

MADNESS, BADNESS, SADNESS:  
ALDOUS HUXLEY AND THE SHIFTING  
SHADOW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

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A thesis submitted to  
The University of Birmingham  
towards the degree of  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English  
College of Arts and Law  
The University of Birmingham

January 2011

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**Full name** (surname first): Sidaway, Adam James

**School/Department:** English

**Full title of thesis/dissertation:** Madness, Badness, Sadness: Aldous Huxley and the Shifting Shadow of Psychoanalysis

**Degree:** MPhil (B) Literature and Modernity

**Date of submission:** 31/01/11

Date of award of degree (**leave blank**):

**Abstract** (not to exceed 200 words - any continuation sheets must contain the author's full name and full title of the thesis/dissertation):

The influence of Freud on Huxley's fiction has been frequently understated in criticism. Examining key periods both in history and in Huxley's life, this thesis reassesses the long-held critical belief that Freud was frequently dismissed by Huxley as 'bunk', instead proposing that psychoanalysis was in fact one of Huxley's major and most enduring intellectual obsessions. Whilst engaging with some of his major novels, this thesis is also concerned with the short stories and novellas that have received rather less critical attention, collectively revealing both the depth and nature of Huxley's obsession with the concepts of psychoanalysis. This thesis is a radical revision of this contested facet of criticism, proposing that Freud and psychoanalysis were never the subject of satirical attack, but were instead weapons in the satirical artillery against a post-war society that grew increasingly neurotic.

Technological and economic progress seems to have been accompanied by psychological regress. The incidence of neuroses and psychoses is apparently on the increase. Still larger hospitals, yet kinder treatment of patients, more psychiatrists and better pills — we need them all and need them urgently. But they will not solve our problem.

Aldous Huxley – ‘Madness, Badness, Sadness’

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks are accorded to Professor Steve Ellis of the University of Birmingham for being everything one could hope for in a supervisor. Steve's patience and enthusiasm along with his comprehensive academic and pastoral support has been invaluable throughout the research and writing of this thesis.

I would like to thank my parents for the sacrifices they have made in what have been difficult times, and Miriam for inspiring confidence and belief during periods when such qualities were in short supply. Thanks also go to my closely knit network of family and friends for their encouragement and support.

Last but by no means least; I would like to thank Louie for the long hours he has spent sitting with me while writing this thesis. Though he may not know it, his contribution has been immeasurable.

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## Introduction

Though *Brave New World* is a novel that will almost certainly preserve Aldous Huxley from the ignominy of anonymity, Marcel Proust's claim that 'he occupies an unassailable position in the English literary world of today' (cited in Watt 1975, 8) is one that seems to grow more dubious with every passing year. Critical bibliographies such as *The Year's Work in English Studies* catalogue the countless tomes dedicated to Huxley's contemporaries. Writers such as Conrad, Joyce, Orwell, Woolf, Lawrence and Eliot all continue to enjoy a buoyant critical heritage, yet Huxley is a name that features rather less frequently as the subject of fresh critical enquiries in the last decade. Aside from a handful of sporadically published essays in literary journals, and a couple of biographical accounts, the evidence suggests that Huxley can no longer compete in a literary market he once criticised for being saturated with 'diplomas and doctorates' who are dedicated to studying 'the insignificant aspects of a good writer's work or else the work, not yet explored, because universally deemed not worth exploring, of a bad writer' (Huxley 1947, 109). The fact that Huxley's assessment of criticism is still relatively accurate makes the critical aridity all the more confusing. Though his status as a 'good' writer is universally accepted, the claim that he is a figure about whom there is no longer anything significant to say is more difficult to refute, given the ever-dwindling volume of criticism.

However, Huxley's cryptic attitude towards Freud and psychoanalysis has and continues to prove sufficiently significant so as to warrant a good deal of critical contention. Remaining faithful to Huxley's own assertions on the subject, the argument that he was, and remained, staunchly anti-Freudian has been upheld by many of his most influential critics. Sybille Bedford's two-part biography faithfully reproduces many of Huxley's misgivings about psychoanalysis during the 1960s, and his comprehensive and vociferous anti-Freudianism whilst living in America has

galvanized the anti-Freudian position in criticism of his works more generally. Huxley's most diligent and renowned advocate, Jerome Meckier, whose recently published collected essays on Huxley (exceeding five hundred pages in their entirety) have further solidified his reputation as the most prominent self-proclaimed 'Huxleyan' to date, joins Huxley in his apparent dismissal of Freud. Taking his lead from Huxley's own rants about the flawed methodology of psychoanalysis in the 1960s, Meckier's essay 'Our Ford our Freud and the Behaviorist Conspiracy of *Brave New World*' (1978) represents a sustained attack on Freud and dismisses psychoanalysis as being no more significant than a satirical punch bag, as in statements like: 'Huxley was expressing his lifelong disrespect for the unsound philosophy of one of the modern era's false gods' (Meckier 2006, 131).

Though Meckier's procedure, quoting Huxley's cynical indictments of psychoanalysis in the 1960s to bolster an anti-Freudian reading of *Brave New World*, which was written almost thirty years before, is at best questionable, other critics of the Huxleyan school have been inclined to agree with the conclusions arrived at by Meckier. Vibbert, in a more recent contribution, maintains the anti-Freudian trajectory of Meckier's earlier essay, opening her own reading of *Brave New World* with a declaration of support: 'I concur with Meckier's claim that Huxley intends the novel to be a satiric disparagement of Freudianism' (Vibbert 2006, 133). Similarly, whilst Thody cannot deny the biographical significance of psychoanalysis, seeing the Oedipus complex as central to Huxley's relationship with his father (Thody 1973, 17), he maintains the anti-Freudian stance Huxley so keenly promoted in later life. Paraphrasing Huxley's own arguments, to which Thody remains faithful, he contends that:

The Freudians are wrong because they take into account only one aspect of human physiology, and base their conclusions upon only one kind of evidence: that which emanates from the supposed working of the unconscious in a primarily sexual context. (1973, 54)

In a comprehensive book-length example of brilliant scholarship, Firchow in *The End of Utopia* (1973) dispatches Freud in an uncharacteristically brief flash. In the chapter which bears

his name ('The Future of Science and Our Freud'), Freud's presence in *Brave New World* strikes Firchow as 'surprising' (Firchow 1973, 47). Firchow's 'surprise' no doubt springs from the irreconcilable inconsistencies between *Brave New World*, a novel complicit in the theories of psychoanalysis, and the anti-Freudian diatribes of the 60s, but the fact that Firchow's 'surprise' remains unelaborated and unexplained throughout the text is disconcerting. The apparent snubbing of Freud as an influence on Huxley, all the more damning than a full blown attack, is not an uncommon phenomenon in criticism: Ferns (1980), Dunaway (1989), Barfoot (2001) and Birnbaum (1972) all carefully sidestep Freud in their book-length studies.

Not all have been inclined to take Huxley's carefully engineered anti-Freudianism at face value however: there are those who have found such a one dimensional approach to a polymath author unsatisfactory. In line with such sentiments, Charles M. Holmes adopts a more perceptive interpretation of how Freud and Huxley relate in Huxley's novels. Like Meckier he admits 'Huxley rejected Freud', but suggests that 'Given Freud's emphasis on sex, and Huxley's near-obsession with it, the rejection implies unconscious resistance incompletely understood' (Holmes 1970, 147). *The Dark Historic Page: Social Satire and Historicism in the Novels of Aldous Huxley*, published in 1982 by Robert S Baker, was the first critical work to announce Freud and psychoanalysis as the prime cog in Huxley's novelistic machinery. Moving far beyond the tentative assertions of earlier critics, Baker boldly claims that 'The Freudian family romance, despite Huxley's repeatedly expressed misgivings concerning Freud's emphasis on erotic behaviour, is one of the principal satirical conventions of his social satire' (Baker 1982, 142). However, the prevailing sentiment in this field of study is one of confusion at the apparent contradiction between Huxley's repeated condemnation of Freud and the obvious indebtedness to psychoanalysis in both essays and fiction. As Baker concedes:

Huxley's repeated disparagement of Freud remains a vexing problem. His essays contain numerous references to covert psychological behaviour; indeed, the existence of an 'unconscious' level of irrational and appetitive energy is a

persisting theme in them as well as an integral aspect of characterization in the novels. (1982, 112)

It is not until recently that the ‘vexing problem’ posed by Huxley’s ambivalent attitude towards psychoanalysis has been the subject of more thorough critical examinations. Buchanan’s recent and valuable contribution ‘Oedipus in Dystopia, Freud and Lawrence in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*’ (2002) represents an attempt to re-evaluate the relationship between Huxley and Freud by highlighting the fact that in *Brave New World* ‘Huxley seems to have been using the “Oedipus complex” not as a target for mockery ... but as a weapon in his satirical attack on the mores of modern life and on its utopian fantasies’ (Buchanan 2002, 89). Despite reaching the conclusion that the role of psychoanalysis within *Brave New World* is a positive one, Buchanan remains aware of the difficulty of diagnosing Huxley’s attitude towards Freud in the 1930s; summarising the critical conundrum, he acknowledges that ‘little consensus has emerged, partly because of Huxley’s apparent ambivalence about Freud’s ideas and his growing reluctance, after he had written the novel, to admit that he had ever been in agreement with Freud’s conception of human nature (2002, 75) .

It is most likely due to the apparently contradictory and complex nature of Huxley’s relationship with Freud that discussions relating to psychoanalysis in Huxley scholarship have tended to distort and oversimplify critical dialogues by relating Huxley’s overtly anti-Freudian statements to much earlier works like *Brave New World*. Implying that this area of Huxley scholarship remains underdeveloped, Golovacheva, speaking at *The Third International Aldous Huxley Symposium*, argues: ‘his radical views of Freudism have been analysed by Peter Firchow, Jerome Meckier, Robert Baker and James Hull. Still I believe the discussion can and should be continued’ (2004, 129).

In this thesis I intend to contribute to the hugely divergent yet largely underdeveloped critical discourse relating to Huxley’s attitude towards Freud and the impact of psychoanalytic

ideas on his fiction. Though the subject of Freud has evidently piqued interest in Huxley criticism, it has rarely warranted more than a cursory glance. Primarily, it is the intention of this thesis to justify psychoanalysis' place amongst Huxley's major and most enduring intellectual preoccupations. Psychoanalysis has been frequently overlooked or disparaged in criticism as only a minor target of satirical attack in Huxley's work; this thesis aims to prove how it was much more than this, and grew to be one of Huxley's greatest intellectual obsessions. In turn, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of Huxley's duplicitous, mystifying and constantly evolving attitudes towards Freud will be reached through a thorough dissection of his works. I would contend that a good deal of confusion and disagreement relating to this facet of Huxley scholarship has been the result of many critics drawing conclusions having analysed only one text (namely, as has been illustrated, *Brave New World*), often out of context. However, this thesis will hopefully achieve more substantiated and rigorously tested conclusions through studying Huxley's works both as a whole and in context. As Bowering contends:

Misunderstanding has arisen from the failure to see the individual novels as part of a larger whole. As I have suggested, Huxley's work, fiction and non-fiction, is most satisfactory when viewed as a synthesis. None of the major novels, with the possible exception of *Island*, provides a comprehensive picture of Huxley's beliefs, and a great deal of adverse criticism has resulted from the study of his novels in isolation. (1968, 4)

This thesis will take the form of a synthesis, with each chapter scrutinizing key periods in Huxley's life. The title of this thesis, *Madness, Badness, Sadness*, is significant in that each word adequately represents the periods with which this thesis is concerned. In the opening chapter, Huxley's burgeoning reputation as a potent social satirist will be examined alongside his growing interest in psychoanalysis during the 1920s. The prevailing argument of this chapter is that Huxley's psychologically troubled youth left an indelible mark on his social satire, and psychoanalysis served as both a potent satirical muse and as a painful reminder of a trauma ridden childhood, constantly threatened by madness. The second chapter aims to critically re-assess

Huxley's much misunderstood political identity during the decade of badness and war, the 1930s. Challenging the prevailing image of a pacifist Huxley in this decade, the chapter will reveal and analyse the 'hidden Huxley', a political activist who advocated the widespread application of psychoanalytic ideas in order to exercise mass control and ensure social stability during a decade of unprecedented instability and fear. This will, in turn, render a more radical reading of *Brave New World* not as a purely dystopian novel, but as a blueprint for some of the mechanisms of control that Huxley was promoting in his hitherto unknown essays, pamphlets and broadcasts. The final chapter will document and evaluate Huxley's changing attitudes towards psychoanalysis during the years spent in America. With the death of his wife Maria, the fire that destroyed their home, the return of blindness and the onset of cancer all occurring during this period, Huxley's American years were undoubtedly defined by sadness. Though it is widely contended that mysticism and the use of hallucinogenic drugs led Huxley to a fierce indictment of psychoanalysis as essentially a symbol of the West, it will be argued that he never truly succeeded in debunking and transcending the shifting shadow of psychoanalysis, and, as *Island* reveals, Freud was in fact key to achieving the utopia he envisaged.

## The Dark Disciple: Huxley's Satire and Psychoanalysis in the 1920s

*When through his bleared and suffering mind*

*A sudden tremor of comfort ran,*

*And the void was filled by rushing wind,*

*And he breathed a sense of something friendly and near,*

*And in privation the life of God began*

Aldous Huxley 'The Birth of God' (1920)

Aldous Huxley never tired of a joke at Freud's expense. 'The only people who *don't* get anything from LSD or mescaline' he wrote in a letter to his Aunt Ellen in 1956, 'are psycho-analysts':

None of them got anything positive-except for one, who said that, when he went to the bathroom, he noticed that his excreta smelled stronger and sweeter. Sig Freud's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul, or his anus, goes marching along. (Smith 1969, 813)

Huxley was again voicing his scepticism at the reductionism from which he perceived psychoanalysis to suffer. Though he took pleasure in such acts of satirical debunking, the strength and tone of his misgivings imply that Freud had indeed gone 'marching along' for some time in his intellectual universe, despite Huxley's best attempts to dispel him. In psychoanalytic therapy

the cause for neurosis can usually be traced back to a childhood trauma. It is perhaps little wonder that Huxley's childhood bore all the hallmarks of a classic Freudian case study.

