

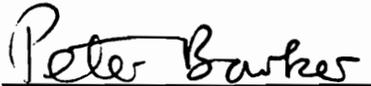
William H. Sheldon and the Culture of the Somatotype

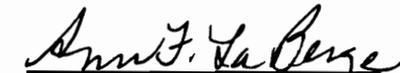
by

Stephen H. Gatlin

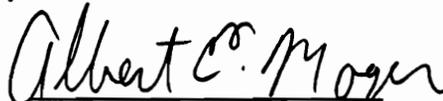
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(ABSTRACT)

The burden of this dissertation is to show that William Sheldon's somatotype project should be seen as an integral aspect of modernist culture. Sheldon engaged the same problems with modernity and the "Second Industrial Revolution" (urbanization, overpopulation, industrialization, alienation) that confronted modernist poets, novelists, and philosophers. In this I am elaborating Dorothy Ross's recent metaphor, "modernist impulses in the human sciences" (1994). Both scientists and artists were responding to the social chaos and fragmentation engendered by WWI, by capitalism, and by a science and technology that was often felt to have run amok. Advocacy of eugenics for Anthony Ludovici, William Sheldon, and Aldous Huxley (polemics against "promiscuous breeding", overpopulation, medical and psychological holism, "aristocracy", nobility) was another means of defending conservative values against the onslaught of modernism.

The German romantic, holistic, tradition (the "Goethean vision") in the physical and biological sciences that has

been treated recently by Ann Harrington (1996) carried reactionary assumptions and priorities that duly influenced British and American constitutionalists. Sheldon's quest of the somatotype, his attempt to map the human physique scientifically, was, at least in his case, a means of salvaging personality, character, and soul in a way that was consonant with the aims of German holism and hence, to a significant degree, with the aims of the nazis, who appropriated the tradition for political purposes and propagandized it in their art. Sheldon's studies in human constitution possessed the same "value-base" (Weingart) as much of German medicine and psychology during the first four decades of this century. Sheldon's anti-Freudian position was intended to reindulcate a place for moral character and eugenic breeding in psychology. Sheldon insisted that character was a seasoned and hard-won proposition, as opposed to a cheap jettisoning of sexual inhibitions. Sheldon opposed the sexual origin of neurosis and replaced it with a highly disciplined character-building that was consistent with a nineteenth-century masculine ethos.

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I have received invaluable assistance from many others. I wish to thank Lesley Hall at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London for sharing her research on Anthony M. Ludovici and for being generally gracious with her time and talents. Thanks also to Christopher Lawrence at the Wellcome for sharing chapters from his forthcoming book on inter-war medical holism.

Steve Wagner at the History of Science Collections,

University of Oklahoma, I wish to thank for knight service in acquiring for the Collections copies of two unpublished Ludovici manuscripts. Steve's persistent correspondence with Edinburgh University's archivists as well as with Ludovici's attorneys in Suffolk is much appreciated.

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INTRODUCTION

There is in William H. Sheldon's constitutional studies, his "constitutional psychology" (1940, 1942, 1954) and "constitutional psychiatry" (1949), a neo-romantic cast that, on a medical ("Neo-Hippocratic", "Neo-Humoral") level, hearkens back to the early nineteenth century (Rosenberg 1977), before the astounding successes of germ theory and laboratory medicine, and on a nostalgic level back to a pre-industrial age, before the advent of modern technological society and especially before psychoanalysis and modern art.¹ Sheldon, like other medical holists of his era, including Georges Canguilhem in The Normal and the

¹ Throughout this dissertation I use the expressions modern, modernity, and modernist in the following ways. Modern and modernity I identify with the rise of science in the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. These are taken to be continuous with the subsequent "culture" of science that encouraged the Industrial Revolutions of the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The expression modernist is taken from literature and the arts and is defined both as a "pushing of the envelope" of science (what one historian has dubbed "calling modernity's bluff") and a radical rejection of science and its progeny: the rise of the middle class and the demise of "aristocracy" and tradition. Modernist rejection of Enlightenment science was prompted by the same forces that brought about holism in the medical sciences (Sternhell 1994, Lawrence 1997): i.e., the ugliness, the indignity, and the dishonor that science and its values were perceived to have wrought on those who clung to the values of the past for orientation and meaning (see chapter 3). Jeffrey Herf's expression "reactionary modernism" (1984) approximates the expression modernist, to the extent that the word modernist implies both a modern (scientific) element as well as a deeply reactionary one. The nazis, the literati, as well as medical holists, were, in this sense, "reactionary moderns".

including Georges Canguilhem in The Normal and the Pathological (1944), and Ernest Hooten in Young Man, You Are Normal (1944), sought to revitalize an appreciation of the "whole man" and the "normal man". Sheldon's somatotypy was a scientific (empiricist) means both of lamenting man's loss of soul (wholeness) and of pointing up possibilities, albeit exceedingly pessimistic ones, for his biological and spiritual renewal.² Indeed, the reasons for Sheldon's unrelenting quest of the somatotype, which occupied him and teams of assistants for at least two decades, are far-ranging culturally and largely extra-scientific in origin.

Sheldon's constitutionalism was one manifestation of the modernist defense of "aristocracy" and therefore must be read in broad cultural context. Historians of medicine now appreciate that medical holism during the inter-war years and beyond,³ which included constitutional research, was,

² Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will in The Nazification of Art (1990) contend that "National Socialism as a political movement was founded upon an appeal to yearnings for order and wholeness that could be found in all countries which had suffered the experience of social fragmentation engendered by capitalism at an advanced stage; and that art was moulded by National Socialism both as an expression of and a vehicle for those yearnings" (vi). It is my contention that Sheldon's constitutional studies participated in these same "yearnings for order and wholeness" that we see in nazi propagandist art.

³ Christopher Lawrence's recent work, which admits of a rich interaction between constitutionalism and culture, and Pauline H. M. Mazumdar's recent paper at the History of Science Society Annual Meeting (1996) in Atlanta, Georgia, "Serology, Clinical Medicine and the New Constitutionalism 1900-1930", present different emphases in the scholarship.

as Christopher Lawrence maintains, "anti-modern or cultural" (Lawrence 1997/98, p. 9).⁴ The expression aristocracy, which was reappropriated by modernists in the early twentieth century, was itself a modern invention (Hobsbawm 1962). It was just when the literal aristocracy was seriously embattled that it became inverted in the course of the Industrial Revolution into the psychological and "neurotic" underground of reactionary novelists, poets, and philosophers (Steiner 1971). This self-conscious defense of aristocracy, what amounted to "The Great Ennui" in George Steiner's terms, was the outrage with the modern industrial world that "natural aristocrats" (discontented intellectuals) have cultivated assiduously for some two

Mazumdar's paper, unlike Lawrence's, discusses constitutionalism as an "internal" conversation among a group of (mostly German) medical doctors. No "cultural" or "anti-modern" elements intrude. I wish to thank Pauline Mazumdar for sharing this conference paper with me.

⁴ Says Christopher Lawrence: "During the interwar years of the twentieth century, just at the moment when medicine seemed to be registering its greatest triumphs, ...many individuals and groups within mainstream medicine attempted to resist what they saw as reductionism and excessive reliance on technology. Resistance took various forms. Constitutionalism, psychosomatic medicine, neo-Hippocratic medicine, neo-humoralism, social medicine, and in Europe, homeopathy and Catholic humanism, represented some of the ways in which doctors tried to reconcile traditional clinical concerns with advancing laboratory science and bureaucratization....Holistic approaches informed many scientific and philosophical enterprises, and were central to some of the key political ideologies of the time. A careful examination of medical holism during this period can thus contribute to a richer understanding of the relationship between medicine, science and society in the twentieth century" (Lawrence 1997, p. 1).

hundred years (Carey 1992). Adolf Hitler's heroic vision for Germany was this same "aristocratic" reaction adapted to the exigencies of German history and to middle-class anxieties about the modern (Barron 1992). Both Hitler and the eugenicists I describe here sought to recapture ancient splendor and beauty in a world that had increasingly surrendered its body and soul to what Thomas Carlyle called the "cash nexus" and the "great goddess of getting on". The modern, urban, industrialized world (both in Europe and the United States) was felt to have abandoned a simpler and more honest, ethical, life nourished by the countryside. The human physique shared in this historical process.

"What was a gifted man [an artist] to do after Napoleon?" asks George Steiner, but become obsessed over his own alienation from and his perceived superiority to other men in an industrialized, bourgeois, world that acknowledged no heroic (noble) distinctions. More importantly, whom was a "superior" man to serve? Not those, certainly, who were simply good at making money. For they were the enemy, the unchastened opportunists who were clever and facile rather than seasoned and wise. Emerson, Carlyle, Nietzsche, Shaw, Wells, Lawrence were a few of the great expounders of this reaction.⁵ Both eugenics and its explicitly racial

⁵ This contention denies a view of Nietzsche that has become commonplace in recent years; namely, that Nietzsche would have been outraged by the nazis, that his artistic vision of the superman never implied the sort of atrocities

instantiation, nazi race hygiene, were in this sense recycled romanticism. Eugenics and constitutionalism became a new vehicle for articulating reactionary discontent. In fact, hero worship (Bentley 1944) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was one symptom of the intractable rebellion against modern industrialism and "business culture" (Tate 1936) launched by reactionary intellectuals of varying stripes and commitments.

Twentieth-century obsessions with biological degeneration and counterselection following the first World War were the same in kind as the felt reaction from intellectuals to Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and the coopting of the romantic spirit by "Captains of Industry". Ernst Junger's novels depict repressed "Freikorps" anger and violence, the same disgust that fictional accounts from Stendal and Balzac in the early nineteenth century portray as first taking root in the romantic literary consciousness (Gamache 1987). Eugenics and race hygiene in this century can be regarded as an urgent and scientific way of offsetting bourgeois torpor and shopkeeper cowardliness with biological (holistic) excellence and spiritual purity, what in nazi Germany became linked to the "fighting spirit" of

executed by the leaders of the Third Reich. I reject this position, because it is historically reductionist and because it has been a key factor in the "rewriting", the salvaging, of Nietzsche for the political Left. This maneuver has allowed us to regard modernist literary culture through rose-colored lenses.

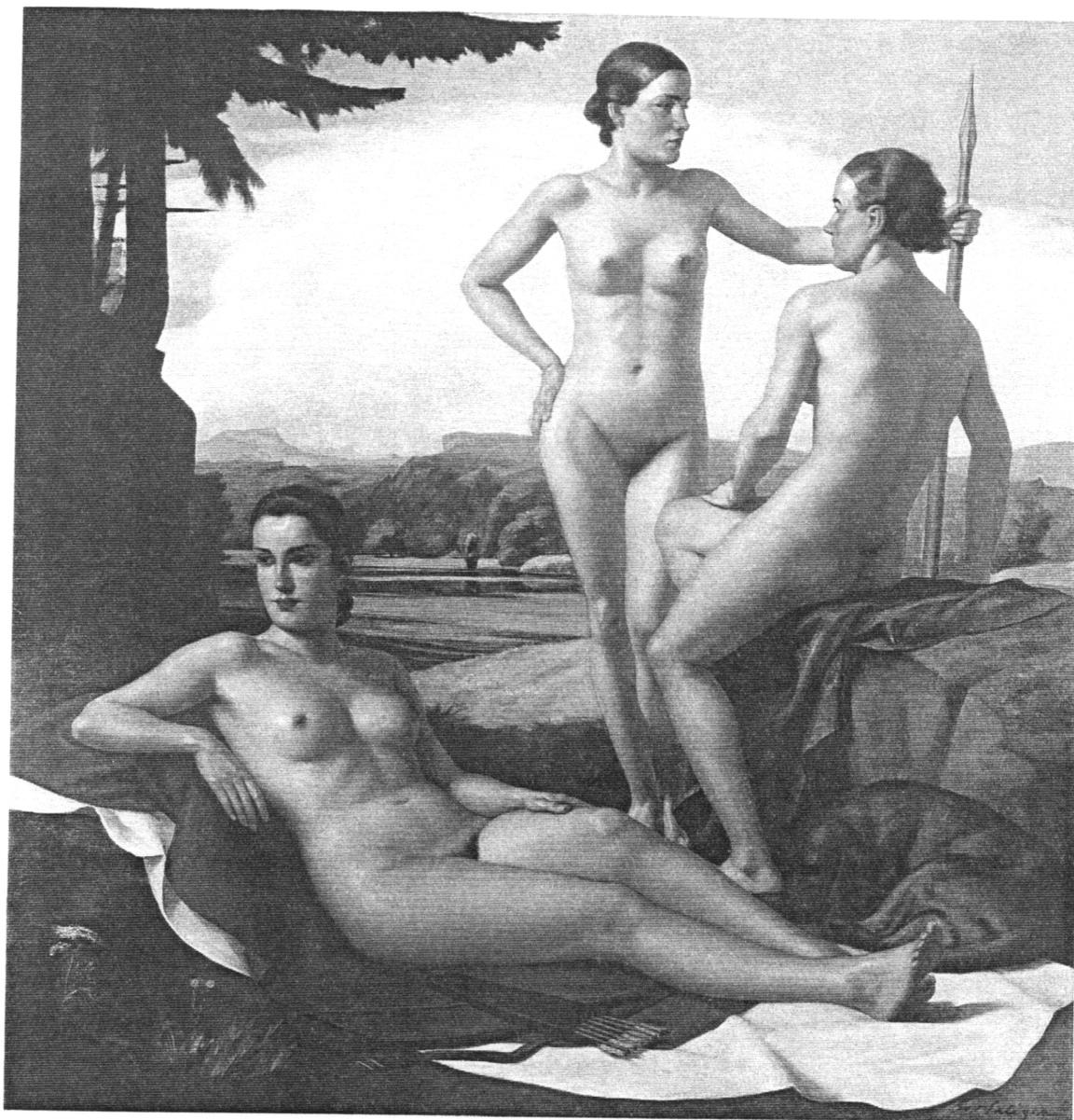
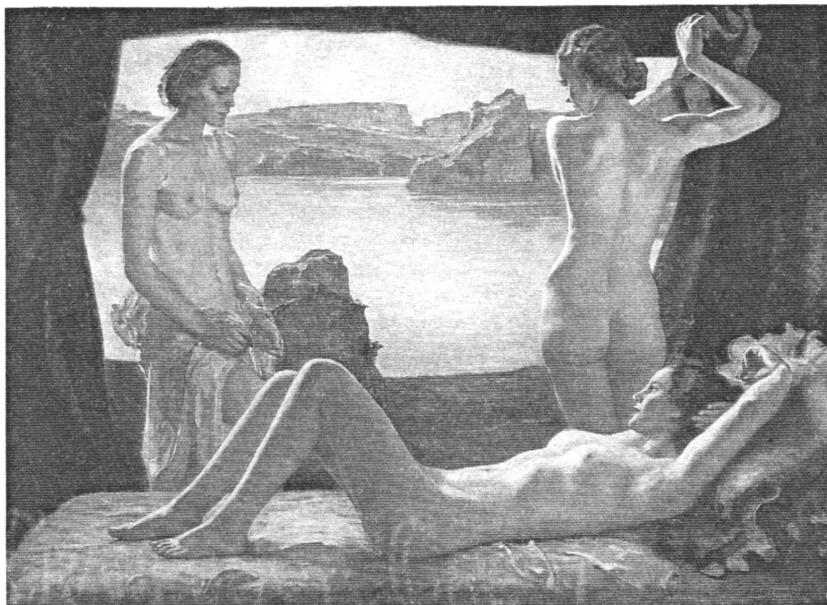


Fig. I.1

Ivo Saliger: Diana's Rest. 1939-40
"A TIME OF AFFIRMATION OF THE BODY, A CELEBRATION OF HELLENIC ATTITUDES AND VIRTUES."—ROBERT SCHOLZ

Ernst Liebermann. By the Water



Below:

Albert Janesch. Water Sports. 1936

"REPRESENTATION OF THE PERFECT BEAUTY OF A RACE STEELED IN BATTLE AND SPORT. INSPIRED NOT BY ANTIQUITY OR CLASSICISM BUT BY THE PULSING LIFE OF OUR PRESENT-DAY EVENTS"
—HUBERT WILM

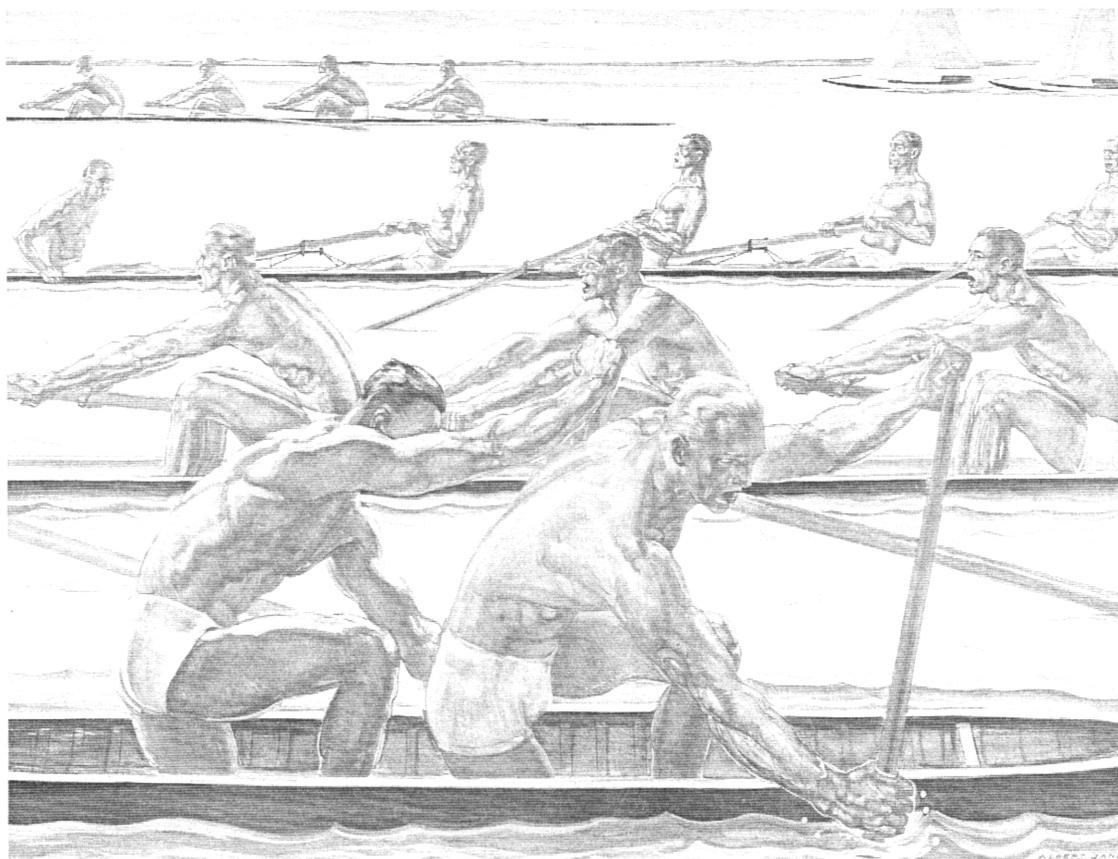


Fig. I. 2

nordic man and to a militant reinstatement of masculinity in Britain and the United States during the 1920's (Douglas 1995). This is the core meaning of nazi propaganda art (see figures I.1 and I.2). Nordic physiques for both nazis and their sympathizers were a eugenic counterblast to modern physical and spiritual decrepitude, the same decrepitude decried by Sheldon's Harvard mentor, Ernest Hooten, and perceived to be caused by counterselection and its attending moral and spiritual powers of disintegration (Hooten 1938). Nazi propaganda art presented--contra modern art proper ["Entartete Kunst" in nazi parlance]--a normative ideal of beauty, nobility, and honor, an invocation of heroic and essentially Hellenic values into the decadent West.

Similarly, the human body for Sheldon became not just the site of the spiritual but the soul itself. Sheldon declared in a letter to New Zealand physical educator, Philip Smithells, written probably in the 1950s:

The profession of physical education has always seemed to me to be the most religious profession. Their faith is secure, and their worship serene, for they have found the immortal Soul. The soul is the body....Physical educators derive an ecstasy from seeing the soul stand straight up (Carter and Heath 1990, p. 217).

The impulse of the heroic vitalists, according to Eric Bentley, was to "seek the excellent in an age of the

average, the organic in an age of mechanism, in fine, quality in an age of quantity" (Bentley 1947). The vulgar masses, the ever-burgeoning "mongrel population" to Sheldon the somatotypist and eugenist, were the "quantity", the putative biological "thoroughbred" the "quality". Sheldon sought to elaborate scientifically what "post-romantics" (including Carlyle, Emerson, Nietzsche, Lawrence, and William James) in the nineteenth-century had begun in spirit: to fashion a humanist religion out of the Promethean possibilities for splendor, vitality, and social order invested within the human physique or, as the English romantic poet William Blake rhapsodized, "the human form divine". Sheldon's somatotype project was a logical extension of Promethean ambitions for self creation and realization, and eugenic breeding became an essential ingredient of these humanist and essentially "religious" designs.

To say with Richard Osborne that Sheldon was "a philosopher of the pragmatic school" (Osborne 1981, p. 716) is, on one level, to speak accurately. Sheldon owed much to William James, his supposed godfather. But such a claim understates Sheldon's involvement not only with nineteenth-century romanticism and Nature Philosophy but with twentieth century holistic biology and medicine, which merged with reactionary politics in both Germany and the United States between the World Wars (Harrington 1996). By

contextualizing somatotypy with interwar holism in medicine we can see that Sheldon's physique studies had broad cultural and scientific correlates. What Anne Harrington has said, for example, of the German neurologist, Constantin von Monakow (1853-1930), might apply equally well to Sheldon's core beliefs about social reform and about the primacy of individual improvement in the human specimen. Says Harrington:

He [Monakow] tended to see political problems as a mere symptom of deeper cultural and spiritual woes, whose cure lay in the (psychobiological) regeneration of the individual rather than in the world of public policy. The final message of this biologist-turned-prophet was clear: not through political change but through individual effort--avoidance of the corrupting influences of an overtechnologized, overindustrialized society and trust in one's biological (unconscious, instinctual) core--could mankind hope to rediscover the road to spiritual regeneration and the moral life (Harrington 1991, p. 441).

Sheldon's Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936) also advocated a "Promethean" attitude to individual regeneration, to the cultivation of personality, character, and soul. Sheldon was responding desperately and perhaps anachronistically to what the Germans, especially Oswald

Spengler, whom Sheldon read and admired, called Entseelung or the "desouling" of modern man. Sheldon no less than Monakow [or, indeed, Carl Jung in his Modern Man in Search of a Soul (1933)] was struggling to recapture and redirect the "instinctual core" of man with his somatotypy. Sheldon opposed Freud, who he believed was ignoring biological and spiritual reality in his psychoanalytic theory. Sheldon hypothesized that the Freudian "unconscious" was actually the body and that Freud's sexual emphasis regarding the aetiology of mental illness was a violation of very real religious and biological directives (Sheldon 1936, 1949).

Sheldon's constitutional work possessed the same "value-base" (Weingart 1984) as nazi ideology, even if race was not emphasized. Nazi race hygiene was a localized version of global eugenic and holistic interests that were shared by western medical doctors, physical anthropologists, as well as literary modernists. The foundational cultural pride and prejudice, the hubris, of the nazis was a Weltanschauung shared by British and American literary elites, obsessed as they were with high art and the collapse of civilization (Carey 1992).

Sheldon was a biological determinist in an era dominated, especially in post-war America, by a more democratic and forgiving environmentalism in psychology, as Gardner Lindzey has said (Lindzey 1957). Nazi ideology and Sheldon's version of "heroic vitalism" were drawing from

common romantic springs which had as much to do with reactionary passion as with biology or anthropology or medicine. As I will show, this "value-base" of eugenic utopianism has gone unexplored among historians of eugenics, or else it has been assumed in such a way as to eclipse its historical character and depth.

William Schneider's attitude to Sheldon and his work may help to account for why he has been neglected by historians of science. "Sheldon" says Schneider,

...is considered a whacko because he tried to explain criminology and more specific qualities by body form. The two worlds he worked in-- criminology and physical anthropology--repudiate those ideas (and him) now.[Ernst] Kretschmer, on the other hand was a psychiatrist first, which [sic] has a long-standing tradition of characterizing people as "types". True, he did dabble in physiological explanations of psychological temperament, but he kept enough grounding in psychiatry, that subsequent generations can still honor him without embarrassment" (Schneider 1995).

Schneider's assessment says far more about his historiography than it does about Sheldon. Schneider's is essentially a "great man" approach to the history of science, whereby we "honor" those scientists "without

embarrassment" who successfully anticipated what scientists, or historians of science, believe today and call those "whacko" who did not. By these lights most of the history of science can be relegated to obscurity. Only the "winners" need be attended to, their views championed in light of present knowledge. In this wise, historians of science become apologists for mainstream opinion. Schneider appears satisfied when he can say with Robert Holt, a critic of Sheldon's Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949): "It is a piece of dangerously fascistic pseudoscience...a scientifically incompetent and socially vicious book" (Holt 1950, p. 495). Such an assessment as Schneider's abjures us to regard Sheldon's somatotypy only as science or pseudoscience and to ignore its embeddedness in a matrix of both modern and modernist assumptions. Schneider's attitude would shut down historical inquiry at just the point where it becomes both penetrating and broadly informative. If we take Schneider's approach to Sheldon and somatotypy, we ignore a cultural depth that can actually tell us something interesting and important about what it meant for an individual to practice this kind of science in the early twentieth century.

Sheldon's somatotypy reflects and is reflected by modernist culture. By examining Sheldon in the way I am proposing, we can begin to piece together seemingly discrete strands in modernist thought, including the cults of nudism

and athleticism, nazi propaganda art, agrarianism, eugenics, the so-called "fascist body" and "fascist" aesthetics, constitutional medicine, the "cult of the superman", the "natural aristocrat", and "heroic vitalism" (see figure I.3). Such an investigation of somatotypy can help us flesh out Dorothy Ross's conjecture about "modernist impulses in the human sciences" (Ross 1994), which, at this stage, remains a fertile metaphor in need of historical elaboration.

If William Sheldon, as Sarah Tracy suggests, led American constitutionalism "in a radically reductionist and politically unpopular direction that ultimately destroyed its credibility" (Lawrence 1997, p. 22), he also charted a course in his researches that joined medicine and psychology with reactionary and modernist designs that are in themselves important and that merit serious attention rather than patronage. It is a key contention of this study that Sheldon's constitutionalism can best be appreciated by taking its "modernist impulses" seriously, impulses that were deeply and legitimately conservative and that were derived from cultural forces very like those motivating literary modernists. We cannot, logically and historically, regard T. S. Eliot's The Wasteland (1922) as great poetry unless we regard William Sheldon's somatotypy as honest rebellion. Tracy's assessment, itself severely reductionistic, ignores just the factors this study



. Title pages of Adolf Koch's Journal of the Worker Nudist Culture, late 1920s, early 1930s

Fig. I. 3

emphasizes. I say more in the conclusion about the tendency of historians (especially of eugenics) to write the history of biology and medicine without benefit of modernist irrationality.

Sheldon's most eminent advocate, in fact, was not a scientist at all but, as one might expect, a man of letters, Aldous Huxley, who enthused to his biologist brother, Julian, in 1937 that he had

met in Chicago a very remarkable man called Sheldon, a psychologist, who has been working for 10 years in the field that Kretchmer [sic] worked in and who has evolved, I believe, a genuinely scientific conception of human types--or rather of the typological factors present in varying amounts in different individuals. He seems to me to have evolved a genuine algebra in terms of which to discuss the problem, so that it now becomes possible to talk concretely, quantitatively and scientifically on a subject about which one could only speculate in a vaguely intuitive, personal way. His book [Varieties of Human Physique (1940)] will be out in a few months and I suspect it will prove to be of first-rate importance" (Smith 1969, p. 428).

It is appropriate to read Sheldon's constitution studies in light of Huxley's work for several reasons.

Huxley apparently found in Sheldon's work a scientific justification for long-standing hereditarian opinions. Huxley remarked to Grace Hubble in May 1944, while at work on an article on Sheldon for Harper's Magazine: "For the first time old insights and intuitions about the different kinds of human beings have been clarified and put on a firmly objective and measurable basis" (Smith 1969, p. 505).

Aldous Huxley became friends with Sheldon and took on the role of apologist for his work in several of his books and in at least three magazine articles. Huxley shared Sheldon's position on eugenics and population control as well as his anti-Freudianism. Sheldon emphasized (or remphasized) the role of the body in psychology and psychiatry, which Freud had not done; and Sheldon's tendency to mystify, spiritualize, the body (his empiricist rhetoric notwithstanding) appealed to Huxley's quest for a naturalized religion, a course that Sheldon took up early on in his Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936). Huxley continued this quest into the early 1960s. Most modernist writers, including Virginia Woolf and the "Bloomsbury Group" in London, abandoned traditional typologizing or the "composite portrait" (Calcraft 1971, Tytler 1981) in favor of Freudian explanations of human behavior during the early decades of this century. Huxley, however, retained a more somatic position, insisting that character analysis apart

from considerations of the body was vacuous (Smith 1969, p. 516). Sheldonian somatotypy was in this way a conservative counterblast to Freudian doctrines. To "save" the somatotype was to preserve a universe of traditional social, moral, and intellectual assumptions under attack by Freudian psychology and by modernism generally. Huxley's defense of the Sheldonian somatotype denoted a reactionary stance. It meant a siding with nature in the famous "Nature-Nurture Controversy" (Pastore 1949), which raged during the time Sheldon was publishing his major work and during the time Huxley was defending it.

Another defender of biological aristocracy who can help us understand Sheldon's work was the novelist, Nietzsche scholar, World War I veteran, and one-time secretary to August Rodin, Captain Anthony Mario Ludovici, OBE, who wrote several popular defences of an aristocratic order, including A Defense of Aristocracy (1915), The Choice of a Mate (1935), and The Quest of Human Quality (1952). Sheldon read Ludovici's work, perhaps as early as the 1930's, and we know from a letter that he wrote to Ludovici that he thought very highly of it. Ludovici's popularization of eugenic ideals in a Nietzschean mode is comparable to Sheldon's constitution studies in the late 1930's and following, especially his Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949). It is clear that they were, at the least, operating from common assumptions. When Sheldon and

Ludovici corresponded and compared notes during the early 1950's, it was apparent that their thought had been developing along parallel lines for decades.

Sheldon's studies in human physique exhibit a quintessentially modernist character, in that they equivocate between an empiricist, progressive, methodology, which sought to ameliorate the human condition, and a matching, retrograde urge to "get rid of people". One finds a similar tension in Aldous Huxley's fictional dystopia, Brave New World (1933). Just as Huxley was responding to the nightmarish prospects of social engineering, a position which has been consistent with a stereotypical "English department" antipathy to science and technology, he, with his brother, Julian, advocated eugenic measures intended to offset fears of the destructive biological counterselection they believed was widespread in modern society (Bradshaw 1994). Commonly read in the former light by those wishing to deemphasize Huxley's elitism and emphasize a disgust with technology, Brave New World, in fact, depicted a thinly disguised contempt for the masses. David Bradshaw's recent collection of Huxley's early essays, The Hidden Huxley: Contempt and Compassion for the Masses 1920-1936 (1994), reveal the extent of this disdain for common men, whom Huxley referred to as "the new stupid". Huxley and a legion of modernist literary "greats" weathered this hubris. Their reputations, not unlike Nietzsche's, have been shifted

and finessed by the political Left, and hence preserved. The case has been otherwise for Ludovici and Sheldon.

