugliness’ (43), and a desire to be like ‘the hero of some American gangster movie’ (43).

As with *Time Must Have a Stop* and the *The Genius and the Goddess*, the characters in *Island* express Sheldonian ideas. The nurse, Radha, speaks of the ‘“kind of body chemistry”’ that turns people into ‘“psychotics”’ (72). In Huxley’s utopia, medical study, like Sheldon’s system, does not divorce the physiological from the psychological. Radha reiterates Huxley’s and Sheldon’s contention that Western orthodox psychology does not consider the physical body as it should:

‘So far as they’re concerned, the physical fronts don’t exist. Except for a mouth and an anus, their patient doesn’t have a body. He isn’t an organism, he wasn’t born with a constitution or a temperament [. . .] Mind abstracted from body – that’s the only front they attack on.’ (73)

Radha insists that in order to fully understand the human mind, one must consider ‘“anatomy”’, ‘“biochemistry”’, and ‘“physiology”’ (73). This is clearly a highly Sheldonian perspective on psychology. Huxley raises this theme again later in the novel, when Dr MacPhail discusses a similar point to the one made by John Rivers in *The Genius and the Goddess* (*GG*, 114-15). MacPhail remarks that Andrew, his great-grandfather, managed to survive his abusive upbringing, mentally and emotionally, unlike his siblings. Dr MacPhail thus attacks conventional psychological approaches and praises a constitutional psychology that is highly Sheldonian in outlook:

‘By all the rules of the Freudian and Pavlovian games, my great-grandfather ought to have grown up to be a mental cripple. In fact, he grew up to be a mental athlete. Which only shows [...] how hopelessly inadequate your two highly touted systems of psychology really are. Freudianism and Behaviourism – poles apart but in complete agreement when it comes to the facts of the built-in congenital differences between individuals. How do your pet psychologists deal with these facts? Very simply. They ignore them. They blandly pretend that the facts aren’t there. Hence their complete inability to

cope with the human situation as it really exists, or even to explain it theoretically. Look at what happened, for example, in this particular case. Andrew's brothers and sisters were either tamed by their conditioning, or destroyed. Andrew was neither destroyed nor tamed. Why? [...] He had a more resilient constitution than the others, a different anatomy, different biochemistry and different temperament.' (132-33)

As so often when Sheldonian ideas are being expressed, the word 'temperament' is used.

The Palanese make other Sheldonian statements. Vijaya remarks that some people like to meditate in a group, but others do not: ' "It depends on one's temperament" ' (209). Mrs Rao adds that she enjoys it, because ' "fat people enjoy company" ' (209), equating endomorphy with its corresponding viscerotonia. Recalling *Time Must Have a Stop's* Eustace (*TMHS*, 121), Dr MacPhail says: ' "If I can ever find the time, I'd like to write a little book on human physiology in relation to ethics, religion, politics, and law" ' (176). MacPhail is asserting the impact of the body on human behaviour, and thus on all areas of society. Pala accepts this contention and this influences the ways in which the society is constructed.

Sheldon's ideas are built into the education system in Pala. Mr Menon, the Under-Secretary of Education, states that ' "our first business is elementary education, and elementary education has to deal with individuals in all their diversity of shape, size, temperament" ' (230). The students are ' "learning, in their psychology and physiology classes, that each one of us has his own constitutional uniqueness" ' (231). Somatotyping is presented as fundamental to the educational process:

'We begin [. . .] by assessing the differences. Precisely who or what, anatomically, biochemically and psychologically, is this child? In the organic hierarchy, which takes precedence – his gut, his muscles, or his nervous system? How near does he stand to the three polar extremes? How harmonious or how disharmonious is the mixture of his component elements, physical and mental? How great is his inborn wish to dominate, or to be sociable, or to retreat into his inner world?' (231)

The references to the gut, muscles and nervous system pertain to the defining physiological elements of the viscerotonic, somatotonic, and cerebrotonic

respectively. Menon references the three poles inherent in Sheldon's system, and his discussion of the possibility of disharmony between physical and mental component elements is a reference to Sheldon's concept of dysplasia. Then Menon's three examples of personality traits summarise Sheldon's three somatotypes, and these traits are described as being '“inborn”'. Thus Sheldon's ideas dominate this entire passage.