At the age of fourteen, Huxley's mother died of cancer. George Woodcock describes how 'the agonized and rebellious cry of his mother- "Why do I have to die, and die so young?"- burnt itself into his mind as it did into [his brother] Julian's' (Woodcock 1972, 40). Two years later, *keratitis punctata*, an extremely painful inflammation of the cornea, struck leaving him 'virtually blind for eighteen months, and left him with his sight permanently impaired' (Thody 1973, 7). The third and arguably most thunderous blow to the young Huxley, in 1914, was the suicide of his closest brother 'Trev', whose 'presence and devotion enabled his younger brother, still half sightless and walking with the deliberate lifting tread of the near-blind, to find his place in the unfamiliar world of Oxford' (Woodcock 1972, 46).

Despite the tragedies that struck Huxley with a merciless regularity, much of his grief was sublimated into a thirst for knowledge and an exploration of ideas, and he quickly converted a physical blindness to a bright intellectual vision. The accelerating rate of literary production throughout the 1920s was matched by a burgeoning reputation. By 1928 Huxley's intellectual sight was so brilliantly clear that the *American Review* was moved to declare that 'so accurately has he reflected the spirit of his age ... his whole emancipated generation seems to have accepted him as their official spokesman before the world' (Houston cited in Watt 1975, 211). It is of little surprise that one critic has made the comparison between Huxley and one particular blind figure from Greek mythology: 'Huxley appeared a Tiresias, the blind seer to whom antiquity assigned the dubious pleasure of being correct about the most unbearable truths' (King 1989, xiv).

Huxley was evidently a great visionary, investing his Tiresian energies in Scogan of *Crome Yellow* (1921) who envisages, out of the ashes of World War One, 'The Rational State' in which 'men of intelligence will learn to harness the insanities to the service of reason' (Huxley 2004, 124) and in Mr Bojanus of *Antic Hay* (1923), who compensates for his minute physique with a grand political vision. He sees through the propaganda of civilization: 'How can there ever be liberty under any system? ... Liberty? why, it doesn't exist! There's no liberty in this world;

only gilded cages' (Huxley 1980, 34). The world's increasing fascination with the prophecies of *Brave New World* (1932) is perhaps the greatest testament to Huxley's Tiresian qualities.

But the young Huxley also had a great deal in common with another famous blind man from antiquity; Oedipus, the tragic victim of fate, to whom it dealt the worst possible hand. For his cousin, Laurence Collier, the prevailing memory was of an Aldous 'aloof and secretly critical ... he said nothing, but looked at something else or gazed abstractedly into the distance with a fixed and enigmatic smile, and I began to think that he liked neither Switzerland nor his father' (cited in Woodcock 1972, 37). In his fictional debut 'The Farcical History of Richard Greenow' (1920) the blind, disgusted Oedipus is rampant. In the short but disconcerting tale, Huxley projects the physical difficulties he often experienced onto his fictional counterpart 'Dick': 'From childhood upwards Dick had suffered from the intensity of his visceral reactions to emotion. Fear and shyness were apt to make him feel very sick, and disgust produced in him a sensation of intolerable queasiness' (Huxley 1929, 78). Throughout the 1920s, Huxley's novels and short stories became the canvas upon which the admixture of confusion, rage and disgust found expression; as Ferns concedes his 'lack of sympathy with the pleasures of the body' becomes 'almost pathologically distasteful' (Ferns 1980, 91). Whilst many biographers contend that Huxley handled the traumas of his youth with equanimity ('If there were moments of appalling discouragement and strain', Bedford narrates, 'he never showed it' (Bedford 1973, 36)), grief and disgust at the frailty and death of the human body found their outlet in his fiction. In an anonymous 1920 review of his earliest works, one commentator detects more of the angry Oedipus, rather than the prophetic Tiresias, in the young Huxley:

He is in a cold rage with the body, because it is often ugly, often smells, is prone to diseases, gets worn out and will go its own way in spite of reason and the claims of the imagination ... He despises human nature. (cited in Watt 1975,55)

On many occasions Huxley's carefully poised satire descends into vitriolic cynicism. Interestingly, it was often those closest to him, not the frivolous and predatory critics, who

brought him to account for the dark, malicious elements of his fiction. Huxley's wife Maria, though respectful and admiring of his work, could not readily accept his frequent desire to represent in fiction that which could barely be uttered in real life. D.H. Lawrence, a close friend to them both, detected that the destructive satire of *Point Counter Point* (1928) had perhaps gone too far: 'I think the *Counter Point* book sort of got between them—she found it hard to forgive the death of the child [in the novel] –which one can understand' (Bedford 1973, 206).

True to the Oedipus legend, it was the figure of the father who bore the brunt of Huxley's satirical malice. The theme was briefly introduced in *Crome Yellow* through the character of Mr Wimbush, the pseudo-father for whom utopia is a life lived 'entirely secure from any human intrusion' (2004, 158). In *Antic Hay*, the satirical finger is pointed more specifically at the father figure. Much like Wimbush, Gumbriel senior is not comfortable in the world of humanity, instead 'the starlings were Mr Gumbriel's most affectionately cherished friends ... he was always to be seen gazing up, round-spectacled and rapt, at the fourteen plane trees' (1980, 19). In *Antic Hay*, Huxley's diatribe against fathers is fully mobilised, the 1920s London of the novel, stewing in its disillusionment and cynicism, is the prevailing legacy of an older, more specifically Victorian generation that has clearly failed to come to terms with the trauma of war. Huxley depicts a younger generation so disillusioned as if to be terminally ill: 'Men and women were ceasing to be themselves, or were struggling to remain themselves. They were dying, they were struggling to live' (1980 249). The father as a malignant anti-human symbol reaches its climax in *Point Counter Point* with the figure of Sidney Quarles who is the primary satirical target in the novel. In his role as father, he is a complete failure, as the sharply narrated description implies:

As a father, Mr Quarles had shown himself as no less erratic and no less ineffectual than as a politician or as a man of business. Brief periods of enthusiastic interest in his children had alternated with long periods during which he almost ignored their existence. Philip and his brother had preferred him during the seasons of neglect; for he had ignored them benevolently. They liked him less when he was interested

in their well-being. For the interest was generally not much in the children as in the theory of education and hygiene. (1978, 384)

The similarities between the father-and-son relationships of the 1920s satire, and the emotionally stunted relationship between Huxley and his own father have led critics such as Thody to the conclusion that ‘Huxley’s adoration of his mother implied feelings of intense jealousy for his father, and these were translated into the subconscious notion that Leonard Huxley was at least partly guilty for his wife’s death’ (Thody 1973, 17). Though Huxley often characterised father figures as dry, eccentric intellectuals, bereft of any emotional dexterity, his own father Leonard could not help feeling deeply upset and angered by what he perceived to be a highly personal attack in *Antic Hay*. He expressed his shock and distaste at his son’s latest satirical assassination of the father figure, and general irreverence, in a letter to him. Sensing an opportunity to confront his father on a subject that had never before entered their frequent yet formal correspondence, Huxley responded in defiant fashion:

I am sorry you should have found my book so distasteful. Like you, I have no desire to enter into argument about it: argument, indeed, would be useless ... And there, I think, I had better leave it, only pausing long enough to express my surprise that you should accuse me, when I speak of a young man’s tender recollections of his dead mother, of botanizing on my mother’s grave. (cited in Smith 1969, 224)

This example of Huxley and his father coming to blows over what is evidently the very delicate subject of family relationships foregrounds the parallels between Huxley and Oedipus. Though the ‘smoke and fire of Huxley’s satire’ (Firchow 1972, 32) often burned the closest members of his family, as well as the figures in society he publicly targeted, it was a mode of writing for which he made no apology, and rigorously defended. In many respects fiction was a release valve for Huxley, allowing for personal traumas of a defeated youth to be projected onto the helpless characters of his fiction. A frequent oscillation between blind, disgusted rage and enlightened sagacious prophecy, between Oedipus and Tiresias, was the *modus operandi* to which

he would remain faithful for almost his entire literary career. This curious duality was later criticised in no uncertain terms by C. Day Lewis (1936), a prominent contemporary of Huxley:

Aldous Huxley's own sensibilities are so exquisite that, together with his great talent in writing, they have made him one of the prophets of our time—*the Prophet of Disgust*. He feels so keenly the discrepancy between the fact and the ideal that he seems like some miserable figure, *standing with face averted* from the ruin and filth that surround him; though every now and then, half in fascination, half in disgust, he directs an exceedingly sharp glance at what so much appals him. (cited in Watt 1975, 273)

Day Lewis's diagnosis would prove particularly apt to Huxley's relationship with a figure no less controversial and prolific than himself: Sigmund Freud. One can conjecture that on the one hand Huxley would have marvelled 'half in fascination' at perhaps the most provocative intellectual of the twentieth century, the harbinger of humanity's 'third wound':

But human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house. (Freud 1991, 326)

Freud's theories, their focus on civilisation's most fiercely repressed taboos, their uncanny ability to deal devastating blows to conventional civilised man, and their primary focus not on a mankind idealised, elevated or eulogised in any way, but wracked by a catalogue of psychological ailments, figuratively writhing and gesticulating under the immense pressure of war and mechanisation, chimed with the *Weltanschauung* of Huxley's early satire. Huxley's anti-Victorianism, which manifested itself in scornful contempt for 'exhausted Victorian modernity and the shop-worn constraints it could no longer impose' (Meckier 2006, 132), found the words with which to express itself in the case studies of psychoanalysis, each one a sad indictment of the way in which Victorian notions of progress, steeped in the rhetoric of civilisation, had only served to harm the individual: 'The instinctual wishes that suffer under civilisation are born afresh with every child;

there is a class of people, the neurotics, who already react to these frustrations with asocial behaviour' (Freud 1995, 690).

After the outbreak of the First World War, psychoanalysis quickly became inextricably bound up with wider modern thought. Thomas Mann, a writer who Huxley would later befriend, reflected on the degree to which psychoanalysis had infiltrated Western consciousness, describing the deadly charm of psychoanalysis as a kind of subversive religion; 'the analytic revelation' he wrote,

is a revolutionary force. With it a blithe scepticism has come into the world, a mistrust that unmask all the schemes and subterfuges of our own souls. It infiltrates life, undermines its raw naivety, takes from it the strain of its own ignorance, and inculcates the taste for understatement, as the English call it for the deflated rather than for the inflated world. (Mann cited in Phillips 2006, ix)

If one accepts Mann's claims, then it was most certainly the 'revolutionary force' of psychoanalysis that swept over Huxley and contributed so much to the self-appointed mission, through much of his early fiction, of proceeding with a 'blithe scepticism' to depict 'the deflated rather than the inflated world.' Smith, speaking more generally, concurs with this interpretation: 'it must not be forgotten that Huxley was fundamentally a sceptic; from this cast of mind proceeded his satiric impulse' (Smith 1969, 2).

Baker notes how 'Huxley's letters, essays, and novels prior to the publication of *Point Counter Point* are filled with references to Freud' (Baker 1982, 236), and the reason for the prevalence of psychoanalysis is at least due in part to the fact that Huxley was very much a part of the 'Freudian moment' as a young intellectual of the 1920s. Throughout the 1920s Freud was not only publishing constantly, but many of the theories postulated in works such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) were

beginning to be absorbed into the wider British cultural consciousness. The First World War, Brown contends, was central to the spread of psychoanalysis, as Freudian theories relating to the unconscious and to drives were crucial to understanding the origins of shell shock:

Those who had to deal with such neuroses increasingly came to accept the fact that they were psychological in origin and began to make use of some Freudian concepts in order to understand them. Both in Great Britain and the United States the period from 1918 onwards saw a further spread of psychoanalytic information amongst the general public, and the first trickle of the flood of popular literature on the subject began during the early twenties. (Brown 1961, 56)

Alongside Huxley's own burgeoning literary reputation during the 1920s, psychoanalysis was also enjoying exponential growth during this decade in Europe: 'progress became more marked after the War, when in 1920 the Berlin Institute of psychoanalysis was opened... followed shortly afterwards by the opening of similar Institutes in London, Vienna, and Budapest' (Brown 1961, 36). Throughout the decade the image of psychoanalysis in the collective consciousness of the Western intelligentsia intensified, as Auden famously remarked 'Taking them by and large, as a nation / All suffer from an Oedipus fixation' (cited in Cunningham 1988, 115). It is perhaps for this very reason that Freud is so prominent in Huxley's 20s fiction, for as well as a branch of psychology it was also a cultural phenomenon, imbued with qualities of validity, vitality and, most importantly, popularity, that Huxley was keen to exploit in his social satire. One of the defining features of Huxley's fiction, as one contemporary noted, was for 'the very brilliance of its timeliness' (Watt 1975, 163); the timeliness, and a good deal of Huxley's satirical sting, was due to the fact that, as Wood-Krutch wrote in 1922, 'Freudianism [has been] introduced into the drawing room' (Watt 1975, 65).