T. E. Adorno formalized an ending to the social and scientific acceptability of constitutional typologizing as a going concern following World War II (Adorno 1950). Aldous Huxley referred to Sheldon as the typologist when he introduced him to Dr. Humphrey Osmond. Sheldon, along with poet and aesthete Ezra Pound, might have been numbered among his "authoritarian personalities". Adorno's was perhaps a justifiable witch hunt, but The Authoritarian Personality sought to purge the land of evil in a way that closed the door on a major chapter of American medicine, psychology, and psychiatry, a door that has yet to be reopened, so effective have been the taboos. Art critic Peter Adam has remarked: "Not much is known about the art of the Third Reich" (Adam 1992, p. 7). One might say the same thing about the culture of Sheldon's somatotypy. Both nazi art and constitutional typologizing have inhabited an artistic and scientific shadowland since the late 1940's, and it is understandable that these activities should have been tarred with the same brush.

The present study reopens a segment of this largely forgotten albeit recent past by demonstrating that Sheldon's physique studies were an integral part of modernist culture and not simply a stereotype of bad science. Sheldon's project, whatever its scientific failings, is a much more

interesting and important matter culturally and historically than this. The demise of Sheldon and his work represents an American version of "Goetterdaemmerung". Invested within Sheldon's constitutional studies were the interests, passions, and desires of an age, qualities that our post-war, egalitarian, world has gone to extremes to deny.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation introduces the work of Captain Anthony M. Ludovici. Ludovici's attack on modern industrialism and his "Nietzschean" advocacy of eugenics helps us to understand the countermodernist attitudes and themes in Sheldon's constitutional work.

Chapter 2 elaborates Ludovici's understanding of the link between modernity and constitutional deficiency. I propose that Ludovici's notion of "Flourishing Life", which he specified as early as 1915 and rehearsed as late as 1970, is a key assumption in Sheldon's constitutional research.

Chapter 3 explains Sheldon's version of Prometheanism and its role in his constitutional psychology. This is derived chiefly from his 1936 book, Psychology and the Promethean Will. I relate Sheldon's critique of behaviorism and Freudian psychoanalysis and spell out his unique conception of "civilization and its discontents". Sheldon's psychology reinforced a nineteenth-century notion of character building and criticized the sexual origins of mental illness advanced by Freud. Sheldon's anti-modernism and anti-capitalism are introduced. Sheldon's thought is

compared to other American psychologists during the mid 1930s, with the intention of clarifying Sheldon's positions relative to the work of some contemporaries, namely Gordon Allport and the Gardner Murphys.

Chapter 4 lays out in detail Sheldon's "eugenic" psychology. Sheldon intended his constitutional psychology and psychiatry as a challenge to Freudian psychoanalysis. By arguing that the human body, physique, was actually the Freudian "unconscious", Sheldon offered a biologically-based (and eugenic) alternative to what he called Freudian "theology".

Chapter 5 deals with Aldous Huxley's defense of Sheldon's constitutional research. By way of a long-standing friendship with Sheldon and numerous apologies for his work, Huxley served effectively as Sheldon's "bulldog", recalling his grandfather T.H. Huxley's defense of Darwin. Huxley's interest in Sheldon reveal reactionary tendencies of his own that were integral to the modernist or "reactionary modern" (Herf 1984, Ross 1994) revolt against modernity.

Chapter 6 treats Sheldon's dealings in the early 1950s with Rockefeller Foundation officers Dr. Alan Gregg and Dr. Robert Morison. Their decision to grant \$100,000 to a University of Oregon Medical team to study the relationships between disease and constitution, with Sheldon serving as consultant, prompted a flurry of notes, conversations, and

memos that illuminate Sheldon's strengths and deficiencies as a man and as a scientist. Sheldon's behavior during these years, as recorded by Gregg and Morison, bolsters my argument for "modernist impulses" in his work.

Chapter 7 presents Sheldon malgre lui, or Sheldon "against himself". I offer some observations and conclusions about his life and career relative to the overall thesis of this dissertation. I show how his scientific career was obscured and compromised by the weight of his own alienation from the modern world. Contrary to the Prometheanism that he preached for decades--the contention that education should be a life-long affair and that old age should be a time of intellectual excitement and ferment--Sheldon himself lapsed into cynicism during the last twenty-five years of his life. Living until 1977, Sheldon produced little work after the 1950s, and he managed to alienate himself from all but his closest and most tolerant friends in his last years.

In the Conclusion I essay how and why Sheldon's work has been largely omitted from its most likely historical niches: the history of eugenics, the history of psychology, and the history of psychiatry. Eugenics scholarship over the past thirty years has been dominated by apologists who have sought to legitimate the biological sciences, not to highlight an esoteric "value-base" for both genetics and eugenics that has become practically anathema in our

contemporary world. Much of the history of eugenics has been presentist and even ahistorical. Certainly it has been a history that has omitted "modernist impulses" (Ross 1994), including the writings of those like Anthony Ludovici and William Sheldon whose views fell increasingly outside the political mainstream. Similarly, historians of psychology have written the history of their discipline without regard for the perturbations of reactionary culture. Preferring to see their discipline as progressive and culmulative, historians have, when they have discussed it at all, dismissed Sheldon's somatotypy as methodologically deficient. The immense "tacit knowledge" (cultural influence) that went into Sheldon's work, which may be of more historical interest than his dubious empiricism, has not been considered at all. Finally, historians of psychiatry, focusing on what Mark Micale has called the "Freud drama" (Micale 1995, Szasz 1976), wrote out of their discipline figures like Sheldon, because he was a dissenter from the Freudian camp and because he emphasized the importance of the body in contradistinction to Freudian "depth psychology" which made no use of eugenic factors.

1. ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI AND WILIAM H. SHELDON:
AN "ELECTIVE AFFINITY"

1.1 Anthony M. Ludovici: Defender of "Lost Causes"

Captain Anthony Mario Ludovici (1882-1971), OBE, deserves scholarly attention in his own right as a British artillery and intelligence officer during World War I, Nietzsche scholar and translator, novelist, and eugenics advocate.¹ As a young man he was secretary and biographer to August Rodin and biographer to Vincent van Gogh. Ludovici's complete works, which are uncollected, appear, based on the National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints, to run to at least forty volumes. Anchored in the reactionary fervor of Nietzschean heroics, Ludovici's work spans some six decades. No critical writing on Ludovici exists, apart from scattered reviews and comments that have themselves passed into obscurity.

¹ The Galton Institute in London contains minutes of a meeting of "The Nietzsche Society", dated July 1947, recorded by the society secretary, A. J. Leahy. Ludovici is listed as one of four presiding Councillors. Professor Darwin-Fox is listed as President. It is announced that the next meeting of the society will be held at University College, London, and will be entitled "Nietzsche and Eugenics". Correspondence to the society includes the following letter from D.J. Ibberson: "Have you read Dr. Levy's introduction to the pocket edition of Gobineau's Renaissance? In this he says 'Today the most cultured people in Europe are beginning to suspect what de Gobineau and Nietzsche knew 50 years ago, that the Christian and democratic ideologies lead to the survival and triumph of people who have no right to survive at all, or at any rate only on a very low plane'". (Galton Institute Archives, C.12 A. M. Ludovici, 1927-1947).

Ludovici was one of legions of men (including but not limited to European nazis and fascists in his generation) who rebelled against twentieth-century democracy and feminism. Ludovici was something of a dictator manque in a time of all too real dictators. He was, not surprisingly, a consummate enthusiast and translator of Nietzsche, whose teachings answered to the intense alienation experienced by World War I veterans of the so-called "lost generation" of writers, those who, by turns, loathed the stupidity and waste of the War as well as the servile world that followed in its wake. Ludovici's alienation was of a stamp that Klaus Thewleit has argued characterized the inter-war Freikorps, whose rage issued in the most appalling violence against the German working class and whose membership was to comprize the core of the nazi party (Thewleit 1987). Joseph Goebbels' novel Michael (1921) depicts this "neo-romantic" hatred of middle-class life as well as any fictional document of the time.

Eugenics for Ludovici at the beginning of the twentieth century is intimately connected with a not-so-thinly-disguised loathing of modern industrialism and all its works. Ludovici's surrogate violence and his passion for aristocracy and eugenics are cut from this same reactionary cloth. To argue for biological "aristocracy" and its scientific Doppelgaenger, eugenics, was to argue for a kind of "pre-lapsarian" world, based on an idealized image of the

heroic past, where men ruled with an iron hand, where honor and virtue and pride were common coin, and where getting and spending were governed by a pre-modern hierarchy based on natural superiority and prerogative, the antithesis in political terms to Thomas Hobbes's The Leviathan. It was a nostalgia in the same lineage as that preached by "Victorian sages" such as Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin (who reverted to the Middle Ages for models of society) as well as by southern literary agrarians in America during the late 1920s. The old Confederacy to Alan Tate, Andrew Lytle, et. al., served as a heroic ballast against the cowardly, commercial, technological, world created by "Yankees", the modern and mortal enemy of those confederates (mostly yeoman farmers) who had fought and died for a traditional world--for "the cause"--some half century before the hardening of modernist literary discontent in the twentieth century (Dorman 1993, Genovese 1994). Eugenics for Ludovici was all of a piece with a war veteran's longing for honor and heroism which he felt had been "unmanned" by scientific modernity and its progeny--technology and capitalism.²

² The word "unmanned" is from Thomas Hardy's novel, The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886). Hardy portrayed what he surmised to be an evolution in "character" (later formalized as "neurosis") that occurred with the Industrial Revolution. His fictional character, Donald Farfrae, the classic "ectomorph", was the new and nimble and shallow entrepreneur (Ludovici's classic "Promethean type"), and Michael Henchard, the "mesomorphic ectomorphic", was the "repressed" and "tyrannical" vestige of a rural England that was passing away. Hardy meditated on what was gained and what was lost

The young English playwright, Eric Bentley, who probably understood the historical and psychological dimensions of this male preserve as well as anyone following World War II (Ludovici 1952), and who wrote most apologetically about it, dubbed it the "Cult of the Superman" (Bentley 1947) and linked it to the romantic "hero-worship" among intellectuals that occurred in conjunction with the (first) Industrial Revolution. The Cult of the Superman was first published in the middle of the second World War as Century of Hero Worship. Bentley's expression "heroic vitalism" captures nicely this reactionary tradition, which was epitomized in America by Emerson and in Europe by Nietzsche.³ George

with the coming of technical man. What was lost, to his mind, was the deeper dimension of character and soul, precisely the same "dissociation of thought and feeling" that Sheldon was to label the "urban sacrifice" in Psychology and the Promethean Will. Hence Hardy's ironic title, The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge: A Story of a Man of Character. The following passage depicts a primitive masculinity shrugged by scientific and technical expertise:

He [Henchard] stood behind Farfrae's chair, watching his dexterity in clearing up the numerical fogs which had been allowed to grow so thick in Henchard's books as almost to baffle even the Scotchman's perspicacity. The corn-factor's mien was half admiring, and yet it was not without a dash of pity for the tastes of anyone who could care to give his mind to such finnikin details. Henchard himself was mentally and physically unfit for grubbing subtleties from soiled paper; he had in a modern sense received the education of Achilles, and found penmanship a tantalizing art (Hardy 1886, p. 106).

³ George J. Stack in Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity (1992) demonstrates that Emerson influenced

Steiner the literary critic has expanded Bentley's untimely observations (Steiner 1971) into a more impressive piece of cultural and literary history. Bentley was rousing just the Nietzschean, "fascist", mischief that most intellectuals in America and Britain wanted to suppress by 1947. It was, in any event, the world in which both Ludovici and Sheldon had their being.

The equivocal reception of Bentley's book serves as a barometer to gauge American zeal for scrapping pre-war notions of aristocracy in such "heroic-vitalists" as Carlyle, Nietzsche, and Shaw. S. B. Colby, reviewing the book for the New York Times, accused Bentley of writing an "intellectual pleasure excursion into what is a morgue for political ideas" (Colby 1944, p. 59). Joseph Wood Crutch thought the book "interesting if somewhat inconclusive [and] must represent a considerable triumph of integrity over temptation" (Crutch 1944, p. 59). The Cult of the Superman showed a young man more than half in love with the work of George Bernard Shaw who, as Sidney Hook complained in a review, clearly "glorified the regimes of Mussolini and Hitler" (Hook 1944, p. 60). It was Shaw, of course, who had declared that only a eugenic religion could save civilization (Shaw 1905).

Nietzsche even more than has been commonly assumed. According to Stack, Nietzsche effectively "cribbed" much of his Zarathustra from Emerson who, along with William James, was a major influence on Sheldon.

The length and character of Sheldon's and Ludovici's friendship is uncertain, based on available evidence at this writing. It is not possible to tell precisely when Sheldon first read Ludovici, although it would seem from comments in a letter that Ludovici first read Sheldon's work in the early 1950s. From Sheldon's comments it appears that he had known Ludovici's work for some time and that he admired it enough to want to own all of it. Sheldon remarked in a letter to Ludovici, dated July 6, 1953:

It was a great pleasure to me to hear from you again, especially after having had the privilege of reading The Choice of A Mate [1936]. I think this is one of the most vital, sensible and hard hitting volumes I have ever read, and I think for England to have produced it may almost justify our racial existence.

I treasure that book, and would like to buy at least three more copies of it. Also I would like to buy any other book of yours that is in print or can be had. [my emphasis] I wonder if you would be willing to ask your publisher or any bookseller who might have some of your books, to give a quotation on them. I would be glad to send a check in advance. You will perhaps remember that I have The Quest of Human Quality (Sheldon to Ludovici 1953, Sheldon Archives).

Ludovici had written to Sheldon earlier, thanking him for a copy of Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949): "I approve of so much in your attitude and in your trenchant method of expressing it, that the few details over which we might find ourselves in conflict are too insignificant to be mentioned....How very close we are in our attitude towards many questions" (Ludovici to Sheldon 1953, Sheldon Archives). Ludovici also cites Sheldon in his book Religion for Infidels (1961).

I introduce Ludovici in this study of Sheldon because, first, Sheldon and Ludovici knew each other personally and they read and admired each other's work. Second, the virulence and cartoonish quality of Ludovici's reaction to modernity parallels Sheldon's own reactionary posture in rich and informative ways--in ways that are not generally linked to modern psychology and medical holism. Sheldon, like Ludovici, was a loner. His vision of the modern world placed him at odds with his more "unimaginative" colleagues in psychology (Osborne 1981, p. 716). In fact, Ludovici's Nietzschean eugenics (Ludovici 1947) looks very unlike progressive eugenicists' efforts to ameliorate society's ills, as does Sheldon's somatotypy.⁴ For Ludovici eugenics was

⁴ The patronizing attitude, for example, that we find in Charles Davenport in the United States and the sentimentality that founded the Eugenic Records Office (Dann 1996) are absent in Ludovici. To Ludovici, the actual blame for "feeblemindedness" rested with just those Promethean industrialists who had caused the problem in the first

not simply a question of eliminating "bad protoplasm". It was a question of reordering the world entirely by wresting it from the hands of corrupt Prometheans, the shallow and unchastened technocrats who were responsible for modern industrialism.

The assumptions that underwrote Ludovici's countermodernity and his championship of eugenics were biologically more Lamarckian than Mendelian (Proctor 1988), at least to the extent that a radical critique of industrialists and industrialism could be justified more easily with Lamarckian principles than with Mendelian ones. Lamarckianism, as Peter Bowler has said, was also enlisted variously to justify racism in the late nineteenth century (Bowler 1993). With the notion of acquired characters Ludovici could see modern degeneration itself as an "acquired" characteristic brought to the working population by the horrors of the Industrial Revolution (Ludovici 1921a). Ludovici's antagonism towards those Prometheans who created the modern industrial world turned on the idea that, just as degeneration had origins in modernity (crowded cities, bad food, inhumane working conditions, starvation wages, promiscuous breeding), a proposed countermodernity might restore what Prometheans had stolen from the population--health and vitality, or in eugenic language,

place. From quite a different angle, this was also the view of Christian apologists G.K. Chesterton (1927) and C. S. Lewis (1944).

"psycho-physical harmony". Ludovici's was largely a war against the arrogance and presumption of Rotarians.

With Ludovici eugenics was never a question of bourgeois police work directed against the poor and unfortunate. Rather, it was a question of getting tough with eugenicists themselves. Ludovici was, in fact, a "rebel within the ranks" (Pandora 1997) of eugenicists, to appropriate an expression from Katherine Pandora. As G.K. Chesterton said in 1927, the whole matter of eugenics was an appalling embarrassment. That those industrialists and their effective apologists, the eugenicists, who had starved and maimed the working poor throughout the nineteenth century, who had demoralized much of the middle class, and who had grown disgustingly wealthy in the process, should then turn about and accuse this "underclass" of being disposable "degenerates", required unmentionable gall. Eugenics was a dark secret that Chesterton exposes with basic morality and good sense (Chesterton 1927). To Ludovici's mind, the efforts of eugenicists were untimely and sentimental, not unlike Christian charity. Ludovici operated at a level of countercultural rebellion that challenged the very foundations upon which conventional eugenic assumptions were made.

Ludovici provides a heroic "value base" (Weingart 1984) for Sheldon's constitutional research as well as for his utopianism. Something very like Ludovici's attitude to the

modern as well as his attitude to eugenics informs all of Sheldon's thinking, a fact that helps us understand Sheldon's own alienation from all but his closest friends in later life (Osborne 1981, Carter and Heath 1990). Sheldon's alienation from his peers was owing not just to his own untoward personality, his apparent genius for lighting on others' sensitivities, as his close friends have remarked (e.g., Hartl and Monnelly 1995, Osborne 1981), but to a more generalized revolt against modernity.⁵ Richard Osborne, for example, one of Sheldon's close friends, acknowledged Sheldon's romanticism, his attachment to medieval chivalry, his agrarianism, his exceeding individualism, but he failed to realize how these qualities connect Sheldon's work to a larger anti-modern culture (Osborne 1981, p. 716).

Ludovici was a famous, or infamous, anti-feminist (Ludovici 1921, 1923, 1927), although his views about modern man were just as unfavorable. Inspired by Nietzsche, he argued in Man: An Indictment (1927) that it was the wimpishness of the modern male that had created the problem

⁵ Both Sheldon and Ludovici would be classified simply as "repressed" by the Freudians, just as Jacoby and Glauberman see Richard Herrnstein and Arthur Jensen today as "the return of the repressed" (Jacoby and Glauberman 1995). Sheldon discusses the Freudian concept of repression at length in Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936), pp. 250-251.

of the modern feminist woman.⁶ Such a view was predicated on a stern belief in the deleterious effects of the modern world on the human constitution, which Ludovici saw as having deteriorated tragically since ancient times, namely since the dispersal of ancient tribal units and since promiscuous interbreeding obtained among once discreet and virile "races" (Ludovici 1952). Modern industrial society with its attending proliferation of urban centers had brought physical "mongrelization" to a crisis state in the twentieth century (Ludovici 1921). Ludovici's idealized description of his one-time employer, August Rodin, actually speaks to his own position: "The artist in him led him to cling with conservative ardour to tradition and to all the institutions which would make beauty and patriarchal order prevail against the ever-encroaching ugliness and anarchy of modern industrialism" (Ludovici 1926, p. 172).

J. M. Robertson, the cultural historian, once remarked: "My young friend, Mr. Anthony M. Ludovici, threatens to become the professional champion of lost causes" (Kerr 1932,

⁶ Ludovici exclaimed to a Mr. Blacker in 1924: "England, poor old England is going down in a stew of female sentimentality. The danger is that whereas one hundred years ago England merely professed Christianity, to-day she actually believes it. Hence the guilty conscience regarding our Empire, which is leading to Imperial disintegration; hence the Dartmoor outrage, which is due to females in trousers like Paterson being the head of our penal system, and hence the partial communism we are already enjoying under the Income Tax, and the Christianity of the Eugenics Society!" (Ludovici to Blacker, 1924, The Galton Institute Archives, C.212, A. M. Ludovici, 1927-1947).

p. 86). Ludovici's unflinching defence of aristocracy in the face of modern industrialization, his advocacy of "breeding" in a time of "democratic resurgence", and his staunch anti-feminism, comprized a modernist revolt of tragic, or pathetic, proportions. Norman Himes, an editor of the journal Marriage Hygiene, declared of Ludovici: "[He] is a rabid fellow...I think there is something wrong with that man's head....Forget about Ludovici. He is probably cracked" (Himes to Ellis 1935, Paul Richards Collection).

Havelock Ellis remarked to Francoise Lafitte-Cyon in 1926: "That Ludovici is a nuisance....I now have to read MS of another book by [him] (in which he attacks my 'superficial views' on women) and shall of course have to recommend it for publication" (Ellis to Lafitte-Cyon, 1935, Paul Richards Collection). Lafitte-Cyon, recalling the contents of a dream about Ludovici, replied in kind to Ellis:

Ludovici - tapez lui dessous. Il fait mal a tant de femmes. Je suis chaque jour tellement en train de reparer le mal qu'il fait, qu'il y a 2 jours, en une nuit blanche, je me suis debattue toute la nuit avec lui. J'etais a un meeting ou il avait parle et je m'etais levee pour lui repondre et prendre la defense des femmes et rendre courage a toutes ces femmes qui se laissent aller au decouragement par lui. Sentant que c'etait mon devoir d'aider mes soeurs, Dieu ce que j'eu

ai dit a Ludovici et comme j'ai vu les visages des femmes presentes s'illuminer d'espoir et comme cela m'a donne courage! (Lafitte-Cyon to Ellis, 26 June 1926, Paul Richards Collection).⁷

Cyon declares that "war against Ludovici is the war of twentieth-century women. He [Ludovici] wants us down on our knees like cows":

Guerre a Ludovici - guerre des femmes du 20eme siecle. Il veut nous reduir a quatre pattes comme des vaches. (Lafitte-Cyon to Ellis, 26 June 1926, Paul Richards Collection).

According to Lesley Hall, who is currently preparing a biography of feminist F.W. Stella Brown, Ludovici was a literary, philosophical, maverick (Hall 1996). The papers that Ludovici read to the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology during the 1920s provoked resignations from this normally tolerant and broad-minded group, and it was decided not to ask him back (Hall 1995, p. 673).

Ludovici accused his contemporaries on all sides of "unconsciously babbling the corrupt values of their age"

⁷ "Ludovici - Beat him up. He has hurt so many women. Every day I try to repair all the harm he has done, so hard that two days ago during a sleepless night I fought with him all night long! I was in a meeting where he had spoken, and I had stood up to answer him and defend women and encourage women who despair because of him. Feeling that it was my duty to help my sisters, I found it was very easy for me to say horrible things to him, and I saw the faces of the women in the audience illuminated with hope, and this gave me so much courage".

(Ludovici to Pillay, 1935, Countway). In a letter to A. Pillay of Bombay, India, Ludovici claimed himself "an importunate early-morning rouser who is breaking your sleep" (Ludovici to Pillay, 1935, Countway). "My dear Pillay" says Ludovici, "I should have to talk to you for months to make you see that you, too, are asleep in the current values...I shall need a long conversation with you to be able to snap up immediately every unconscious display of bias in your remarks and thus bring it to your consciousness" (Ludovici to Pillay, 1935, Countway).

Objecting to a letter from a Dr. Khanolkar in which he claimed that "An average woman nowadays does not believe herself to be designated solely for the purpose of bearing children", Ludovici retorts:

This means [in fact] that Dr. Khanolkar does not believe her to be so designed. But what does it matter what a corrupt average woman today believes in or not? In any case Mr. Havelock Ellis, Mr. Stuart Mills and Mrs. Marie Stopes have ruined his mind. I say simply --and none of your doctor friends can deny it, however much their unconscious impulse arising from current values may urge them to--that orgasms ad infinitum do not constitute sex expression to the female, and that shows an unconscious male bias (i.e. the same as a feminist bias) to suppose that fornication with sterility can ever be an adequate sexual exercise for

women (Ludovici to Pillay, 1935, Countway).

Ludovici insisted that sexual intercourse between men and women be directed to quality procreation. Modern "fornication" was a symptom of the lack of concern for "Flourishing Life". Birth control, he argued, promoted a relaxed view of human morality and reproduction, just as psychoanalysis promoted a relaxation of manly self control and responsibility for the biological future.

In his insistence on females as vessels for child-bearing Ludovici exhibits a paradoxical puritanism which he shared with his contemporary, D. H. Lawrence, arguably the most self-conscious advocate of "Nietzschean" morality, the "gospel of the body", in modern English fiction. It was a stereotypically "fascist" attribute, as well: a high-flying critique of Puritanism's anti-biological values (which generally overlapped with racism) coupled with a male fastidiousness about sex and the feminine. At the same time that Ludovici and Lawrence loathed Christian morality and its denial of the "Dionysian", they recoiled from "fornication". One presumably cannot fornicate with women properly subjected. This contained, chaste, sexuality is evident in male-dominated nazi propaganda art. It was the sexuality that asserted a stylized male and female physique. It encouraged eugenic offspring, and it spurned promiscuity, which in the reactionary mind was associated with cities, with psychoanalysis, with biological decadence, and with

Jews (Sheldon 1936). I will consider these themes more fully in chapter 4.

There was a seamless transition between the condemnation of fornication on Christian grounds and its condemnation on materialist grounds. Eugenics for both Ludovici and Sheldon was a means for promoting a traditional moral order without recourse to Christian metaphysics or Puritan morality. But their respective moral positions were something of a half-way house between the ancient and the modern.

In a similar context sociologists Max Weber and Max Scheler spoke of the dilemma of modernization in academia, and in tones similar to Ludovici's attitudes to the modern. Weber chided his more traditional colleagues for failing to recognize that the specialized knowledge appropriate to modern academe offered no license for prophecy: The true, the good, and the beautiful were not to be conflated (Harwood 1993), a position that could be taken as the polar opposite from Sheldon's and Ludovici's eugenic holism. The culture war between elitist "Mandarins" and democratic "Comprehensives" in the German genetics community (1900-1933) is essentially the same war being fought by Ludovici. Scheler exclaimed that the most profound perversion of the hierarchy of values is the subordination of vital values to utility values, which gains force as modern morality develops. This Scheler called the "ethos of industrialism"

(Harwood 1993, p. 275).

Early twentieth-century Hellenism was in this light at once a way to denigrate Puritan morality and industrialization, after Nietzsche, and to reestablish a no less insistent morality based on eugenics and on Greek models of physical beauty, splendour, and balance. It was also a reinstatement of physiognomical values best summarized in the romantic poet Keats's lines: "Truth is beauty, beauty truth". Sheldon's and Ludovici's eugenics echoed the persistent desire to believe that the biologically beautiful and the virtuous were one and the same. A Wordsworthian notion of "Nature's Holy Plan" hovers nearby. Human physique appears to have been a last stronghold for preserving civilization and hierarchy, for appealing to biological values that alone could offset the perceived indignity and social chaos of modernization.

Sheldon's partiality for agrarian values rooted in his rural upbringing on the Rhode Island coast (Arraj 1990, pp. 131-156), together with Ludovici's nostalgia for an unspoiled English countryside (Ludovici 1970), depict the cultural schizophrenia that was so endemic to modernist literary struggle. The links between anti-feminism and agrarianism and militarism are patent, nazis and fascists notwithstanding. The rural past was "standardized America" and "Anglo Saxon" England. Ludovici and Sheldon sought to pour new wine into old wine skins in a way analogous to the

eighteenth-century philosophes' advocacy of an atheism short of bad taste and violent revolution (cf. Becker 1936).⁸

It would appear that Ludovici's wishes were contravened on several counts in his Last Will and Testament. His direction that manuscripts be published, The English Countryside and My Autobiography (The Confessions of an Antifeminist),⁹ "at the lowest price compatible with the cost of production of a decent and presentable edition" was likely ignored, or at least there is no evidence that his request was carried out (Ludovici 1970, p. 2). Ludovici also directed that the "University Court of the University of Edinburgh" be given "the sum of 2000 pounds to be

⁸ Sheldon could also exhibit good form with his strong conservative opinions. In 1957 he wrote to Charles Lindbergh at his home in Darien, Connecticut, from his Constitution Laboratory in New York:

I still have every good intention of accepting your kind invitation to come up and see you some evening. I have much to learn from you and there is a lot I would like to talk about with you.

For the past year I have been subscribing to a little sheet published in Washington and called Human Events....[it presents] what I would call the soundly conservative side of major political questions of the day. I enjoy the sheet and I am curious as to whether you get it. If you do not, and will be kind enough to mail the enclosed post card, I would rather like to send you a subscription to it. I think the paper is quite "all right" in the sense that there would be no embarrassment in your being on its mailing list (Sheldon to Lindbergh, Dec. 12, 1957, Sheldon Archives).

⁹ There are, in fact, two manuscripts. One is an autobiography of Ludovici and the other is a manuscript entitled The English Countryside. Both manuscripts total 614 typewritten pages.

invested in trustee securities and the income thereof to be used to provide a money prize to be known as "THE LUDOVICI PRIZE" to be awarded annually or at the discretion of the said University Court for the best thesis submitted to them on the subject of miscegenation" (1970, p. 3).

Further, "With regard to the balance of the said residue of my Residuary Estate I DIRECT the said University Court to use the same at their discretion for the purpose of research into the influence of miscegenation on man's quality and well-being such research to be carried out under the auspices of the University Department of Public Health and Social Medicine" (1970, p. 3). According to inquiries, the University of Edinburgh has no record of such a bequest ever being made. Ludovici's requests were apparently ignored. The net value of his estate, some seventy-eight thousand pounds according to records, may not have been sufficient, given other demands and contingencies, to support his designs. Ludovici died without issue in Ipswich, Suffolk, in 1971, predeceased by his wife.

1.2 Ludovici's Complaint Against Modernity

My aim in this section is to use the work of Anthony M. Ludovici to introduce what can only be labeled the "literary" or "heroic" roots of Sheldon's life's work in human constitution--his appropriation of, if not his belief in, the notion of euhemerism, a practice that Ludovici

argued for at length in Man's Descent from the Gods: Or, the Complete Case Against Prohibition (1921). The expression denotes the practice of interpreting myths as accounts of historical persons and events, after the fourth-century B.C. mythographer, Euhemerus.¹⁰ In Ludovici's hands euhemerism is a mythic means of making a case for biological and aesthetic degeneration by postulating a pre-historical "race"--the Greek gods--who were superior in every way to modern man--spiritually, physically, and psychologically. The gods were "supermen" who once walked the earth. Greek mythology is, in this sense, stories about real people. Their physical splendour, their natural pride and healthy prejudice, their freedom from deleterious Puritan (anti-biological) values, and their relative freedom from disease, both physical and psychological, make them eugenic icons (Ludovici 1933). This valorization of essentially Hellenic values also pervaded nazi propaganda, especially in art (Adam 1992, Barron 1992). One ambition of the Third Reich was to eradicate biological, and more specifically, racial, "decadence" from the modern world. Eugenics, "good breeding" (Lebensborn in nazi terminology), was seen as the

¹⁰ Euhemerism was a common practice in eighteenth-century history and historiography. An excellent general treatment of the subject can be found in Frank Manuel's book, The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1959. To my knowledge, no scholarship exists that relates euhemerism to eugenics. It would appear that a belief in euhemerism became quaint in the course of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography.

way to achieve this. Hence eugenics and nazi race hygiene, while divergent in important specifics, some of which I will enumerate here, were pursuing similar goals. Nazi race hygiene can best be seen as a particularized racial strain of a more global eugenic mandate we find in Ludovici and Sheldon.