The inhabitants of Pala are very interested in gauging the essential, inbuilt tendencies of their children at a young age. As Mr Menon explains: '“We ask questions about every child's physique and temperament” '(234-35), mirroring Sheldon's research methods. This information about the child's somatotype is then acted upon. It is used to structure his/her subsequent education. Huxley comments on two facets of this process. Firstly, Sheldon's system is used as a method of teaching tolerance and understanding of human difference. The process is begun by identifying all the young cerebrotonics:

'We sort out all the shyest, tensest, most over-responsive and introverted children, and assemble them in a single group. Then, little by little, the group is enlarged. First a few children with tendencies towards indiscriminate sociability are introduced. Then one or two little muscle-men and muscle-women – children with tendencies towards aggressiveness and love of power. It's the best method, we've found, for getting little boys and girls at the three polar extremes to understand and tolerate one another. After a few months of carefully controlled mixing, they're ready to admit that people with a different kind of hereditary make-up have just as good a right to exist as they have.'
(235)

Here we find Huxley expressing in fictional form the same argument he had made elsewhere in his non-fiction, such as in his *Human Situation* lectures: that knowledge of Sheldon's system can aid an attitude of tolerance. Thus, despite the potential dangers of such classification systems, notably their misuse if overly simplified and used for reductive pigeonholing of individuals, or to label individuals as 'other', Huxley sees Sheldon's theory as a tool to aid empathy and understanding of others, and to inculcate acceptance and respect of human difference. In this novel Huxley once again borrows Sheldon's exact vocabulary to describe the three types, his language in the above passage using the same words as

Sheldon's descriptions of the twenty most central traits of each somatotype in *The Varieties of Temperament*. For example, when discussing what Sheldon would define as cerebrotonia, Huxley uses the word 'over-responsive', just as Sheldon used the word 'overresponse'. Huxley writes 'introverted', just as Sheldon listed 'introversion'. To describe the second type, Huxley uses the phrase 'indiscriminate sociability', and Sheldon had written of viscerotonics 'indiscriminate amiability' and 'sociophilia'. Of the third type, Huxley singles out the qualities of 'aggressiveness' and 'love of power', echoing Sheldon's use of the words 'aggressiveness' and 'love of dominating, lust for power' when discussing somatonia.

Thus Sheldon's theory underlies how children are educated, the 'controlled mixing' based upon Sheldon's principles aiding the instilling of social skills and moral values, and the somatotype diagnoses affecting students' future education. Secondly, the theory is itself a subject on the syllabus, even for very young children. Huxley utilises animal metaphors to represent Sheldon's classifications, as Pala's simple way of introducing Sheldon's theory to children. Mrs Marayan, the Principal of New Rothamsted school in Pala, explains thus:

'In the lower forms we do the teaching in terms of analogies with familiar animals. Cats like to be by themselves. Sheep like being together. Martens are fierce and can't be tamed. Guinea-pigs are gentle and friendly. Are you a cat person or a sheep person, a guinea-pig person or a marten person? Talk about it in animal parables, and even very small children can understand the fact of human diversity and the need for mutual forbearance, mutual forgiveness.'
(235)

Huxley once again demonstrates his tendency to simplify Sheldon's theory as one of 'types': ' "Are you a cat person or a sheep person, a guinea-pig person or a marten person?" ', despite the fact that Huxley insists a number of times in his non-fiction that Sheldon is not writing about 'types' at all. Here Huxley uses *four* animal types, rather than three. Both the gregarious sheep people and the gentle and friendly guinea-pig people represent qualities of Sheldon's viscerotonic type, whilst the somatonic and cerebrotonic types are represented by just one animal, martens and cats respectively.

Older Palanese children are introduced to the *Bhagavad-Gita* and thus also to Huxley's connection of Sheldon's ideas to Vedanta, linking somatotypes and religious paths. Menon states: "Sheep-people and guinea-pig people love ritual and public ceremonies and revivalistic emotion; their temperamental preferences can be directed into the Way of Devotion" (235). (Sheldon writes of the viscerotonic's 'love of [. . .] ceremony' and that the viscerotonic 'really participates emotionally' in 'sacrament and ceremony' (VT, 36), and has 'no emotional inhibition' (VT, 44).) Menon continues: "Cat-people like to be alone, and their private broodings can become the Way of Self-Knowledge. Marten-people want to *do* things, and the problem is how to transform their driving aggressiveness into the Way of Disinterested Action" (235). Once again, Huxley's distaste for somatotonics is revealed: the marten-people are the only group whose instincts are described as a 'problem'.