It is perhaps for this very reason that Huxley recoiled from Freud 'half in disgust'. In the first instance, the ubiquity of psychoanalysis in the intellectual world must have proved irritating. Such a sentiment is implied in *Crome Yellow*, through the vacuous Mary Bracegirdle's tedious

conversations about her farcical battle against ‘repressions of the natural instincts of sex’ (Huxley 2004, 32). More significantly, Freud’s theories, particularly those relating to childhood trauma and to neuroses’ origins and symptoms, must have touched a particularly sensitive nerve. Huxley, whose mental composure had been sorely tested on three occasions during the psychologically delicate formative years of his life, would have found Freud’s ‘deflated world’ more unsettling than most. His eldest brother Julian developed an obsessional neurosis during adolescence, which culminated in a breakdown. In his memoirs, Julian candidly reflected on his condition: ‘the boy I fell in love with was really beautiful ... I was so obsessed by him. My nervous breakdown in 1912, due to my unresolved conflicts about sex, had inflicted on me “the dark night of the soul”’ (Huxley, J. 1972, pp. 54, 153). As has been noted, Trevenen was also struck with the Huxley curse of psychological illness, driven to suicide after a grievous wave of depression triggered by a secret love affair with a girl whom, because of a sense of Victorian social propriety, he felt he could not marry. As Dunaway rightly suggests ‘melancholia, that nineteenth-century euphemism for mental illness, plagued the Huxley family’ (Dunaway 1989, 11). In light of such observations, it is understandable that critics such as Baker have reached the conclusion that ‘the theme of repression and psychological abnormality by and large constitutes the heart of Huxley’s criticism of Edwardian and early modern English society’ (Baker 1982, 117).

It is with Huxley’s conflicting and complex relationship with psychoanalysis in mind that ‘The Farcical History of Richard Greenow’, ‘Huxley’s first extensive published work of fiction ... a piece that deserves to be much better known than it is’ (Firchow 1972, 40), is considered. Aside from Firchow’s short but valuable analysis, the novella has never attracted more than passing remarks. ‘Richard Greenow’ has remained neglected by critics, and largely overlooked as part of the Huxleyan canon. Reasons for this neglect are not clear: *Limbo*, the collection in which the short story is contained, has never enjoyed circulation on the scale of every subsequent publication, but the text serves as a locus for so many of the ideas and theories that Huxley would later develop, and therefore deserves attention here. ‘Richard Greenow’ is the story of a young Oxford student, Dick, who comes to realise that he is ‘a hermaphrodite, not in the gross obvious sense, of course, but spiritually. Two persons in one, male and female. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde’

(Huxley 1929, 37). The situation between Dick and the female with whom his psyche, Pearl Bellairs is shared, is best summarised by the narrator:

He would devote the day to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, to philosophy and mathematics, with perhaps an occasional excursion into politics. After midnight he would write novels with a feminine pen, earning the money that would make his unproductive male labours possible. A kind of spiritual *soutener*. (1929, 38)

The story ends tragically as Dick cannot reconcile the sensational patriotic novelist with the pacifist dry academic. Pearl is no longer subject to the will of Dick and battered by the competing forces, Dick slips into a coma and dies. The similarities with Stevenson's gothic thriller do not end with the idea of duality: 'Richard Greenow' seems to inherit the same dark mysterious spirit that hangs in the thick London air of *Jekyll and Hyde*; the novella is an extremely dense and disconcerting examination of the world seen through the eyes of a mind in the throes of a worsening psychological malaise, a distorted and inverted *bildungsroman*, and Huxley reflects Dick's psychotic mind with a dynamic and fragmentary plot structure whereby the time and space are as distorted as the mind of the protagonist that perceives them. It was a structural technique he would again use to great effect in *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) 'the most complexly constructed and the most psychologically convincing novel Huxley ever wrote' (Woodcock 1972, 20).

In 'Richard Greenow' the only hope of salvation for Dick is through psychoanalysis:

Suicide or brandy seemed the only cures. Not satisfactory ones, though. Towards evening an illuminating idea occurred to him. He would go and see Rogers. Rogers knew all about psychology—from books, at any rate: Freud, Jung, Morton Prince and people like that. He used to try hypnotic experiments on his friends and even dabbled in amateur psychology. (1929, 63)

The analysis, however, turns out to be a complete failure. Dick openly admits to his analyst that 'I want you to nose out my suppressed complexes, analyse me, dissect me' (1929, 64). The plea for

help falls on hopelessly inadequate ears. Rogers, an example of what Freud called the ‘wild psychoanalysts’ who ‘do more harm to the cause of psychoanalysis than to individual patients’ (Freud 1995, 355), proceeds with the most impoverished of analyses. Rogers begins by using free association, but is so ill prepared that the technique is reduced to a farcical series of Freudian clichés. He quotes a series of Freudian trigger words such as ‘Mother’ and ‘Father’ for ‘he always began his analyses with the family, since the majority of kinks and complexes date from childhood’ (1929, 65), with the hope that the suppressed content will reveal itself in Dick’s answers. Greenow answers his interrogator curtly and with ‘dull answers all the time. Evidently, nothing very catastrophic had ever happened to him’ (1929, 67). The scene is saturated with a sense of dramatic irony; Dick gives no meaningful information about his past, or of his alter ego Pearl, the very reason he turned to analysis, but instead offers one-word answers to the equally curt and meaningless questions ‘ “Mother.” “Dead,” replied Dick immediately...”Father.” “Dull”,(1929, 66). The analysis fails and from that point Dick’s worsening condition accelerates to the point of death.

The analysis is an early indication of Huxley’s cynicism about psychoanalysis as a therapeutic method; it highlights the beginning of his enduring scepticism about a psychiatric practice whereby the parameters of practice are not clearly delineated. The concept of the psychoanalytic ‘talking cure’, the bedrock of the psychoanalytic method, is satirised in ‘Richard Greenow’ for ironically, Dick and Rogers barely speak throughout the whole analysis and the scene is dominated by silence. Huxley’s prejudices regarding the Freudian method were later revealed in *Literature and Science* (1963):

It is only by attacking the problem of human nature on all its fronts- the chemical and psychological, the verbal and the non-verbal, the individual, the cultural and the genetic that we can hope to understand it theoretically and to do something about it...Freud only made significant contributions to the problem of human nature on one sector of the front, the psychological. (Huxley 1963, 83)

The farcical analysis is evidently an attempt to debunk the idea that Freud can offer a legitimate cure for psychological trauma, and a cynical indictment on what he later perceived to be the flaw in psychoanalysis as a reductive system whereby the spectrum of human experience is appropriated into a small collection of instincts and drives, here simplified to the absurdly simple trigger words that Rogers uses. Conversely, what this satirical debunking of Freud reveals is Huxley's unwillingness to meet Freud 'head on'. Dick's resistance to analysis can be seen as symbolic of Huxley's resistance to Freud, an unwillingness to visit 'the basement downstairs with the rats and black beetles' (Bedford 1974, 261) that for Huxley constituted the unconscious mind.

Though Huxley keeps farce very much in the foreground with the comic names of characters such as 'Dick', 'Hyman', and 'Thingummy(jig)', along with the incessant quipping and intellectual showboating of the attendants at the Cravisters' dinner party (the intellectual dinner party would soon become one of the prime settings for Huxley's early social satire), 'its "farce" is not in the least amusing, and the final impression it leaves is one of black pessimism' (Woodcock 1972, 70). Rather, 'Richard Greenow' takes on the complexion of a sinister biography. From the outset, there are hints of parallels between Dick and Huxley:

Those clever young men who discover Atheism and Art at School, Socialism at the University, and, passing through the inevitable stage of Sex and Syphilis after taking their B.A., turn into maturely brilliant novelists at the age of twenty five. I prefer, therefore, to pass over the minor incidents of a difficult pubescence, touching only on those points which seem to throw light on the future of our hero.  
(Huxley 1929, 5)

One could be forgiven for mistaking the 'clever young man' that the narrator describes as Huxley himself. That Dick is an Oxford student of unusual academic ability (1929, 3), has abandoned religion in favour of atheistic scientific determinism (9), has been prohibited from active service in the war (albeit for political, rather than physical reasons) (69), spends 'his holiday time in reading, largely, devouringly' (3) and has endured (although euphemistically phrased) 'minor incidents of a difficult pubescence' (5), indicate that Huxley put something of himself into the

character of Dick. This interpretation is endorsed by Ronald Clark, who notes in his biography of the Huxley family that *Limbo* contains ‘almost painful overtones of thinly disguised family history’ (Clark in Barfoot 2001, 12). Furthermore, the novella is temporally synchronised with Huxley’s own timeline: in ‘Richard Greenow’ the war breaks out not long after Dick leaves ‘Aesop college’ to enrol at Oxford (1929, 70), which is entirely consistent with Huxley’s own experience, given that war broke out only six months after his enrolling at Balliol, Oxford (Bedford 1973, 384). The temporal synchronicities deepen with the progression of the novella:

In those first horrible months of the war, when he was wrestling with Pearl Bellairs and failing to cast her out, it was Hyman who kept him from melancholy and suicide ... Hyman made him write a long article every week, dragged him into the office to do subeditorial work, kept him so busy that there were long hours when he had no time to brood over his own insoluble problems. (1929, 71)

This passage, describing Dick’s worsening condition with the breakout of war, has added biographical poignancy when one considers that Huxley had his own ‘insoluble problems’ to deal with; three months before war was declared his maternal grandmother died, and precisely twenty one days after the outbreak of war, news reached Huxley of Trev’s suicide (Bedford, 384). Though neither actively participated in it, the outbreak of war proved as difficult for Dick as it did for Huxley.

The farcical dualism of Dick and Pearl could be seen to be an allegorical smoke screen for Huxley’s fears for his own psychological condition at this highly traumatic time. Dick is the symbol of the absolute and of ideas whose life is given meaning through the disinterested pursuit of facts. However, this existence is compromised by Pearl, the sensational novelist, ‘a sentimental young lady’ (1929, 37), the symbol of feeling. Dick’s demise, it is implied, comes to pass as sensation overrides logic and Dick is made to feel too much. It was a sentiment that Huxley echoed in *Crome Yellow* (1921):

Life, facts, things were horribly complicated; ideas, even the most difficult of them, deceptively simple. In the world of ideas everything was clear; in life all was obscure, embroiled. Was it surprising that one was miserable, horribly unhappy?  
(Huxley 2004, 18)

This ongoing preoccupation in fiction represents Huxley's fears that the traumas he had endured in life may have escalated psychologically into a condition not dissimilar from the psychosis from which Dick eventually perishes. This novella is an exploration of that fear, and its potential outcomes. Huxley, through Dick, describes how experiences of writing helped stave off suicidal depression and this helps us better understand why so much of his satire has a dark unsavoury trajectory, for Huxley's creative imagination was never too far from the traumas that scuttled like 'rats and black beetles' in his unconscious mind.

Though Huxley would forever remain sceptical of psychoanalysis as a means of offering an actual cure, he sees the theory behind it, notably the Freudian model of the mind, as absolutely central not only to his own experiences, but to the modern condition at large. Baker contends that the mission of Huxley's satire in the 1920's was 'to assess the trauma of the Great War of 1914, and to define the historical and ideological lines of cleavage at work in European as well as English society' (Baker 1982, 28). The character of Dick is a symbol of the central cleavage of modern society, the seemingly irrevocable split between the conscious and the unconscious mind. Though psychoanalysis was conceived long before the First World War, the war consolidated and validated many of the conclusions that Freud reached. The psychological malaise which transpired out of War, for Huxley as well as Freud, logically proved that the ego 'is not even master in its own house' (1991, 326). The unsettling reality of this situation is highlighted by the narrator: 'When you read about it, a Jekyll and Hyde existence sounds delightfully amusing; but when you live through it, as Dick found to his cost, it is merely a boring horror' (1929, 83).

Like a Judas figure, Huxley publicly decried Freud and the psychoanalytic method, working throughout his literary career to engineer an anti-Freudian reputation, yet his fiction implies a superficial rejection not wholly understood, secretly endorsing the theories and

ideologies that underpin psychoanalysis through a careful interweaving of Freudian concepts into the fictional fabric. By the time that *Crome Yellow* (1921) was published, the dark shadow of war that dominated 'Richard Greenow' had receded. Whilst 'Richard Greenow' gives a harrowing and desperate account of the war, defined by pain: 'incommunicable, individual, beyond the reach of sympathy; infinities of pain pent within frail finite bodies; pain without sense or object, bringing with it no hope and no redemption, futile unnecessary, stupid' (1929, 109), *Crome Yellow* illustrates a dramatic shift in attitude, as demonstrated through the character of Gombault: 'Personally I found the war quite as thorough a holiday from all the ordinary decencies and sanities, all the common emotions and preoccupations, as I ever wanted to have' (2004, 143).

If Huxley, between 'Richard Greenow' and the novels of the 1920s, had learned to better detach himself from his fictional creations, he had also lost sympathy for the human individual. The novels of the 1920s do not depict war as a painful and destructive force, merely as a dehumanizing and psychologically perverting one. The result is a deeply cynical and satirical depiction of a monomaniacal and neurotic world, each individual crystallised by their obsessional pursuit of an individual idea. This situation is summarised in a conversation between Denis and Mary in *Crome Yellow*:

'One is apt,' Denis went on, 'to be so spellbound by the spectacle of one's own personality that one forgets that the spectacle presents itself to other people as well as oneself.' Mary was not listening. (2004, 136)

Huxley had, in *Crome Yellow*, harnessed a small quantity of the subversive force of psychoanalysis. 'In this post-war world of sad, gay disillusionment and scientific luxury' (Aiken cited in Watt 1975, 125) the only discernable truth seems to be in the neurotic bent of modern society. Though the war is not recognised as a traumatic event, Huxley creates an atmosphere in which its effects are constantly felt through a world that has been psychologically inverted. As Scogan, who foretells *Brave New World's* 'Rational State' in *Crome Yellow*, contends: 'In a sane world I should be a great man; as things are, in this curious establishment, I am nothing at all' (2004, 122).