On a scientific level Ludovici was to claim in later years, following voracious reading in modern biology, that the ancient Greeks and their gods were biologically superior to modern man because of their geographic isolation and their close inbreeding over centuries, as indeed might be said of ancient peoples generally (Ludovici 1933, 1952).¹¹ His adoption of the notion of "psycho-physical harmony", which was common coin among eugenists and geneticists in the early twentieth century, accorded with holistic,

¹¹ Says Ludovici in 1933:

"If we examine the sources of our civilization and culture, our attention is turned nolens volens to a number of peoples whose homes were either on islands, peninsulas, or areas naturally or artificially enclosed, and who were, therefore, compelled to practice endogamy, or who deliberately chose it.

No great civilizing moment can be traced before the existence of these endogamic peoples, and the presumption is, therefore, that they must have been great peoples. They not only practised endogamy but professed it as a virtue and an article of faith. They hated the foreigner. Endogamy was even adopted by the classes.

Within their populations, small groups split off who tended to inbreed among themselves and actually practised incest. Now we know that close inbreeding of this sort presupposes great health. We must conclude, therefore, that these peoples were not only great but also very healthy" (Ludovici 1933, p. 1)

constitutional, ideas of psychosomatic integrity. Modernist culture and medical holism were both nostalgic for a past that could salvage the decadent West from social chaos.

The parallels to "Neo-Hippocratic" holism and constitutional medicine are apparent (Cawadias 1928). According to tradition, Hippocrates first postulated a robust normality based on humoral balance, a balance that was reconceptualized and revived in the early twentieth century with the rise of modern genetics and endocrinology (Garrison 1929). Modern holism entailed explicit commitments to ancient models of health and vitality, both to offset a myopic localism in medicine, to reestablish a model of physical and mental continuity and wholeness, and to parry the ill effects of modern industrialism on the human body and mind.

Two landmark events brought about degeneration, Ludovici claims. The first was Prometheus' rebellion against Zeus, namely his giving of fire to man, which resulted in the consumption of food blasted of its pristine nutritional value. The resulting malnutrition necessitated the healing and restorative wines of Dionysus, intended by Zeus, his father, to help offset this degeneration. A second degeneration occurred, according to Ludovici, in modern times with promiscuous breeding and the Industrial Revolution, which served to "besot" and enslave the masses of the population. Mongrelization of ancient peoples,

cities, bad food, and unnatural social relations served to fulfill unbounded Promethean desires for wealth and "progress" at the expense of biological and hence psychological and spiritual quality.

Ludovici turns the traditional account of Promethean heroism on its head. "Prometheus" Ludovici insists, "was a depraved, foolish and ambitious man, with just that amount of gutter smartness which the nineteenth century regarded and crowned as superiority" (Ludovici 1921, p. x). On the other hand, "Zeus was a wise and superior person, bearing a close resemblance to his superior forebears" (1921, p. x). Ludovici's treatment of the Promethean myth is cast as a revolt against Prohibition, against the Promethean, "Republican", Puritan, forces that, to his mind, had enslaved workers and made modern life ugly and servile.

Not only were the Prometheans "besotting" the working class with degrading labors. With Prohibition they sought to take away their healing liquors as well, which as recently as the sixteenth century, Ludovici claims, were of high quality. Alcohol was now illegal, corrupt, and classed in America with firearms. "In plain English", says Ludovici, "the Prohibition campaign, both in America and in this country, is simply an attempt to fling us back into the grey misery of a Promethean civilisation, without either the solace or the therapeutic safeguards of the doctrine of Dionysus" (1921, p. 242).

"Commercialism" he says, "comes on the scene, unscrupulously deteriorates our national drinks and turns them into harmful, or at least neutral drinks for its own base ends; and then, if you please, has the impudence to declare (as it has done in America) that for commercial and industrial purposes the proletariat are more serviceable material if they are deprived of these beverages" (1921, pp. 154-155). Prohibition, to Ludovici's mind, is the reductio ad absurdum of Promethean civilization:

With the masses groaning under an exploitation more cruel than has ever been seen in the world before; with the oppressors of these masses growing every day more vulgar, more luxurious, more dishonest, more pleasure-loving and more convinced that they were the chosen of God; with distrust increasing so rapidly on either side that, at the end of the century a war to the death was secretly declared by each side against its opponent; with ill health, degeneration, insanity, and the multiplication of undesirables increasing by leaps and bounds (by "undesirables" are meant people who had been made undesirable by the system); with the character and mind of the masses deliberately deteriorated by besotting labours;--that typical Christian, Browning, was still able to lisp: "God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world". All's right with the world! when Browning and his class, a small

minority in the land, were the only people who were "all right" (1921, pp. 67-68).

Science has to be wrested from the hands of irresponsible Prometheans. "I wish to emphasize the importance", he says, "of enquiring what kind of man, what type of man, is responsible for our present civilisation, and whether there is not a better civilisation to which we might return, if the supremacy of a different type could be encouraged and cultivated" (Ludovici 1921, p. 241).

Sheldon's temperamental "superman" answers Ludovici's call for a different "type" of man. By Sheldon's definition such a eugenic type would be balanced in the three components of physique, to include aesthetic and religious sensibilities: an appreciation of physical beauty and a respect for the biological future. Vulgar exploitation, sexual promiscuity, and the fixation on the accumulation of wealth, themes Sheldon takes up in Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936), [see chapter 4] might be precluded if humans possessed higher thresholds of religious and aesthetic values based on eugenic excellence (Sheldon 1936). But a mongrelized people cannot do better. Their potential for nobility, honor, self-sacrifice is accordingly limited. Leaders, superior specimens, by these lights, are born, not made.

Industrialization was essentially an "ugly" and unheroic proposition, both physically and spiritually. The

people, the landscape, became a "wasteland" with the Industrial Revolution. The implication is that unexploited and beautiful physical specimens would not on their own initiative have created the modern industrial world--the "Wasteland" in T.S. Eliot's words. Industrialization was the work of small and technical minds, operating on the basest of motives. Ludovici thought that knowledge, learning, even enterprize, need not be this way. Certainly it had been otherwise among the ancients, and even in pre-modern Europe (Ludovici 1921).

And it must not be supposed that this other type would necessarily be hostile to science or to discovery; it would, however, promote science and discovery in a different way, with at least a careful observance of aesthetic-survival-values (1921, p. 241).

Indeed it is often the specialist who is summoned as a fixer, problem solver, when Prometheans [who were also scientists] botch things:

When muddle, suffering, and grave physical degeneration arise through neglect of the Art of Life, it is the scientist who is called upon to advise, and to advise quickly nowadays....it is the poor, clumsy, heavy-footed scientist who has to take the place of the artist, of the man who knows. Unfortunately, however, the scientist's ways are so devious, so uncertain...that humanity almost perishes on his

doorstep (1921, p. 84).

We find in Ludovici a privileging of the artistic and the intuitive (the "poet's instinct") over the scientific. Social policy, Ludovici believes, should be arrived at by virtuous aristocrats (men who possess "goodness"), not declassé, Promethean, technocrats, who have no feel for the noble past. In A Defense of Aristocracy (1915) Ludovici had insisted that only a "samurai" society could eliminate the folly and stupidity into which the modern world had fallen, a notion entertained at roughly the same time by Aldous Huxley and others (cf. Bradshaw 1994). David Bradshaw's recent resurrection of what he calls "The Hidden Huxley" reveals the social and political side of Huxley's early writings that, according to Bradshaw, have "languished misunderstood for over fifty years" (Bradshaw 1994, p. vi). These writings bear a striking resemblance to Ludovici's defense of aristocracy as well as Huxley's strong debt to the American Nietzschean, H. L. Mencken (Bradshaw 1994, p. x), namely to Mencken's insistence on the "preservation of the leisure class" (Bradshaw 1994, p. x). I explore Sheldon's particular relations to Huxley in chapter five.

F.W. Stella Browne's 1915 review of Ludovici's Defense aptly summarized his social beliefs, which were to change little over the next half century (Ludovici 1952):

The author's thesis is that the vigor and order of civilisation can only be preserved by the rule of

exceptional men; 'the lucky strokes of nature', the 'examples of flourishing life', whom he terms Aristocrats. Further, that the development of an Aristocracy, demands long tradition, close inbreeding, with an occasional cross, and rigorous selection, both in eliminating and incorporating certain elements in the life of the community (Browne 1915. p. 430).

Ludovici's Defense was no apologia for the ruling class in Britain, as Browne understood, but a radical indictment of it. "No socialist" says Browne, "could bring a stronger indictment than he does, in his analysis both of the methods of recruiting the British peerage, since 1688, and of the short-sighted, slip-shod greed, with which its incomparable opportunities for leadership were frittered away, and its responsibilities abused" (1915, p. 430). "The exploitation and cruelty of modern capitalism, began on the land" says Ludovici, "while success in trade, like success in law, is absolutely no criterion of ruler quality, nor of taste: on the contrary, it is more often the reverse of these two possessions" (Browne 1915, p. 431).

Ludovici distinguishes between "vital-survival-values" and "aesthetic-survival-values". Aesthetic survival values parallel what Sheldon calls the fifth panel of consciousness, which was concerned with the aesthetic appreciation of beauty, the "t-component" in the nomenclature of somatotypy. The former have "survival alone

as their object,--not a particular kind of life, but simply life is the goal. That is why they may be accurately described as merely vital survival values" (Ludovici 1921, p. 230).

But there is obviously another kind of survival value. In order to survive, alone, it may be necessary to sacrifice something desirable, something noble, something beautiful....It may therefore be easier, in the course of ages, for a race to abandon a desirable, a noble, or a beautiful feature, in order to simplify the problem of survival. And if there are no severe values forbidding such abandonment of desirable characteristics, these characteristics...run a considerable risk of being dropped on the way (1921, p. 231).

Ludovici marshalls Herbert Spencer to show how this state of affairs came about in evolutionary terms. "Superiority" claimed Spencer, "whether in size, strength, activity, or sagacity, is, other things equal, at the cost of diminished fertility; and where the life lead by a species does not demand these higher attributes, the species profits by decrease of them, and accompanying increase of fertility...very often that which, humanly speaking, is inferiority, causes the survival" (1921, p. 231).

"Survival" claims Ludovici, "may mean abandoning, for

convenience' sake, some form of superiority....In opposition to the vulgar assumption of modernity,...success was not by any means always a sign of superiority. It is only in an age when ignorance and tastelessness coincide in forming opinion, that success, which may necessitate the abandonment of a desirable quality, is always identified with superiority" (1921, pp. 231-232).

Ludovici found in Spencer's evolutionary speculations a "scientific" legitimation for his loathing of modernity. Modernity's violation of "natural superiority" had created a situation wherein vulgar Prometheans (unchastened scientists, technocrats, businessmen, "robber barons") had excelled by dint of their physical and spiritual mediocrity: their patent lack of the "Art of Life". The aesthetically superior physical specimen--and hence to Ludovici's mind the spiritually and intellectually superior specimen--had become redundant in the career of the modern world. With modernity, biological excellence was ignored, to the overall detriment of society.

Ludovici was outraged by modernity's blithe acceptance of physical and mental decrepitude:

We who, today, are so used to illness, botchedness and ugliness, that we scarcely know ourselves as Europeans and civilised men unless we have at least one cripple, one cretin, one lunatic, one neurasthenic or one consumptive in our family....we no longer regard our

own or anybody else's physical shortcomings with shame or disgust...--we of modern progressive Europe, can form, it is true, but a shadowy conception of the horror with which primitive man must have regarded such a shower of physical calamities as fell upon him after the first application of fire to food (1921, pp. 115-116).

Ludovici's Promethean type is an engineer or a chemist, a "boy-scout" type who is oblivious to what he is doing to the world. He has to be led by artists who know better. His description of both the Promethean and the Dionysian types bears extended citation:

When I use the expression 'a type of man animated by the Promethean spirit' I mean a people rather like the Americans, the modern Germans and ourselves,...with the minds of boy-scouts...whose chief concern and joy in life is to press every possible discovery, chemical or mechanical, to its furthest possible development, without a thought to the consequences,--that is to say, regardless of the misery, ill-health, ugliness or de-generation that they may be creating. It is a type that has no art of life, that cannot construct in life; it can construct only bridges, towers, engines, canals, material things and romances....Like the boy-scout, it does not understand women and is usually mastered by them....

There is another type, however; though, unfortunately for mankind, its influence seems to make itself felt but very slightly in modern Western civilisation. It is a type of more benevolent, more wise and more adult thought. It is a type that produces men who develop beyond the boy-scout stage in tastes and interests....It has no respect for the engineer or the chemist. It regards them as unscrupulous schoolboys who must be kept in check....It sees no object in existence unless life is beautiful, healthy, vigorous, and joyful....For want of a better term this type might be called the Dionysian, since their radical hostility to the Promethean type and the Promethean type's bottomless loathing of them is so well depicted in the ancient Greek myth (1921, p. 179).

Ludovici's "beautiful, healthy, vigorous, and joyful" specimen--his eugenic ideal of "Flourishing Life"--found scientific expression in Sheldon's temperamental superman, a physical specimen possessing high and balanced thresholds of heart, muscle, and intellect. For Sheldon as for Ludovici adaptive success was contingent upon structure and quality of the organism in question. The rub enters, however, when the biological best fail to adapt to the indignities of "vital survival values".

Ludovici was a staunch defender of the "discontents" (i.e., of their inherent virtue and reality) of modern

civilization and "aristocracy" at just the time Freud was rationalizing them away, along with what Ludovici regarded as the essence of heroism and manhood, qualities which lay for him in the realm of the "Dionysian" and not the "Promethean". Spiritual accomodation and psychological maintenance, the pith of psychoanalysis, were, to Ludovici's mind, the province of the declassé degenerate and coward. If the world's salvation was dependent after all upon childhood sexuality and toilet training, Ludovici would have none of it.

Ludovici's understanding of biological and social superiority is at odds with stereotypical middle-class motivations for endorsing eugenics, as discussed most recently by Diane Paul (Paul 1995). Paul's portrayal of the motivations for eugenic practice center around a quintessentially progressive, middle-class, concern for order, sobriety, and responsibility for the "lower" orders--just the "Protestant" priorities (especially in an American context) that Ludovici rejects. Ludovici defends eugenics not on the grounds that it will make for a safer and more stable world for middle class industrialists--for the further rationalization of the population along Progressive and mainly Protestant guidelines--but that it will serve to erode the very foundations of business culture and Promethean hegemony. Eugenics for Ludovici is a decidedly revolutionary, counter-cultural, activity, not a

contribution to middle-class solidarity and complacency.

In The False Assumptions of Democracy (1921) Ludovici is explicit about this departure from mainstream eugenics. His distinction between "society's failures" and "nature's failures" is radical, and it is certainly a different understanding of eugenics than that endorsed by mainstream eugenicists; i.e., those social Darwinists who justified biological quality, based on adaptation, to industrial civilization, whereby society's failures are necessarily nature's failures (Paul 1995). This approach to eugenics, which I believe is the approach that has received the most attention in eugenics scholarship, is simply not of the same calibre as that advanced by Ludovici, and it will not identify and capture the reactionary element in Sheldon's constitutional studies.

The mainstream eugenicist assumed a priori that adaptation to industrial civilization is a good thing; otherwise, and obviously, the individual will be a social liability, a "failure". But for those "biological aristocrats" who are "superior" to their surroundings, it is the worst form of punishment. Freud, too, lamented the lack of adaptation to the industrial world and called it neurosis; Ludovici and Sheldon asserted that a lack of adaptation could also be a symptom of superiority. The difference here is between modernist literary revolt, which gave no quarter and which promised no quick cures, and

conventional apology for the status quo, in this instance by way of eugenics. Says Ludovici:

Nature's failures and society's failures are not identical. Nature's failure is frequently a creature below par, he is frequently botched and undesirable. Society's failure may be an extremely valuable person to whom modern conditions are so loathsome that he cannot adapt himself to them and become successful. That is why the Eugenists, who are prone to class the unsuccessful of the age with the undesirable, still have a good deal to learn. The unsuccessful now-a-days are certainly the biologically 'unfit'; but the question that must be decided before you conclude that they are also 'undesirable' is whether present conditions demand desirable or undesirable qualities in those who become successfully adapted to them,--in those, that is to say, who are 'fit' (Ludovici 1921, p. 73).

This is what Sheldon meant when he said that "Possibly the most tragic circumstance in human life is to be caught in (born into) that often strangulated pocket of biologically aristocratic stock during a period of democratic resurgence" (Sheldon 1949, pp. 63-64). Those biologically fit and socially unfit are, according to Sheldon, "people of too high a secondary t [beauty] component, caught in a society that has forgotten to

maintain protective devices for its too highly refined stock" (1949, p. 64). "Democracy" Sheldon claimed, "always means a breaking down of the fences by which some earlier thrust at 'civilization' had contrived to refine--i.e., lift the t component--of some stock above the common average" (1949, p. 64).

This refusal to equate the biologically superior with the socially superior is the mechanism that links modernist rebellion with a heroic strain of evolutionary biology. It also animates Ludovici's wider, historical, critique of modernity.

Sheldon was, like Ludovici, scientizing modernist discontent. To defend "constitution" or endogenous factors in medicine and psychology was to defend a biologically "aristocratic" order, which for both Ludovici and Sheldon was a very different thing than simply defending status-quo (liberal/conservative) politics or middle-class eugenic designs. Ludovici's critique of early 20th-century Britain, as Browne (1915) suggested, was neither strictly liberal nor conservative. Certainly the eugenic aspects of his argument could and did appeal to both marxists and fascists. Ludovici was engaging early on in a generic modernist reaction that predated a later hardening of political categories and allegiances (Aschheim 1988, p. 147). Both Ludovici and Sheldon, while patently not nazis or fascists--indeed they derided both--were no less concerned than they

with eugenic excellence. Sorting out the salient differences and the teasing similarities between nazi race hygiene and eugenics is a job that has not been taken up by historians of biology, largely because this Nietzschean component of eugenics has not been understood, or has not been taken seriously in the literature.

To adopt a modernist attitude to modernity, which is what I believe Sheldon in some measure did, lends to his constitutional study a reactionary quality heretofore unrecognized or, at the least, unacknowledged within eugenics scholarship. Sheldon's program in somatotypy was at once a continuation of nineteenth century anthropology and criminology, after Lombroso and Bertillon (cf. Sekula 1986), as well as a radical departure from them. The reason for this difference is apparent, based on the positions of Ludovici and Sheldon outlined here. The zeal for using physiognomy (police photography) as a means of social control among progressive reformers was not a transparent matter with either Sheldon or Ludovici. Their stances against modernity problematizes middle class complacency about eugenics and places an important realm of twentieth-century biomedical investigation within the purview of modernist alienation. It also stands to belie accounts of eugenics that are tied chiefly to practising geneticists, biologists, and to status-quo reformers, as we see in Diane Paul's accounts (Paul 1995). Her work elides this critical

conjunction of modernist alienation and modern biology; she segregates what was not, in fact, segregated for a constitutionalist like Sheldon. Such alienation and its crucial role in eugenics presumably lies outside the domain of contemporary historical discourse. Paul seeks to locate more "substantive" causes for eugenics within realms of inquiry compatible with current political and scholarly interests.

2.0 THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORIGINS OF MODERN DISEASE

2.1 Ludovici's Concept of "Flourishing Life"

Ludovici's The Quest of Human Quality: How to Rear Leaders (1952) was his last and most extended argument for eugenics. In it he fleshes out in terms appropriated from modern biological research his earlier, intuitive, epithet, "Flourishing Life". Ludovici offers a lucid and accessible context for Sheldon's project in somatotypy. Sheldon's constitutional psychology and psychiatry can be regarded as an extended essay on Ludovici's eugenic platform. Sheldon demonstrated enthusiasm for Ludovici's writings, because they provided an accessible intellectual assault on modernity compatible with his own.

Ludovici enlists modern biological authorities (which Sheldon does not do in Varieties of Delinquent Youth) to argue for an "aristocratic" order: that superior leaders (or even a superior population) cannot be gotten from inferior biological stock. Contrary to "popular" and "erroneous" assumptions, Ludovici insists that "a man [cannot] do or express what he himself is not; that by taking thought, by study, or long-training, a creature who is psycho-physically chaos, confusion, and disharmony, cannot express, impose, or produce order, harmony, and quality" (Ludovici 1952, p. 91).

Ludovici blasts what he calls the "indurated false doctrine" of environmentalist thinking, which he traces to Christianity, and which parallels Sheldon's own biologism:

'Indurated false doctrine'...is centuries old, and derives from the original error, committed over two thousand years ago, of supposing that a man's soul, mind, or psyche, functions independently of his body....In this book the above superstition is scrapped (1952, p. 124).

In its place he posits a robust monism: "We profess our faith only in those procedures which give some promise of producing a people who cannot help expressing order, harmony, and quality, because they are order, harmony, and quality...we accept as inevitable the conclusion that [people] must display quality of both body and spirit before [they] can measure, assess, appreciate and, above all produce, quality of any kind". "How [can] we know what it feels like to be a thorough-bred and to possess the symmetry, harmony, dignity, and quality of a fine animal" given our "chaotic ancestry and, therefore, the pervasive chaos of our whole psycho-physical make-up?" (1952, p. 124).¹

¹ This position, which was in the main Sheldon's position also, constitutes the "reductionism" Sarah Tracy claims destroyed the credibility of American constitutionalism. While the position is patently "genetic" and deterministic, it does not deny the environmental causes of the degeneration--namely the social chaos and indignity of modernity. Ludovici's biology is animated by the Lamarckian inheritance of acquired characteristics. If the human physique has degenerated, it can also regenerate. Ludovici and Sheldon did not see this stern alternative as reductionist. Instead, they regarded it as all of a piece with the modernist and "holistic" critique of modernity that

Ludovici capitalizes on the revival of age-old constitutional and physiognomical assumptions, for example, that external physical beauty, harmony and symmetry signify health, a positive version of the old German medical adage, "Hesslichkeit stellt eine schlechte Prognose vor" ["Ugliness presupposes a bad diagnosis"] (1952, p. 104). Indeed the revival of physiognomy, of constitution, within modern medicine was partly a result of advances in endocrinology, as Garrison (1927) and Cawadias (1944) have suggested. The older, more static, anthropology of Rudolf Martin in Lehrbuch der Anthropologie (1914) was superceded.

These revisions initiated a new "characterology" within medicine (Tucker and Lessa 1943), which, when juxtaposed with other more quantitative fields of modern medical and psychological research, assumed an anachronistic cast. Rooted in tradition, constitutional research was something of an "ancient mariner" within modern medicine. It advocated a seasoned, wiser, and more intuitive perspective on the human condition (Draper 1944). It sought to merge the medical and the philosophic and hence humanize medical thought and practice. Sheldon even regarded his constitutional psychology as a corollary in some ways to Hutchins' and Adler's Great Books Program initiated during

raged all around. Theirs was "holism" with a vengeance. To them, it was the "New Deal" world of Roosevelt that was severely reductionistic in endorsing an uncritical environmentalism.

the 1930s at Chicago (Sheldon 1949). Constitutional investigation, in addition to its putative aim of establishing the relationships between physique and temperament on a scientific basis, as well as ferreting out the relationships between disease entities and constitutional "type", was part of a greater holistic effort to put a human face back into medicine and human life.

Constitutional medicine also was of a piece with the same Janus-faced passions that spurred the nazis to frame ancient splendor with modern efficiency. Constitutional research in the early twentieth century is an enthralling and largely uncharted example of the intersection between medicine, art, and society, and one that has been fugitive and difficult of historical access, because consumately transdisciplinary. Yet it is as important as the immediate kinship that existed between notions of "nordic superiority" and nazi propaganda art in Germany. The statuary of American artist Paul Manship and, earlier, French artist August Rodin, for example, spoke to common Hellenic, and, in this context, eugenic, passions within the fine arts and within western society, just as patently as the statuary of Arno Becker spoke to nazi race hygiene (Taylor 1990, pp. 231-248).

This new Hellenism in art and "psycho-physical" harmony in biology/eugenics, as it was understood by Ludovici and other eugenists and race hygienists, were fellow travelers

in modernist culture. Hellenism, in fact, comprized a new morality for eugenists based on biological excellence, with strictures every bit as binding and dogmatic as the old Christian theology. A Greek ideal of wholeness served as an antidote to modern disintegration which, in turn, had a medical corollary in "Neo-Hippocratism". Sheldon the constitutionalist sought to make the body a standard for the mind, thus "saving the physique". To anchor the mind in the body was to resist the claims of the modern with biological science itself.

Christopher Lawrence's forthcoming work on this subject emphasizes the daunting historical complexity of inter-war medical holism. "The many diverse terms with holistic implications" he says, "--organicism, vitalism, totality, synthesis, community, Ganzheit, Gestalt, medicine humaine, to name but a few--suggest at the variety of responses to a multitude of issues and problems" (Lawrence 1997, p. 8). He adds:

It is almost impossible to articulate fully the relationship among these concepts and slogans. One can at best point to Wittgensteinian family resemblances, the full exploration of which would require something like an intellectual history of the western world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (1997, p. 8).

Lawrence claims further that "there was probably a

special affinity [in the interwar years] between holism and ideologies of the right because the organic analogy lent itself to rhetoric about subservience of individual parts to the well being of the whole and hierarchical relations among the parts" (1997, p. 10). Ludovici's eugenic doctrine is certainly a case in point.

The rationale that Ludovici employs to justify this new, modernist, "physiognomy" is the "important truth" that "physical traits, organs, and parts of organs, bones and parts of bones, endocrine glands, body cells and blood cells, may be inherited independently from either parent; so that if parents are disparate, as most parents are today, their child or children are mosaics of odd parts, a confusion of more or less badly adjusted, badly proportioned, badly balanced, bodily components, and cannot, except by a fluke, form a harmonious whole" (Ludovici 1952, p. 92).

Ludovici had stated this same thesis as early as 1933 in an address to the Eugenics Society in London entitled "Eugenics and Consanguineous Marriages" where he explains the importance of inbreeding for purifying the population. Inbreeding "stabilizes the germ plasm of a stock" says Ludovici. "It also brings together those deleterious factors in the stock and makes the products of breeding accessible to the axe of Natural Selection. But what it also does is to produce individuals with a high degree of

correlation between their bodily parts....Where it is replaced, either owing to superstition or magic [environmentalism, Christianity], by out or cross-breeding, reversion and degeneration of acquired characteristics tends to prevail" (Ludovici 1933, pp. 2-3).

"Wild random breeding", or what Sheldon labeled "promiscuous breeding", is the culprit. "Every other condition necessary" says Ludovici "for the emergence of a ruling elite must prove inadequate if this major condition be not first fulfilled" (Ludovici 1952, p. 109). "We are so familiar" Ludovici claims "with sub-normal health, chronic disability and defect, inferior stamina, sub-normal balance, asymmetry, and ugliness...that we have long ceased to notice how deplorable the average human being really is" (1952, p. 94).

Ludovici's concern with "mongrelization" of the population (of England) has relatively little to do with race mixing per se, which he regards as its "rarest manifestation", although racial miscegenation is hardly discounted. His injunctions apply most urgently within "races". "[Mongrelization]" he contends, "occurs chiefly in healthy, sound stocks [of any race], mongrelizing themselves by mating with unsound, weedy, and tainted stocks; or in well-constituted and good-looking stocks mating with ill-constituted, badly-grown, and repulsive stocks; or by the mating of wholly disparate types--short and stumpy with tall

and slim, fat and heavy with spouses whose endocrine balance is normal; vigorous and hard-mating with weakly and soft. So that ugliness becomes not merely the hereditary feature of a family line, but is created afresh in every generation and family by the confusion and chaos resulting from the jumble of incompatible traits inherited independently from widely disparate parents" (1952, p. 95).

This mongrelization, claims Ludovici, results in a "completely atomized population", a random "combination and permutation of millions of odd and different traits...in which everyone is unique of his kind in some form of peculiar ugliness, ill-health, or defect" (1952, p. 95). Hence there can be "no affinities, no real understanding, either of feeling or of type." (1952, p. 95). It is only a "romantic and gambling expectation...that quality and order can come from these modern atomized populations....As if quality and order were features of human life and capacity which could be conjured in from outside!" (1952, p. 95). He alleges that "improvement in the standard of living in recent years [has presented] no corresponding improvement in psycho-physical quality" (1952, p. 95).

Ludovici marshalls the work of a universe of biologists and anthropologists, including Darwin, Spencer, Mjoen, Davenport, Rodenwaldt, Haldane, Huxley (Julian), Crew, Carell, Morgan, Lundborg, and even Boas and Montague, to make his case. Ludovici and Sheldon

believed these considerable researches to constitute a clear eugenic mandate. Most relevant to Sheldon's psychological and psychiatric hypotheses is Ludovici's contention that a lack of "psycho-physical quality" and not hitches in childhood sexuality is the real foundation of neurosis and psychosis. As man is a psycho-some...it follows that the discords, disharmonies, and disproportions in his make-up must involve corresponding discords and conflicts in his mind and nervous controls. Chaos cannot reign in his bodily parts without being reflected in his mind.... Where constitutional confusions necessarily become reflected in the mind, it would be surprising if the expected results did not appear in the form of impaired mental balance and sanity, reduced serenity, poise and dignity, and defective steadiness and will-power. For these would be but psychological counterparts of modern people's physical disharmonies and conflicts (1952, p. 110).

Ludovici sides with Alfred Adler against Freud concerning the origins of mental illness. While Freud gives a "sexual twist to the roots of neurosis", Alder rightly "emphasizes the importance of organ-inferiority". Ludovici contends that it is psycho-physical conflict that gives rise to "inferiority feelings", and it is to these chronic "inferiority feelings...that, in a flash, any trivial

provocation, slight, or vexation, becomes anchored" (1952, p. 134).

Ludovici excoriates UNESCO as well as Boas and the Columbian School of Anthropology who "try cavalierly to ignore the whole phenomenon of disharmony and confusion arising from crossing disparate parents" (1952, p. 114). Ludovici concedes that, as a rule, bodily parts independently inherited "do not now affect actual viability" (1952, p. 114). Progeny obviously survive under random mating. The point is how well and in what quality they survive. Ludovici insists, with Rodenwaldt, that "confusions and disharmonies, to which breeding from disparates inevitably leads, are nonetheless handicapping for not now being actually lethal; and whether we look on such badly-bred organisms merely from the standpoint of their bodily functions or from that of their feelings, emotions, tastes, and volitional powers, we cannot fail to recognize in them the consequences of chaos and disorder" (1952, pp. 114-115).

That eugenics was discredited for political reasons more than for scientific ones following the second World War (Provine 1971, Bowler 1992) gives at least some purchase to Ludovici's beleaguered counterblast. What he obviously regarded as a carte blanche and ideologically-driven environmentalism, as well as an ever-burgeoning and hegemonic democratic ethos, was the same ethos that literary

modernists had resisted with apocalyptic fervor for decades. Sheldon and Ludovici were both fighting a culture war with eugenics they were bound to lose at the time. Most recently, however, owing to the prospects and successes of the Human Genome Project (Kevles and Hood 1994), the science of eugenics has made a comeback among geneticists, and the word eugenics is again an acceptable part of their working vocabulary (Beatty 1996). The irony may be that the science was more enduring than the modernist fears that propelled it in men like Ludovici and Sheldon, an impression that has hardly been forthcoming since the second World War. The conventional line (e.g., Dunn and Dobzhansky 1946) has been that human inbreeding is bad and that outbreeding is good, or at least not bad, and that eugenic protests in reactionaries like Ludovici and Sheldon were specious from a scientific perspective. In fact, the scientific veracity of eugenics was whitewashed in the interests of political expediency. The world changed, and science changed with it.