Susila also discusses how Palanese "[b]oys and girls are specifically taught what to expect of people whose temperament and physique are very different from their own" (96). However, this does not mean that there are never communication problems between people of extremely different temperaments. This may be because, as "sometimes happens", the "lessons don't seem to have much effect", or it may be because "in some cases the psychological distance between the people involved is really too great to be bridged" (96). Thus on the one hand, Sheldon's concepts give Huxley increased faith in the possibilities of education to encourage greater tolerance and understanding of others, as they offer both an acceptance of, and a more precise understanding of, human difference. Yet on the other hand, Huxley's belief in Sheldon's ideas leads him to view the differences between certain individuals as being insurmountable barriers to effective interaction. Thus there is always the tendency to view those of another physique and temperament as alien and other. It is possible, then, that such a system also has a potentially divisive influence, inculcating a sense of difference, distance and detachment from those physically and temperamentally different to oneself. Once again, Huxley's subscription to Sheldon's concepts informs his belief in the

difficulties of human communication, reinforcing his view that humans live in their own ‘island universes’ (*DP*, 4). Susila provides the example of her cerebrotonic father and viscerotonic mother (although these terms are not used at this point): ‘ “A bustling, cheerful, outgoing woman married to a man so fastidiously introverted that she got on his nerves all the time” ’ (96). Thus a Sheldonian education, whilst helpful, is not presented as a cure-all for the problems of temperamental variation within society.

Palanese society uses Sheldon’s ideas as a preventative measure, to avert social problems. In Chapter 9, Dr MacPhail uses Sheldon’s language when he states that children in Pala go through a process of ‘ “somatotyping” ’ at ‘ “between four and a half and five” ’ years old (172), which helps to identify potential delinquents. (Delinquency was a major theme of Sheldon’s work, discussed in *The Varieties of Temperament* (*VT*, 255) and in his book *The Varieties of Delinquent Youth* (1949)). Thus somatotyping, diagnosing a person’s Sheldonian mind-body type, is presented in Pala not just as a tool for understanding, but as a system that can be acted upon, leading to practical treatments, in many cases chemical ones, such as, disturbingly, ‘ “three pink capsules a day before meals” ’ (172) for some of the potential trouble-makers. Western approaches to delinquency, such as ‘ “sermons” ’, ‘ “therapy” ’, and ‘ “prison” ’, are, according to MacPhail, ineffective because they do not consider the body as well as the mind, they do not consider ‘ “biochemistry” ’ or ‘ “endocrine disbalance” ’ (172); they consider the environmental influences of ‘ “culture, economics and the family” ’, but not the ‘ “built-in pattern” ’ of a person’s physiology and temperament (170). It can be seen here, and at other times in *Island*, that Huxley’s belief in Sheldon’s system strengthens his certainty that behavioural problems can have physical, biochemical causes and thus medicinal, pharmacological solutions. As well as the ‘ “three pink capsules” ’ for delinquents mentioned above, criminals get ‘ “medical treatment and a course of *moksha*-medicine experiences” ’ (176), and criminal behaviour can be solved by a ‘ “local panel of medical and mycomystical experts” ’ (177).