The scenes of Huxley's fiction throughout the 1920s are packed with neurotics. In 'Richard Greenow' Dick falls victim to a deadly psychosis, in *Crome Yellow* Mary Bracegirdle is wracked by fear of neurosis: 'It's always dangerous to repress one's instincts. I'm beginning to detect in myself symptoms like the ones you read of in the books. I constantly dream that I'm falling down wells; and sometimes I even dream that I'm climbing up ladders. It's most disquieting' (2004, 32). In *Antic Hay* (1923) the neurotic theme continues, not only with Lypiatt, the sensationalist artist in the throes of the death drive: 'Death, death, death. I repeat the word to myself again and again. I think of death, I try to imagine it, I hang over it looking down into the well of death. It is horrible but I do not want to go on living' (1980, 212), but also with Gumbriel, the borderline psychotic, a diluted and more fiercely satirised Dick Greenow, who plays out delusional unconscious fantasies as 'The Complete Man', the alter ego he employs in a futile quest for female companionship, 'The Mild and Melancholy one allowed them to pass for ever. But today – today he was the complete and Rabelasian man ... the imbecile game was at its height; there would be opportunities, and the Complete Man could know how to take them' (1980, 96). Finally, *Point Counter Point*'s Spandrell is an elaborate and complex Freudian neurotic. As Baker points out 'Spandrell is clearly a figure drawn from Freudian psychology' who demonstrates a 'remarkable similarity between Huxley's study of a complex pattern of a psychotic behaviour and Freud's analysis of moral masochism and the prostitute complex' (Baker 1982, 112).

Though an exhaustive examination of the Freudian case studies in Huxley's fiction of the 1920s cannot be pursued here, their significance lies in the cumulative image they generate. Huxley's progression from the rather crude Jekyll and Hyde dualism of 'Richard Greenow' to the complex neurotic enigma Spandrell in *Point Counter Point* illustrates his increasing knowledge of and belief in psychoanalysis as a means of describing the malaise of post-war modernity. For both Freud and Huxley, the self-appointed task was not only to desecrate the remaining ruins of Victorianism, but to also assess the damage that the First World War had wrought upon society, and diagnose the symptoms that surfaced from this period of mass trauma. What Huxley's neurotics represent is an endorsement of and belief in the central tenets of the psychoanalytic dogma. Huxley's mission was 'to diagnose the matrix of symptoms comprising the disease of

modern man' (1982, 99). 'Richard Greenow' was a brief yet disconcerting glance at the disease, the subsequent satire of the 1920s was a complex exploration of the symptoms and in both cases psychoanalysis seemed to both provide profound truth in a world disillusioned, traumatised, *inverted* by war and the means with which Huxley could give full expression to the *saeva indignatio* he felt at such a demise. For both Huxley and Freud it became apparent that the biggest casualty of war was the psyche; the 'disease of modern man' was neurosis. Personal experiences consolidated the conclusions he arrived at in fiction, though he never could fully accept Freud overtly as an intellectual influence, given the painful and vulnerable position that psychoanalysis placed him in.

Towards the end of his life Huxley criticised Freud for 'talking all the time about the basement downstairs with the rats and black beetles' (Bedford 1974, 261), but it was with man's most base and depraved components that Huxley 'half in fascination, half in disgust' could most effectively expose the proverbial rot that had set into post-war British society. Huxley followed Freud to the darkest corners of humanity; he emerged from the basement of rats and black beetles with the dark yet glittering cynicism which made the novels of the 1920s the deeply pessimistic, fiercely satirical fictional landmines they were intended to be. However, the end of the decade would mark a development in Huxley's mission, with the ominous clouds of war again beginning to accumulate for the second time, he realised that he could no longer be 'a detached and heckling observer standing above the melee' (Firchow 1972, 24); as a contemporary noticed, 'He is ceasing to play with ideas and beginning to feel them' (Watt 1975, 95). In parallel with this shift was a development in Huxley's attitude to Freud. As we shall see, he began to see Freud as more than just the subject of morbid intellectual curiosity, and psychoanalysis became a religion in which he was starting to believe.

## Concealed Consummation: The Centrality of Psychoanalysis in Huxley's Fiction of the 1930s

*Freud and his followers ... have proved that our adult mentality, our whole way of thinking and feeling, our entire philosophy of life may be shaped and moulded by what we experience in earliest childhood ... Such are the scientific facts waiting to be applied to the solution of political problems.*

Aldous Huxley 'Science and Civilisation' (1932)

David Bradshaw's *The Hidden Huxley* (1994) suggested that there is still a great deal that critics had yet to discover about Aldous Huxley, and that the consensus they had arrived at could so easily be demolished by revelations not dissimilar from those provided within Bradshaw's compilation of Huxley's hitherto unfamiliar essays, interviews and broadcasts during the 1930s. The fire that devastated the Huxleys' Los Angeles home in 1961, destroying the vast majority of his personal letters and diaries (King 1989, 358), is a stark reminder that there is and will always be huge black holes in the critical universe of Huxley. Indeed, it is with the exploring of these black holes that critics are charged, and it is perhaps the incompleteness of what one can physically know about the man that makes Huxley an enigmatic, mysterious figure on the periphery of the literary canon between the wars.

But what *The Hidden Huxley* also reveals is a far more disquieting truth, that there is a deliberate and systematic process of censorship by which examples of Huxley's works that are antagonistic to the figure that critics collectively project are marginalised, obscured, *hidden*. Though a process of selection of source material will inevitably lead to some works taking precedence over others, it seems more or less that the material contained within Bradshaw's

volume has remained completely untouched. *The Hidden Huxley* does not just reveal a more morally dubious Huxley, but also a less affable and more questionable critical heritage. Bradshaw leads the condemnation:

Above all ... the current view of the inter-war Huxley derives from a standard bibliography of his writings which is as incomplete as it is unreliable. Concealed behind the deficiencies of this principal check-list of his work, the authentic 1930s Huxley has languished misunderstood and unread for over fifty years. (1994, vii)

That the material contained within *The Hidden Huxley* which comprises, in the main, transcripts of national BBC broadcasts, articles written for the *Evening Standard* and for *Nash's Pall Mall Magazine*, has never been previously discussed by any serious critic of Huxley is a shocking revelation, especially when so many critical accounts proudly showcase far more obscure scraps of original source material, painstakingly dredged from the depths of Huxley's colossal literary legacy.

For an insight as to the ways in which the incomplete and distorted bibliography of Huxley's works has impacted on his reputation in wider literary debates one need look no further than Cunningham's *British Writers of the Thirties* (1988). Noting Huxley's rather sudden conversion to pacifism on the eve of World War 2, Cunningham declares:

Huxley's Peace Pledge Union pamphlet *What Are You Going to Do About It?: The Case For Constructive Peace* (1936) must be one of the '30s' most denigrated texts. *We Are Not Going to Do Nothing* toughed Day Lewis (1936). And Huxley's antagonists were right: his pacifism *is* cranky... a quietist recipe for the well heeled author who would shortly retire to vegetables and mantras in the Hollywood sunshine far from the threat of gas-chambers and bombs. (Cunningham 1988, 70)

The feelings of betrayal and anger amongst Huxley's contemporaries (and Cunningham's account implies that the negative impressions have remained) were directed towards the act of 'turning a blind eye' both to the pressure pot that was boiling over in Europe, and to where his services as a

prominent and prolific literary prophet might be put to better use if, indeed, he truly advocated the pacifist cause. It is apparent that Huxley's *passivity* seemed to rankle more than his *pacifism* amongst the inter-war intelligentsia. Perhaps it is the mantle of passive pacifism that Huxley adopted through much of the late thirties, trying to make his voice heard from the other side of the Atlantic rather than on the ground on which the battle was being fought, that has meant Huxley's reputation within the canon of English literature has fared considerably less well than many of his contemporaries (most notably George Orwell, a figure with whom Huxley is so often compared) in criticism today. Similarly, it would seem that critics followed Huxley's lead in the act of 'turning a blind eye' when choosing their source material; such censorship has not only obscured and marginalised Huxley further, explaining the relative aridity of the Huxleyan critical landscape in recent years, but has distorted the 1930s Huxley by promoting the image of him as a wholehearted pacifist when, in truth, Huxley's adoption of pacifism was neither complete nor wholehearted during this decade. He frequently oscillated between affirmation and rejection of pacifist beliefs, and this oscillation is symptomatic of his treatment of all the ideas with which he worked, as Smith contends:

Always in Huxley compassion and scorn, revulsion and tenderness, strove together and, as it were, through a dialectic of emotions regulated by intelligence, produced his multivalent attitude towards the world. (Smith 1969, 1)

Bradshaw's volume bears witness to a socially attuned Huxley, frequently calling for swift and radical action. It is hard to believe that a writer now famed for the mystic-liberal agenda he came to champion, once counselled his BBC listenership that 'Any form of order is better than chaos. Our civilisation is menaced with total collapse. Dictatorship and scientific propaganda may provide the only means for saving humanity from the miseries of anarchy' (1994, xix). Hinting at the new direction in which criticism should move, Bradshaw suggests that 'Though the legendary liberal humanist does not emerge unscathed from these pages, it may well be that the Huxley who surfaces is a figure even more deserving of our attention' (1994, xxiii).

And it is with the socially concerned political activist that this chapter will be primarily concerned, assessing Huxley's sociological ideas and reconciling them with the Freudian theory that helped germinate them. It is neither desirable nor necessary to disparage the entire critical heritage of Huxley, but contained within Bradshaw's *expose*, is source material, hitherto marginalised, that offers exciting answers to what Robert Baker described as the 'vexing problem' of Huxley's indebtedness to psychoanalytic theory (Baker 1982, 112). Huxley's attitude towards Freud and psychoanalysis underwent a short-lived but radical shift during the early part of the 1930s. It will be illustrated how he used the conclusions reached by psychoanalysis in order to advocate unprecedented and wholesale changes in the political and social world, and how this radical Freudian agenda manifested itself in the fiction of the early 30s. It is hoped that this chapter will move beyond the widely promoted idea that Huxley had always had reservations about psychoanalysis and acknowledge the fact that during the 1930s Huxley affirmed the validity of both the Freudian model of the mind, and the model of society that Freud envisaged in *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilisation and its Discontents*.

'After the Fireworks', a novella published within the volume *Brief Candles* (1930) marks the beginning of Huxley's movement towards an overt affirmation of the psychoanalytic *Weltanschauung*. Like 'Richard Greenow', critical accounts of the novella remain relatively sparse, as Woodcock observes: 'it is a novella that deserves the greater attention it would have gained from separate publication' (1972, 166). Firchow describes it as 'one of his more autobiographical short stories' (Firchow 1972, 94) and as in 'Richard Greenow' one can discern how Huxley has aligned himself with Miles Fanning, the ailing yet brightly intellectual and sexually charged novelist who, during the course of the novella, becomes entangled in relations with an admirer of his work who is much younger than himself.

Huxley's intellectual pre-occupations in 'After the Fireworks' are not difficult to detect; on the very first page the subject of psychoanalysis is introduced to the dining room, with Fanning seizing his opportunity to bring the conversation round to 'The Freudians', but 'he broke off suddenly. After all he was talking to Colin - to *Colin*' (Huxley 1977, 114). The narrator's aside

signals a dramatic shift in attitude from the novels of the 20s, where through Rogers in ‘Richard Greenow’ and Mary Bracegirdle in *Crome Yellow*, Huxley implies that Freud is the conversational topic of idiots, that is, people like Colin. However, in ‘After the Fireworks’ Huxley is offering the means by which a more serious examination of psychoanalysis might be staged. Huxley’s growing interest in Freud is presented through the character of Fanning who, though often comically interrupted mid-flow, relishes any opportunity to psychoanalyse:

‘Ostrichism- it’s the only rational philosophy of conduct. According to the Freudians we’re all unconsciously trying to get back to...’

‘But poor woman!’ Dodo burst out. ‘She must have suffered.’

‘Nothing like what I suffered. Besides she had the Divine Mind to go back to; which was her version of the Freudians’ pre-natal...’

‘But I suppose you’d encourage her to come to Tunis?’

Reluctantly, Fanning gave up his Freudians. (1977, 140)

Though Freud is used in primarily comic contexts in the novella, having Fanning’s psychoanalytical observations constantly interrupted by his interlocutor, the teachings of psychoanalysis are eventually employed to more serious ends. Psychoanalysis ceases to be, as in ‘Richard Greenow’ and *Crome Yellow*, the curious subject of fruitless and idle gossip, but of deep and far reaching considerations on the state and mores of inter-war society. Fanning, unlike the fictional predecessors of the 1920s, is not so obsessed by the ideas he embodies as to be totally enveloped and consumed by them. Speaking in Freudian tropes, he diagnoses the condition from which the characters that pack the scenes of Huxley’s 1920s satire, and modern society at large, suffer:

‘I am answering for a self that changes very little through every change of circumstance—the self that doesn’t intend to put up with more discomfort than it can possible avoid; the self that, as the Freudians tell us, is homesick for that

earthly paradise from which we've all been banished, our mother's womb, the only place on earth where man is genuinely omnipotent, where his every desire is satisfied, where he is perfectly at home and adapted to his surroundings, and therefore perfectly happy. Out of the womb we're in an unfriendly world, in which our wishes aren't anticipated, where we're no longer magically omnipotent, where we don't fit, where we're not snugly at home. What's to be done in this world? Either face out the reality, fight with it, resignedly or heroically accept to suffer or struggle. Or else flee. In practice even the strongest heroes do a bit of fleeing, away from responsibility into deliberate ignorance, away from uncomfortable fact into imagination ... Take my case' (1977, 198)

Fanning's elaborate metaphor, in which the mother's womb is seen as the realm in which the disillusioned masses are so hopelessly enveloped, undoubtedly stems from Freud's dream theory: 'Our relation to the world, into which we have come so unwillingly, seems to involve our not being able to tolerate it interruptedly. Thus from time to time we withdraw into the pre-mundane state, into existence in the womb' (Freud 1991, 117). However, Fanning's impression of modernity seems to take more from Freud's ambitious and polemic attack on the destructive force of organised religion, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927). Like Fanning, who sees the tendency to flee 'away from responsibility into deliberate ignorance, away from uncomfortable fact into imagination' as a regrettable yet inevitable symptom of an 'unfriendly world ... where we don't fit', Freud, in an uncannily similar examination, saw the oppressive and dehumanizing progress of civilisation as the sole culprit for man's need to retract from the real world into the comforting womb of ideas:

Thus a store of ideas is created, born from man's need to make his helplessness tolerable and built up from the material of memories of the helplessness of his own childhood and the childhood of the human race. (Freud 1995, 695)

Huxley's alignment with Freudian values is brilliantly clear throughout the novella. Fanning's zealous advocacy and his intricate knowledge of Freudian theory seem to imply that Huxley was

not just reading Freud a good deal, but beginning to ingest and be convinced by the conclusions Freud reached in works such as *The Future of an Illusion*. Like Fanning's figurative womb, in which the individual is enveloped and enshrined in societal systems that discourage 'facing out the reality ... to suffer or struggle', Freud also saw the menace of civilisation and organised religion as essentially womb substitutes in which the individual feels safe: 'Over each one of us watches a benevolent Providence which is only seemingly stern and which will not suffer us to become a plaything for the over-mighty and pitiless forces of nature' (1995, 696).