On many points, however, Sheldon and Ludovici might well have disagreed. Ludovici's Catholic sympathies and following (Browne 1915), for example, would have been unlikely for Sheldon. It should become apparent, too, in the course of this study that Sheldon's notion of Prometheanism was not the same as Ludovici's. Sheldon's construal of the Promethean was more psychological than Ludovici's and indicated an intellectual striving, a

"Promethean Will", for the realization of personality, character and soul; whereas Ludovici, reflecting Nietzsche, regarded Prometheans as plebians, without soul. Sheldon's Prometheans are, to some extent, Ludovici's Dionysians; and Ludovici's Prometheans answer to Sheldon's "wasters" (Sheldon 1936): both are modernist categories for the vulgar, unchastened "herd". Ludovici reserves the "Art of Life" for the Dionysian, which he took directly from Nietzsche.

Sheldon the psychologist and medical researcher, on the other hand, incorporated the Dionysian into his human physique studies and regarded it as a particular component, variety, of physique--an aspect of endomorphy. Sheldon sought to merge eugenics with extant psychological and psychiatric categories, chiefly those of Kraepelin, Kretschmer, and Freud. Sheldon's "Promethean Conflict" (1936) was actually his idiosyncratic way of articulating "neurosis", or the conflict between the Promethean and the Dionysian in Ludovici's vocabulary. Despite the fact that Ludovici and Sheldon are using different terms, they describe basically the same thing.

Ludovici's loathing of modernity can be seen as symptomatic of "civilization and its discontents", an obsession that lay at the core of modernist revolt in literature and one that was formalized in modern(ist) psychology. The crucial conflict of the literary and

artistic modernists turned on the psychological and (literal) geographic divide that fell between country and city, masculine and feminine, primitive and modern, normal and abnormal. Ludovici assigned to oblivion, with Nietzschean prerogative, all that threatened the "country" (or a highly rarified version of it), the primitive, the "Dionysian", the "aristocratic". Freud predictably cast the problem in sexual terms, dubbing it the "castration complex", while Adler called it the "masculine protest". Sheldon, more reflective of the modernist revolt against industrial cities, called it the "urban sacrifice" (Sheldon 1936, p. 203).² For Sheldon it was the primary source of

² Lewis Mumford (see especially The Culture of Cities 1938, City Development 1945, The Urban Prospect, 1956, The City in History 1961, and The Highway and the City 1967) acknowledged intellectual debt to Sheldon's Psychology and the Promethean Will. In a letter to Sheldon dated 9 July, 1950, Mumford confided that:

Your name forced itself on my consciousness the other day when, before I began working on my final draft [perhaps Art and Technics, 1952], I started to make a list of Acknowledgements of the people who had most influenced my own thought, or most supported it as fellow travelers. Naturally, you were in that list, with an impact out of all proportion to the quantity of study I had done of your writings: so, out of curiosity, I picked a copy of Psychology and Promethean Man [sic] from my shelves, since I had quoted a passage from it in my chapter on religion. The copy is undated and I don't know when I first got it: I suspect it was after I had dipped into it in the N.Y. Public Library around 1940; and I even have a feeling I never had gotten closely to grips with it before the other day, for much of the book seemed utterly fresh to me....I found its insights extremely penetrating; and not less welcome because they were so close to my own. Maybe you

conflict in modern life: the effort to square feeling (the country) with rationality (the city) or, in approximate Nietzschean terms, the Dionysian with the Apollonian. It is here that depth psychology, constitutional psychology, and the literary/artistic rebellion against modernity are joined. To surrender the country, as it were, to capitulate to urban values, was anathema for Sheldon and Ludovici. The country in this instance indicates the persistence in the modern mind of the ancient, the feudal, the primitive, the clannish, and the communal, qualities that marked modernist literary rebellion as well as nazi culture (Mosse 1966, Carey 1992).³

Sheldon and Ludovici shared a generalized cultural

did more to mold my present point of view than, with the utmost rigor of honesty, I can now recall. No matter: the rapport is there....Here's to renewing our talks at a not-too-distant date. Please remember me to your fine colleagues (Mumford to Sheldon, 1950, Sheldon Archives).

³ John Carey declares: "The contention that Hitler's ideas on culture were trivial, half-baked and disgusting can be allowed only if the same epithets are applied to numerous cultural ideas prevalent among English intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century, some of which are still espoused today. The superiority of 'high' art, the eternal glory of Greek sculpture and architecture,...the divine spark that animates all productions of genius and distinguishes them from the low amusements of the mass--these were among Hitler's most dearly held beliefs. His contempt for 'gutter journalism', advertising, and 'cinema bilge', his espousal of the aristocratic principle...His rewritings of the mass--as exterminable subhumans, as an inhibited bourgeois herd...[demonstrates that] Mein Kampf...was not, in any respects, a deviant work but one mainly rooted in European intellectual orthodoxy" (Carey 1992, p. 208).

pessimism, based on their common belief in "random" or "promiscuous" breeding and attending overpopulation. Breeding without a "religious", long-term, regard for consequences is the highest "delinquency". Human life becomes less valuable in the mass (Sheldon 1936, p. 11). Both men were committed to eugenics, to the creation of human "thoroughbreds", Ludovici's exemplars of "Flourishing Life," which Sheldon specified in unprecedented psychological detail. Their passion for eugenics was a way of blasting the modern world by scientific means.

2.2 Germ Theory: That "Savage Superstition"

Such an attitude to modernity as we see in Sheldon and Ludovici alerts us to the need for a more socially and politically informed appreciation of the social forces that animated constitutional medicine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a subject that has received little scholarly attention, with the exception of Christopher Lawrence's forthcoming volume (see above). "Neo-Hippocratism" in early twentieth-century medicine, which inspired the holistic program of Sheldon the constitutionalist, was on one level a continuation of nineteenth-century concerns about the liabilities of medical reductionism. This account, such as it is, will be summarized below.

Early, primary literature on constitution and holism is

sketchy, marginal, and it offers no insight at all into the broader social, political, and cultural dimensions of constitutional arguments. The challenge here is to link up this medical holism, which was the research tradition in which Sheldon was working, with a broader arena of reactionary thought. Just as the nazis were promoting a medical holism (an "organic vision") to counteract the perceived diseases of modernity (Proctor 1988), so a constitutionalist like Sheldon in a less specifically racist mode was challenging a reductionist paradigm in medicine that failed to embrace the whole individual, whom we see portrayed so vividly in nazi propaganda art. The whole individual in this case implied the integrity of the physique, the phenotype, the exemplar of ancient balance and symmetry. The German art critic Willibald Sauerlaender has said that nazi propaganda art displayed "aesthetic eugenics" (Sauerlaender 1994, p. 13). Although specifically racist, nazi art presents just those qualities of health and vigor that were universally valorized by eugenists like Sheldon and Ludovici. Like them, Leni Riefenstahl, the German film director, could resonate to the primitivism and physical splendor of the Nuba warrior without regard to race (Riefenstahl 1995).

It should be emphasized that, at least on a technical level, "the typology of constitution was an inter-ethnic phenomenon" (Garrison 1929, p. 678). It did not focus on

race. This is likely the reason why constitutional thought has received no scholarly attention among historians of scientific racism (e.g., Barken 1992) or from historians of eugenics, even though constitution, race, and eugenics went hand in hand. Sheldon staked out the territory so in his Atlas of Men (1954):

The somatotype identifies a person belonging to a biological group or family which appears to be world-wide in distribution and cuts across all of the more or less uncertain boundaries by means of which men have attempted to divide themselves according to race, coloring, head dimensions, physiology, blood type, geographic birth and so on. The somatotype does not replace these common and conventional identifications but cuts across them, binding and relating them (Sheldon 1954, p. 3).

According to historian of medicine Arturo Castiglioni, "Neo-Hippocratism" was a holistic corrective to a period in which a "morphologic, analytical, localistic tendency dominated" (Castiglioni 1969, p. 957). Erwin Ackerknecht has said that "Constitution studies developed as a reaction against bacteriology, as the realization grew that the 'soil', as well as the 'seed' was important in infectious disease. These studies were also a reaction against the extreme localism of the nineteenth century" (Ackerknecht 1955, p. 238).

Fielding Garrison's account of constitution and the evolution of anthropology in medicine saw the solidist (cellular) pathology of Virchow dominating medicine during the period 1850-1900, when consideration of the patient as a whole was lost in the pathological lesion or specimen (Garrison 1929, p. 679). "The rise of bacteriology merely transferred this dominance from cell to bacillus, but with the new sciences of serology and endocrinology, the humoral pathology was revived and a new order of things obtained" (1929, p. 679).

Garrison agreed with Dr. Alexander P. Cawadias' account written at approximately the same time: "We are abandoning" said Cawadias, "the principles which directed our science these last hundred years, the organic localization of disease, Virchow's cellular theory and the bacteriological causalism, for a much wider and more comprehensive conception derived from the doctrine of the ancient Greek physicians, and described as Neo-Humoralism or more accurately Neo-Hippocratism...[and] constituted by these principles, the vitalistic principle, the principle of biological correlation and integration, and the principle of pathological correlation and integration" (Cawadias 1928, p. 1).

In the heat of the second World War, a time of apocalyptic cultural and scientific change, Cawadias summarized the meaning of constitutional medicine and Neo-

Hippocratism. His historical account is important because it seems to be the only one of its kind and because it provides a framework for placing Sheldon's constitutional project into historical perspective. By 1944 Cawadias could declare that "constitutional medicine is another term for the branch of medicine known as 'endocrinology and metabolism'....[it] embraces not only the chemical processes of the body, but also their regulators--genes, neuro-endocrine system, digestive, nutritive and general environmental factors" (Cawadias et. al. 1944, p. 9). With a sweep Cawadias dismisses not only the traditional conceptions of constitution prior to the nineteenth century but all of the anthropological versions, including the more recent "philosophical Neo-Hippocratism" of the German anthropologists, Kraus and Martius. "Neo-Hippocratism" he says was necessary as a heuristic "to indicate a path of research, but before it could develop into scientific constitutional medicine it had to pass through the crucible of biochemical laboratories" (1944, p. 10).

Most relevant for the present study is Cawadias' understanding of the role of the "Italian school" of physical anthropology in the development of constitutional thought, the school that Sheldon trained in at Chicago in the mid 1920s under Sante Nacaratti, who had, in turn, studied under Viola in Italy. Following Johansen's notion of the genotype (a concept Cawadias claims was erroneous

"because there are no purely hereditary features, all features of the individual being products of environmental factors acting on hereditary tendencies"), the constitution was taken to denote "only the external manifestations of the individual":

The Italian school with da Giovanni and Viola and the German school with Brugsh, a pupil of Kraus, regarded constitution as the sum total of morphological features, the habitus....Another group of workers considered constitution to mean the sum total of morphological features combined with certain other clinical features of the individual....Kretchmer [sic] in Germany described constitution and types of constitution on the basis of a combination of morphological and mental factors. G. Draper of New York, going a step further, described constitution and constitutional types on the basis of a combination of morphological, mental, functional and immunity factors. All these workers contributed greatly to knowledge of constitution, i.e. of the psychophysical structure of the individual, but their basic conception was erroneous (1944, p. 9).

Cawadias' argument is that "the definition of constitution cannot center around the habitus, mental and physiological features, since these are only external manifestations of the constitution. The basis of

constitution is the body chemistry as regulated by genes, neuro-endocrine system, digestive, nutritive and general environmental factors" (1944, p. 9). The aforesaid capsulizes the essential themes of Sheldon's project in somatotypy. Sheldon's emphasis was, in fact, the "habitus", a photographic recording of physique, together with a correlation of these features with discrete examinations of temperament, disease entities, similar in many ways to Kretschmer's work. There was in the "habitus" a fascination, a faith, and an enchantment. George Hersey's recent book on art and sexual selection is at least correct on this point: Sheldon did possess a "relative lack of interest in the mechanics of inheritance" (Hersey 1996, p. 92). It was Sheldon's allegiance to this Italian/German School of physical anthropology that oriented him to external morphology as it developed embryologically and, attendingly, on somatotype photography to capture it.

Sheldon's doctoral dissertation at Chicago was a reexamination of earlier work done by his professor at Chicago, Sante Naccarati. Sheldon aimed to "repeat and extend some work done by Naccarati in which he found a relation between "Morphological Index" and intelligence criteria" (Sheldon 1926, p. 1). Sheldon's findings were essentially negative. The poverty of the older typological/biometric approach and the virtual pre-paradigm state of American psychology during the 1920s sent Sheldon

to medical school in the late 1920s in search of a new synthesis for psychology and medicine (Sheldon 1975).

What distinguishes Sheldon's earlier work in the "Italian School" of physical anthropology and his human constitution series proper, Varieties of Human Physique (1940), Varieties of Temperament (1942), Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949), and Atlas of Men (1954) is a dramatic evolution in theorizing. Sheldon's departure from this earlier typologizing came with his own theory (in fact a new twist on an existing paradigm)⁴ that the traditional types of Hippocrates, Aristotle and, most recently, Kretschmer, which correspond roughly to ancient humoral psychology, actually derived from the three embryological germ layers, the endoderm, mesoderm, and ectoderm, from which he derived his terms endomorphy, mesomorphy, and ectomorphy. Instead of Kretschmer's inchoate types, which Sheldon believed did not answer to the reality of human variety, he created a "sliding scale" for calculating the relative proportions of these three "components" of physique which, he argued, occurred consistently in any population.

Constitutional factors in disease were never really

⁴ The originality of Sheldon's embryological scheme was hotly contested in Germany by the publisher of Carl Huter's works, Amandus Kupfer, following the wide publicity accorded to Sheldon in the 1951 Life magazine article by Robert Coughlan. Material dealing with this protest is preserved in the Rockefeller Foundation Archives (see chapters 5 and 6).

eclipsed in central Europe by the dramatic successes of bacteriology as they were in America, according to Tucker and Lessa:

In Europe, particularly in Germany, Austria, Italy, and France, where the tradition of the endogenous constitutional factors lived in many of the older physicians and scientists, the newer interest in exogenous factors never entirely displaced the constitutional approach to biological problems. In the United States, however, with modern medical schools developing only since the time of Pasteur, the absence of the older constitutional tradition has been felt and evidenced in the almost entire absence of a consideration of constitution in medicine (Tucker and Lessa 1940, p. 444).

Tucker and Lessa's claim helps place the constitutional research programs of Americans George Draper (whom Cawadias, above, identified with the Italian School) and William Sheldon into an older, European and holistic tradition. Sheldon's reading in German constitutional studies during the 1920s and 1930s is itself an indication of reaction against main-stream American (laboratory) medicine as well as mainstream American culture. Constitutional research, anchored as it was in hereditarian assumptions about class, hierarchy, "aristocracy", was an obvious choice for articulating counter-cultural values in the context of

American medicine and America society in the 1920s. Constitutionalists did not attack germ theory for medical reasons alone. Their reasons for disputing germ theory and medical reductionism were embedded in a matrix of reactionary concerns about the liabilities of modernity and industrialization.

Sheldon equated certain kinds of putative medical advancement with moral and spiritual decline. Germ theory as much as psychoanalysis he saw as an "environmentalism" that served an exculpatory, excusing, function within modern society. Germ theory threatened the social and moral status quo. Sheldon, as did Ludovici, connected the advent of germ theory with personal and social irresponsibility, with social chaos. In a letter to Norman Himes, an editor of Marriage Hygiene, Ludovici called bacteriology a "savage superstition" and claimed that "no bacteria ever caused any disease or illness" (Ludovici to Himes 1936, Paul Richards Collection). There was a democratic, leveling, aspect to germ theory that flew in the face of individuality and "constitution". Germ theory for both Ludovici and Sheldon implied that disease was irrespective of person, of constitution, and therefore, ultimately, of biological quality. Moreover, with germ theory came a global environmentalism that justified irresponsibility on many levels. "With the discovery of micro-organisms", says Sheldon:

a sharp thrust toward the Dionysian outlook was given to the medical profession. For since it was demonstrable that these minute organisms are associated with disease it was easy to assume that they might constitute the cause of disease. Such a possibility was wonderful grist for the Dionysian mill. There was then justification for a vast irresponsibility. If disease is caused by specific exogenous influences, why then we can forget the matter of endogenous or constitutional differences, in the study of medicine, and with that we can dismiss all human concern for the biological future,...reflecting the essential delinquency of our present human society (Sheldon 1949, p. 874).

Both Ludovici's and Sheldon's complaint against modernity is reminiscent of a "Will" psychology, an obstinate refusal, in this instance, to accept the collapse of temperament and physique (and hence eugenic breeding) as benchmarks for integrated character. This psychology was essentially the same one espoused by the British psychiatrist, Henry Maudsley (Showalter 1985). It underwrote the "muscular Christianity" of Rugby Chapel and was the dominant masculine ethos of the nineteenth century. This distinctively male province involved by the early twentieth century a skepticism if not a rejection of the psychoanalytic model that constituted, to Sheldon's mind, "a

premature resolution of conflict" (Sheldon 1936, p. 156). Conflict for Sheldon was to be faced up to on "manly", intellectual terms, a process that demanded a stern growing up--a hard-won development of "character"--and not a facile jettisoning of sexual inhibitions. A person was "cured" under psychoanalysis when he was relieved of "character". Freud's emphasis on the sexual nature of human conflict was, to Sheldon's mind, symptomatic of Jewish, urban, decadence. I discuss Sheldon's anti-Freudian position at length in chapter 3.

Psychoanalysis was finally unacceptable, because it placed human character, integrity, virtue, "breeding"--a temperamental "complexio" of noble values reflected in superior somatotypes--at the mercy of a mayhap infancy and childhood and "unconscience mind", which supposedly operated outside the jurisdiction of the conscious mind and will. Psychoanalysis, Sheldon believed, was the "fitting" psychology for the modern world, because it was without noble values. It was excusing and soft where it should be firm and unflinching. It was cowardly and "feminine" where it should be brave and manly. Sheldon's and Ludovici's argument for eugenics was a means to reinstate the primacy of the biological organism in the face of the economic, spiritual, and religious dismantlement of traditional man.

The official demise of human typologizing following the second World War signaled an end to the forum that had

allowed an intellectual elite to trade in such class distinctions without undue censure. Such typologizing fell into Adorno's snare for fascists in The Authoritarian Personality (1950). Indeed, the wisdom (also "class" and "breeding") of typological characterization, its strong intuitive element, its "Neo-Hippocratic", holistic, element, its strong "predilection de artiste", became increasingly redundant in a post-war climate dominated by "Prometheans" ("wasters" in Sheldon's terminology) who were, by Ludovici's and Sheldon's standards, oblivious to all but empirical and consequently democratic interests. Modern laboratory medicine entailed a rejection of such ancient discriminations. Sheldon's somatology, based in ancient typologizing, sought to do what was puzzling and vexing to many of his mainstream critics in academic psychology: assert essentially heroic values--i.e., values that were perceived by Sheldon as being superior to and on occasion even dismissive of the findings of modern science. Within a branch of medical holism lay a mechanism for saying more than could be said by scientific convention alone.

For both Ludovici and Sheldon, art preceded science, and this despite Sheldon's decades of accomodating a medical/cultural holism into modern social science methodology, what Kurt Danziger has called "the triumph of the aggregate" in early twentieth-century psychological research (Danziger 1990). It is therefore hardly surprising

that behavioral psychologists in the United States who reviewed Sheldon's work in the middle of this century--during, in Sheldon's words, a time of "democratic resurgence" following the War (Sheldon 1949)--were highly skeptical of it. From their democratic and "scientific" perspective, the high correlations that Sheldon asserted between physique and temperament were as dubious scientifically as they were undemocratic, despite Sheldon's arguably superior tacit knowledge in the matter (Coughlan 1951, Lindzey 1957). Behaviorists apparently had no ulterior motives for laboring the point beyond what they regarded as the empirically transparent. Such behaviorist academics were, by Ludovici's heroic lights, Promethean "boy-scouts" who didn't grasp the point, residing as they did beyond the pale of elitist reaction. Sheldon saw these behaviorists as "prosaic minds" (Osborne 1981), who harbored no nostalgia for aristocracy.

3.0 SHELDON'S PSYCHOLOGY AND THE PROMETHEAN WILL AND THE SOCIAL ROOTS OF COUNTERMODERNITY

3.1 Dartington Hall and the Beginnings of Reaction

William Sheldon wrote Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936), subtitled "A Constructive Study of the Acute Problem of Education, Medicine and Religion", during a two-year residence (1934-1936) at Dartington Hall in Devon, England. Dartington Hall had become a literary retreat, progressive school, art colony, and general haunt of coterie culture in 1930s Britain. While at Dartington Sheldon met and became friends with Christopher and Margaret Isherwood, Stephen Spender, and Gerald Heard, among others. It was also during this time in Europe that Sheldon first visited Sigmund Freud¹, Carl Jung, and Ernst Kretschmer (Sheldon 1949).²

¹ No correspondence to or from Freud has survived among Sheldon's papers at the Smithsonian, and no letters from Sheldon to Freud appear in Freud's published correspondence. Sheldon's only remarks about his conversation with Freud in 1935 appeared in Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949). Sheldon recalled: "Freud was generous of his time with me. He spent many hours discussing these problems. My thesis in such discussions was that his whole psychology was semantically vulnerable, that it would in the end be destroyed by mystics and by priestly exploiters from within unless it could anchor itself to a solid underlying physical anthropology [eugenically-based]....Freud agreed with the alternative, but the major premise [that behavior is a function of structure, the thesis of Varieties of Delinquent Youth] was a little too radical for him....'I study minds' [said Freud], 'and I cannot quite believe that bodily structure and mind can be so connected that analysis of the one will lead to an understanding of the other'" (Sheldon 1949, p. 50).

Promethean Will was Sheldon's first and arguably his most cogent and penetrating critique of modernity. In it he set forth a Weltanschauung that informed his later somatotype research, which began in earnest following his return to the United States. The book reflects a grasp of modernist issues in psychology, literature, and culture that were in no way evident in Sheldon's earlier M.A. and Ph.D. work at Colorado and Chicago (Sheldon 1922 1926), nor in his

² In a letter to Ernst Kretschmer, the famous German psychiatrist, dated December 2, 1948, Sheldon is deferential towards his old master and reminds him that he was one of the "wandering medical researchers [or scientists]" from the United States who visited his clinic in Tuebingen in 1935, and one whom he will probably not remember. Sheldon declares that since that time he has published two books [Varieties of Human Physique (1940) and Varieties of Temperament (1942)], for which he owes Kretschmer a long overdue debt of gratitude. Elsewhere Sheldon said of Kretschmer: "I have never seen a shrewder psychiatric diagnostician than Dr. Kretschmer" (Sheldon 1949, p. 52). This letter to Kretschmer from Sheldon is now in the possession of Mrs. Sabine Knoll (Marburg), Ernst Kretschmer's granddaughter, who kindly gave me permission to cite it here. Thanks also to Prof. Dr. Eve Marie Engels, Tuebingen, and to PD Dr. med. Albrecht Hirschmueller from the Institute fuer Geschichte der Medizin der Eberhard-Karls-Universitaet, Tuebingen, for their assistance in locating this letter. The first paragraph of the letter reads as follows:

Lieber Professor Kretschmer!

Wahrscheinlich werden Sie sich nicht an mich erinnern. Ich besuchte Ihre Klinik 1935 als einer der wandernden medizinischen Wissenschaftler dieses Landes. Inzwischen habe ich zwei Baende veroeffentlicht, die Ihnen viel verdanken und die ich Ihnen schon lange haette schicken sollen....Hochachtungsvoll

W. H. Sheldon

incidental psychometric publications in the 1920s (Sheldon 1927a, 1927b). It would appear that Sheldon's medical training and this two-year stint at Dartington, together with extensive reading in the German constitutionalists during the 1930s, "brought his individualism into full bloom" (Osborne 1981, p. 718) and secured the foundations for his life's work.

Dartington Hall was owned at the time by the Elmhirsts, one of the wealthiest families in England. Sheldon's study abroad was sponsored by the Society for Religion in Higher Education. Sheldon remarked in a Preface to Prometheus Revisited (1975)--an updated version of Promethean Will inspired by Aldous Huxley's Brave New World Revisited--that, "Professors J.B.S. Haldane and Canon C. E. Raven included me in a series of discussional seminars focused on the psychological nature of the religious function. It was the substance of these Cambridge seminars, expanded and developed into an essay, which was published in 1936 by Harper Brothers as Psychology and the Promethean Will" (Sheldon 1975, p.1).

Sheldon takes up the religious theme in Promethean Will that was to mark all of his later quantitative work in constitution and psychology, from roughly the early 1940s through the 1950s. The second edition of Psychology and the Promethean Will entitled Prometheus Revisited (1975) appends an explicitly eugenic dimension that the earlier book lacks.

But the essentials are unchanged. Sheldon's sense of urgency about eugenics grew with the years and was strongest in 1975, just two years before his death. The "religious function" amounted, in the fullness of Sheldon's opus, to an uncompromising biologism. To obey "God" was to obey eugenics. To violate "God" was to ignore biological, eugenic, reality. Sheldon's was first and last a "theological" system founded in human constitution. Good and evil resided in the human physique, in the anthropological minutiae of the somatotype; and Sheldon insisted that to know human constitution was the only access to genuine social reform. This was both the rhetoric and the substance of his somatotype project. Like Darwin and Freud, Sheldon saw man as part of nature, as a human animal. Unlike Freud, he believed that man's forebrain destined him for greater, "Promethean", things. Sheldon rejected Freud's sexually-based morality as well as his rationalization of the human soul. He exhorts his readers to "surmount the barrier which seems to block fulfillment of the ancient dream of joining the gods" (1936, p. 6).

In fact, there existed a tension, a tenuous commerce, between Sheldon's mythologizing in Promethean Will and his scientific pretensions in the Human Constitution Series proper, comprized of Varieties of Human Physique, Varieties of Temperament, Varieties of Delinquent Youth, and Atlas of Men. "Joining the gods" Sheldon was inclined, at times, to

view as an "educational problem" rather than a "constitutional" one. On the other hand, he considered constitution or "the condition of the physical being" as "the first and deepest determinant of consciousness" (Sheldon 1975, p. 106). This was a waffling that probably went unresolved in Sheldon's own mind, as he actually specified the Promethean physique in Varieties of Delinquent Youth, which, not coincidentally, happened to resemble his own--a mesomorphic ectomorph with a high t [aesthetic] component. On one level Sheldon wanted his ideology to be free-floating, independent, of his actual somatotype measurements; on another level, he wanted to anchor "Promethean Will" in the somatotype itself. It may be that the wishful and uneven fit between Sheldon's heroic and religious interests and his general theory of somatotypy, a point marked by contemporaries Morison and Gregg at the Rockefeller Foundation (see chapter 6), has served to confuse his audience and compromise his reputation as a scientist. I take up this problem at more length in chapter 7.

Promethean Will, in any event, was a means for Sheldon to essay his views on the state of modern psychology as well as on modern society. Sheldon fashioned his somatotypy around a conservative "Panel Psychology", what he called a "working picture of the mind", which served as a "groundplan of a psychology adapted to the study of conflict" (Sheldon

1936, p. 103). These "Panels" Sheldon likened to a Chinese painting (1936, p. 103), each panel indicating an "institutionalized idea structure" (1936, p. 103); and they were later to correspond to, or interact with, the three polarities of physique and temperament (Sheldon 1940, 1942, 1949). Sheldon's adoption of a panel psychology was, in fact, common among psychologists at this time. Another example is George Draper's book Disease and the Man (cf. Tracy 1992), although Sheldon's rendering of the panels was distinctive.³ Sheldon, following his training in medicine, intended a "panel" in psychology to imitate a "system" in medicine, and to inculcate "clear medical thinking" into psychology (Sheldon 1936, p. 133).

3.2 The Panels of Consciousness

Sheldon's five panels of consciousness are: 1. material relations, 2. social relations, 3. sexual relations, 4. religious relations, and 5. aesthetic

³ Sheldon says in Prometheus Revisited (1975):

Dr. George Draper in his book, Disease and the Man, (Kegan Paul, 1930), used the panel idea from the perspective of a medical clinician, describing the human personality as a clinician sees it. Draper's four panels are labeled morphologic, physiologic, immunologic, and psychologic. He was looking at the total personality from very long range. Here we are making a closer and more minute examination of Dr. Draper's psychological panel. Both Dr. Draper and the present writer borrowed the four panel idea from Carl Jung, with whom we both studied (Sheldon 1975, p. 105).

relations. They depict a dynamic interplay between personality psychology and its intersections with society, what Sheldon was later to call "social psychiatry", which lay at the core of his "biological humanics", his eugenic utopianism (Sheldon 1936, 1949, 1975). Society's ills lay ultimately in biological delinquencies, insufficiencies. But the ordering of social relations (the second panel), i.e., politics and policy, were also crucial in encouraging or discouraging biological givens. Society can work for or against biology, and the modern world worked mainly against it. Sheldon's countermodernity, including an anti-capitalism and a social elitism, informs these five panels of consciousness.

The first panel is concerned with material relations, with the "psychological meaning of money...with economics, with the acquisition and possession of things, with the wealth and property relations of a mind" (Sheldon 1936, p. 106). This first panel encapsulates Sheldon's disgust with modern economic relations-- with what he calls the "root of evil" resulting from "The Lust for Massed Wealth" (1936, 107). "If a society were to be functionally healthy in the first panel" says Sheldon, "money would be available only to individuals of relative maturity, who could be trusted to use their released energies toward the accomplishment of purposes pertaining to the ultimate social good. In a functionally planned society, money would become...a weapon

through which responsible persons could control and penalize the waster...[by] putting the waster back to the foot of the class" (1936, p. 108).

Sheldon's desire is to effectively create, or recreate, an aristocratic society "through which the responsible mind could be freed from the application of its energies to purposes in line with its central desire to build character, while the waster would be automatically inhibited from wasteful activity, simply by being deprived of money" (1936, p. 108). In this way the "unchastened" denizen of Jazz Age America would be replaced back into an old and familiar subclass (of the nineteenth century) where he must "of necessity...become preoccupied with the basic first panel business of [simply] maintaining physical life, until he could rise perhaps in later generations, to a nobler and more responsible mental level" (1936, p. 108).

Sheldon believed that culture and learning should be elevated above material possessions, and in his personal life he practised what was called in the nineteenth century, "plain living and high thinking". He defended on the American scene, like H.L. Mencken, what amounted to a "Bildung" culture (Harwood 1993, pp. 278-279) that opposed the unbridled materialism and vulgarity of the uneducated "herd". Money, or the desire for money, put simply, was a block to the development of character. The lust for money, the "habit patterns of a business mind", thwart the heroic

struggle, the "Promethean Will", for self realization, for the development of a soul. The Southern agrarian version of this anti-capitalism and anti-modernism rested on similar assumptions during the 1930s, on an older "republican" (later democratic) insistence on individual autonomy and integrity that resisted the capitalist system and its drive for massed wealth. The agrarians saw this older autonomy and integrity in the yeoman farmer of the ante-bellum South (Tate 1936). Instead of middle and old age being, in a financially responsible society, "the halcyon period of life", it becomes [in a capitalist society] a "period of pain, of regret and uselessness" (1936, p. 148).