Palanese culture possesses the concept of the ‘“Muscle People” ’ (172), a type of person which tallies entirely with Sheldon’s mesomorphic somatotonic. Vijaya sees Stalin as this type, ‘“predestined, by his shape, to be an extravert” ’ (173). Here is the Sheldonian view that bodily shape determines personality. Vijaya distinguishes, like Sheldon, between the two types of extravert which Sheldon would term the viscerotonic and somatotonic, although Vijaya does not use these terms. Stalin was ‘“not one of your soft, round, spill-the-beans extraverts who pine for indiscriminate togetherness. No – the trampling, driving extravert” ’ (173). Vijaya’s words are infused with Sheldon’s language, such as his description of the first type of extravert as being ‘soft, round’, recalling Sheldon’s description of endomorphy as ‘roundness and softness of body’ (*VHP*, 37), and his use of the phrase ‘indiscriminate togetherness’, which recalls one of Sheldon’s central traits of the viscerotonic, ‘indiscriminate amiability’. The ‘Muscle Man’ type (173), described as ‘broad-shouldered’ (174), which is a central trait of Sheldon’s mesomorph (*VHP*, 39), ‘“always feels impelled to Do Something” ’ (173), like Sheldon’s somatotonic, who has a ‘need of action’. The ‘Muscle Man’ is ‘“never inhibited by doubts or qualms” ’ (173), just as Sheldon describes the somatotonic as having ‘freedom from doubt’ (*VT*, 64) and as being ‘impeded but little by hesitations, misgivings, or considerations of alternatives and reservations’ (*VT*, 64). Neither is the ‘Muscle Man’ inhibited ‘“by sympathy or sensibility” ’ (173), reflecting the somatotonic’s ‘psychological callousness’, one of the twenty most important somatotonic traits as listed by Sheldon. Vijaya uses several of these twenty somatotonic traits to describe the ‘Muscle Man’ type, including being ‘“too fond of power” ’ (173), just as the somatotonic has a ‘lust for power’, and being ‘“ruthlessly busy” ’ (173), just as Sheldon has ‘ruthlessness’ on his list. Once again, the word ‘temperament’ is also used (173). Thus, although Sheldon’s somatotype terms are not used in this passage, it is nevertheless full of Sheldonian references and language.

Again, it is the mesomorphic somatotonics that are problematic for Huxley. Vijaya speaks of ‘“the love of power and domination that goes with this kind of

physique” ’ (175). According to Dr MacPhail, the potentially corrupting influence of power cannot ‘ “be solved by good social arrangements” alone because it ‘ “has its roots in anatomy and biochemistry and temperament” ’ (176). Pala’s solution to the problem of the ‘Muscle Men’ (174) is three-pronged. Firstly, Pala’s use of ‘ “Mutual Adoption” ’, interminglings of ‘ “fifteen to twenty-five” ’ families (98), as outlined by Susila in Chapter 7, makes it difficult for them to bully their families, and the decentralised political governance prevents them, according to Vijaya, from being able to ‘ “domineer on any larger scale” ’ (175). Secondly, the ‘Muscle Men’ are given physical tasks that ‘ “canalize” ’ and ‘ “deflect” ’ their love of dominion ‘ “away from people and on to things” ’. They are given ‘ “all kinds of difficult tasks to perform – strenuous and violent tasks that exercise their muscles and satisfy their craving for domination - but satisfy it at nobody’s expense and in ways that are either harmless or positively useful” ’ (175), such as ‘ “wood-chopping” ’ (235). The ‘Muscle Men’ also do a lot of rock climbing (177), which, as mentioned when discussing Dugald earlier, fits with Sheldon’s description of the favoured activities of somatotonics. Vijaya states that ‘ “rock climbing’s a branch of applied ethics; it’s another preventive substitute for bullying” ’ (181). Dr MacPhail adds that if you are ‘ “naturally aggressive” ’, then ‘ “work off your aggression on a precipice” ’ (182). As with the previous examples, Huxley is imagining the possibilities if a society recognised Sheldon’s work, and used it to diagnose its children and to prevent and treat social problems. He envisages what some of those preventative measures might be, based upon Sheldon’s underlying principles. Thus Sheldon’s ideas are integral to Huxley’s utopia, and indeed are fuelling Huxley’s creative process, and the content of the novel.

The other Palanese method for dealing with the ‘Muscle Men’ is to train them in being ‘ “aware and sensitive” ’, ‘ “to enjoy the commonplaces of everyday existence” ’ (175). They thus find so much pleasure in this that they do not need ‘ “the pleasure of being the boss” ’ (175). Although this training suggests the teachings of Buddhism, it also recalls Anthony Beavis’s praising of his Alexanderist technique in *Eyeless in Gaza*, because it caused ‘tiresome non-

existence' to become 'absorbingly interesting reality' (*EG*, 212-13). The fact that Alexanderist ideas are also a part of Palanese education (e.g. 161-62) suggests that in the case of the problems of the 'Muscle Man', Huxley is *combining* the ideas of both Alexander and Sheldon: Alexanderist mind-body lessons aid those whose body causes them to possess a potentially destructive personality.