The discernable movement away from predominantly destructive satire to a more constructive method of examining society's mores that is Huxley's attempt to cure rather than to merely diagnose what was coined in *Point Counter Point* as 'the disease of modern man' (1978, 161), is presented through Fanning's fierce ambition to live, as *Point Counter Point's* Philip Quarles puts it, 'integrally'. Quarles' helpless plea epitomises the mood of nihilistic helplessness of the 20s fiction: 'Shall I ever have the strength of mind to break myself of these indolent habits of intellectualism and devote my energies to the more serious and difficult tasks of living integrally?' (1978, 329). Through the character of Fanning, armed with Freud, Huxley moves closer to the constructive answer: 'to have my wishes fulfilled I don't have to rush off every time to some imaginary womb-substitute. I have the power to construct a womb for myself out of the materials of the real world' (1977, 199).

However, the spirit of optimism is quickly destroyed. As Fanning learns to his cost, an existence outside the comforting womb of intellect is not so easily achieved in practice as it is in theory. He boldly steps into the brave new world of action, emotion and feeling by pursuing a relationship with the much younger Pamela, the youthful carefree symbol of sexual vitality. Fanning, whose tale bears more than a passing resemblance to that of Gustav von Aschenbach, the intellectual artist around whom *Death in Venice* (1912) revolves, surrenders to his Dionysian impulses. As in Mann's novella, Fanning pays with his life for what turns out to be a fatal indiscretion, for the moment he truly exposes himself to the real world proves the moment at which he contracts the pneumonia that eventually kills him. It is significant that the fatal moment

comes when Fanning and Pamela are making love outside where ‘in the darkness they were inhabitants of the supernatural world’ (1977, 208), for Huxley is emphasising how they are both so patently outside the womb:

But at midnight they had found themselves, almost suddenly, on earth again, shivering cold under the moon. Cold, cold to the quick ... It was a kind of trance of chilled and sickened exhaustion that he had at last dropped down in his bed in the convent cell. Next morning he was ill. The liver was always his weak point. (1977, 208)

The attempt to put theory into practice, to step outside the womb both figuratively and in this moment, literally, proves to be a fatal overestimation of his ability to transcend the world of intellect, the comforting womb of his existence. His death serves as a fatalistic mourning for the frailty and transience of the human individual in the ‘real world’. Though Fanning’s brave exploration out of the womb is admirable, marking a clear ideological progression from the crippled womb-enveloped protagonists of the 20s, Huxley’s acute and deep-seated pessimism regarding the frailty and weakness of the human body persists in ‘After the Fireworks’. Whilst for Woodcock the prevailing message is that ‘Romance in real life is an illusion’ (1973, 167), I would argue that Huxley goes even further in order to prove that ‘real life’ is itself an illusion, an unrealisable ideal, a paradise the modern individual, surrounded by the illusions of religion, civilisation and intellectualism, can never hope to regain.

Fanning’s, and by logical extension Huxley’s, knowledge of and fascination with psychoanalysis is something that would deepen with *Brave New World*. Soon after the publication of the novella, the ominous clouds of war again began to assemble. Rising unemployment rates, lack of national planning and the unbridled advance of technology (Bradshaw 1994, xvii) provoked something resembling mass hysteria amongst the English intelligentsia during the early part of the 1930s. Huxley’s concerns about the individual’s ability to transcend the inadequate social systems to which they are bound and to live ‘integrally’ swiftly became integrated into far more pressing and far reaching considerations of how social systems themselves might be

improved in order to prevent a complete dissolution and destruction of civilisation: ‘We must either plan or else go under ... force has got to be used’, an anxious and zealous Huxley declared in *Nash’s Pall Mall Magazine* in 1931 (Bradshaw 1994, 28).

The search for a solution that would protect countries from complete economic collapse was not a purely English concern. The success of the Nazi party in a Germany racked by economic depression at the 1930 Reichstag elections marked the beginning of Hitler’s ascent to power. The discontent of deep economic depression was soon coupled with the prospect of war and so the threat of civilisation’s complete destruction. In a letter to Freud requesting a contribution to the League of Nations on how war might be avoided, Albert Einstein, writing only six months after *Brave New World* was published, posed the question that tormented so many of the Western intelligentsia:

Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war? It is common knowledge that, with the advance of modern science, this issue has come to mean a matter of life and death for civilization as we know it; nevertheless, for all the zeal displayed, every attempt at its solution has ended in a lamentable breakdown.  
(Einstein in Freud 1991, 345)

Einstein was not the only famous intellectual to turn to Freud for answers, and throughout the early part of this decade Huxley remained convinced that ‘Psychology is the key to science’ (Bradshaw 1994, 111) and so the key to exercising control in a civilisation that had arrived at its present condition as a result of scientific and technological progress. Huxley perceived that psychoanalysis was a powerful tool for manipulating and indoctrinating the masses, and he believed that if the state intervened in the development of its children, it could exercise mass control. In the BBC broadcast ‘Science and Civilisation’ which was aired only two weeks before *Brave New World* was published, Huxley clearly perceives that stability is most effectively gained through a practical application of psychoanalytic theory:

Freud and his followers ... have proved that our adult mentality, our whole way of thinking and feeling, our entire philosophy of life may be shaped and moulded by what we experience in earliest childhood ... Such are the scientific facts waiting to be applied to the solution of political problems. (1994, 109)

It is in light of Huxley's contemporaneous observations such as these that *Brave New World* might better be understood. Though Huxley claimed never to have been 'intoxicated' by Freud, it was certainly during the period of the early 1930s when he became embroiled in deep and penetrating sociological examinations, that Huxley exposed himself most to the potent effects of psychoanalysis, and found himself deeply influenced by it. As the above quote illustrates, Huxley was profoundly convinced that psychoanalysis and behaviourist techniques could provide the key to stability, and *Brave New World* can be viewed as a novelistic simulation of those convictions. In *Brave New World*, Huxley takes Freudian teachings to their logical conclusions in the form of the rational state, predicting to what depths society, without intervention, might descend in the form of the savage reservation. Vibbert is a critic who has studied Freud's influence on *Brave New World*; she states her position from the outset:

I contend that Huxley's attack is centred specifically on Freud's 1920 publication *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. This treatise is a perfect primary target for Huxley's attack because the essay presents Freud's most elemental theory of human behaviour. (Vibbert 2006, 133)

Taking her lead from Meckier (who, incidentally, is editor of the volume in which her essay is contained), Vibbert contends that Freud is included in *Brave New World* solely as a target of satirical attack. As such, she contends that:

In *Brave New World*, Huxley explores Freud's dichotomy of death and life instincts by creating two societies, each of which operates on the basis of only one of the two complementary instincts. The brave new world is the representative of the death instinct. All of society's structures are aimed at mitigating the influence

of the life instinct and creating the most direct route toward death for its citizens. The Malpais society represents the uncontested life instinct; the society's ethos of self-denial and suffering ironically prevent the death instinct from carrying out its desired function and present the possibility of extended life for some inhabitants. (2006, 136)

As well as oversimplifying the ideas that underpin the opposing societies, Vibbert's attack aims to present the brave new world, in which Freud is installed as one of its founding fathers, as the symbol of death and the Malpais society as the symbol of life. An attempt is therefore made by Vibbert to prescribe the moral trajectory of the novel, implying that the Savage Reservation was endorsed by Huxley for its propagation of life in sharp contrast to the Rational State which is reviled and attacked for its propagation of death. I would argue that such an argument is inaccurate on three counts. Firstly, as shall be illustrated, the text does not adequately support such an argument and in fact, there is more evidence to suggest that the opposite might be true. Secondly, it is unlikely that *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* would have warranted Huxley's satirical scorn, given Freud's own reservations about the paradox of the opposing drives within the text. In a concluding disclaimer, Freud concedes that:

This all leads on to countless other questions to which at present we have no answers. We have to be patient and wait for new means and opportunities of research. And we must also be prepared to abandon any path that appears to be going nowhere, even though we may have followed it for quite some time. (Freud 2006, 194)

Finally, I would argue that *Brave New World* is more indebted to the observations of Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents*, which was first published in translation in 1930 by Hogarth Press and would therefore have widely circulated around the time when *Brave New World* was being written. It is a text in which Freud revised his theories of drives from the simple (paradoxical) polarities of 'life' and 'death' as inner drives within the individual to that of aggression and Eros (love and hate) as external drives projected outwards, suggesting that the progress of civilisation

is contingent upon a conflict between these two forces. At heart, *Brave New World* and *Civilisation and its Discontents* both propose that civilisation is at the expense of the human individual. As such, it will become apparent that the primary mode of the novel is not satire, but a genuine and wholehearted sociological examination of the exigencies of civilisation, and how the cost to the individual might be mitigated.

The Rational State of *Brave New World* has mastered Freudian economics in order to possess absolute power. Whilst Pavlovian conditioning and a carefully implemented eugenics programme has helped ensure mass stability in the rational state, no scientific findings have been more important than those made by psychoanalysis: ‘Our Freud’, Mustapha Mond, one of the four world controllers, triumphantly boasts,

had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The world was full of fathers, was therefore full of misery; full of mothers, therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts—full of madness and suicide. (2004, 33)

As such, The Rational State is a world predicated upon Eros, upon a satisfaction of the pleasure principle and wish fulfilments. Through a constant, systematized release of libido in the form of ‘orgie-porgies’ in which the citizens discharge libidinal tension upon each other, whilst maintaining the internalised image of ‘the Great Being’, the leader to which they are all libidinally fixated, The Rational State has not only managed to engineer stability by removing potential unrest that can arise from unsatisfied instinctual urges, but also to make love and desire the binding force of civilisation. To aid in the aversion of suffering and tension, The Rational State has employed the use of the narcotic drug soma: ‘Euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant ... Take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache’ (2004, 46). On the few occasions that citizens find themselves subject to the reality principle, they can retreat to the synthetic world of soma in which the pleasure principle is even more rampant. Again The Rational State has learned from and mastered the theories posited by Freud in *Civilisation and its Discontents*:

The crudest, but also the most effective methods of influence is the chemical one, intoxication. I do not think that anyone completely understands its mechanism, but it is a fact that there are foreign substances which, when present in the blood or tissues ... [make us] become incapable of receiving unpleasurable impulses. (1991, 265)

As such, The Rational State is galvanised against the reality principle and therefore suffering. The instinct towards aggression has been totally eradicated in favour of a complete subordination of all instincts to the instinct of Eros.

By contrast, and in polar opposition to Vibbert's claims, the Savage Reservation is the embodiment of the other instinct underpinning civilisation according to Freud, aggression, and, by logical extension, the death drive, for 'This aggressive instinct is the derivative and the main representative of the death instinct' (1991, 314). Abandoned by The Rational State, the Savage Reservation has descended into a totemic, puritanical state in which stability is bound up with fiercely aggressive chastisement. The opening account of Malpais is soaked with allusions to death: 'in a crevice of rock lay a pile of bones. It was all oppressively queer' (2004, 93) and 'A dead dog was lying on a rubbish heap' (2004, 96). Similarly, the citizens of the Savage Reservation are spectres of death, their wasted carcasses an emblem of a lifetime served in the name of aggression: 'His face was profoundly wrinkled and black, like a mask of obsidian. The toothless mouth had fallen in. His body was bent and emaciated to the bone, almost fleshless' (2004, 95). Instead of Orgy Porgy services, in which the binding force of civilisation is Eros, the Savage Reservation has its own means of solidifying social stability:

The coyote man raised his whip; there was a long moment of expectancy, then a swift movement, the whistle of the lash and its loud flat sounding impact on the flesh. The boy's body quivered; but he made no sound, he walked at the same slow, steady pace ... twice, thrice, four times round he went. (2004, 99)

The sadomasochistic rain dance ritual of the Savage Reservation, deliberately juxtaposed with the

solidarity rituals of the Rational State ('Lenina liked the drums... 'Orgy Porgy,' she whispered to herself. These drums beat out just the same rhythms' (2004, 97)) exemplifies, by contrast, its total subservience to the principle of ascetic aggression. This unbridled aggression, suffering and punishment has led to the descent of the Savage Reservation into a desolate wasteland, wrought with death, pestilence and disease. The parallel civilisations are equally inadequate for they have renounced one instinct in favour of another, and as such relinquished the means by which progress might be made. The opposing societies are not, as Vibbert contends, satirical avatars of Freud's contradictory opposing drives, they are exemplifications of Huxley's acknowledgement of the fact that one drive without its opposite leads civilisation to absurd extremes. Rather than a satirical disparagement of Freud, the opposing civilisations of *Brave New World*, one of which has been physically destroyed by aggression, the other morally destroyed by Eros, seem to affirm Freud's central idea relating to the progress of civilisation:

And now, I think, the meaning of the evolution of civilisation is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species.  
(1991, 314)