The explosion of economic prosperity during the 1920s was for Sheldon a moral and intellectual failure. "With the chastened, or responsible mind everywhere entangled in the Promethean conflict [the conflict, again, between feeling and intellect, country and city], the waster steals a march, finds a short cut to money, and so 'gets away with' his unchastened way of life" (1936, p. 108). Sheldon's "Prometheans" are largely Ludovici's "Dionysians", the foils to "boy scout" or "waster" distortions of an older moral order that, Sheldon believed, preserved a stronger equation between money, morality, and class. Although Sheldon recognizes "unbalanced" Prometheanism, he most often identified the Dionysian with decadence. Sheldon's "Promethean Conflict" presented a war between cognition and

feeling (modern neurosis) that both captured and problematized Ludovici's more extravagant distinction between the Promethean and the Dionysian personalities.

A society's health, Sheldon maintained, can be determined by "the extent to which [it] has succeeded in keeping money away from waster personalities, and in guaranteeing its rational distribution to more highly cultivated, responsible minds" (1936, p. 108). But "as matters are arranged, the maturest and most developed minds frequently lack sufficient economic security to free their energies for intellectual pursuits, while persons in possession of wealth are often totally irresponsible in the character sense" (1936, p. 109). The best minds "have grown souls at the price of weakness in the first panel, and the latter have achieved a distortion in this panel at the price of their souls" (1936, p. 109). Given this, the "cardinal first panel virtue...is poverty in the sense of frugality" and the "cardinal sin...is the lust for wealth" or "conspicuous personal expenditure" (1936, p. 109).

The second panel operates in tandem with the first and is concerned with "social dominance and submission; with social prestige; with law and order; with the political and social status arrangements of society;...particularly with protecting individuals from harm intentionally inflicted by other individuals" (1936, p. 109). These "other individuals" are, to Sheldon's mind, "wasters" or social

inferiors who have not "gone on to more elaborate feeling and thought" (1936, p. 111). It is a question of protecting "relatively civilized individuals from exploitation by less civilized or less disciplined or less chastened individuals" (1936, p. 110).

The third panel of consciousness is concerned with sexual relations, with "the attempt to harness and civilize the emotional and creative energy of the reproductive urge, which is known to be capable when under discipline of warming and supporting the whole tree of character" (1936, p. 113). It is in this panel that Sheldon takes most exception to Freudian notions of sexuality and its relation to human growth and development. Sheldon's idea of sexuality remains holistic, in this case governed by the "character" of the "whole organism". He speaks of "the whole tree of character" that is "under discipline" and in a way consonant with traditional Christian morality, wherein the sexual passions are subject to the rule of the conscious mind. Sheldon would have us "mold [our] intellects in a long and patient discipline" (1936, p. 6).

The fourth panel of consciousness is the religious panel, which is concerned with "maintaining orientation in time" (1936, p. 115). This panel operates by "bringing feeling to the support of thinking" (1936, p. 115), an operation that was essential, Sheldon believed, for moderns in search of souls. This psychological rapprochement would

lead to the development of personality and, perhaps, character. "This is the activity" says Sheldon, "which psychologists and religionists together must learn to harness, until it can be used everywhere to prevent the dying back of the brain" (1936, p. 116).

The fifth panel of consciousness concerns what Sheldon calls "feeling-awareness", defined as "the development of sensitiveness to the subtler, less obvious meanings of things; with the imagination of pain and joy; with warming and vitalizing the aesthetic experience" (1936, p. 117). This panel is concerned "with the growth of the human soul...the aesthetic panel" (1936, p. 117). Sheldon's aesthetic experience goes some way in alleviating what he calls the "urban sacrifice"--the "dissociation of sensibility" (Eliot) between country and city, emotion and reason, that afflicts the modern mind.

It is the experience of simultaneously seeing and feeling a meaning; that is the aesthetic experience. The highly aesthetic mind is, I think, simply a mind unusually sensitive to a system of meanings, and capable of quick emotional participation in them. It is the mind that feels itself over into things in its environment....The Germans have the much richer term Einfuehlung (a feeling into something) (1936, p. 118). This is Sheldon's distinctive rendering of a global holism in science and society during the inter-war years

(Harrington 1996). Sheldon makes plain in Prometheus Revisited (1975) that soul means "wholeness" and that a lack of soul denotes fragmentation, conflict. Soul means union between affect and cognition. Not all are capable of fifth panel consciousness. "To the waster" claims Sheldon, "life is principally an opportunity for expression, and the world a thing to be used. To the chastened mind life is an opportunity for contemplation, and the world a thing to be understood and felt with" (1936, p. 119-120). Sheldon emphasizes that

There are people who are aware of and responsive to an aesthetic range many times greater than the normal, common average, and it is not inconceivable that there may be far more difference in this respect between a really sensitive mind and the normal, than between the latter and that of an inarticulate animal who has, such people say, no soul (1936, p. 120).

3.3 Sheldon's Reaction to Freud: Character Development and the "Forest of Arden"

Sheldon's insistence upon a preservation of the religious function and his defense of the soul, a position he shared with Carl Jung, conflicts with "Freudian psychoanalysts [who] call religion a mere sublimation of sex, and therefore are not interested in it" (Sheldon 1936, p. 186). Sheldon's view of sexuality and conflict were, in

fact, antithetical to the "Freudian picture". "The Freudian" says Sheldon

explains conflict and the deep, unsatisfied yearnings of life, in terms of repressed lower panel (sexual) desires. The view advanced here merely reverses the Freudian picture, and regards the difficulty as due, instead, mainly to the overexpression of lower panel, and the consequent repression of higher panel desire (1936, p. 186).⁴

The building of character, the primary purpose of education, involved not a dropping of sexual inhibition but an integration of sexual energy into the "higher panels" of consciousness--the religious and the aesthetic panels. "There is only one sin", claimed Sheldon, "namely [the] failure to develop the higher panels of consciousness and thereby to hold lower panel impulses in good balance. These lower panel "distortions" Sheldon designated as "greed,

⁴ Sheldon expands this idea in Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949):

Freudian theology refers to the backmind as the unconscious or as unconscious consciousness, and Freudians, not often rural in outlook, have little use for mental barns and backyards. Their religion is one of abolition of the backmind and they prefer to stable the horses of instinctive impulse in the parlor, abandoning the Promethean idea of harnessment, and in short abolishing Prometheus. This is a Dionysian resolution of fourth panel [religious] conflict which in our generation has been subtly commended to Epimethean minds. The Freudians have sold the Epimetheans a bill of goods (Sheldon 1949, p. 851).

arrogance, and overbreeding", the staples, unhappily, of modern life. It was the Promethean component of consciousness that governed the biological future.

Sheldon the pediatrician disagreed with Freudian beliefs about parent-child relations. Freud's Oedipus complex Sheldon regarded as "jolly nonsense" (1936, p. 163). It was "mistaken modernism" (1936, p. 164). "The Oedipus complex" says Sheldon, "lurks like a ghost in the attic, and stamps natural parenting with the sickly pink tint of 'sexual perversion'" (1936, pp. 162-163). "Yet the only kind of parent" claimed Sheldon, "who ever produced sexual fixations in children is of course a sexually obsessed or vulgar and unimaginative parent, in which case the child is fortunate if he escapes with nothing worse than an 'Oedipus complex'" (1936, p. 163):

Children are enormously sensitive to the attitudes and ideals of a parent, often indeed far more aware of these attitudes than are the adults themselves, and no mother need ever worry about the 'Oedipus complex' if her own sexual life is moderately well in order, and if she is glad in her heart to let the child grow beyond her when the latter begins really to grow up (1936, p. 163)

Putative sexual fixations on a parent are not so much sexual problems as orientational problems for Sheldon.

So far as I am aware, a truly sexual fixation of a

practically important nature between parent and child rarely if ever occurs except in low-caste families, living under conditions of bad domestic hygiene....But these are not sexual problems....They are denominational, second panel problems directly, and more indirectly they are problems of perspective and general self control (1936, p. 164).

Taking the notion of an Oedipus or a castration complex seriously, Sheldon claimed, was to halt development in the higher panels of consciousness, to effectively cut a child off from the opportunity to grow up. To be inhibited about expressing emotion to and with a child, interactions that are so germane to the development of a soul, was part of what Sheldon regarded as "a great war on the sentiments" (1936, p. 162).

The impression has filtered out into educational philosophy that in order to achieve a rational mind you must be free from...sentiment built around the natural attachment between parents and children (1936, p. 162).

In fact, natural attachments between parents and children for Sheldon were rooted in nature, in country living. Sheldon's view of child-rearing is Wordsworthian in its commitment to pastoral simplicity, honesty, and stability. The seasoned and chastened parent, who has let "nature be [his] teacher", who has, following Wordsworth, participated in "natural piety", is to the young child the

source of sanity and orientation. The city to Sheldon's mind was opposed to these natural values as well as to good parenting. Cities overstimulate. They encourage extraversion, which Sheldon defined as the "the loss of integration of a mind with its own deeper levels. Such a mind comes to depend upon the outer relations of things for its support, and the setting is then laid for the emergence of the unchastened, waster personality" (1936, p. 158). Reminiscent of the romantic notion of nature's power to create, heal, and restore the mind, Sheldon asserts that:

Conscious happiness lies in reminiscent contemplation of the meaning and the relatedness, and of the essential simplicity of the things of this world, not in the rapid presentation to the senses of the things themselves (1936, p. 157). Sheldon contrasts the solitude of the deep forest, the sweep of open country, the unspoiled natural life of the great marshes and swamps, the continual panorama of simplicity and sincerity of life, the expectant meaningfulness of all things that happen with urban life [where] human beings are shunted off [from nature], dissociated from meaning, little by little, more and more, until at last the whole system of meaning of a mind is destroyed and replaced by something fast, artificial, and unstable and untrue, and in the end tragically dissatisfying....This is the urban sacrifice (1936, p.

158).

The geographic and psychological contrast between the city and the country reflects the difference between "large group psychology" and "small group psychology", or the "waster" outlook and the "chastened" outlook. Sheldon sees these differences reflected in "progressive" educational influences, which "seem to be founded on the supposition that human life is to be progressively more of a quantitative and less of a qualitative consideration" (1936, p. 159).

Children are to be developed mainly for the purpose of leading well-adapted, urban lives. They are to be as expressive as possible, and free from 'complexes'. They are to be discouraged from phantasy and meditation, are not to be disciplined in any manner, but must adapt expressively and continually to groups of other children. This is the trend of influence of the Freudian psychology, which springs from a racial and social outlook that has been almost exclusively urban and essentially unhappy for many centuries (1936, p. 159).

To counter this unhappy social outlook Sheldon differentiates between "natural aesthetics [of the country] and artifactual aesthetics [of the city]" (1936, p. 121). The "arty" personality--the denizen of the theatre, the concert hall, the (modern) art gallery--Sheldon contrasts

with the seasoned, chastened, country-dweller.

The boundary between them is not always sharp, but try to visualize in your mind's eye what the term arty personality means to you, and then compare that with the picture of an observant, eager, though quiet and humble child watching a muskrat build his house. You will then have the essential difference (1936, p. 121).⁵

Early communion with nature fortifies the adult (again in a fashion reminiscent of Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey) with "the kind of imagination which is a true sense of humor", by which Sheldon means "a mind alive to the natural aesthetic world", one which is "independent" and possesses a "natural buffer of resiliency and recoil" [against life's troubles]. It is a world which "perpetually recovers and is recreated" (1936, p. 121). Nature brings a distinctively poetic yet practical "immortality".

To have established in childhood a permanent emotional and intellectual rapport with the outer living things, is to have found an anchor in something alive which yet

⁵ Sheldon is even more insistent about niggard artefactual aesthetics in Prometheus Revisited (1975) a reworking of the 1936 text. "Natural aesthetics", he declares, "is being rapidly wiped out by the population cancer, and all three of our main branches of artefactual aesthetics have reverted toward a waster pattern. Modern art is of course now mainly a defiant anti-art; modern writing is mostly anti-forth and fifth panel [religious and aesthetic]; modern music is almost wholly disruptive waster noise" (Sheldon 1975, p. 246).

does not change. The living things of the woods and meadows and fields and marshes are immortal. They never die and leave you. They are always there. They are always the same....They are artless. To commune with them is to commune with all who have lived before you in the Forest of Arden (1936, p. 122).

Such communion with nature allows one to "escape beyond the concrete and the noise and the swamp draining and the eternal covering of the earth with 'improvements' that mark an urban, overstimulated civilization" (1936, p. 122).

It is well if a man had wise parents who took him as a child feelingly among these immortal living things that have eternal youth, for then his whole life can be a unity, and he will have no second birth to go through in order to find a character and a religion (1936, p. 122).

Wasters and artifactual aesthetes oppose this communion and renewal. Theirs is a

rapidly increasing group who find their main fifth panel life in some art love [and they] present quite a different mental profile from the natural aesthetics group....These people do not have the heart of a child personality; they are only rarely simple; their personalities are frequently greatly complicated by profoundly conflicting orientational trends....They have turned for their higher panel ecstasies to things

that the human mind has artificially produced for itself, even in urban, crowded, hysterical environments (1936, p. 123).

Sheldon believed that artifactual aesthetes with "character-phyllic minds" (minds devoid, by his definition, of character)

turn away, and escape, from the most interesting and important problems of life, by embracing one or more of these artifactual interests as religious orientational substitutes. Art interests which fit into a wider orientational picture enrich and expand a mind, but art taken as central purpose, or as central interest, is fatal to a mind....When through later accidents of circumstance these people [the artifactual aesthetes] develop minds, they have to go through the tragic second birth which William James described in Varieties of Religious Experience. The second birth is really the breaking and resetting of the orientational backbone (1936, p. 124-125).

The deep-seated opposition between rural American values and urban European values is palpable here.

Sheldon's opposition to Freudian doctrine hinges on just those romantic virtues that he believed were being eclipsed with modernism, the same qualities, in fact, that historians have written out of the history of psychology and psychiatry in the interests of advancing Freudian ideas (Micale 1995).

Sheldon's values are essentially agrarian and Emersonian. They hearken back to nature and to rural life for "religious" sustenance, and nature is regarded as a fountain-head for moral and intellectual development. Sheldon derives meaning and orientation from nature. The city, conversely, is regarded as the antithesis of all that is unspoiled, natural, and true. Sheldon declares:

We cannot of course prevent the necessity of a child sooner or later facing an urban world as it is, but it is well in the early formative years to build in as solid and as individually indicated a personality foundation as possible before these inevitable strains are applied. The problem is always to develop in the child a character which will stand the test of time (1936, p. 162).

Sheldon's emphasis on character development made him oppose Freudian doctrine as "premature resolution of conflict" (1936, p. 179). While Freud's formulae for dealing with "neuroses" and "complexes" gave priority to sexuality, Sheldon emphasized intellect, class (by which he meant chastened values inculcated over generations), a rural upbringing, and "humor", defined here as a mind alive to the "natural aesthetic world" (1936, p. 121). The key to actual (i.e., seasoned and tried) mental health for Sheldon was not to eliminate conflict, which was inevitable and necessary for growth, but to elevate it to a higher intellectual plain

where it could be scrutinized and laughed about. Freud's was a consummate "waster" psychology for Sheldon. He believed Freud encouraged a quick and dirty fix for deep-seated moral and social delinquencies. Moreover, Freud, along with other psychologists had "shouted down the soul" (Sheldon 1936, p. ix). Freud elided just those natural pieties Sheldon regarded as foundational and indispensable.

3.4 Sheldon's Psychology in Historical Context

In the context of 1930s American psychology William Sheldon was defending a "home culture" in his Psychology and the Promethean Will, a defense that enjoyed a rich affinity with holistic thought in Germany at this time (Harrington 1996). The notion of German "Volk" had an analogue in American nativism. Both societies were defending themselves against foreign elements perceived as threatening to their racial, aesthetic, and moral traditions. By defending a home culture Sheldon was at odds with certain "exploratory relativists" at the time who, according to Katherine Pandora, "sought to destabilize familiar and contested practices and ideas [in psychology]: the goal was, most often, to critique the home culture" (Pandora 1997, p. 203). Sheldon's psychology implied a pastoral stability based on a romantic understanding of the relationship between mind and nature, as we have seen. Other American psychologists such as Lois and Gardner Murphy were intent on challenging this

essentially nineteenth-century order in the interests of radical social change. One's attitude to the immigrant was key.

For such cultural critics during the 1930s, the concept of "the immigrant"... was used as a symbolic representation of the relativity of knowledge claims. Looking at America with an 'American eye', was a reversal that was possible only for those thinkers who were ready to build a new America from the point of view of an urban future as opposed to that of a rural past (Pandora 1997, p. 208).

It is in this sense that Sheldon was a "modernist" or "reactionary modern" figure rather than simply a modern one. His hope for the future of America and its prospects for democracy during the turbulent 1930s inclined both to the historical past and to the "rural past"--which were the same thing--rather than to the "urban future". Democracy, he believed, could only survive among free and educated citizens, and in limited numbers. The massive populations of the burgeoning cities threatened the older social and political paradigm initiated by the colonial republicans, who had opposed the "paper men", the capitalists, from the beginning. Thomas Jefferson, one may recall, exacted a full look at the worst of English cities in the throes of the Industrial Revolution and decided that America should retain an agricultural economy. Manufacturing, Jefferson thought,

would corrupt the American soul. Sheldon believed Jefferson prophetic. The city, Sheldon assumed, was something necessarily alien to the countryman, and something to be tolerated, negotiated, for intellectual reasons rather than accepted for emotional ones. If the city was necessary for the life of the mind, it was also a liability to the heart and soul. Nature possessed, in Alan Tate's words, "knowledge carried to the heart" (Tate 1932), unlike the decadence of art devoid of feeling, the "artifactual", which Sheldon so decried. Man's instinctive bond with nature was intuitive and inviolate in Sheldon's mind. Like Freud, the relativists discussed by Pandora were moderns. They were progressives. They were also, as Pandora says, "philoethnic" (Pandora 1997, p. 211). They embraced the city and ethnic diversity in a way that Sheldon could not or would not do. The project in somatotypy that was to follow close on the heels of Promethean Will was a means of lamenting a vanished past and of preserving an older America and its stable values.

When modernist writer William Faulkner was asked if the past was dead, he replied: "No, it isn't even past". It was a deeply southern and reactionary sentiment to which Sheldon would have resonated. T. S. Eliot complained that the development of scientific thought since the seventeenth century had created a "dissociation of sensibility", an alienation in the whole man between his capacities to think

and to feel" (Hallman 1984, p. 175). Eliot's perception of the modern industrial "wasteland" is but a variation on both Ludovici's and Sheldon's critique of modernity, as we have seen. Ludovici's "Prometheans" are Sheldon's "Wasters" or "unbalanced Prometheans" (Sheldon 1975, p. 244) or perhaps T. S. Eliot's "Mr. Eugenides" in The Wasteland (1922).

Oswald Spengler's contention that political culture moves from primitive tribalism through the agrarian and town community into state nationalism Sheldon took to heart (Sheldon 1949), as did American poet, Alan Tate (Hallman 1984, p. 178). In this decadent last stage, said Spengler, "the body of the people, now essentially urban in constitution, dissolves into formless mass" (Spengler, 1926, Table II). The "formless mass" of the city is emblematic of the dissolution of the physical body--the body and the body politic, the micro and macrocosm--as well as the chaos of urban centers (see figure 3.1). Ludovici was saying the same thing in specifically eugenic terms throughout the 1920s (Ludovici 1921, 1924, 1927) as was Sheldon during the 1940s. The urban center was the destroyer of the original and potent "body of the people", and for the people to become "urban in constitution" was for them to degenerate with modernity into what Sheldon called a "mongrel side show" (Sheldon 1949, p. 834). In this way, Spenglerian cyclic decay and eugenics--or dysgenics--are united. Physique followed culture. And for both Ludovici and



Figure 3.1 Title Pages from German Satirical Magazine, Kladderadatsch, 1933.

Sheldon, culture also followed physique. It was an equation of apocalyptic proportions that could not be contained in the pluralistic ["mongrel", "promiscuous"] world that had already arrived.

4.0 SHELDON, MODERNITY, AND A EUGENIC PSYCHOLOGY

4.1 Somatotypy: The "Statics of Physique"

William Sheldon's system of somatotypy (or "body typing") was a new twist on an ancient tradition that came to be called "biotypology" by anthropologists in the early 1940s (Lessa 1943). Sheldon summarized a voluminous typological literature and formulated outstanding problems in the first book of his Human Constitution Series, Varieties of Human Physique (1940), which he co-authored, along with Varieties of Temperament (1942), with S. S. ("Smitty") Stevens, a personal friend and acclaimed Harvard philosopher and statistician. Stevens was favorably impressed with Sheldon's ambition to quantify human physique in a way that would address the lacunae of orthodox anthropometry, which was thought to be in a crisis state by the early 1940s (Tucker and Lessa 1940, Lessa 1943, Cawadias et. al. 1944).¹

¹ Stevens defended Sheldon's psychological holism in a letter dated 2 December, 1966, to a Professor Zellweger at Purdue University. He forwarded a copy of the letter to Sheldon, writing in hand across the bottom corner: "Dear Bill: The model builders keep generating fancy schemes, but I still like your approach best. Warmly, Smitty". The letter itself reads:

I found much of interest in your discussion of Sheldon and the trinomial expansion. It is always interesting to note the differences between those who study people and those who study models. Sheldon wants only to describe people, not to generate theoretical distributions of one sort or another. Ekman, Humphreys, and perhaps yourself, never look at people, only at formulas and diagrams. Sheldon begins with the three obvious aspects of physique and he scales each aspect on a separate seven point scale. Everything else

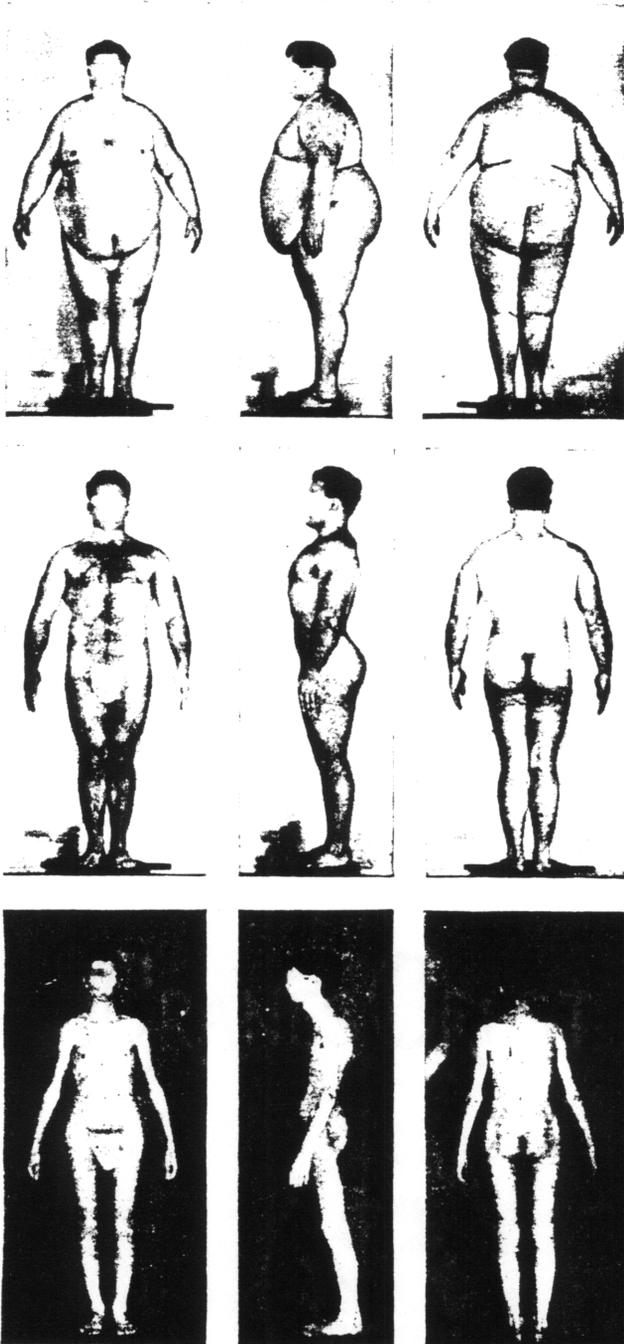
Sheldon "scaled" German psychiatrist Ernst Kretschmer's static, inchoate, types (effectively covering similar schemes elaborated in the nineteenth century, as illustrated in figure 4.1) by hypothesizing that his three body types ("pyknic", "athletic", and "asthenic") were, in fact, the respective expressions of the three embryological germ layers: the endoderm, which developed into the stomach, heart, and intestines; the mesoderm, the bones and musculature; and the ectoderm, the skin, brain and nervous system (Sheldon 1949). Sheldon conjectured that the germ layers were the actual biological "subsoil" for the traditional "temperaments", which were thought to underlie personality. Sheldon's three polarities of physique ("fat", "muscular", and "skinny"), arrived at by inductive surveying of selected (college and military) populations, were assumed to map on to these three germ layers and were labeled endomorph(y), mesomorph(y) and ectomorph(y), respectively (see figure 4.2). Varieties of Human Physique laid the theoretical groundwork for this system, while Varieties of

follows.

I rather doubt that nature will prove sufficiently obliging to create people in accordance with the demands of a particular geometry. You mention your need to be a Kepler. Perhaps you are imitating Kepler's grand idea that the orbits could be simply related to the successive regular solids. Nature did not turn out to be quite so simple. Maybe Sheldon's Kepler will turn up someday, but it seems improbable that mathematical or geometric schemes relating to distributions play much of a role" (Stevens to Zellweger, 1966, Sheldon Archives).

TABLE I
CLASSIFICATIONS OF CONSTITUTIONAL TYPES

Source	Nationality	1	2	3	3b
Hippocrates (460-400 B.C.)	Greek	Habitus apoplecticus (short, thick)		Habitus pathicus (long, thin)	
Halle (1797)	French	Abdominal	Muscular	Thoracic	Nervous, cephalic
de Troisième (1823)	French	Abdominal		Thoracic	Cranial
Roestan (1828)	French	Digestive	Muscular	Respiratory	Cerebral
Walker (1853)	English	Nutritive beauty (Venus)	Locomotive beauty (Diana)		Mental beauty (Minerva)
Carus (1853)	German	Phlegmatic	Athletic	Asthenic	Cerebral
Wells (1869)	American	Vital	Motive		
di Giovanni (1877)	Italian	Third combination	Second combination		
Beneas (1878)	German	Rachitic	(Plethoric)	First combination	
-Rokitanaky (1878)	German	Hyperplastic	Carcinomatous	(Phthisic)	
Huter (1880)	German	Ernährungstypus	Normal	Scrofulous, phthisical	
Manouvrier (1902)	French	Brachyungstypus	Krafttypus	Hypoplastic	
Stratz (1904)	German	Brachyskeletal (Microskeletal)	Mesoskeletal	Empfindungstypus	
Virenius (1904)	Russian	Xantodermic (Racial)	Leucodermic (Racial)	Macroskeletal	
Sigaud (1908)	French	Connective	Muscular	Melanodermic (Racial)	
Bean (1912)	American	Digestive	Muscular	Epithelial	Nervous
Bryant and Goldthwait (1915)	American	Hypo-onto-morph (Hypo-phylo-morph)	Meso-onto-morph (Meso-phylo-morph)	Respiratory	Cerebral
Mills (1917)	American	Herbivorous	(Meso-phylo-morph)	Hyper-onto-morph (Hyper-phylo-morph)	
Brugsch (1916)	German	Hypersthenic	Mesoplastic (Normal)	Carnivorous	
Viola (1919)	Italian	Wide chested	Sthenic	Asthenic (Hypoasthenic)	
Davenport (1923)	American	Megaloplastic (Macrosplanchnic)	Normal chested	Narrow chested (Asthmatic)	
Stockard (1923)	American	Fleshy biotype	Normosplanchnic	Microsplanchnic	
Aschner (1924)	German	Lateral	Medium biotype	Slender biotype	
Bauer, J. (1924)	Austrian	Broad	Intermediate (Normal)	Linear	
Draper (1925)	American	Hypersthenic habitus (Arthritic habitus)	Sthenic habitus	Slender	
Kretschmer (1925)	German	Gallbladder	Asthenic habitus	Asthenic habitus	
MacAuliffe (1925)	French	Pyknic	Athletic	Ulcer	
Weidenreich (1926)	German	Round		Leptosoma (Asthenic)	
Pease (1927)	Italian	Eurysome		Flat	
		Hypervegetative		Leptosoma	
				Hypovegetative	



Three extreme varieties of human physique

Fig. 4.2

Temperament, published two years later, correlated physique and temperament. Varieties of Delinquent Youth, published in 1949, was an application of somatotype methods to psychiatry. Atlas of Men (1954), the last volume in the Human Constitution Series, was largely a formal representation of research in the earlier volumes.

Sheldon believed that Kretschmer's "types" did not answer to the seemingly infinite variety of human variation. The old "business of types" was "mentally handcuffing" (Sheldon 1949, p. 51). Somatotypy was intended, prima facie, to address this problem. Sheldon claimed that we see no "pure types" in the real world, only a blending of the three "components" of physique. "In the study of morphology and temperament" said Sheldon,

we had made no progress beyond the types of Hippocrates until we emerged from the idea of typologies or of dichotomies and trichotomies, and substituted for all that the conception of components capable of multidimensional distribution and therefore leading to a morphological and a temperamental taxonomy which the familiar biological distribution curves would fit-- multidimensionality (Sheldon 1949, p. 49).

Sheldon photographed subjects in mass according to a stylized method perfected by him and his assistants over several decades. From these photographs a number ranging from 1-7 was assigned to each component of physique,

according to that component's relative presence or absence. Hence a given physique would obtain a three-digit "somatotype" designation.

In addition, the physiques were judged on a broad range of aesthetic criteria, especially the "t-component" or the "aesthetic pleasingness" of a physique, what Sheldon called "the aesthetic success of that particular biological experiment which the individual himself is" (Sheldon 1949, p. 21). "Dysplasias" were also indicated, defined earlier by Kretschmer as an "incompatible mixture of types" and redefined by Sheldon as assymetry or "disagreement among the different regions" (Sheldon 1949, p. 19). Numerous other epithets refine the somatotype profile, including the expression "asthenic", defined as the "condition of being abnormally weak for the somatotype...what Dr. George Draper used to speak of...as the PPPPT's (poor protoplasm poorly put together). A person of any physical pattern may be asthenic" (Sheldon 1949, p. 23). "Gnarled [or] Scrub-oak mesomorphy" is another:

The bodies are...often extremely strong, but are usually heavy and cumbersome, with massive torsos and short legs. They are built close to the ground and suggest stunted, gnarled tress growing near the timberline. In its most extreme form, gnarled mesomorphy has a ghoulish aspect. Thousands of examples of it may be seen any day on the streets of

our large coastal cities" (Sheldon 1949, p. 23).

Dysplasia was defined as "the extent to which a physique presents different somatotypes in different bodily regions" (Sheldon 1949, p. 19). Ludovici (1952, pp. 124-147) had identified the "unequal inheritance of body parts" as a primary cause of dysplasia in the human physique. He had identified dysplasia with a lack of "psycho-physical standardization", or what Sheldon would called "mongrelization" of stock:

Every breed of man, as well as of horse or rooster, is mongrel in the sense that it is derived from a blending of predecessor stocks. The point--and I think this may be the crucial point in the problem--is that some blends are good, whether new or old, when measured in terms of the resulting individual's strength, efficiency, intelligence, muscular coordination, and bodily harmony or symmetry, while some other blends are less good (Sheldon 1949, p. 21).