Island shows once again Huxley's negative portrayal of somatonia. The enemies of Pala and its philosophies are often portrayed as at least partially somatonic in nature. Colonel Dipa is an extreme example of pure somatonia: he is a leader and a war-monger, who loves 'glory and power' and enjoys 'the pleasures of bullying' (120). The Rani and Murugun, two of the least sympathetic characters, also possess, as mentioned, somatonic traits. However, *Island* is the first Huxley novel where at least some mesomorphic somatonic characters are presented in a positive manner, such as the character of Vijaya. The reason for this difference is that *Island* is set in an ideal community, where, as discussed above, the mesomorphic somatonics are given the opportunity to channel their aggression into beneficial, or at least non-destructive, activities. Nevertheless, the very fact that Pala needs to have systems in place to control the impulses of somatonics demonstrates that Huxley still viewed this somatotype as dangerous.

The Palanese often use artificial insemination to 'enrich the family with an entirely new physique and temperament' (213), as Pala has 'a central bank of superior stocks of every variety of physique and temperament' (215). Thus Huxley demonstrates that the Palanese believe that temperament, as well as physique, is genetically determined, and once again, the language of Sheldon's books is used. Pala's procreational methods, including the distasteful phrase 'superior stocks', confirm Huxley's continued interest in eugenics. This was an interest which, as previously discussed, Sheldon shared, and which Sheldon, through his emphasis in his theories on the inherited qualities of human beings, helped to reinforce in Huxley's thought, mirroring both of them in controversy. However, although Sheldon's theory of mind-body types arises from the same emphasis on inherited difference as their mutual interest in eugenics, Huxley never

implies that any one of Sheldon's types, or the qualities of any of the types, should be bred out of the population. All three somatotypes are present in Pala, and all are presented as beneficial to society. The question of how to deal with the power-hungry somatotonics is discussed in terms of how they can be usefully employed, not how they can be eliminated, as outlined earlier. Thus Huxley's depiction of artificial insemination in *Island* displays no bias towards any one physique or temperament, and all three somatotypes are encouraged. Indeed, Huxley depicts Shanta, an ectomorphic cerebrotonic, and Vijaya, a mesomorphic somatonic, using artificial insemination to have an endomorphic viscerotonic child (213). Shanta states that she and Vijaya have chosen genetic stock that is ' "a lot more endomorphic and viscerotonic" ' than the rest of the family (213). Here is another example which demonstrates that in *Island*, Huxley has created a society where Sheldon's theory is not only universally accepted, but *applied*. Because of a belief in Sheldon's system, a belief that personality is to a large extent inborn, artificial insemination is seen as a way of creating the opportunity to produce families composed of more varied physiques and temperaments, which is seen as 'educative for everybody concerned' (213). As well as counteracting a smaller gene pool, it is seen as an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of those of other somatotypes, increasing empathy and tolerance.

However, the dangers of a Sheldonian belief that a person's physique determines their personality are clearly that it could lead to the judgement of humans on the basis of their appearance, as well as providing a philosophy that creates the possibility for citizens to be pigeonholed into certain roles in society based upon another's assessment of their 'type'. How much control do the Palanese have over their roles in society? Or is this another form of *Brave New World*, where citizens have pre-defined duties informed by their mind-bodies? A belief in Sheldon's theory could lead to harmful pre-judgements of individuals, such as the notion, mentioned earlier, that certain physical characteristics of the ectomorphic cerebrotonic can be equated with intelligence, or the view that anyone with a muscular, mesomorphic physique is a potentially dangerous somatonic bully.

Thus in Huxley's last published novel, the influence of Sheldon is highly apparent, twenty-five years on from Huxley's first endorsement of Sheldon in *Ends and Means*. It is particularly significant that Huxley uses Sheldon's ideas extensively in *Island*, as this work is Huxley's presentation of his ideal society. In this novel Huxley demonstrates in fictional form not only his belief in Sheldon's ideas, but his belief in their potential for beneficial practical utilisation. The novel's utopian nature allows Huxley to fully reveal how integral he believed an understanding and application of Sheldon's theory to be in the creation of a harmonious society, in ways that are at times highly controversial.