This was a conviction that Huxley shared, that for civilisation to progress there must be a balance in the constant progress of struggle and conflict in order to ensure that civilisation evolves in a progressive way. During the early part of this decade, Huxley's essays reveal, in concordance with so many of the intelligentsia at this time, a genuine fear that the instinct of aggression might overrun civilisation in the form of war. This led Huxley to adopt some of the very principles he seemingly reviled in *Brave New World*. His strong opinions on eugenics, for example, seem to mirror the sterilisation programme of the rational state:

The Mental Deficiency Committee advised that the accommodation for mental deficientes should be quadrupled. But even if this most desirable measure were carried through, about two thirds of the present population of half-wits would still be at liberty to have children ... There is one simple and, so far as it goes, effective

way of limiting the multiplication of sub-normal stocks: certified defectives can be sterilised. (1994, 152)

That The Rational State of *Brave New World*, in which the Freudian dogma, combined with behaviourist manipulation and a robust eugenics programme, was not intended to be a satirical attack on the mechanisms that controlled it, but that it instead represented a means by which civilisation might better be stabilised in the face of a second wave of unimaginable aggression, will undoubtedly remain a highly disturbing bone of critical contention. Nonetheless, Huxley concluded that both worlds were grossly inadequate in that they negated and oppressed the individual. In *Brave New World Revisited* Huxley reflected upon the inadequacy of the two worlds he had created in his novel and the acquiescent civilians contained within them:

These millions of abnormally normal people, living without fuss in a society to which, if they were fully human beings, they ought not to be adjusted, still cherish ‘the illusion of individuality’, but in fact they have been to a great extent de-individualized. Their conformity is developing into something like uniformity. But uniformity and freedom are incompatible too ... Man is not made to be an automaton, and if he becomes one, the basis for mental health is destroyed. (Huxley 1994, 29)

In many respects *Brave New World* was an expansion upon the ideas he had begun to develop in ‘After the Fireworks’, working like Freud in *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilisation and its Discontents* through the mechanics and evolution of civilisation and identifying the relationships between the individual and civilisation. Like Fanning, the Savage, who travels from the Savage Reservation to The Rational State, bears the full force of the conflict between love and aggression. Committing suicide in order to release himself from the intolerable torment, the savage is another of Huxley’s protagonists who pays with his life for the struggle against the de-individualising forces of civilisation: ‘the right to grow old and ugly and have too little to eat ... the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow ... the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind ... I claim them all’ (2004, 212). *Brave New World*, as has

been illustrated, is in so many ways a fictional simulation of the forces and exigencies of civilisation that Freud was dealing with in his socio-political works. That such works were circulating in translation while Huxley was writing the novel (Strachey 1991, 245) would suggest that he had such texts in mind, rather than, as Vibbert contends, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which would have faded quite considerably from British consciousness in the intervening decade since its initial publication. Huxley, like Freud, was deeply sceptical of the concept of civilisation for the pressures, illusions, and suffering that it wrought upon the individual, and both concluded that if civilisation is at all necessary, its evolution and development is entirely contingent on a process of conflict between the instincts of love and death, which will always work against the individual. Indeed, it is difficult to disagree with Buchanan's conclusion that Huxley was not using Freud 'as a target for mockery in *Brave New World*, but as a weapon in his satirical attack on the mores of modern life and on its utopian fantasies' (Buchanan 2002, 89).

Though Huxley's essays illustrate a constructive attempt to engineer a stable civilisation, a decline in the Western economy, the subsequent rise in the oppressive civil rule of Germany, Russia and Italy as a result of that decline and the prospect of war as a result of civilisations bent on aggression, meant that the scepticism of the 1920s endured and deepened during the 1930s. There was, however, a clear convergence between Freud and the ideas that underpinned the novels and essays of the early 1930s. During the latter part of the decade, this scepticism manifested itself in pacifism, and a movement away from a Europe stewing in its discontent. In doing so he was taking his lead from Freud who sagaciously concluded that:

Happiness, in the reduced sense in which we recognise it as possible, is a problem of the economics of the individual's libido. There is no golden rule which applies to everyone: every man must find out for himself in what particular fashion he can be saved. (1991, 271)

For Huxley, the path to relative happiness and possible salvation lay in the United States, where he moved in 1937. This chapter has illustrated how Huxley could not reconcile Freud's ideas with

a genuine utopia during the 1930s. However, as will be revealed, Huxley moved, despite himself (given the anti-Freudian dogma to which he converted), towards the idea of a Freudian utopia in his final years.

## Freudian Dissent, Fictional Descent: Huxley, America and the Search for Psychological Salvation

*The man with the cigar kept talking about the unconscious. But the only unconscious they ever pay attention to is the negative unconscious. Not a single word about the positive unconscious ... The whole thing is just pure idiocy!*

Aldous Huxley- *Island*

The theme of conversion is one that has attracted many critics to the study of Huxley's later works. Huxley's move to America in 1937 symbolised a massive geographical conversion, his advocacy for pacifism in the latter part of the same decade a political one. The publication of non-fiction such as *The Doors of Perception* (1954) along with novels such as *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944) not only testifies to a conversion from a predominant intellectual entrenchment in Western thought to Eastern, but also illustrates a conversion from the uniquely Huxleyan brand of agnosticism that his grandfather, T.H. Huxley, championed, to an insatiable curiosity with, and advocacy for, the most obscure branches of mystic thought.

The dominance of the theme of conversion in criticism of Huxley's later works is exemplified by book-length studies dedicated to its treatment. In *Aldous Huxley Between East and West* (2001) and *Aldous Huxley: A Quest for Values* (1972), the conversion is seen as one in which the disgruntled young Western cynic of 1920 is eventually succeeded by the sagacious Eastern mystic of 1950. Works such as these, which depict Huxley on a steady path towards a metaphorical pinnacle of spiritual enlightenment, have been endorsed by the eulogistic biographical accounts of Bedford (1973 and 1974), Hull (2004) and Laura Huxley (1968) for example. As well as the more positivistic accounts of conversion that narrate a widening in

Huxley's intellectual scope, there is evident in some critical accounts, however, an acknowledgment of the decline in Huxley's artistic powers in his final years.

Woodcock concedes that the growth of Huxley's spiritual powers lead to a decline in his artistic ones: 'the austerity of the aspiring mystic had destroyed the austerity of the novelist ... *Island* was an act of literary self-indulgence, a spare fable turned into an unwieldy manifesto' (Woodcock 1972, 285). The feeling that his later fiction was distinctly inferior to the earlier works was also a sentiment felt strongly by Huxley's contemporaries. Acknowledging the steady decline in his powers, the English novelist V.S Pritchett, in 1955, laments:

One has to make harsh criticisms of the cleverest writer of an exceptionally brilliant generation. This copious and original novelist tends now to the journalistic rewrite of his former self. (in Watt 1975, 411)

It was Huxley's propensity toward 'didacticism [that] had crept forward steadily in [his] American fiction' (Dunaway 1989, 363) that was instrumental in his artistic decline, and at the heart of the conversion theme lies the idea that 'in the latter thirty years of his life Huxley quite deliberately turned from the role of writer as artist to that of writer as teacher' (Woodcock 1972, 20). It was during this latter period of Huxley's life, spent in America where 'no nation outside Germany and Austria was more hospitable to psychoanalysis' (Edmundson 2007, 32), that Huxley's didacticism turned more specifically towards the 'sixty-four billion dollar question' of mental health (Huxley 1956, 12). During his final years, Huxley turned fiercely against psychoanalysis, abandoning any notion that Freud and psychoanalysis could ever offer a genuine means of curing neurosis, and denying that psychoanalysis had ever exercised any influence over him. As shall be seen, the essays of Huxley's American years are undoubtedly defined by a robust and relentless anti-Freudianism.

However, to call Huxley's anti-psychoanalytic conversion a smooth transition from acceptance during the 1930s to outright rejection in the final years would be an oversimplification. Although the later essays maintained a uniform anti-Freudian position, the

later novels frequently bear witness to Huxley 'regressing' to the position of cynical pessimism he adopted in the 1920s, Freud is again utilised as a weapon in the attack on the mores of contemporary society. Huxley's Janus-faced attitude towards psychoanalysis will reveal itself not only through an examination of the later essays dealing with the subject of psychology, but also in his fiction, which maintains psychoanalysis as a major theme. Similarly, it will be argued that in his late fiction, in spite of the anti-Freudian agenda of the essays, Huxley continued to make extensive reference to and, as an analysis of his final novel *Island* will reveal, continued to endorse the psychoanalytic *weltanschauung* to the point of envisioning psychoanalytic ideas in the mechanics of a genuine utopia.

Huxley's multifaceted conversion began with *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936). The novel is widely recognized amongst critics as his central conversion novel, the 'single complete expression of the conversion theme' (Bowering 1968, 20), and his most structurally innovative and artistically most successful novel: 'Everything he wrote earlier is in a sense preparatory, everything subsequent a tailing off' (1968, 20). However, the 'conversion' expressed in the novel is as problematic as the years he spent writing it; a period defined by a 'creative agony of a kind Huxley had never experienced before' completed 'after long interruptions due to mental depressions and disturbances' (Woodcock 1972, 20). It is therefore not difficult to understand why *Eyeless in Gaza* has such a perplexing 'traumatised' structure, which Antony Beavis, the novel's protagonist, goes some way to describing:

Somewhere in the mind a lunatic shuffled a pack of snapshots and dealt them out at random, shuffled once more and dealt them out in a different order, again and again indefinitely. There is no chronology. (Huxley 1977, 20)

A good deal of critical discussion has been dedicated to what Firchow calls the 'fragmented and antichronistic' structure of the novel and he notes how this structure has been 'the cause of disturbance' amongst critics and readers alike (Firchow 1972, 147), for its complexities not only make the reading experience a challenge, they also make it a deeply unsettling and bewildering experience. In a development of the earlier novels, Huxley is representing the complexion and

behaviours of the human mind through the very structure of the novel, with chapters constantly shifting between present events, and their remembered associations through multiple and fragmented timelines. *Eyeless in Gaza* is quite patently a psychological novel, but more specifically, it is a psychoanalytical novel, for childhood traumas of the past provide the locus of meaning for the neurotic present. Quite simply, *Eyeless in Gaza* is the stage upon which the protagonist, Anthony Beavis, battles with his unwieldy and trauma-ridden unconscious: on the very first page Beavis notes how ‘The dramas of memory are always Hamlet in modern dress’ (1977, 7), and the death of Antony’s mother, and a loveless relationship with his father immediately foreground the fact that Oedipus is at the centre of the novel’s psychological landscape.

*Eyeless in Gaza* witnesses Beavis’s attempts to examine his own traumatic past in order to assimilate it with the dissolute and deeply dissatisfying present, and therefore live what *Point Counter Point*’s Philip Quarles calls ‘more integrally’ in the present. In the novel it is implied that the danger of living in the immediate present, ignorant of the existence and meaning of one’s past, leaves one extremely vulnerable to the traumas of one’s memory. In the famous opening scene where Beavis is making love to Helen Amberley on the roof, a process of free association is triggered in which past traumas flood into the psyche. In the arresting lucidity of the moment of remembrance, Beavis is jolted into a realisation that memory acts as a permanent threat to a coherent sense of time and space, like a constantly cascading waterfall into madness:

Even the seemingly most solid fragments of present reality are riddled with pitfalls. What could be more uncompromisingly *there*, in the present, than a woman’s body in the sunshine? And yet it had betrayed him. The firm ground of its sensual immediacy and of his own physical tenderness had opened beneath his feet and precipitated him into another time and place. Nothing was safe (1977, 20)

The entire novel is imbued with the sense of crippling existential angst that Huxley has, as this thesis has shown, given extensive expression to throughout his fiction. However, *Eyeless in Gaza*, devoid of the satirical impulse that energised the earlier works, presents the theme in a

powerful and penetrating way. The central psychological theme, manifested in the novel's structure which symbolises what Baker calls a 'complex interplay between the "dramas of memory"' and the urgencies and vagaries of an intractable present' (Baker 1982, 146), is yet another variation on the theme of living free of the trappings of intellectualism, and of the 'rats and black beetles' (Huxley 1994, 72) of the past, a theme that is dominant throughout Huxley's fiction. As Baker contends:

Anthony Beavis's attempt to rise above 'the drain pipe of *Weltanschauung*' to become the 'good man' who is 'merely a less completely closed universe' - neither a victim of the anarchy within 'the cellars of his mind' nor a captive of the 'prison' of knowledge- is a movement from spiritual confinement and psychologically crippling enclosure towards a new freedom in relation to time, history and death. (1982, 164)

The novel's preoccupation with traumatic memory, exemplified through the character of Beavis who is wracked throughout by cruel and painful memories from the vaults of his unconscious mind, again illustrates the fact that Freud was very much at the centre of Huxley's ideas relating to psychology. Though Huxley later criticised Freud for predominantly concerning himself with 'the state of mind that leads to disaster' (1963, 32), *Eyeless in Gaza*, despite the evident political conversion to pacifism, is clearly a novel that is, by his own yardstick, 'Freudian', for the novel is preoccupied by trauma, disaster, death and disappointment.