"Many dysplasias are hereditary" says Sheldon, "and become established as the hallmarks of different breeds of human stock. When of less general distribution they are often said to 'run in families'. Probably most of the characteristics that have been called 'racial' began as mutant dysplasias" (Sheldon 1949, p. 19). Hence dysplasia was prior to and determined race.

The term "dysmorphic" indicates that a physique is "badly

formed", while "gynandromorphy" indicates "the degree of prominence of feminine characteristics in a male physique, or of masculine characteristic in a female physique (Sheldon 1949, p. 19). Other aesthetic considerations abound and are presented in detail in the first three volumes of Sheldon's work.

Sheldon's somatotypy, despite its putative anchorage in psychology, medicine, and statistics, was fundamentally a modernist (and specifically holistic and eugenic) retooling of the ancient science or pseudo-science of physiognomy. This fact has problematized Sheldon's status as a scientist (Parnell 1954, Hunt and Barton 1959). Physiognomy involved reading moral, psychological, and spiritual qualities from external morphology. Sheldon, while engaging empirical science, was tacitly committed to physiognomical and hence aesthetic ideals that were, especially in the context of modern social-science methodology, extra-scientific, intuitive, and, as I have argued, reactionary. His emphasis on the importance of beauty in the human physique (read "structure-function continuum", or the "t-component") was a holistic commitment. Beauty implied symmetry, balance, harmony, integrity, the issues of eugenic breeding that are emphasized by Ludovici and that are depicted so vividly in nazi propaganda art. Physical beauty was also something that could not be gleaned by everyone. Somatotypy was finally a subjective art, despite the requisite quantitative

and "objective" scientific underpinnings. Somatotypy possessed a teleology in the tradition of Nature Philosophy. The appreciation of beauty was a "gift" with which everyone was not endowed (Sheldon 1949, p. 40). Judging superior physiques was as exclusive as possessing them, and Sheldon intimated that only those who possessed them could judge them. The aesthetic sense was "in the breed". In this Sheldon shared the belief of the famous eighteenth-century Swiss physiognomist, Johann Casper Lavater (1741-1801):

The ideal physiognomist should have a fine physique, acute senses, profound self-knowledge, and a highly associative intelligence. He should be a connoisseur of the world, even a cosmopolitan, with a fund of knowledge and culture as well as an excellent command of language. He should be well grounded in anatomy and physiology, know all about the nervous system, the temperaments, and blood groups. He should also consort with the wisest and best people, and spend as much time as possible in the company of those who have good faces (Tytler 1982, pp. 65-66).

4.2 Correlation of Physique and Temperament and the Psychiatric Components

A critical thrust of Sheldon's constitutional project was his attempt to map long-standing holistic medical beliefs on to modern psychological and psychiatric

categories. He reasoned that if he could demonstrate that his tri-partite somatic schema of endomorphy, mesomorphy, and ectomorphy (which was an embryological and statistical reworking of traditional categories elaborated variously since Hippocrates) corresponded to psychiatric polarities already postulated by a host of nineteenth- and twentieth-century psychiatrists, including Kraepelin, Freud, and Kretschmer--a move from "disease entities to components [of human physique]" as he put it--then he could show that both normality and abnormality were anchored in "temperamental" admixtures within the human body, lodged in the somatotype, and capable of access by anthropological scrutiny. This same tri-polar scheme was also consonant with Kraepelin's Manic-Depressive Psychosis (corresponding to the endomorphic), Paranoid Schizophrenia (the mesomorphic), and Hebephrenic Schizophrenia (the ectomorphic). Sheldon regarded his "sliding scale" for measuring the components of physique a distinct advancement over Kretschmer's inchoate types.

"Devious and subjective verbalizations" would thus be replaced by structural verisimilitude having an anchorage in physical anthropology and eugenics, since "psycho-physical standardization" and "psycho-physical harmony" were rooted in breeding and were the foundation both physical and mental health. If traditional psychiatric categories could be shown to correspond to a revised somatic reality--the

somatotype--then both psychology and psychiatry could have biological meaning. Psychiatry could be salvaged from a "marsh" of diagnostic and therapeutic contradiction. The psychiatric could be shown to be simply the other side of a normal psychological coin, and hence the idea of a holistic sanity and normality could be preserved by virtue of a visible, representative, phenotype. The saving of the physique, therefore, was also a saving of individuality, character, and a biologically-grounded morality. It was seen by Sheldon as a political statement as much as a medical and psychological one. Medical doctors in the modern era such as Sheldon and Jung, who also parted from Freud on the matter of the soul, were the new sages, the "soul doctors", fulfilling a role that had been fulfilled by ministers and priests in previous centuries (Cornell 1990).

By mapping his three components of physique onto Freud's oral-erotic, urethral-erotic, and anal-erotic, with the orals being the vicerotonics, the urethrals the somatotonics, and the anals the cerebrotonics, Sheldon could show that these entities were, in truth, a function of an observable, biological, reality, calling for a radically different understanding than that proposed in Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud's "unconscious" was actually the body. Psychoanalysis implied a disembodied system devoid of all structural, anthropological, and therefore racial and aesthetic considerations. Freudian neurosis assumed no

distinctive physical being. Sheldon sought to coopt and therefore compromise the authority of psychoanalysis by maintaining that its apparent explanatory mechanisms had been rooted in the somatic and the eugenic all along.

The three psychiatric states that were anchored in a miscalibration of the three "normal" polarities of physique defused the Freudian aetiology of neurosis and psychosis. Instead of lying in the vague and unassignable shadowland of childhood sexuality, which Sheldon believed was not amenable to empirical investigation, neurosis could be seen as a somatic imbalance, which was a modern(ist) revision of "Hippocratic" claims. Borrowing the idea of dysplasia from Kretschmer, which indicated assymetry between body segments (in this case visible, "physiognomic" ones), Sheldon could hypothesize that abnormal mental states were actually owing to somatic dissonance or "interference" between the primary components of physique, which had their origin in breeding. The "normal" physique in somatotypy was the "beautiful" physique. This is the actual meaning of Sheldon's much touted assumption, the "structure-function continuum" (Sheldon 1949). With Sheldon it was finally not a question of the legitimacy of "varieties" of physique (i.e., the democratic admission that all physiques have a legitimate use and function in society), but rather a scrutiny of "varieties" to point up the visible superiority of the minority. The role of eugenics for both Sheldon and

Ludovici was patent: to improve the biological quality of a population by improving its beauty, and hence reverse modern disease and return the "zest for life". This prescription is aesthetic, heroic, and by scientific standards, irrational.

The mechanism for mental disturbance, imbalance, Sheldon assumed, lay in not "obeying" our physical being, a failing which came with cities, with urban employment, with civilization--just those qualities that marked the modern physiognomy of Hardy's fictional character, Clym Yeobright. Physique was relegated with modernity to an "artifactual" existence. In Ludovici's vocabulary, "Prometheans" (those who were simply crafty and clever and often biologically inferior) triumphed with the Industrial Revolution, and they "swamped" natural physical being. The result of this violation was, Ludovici argued, "psycho-physical chaos".

Sheldon narrates a story told to him before the War, as he says, by "an earlier acquaintance...a native German of Munich who had been an officer in World War I" (Sheldon 1949, p. 832):

Now we meet for a pleasant evening in a Munich beer parlor. 'Why are you Germans stirring up another war?' I asked him. 'Another war!' he ejaculated...Since when has there not been war?' I suggested that I thought we had buried the hatchet fifteen years before. 'Ah yes,' he suggested, 'he seemed to grow wistfully thoughtful,

'yes, you buried the hatchet--in Germany's back'...We talked for five hours and I learned as much from that lecture as from any I ever attended. I learned that we English-speaking people are a degenerate, rundown, stock, a kind of coupon-clipping remnant from a once vigorous and powerful line that has gone to seed. We are not realistic. We established a vast world empire but we did only half the job....We had started as heroic conquerers, had deteriorated to romanticists, then to jugglers, and later to shopkeepers and 'businessmen'....We once heroic, warlike, and predatory Anglo-Saxons had degenerated to pacifist bleat...we now began to make hebephrenic [fearful, cowardly] noises and to indignify the high destinies of mankind.....This was a German mind picture of our Anglo-American society (1949, pp. 832-833).

If Sheldon is not actually inventing this story, he is certainly appropriating it to express his own views. It may be a ploy to soften his position among post-war readers, to make it appear that a German is saying what he wants to say himself: that the eugenic agenda of the Germans was legitimate enough, it was simply--delinquent, unsuccessful. And in the same way that the Americans and English had been delinquent--they had all "waged wars of unsuccessfully aggressive predation" (1949, p. 834). "And I", says Sheldon, "had sentenced myself to make sense of the idea of

delinquency" (1949, p. 834).

Sheldon argues that at the back of unsuccessful predation lies "irresponsible reproduction" (1949, p. 835). Presumably the corollary of this is that successful predation lies in responsible reproduction. The "stocks and breeds" who are today's best are losing out because they have "given up in the struggle of competitive reproduction, [thus] lowering their birth rate as compared with previously less favored competitors. Thus the heaviest reproduction is now taking place in those human ranks which in comparatively recent times have been at the tail end in the competitive struggle for survival and power" (836). "This appears", claims Sheldon, "to be a reversal of the natural arrangement through which the long process of evolution has taken place, and is a by-product of a world situation in which one species has succeeded in achieving an overwhelming success over all its rivals." (1949, p. 836).

"Under normal or natural conditions" continues Sheldon, "reproduction is a consequence of success in the hard test of staying alive against rigorous competition. In the present situation, which is a purely human arrangement and is to an increasing degree a consequence of unregulated competitive activity on the part of the medical profession, reproduction has been so easy and so safe that even the weakest and the least gifted can spawn" (1949, p. 836). However, "the relatively more gifted [those of good stock]

and more conscious organisms [i.e., those with minds and souls] also develop interests other than those of food and of expanding their flesh. Where reproduction is made so easy that the most evolved stock, in order to maintain a superior reproductive ratio, would have to drop its other interests and compete with comparatively inferior organisms that do not develop other interests to a comparable degree, the better stock tends to ignore the challenge of competitive reproduction. This is merely to say that bad reproduction drives out good" (1949, p. 836). "Bad reproduction" means reproduction from those members of the population who suffer with what Sheldon liked to call "aesthetic stigmata and low t"--the "mongrels", the "burgeoned estate", of the United States population. To wit, the mothers of the HGL "delinquent youth", whom Sheldon also studied in considerable detail: those "all-body-and-no-soul females". The lowering of the t component, again, has resulted largely from modern medicine's "keeping people alive indiscriminantly" (1949, p. 793). And this may "constitute the principal criterion of delinquency" (1949, p. 793).

4.3 Sheldon's Temperamental Superman: The Eugenic Connection

William Sheldon adopted a view of the past similar to Ludovici's to make heroic claims about man's physical

degeneration and dishonor in Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949). Man's heroic past was a key assumption in Sheldon's constitutional investigations, an assumption that does not appear to fit comfortably or consistently into any mainstream view of evolutionary development among biologists in the early twentieth century, despite his appropriations of evolutionary tropes to bolster his arguments. On one level, Sheldon's counterselectionist theme was common among early twentieth-century evolutionists; as Sheldon put it, "we are not evolving now but devolving" (Sheldon 1949, p. 837). Such a position is based on strong assumptions about the power of evolution, via the liabilities of modernity, to effect change in man and society. It assumes a precipitous falling away, a "degeneration", based on "the pathology of increasing urbanization and loss of zest in human life" (Sheldon 1949, p. 838). The opposite would presumably entail "evolution" towards a more "progressive" or "advanced" state. This is basically the same position advanced by Ludovici in chapter 1, which, in turn, echoed decades of western Aryanism (Hersey 1996, pp. 61-80).

It is also a degenerationist and a Lamarckian complaint and not primarily a Darwinian one. Psychiatrists in the nineteenth century were largely "Non-Darwinian" in their outlook (Bowler 1993, Dowbiggin 1991, Gatlin 1995). Sheldon's position, with its essentially nineteenth-century emphasis on degeneration, appears to fall into the same

camp. Degeneration theory implied a relatively swift and dramatic transformation (in this case in body structure), unlike Darwinian "natural selection", which implied no such outcome. Sheldon's embryological scheme for human evolution has more in common, in fact, with recapitulationist theory than it does with natural selection. Sheldon's hypothesis that ectomorphs are more highly evolved than endomorphs and mesomorphs implies a Haeckelian and not a Darwinian position. Under degenerationist assumptions man and society "degenerated" from a putative pristine prototype, and yet could "regenerate" in relatively short order, given selective breeding and improved environmental conditions. Hence the sense of urgency among eugenists about "marital hygiene" in both Ludovici and Sheldon. If "bad breeding" was the culprit, sexual selection could be engineered, via eugenics or artificial selection, to reverse deleterious developments.

Sheldon's was a theological as well as a eugenic project based on a hypothetical "superman". This "superior" physical/temperamental specimen was hypothesized to possess maximum endowments of heart, muscle, and intellect--a 7-7-7 respectively in endomorphy, mesomorphy, and ectomorphy--whom Sheldon whimsically called God or "Mr. G", and who was intended to serve as a materialist foil to the Christian God. Sheldon's temperamental superman was the eugenic paragon modernity had so impugned. It does not exist today.

Sheldon, like Nietzsche, was playing the role of "cultural physician" (Ahern 1995). His imagined "superman" was an idealization that answered to deep-seated, emotional needs for stability and integrity on the part of reactionary intellectuals.

I have discussed the views of Ludovici in order to point up Sheldon's debt to this neglected genre of modernist mythologizing, and to emphasize the degree to which Sheldon's research in constitutional medicine was linked to essentially literary, heroic, passions. Varieties of Delinquent Youth was gauged as a contribution to psychiatry and criminology. But Sheldon's idea of delinquency was actually an apocalyptic critique of modernity and made an uneasy bedfellow with modern social science. Constitutional investigation during the interwar years, especially in Sheldon's hands, was a means of providing a biological lodestone for normality at a time when traditional normality had been challenged by the modern in the most radical ways. Freud's notion of the "psychopathology of everyday life" asserted universal abnormality. Who, after all, was "normal"? Who was a hero? These were burning questions for psychiatrists in the wake of the mental and spiritual fallout of the first World War. The horrors of modern combat undermined the confidence of traditional male assumptions about heroism and honor (Showalter 1985).

Sheldon believed that psychoanalysis as well as much of

modern medicine was founded on an a priori notion of sickness rather than health, a problem taken up by Georges Canguilhem in The Normal and the Pathological (1944). Sheldon's constitutional medicine was founded on the assumption that an ancient, "Hippocratic", understanding of robust normality obtained, and that disease is the body out of balance; just as "abnormal" mental states, properly understood, can be symptomatic of natural, normal, health and vitality gone awry. Health and vitality could best be recovered under a eugenic program of improved breeding, together with due respect for "superior" physical specimens. Sheldon's friend and mentor, Harvard anthropologist Ernest Hooten, in a book entitled Young Man, You Are Normal! (1946), was after the same quarry. Hooten's book included a pictorial caricature of what appears to be a hunch-back, perhaps Jewish, physician examining a eugenic Harvard undergraduate, which suggested that modern medicine "monkeyed" with what did not need to be fixed.

Physical and mental degeneration, Sheldon assumed, had been brought about by the ravages of industrial civilization and its animus, Puritanism, which denied the body in favor of wishful, democratic, mystifications, a theme also advanced by Ludovici. Modern man was plagued with disease because the modern world itself was a violation of "original" biological integrity. This notion was a staple

literary theme in the nineteenth century.² Modern medicine itself, fueled by Christian sentiment, as Darwin had said in The Descent of Man (1872), fostered "counterselection", in that it saved people who would have naturally perished in the past; and it flinched from making qualitative (non-mystical) distinctions about people and their actual psycho-physical makeup. It was content to play a game of "patch up" and ignore the long-term biological future. This was

² Thomas Hardy in The Return of the Native (1876) comments on the absence of the Hellenic "zest for existence" that so marked modern times. The eugenists were distinctive, perhaps, in thinking that this lack of vitality could be recaptured through controlled breeding. Hardy's tone is more pessimistic and accepting of modernity as it presents itself:

In Clym Yeobright's face could be dimly seen the typical countenance of the future. Should there be a classic period to art hereafter, its Pheidias may produce such faces. The view of life as a thing to be put up with, replacing the zest for existence which was so intense in early civilizations, must ultimately enter so thoroughly into the constitution of the advanced races that its facial expression will become accepted as a new artistic departure. People already feel that a man who lives without disturbing a curve of feature, or setting a mark of metal concern anywhere upon himself, is too far removed from modern perceptiveness to be a modern type. Physically beautiful men--the glory of the race when it was young--are almost an anachronism now....The truth seems to be that a long line of disillusionive centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called. What the Greeks only suspected we know well; what their Aeschylus imagined our nursery children feel. That old-fashioned revelling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary that man is in by their operation (Hardy 1876, p. 170).

Sheldon's life-long obsession.

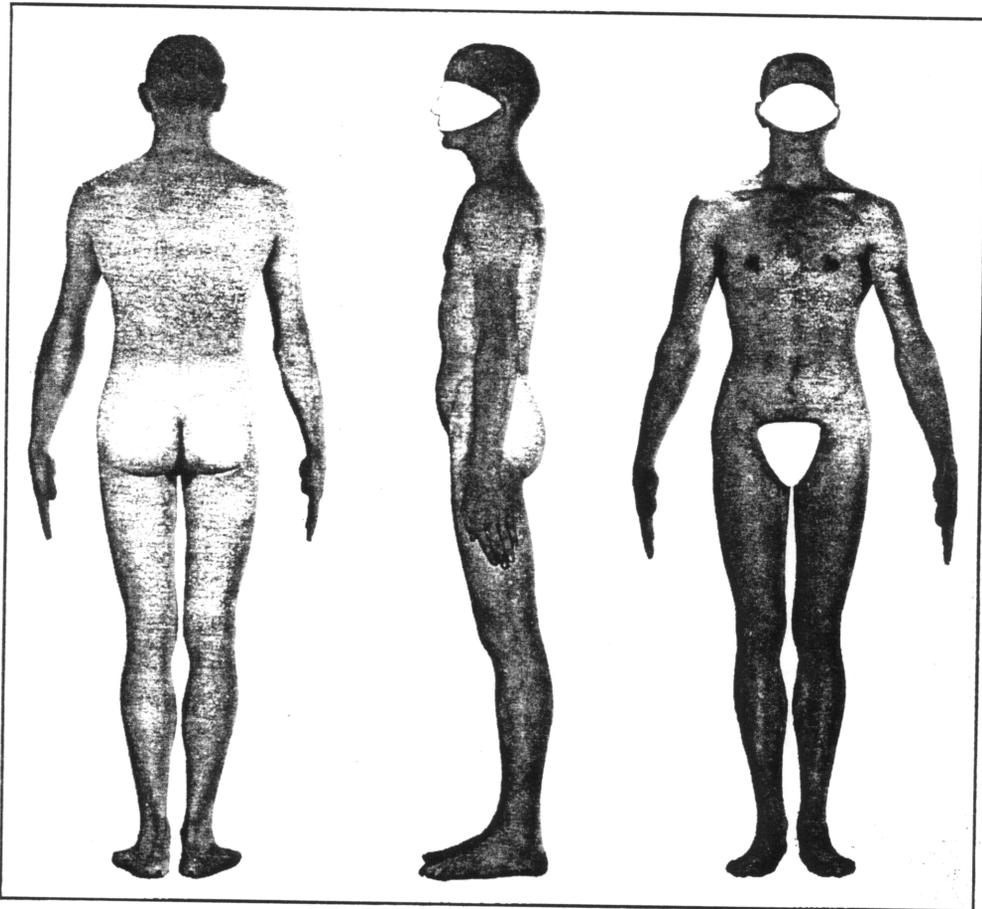
Sheldon believed that man's (chiefly Anglo-Saxon man's) religious being shared in this biological decline. Hence his apparently anachronistic concerns, by the quantitative standards of modern social science research, with honor and heroism. Sheldon valorized the natural pride and prejudice of the pre-modern world and pre-modern man, calling it metaphorically, "the ancient hereditary estate" pitted against "the corruptive and disintegrative forces natural to a large estate under senile ownership" (Sheldon 1949, p. 833). Delinquency, he believed, was caused by a lack of fit between who people are biologically and originally--hence the necessity for Ludovici's euhemerism, or "Neo-Hippocratism", or vitalism, or a postulation of vanished pristine health--and what they were obliged to become in modern society. The modern world was, in this way, artificial, unreal. It did not play straight with biological "truth". It was a lie encouraged by modern medicine and Christianity, in addition to the aggravating practices of psychoanalysis, "New Deal" politics, and a global, "exculpative", environmentalism in the social sciences. "The philosophy of eugenics", said Sheldon "and the philosophy of psychoanalytic dynamics define almost perfectly opposed antitheses" (Sheldon 1949, p. 869). Eugenics was needed to return a primal sanity to a beleaguered and biologically botched civilization.

Sheldon's view of civilization and its discontents issued in scientific claims about the relationship between heroism and physique that fascinated general readers, including the literati. The poet W. H. Auden on reading Varieties of Delinquent Youth in 1950 was quick to pick up on Sheldon's claim that somewhat fragile and aesthetically "superior" physiques and not decidedly mesomorphic (muscular) ones were more given to heroism in battle. Auden spun off the following lyric in response, entitled "Footnotes to Dr. Sheldon":

Behold the manly mesomorph
Showing his splendid biceps off,
Whom social workers love to touch,
Though the loveliest girls do not care for him much.
Pretty to watch with bat or ball,
An Achilles, too, in a barroom brawl,
But in the ditch of hopeless odds,
The hour of desertion by brass and gods,
Not a hero. It is the pink-and-white,
Fastidious, slightly girlish, in the night
When the proud-arsed broad-shouldered break and run
Who covers their retreat, dies at his gun (Auden 1951,
p. 63).

Sheldon waxes lyrical about these "heroic" physiques, namely somatotypes 126, 134, and 143 in Delinquent Youth (see figures 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). He struggles for a workable

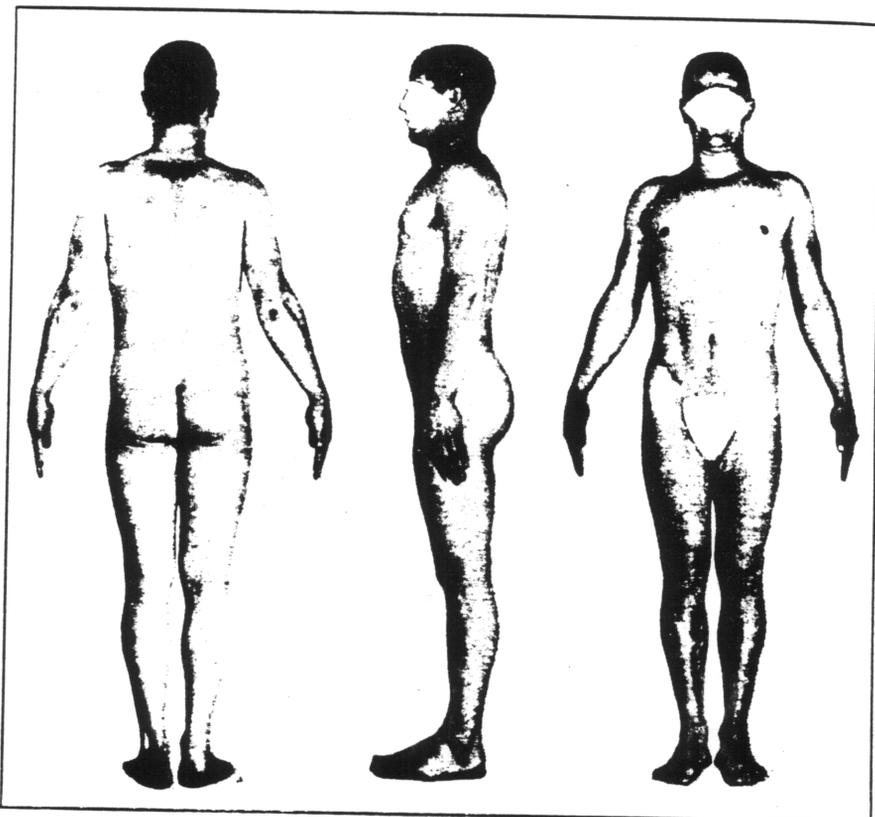
126. COMPANY B, PLATOON 1, SECTION 2
 Second-Order Psychopathy; with Minor Somatoroses:
 Nos. 115-132



Description: Somatotype $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{1}{2}$ -4. A 21-year-old ectomorphic mesomorph five inches above average stature. He is heavier in bone than in muscle but all segments are about evenly developed. Primary $g+1$, secondary $g\pm$. Primary $t\ 3$, secondary $t\ 4$. Features strong, well modeled, sharply chiseled. It is decidedly a handsome face. Hands and feet excellently formed. General strength 4, hand strength 4. Coordination that of an athlete, although he is too light and too gynandroid for first-rate athletic competition. A fairly good boxer but in no real sense a fighter.

Fig. 4.3

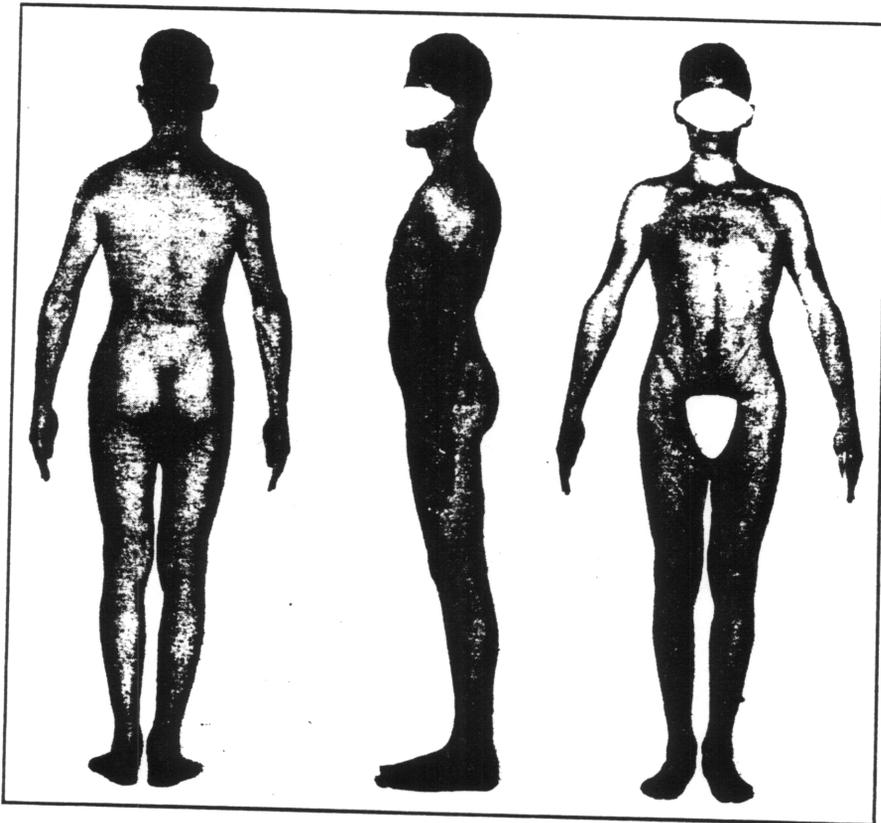
134. COMPANY B, PLATOON 1, SECTION 3
 Second-Order Psychopathy; Uncomplicated:
 Nos. 133-143



Description: Somatotype $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $5\frac{1}{2}$ -2. A 21-year-old mesomorph five inches above average stature. A powerful, superbly developed physique. Stalwart mesomorphy smoothly buttressed with latent endomorphy. No apparent weaknesses or dysplasias. Primary and secondary $g\pm$. Primary t 4, secondary t 4. Features strong, well molded, cleanly chiseled, although the face is a trifle too large and has a trace of puffiness. General and hand strength 4. Excellent coordination. He looks and handles himself like a movie hero. Probably too slow and easy-going for first-rate athletic competition. Rarely pugnacious or truculent, but he is reported to be an efficient fighter when provoked. We never saw him provoked.

Fig. 4.3

143. COMPANY B, PLATOON 1, SECTION 3
 Second-Order Psychopathy; Uncomplicated:
 Nos. 133-143



Description: Somatotype 3-4½-4. An 18-year-old moderate mesomorph four inches above average stature. Heavier in bone than in muscle and all segments imperfectly—although about equally—developed. The Potter seems to have started to make a more pronounced mesomorph but somehow wavered. No dysplasias. Primary $g+1$, secondary $g\pm$. Primary $t\ 3$, secondary $t\ 4$. Features strong, well developed, finely molded and chiseled. A handsome face. Fine hands and feet. General strength 3, hand strength 3. Coordination excellent. A fair athlete, a fine dancer, good at all minor games. Not much of a fighter. Too gynandroid for competitive athletics.

Fig. 4.3

definition of delinquency, yet he cannot reconcile his understanding of the biological basis of heroism with the demeaning demands of civilization, which was just the dilemma Ludovici rationalized with Herbert Spencer's "vitalist survival values" and "aesthetic survival values" (see chapter 1). Given Sheldon's understanding that civilization (modernity) itself brought about biological "delinquency", he has little leverage for making practical, normative, claims about law and order, crime and punishment, short of radical, virtually apocalyptic changes in both Nature and Nurture. Hence the pessimism in Varieties of Delinquent Youth. Sheldon, in his valorization of these physiques, echoes Emerson: "Bruisers and pirates are of better promise than talkers and clerks".

Somatotype 126 displays "a heroic component", according to Sheldon:

The young man had looked at what we had to offer, [and] had not even bothered to express scorn. To him we were the unfortunate and, I believe, the delinquent ones. We the stuffy weaklings caught in the sticky flypaper of everyday human moronity. This boy's internal life, and to some extent his external life, was that of a hero. In three parts of his make-up he walked the earth as a god who gazed serenely upon a swarming and inferior species. In the rest of his make-up he was perhaps a somatorotic delinquent, if that means

anything (Sheldon 1949, p. 494).³

This same youth, after having run away from the Haydon Goodwill Inn, "saw action at the front, reported that he was having a great time, and shortly thereafter was heroically killed". He had no known illnesses: "Never sick a day in his life", except [perhaps this is intended as a satire on bacteriology] once "when the old sow bit a piece out of my leg. Next day the sow had a high fever". He is designated as a "2 1/2 [in endomorphy]--4 1/2 [in mesomorphy]--4 [in ectomorphy]" with "features that are "strong, well modeled, sharply chiseled. It is a decidedly handsome face. Hands and feet excellently formed....Coordination that of an athlete, although he is too light and too gynandroid [feminine] for first-rate athletic competition" (1949, p. 494).

The heroic quality and integrity of these physiques, their natural vitality, their aesthetic appeal, their untutored "defiance" of "everyday human moronity" (in this

³ Sheldon's eugenics, especially as it is presented in Varieties of Delinquent Youth, falls nicely into a categorization outlined by Juan Enrique Leon in his illuminating study A Literary History of Eugenic Terror in England and America, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1989. Distinguishing between a romantic countertradition (which derived chiefly from Nietzsche) and a mainstream, statist, tradition in eugenics, Leon would likely see Sheldon's Somatotype 126 as belonging clearly to the former. Sheldon, in fact, is debunking mainstream eugenics, which feared the nomad, and he idealizes the pre-modern vitality, energy, and heroism of this "delinquent youth". This was also Ludovici's tack: to identify the splendor of "natural" physiques with the Nietzschean beast.

case their primal dismissal of social science as the labor of fools), are violated in modern society.⁴ Their existence is anomalous because their "superiority" is superfluous. These young men putatively would not be "delinquent" in a world that respected and rewarded eugenic excellence. As it stands, their "noble" qualities get buried in a plethora of verbiage and false politics. Their very real biological, temperamental, strengths misfire outside a nourishing culture. Social workers and psychiatrists assign the delinquent boys to endless and contradictory diagnostic pigeonholes that violate their biological reality and replace it with a vacuous psycho-babble, or as Sheldon claims in the case of psychoanalysis, "a labyrinthine succession of devious and subjective verbalizations" (Sheldon 1949, p. 5).