Huxley also refers to Sheldon's ideas in *Literature and Science* published the following year, the year of his death.¹⁰ Until the end of his life, Sheldon's ideas were one of the cornerstones of Huxley's thought, and, as this thesis has shown, their influence on both his fiction and non-fiction works was immense. As well as affecting Huxley's construction of his fictional characters, Huxley's Sheldonian world-view informed the philosophy of his fiction and non-fiction as regards free will and determinism, nature and nurture, psychology, literature, history, politics and religion. Sheldon provided Huxley with a specific lens through which to view himself, other individuals, and human relations within society.

¹⁰ For example, *Literature and Science* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), p. 82.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this thesis provides a contribution to the understanding of the influences that helped to shape the works of Huxley by examining how Alexander's and Sheldon's specific conceptions of human beings as 'psycho-physical wholes'¹ were profoundly influential upon Huxley's writings. The thesis as a whole thus provides an important contribution to the study of Huxley's conception of the relationship between mind and body, and the works he wrote which were impacted by this conception. The case being made in this thesis is that these influences do not merely manifest as incidental echoes of these men's ideas in Huxley's writings, and that their impact goes beyond his fictional characters expressing the ideas of these men in intellectual conversations. This thesis establishes that Huxley's entire philosophical world-view, including his conception, understanding, and presentation of character and character development, and his views on an ideal world, are fundamentally affected by Alexander and then Sheldon.

For example, Chapter 2 showed how the development of Anthony Beavis's character in *Eyeless in Gaza* is depicted in an Alexanderist manner. Chapters 6 and 8 revealed the extent to which Huxley's conception and presentation of character was being driven by Sheldon's ideas, most notably in *Time Must Have a Stop* but also in other novels such as *Ape and Essence* and *Island*. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 8, *Island* demonstrates that Huxley believed a knowledge of the ideas of both Alexander and Sheldon, sometimes in combination, to be fundamental to a correctly functioning society, by presenting a utopia which utilises both men's concepts. Chapters 3, 5, 7 and 8 revealed how an examination of Huxley's non-fiction supports this thesis's assertions regarding the influence of these men upon Huxley's fiction, as Huxley's essays and lectures not only overtly endorse these men, but

¹ *Letters*, p. 516, (25 March 1945).

often express in an explicit manner the same Alexanderist and Sheldonian ideas that are conveyed in his novels through character and narrative.

Take the example of *Ends and Means*. When Huxley expresses in *Ends and Means* the Alexanderist conviction that ‘if we can learn the art of conscious inhibition on the physical level, it will help us to acquire and practise the same art on the emotional and intellectual levels’ (*EM*, 222), he makes a point that he had expressed in *Eyeless in Gaza* through the transformation of Anthony Beavis, as he learns mind-body control from Miller, and subsequently begins to more effectively control his behaviour. When Huxley writes in *Ends and Means* that viscerotonics’ and somatotonics’ inherent natures make it very difficult for them to experience mystical ‘ultimate reality’ (*EM*, 235), this is the same point he presents in *Time Must Have a Stop* by portraying the somatotonic John Barnack and his viscerotonic brother Eustace as defiantly anti-mystical in the face of the cerebrotonic Rontini’s occult philosophy. Thus an investigation of Alexander and Sheldon’s influence on Huxley’s non-fiction further reveals the ways in which Huxley’s intellectual and philosophical interests and convictions fed his novels of ideas.

In examining the influence of Alexander upon Huxley’s fiction, *Eyeless in Gaza* is undoubtedly the key text, with the guru-like Miller acting as an Alexander mouthpiece, and Miller’s Alexanderist lessons and ideas producing changes in the behaviour of the central character, Beavis. Alexander’s influence is less noticeable on Huxley’s subsequent novels, but Propter in *After Many a Summer* does express Alexanderist ideas, such as the importance of bodily posture. Huxley’s final novel *Island* represents the most clear endorsement of Alexander in Huxley’s fiction since *Eyeless in Gaza*, unsurprisingly since Huxley is presenting his ideal society and the techniques and tools it uses for mental and physical well-being. Thus *Island* shows Huxley’s continuing subscription to Alexander’s ideas almost thirty years after he was first introduced to them. Huxley’s non-fiction demonstrates that Huxley was committed to endorsing the Alexander Technique throughout his life, but it also reveals, as did *Island*, that Huxley’s conception of the Alexander Technique, and its similarity to, and compatibility with, other philosophies and techniques, differed

from Alexander's own views. Whilst Huxley's use of Sheldon's ideas remained, for the most part, true to Sheldon's expression of those concepts in his own writings, Huxley's use of Alexander's ideas revealed their divergent philosophical positions, as Huxley integrated Alexander's concepts into a mystical world-view which Alexander himself rejected.