Despite Beavis's conversion to pacifism leading him to a more humanistic and charitable mode of existence, he is still consigned at the end of *Eyeless in Gaza* to the same psychological no-man's-land as the protagonists of the early novels. Beavis's attempt to 'rise above the drain pipe of *Weltanschauung*' (1982, 164) through proactive preaching of pacifist values is upset by a violent episode in which a hard right political sect who refer to themselves as 'a group of patriotic Englishmen' (1977, 408) threaten him with death if he goes ahead with the speech he plans to deliver at an important political conference. This present-day trauma throws Beavis into the

quagmire of all his past traumas, which are collectively described, in the final passages, as ‘the voice’:

The voice spoke out of a cloud of fatigue. For a minute he was nothing but a dead, dry husk enclosing black weariness and negation ... Suddenly he laughed aloud. Carried to such a pitch, expressed so ingeniously, baseness was almost comic. (1977, 409)

Beavis appears to be deeply lodged in the same psychological crevice as all of Huxley’s previous protagonists. However, for a brief flash, Beavis achieves psychological salvation, temporarily transcending space, time and the dark vaults of memory in order to discover a new, deeper, more profound state of consciousness:

In peace there is unity. Unity with other lives. Unity with all being. For beneath all being, beneath the attractions and repulsions, lies peace. The same peace as underlies the frenzy of the mind. (1977, 414)

But the epiphany is short lived, and Beavis is again pressed with the crippling dilemma of whether death is a price worth paying for a meaningful life of pacifism, lived in ‘unity with other lives...unity with all being’ (1977, 414) or whether it is better to abandon such convictions and return to the familiar womb of pessimism, merely ‘looking on from your private box making comments’ (1977, 409).

Whether or not Beavis is once again plunged into the ‘frenzy of evil and separation’ (1977, 414), or whether he is able to permanently overcome ‘the voice’ of his traumas, is a question that Huxley chooses to leave open at the novel’s conclusion. The ambiguity of the conclusion represents Huxley’s lingering skepticism about the methods by which the neurotic individual might better understand and so transcend the nihilistic nightmare he is forced to endure. For Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza* represented the tentative beginnings of a quest for psychological salvation, for a more positive, and therefore, by his own personal criteria, a more overtly anti-

Freudian position on what was for Huxley the ever increasingly important subject of psychological health.

It is therefore surprising to discover that the multiple conversions that *Eyeless in Gaza* alludes to never materialise in much of the subsequent fiction. The onset of World War Two did much to re-energise Huxley's pessimism after *Eyeless in Gaza*. With the gears of war firmly engaged by 1939, the same year as his next novel, *After Many a Summer* was published, Huxley's zealous and vociferous advocacy for pacifism steadily diminished into a personal and private conviction: 'Aldous was cut off from the mass of his contemporaries. He took no direct action. He did not write any more pamphlets or letters to the press' (Bedford 1974, 3). *After Many A Summer* (1939) is testament to Huxley's 'regression' to the state of cynical condemnation with which he had been so familiar in the earlier works:

You're lost. Utterly lost. Doomed to perpetual imprisonment in your ego- doomed to be a personality in a world of personalities; and a world of personalities is *this* world, the world of greed and fear and hatred, of war and capitalism and dictatorship and slavery. Yes, you've got to be cynical (1961, 97)

The negative trajectory of *After Many a Summer* is indicative of Huxley's literary and psychological regression from the unity that is proposed in *Eyeless in Gaza*, to the fragmentation of the early destructive satires. The main catalyst for this regression was undoubtedly World War Two, which would have served to reawaken traumas of death, loss and destruction: 'Throughout the book, Huxley's self-rage boiled over: that same pessimism which had darkened after his blindness and the sudden deaths of his mother and Trev' (King 1989, 110). Propter is the character through which Huxley's cynicism is most clearly discerned:

between the animal below and the spirit above there is nothing on the human level except a swarm of constellated impulses and sentiments and notions. Memory and the slowly changing body constitute a kind of spatio-temporal cage, within which the swarm is enclosed. To talk of it as though it were a coherent and enduring

‘soul’ is madness. On the strictly human level there is no such thing as a soul (1961, 218).

The current of anger and despair that courses through Propter’s veins illustrates how little Huxley’s retreat to America, a relative sanctuary from war, helped in protecting him from the psychological effects of the conflict. Having lived through one World War, Huxley could not have failed to foresee the mass destruction that was soon to impose itself upon the world. In *After Many a Summer* the hope of ‘Unity with other lives. Unity with all being’ that is cautiously proposed in *Eyeless in Gaza* has been obliterated by the prospect of war. The mind is described as a cage, the thoughts and memories within it, imprisoned. War had again foregrounded the ‘state of mind that leads to disaster’, and Huxley, as this novel exemplifies, was clearly not immune from its impact. For Baker, *After Many a Summer* is the stage upon which Huxley showcases humanity’s ‘decline into a state of cynical nihilism extended into a prolonged process of entropic stagnation’, a rather bleak perspective that was energised by Huxley’s personal conviction that ‘the world is indeed a lunatic asylum’ (Baker 1982, 190). The prevalence of neurosis in the novel, represented by each character’s perverse and confused relationship with the other, highlights Huxley’s retreat from the prospect of psychological salvation. In the context of this novel, his (simplistic) criticism of the apparent reductionism at work in the psychoanalytic method seems mildly hypocritical:

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 (Huxley 1978, 147).

Psychoanalysis, according to Huxley, concerns itself only with the base and most animalistic physical processes. It dealt entirely with what Propter in *After Many A Summer* termed ‘the animal below’ but never with ‘the spirit above’ (1961, 218). But the inclusion of the character Joe Stoyte, the psychotic billionaire whose money allows him to indulge in ‘violent eroticism’ with a girl a third of his age (1961, 41), and whose immense material wealth allows him, quite literally, to get away with murder (1961, 221), would suggest that Huxley was all too ready to

accept that humanity had a propensity towards ‘the animal below’ rather than ‘the spirit above’. Such an interpretation is supported by the novel’s conclusion, where Dr Obispo and Jo Stoyte’s search for everlasting life is revealed to reside in a two-hundred year old ‘foetal ape’ (1961, 249). Huxley intends for this scene to be as tragic as it is comic. Whilst the image of an ape as ‘The Fifth Earl of Gonister’ wearing ‘the Order of the Garter’ cannot fail to amuse, it is a darkly satirical projection of humanity’s ignominious destiny.

*Ape and Essence*, a novel written a decade later, picks up where *After Many a Summer* left off, depicting yet further regression into a negative dystopia of psychological torment in which traumas ‘swarm’ around the ‘spatio-temporal cage of the mind’ (1961, 218). The story, which adopts the form of a Hollywood screen play, depicts a human race utterly devoid of humanity, descended to an ape-like existence that has taken the ‘materialism of the body’ that Huxley criticised in Freud to unimaginable extremes. Dr Poole, the novella’s protagonist, is a vivid symbol of humanity falling down ‘the drainpipe of *weltanschauung*’ (1982, 164) to ‘the animal below’:

For a moment Dr. Poole hesitates between the inhibitory recollection of his Mother, the fidelity of Loola prescribed by all the poets and novelists, and the warm, elastic Facts of Life. He chooses, as we might expect, the Facts of Life. He caresses either bosom with hands that have never done anything of the kind except in unavowable imaginings. The noises of mating swell to a brief climax. (1949, 112)

The Los Angeles of *Ape and Essence*, ravaged by death and destruction, is a dystopian rendering of the ersatz and capital driven America that Huxley ‘still regarded with revulsion tempered by pitying amusement’ in the 1940s (Woodcock 1972, 217). Huxley’s black pessimism in *Ape and Essence* was not unfounded. World War Two had provided him with numerous examples of the ease with which man can descend into animalistic modes of existence, and commit incomprehensible acts of inhumanity. The vast open desert, which is the barren setting of *Ape and Essence*, immediately foregrounds the fact that ‘the bombs and the grisly revelations of the

Holocaust intensified the loss of Huxley's sanctuary' (King 1989, 198), for in this Los Angeles there is no sanctuary; either physically from the searing heat nor mentally from the madness that has overrun the totemic civilisation that is depicted. But as much as *Ape and Essence* can be viewed as a novel in which Huxley drives another pernicious nail into the coffin of humanity, it also illustrates a profound scepticism towards the very concept of conversion that Huxley had introduced in *Eyeless in Gaza*. As the narrator ruefully reflects:

and each remorse bringing with it the idea of punishment and all its attendant sensualities. And so on, indefinitely. Well, as I say, let loose those into this, and the result may easily be a religious conversion. But a conversion to what? Most ignorant of what he is most assured, our poor friend doesn't know. (1949, 117)

'Most ignorant of what he is most assured' would prove to be an apt analysis of Huxley's own conversion experience. Huxley had more or less remained assured of a predominantly negative examination of the human condition through most of his life. However, his mystical experiences, his experimenting with LSD, and his increasing research into the field of mental health, coupled with the slowly fading spectre of war, engendered a sea change in his world view during the 1950s. Undoubtedly, the initial catalyst for Huxley's u-turn on the subject of psychology was the experience of mescaline, which he gave full account of in *The Doors of Perception* (1954):

To be shaken out of the ruts of ordinary perception, to be shown for a few timeless hours the outer and inner world ... as they are apprehended, directly and unconditionally, by the Mind at Large— this is an experience of inestimable value to everyone and especially to the intellectual (Huxley 1977, 73)

Huxley's numinous experience of mescaline shook him out of 'the ruts of ordinary perception'. The thoughts and visions that he experienced under the drug's influence lead to an exponential widening of both intellectual and spiritual awareness. It was not until Huxley took mescaline that the conversion that was cautiously begun in *Eyeless in Gaza* was finally realised, and the idea of utopia could be genuinely entertained. Huxley's experience of mescaline was far

more than a happy accident, it was the pinnacle of his long and arduous search not only for a means by which the ailments of near-blindness, insomnia and back pain might be appeased (Bedford 1974, 255), but also for what this chapter has been calling ‘psychological salvation’ from what Huxley himself called ‘the demon circuit’ of traumatic memory (Smith 1969, 634). In a letter to his brother Julian, he argued that life should be a ‘spiral development’ from ‘unconscious animal’, through ‘conscious human’ up to ‘superconscious spiritual being’ (Smith 1969, 449), and the search for a so-called superconscious spiritual existence lead him through Dianetics, Scientology, Entelechy Therapy, Mesmerism E-Therapy and Hypnosis. Indeed, parapsychology was more than a mere source of intellectual curiosity: the subject of what Huxley had called ‘the Mind at Large’ in *The Doors of Perception*, or ‘the Mind with a large M’ in *Island* (1994, 204), grew to be something of an obsessional neurosis in itself, with massive personal ramifications for both Huxley and his cancer stricken wife, Maria: ‘though the couple were faddists of psychological lore, the reader would be mistaken, however, in thinking these concerns casual (King 1989, 278).

Huxley’s expertise and extensive experience in the field of parapsychology led him to consider ‘the sixty four billion dollar question’ of mental health at great length and depth during the 1950s and 60s. Informed by his own experiences of hallucinogenic drugs, he wrote extensively and authoritatively on the subject. *The Devils of Loudun* (1952), ‘Madness Badness Sadness’ (1956), ‘The Oddest Science’ (1957), *The Human Situation* (1958) and *Literature and Science* (1963) all indicate the obsession that psychology quickly became in the twilight of his life. Psychoanalysis, as he repeatedly took pains to make clear, was at odds with the widespread application of effective psychological therapy:

As I said, I was never intoxicated by Freud. I feel more and more strongly that you have to have the total organic approach. We *have* to see things as *a totality*- we *have* to make the best *of all the worlds*. (Bedford 1974, 260)

It is not difficult to understand why Huxley became so fiercely anti-Freudian. His experiences of holistic psychiatry or what he called the ‘organic approach’ which was ‘to *attack*

*on all fronts* [of mental illness] *at once*' (1974, 258) were so successful that he could not see a more effective means by which neuroses might be cured. As a result of his own experiences of holistic treatment, he regarded the effectiveness of the psychoanalytical 'talking cure' with an unshakable scepticism, for not only did psychoanalysis essentially fail to cure neuroses due to the fact that it only approached 'the problem of human nature on one sector of the front, the psychological' (Huxley 1963, 83), but the practice was also riddled with quackery renowned, as Huxley articulated in a letter, for its 'ten year analyses' and 'couch addicts' (Smith 1968, 896).

Huxley again re-iterated these misgivings in *Literature and Science* (1963), a psychiatric manifesto detailing the ultimate means by which the end of psychological salvation might be attained. As with any other manifesto, the policies are punctuated with a debunking of the opposition, in this instance, Freud. Huxley begins by mounting a full scale attack against psychoanalysis, announcing that 'The Freudian hypothesis is open to criticism on many scores. It uses words which sound and read like scientific terms, but which are in fact not scientific at all' (1963, 80), and 'To these logical deficiencies of the Freudian theory must be added its one-sidedness and over-simplification of the problem under study by a wholesale and wholly unwarranted disregard of relevant facts' (1963, 81). Whilst most critics have tended to pass over strong statements such as these, they illustrate Huxley's great desire to debunk the psychoanalytic diagnosis of the human condition. The academic scrutiny for which Huxley had been famed was clearly lacking in his pronouncements on the subject of psychoanalysis, and such venomous accounts of psychoanalysis' failings as a therapeutic method would suggest that the shadow of Freud and 'the state of mind that leads to disaster' was one that Huxley was never completely successful in surmounting.

The final fictional attack on psychoanalysis was mounted in Huxley's final novel, *Island* (1962). In it, he gives full expression to his personal beliefs as to how 'the sixty four billion dollar question' of mental health is answered, and it is significant that he couched the issue of mental health in monetary terms, for *Island* is the elaborate fable of a mentally perfect paradise in a perpetual struggle against the ever-growing force of capitalism. The world of Pala is the canvas

upon which Huxley projects his perfect society; it is a novelistic simulation of many of his convictions about how sociological and psychological utopia is achieved whilst being ‘surrounded on all sides by insane and powerful and threatening barbarians’ (Huxley 1994, 179).