4.4 The Physique of the "Superman"

At the core of Sheldon's work is his heroic conception of the temperamental "superman", a direction toward which his constitutional studies were tending all along. Sheldon's was a massive project in the biologizing of the

⁴ The "delinquent youth" of Sheldon's also recall Jack London's idealization of hoboos in The Road (1906). London's "profesh", of whom he is proudly one, are the savvy and brilliant elite of the tramp world, "the aristocracy of The Road". They are the lords and masters, the aggressive men, the primordial nobleman, "the blond beasts so beloved of Nietzsche" (London 1906, p. 285).

soul, a sustained effort at correlating "temperament" with physique, with a view to justifying, in a quintessentially Nietzschean fashion, the ways of flesh to spirit or, equally, of biological aristocracy to modernism, and in a way distinct from Freud's more linguistic construals and also at odds with the "mindless" reductions of the behaviorists.⁵ Sheldon was, at bottom, a disaffected religionist. Rejecting other (metaphysical) "theologies", e.g., Christian and Freudian, Sheldon essays the meaning of "God" in the materialist, operational, vocabulary of somatotypy. What the "heroic-vitalists" played by ear and the more conventional eugenicists botched, Sheldon set to psycho-physical "music", however disconcerting we may find the score. It is this strong heroic, holistic, strain in

⁵ Says Sheldon of behaviorism: "As a psychology, behaviorism must take its place among the premature overenthusiasms engendered by the popularization of objective science....In its striving to free man from obsession with his instincts, behaviorism is the diametric antithesis of the Freudian plan of persistently rubbing the mental nose in those elemental, sexual, digestive, and self-assertive preoccupations which naturally characterize the normal first awareness of the emerging child mind. The Freudian psychoanalyst restores his patient to wholeness by taking him back to instinctive, self-loving beginnings of life as the one safe and true foundation for an orientational outlook. This is simply resolution of the character conflict. From the Freudian bias, it is "character" that causes human conflict, and when this is amputated, the patient is successfully analysed. He can then live a more expressive life, as a conscience-free waster. Freudian and behaviorist are the complete opposites in psychology, and the Christian Epimethean is the unreconciled brother of the Promethean behaviorist" (Sheldon 1936, p. 98).

Sheldon's work that so sets it apart from his more prosaic contemporaries in psychology and eugenics.

Sheldon postulates that normal and abnormal behavior form a physical and psychological continuum. It is a way of understanding maladaptive behavior such that the problems of manics, depressives, and paranoids can be seen as one of degree and not kind; that "the primary psychiatric components may also be ingredients, or at least near relatives of ingredients, of superior reaction patterns" (Sheldon 1949, p. 91). These "reaction patterns" are possibly "like wild horses which, tamed, will open to man a new leverage on power in many directions" 1949, p. 91) "This new schema," explains Sheldon, "the obverse or 'other side' of that for psychiatric classification, may constitute a relief map for the study of superior temperamental endowment" (1949, p. 91).

"Hyperphrenia could be defined simply as unusual or excessive mentality" (1949, p. 91) says Sheldon. But "more freely, it might also imply a superior quality of mentality" (1949, p. 91) [the "superman"]. The "hyperphrenic index" is a way to bring "delinquency" out of the slums and into the parlor; and, moreover, a way of salvaging heroic behavior instead of simply "resolving" it prematurely and preemptorily. Sheldon locates "in the mental hospitals the lost trail to a moral philosophy for the human breed" (1949, p. 90). Mental pathology is only a slight miscalibration of

normality; paranoids, for example, are actually confused Epimetheans, "stalwart protector[s] of ground already won" (1949, p. 90) or Prometheans, "leader[s] and pioneer[s] into...new (forbidden) ground. Paranoia and heroism may perhaps blossom from the same temperament, as green apples and ripe ones fall from the same tree" (1949, p. 90).

The same corollary holds for the manic, manic-depressive, cycloid. "Biologically" says Sheldon, "this is a condition in which the expression of energy is too exuberant. Discriminative inhibition is too low. But if only it were not quite too low the social and survival value of the trait might be strongly positive instead of negative. The resulting personality might then have been called buoyant, energetic, sprightly, animated, cheerful, hearty,...etc." (1949, p. 89) Similarly, the third psychiatric component governs what we today call schizophrenia and what Sheldon sometimes called "hebephrenic, withdrawn, helpless, jettisoned" behavior (1949, p. 90). This pole of behavior falls to the ectomorphic physique, as the depressive fell to the endomorphic physique and the paranoid to the mesomorphic physique. Biologically, the schizophrenic appears to be engaged in a "process of relinquishment":

In order to gain greater things it is sometimes necessary to relinquish what has already been gained. Here is a basic biological truth which has been

marshalled to the ratiocination of an otherworldly religious philosophy. But the principle goes deeper than religions do. Without the power of relinquishment organic life would soon trap and destroy itself in viserotic and somatorotic cul-de-sacs, as countless millions of individual species have no doubt already destroyed themselves. In hebephrenia, and in some religious practices, the power of relinquishment goes too far. Too much is relinquished. But if only not quite so much had been let go, the individual might have been called detached, dis-interested, exalted, high minded, above partisanship, of lofty purpose, sublime. In short the power of detachment is the power to transcend and to suspend the immediate interests of the biological self. These interests may be suspended with resultant self-destruction, as in hebephrenia, or with an emergence of the highest imaginable social and moral responsibility, as in the legendary Christus (1949, p. 90).

Sheldon's "superman" possesses a perfect balance (reminiscent of the old humoral system) of heart (endomorphy), brain (ectomorphy), and muscle (mesomorphy). This "hyperphrenic balance" amounts to a somatotype designation of H 4-4-4, indicating an equal proportion of endomorphy, mesomorphy, and ectomorphy. "The 4-4-4", says Sheldon, "is probably about as close as human flesh gets to

God....To call a man an H 4-4-4 may be tantamount to crediting him with humor" (1949, p. 93). Humor has two qualities: " (1) An inclination toward detachment--the quality of regarding life and self lightly; (2) An inclination to tolerate and to enjoy incompatibilities at a high level of awareness (1949, p. 93)....This second quality may contain the essence of humor, and if it does it may contain the essence of human salvation" (1949, p. 93).

The humor of the "superman" allows for what Sheldon calls "the pleasant toleration of conflict and uncertainty" or "a savoring of mental conflict" (1949, p. 93). This state of "detachment...defines an antithesis both to theologizing and to all the popular patterns of psychotherapy" (1949, p. 93). "Humor" is understood, again, as a perfect, or near-perfect, balance between the polarities of physique and their corresponding temperaments. Humor understood in this way, comprizes an antithesis to the two primary morbid conditions in the psychiatric lexicon--namely, schizophrenia (or what Sheldon prefers here to call "oneirophrenia" (dream mind), and manic-depression, which connotes a variety of psychoneurotic anxiety (fear) states. Both of these conditions, according to Sheldon, result from what he calls either a "vice of consciousness" or "partial consciousness" (1949, p. 93).

The "cerebral cortex" presents both a "new danger and a new opportunity...to organic life" (1949, p. 94). The

danger is, first, "of finding consciousness too immediately fascinating and so of making a vice of it" (1949, p. 94); a "'vice' being defined as a natural function which gets practised as an end in itself, thereby diverting the vicious individual from accomplishing his broader or higher objectives" (1949, p. 94). "This may be what sometimes happens in schizophrenia" says Sheldon, "which presents one antithesis to humor" (1949, p. 94). This "vice of conscious fantasy", he concludes, "persists [and] the patient drifts toward a kind of impotence of consciousness and tends to live in what seems to resemble a dream state...[in a] sort of archipelago of conscious fragments" (1949, p. 94).

The phenomenon of "partial consciousness" results in other related disorders; especially the problems of "unjustified fear and other maladaptive emotional states" (1949, p. 95). These people, says Sheldon, "seem to suggest bathers who are not quite up to the business of going in all over. Unable to swim, or lacking the assurance of being able to swim, they wade about in the shallow edges of consciousness where they either shiver with fear and are miserable or finally settle for the pleasant tingle of the shallow water about their feet, and concentrate on that. Either of the resulting habitual moods is fatal to the full play of consciousness, and so to the achievement of humor" (1949, p. 95). Both "schizophrenia [or "euphorial oneirophrenia"] and "habitual fear" are "aspects of the

tragedy of being caught halfway in the very dangerous adventure of consciousness....To go all the way and fully master the art of consciousness, until the contradictions and implications of the common questions in life present welcome mental exercise, is perhaps to achieve the H 4-4-4 state...[or] catatonic hyperphrenia [or a]...state of sustained humor" (1949, p. 96).

Sheldon, himself possessing the prototype Promethean physique, appears to be the first practitioner of this "humor". There are, declares Sheldon, countless devices employed by the "multitudes" who are "caught in the trap of partial consciousness" (1949, p. 96). They "try to go back and struggle to prevent being drawn deeper into [its] jaws..." (1949, p. 96). Their consciousness is dulled, snuffed out, by "alcohol...the movies, the daily newspaper, bridge, golf, money, politics, and the education racket" (1949, p. 96). This insistence on the importance of expanding human consciousness, the psychological Prometheanism, interested Aldous Huxley. Indeed, cultivating a "mature mind" became what psychologist H. A. Overstreet called the "vision" for twentieth-century psychology and the basis for society's improvement (Overstreet 1949, p. 292).⁶ It is also the largely

⁶ Sheldon used Overstreet's popular book The Mature Mind as a text in a psychology course he taught at Harvard in the late 1940s.

uncharted trail between Sheldon's notion of "Promethean Will" and 1960s counterculture. Several of Huxley's later novels, including Island, serve as bridges, as does Margaret Isherwood's book The Root of the Matter (1954).⁷

But what can Sheldon mean when he essays his ideal somatotypic superman? One thing he cannot mean, as a practical matter, is that any 4-4-4 somatotype is a "superman". 4-4-4 somatotypes exist, and they are not necessarily "superior". The HGI "delinquent" population in Varieties of Delinquent Youth contains several mid-range somatypes, and the the boys who possess them are fraught with all manner of "delinquencies". What are we dealing with here? In a nutshell, the strong correlations that Sheldon claimed to exist between physique and temperament (the "structure-function continuum"), and which were always hotly contested, were a norm, an ideal. At the same time that Sheldon correlated physiques and temperaments empirically he was also claiming that the strong relationship was a residual, "original", one that had gotten corrupted by environmental, social, influences. The somatotype photograph allows us to view the human physique and temperament with "its clothes off", with "much of the culturally superimposed habit pattern removed" (Sheldon 1949, p. 865). As Aldous Huxley paraphrased Sheldon in

⁷ See Laura Huxley's comment in a letter to Sheldon in chapter 5.

Brave New World Revisited, "in spite of the most intense cultural ironing, an extreme endomorph (to use W. H. Sheldon's terminology) will retain his sociable viscerotonic characteristics, an extreme mesomorph will remain energetically somatotonic through thick and thin and an extreme ectomorph will always be cerebrotonic, introverted and oversensitive" (Huxley 1946, pp. 127-128). The "truth" of somatotypy, therefore, lies in a "pristine" realm relative to modern society, a point which, whether through guile or innocence, Sheldon does not clarify.

Theodosius Dobzhansky repeated what Sheldon himself maintained, that the sliding-scale of somatotypy avoided the inchoate types of Kretschmer. Says Dobzhansky: "The idea implicit in most typological schemes, that the "pure types" were once upon a time the only existing ones and the intermediates arose from them by miscegenation, has no foundation. It is like supposing that all human dwellings came by mixing the Empire State Building with an Eskimo igloo" (Dobzhansky 1962, p. 93).

Sheldon finessed the problem of types. Sheldon may or may not have believed that "'pure types' were once upon a time the only existing ones". Certainly his revision of Kretschmer's typology into degrees or components of physique doesn't necessarily preclude such an assumption. In fact, it may reinforce it. The "pure types" (of antiquity) might just as easily be identified with the three germ layers,

endoderm, mesoderm, ectoderm, as with the polar "types" of Kretschmer. Sheldon does entertain the idea, however, that all "types"--even his own interactive "types" of endomorph, mesomorph, ectomorph--were a degeneration from the prototype of mesomorphic ectomorphy, which is even more speculative than the typological euhemerism dismissed by Dobzhansky.⁸ Sheldon's "structure-function continuum" was, like Ludovici's, an aesthetic proposition first and last. Ludovici does not discuss psychological types, but assumes that "aristocratic quality", in whatever "race" or breed, will be synonymous with the beautiful and the functional.

The strong but imperfect relationship between physique and temperament was maligned by the "unnatural" character of modern civilization (a "bad period of history" as Sheldon put it). This is a strong version of "counterselection" that valorizes "original" superiority. Only in this light does Sheldon's notion of the temperamental "superman" make sense. Otherwise, we fall into the otiose trap of thinking that Sheldon's physique/temperament correlations are simply too high and therefore suspect from a scientific

⁸ In an unpublished letter, Dobzhansky exclaimed to Sheldon concerning his review of Atlas of Men (1954): "I am very happy to have your letter and to know that you do not find my review offensive. I am sure you have enough blind followers, as well as rabid opponents, so that having a non-blind follower may not be entirely unwelcome. I assure you that I have tried to make my criticisms constructive rather than destructive..." (Dobzhansky to Sheldon, 1955, Sheldon Archives).

perspective, which was the general position of Sheldon's critics in psychology (Parnell 1954, Hunt and Barton 1959). We suspect Sheldon's high correlations because we tend to regard biological variety as normal, even desirable. But Sheldon believed that these correlations were themselves embattled. To the extent that we have strayed biologically and socially from our true physical and mental moorings, the "matrix of organic order" as Sheldon put it in Atlas of Men (1954)--among these being that physical beauty also equals "first-rate performance", basically the old physiognomical teaching of Lavater--we have compromised the species. In this dissociation lies the tragedy of the modern world. The "burgeoned estate[s]" of "charwomen", the Haydon Goodwill Inn mothers from Varieties of Delinquent Youth, are improvidently privileged. They breed in the greatest numbers, to society's destruction.

Rom Harre's recent observations on Sheldon's theorizing are both shrewd and entirely ahistorical: shrewd in that Harre basically has it right and ahistorical in that he ignores eugenics. Harre, like most of Sheldon's critics, apparently doesn't take Sheldon's eugenics seriously or, in any event, doesn't correlate it with the more technical and popular aspects of somatotypy. Harre rehearses what Sheldon and Stevens hypothesized in Varieties of Temperament (1942): that while physical being, on a first-order of priority, was linked to temperament, it was also possible, and all too

common, for physique and temperament to become alienated, out of sync; hence, Harre suggests, we need to account for why some physiques and temperaments do not correlate. How is it that temperaments do not always match up with physiques? Says Sheldon and Stevens: "Incompatibilities between morphology and manifest temperament...are often encountered in the analysis of personalities having a history of severe internal conflict" (Sheldon and Stevens 1942, p. 47). "This claim" says Harre, "raises some very deep and, as far as I know, unresearched questions and assumptions. If body type and temperament can be 'out of sync' they must have independent origins in each human being. Then the fact that they are often correlated needs explanation" (Harre 1991, p. 75).

Eugenic factors are excluded. Instead, Harre posits a linguistic, phenomenological, explanation for these discrepancies, one that has become commonplace in phenomenological psychology (cf. Lyons 1987). As Harre says, "those who deviate from [Sheldon and Stevens's] norms have simply failed to understand the meaning of their bodies as societal icons (Harre 1991, p. 76). Asks Harre:

Can we now introduce the idea of being comfortably settled in one's body? This certainly seems to be one of the implications of Sheldon and Steven's study (Harre 1991, p. 76).

As we have seen, the idea was fundamental for eugenicists

a century ago, with assumptions such as "psycho-physical standardization" and "psycho-physical harmony" that Harre ignores. To the extent that modernity is seen as "false" by reactionary standards, constitutional and therefore psychic conflict is inevitable. Put differently, temperament can be at war with the body by virtue of bad breeding. This is just the long-standing "dualism", or "body-mind monkey trap" (Sheldon 1949, p. 811) that Sheldon emphasizes. Dualism in this sense is tantamount to pathology, while monism implies the natural and healthy. Dysplasias in the human physique (a term Sheldon borrowed from Kretschmer's psychiatry) lead to what Ludovici called "psycho-physical chaos", as discussed in Chapter 1. Somatotypy was the means for gauging these dysplasias. Standardization of human populations via inbreeding and selective outbreeding, Ludovici believed, would increase correlations of physique and temperament and hence discourage spurrious alienations of body and mind. Standardization would restore psychological wholeness. By obeying this eugenic rationale, which I believe is the one both Sheldon and Ludovici assumed and not a phenomenological or "social matrix" approach adumbrated by Harre and Lyons, both physical and mental health is warranted. Therefore, if we substitute "holistic entities" or "biological wholes" for Harre's "societal icons" we are probably closer to what Sheldon actually believed. Why Sheldon's psychology has gotten treated and

explained in ways that are incommensurate with early twentieth-century history I treat at more length in the conclusion.

Democracy, to Sheldon's mind, had been disastrous for physical and temperamental heroes. "Ectomorphy of high t component, especially in women," says Sheldon,

has long stood as a sort of stereotype for biological aristocracy. The catch is that high t must in the beginning [euhemerism] always have meant first-rate performance. If we believe in a structure-function continuum, high t means functional efficiency of the first order and this is the basic operational meaning. Beauty of structure and beauty of performance are one conceptual continuum and any separation of the two is a sign of biological bad health..." (Sheldon 1949, p. 811).

Moreover, this phenomenon may have an analogue at the cellular level:

burgeoned and asthenic characteristics ...are really t [aesthetic] phenomena;...texture or quality is in the cellular structure of the organism and that both asthenia and burgeoning are but outward macroscopic expressions of variations from a biological balancing which is likewise and similarly reflected in the aesthetic harmonies of cellular structure. Burgeoning may be definable as a general coarsening of cellular

structure, without good architecture. Asthenia may be a general falling back from pattern, or an architectural recession and shrinking of the cellular structure (Sheldon 1949, p. 811).

Sheldon observed a "disturbing relationship between delinquency and heroism" (1949, p. 857). While interviewing the HGI population, he "again and again experienced the feeling, on interviewing certain of the [HGI] boys, that [he] was in the presence of what could at least be called a heroic component--and this feeling is not common in the ordinary routine of social contact with people in general" (1949, p. 858). "In a hero" claims Sheldon, "there is a quality of unstrained defiance which gives a constitutional psychologist a mediastinal tingle" (1949, p. 858); although he admits that "we did not succeed in putting a finger on any one objective test or criterion by which a heroic delinquent can be distinguished from a non-heroic one" (1949, p. 859). Biological heroes ("dragon-slayers" in earlier eras) are forced underground (into mental hospitals, prisons) in our democratic world. Sheldon's biological heroes thus assume a place with "romantic" reactions to modernity, to industrialization, to the modern imposition of artificiality onto the "human form divine". Noble physiques apparently mortify in the still waters of democracy.

As the social and political acceptability of eugenic thought declined after World-War II, especially its claims

about the relations of constitution and "soul" (which the nazis stigmatized as the relations between race or "Rasse" and soul, "Seele"), environmentalist approaches treated Sheldon's work with different politics and priorities.⁹ What I have proposed was the actual culture of somatotypy--the salient eugenic component, together with a profound disillusionment with modernity--was simply forgotten and discarded. Joseph Lyons' study, Ecology of the Body (1987), is an example of "updating" Sheldon. Lyons, like Harre, omits all eugenic factors from his considerations, as well as modernist culture. To write essays like Harre's and Lyons' requires a strategy of historical jettisoning. It was generally assumed--and this assumption applied to all of the 1950s behaviorists who reviewed Sheldon's work--that somatotypy could be judged on its "textual", empirical, merits alone, without regard to the eugenic soil in which it was sown and nourished.

⁹ Lyons has first to lament Sheldon's methodology before going on to postulate a revised version of somatotypy--his endo, meso, and ecto "styles", which, whatever its merits as a reconsideration of Sheldon's work, ignores both eugenics and all considerations of modernity. Lyons's is a quintessentially presentist account. "Sheldon" claims Lyons, "did not have th[e] vocabulary [of phenomenology] to express his thinking. He was often forced into statements that were constrained within the existing limitations of the physical science of his day (Lyons 1987, p. 222-223).

5.0 ALDOUS HUXLEY AND HIS CIRCLE: THE CULTURAL MEANING OF CONSTITUTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

5.1 Huxley, Sheldon, and Friends

Aldous Huxley wrote to William Sheldon from the Tuscany Hotel in New York on April 19, 1958: "Would there be a chance of seeing you in the course of the next few days?...Have just been re-reading VDY--with increased admiration. It is really damned good" (Sheldon Archives). Huxley became fast friends with Sheldon in the late 1930's and exhibited unqualified enthusiasm for his work.¹ Sheldon's constitutional psychology and psychiatry offered scientific support for hereditarian and anti-Freudian opinions Huxley had held at least since the 1920s (Firchow 1984, Bradshaw 1994, Holmes 1970). Sheldon remarked to Dr. Humphrey Osmund, a mutual friend, that Huxley "was one of the very few people who really understood what he was getting at" (Holmes 1970, p. 219).

From the late 1930's through the early 1960's Huxley tried to stay in touch with Sheldon, with uneven success. Others appear to have exerted similar efforts. Huxley, trying to track down Sheldon in New York in 1958, exclaimed: "I am dining with Denver and Frances Lindley on Monday evening (21st) & they told me to ask you to come along if I

¹ The Introduction contains a letter Aldous wrote to his brother, Julian, about his first meeting Sheldon in Chicago in 1937. Sheldon and Huxley may have had some initial contact at Dartington Hall (see chapter 3) from, roughly, 1934-1936.

could contact you. Otherwise perhaps we cd meet on Wednesday" (Huxley to Sheldon, 1950, Sheldon Archives).

Both Laura Huxley and Margaret Isherwood (novelist Christopher Isherwood's mother and friend to Aldous, whom Sheldon met in England in the mid-1930's and whose 1952 book The Root of the Matter acknowledged extensive debt to Sheldon's Psychology and the Promethean Will) also complained, good-humoredly, of Sheldon's scarceness. Laura Huxley wrote to Sheldon in 1964, soon after Aldous' death: "Aldous never ceased speaking of the importance of your work and again in "Island" he showed how it could be applied in education. The only complaint he had about you is that you never were in the same place when we were there! I complain also, so the next time you are in L.A. let me hear from you" (Laura Huxley to Sheldon, 1964, Sheldon Archives).

Margaret Isherwood berated Sheldon on January 11, 1964: "Dear Wim, I don't like being dropped, or are you dead too?" (Isherwood to Sheldon, 1964, Sheldon Archives). On December 28, 1968, she wrote to Sheldon, even more desperate: "Dear Wim, It seems a bit doubtful now a) you will even remember who I am b) whether this letter will ever reach you--since none of my attempts at communication over the last 16 odd years have met with response" (Margaret Isherwood to Sheldon, 1964, Sheldon Archives). Sheldon's life was chaotic during these years, as he traveled about incessantly with his work. He declares in a letter to Humphrey Osmund

in February of 1957:

I am living a somewhat disorganized life, with three laboratories triangulated across the country, and I have almost given up trying to maintain reasonably decent communications. I am back here now [in New York] just briefly, will be at the Oregon Medical School for the most part until June, and then at the University of California (Institute of Child Welfare) for a long summer. Back to New York in September. All this, just in case you happen to be traveling around the country. I would be delighted to see you wherever and whenever....There is an article by our friend Aldous Huxley in the March issue of Esquire magazine which is superb. I think that no one, certainly, no psychologist, has written so discerningly on the basic difficulty of psychology. Perhaps I am prejudiced because of the kind words about my own work, but I do believe that Aldous has stated this general problem better than it has ever been stated anywhere (Sheldon to Osmund, 1957, Sheldon Archives).

Sheldon, Huxley, and Osmund comprized something of a triangle themselves, along with Gerald Heard, whose works are voluminous and are now virtually forgotten. Isherwood and Heard became proto-hippies and countercultural seekers during the 1960's (Dunaway 1989). Several handwritten letters have survived that document Osmund's enthusiasm for

Sheldon's work. Osmund had a distinguished career in medical/psychiatric research. He is known for his pioneering work in schizophrenia, a line of inquiry that also interested Huxley. Huxley discussed Osmund in conjunction with his peyote and mescaline taking in Doors of Perception (1954). Sheldon's system attracted Osmund, because he believed that Sheldon's somatotypy was fascinating on a personal basis, that it could serve as a foundation for social improvement, and for understanding how different "kinds" of people respond to drugs. Osmund, writing on July 26, 1955, said to Sheldon:

I am much interested in the possibility of classifying response to mescaline etc along the lines of your constitutional scheme. I think it would give us some fascinating information....The importance of your work to psychiatry is enormous (Osmund to Huxley, 1955, Sheldon Archives).

In 1958 Osmund declared:

My wife is keen to meet you. She is a Sheldon fan and considers that your approach has made her life much easier. She is fairly ectomorphic & has been dismayed at her lack of group spirit on this gregarious continent. We are much interested in what one might call human social distance--& the human contact animals (the endomorphs) & the non contact animals (ectomorphs). We are ready to experiment in this

field. Our guess is that we shall find that different constitutions tend to have different ways of detoxicating adrenalin--all sorts of elegant explorations present themselves (Osmund to Sheldon, 1958, Sheldon Archives).

Osmund's anti-Freudianism also linked him to Huxley and Sheldon.

Of course it is easy to see why your book [Varieties of Delinquent Youth] does not appeal to psychiatrists who are not commonly scientifically trained. Those who recognize the somatic component in temperament find Kretschmer's idea much simpler--not recognizing that its very simplicity makes it of small value. To the analytically orientated psychiatrists who temporarily dominate the scene the idea that man has a body apart from his ego, super-ego & id is just one of those tiresome facts to be suppressed without delay (Osmund to Sheldon, 1955, Sheldon Archives).

5.2 Sheldon and the Counterculture

Sheldon's reception during the 1950's and 1960's connects significantly to the counterculture, especially via Huxley, Heard, and Isherwood. Sheldon's Prometheanism, his concerns for self creation and self overcoming, interested countercultural utopians anxious to "expand their consciousness". Sheldon's constitutionalism, with all of

its religious connotations and attachments, was perceived to be a means of doing this.

Robert S. deRopp, medical researcher, novelist, and hippie, appealed to Sheldon on September 5, 1970, from his commune in Santa Rosa, California:

A small group of us has combined forces to form the Institute of Creative Psychology, a practical community based on the idea that man is ordinarily left by nature half finished and that if he wants to attain completion he must do the completing himself. 'Man is being to be surpassed. What have you done to surpass man?' This is about as far as we go with Nietzsche. For more practical studies we depend on William James, William Sheldon and G. Gurdjieff....One can ask, following Rostand [a nineteenth-century constitutionalist]; can man be modified? The answer appears to be very little. The emotional behavior that makes him a menace to himself and others is rooted almost beyond the reach of his conscious mind. When he tries to explore these regions he encounters obstacles, the nature of which depend in part on his type (deRopp to Sheldon, 1970, Sheldon Archives).

It is not surprising that Sheldon's work appealed to the counterculture, because in a crucial sense it was the political Left that reappropriated Sheldon's modernist impulses, just as they did Nietzsche's, although with severe

selectivity. As old-guard conservatism (Ludovici's is the exemplar) fell to a "market-oriented", Republican, alliance with "business culture" in America during this time (Genovese 1994), modernist revolt of the ilk we see in Sheldon, Ludovici, and Huxley (as well as in Hemingway, Proust, and Gide, for that matter), transmuted into the 1960's protest against the "Establishment". Sheldon's medical holism, his concerns with ecology (which he shared with southern agrarians), and his anti-capitalism, are selected by the Left.

It is not exactly clear what Sheldon's attitude was to this reappropriation, but it seems likely that he found its enthusiasms not altogether palatable or persuasive, given his strong "tribal" loyalties to a rural nineteenth century that was very different from the "philo-ethnic" 1960's (see chapter 3). Sheldon's "Promethean Will" was attached to older political reaction in such a way as to make him and his biological philosophy a dubious basis for ravings against the Establishment.

James Arraj's assessment is typical of how Sheldon's conservatism has gotten dismissed as "extreme right wing fanaticism". This accomplished, early twentieth century history no longer matters, and Sheldon can be pronounced a candidate for Jungian analysis, which is just the "premature resolution of conflict" that he both understood and rejected. What Arraj blithely calls the "inferior function"

disguises the heavy change that came with modernity and trivializes modernist rebellion. Says Arraj:

Sheldon the Promethean...becomes Sheldon Epimetheus, the man of the right. He railed against cigarettes, alcoholism, Freudianism, and the Federal Reserve Bank, and he collected the ravings of extreme right wing fanatics which were so much in opposition to the thrust of his conscious objective scientific spirit....There are, then, two Sheldons: the Sheldon who found that something deeper down and laid the firm foundation for a scientific study of physique and temperament, and then the Sheldon who in the grip of his feelings, which often opposed his thinking, worked unconsciously to obscure the magnificent work he has created....Sheldon's life illustrates both genius and one of the most common and least diagnosed personality disorders: the emergence of the inferior function in opposition to the conscious personality. A deeper understanding of Jung's psychology could have helped him (Arraj 1990, pp. 155-156).

Arraj's writing on Sheldon, which tends to the laudatory and hagiographic, exemplifies how an exclusion of Sheldon's "modernist impulses" blocks a richer historical understanding of the "neurotic", reactionary, side of Sheldon's personality. This exclusion comprizes the burden of this dissertation.

5.3 Huxley and the Literary Tradition

Constitution, the visible "habitus", had mattered to nineteenth-century novelists in their "composite portraits" in a way that it was not to matter to either behaviorists or Freudians in the early twentieth century. Constitution implied holism, and "reading" constitution had been the domain of novelists, as well as physiognomists and medical doctors, for centuries. It was associated with the ancient idea of "complexio" by way of physiognomy (Tytler 1982), and with a nineteenth-century class, educational, and aesthetic ideal that was being challenged by modern science (Harwood 1993). Huxley was quick to believe that Sheldon was placing this older literary paradigm on a scientific footing, after centuries of novelistic guesswork. If Sheldon's somatotype scheme obtained, a traditional, essentially pre-modern and "natural", temperament could be salvaged from the ravages of modernity--from the tragic dissociation of "physique" (which was regarded as "factual") and "persona" (which was regarded as "artifactual"). The discontent of civilization was, to Sheldon's mind, the denial of the whole and healthy body, in favor of the "devious verbalizations" and "aesthetic monkey traps". At least from a masculine perspective (which is Sheldon's bias), modernity had violated or "diseased" the human body and mind in at least two ways, as we have seen: from bad breeding and from the artifactual, essentially false, roles in society (see chapters 1 and 3) meted out to

"superior" physiques. The normative aspect of Sheldon's psychology is that heroic physiques bear the brunt of modern indignity.