Huxley shows his interest in Sheldon's system in his writings of the late 1930s, but it is with the publication of Sheldon's *The Varieties of Human Physique* and *The Varieties of Temperament* in the early 1940s that Huxley's use of Sheldon's ideas becomes more systematic, more complex, and more wide-ranging, both in his novels, such as *Time Must Have a Stop*, and his non-fiction, such as *The Perennial Philosophy*. Whilst *Time Must Have a Stop* represents the peak of Huxley's use of Sheldon's ideas in his fiction, in terms of the use of Sheldonian ideas in his characters' discussions and in their characterisation, all of Huxley's later novels reveal Sheldon's influence in their characterisation, and some, such as *The Genius and the Goddess*, and particularly *Island*, feature characters expressing Sheldonian views. *Island* depicts a society that believes in and applies Sheldon's theories, as it does Alexander's. Huxley also uses Sheldon's ideas in his historical analyses, such as in *Themes and Variations* and *The Devils of Loudun*. Furthermore, Sheldon's controversial views contributed to Huxley's fears that humanity was undergoing genetic deterioration, and thus reinforced Huxley's interest in eugenics, as can be seen, for example, in *Brave New World Revisited*.

Whilst the influence of Alexander, along with other influences such as pacifism and Indian religion, produced the most startling change of attitude to occur in the development of Huxley's writings, as discussed in Chapter 2, inculcating his belief in the potential for positive self-change, Sheldon's influence is the greater on Huxley's fiction, his ideas a pervasive influence upon the characterisation of Huxley's later novels. Sheldon's influence is also the more wide-ranging, as although both Alexander and Sheldon influenced Huxley's perception of the human mind-body and its interaction with other mind-bodies, of free will and determinism, and of nature and nurture, Huxley applied Sheldon's ideas to all areas of human

life, as discussed throughout Part 2, including psychology, literature, history, politics and religion.

George Woodcock, in his *Dawn and the Darkest Hour*, offers some interesting comments on Huxley's use of others' ideas. In a discussion of *Proper Studies*, he writes:

Huxley has felt the need to turn his mind to serious matters, but he has not found a personal direction, and in these miscellaneous essays on psychology, education, eugenics and politics he is rarely his own man, relying on other writers for his theories. There was a certain eccentricity about Huxley's choice of masters; Pareto is a good example. He was not a first-rate or even a very original thinker, but he had a central idea that helped to crystallize the drift of Huxley's thought at the time, and so his importance was exaggerated. The pattern was to be repeated; Huxley continually reinforced his own thoughts with the authority of men who intellectually and as writers were often his inferiors, and so over the years we watch a strange procession of gurus which includes Pareto, W. H. Sheldon, F. M. Alexander [. . .] Observing them, one senses a Peacockian intelligence at work, selecting each to personify a special idea that had been added to Huxley's eclectic philosophy, until in the end one suspects that, instead of being the pupil, Huxley is really, in life as in his novels, the puppet-master, and that his apparent deference to his teachers conceals the fact that he is annexing them rather than accepting their suzerainty.²

It is certainly true that Huxley's tendency to 'rely on other writers for his theories' can be found throughout his work. Woodcock's emphasis on the fact that the ideas which Huxley adopts often conform to his pre-existing preoccupations is true of both Alexander and Sheldon, with Alexander's ideas fitting into Huxley's keen interest in the mind-body relationship and educational theories, and Sheldon's ideas also expressing Huxley's pre-existing interest in the mind-body connection, as well as his lifelong interest in human types (see Chapters 1 and 5).