*Island* was always intended as a genuine utopia and therefore a ‘kind of reverse *Brave New World*’ (Huxley in Firchow 1972, 180); but by committing so wholeheartedly to the concept of utopia, the novel badly suffered as a work of dramatic fiction. Huxley admitted to his son Matthew that a good utopian novel ‘is one that cannot be accomplished with complete success’ (Smith 1969, 875). Indeed, the end product was, as Woodcock admitted, an ‘unwieldy manifesto’ (Woodcock 1973, 285) of utopian thought. Perhaps the most ‘unwieldy’ component is Freud, whose contribution to the Palanese utopia is, in truth, far more complex than Huxley intended. Psychoanalysis is immediately fore-grounded as a kind of cautionary tale against bad psychological practice:

The man with the cigar kept talking about the unconscious. But only the unconscious they ever pay attention to is the negative unconscious, the garbage that people have tried to get rid of by burying it in the basement. Not a single word about the positive unconscious ... These people just leave the unfortunate neurotic to wallow in his old bad habits of never being all there in the present time. The whole thing is just pure idiocy! (Huxley 1994, 74)

Although the utopian republic of Pala seems to have rejected the teachings of ‘the man with the cigar’, goading critics such as Meckier into the conclusion that ‘Freud and utopia were incompatibilities’ (Meckier 2007, 132), the workings of the utopian state are in fact heavily indebted to psychoanalytic teaching. Firstly, the Palanese are free, like the citizens of The Rational State, to engage freely in sexual acts with whomever they please. However, unlike The Rational State, these purely sexual relations are fortified and enriched by strong ties of mutual respect between citizens. Rather than life being merely a tireless pursuit of the pleasure principle as in the rational state of *Brave New World*, the principle philosophy of the Pala utopia is to ‘bring home as vividly as possible the essential solidarity of men, the community of experience in

mystical light' (Firchow 1972, 181). Although the Palanese have learned that satisfying the pleasure principle is essential for social stability, they have also learned that the reality principle is a vital tool for progress and for the teaching of a genuinely wholesome morality. The rigorous Savage Reservation-like initiation of all Palanese adolescents is a process designed to promote an awareness of the reality principle, to highlight 'the essential precariousness of life' (1994, 81). The Palanese rite of passage is therefore intended as a means of promoting the value of life, rather than, as with the Savage Reservation, intended as a means of amplifying the spectre of death in the individual's consciousness.

The people of Pala have also learned from Freud that aggression is an irrepressible and central component of the human condition. Rather than the systematic use of drugs such as *soma* in The Rational State, designed to curb this aggressive instinct, Pala instead opts for a more constructive and humane system of allowing its citizens to give vent to their aggressive urges. By promoting the act of climbing as a means of pacifying aggression, Pala has illustrated that the state does not have to intervene in the war against aggression, as do both The Rational State and The Savage Reservation. In short, Pala has understood the constructive power of, and mastered, the Freudian art of sublimation: 'an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life' (Freud 1995, 742). As Vijaya, a citizen of Pala who admits he may have become, like Stalin, 'a Muscle Man' (1994, 173) explains: 'I've climbed my way out of the ugliest temptations to throw my weight around' (1994, 181). Vijaya also reflects on those who pay with their lives for their aggressive urges:

But if Dugald hadn't made a habit of risking his life, it might have been poor everybody for other reasons ... Hurting them because you're too naturally aggressive and too prudent, or too ignorant, to work off your aggression on a precipice (1994, 182)

Climbing is a highly visual symbol of man's progress. For those whose aggressive urges lead them to their death it prevents, unlike Spandrell in *Point Counter Point*, or Jo Stoyte in *After Many a Summer*, innocent, sane people from being dragged into their neurotic vortex. The Island, like Freud, accepts that for some neurosis is a constant battle that may end in premature death.

The Palanese (and Huxley) frequently claim that psychological utopia is achieved by attacking illness 'on all the fronts' leading to a neurosis rate of 'about one in twenty' as opposed to the outside world's 'one in four' (1994, 73). However, in truth, the extremely low prevalence of neuroses is perhaps due to the fact that all Palanese citizens are masters in the practice of the psychoanalytic 'talking cure'. This is exemplified through Will Farnaby, the novel's protagonist. Farnaby cannot properly remember how he came to arrive in Pala, but rather than being subjected to hypnosis, drug induced therapy, or intensive psychiatric treatment 'on all the fronts'; he manages to unlock the vault of memory thanks to a conversation he has with Mary Sarojini, a young native of Pala:

'Tell me again about those snakes and how you fell down.'

He shook his head. 'I don't want to.'

... 'Then you'll never get rid of them. They'll be crawling about inside your head forever. And serve you right,' Mary Sarojini said severely.

Will Farnaby made no comment, but lay there in silence, shaken by irrepressible shudderings.

'Well if you won't do it yourself, I'll have to do it for you. Listen Will, there was a snake, a big green snake, and you almost stepped on him. You almost stepped on him, and it gave you such a fright that you lost your balance, you fell. Now say it yourself- say it!'

'I fell.'

'Say it again, Will.' He was sobbing now. 'Say it again,' she insisted.

It was tearing him to pieces but he said it. 'I fell.' ...

Gradually the sobbing died down. The words came more easily and the memories they aroused were less painful.

‘But you didn’t fall very far,’ Mary Sarojini now said.

‘No I didn’t fall very far,’ he agreed

‘So what’s all the fuss about?’ the child enquired.’ (1994, 12/13)

This analysis, in sharp contrast to the failed analysis of Huxley’s first work of fiction, ‘Richard Greenow’, illustrates the apparent success of the psychoanalytic ‘talking cure’ in spite of Huxley’s reservations about the method. The young Mary identifies and makes conscious both the physical and metaphorical ‘snakes crawling about inside your [Will Farnaby’s] head’, by literally repeating the traumatic drama of the memory in the present; by making the unconscious conscious, ‘the words came more easily and the memories they aroused were less painful’. This analysis certainly reveals the indebtedness that Pala has to psychoanalysis. Ironically, the low levels of neuroses are thanks to a culture well informed of the teachings of the figure they contemptuously refer to as ‘the man with the cigar’. The fact that a child conducts the analysis on an adult reveals the centrality of psychoanalysis to the mechanics of Pala. Freudian teachings are not only important in a medicinal and therapeutic context: the psychoanalytic method has been made into a central component of Palanese children’s primary education, allowing them to become familiar with their unconscious and so prevent the onset of neurosis, creating the psychological utopia that Huxley envisaged, in which each citizen is capable of psychologically emancipating another.

Huxley’s frequent disparagement of Freud in *Island* would suggest that he did not intend for Freud to be central to the workings of a genuine utopia. However, as has been illustrated, there is a compelling case for such an argument. In Huxley’s final years, as a result of parapsychology and experiences of hallucinogenic drugs, the liberal humanist eventually succeeded the hardened cynic, and the huge intellectual rift between novels such as *Ape and Essence* and *Island* is testament to the dramatic shift in Huxley’s interpretation of the human condition. However,

though *Island* is clearly an attempt to distance the concept of utopia from Freudian ideas, synonymous with the 'state of mind that leads to disaster', there is no doubt that Huxley's extensive reading into the subject of psychoanalysis meant that, despite himself, he succeeded in integrating psychoanalytical ideas into a more positive world view.

In her contribution to *The Third Aldous Huxley Symposium* which is a brief assessment of the question of Huxley's attitudes towards eastern and western psychology, Golovacheva argues that Huxley's 'overwhelming fear of control' caused his 'contempt for psychoanalytic therapies since, in his view, all such manipulations were potentially dehumanizing' (Golovacheva 2007, 129). Whilst I would agree that Huxley's relationship with psychoanalysis was one dominated by fear (of its power and its validity), I would contend that *Island* inadvertently taught Huxley that the psychoanalytic 'talking cure' is perhaps the most humane, and potentially successful, mode of psychological therapy; for his favoured 'attack on all the fronts', a method that included hypnosis, drug use, even surgery is, by very definition, aggressive and inhumane. The talking cure, as Will Farnaby learns, allows the individual to understand the nature and cause of his neurosis, and to therefore overcome it, rather than to have it removed as a result of an attack on all the fronts whilst not learning anything about the condition that afflicts him. Huxley's final novel witnesses, for the first time, the protagonist truly identifying with the source of his neurosis, and by doing so transcending it. Psychoanalysis is the method by which the psyche is emancipated, and for this reason *Island* is a novel that inadvertently testifies to the validity of psychoanalysis as a therapeutic method, despite the exhaustive attempts to do the exact opposite. Phillips states that:

It is not that psychoanalysis holds one in its grip, it is that people grip on to it (as a hate-object, as a love-object, but not usually as an irrelevant object). (2006, viii)

This is an accurate assessment of Huxley's own relationship with psychoanalysis. Whether it was a loved or hated object is not of concern, the fact remains that whilst many intellectual pre-occupations came and went; Freud was a constantly relevant and discussed subject in Huxley's works. Despite the apparent scorn he reserved for Freud, he was a figure that Huxley simply failed to let go of. Whilst Huxley's aversions to psychoanalysis have lead most critics to the belief

that he was simply against Freud, Huxley became increasingly Janus-faced during his final years, disparaging Freud at great length in his essays, yet at the same time making Freud more and more central to the ideological core of his novels. Perhaps more importantly, the public war on Freud that Huxley staged in his essays and final novel symbolised a very personal attempt to emancipate himself from the fierce grip of psychoanalysis, and therefore leave behind 'the state of mind that leads to disaster' that was, for Huxley, synonymous with Freud's world of the unconscious, once and for all.

## Conclusion

Above all, it is hoped that the significance of psychoanalysis to Huxley's art has been adequately justified. Through a study of Huxley's literary life across several decades and in context, an attempt has been made to acquire a comprehensive impression of the way in which psychoanalysis was regarded by Huxley and the way in which it was used in his fiction. The fact that no simple or straightforward conclusion can be made on either count is testament to a writer about whom there is still a great deal to say, both in regard to the subject of psychoanalysis and in wider critical debates of his work.

Despite the ambiguities that surround the subject of this thesis, one conclusion can be made. Psychoanalysis was one of the few constants in Huxley's fiction and non-fiction, and for this reason it deserves recognition in criticism as an indisputably significant element of his work, beyond the tentative assertions made by previous critics. It was undoubtedly a subject that fascinated Huxley, and, as an analysis of the novels has revealed, one that even inspired him. In the 1920s, Freud's notoriety as a subversive champion of modernity was something Huxley was keen to emulate. As such, Freud figures regularly as a weapon in the satirical artillery against the mores of post-war society in the fiction of this decade. In the decade leading up to World War Two it has been illustrated how Huxley's political concerns manifested themselves in activism, leading him to an endorsement of psychoanalytic concepts in the hope they might restore stability in a world crippled by mass hysteria. Huxley's move to America signified an attempt to leave behind the war-ravaged world of 'madness, badness, sadness'. Likewise, an attempt was made to leave behind psychoanalysis and 'the state of mind that leads to disaster' during these final years. However, as the essays on the subject during the 1950s and 60s reiterate, Huxley never reached the point of declaring psychoanalysis an insignificant subject, and was therefore unsuccessful,

despite the positive and enlightening experiences of mysticism and mescaline, in transcending the domain of neurosis and trauma. On the contrary, Freud became something of an obsession for Huxley and, to adopt an Orwellian analogy, he became a figure 'inside the whale' of psychoanalysis; unable to extricate his own ideas and convictions from those propagated by psychoanalysis.

For this reason, as the title suggests, psychoanalysis behaved in many ways like Huxley's shadow. It was a subject that Huxley was unable to leave behind, one that even pursued him as a constant reminder of the psychological darkness that threatened the delicate constructs of sanity. Above all, psychoanalysis was a subject with which Huxley clearly identified, for its persistent prevalence throughout a long and productive literary career illustrates the fact that Freud was a figure who constantly provoked, annoyed, vitalized, fascinated yet never bored Huxley. Though the terms of the relationship between Huxley and the shadow of psychoanalysis often shifted, oscillating from outright acceptance to vehement rejection, it was a relationship wherein the intensity never waned. Jung, who is in many ways a bridge between Freud and Huxley, given the strong ties that existed between Freud and Jung, and the degree to which Huxley respected and admired Jungian psychology, described the shadow archetype as 'the dark side of man's being, his sinister shadow ... represent[ing] the true spirit of life as against the arid scholar' (Winston 1989, 262). This description proves an adequate justification for the divergent attitudes to psychoanalysis in Huxley's essays and fiction. Though the scholar would reject Freud with every means at his disposal, the novelist, attempting to represent the true spirit of life, could not resist the dark, subversive shadow of psychoanalysis.

By studying a relatively underdeveloped yet highly contentious topic of criticism, and by studying several of Huxley's lesser known works alongside the more widely discussed major novels, it is hoped that an original, even provocative contribution has been made to the critical heritage of Aldous Huxley. Whilst I would consider this thesis to have succeeded in the breadth of its focus, the dimensions of the study have meant that this might have come at the expense of depth in some instances, leading to relatively short critical assessments of some texts.

Nonetheless, the works that have received less attention here have already received adequate critical attention elsewhere, meaning that their inclusion in this thesis would have served as little more than revisions of other critic's work. Still, there is a great deal still to be said on this subject; one feels, for example, that the essays dealing with psychoanalysis in the 1950s and 60s would be ample source material for a thesis in their own right.

Above all, an attempt has been made to follow Huxley's lead in *The Doors of Perception* by attempting to jolt the figure of Huxley 'out of the ruts of ordinary perception'. Reflecting upon the superiority that Huxley exercised over the ideas with which he worked, Woodcock describes Huxley as 'the puppet-master... [whose] apparent deference to his teachers conceals the fact that he is annexing them rather than accepting their suzerainty' (Woodcock 1972, 144). However, this thesis has depicted Huxley as a tormented, jaded, fallible figure, often unable to adequately control the puppet with the spectacles and the cigar. Nonetheless, these personal weaknesses make Huxley a more tangible and authentic figure, and his literary achievements all the more remarkable, for one is reminded of the fact that despite the personal adversities he faced, Huxley's personal trials were always secondary to his concern for the trials that humanity faced in what was an unprecedented period of destruction and change. As a result, it is hoped that the figure that has been projected in this thesis is one, as Bradshaw in *The Hidden Huxley* hoped, that is 'even more deserving of our attention' (1994, xxiii).

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