Woodcock's contention that Huxley is the 'puppet-master' as opposed to the 'pupil' is true to some extent. In the case of Alexander and Sheldon, Huxley did have genuine admiration and respect for both of them, as is made clear in both his letters and his non-fiction, as has been discussed in this thesis. However, in the case of Alexander, it is clear that Huxley saw the Alexander Technique as only *part* of

² Woodcock, p. 116.

the solution to humanity's problems. As this thesis has shown, this view can be found throughout Huxley's writings on the subject, and is in sharp contrast to Alexander's insistence that his Technique provided the sole hope for humanity. Take the letter Huxley wrote to Margaret Isherwood in 1957, referenced earlier, where he writes: 'It was a pity that old FM had such a one-track mind. For of course there is no panacea, and proper use of the self must be combined with proper diet, proper psychology etc'.³ The affectionate but slightly patronising tone here certainly supports Woodcock's presentation of Huxley as the intellectual superior of his 'guru'. A reading of Alexander's writings will also confirm Huxley to be the more gifted writer, as Woodcock also suggests.

Huxley is indeed 'annexing' rather than 'accepting [. . .] suzerainty', in the sense that he uses Alexander's and Sheldon's ideas for his own ends and to advance his own preoccupations, in both his fiction and non-fiction, in the context of many other ideas which he believes to be important. But his presentation of his attitude towards Alexander and Sheldon is not one of 'apparent deference', but merely praise and respect, both being apparent in his writings on these men; the admiration of one thinker for another, despite those thinkers remaining controversial and cult figures, rather than any acceptance of Alexander and Sheldon's intellectual superiority. Huxley was never comfortable with deference to, or worship of, any idea or person, as he was too aware of the dangers of doing so. For all his adoption of others' ideas, Huxley had always distrusted the concept of the 'guru' in the devotional sense.⁴

This thesis has also been an examination of a writer's attempts to integrate philosophical, scientific, or pseudo-scientific, ideas into fictional form. Huxley's attempts to use these men's ideas in his fiction, as with many other ideas and philosophies, raises aesthetic questions. Huxley sometimes effectively managed to express these ideas by showing, rather than telling, such as Beavis's transformation as he practises Miller's Alexanderist technique in *Eyeless in Gaza*, or the

³ *Selected Letters*, p. 465, (9 February 1957).

⁴ For example, see *Letters*, p. 917, p. 963.

Sheldonian depiction of the contrasting inner lives of the characters in *Time Must Have a Stop*. However, from the mid-1930s onwards, too much telling entered Huxley's fiction, stemming from a newfound, specific philosophical position of which the ideas of both Alexander and Sheldon formed a part. When Huxley uses his characters as mouthpieces for these men's ideas, such as Miller preaching Alexanderism in *Eyeless in Gaza*, or Eustace Barnack Sheldonian types in *Time Must Have a Stop*, Huxley's urge to express the ideas of these men in his fiction is contributing to the overly didactic nature of his later novels, and his tendency to conceptualise characters as merely vehicles for the ideas which they express. (Whilst characters expressing ideas had been an integral feature even in Huxley's earliest novels, didacticism was avoided by Huxley's lack of a coherent philosophical position from which to judge the competing opinions of his characters.)

This thesis provides further evidence of Huxley's attempts at fusing ideas, characters, and narrative, where the characters not only speak of ideas, but their very personalities, and the events that lead from them, are conveying the ideas to which Huxley subscribed. This is the case in *Eyeless in Gaza*, where Beavis's transformation, which fuels the narrative of the novel, is driven by Alexanderist principles, and in *Time Must Have a Stop* or *Ape and Essence*, where the characters, and their behaviours which thus drive the narrative, are living embodiments of Sheldon's theories. In Huxley's novels, characters and narratives have a tendency to be subservient to, indeed to exist to serve, the ideas and philosophies which are being expressed, and the influence of Alexander and Sheldon on Huxley's works certainly contributed to this tendency.

This thesis has also been an examination of an instance of a writer-intellectual being influenced by unorthodox ideas and integrating them into his work. As such it provides a detailed look at a wider phenomenon that was, as mentioned in the introduction, not uncommon during the interwar and post-war period, as intellectuals, for better or worse, explored alternatives to the prevailing beliefs and systems of thought. Huxley's use of Alexander's and Sheldon's ideas in

his works may be regarded as a mixed blessing: at times fuelling thoughtful, interestingly iconoclastic discussion or effective characterisation, at other times resulting in overly schematic characterisation and contributing to an overly didactic style that exacerbated the aesthetic problems in Huxley's later works. What is indubitable is that, as this thesis has shown, Huxley's writings would have been very different had it not been for the influence of these two men.

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