Sheldon's psychology challenged psychoanalytic theory as well as the soul-denying reductions of the behaviorists. Huxley even adopted a "Sheldonian typology" in several of his novels (Calcraft 1980, Holmes 1970) at a time when modernist writers and artists looked more to Freud for inspiration than to the older somaticism, whose static and physiognomical verities were thought to be exploded by modern revelations about the unconscious mind and the sexual nature of human motivation. Freud in such pieces as The Future of An Illusion and Civilization and its Discontents had attempted to destroy a traditional ideal of character. Both Sheldon and Huxley were responding to Freud's efforts to sexualize morality and replace individuality and moral integrity with indulgence and pleasure. Huxley's "soma", "feelies", and "orgy porgy" in Brave New World (1933) satirize this new Freudian ("Fordian") world.

Sheldon's insistence on "beauty and truth" invested within the human physique can be seen as an antidote to the social and moral disintegration depicted in modern art, which Sheldon regarded as "anti-art". Indeed, Sheldon's studies in human physique have recently elicited more scholarship from historians of art than from historians of science. George L. Hersey's recent chapter on Sheldon in

The Evolution of Allure: Sexual Selection from Medici Venus to the Incredible Hulk (1996) is a testament to the artistic and cultural involvement of somatotypy, as is Joseph Lyons' study, The Ecology of the Body (1987). Sheldon may actually share this fate with his rival, Sigmund Freud, whose ideas, although legitimated and instituted with scientific rhetoric, held more appeal for artists than scientists.

Sheldon lamented the abyss into which he believed modern literature and art had fallen:

Literature and poetry have somewhat gone to the devil. No longer are there poets who make fourth [religious] or fifth [aesthetic] panel sense. Poets, like painters, now reveal a horror of structured thought, and being caught morally serious is worse than being caught naked used to be--and more difficult to correct. Likewise artists and dramatists seem everywhere to have transferred the Christian body shame to a sort of modern soul-shame. They have shrouded their souls...as a Victorian lady would veil her body. Everywhere soul prudery has grown up as sex prudery faded from the scene. Everybody hides his soul behind some heavy drapery; behind statistics, objectivity, intellectuality, or behind some vague distortion of rhythmic noise, or some confusion of lines and color which for diversional or jocular purposes gets called

modern 'art' (Sheldon 1975, p. 201).²

Modern art drew inspiration from psychoanalysis and dwelt more on the maimed, the morbid, and the abnormal than on the whole, the healthy, and the normal (Barron 1992, Adam 1992, Taylor and van der Will 1990, Petropoulos 1996). Nazi race hygienists condemned modern art because it was an outrage against the threatened integrity of the nordic body and soul (Rittershaus 1936). Eugenists such as Sheldon and Ludovici were generally sympathetic with this cultural and anti-modern position.

While the nazi revolt against modern art was specifically racist, it was also richly holistic and altogether in keeping with a holistic scientific tradition that flourished in the early twentieth century and which had its origins in Goethe and Naturphilosophie (Proctor 1988, Harrington 1996). Modern art infuriated both nazi race hygienists and eugenists such as Sheldon and Ludovici because it represented an abandonment of representative nature, the human physique, as a loadstone for health and normality (Barron 1992). To this extent it is reasonable to see Sheldon's constitutional psychology as operating in the

² Sheldon remarks in Prometheus Revisited (1975): "Once in the Louvre in Paris, Aldous Huxley and I watched a woman put on a performance of writhing ecstasy in front of a Rubens painting, which Huxley was sure a Freudian analyst would have called "obviously sexual". She was, almost needless to say, a vigorously mesomorphic endomorph. Rubens would perhaps have been as delighted with her as she was with Rubens" (Sheldon 1975, p. 132).

spirit of German holism. This romantic inclination is patent in the following passage from Sheldon's Atlas of Men (1954):

The somatotype concept offers an early and rather crude tool fashioned to reflect a basic structural orderliness which can be perceived in human life. Despite the confusion now rampant in the social inter-relationships of the species, underlying the social chaos is a matrix of organic order, which is to say, of beauty and truth. We are still being born into a world of such beauty as staggers imagination and beggars speech, and the physical reality that a man is carries the stamp of truth even when the beauty is obscure to perception. In such a world it seems reasonable that there should be a way of so truthfully reflecting a man's structural self that the reflection will blend with the continuum of order like faint music. The somatotype is therefore a groping for a reflection in man of the orderly continuum of nature and in a more specific way it is also an attempt to identify the music of one's own particular dance of life (Sheldon 1954, p. 3).

Nothing could reflect more clearly Sheldon's fundamental assumptions about the natural order of things. Nature, although now beleaguered with "social chaos"--i.e., promiscuous breeding, "counterselection", misguided

politics, Puritanism--remains essentially robust. Moreover, the orderliness of nature is still evident via beauty, or the "structure-function continuum". And even when beauty is not apparent, its potential is not eclipsed. This idealized view of nature has more in common with Karl Ernst von Baer's embryology, Johann Casper Lavater's physiognomy, Ernst Haeckel's recapitulation theory, and William Wordsworth's "Holy Plan" in nature, than it does with Darwin's evolutionary theory. For Sheldon, beauty and truth in nature were there, they were only obscured by modern conditions. They have to be recaptured, not unlike the Newtonian notion of "pristine knowledge" (Dobbs and Jacob 1995) that had to be regained. This backward looking, nostalgic, pre-modern, attitude we find in Sheldon was the basis for his constitutionalism.

5.4 Huxley and Psychoanalysis

Aldous Huxley was drawn to Sheldon's constitutional psychology because he believed it could illuminate our understanding of human nature. It also complemented his pressing concerns about moral values, social reform, and world peace. Huxley defended Sheldon's research in the interests of egalitarianism and democracy following World War II. In order to change society, one first had to change, or at least understand, individuals. This, Huxley believed, was the error of earlier efforts at social reform.

Huxley has World Controller, Mustafa Mond, say in Brave New World: "No civilization without stability. No social stability without individual stability" (Huxley 1933, p. 100). Sheldon's somatotype research assisted in Huxley's formulation of a scientific utopia or, more modestly, a liberal democracy that would take into account the science of human differences.

Huxley's attitude to scientific utopianism was equivocal. On the one hand Huxley's Brave New World was critical of the threatening and dehumanizing aspects of science and technology. The novel is, to this extent, a cautionary tale about the frightening potential of science. On the other hand, Huxley was entirely enthusiastic about cleaning up the boom and bust social chaos of the interwar years as well as of the post World War II era. He preached the necessity of eugenics and population control at the same time he denounced totalitarian excesses (Huxley 1946). L.C. Dunn and Theodosius Dobzhansky's Heredity, Race, and Society (1946) sought a similar rapprochement. After the long storm of eugenic debate, Dunn and Dobzhansky acknowledge the human dignity and worth of all people, and in a tone that, in spite of all his moral perplexities, Huxley never quite managed, so vicious was the culture war that had enthralled him for decades:

The variety of human cultures will appear to us an inspiration rather than a curse if we learn to respect,

to understand, and to admire them. In the realm of culture there is enough room to accommodate the diversified contributions not only of different individuals but also of every nation and race. It is a waste of time to discuss which particular contributions are superior and which inferior. There is no common measure applicable to the works of a poet, an artist, a philosopher, a scientist, and the simple kindness of heart of a plain man. Humanity needs them all (Dunn and Dobzhansky 1946, p. 115).

Huxley's mockery of Freud pre-dated his association with Sheldon. Already in his student days at Oxford Huxley was slamming Freudian pretensions in stories such as "Eupompus Gave Splendor to Art by Numbers" (1916) and "The Farcical History of Richard Greenow" (1918). Essays like "Our Contemporary Hocus Pocus" (1925), "A Case of Voluntary Ignorance" (1956), and "The Oddest Science" (1957) testify to Huxley's deep-seated anti-Freudianism (Firchow 1984). Huxley, like Sheldon, preferred Jung to Freud, but he seemed to prefer John Henry Newman to either of them, remarking that modern psychoanalysts are "either uninspired, unilluminating, and soundly dull, or else, like Freud and Adler, mono-maniacal" (Huxley 1927, p. xix). In Jesting Pilate Huxley blamed materialism and Freud in particular for doing away with religion and creating a moral vacuum, which was basically the same complaint launched by Sheldon in

Psychology and the Promethean Will: "The moral conscience was abolished (another illusion) and 'amuse yourself' proclaimed as the sole categorical imperative. The theories of Freud were received in intellectual circles with acclaim; to explain every higher activity of the mind in terms of incest and coprophilia came to be regarded not only as truly scientific, but also as somehow virile and courageous. Freudism became the realpolitik of psychology and philosophy" (Huxley 1926, p. 275). Huxley also criticized John Middleton Murray's book on D. H. Lawrence for "exploiting...the psycho-analytical rigmarole, which will fetch 100's of earnest imbeciles" (Smith 1969, p. 355).

Huxley was in distinguished company in his disdain for Freud during the 1920's, although this rich anti-Freudian literature is virtually absent in the formal history of psychiatry. Huxley's anti-Freudianism has, in fact, been treated most exhaustively by literary critics who deal with the minutiae of Huxley's utopian thought. A. Wohlgenuth's A Critical Examination of Psycho-Analysis (1923) leveled a scathing attack on Freud's theories, along with Abraham Myerson's "Freud's Theory of Sex: A Criticism" (1929). Huxley was also familiar with W.F. Calverton and S.D. Schmalhausen's Sex in Civilization (1929), a book that contains extracts from two letters by Huxley to Schmalhausen. In the first letter Huxley doubts "whether the kind of cold promiscuity current in youthful circles

today is much more satisfactory than the restraints it has replaced. It is as much an expression of the consciousness's hatred for instinct and the body as was puritanism--puritanism inside out" (Schmalhausen 1929). The second letter reiterates: "My own feeling about the present sexual license is that recreative love is apt to be as killing to passion as the most repressive puritanism; in a sense more so, as passion is the product of sexual impulse and some inward repression. When the repression is removed, the impulse wastes itself empty" (1929).

There is in Huxley and his friend D. H. Lawrence the same reaction to modern sexual promiscuity that we find in Sheldon by 1936. Wanting to replace "Victorian" male-female relations with something more spontaneous and genuine, Lawrence³ attempted in his fiction, in the words of I. A. Richards, to "recapture the mentality of a bushman", a move that, in the end, held no serious appeal for either Huxley or Sheldon; although there may have been more than a little kinship between Lawrence's contrived primitivism and Sheldon's holistic appeal to nature as a benchmark for orientation and sanity in his Promethean Will.

In any event, Huxley's rejection of Freudian psychoanalysis was long-standing. Huxley, despite

³ Sheldon had read Lawrence by the mid 1930s, if not earlier, as evidenced by citations in Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936).

occasional pyrrhonist bursts, was fundamentally a moralist of the old Swiftian school. The traditional values of John the Savage in Brave New World were real enough for Huxley, and they were basically those of Huxley's class--the intellectual mandarins who built English departments at the beginning of the twentieth century to counter the reductionist threats of scientific culture (Graff 1987). As Peter Firchow has said:

For him [Huxley], in the final analysis, the moral world was neither chaotic nor relative. 'Values', as he put it in Jesting Pilate, 'are everywhere and in all kinds of society broadly the same', and the duty of the world traveler--or, for that matter, the pilgrim in progress--was to 'distinguish between harmless perversions and those which tend to deny or stultify the fundamental values. Towards the first he will be tolerant. There can be no compromise with the second' (Firchow 1984, pp. 53-54).

"The fundamental values" included a universal biological reality that Huxley sought, and believed he had found, in Sheldon's somatotype scheme. An Enlightenment glow illuminates the find. Somatotypy provided that "matrix of organic order" that could make sense of "social chaos" and, at the same time, reinforce an older, somatic psychology that had taken human differences seriously. Huxley's is an intensely conservative position invested with enthusiasms

about scientific utopia. It is, like Sheldon's thought, both deeply reactionary and thoroughly modern.

Huxley's most cogent apologia for Sheldon's system came in the November issue of Harper's Magazine, 1944, and the March issue of Esquire magazine, 1957, cited by Sheldon above. Huxley is careful in the midst of world war to finesse the eugenic and racist dimensions of anthropological thinking, a tactic that was to be even more evident in his Brave New World Revisited (1946), following the allied liberation of the nazi death camps. The article is a masterpiece of rhetoric, given the strong eugenic and heroic components in both Sheldon and Huxley's views, both before and after the war. The article seeks to democratize and legitimize constitutional thought in the face of a modern psychology that, Huxley claims, ignores somatic considerations:

How many of even the best of our psychologists talk, write, think, and act as though the human body, with its innate constitution and its acquired habits, were something that, in an analysis of mental states, could safely be ignored! And even when they do admit, rather reluctantly, that the mind always trails its carcass behind it, they have little or nothing to tell us about the ways in which mental and physical characteristics are related (Huxley 1944, p. 512).

Huxley transforms what was bound up with pre-war politics,

class, and education into a thing fit for democratic consumption. To attribute everything to "environment, education, or conditioned reflexes", says Huxley [a theory he ascribes to Helvetius in the eighteenth century], is as false as the "oversimplification we find [in] some of the more rabid Eugenists" (Huxley 1944, p. 513). The anthropometrists in thinking "about human differences in terms of fixed racial types--the Nordic, the Alpine, the Mediterranean, and so forth" opened the door to the nazi theory of racial types, "a system of classification which has proved extremely unfruitful as an instrument of applied science, and in the hands of the Nazi ideologists, extremely fruitful as an instrument of discrimination and persecution" (514). Huxley, despite his finessing of the "Nature-Nurture Controversy", is clearly defending an hereditarian position.

The intellectual lineage Huxley suggests here is convenient and overly simple: had the racist tack proved "fruitful...as an instrument of applied science", it presumably would have been accepted with enthusiasm by anthropologists. It is not as if the anthropologists and the nazis pursued fundamentally different goals. They were, as I have suggested, much the same, or at least they were motivated by the same cultural forces. Huxley diminishes the rich and troublesome culture of somatotypy--with its Nietzschean hubris, its virulent eugenic component, its class and race preferences--into a matter of objective

science. He does just what Nietzsche claimed was required to create "objective" science: he dehistoricizes it. The practical value of Sheldon's constitutional system ranges between extremes for Huxley: it can help the physician, on the one hand, to "interpret the merely mechanical findings of his diagnostic instruments" (513). This is the way Sheldon's constitutional research was understood by The Rockefeller Foundation in the early 1950's (see chapter 6). On the other hand, it can help to "reorganize [society]...on the basis of a rejuvenated and thoroughly beneficent, because thoroughly realistic, caste system" (513). Huxley captures the two poles of Sheldon's constitutionalism: the first modest and technical, which engaged Sheldon rhetorically and superficially; and the second ideological and utopian, which engaged him more passionately.

Here is the author of Brave New World, seasoned to the spiritual liabilities of biological engineering and behaviorist conditioning, talking seriously about a "beneficent caste system" based on the "total psychophysical constitution". There is an enduring tension in Huxley's attitude: a relish for emphasizing human differences in the interests of preserving individuality, struggle, noble behavior (one thinks of John the Savage), and, at the same time, a desire to categorize and reduce people in the interests of the social order. Huxley equivocates between a soft version of Ludovici's

eugenics/aristocracy thesis and a concession to environmentalism.

Huxley's version of Sheldon's psychiatric theory is, at once, clear and overly simple. Huxley clarifies Sheldon's temperamental/environmental hypothesis, and he posits an anti-modernity. But he omits Sheldon's urgent eugenic concerns, perhaps in the interests of finessing the hereditarian/ environmentalist debate. Huxley likens Sheldon's theory to what the French philosopher, Jules de Gaultier, called "bovarism", after Flaubert's famous novel, Madame Bovary. "Mme. Bovary, the heroine of Flaubert's novel", says Huxley,

was a young woman who consistently tried to be what she if fact was not. To a greater or less degree we are all bovarists, engaged from earliest childhood in the process of building up what the psychologists call a persona, to suit the tastes of the society surrounding us. The sort of persona we try to build up depends very largely upon our environment, physical and mental....Sheldon's researches show exactly how far bovarism can go without risk of compromising the individual's sanity; and the highly significant fact is that the borderline between normal and abnormal is reached pretty quickly (pp. 519-520).

The environmental component in Sheldon's system, and in Huxley's defense of this system, parallels Ludovici's idea

of "aesthetic survival values" (see chapter 2). In fact, it is just the "environmental" component that activates the modernist theme propounded by Ludovici.

Environment in the broadest sense is modernity, and the modern environment, in all its spiritual and ethical and aesthetic deficiencies, is deemed "unworthy" of the constitution of the natural "aristocrat", who in Sheldon's somatotypy is the the most "evolved" or refined of the three: the ectomorph or the cerebrotonic who, in a favorably mesomorphic (muscular) combination, possesses the "Promethean" physique of "high t [or beauty] component". It is this physique and temperament that comprizes eugenic excellence. Sheldon's Prometheanism can be conflated, therefore, with the splendor of the Nordic physique, because Sheldon, Ludovici, and the nazis were valorizing the "beautiful" (balanced, symmetrical, eugenic, stereotypically Greek) physique.

George Hersey is mistaken in classing Sheldon's ectomorphs with the anthropologists' "undesirables", or rather believing that Sheldon did so (Hersey 1996, p. 100). He has missed Sheldon's valorization of the delinquent as well as the reactionary component rehearsed above. Sheldon, in fact, did not believe in the desirability of the "Somatotonic Revolution" that he himself observed and coined: the tendency for modern society to breed a surplus of mesomorphs and the vacuous infatuation with the

"Incredible Hulk", to employ Hersey's anachronism. Sheldon connected a vulgar surfeit of "muscle" with modernity, a somatotype, to his mind, that possessed neither entomorphic compassion nor ectomorphic asceticism and idealism. This is why the mesomorphs in Delinquent Youth get indifferent press. Huxley captured this anti-modern conviction more succinctly than Sheldon himself ever managed:

The Somatonic Revolution has been greatly accelerated by technological advances. These have served to turn men's attention outward, and have encouraged the belief in a material apocalypse, a progress toward a mechanized New Jerusalem. Such beliefs have been carefully fostered by the writers of advertising copy--the most influential of all authors because they are the only ones whose works are read every day by every member of the population. In a world peopled by cerebrotonics [those of ectomorphic physique and temperament, assuming no gross "dysplasia" of body and mind], living an inward turning life in a state of holy, or even unholy, indifference to their material surroundings, mass production would be doomed. That is why advertisers consistently support the Somatonic Revolution (1944, p. 522).

In this way Sheldon fleshes out modernist rebellion by identifying the polar ectomorph--what Sheldon referred to as the "Christus" somatotype--as the antithesis to the "waster"

aggression of the mesomorph and the indulgence of the endomorph. Sheldon, rather than preferring the raw sexual potency of the mesomorph, sees the mesomorphic ectomorph--roughly the physique of, say, John F. Kennedy Jr.--as being the most "selectable", as well as the most splendid and beautiful and heroic. W. H. Auden's observation on Sheldon's heroic physiques in Varieties of Delinquent Youth is dead on: it is not the mesomorph to which Sheldon most resonated but rather the more beautiful mesomorphic ectomorph, which is neither a decided ectomorph nor a mesomorph, but a refined, "thoroughbred", combination of the two, without the liability of overbreeding.

Although Huxley does not tell the whole story here (to do so would be reactionary overkill, perhaps), he too values most the beautiful Promethean who is, by nature, the standard-bearer, the hero. Again, Auden was perceptive to see this physique as special in Sheldon's canon of "delinquent" youths, and to distinguish it from the less splendid mesomorph (see chapter 4). Promethean physiques defy the indignities of modernity and its false roles, and they suffer, accordingly, at the hands of psychologists and social workers, who are caught, as Sheldon says, "in the sticky flypaper of everyday human moronity" (see chapter 4). It is this physique on whom "nobility" sits and counter-modernity turns. Sheldon suffuses Francis Galton's eugenic class structure with Nietzschean splendor. Sheldon, like

Francis Galton, ranked human populations by beauty, health, ability and reproductive potential, which often overlapped with social status and often did not. But Sheldon was intrigued, as was Thomas Hardy, by the natural heroism and nobility of physiques relegated to stations in society beneath their innate bearing and dignity, especially Hardy's Tess in Tess of the d'urbervilles (1891). In this way, Sheldon's heroic physiques are not only a eugenic but a modernist icon. They objectify the congruity between romantic aspiration and physical splendour and how these are violated in modern industrial society.

Sheldon's physique studies operated on at least two orders of priority, however. The first was an "aristocratic" concern with what Ludovici called "the quest of human quality" via eugenic breeding (see chapters 1 and 2). To the degree that we can recapture and respect good breeding, we promote genuine social reform. Mental and physical disease are here attributed to a lack of "psycho-physical standardization" or "harmony" (see chapter 2). The second priority was the "persona" that can develop out of sync with the physique--the "bovarism" as Huxley explained it. It is related somewhat obliquely to the first, because of the rhetoric that was deployed by both Sheldon and Huxley to make constitutionalism marketable to an audience more amenable to environmentalist arguments.

The egalitarian tone in which Huxley talks about this

"bovarism" gives the impression that any physique is acceptable and that one need only heed it in order to be healthy and well adjusted, which is indicative of a soft conservatism. However, if this were the pith of Sheldon's thought, his constitutionalism would be superfluous, his Prometheanism otiose. Why bother to change what is given when a painless adaptation, or accomodation, can bring happiness? The endomorph eats, the mesomorph fights, the ectomorph reflects. One obeys one's propensities. It will not do, to use Robert Coughlan's example, for an endomorph who likes to eat and wants to own a restaurant, to be cajoled into becoming a professional football player (Coughlan 1951).

The counsel here is not to "fight" one's body with false personas, whatever kind of body one has. In this way a role in society, and all a role implies regarding modernist alienation suffered by "superior" specimens (e.g., somatotype 126 from Delinquent Youth), is democratized--a slide from cultural revolt to the folkish recognition of limitations. The modernist wasteland yields to custom and career counseling. The difference between Sheldon's constitutionalism and mainstream environmentalism becomes one of emphasis. The cultural, or anti-modern, element in Sheldon is reduced to an adjustment of the Nature/Nurture model, and constitutionalism becomes a somewhat old-fashioned reminder, in the words of Robert Coughlan, that we

may be more like our "Uncle Toomey" than we once thought.

Sheldon's actual agenda, however, and as we have seen, was far more radical than that admitted by Huxley, just because of the first priority mentioned above--eugenics and aristocracy. Sheldon and Huxley were, in this way, "secret sharers" of a holism, an anti-modernism, and a "literary" elitism, that continued to be operative into the post-war period, and which was often misunderstood or, just as likely, understood for precisely what it was: a deep-seated feeling of superiority and superciliousness based on modernist discontent. Robert Coughlan had his finger on the pulse of post-war America when he declared that

Whatever their merit, Sheldon's theories are not likely to be popular, and they are especially not likely to be popular in this country. Americans like to believe that anybody can do anything--that every baby born in every log cabin is a potential president....The Sheldon thesis may strike many people as fatalistic and even downright undemocratic (Coughlan 1951, p. 79).

Coughlan's comments were prescient, given Sheldon's troublesome participation in the Rockefeller Foundation study of "constitutional medicine" initiated at just this time. Details of this visible and controversial episode in Sheldon's career are provided in the next chapter.

6.0 "A BRILLIANT INVESTIGATOR OF THE LONE-WOLF TYPE":
ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION FUNDING AND WILLIAM H. SHELDON'S
RESEARCH IN CONSTITUTIONAL MEDICINE, 1942-1955

6.1 Sheldon and the Rockefeller Foundation

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the Rockefeller Foundation's financial support of research in constitutional medicine during the years 1942-1955. The Rockefeller Foundation funded a wide range of genetically-oriented projects during the early 1930's that addressed the "improvement of man", including ones that, in time, turned out to be compromising for the foundation, given later nazi atrocities. I want to focus here on the Rockefeller Foundation's dealings with and opinions about the work of William H. Sheldon. The Rockefeller Archives in New York offer a unique window into the thoughts and actions of the Foundation's board during an especially visible interlude in Sheldon's career. They provide candid opinions about Sheldon the man: his assumed strengths as a researcher and theorizer and, often in the eyes of the Rockefeller officers, his irritating and, sometimes, baffling limitations. The interviews and evaluations compose an illuminating narrative about how the board came to its decision to grant \$100,000 to a group at the University of Oregon Medical School (with Sheldon serving as consultant) to study what the Rockefeller Foundation Annual Report in 1951 calls "the puzzling relationship of body type, or 'constitution,' to the incidence of disease" (176).

The papers, reports, interviews, are contained in two

Archive folders: the first entitled "Columbia University--Constitutional Disease, 1942-1950", RG 1.1, ser. 200A, box 77, folder 933; and the second entitled "University of Oregon--Constitutional Medicine, 1950-1957", RG 1.2, ser. 200A, box 158, folder 1423. The content of the folders is not paginated. This material provides insight into how the project developed over the five-year contract.¹ The image presented to the public regarding the grant, as gleaned from the Annual Report, appears sanguine and unproblematic.² However, this positive public image of the research is belied by private protest and internal dissension within the Oregon team. In fact, the files suggest that the officers were initially at a loss both as to how to evaluate and judge Sheldon's work and how to fit Sheldon into the proposed research. Sheldon appears suspect from the start. He is presented as a somewhat enigmatic, "lone-wolf", figure, in Dr. Morison's words. And, even after the award is presented, the written correspondence indicates problems with Sheldon's on-going participation in the project. Two of the chief interlocutors at the Foundation, Dr. Robert A.

¹ I am especially grateful to Tom Rosenbaum at the Rockefeller Foundation Archives for his kind and generous assistance in tracking down these files on Sheldon and constitutional medicine.

² Sheldon also received high visibility in an article entitled "What Manner of Morph Are You?" in the June 25, 1951, issue of Life magazine, written by Robert Coughlan. See chapter 5.

Morison and Dr. Alan Gregg, repeatedly express consternation at what they feel are patent abridgements of sound scientific methodology and procedure from Sheldon.

6.2 Draper and Sheldon at Columbia

Rockefeller Foundation support for research in constitutional medicine goes back to 1936 with its involvement in George Draper's Constitutional Laboratory at Columbia University (Tracy 1992). Draper had managed prior to Rockefeller support to fund his research with private donations. According to a resolution dated 6/15/45, the Foundation "appropriated a total of \$139,200 for Dr. Draper's work....of observing, measuring, recording and comparing patients...[and while] this way is laborious and slow...it is pioneering in a field of considerable promise, closely linked with psychiatry and psychology, and with increasing status in the hospital and influence [sic] upon students and interns". According to Sarah Tracy, the Rockefeller Foundation's total support for Draper totaled \$146,100 by 1946 (Tracy 1992, p. 81).

On Draper's retirement on July 1, 1946, however, the fate of the Constitution Clinic becomes uncertain. "The officers intend to review the project next spring", states a Foundation resolution, "with a view to making recommendations for conducting the Clinic for a trial period under the direction of Dr. Caughey" a pre-war associate of

Draper who, however, had not at that time returned from the service. Therefore, "Owing to uncertainties created by Dr. Draper's approaching retirement and the present unavailability of Dr. Caughey it seems wise to provide for the work...on a reduced basis until a more comprehensive review can be made next year".

Also, the progress of Draper's research at the Constitution Clinic appears, based on earlier correspondence, to have reached uncertain ground. According to Alan Gregg's diary, on December 9, 1943, Draper claims to have reached "a complete impasse in point of work done for the Navy since he cannot learn from the Navy what has happened to the men they have examined", thus precluding further longitudinal follow-up. Gregg tells him that he might, at least, compare his examinations with published casualty lists. Gregg also reports telling Draper "that the genetics laboratory material was sitting around doing nothing at Cold Spring Harbor; that hereditary human records were nearer to his interests than to perhaps anything else in medicine....D will think this over". And, by telephone, Draper reports to Gregg on April 14, 1944, that the "Air Force and the Army are beginning to give interest to his work though the Navy has manifestly shelved it". The tone of these entries from Gregg suggest exhaustion and a poverty of ideas on Draper's part.

Dr. Robert Morison first mentions Sheldon's name on

May 25, 1945, in an "Interview" with Dr. Walter Palmer, Professor of Medicine at Columbia. Morison relates that Palmer "feels that the Clinic has made a real contribution to understanding of disease and to the intellectual atmosphere of the Presbyterian Hospital....RSM raises the point that RF support cannot be promised indefinitely and it is time to think about the future, especially of D. [Dupertuis]" who "continues to photograph large numbers of patients with various diseases and is classifying them morphologically according to the method developed by Sheldon".

A further interview from Morison, dated May 20, 1946, relates Dr. Caughey's return from the service. Caughey reports that "Plans for a constitution clinic are definitely in the program [at Columbia] but are still nebulous". He says, too, that he "could provide a salary [to Dupertuis] beginning July 1st". However, "D. turned this down since he felt he and William H. Sheldon could work out something at Columbia". Moreover, the interview relates that "George Draper is in bad shape. C. [Caughey] feels Sheldon is bright but a S.O.B.; documentation of latter point unfortunately interrupted by appearance of a visitor. Dupertuis-Draper relation complicated of late years by Draper's antipathy to Sheldon and Dupertuis' somewhat clandestine dealings with Sheldon".

It seems clear that Draper's participation in the

program has come to an end; and that Dupertuis, formerly an assistant to Draper, has shifted his loyalties to Sheldon, even to the point of refusing a salary from Caughey. With Draper out of the picture, and Caughey leaving New York to establish his own constitutional program in Cleveland at Case Western Reserve University, Sheldon assumes the clinic's directorship. It would appear from these conversations that Sheldon and Draper had been at odds for some time. One might conjecture that Sheldon was, in fact, waiting in the wings for Draper's retirement. It is also the case that, under Sheldon's reign, the Constitution Clinic changes its focus dramatically to conform with Sheldon's own research agenda: to search out, as Tracy indicates, "the biological basis of individual temperament, psychopathology, and social deviance"(83).³

On Tuesday, November 25, 1947, Dr. Robert F. Loeb in the Department of Medicine at Columbia, asks Morison if he would be willing to meet with William H. Sheldon. Morison reports that "L. is clearly more favorably impressed by S.

³ Sarah Tracy (1992) is wrong, however, on an important point. She states in a footnote (83) that "Sheldon believed that men's and women's emotions, temperaments, and psychopathologies were influenced little by environment". While it is true that Sheldon stressed nature's role in the formation of temperament, he hardly discounted environmental influences. He simply gave nature an equally important role, which tended to rub against the grain of contemporary behaviorists and environmentalists, many of whom reviewed and commented on Sheldon's work during the 1940's and 1950's.

than he was by George Draper and even goes so far as to say that he thinks this work may be of more significance to the future of psychiatry than is psychoanalysis". We see Morison on his guard immediately regarding Sheldon, despite Loeb's enthusiastic recommendation: "I said that I would be glad to see S. but warned L. that I have read some of S.'s works and found it very difficult to be sure of my own judgment in this new and complicated field". The following day, November 26, Morison arranges by telephone to meet with Sheldon on Thursday afternoon, December 4. Morison remarks on the named day that he "Spent the afternoon going over S's records and future plans." Continues Morison: "The Constitution Clinic has only an informal status but it seems possible that Robert F. Loeb's sympathy will result in more effective arrangements".

Loeb's advocacy of Sheldon here goes some way in ameliorating his dubious status with Morison. In the course of the interview Sheldon explains to Morison his future plans: "S said that he would like to have a sound nuclear organization at Columbia whose basic task would be a continuing survey of all the patients coming to the outpatient clinic". Morison adds that Sheldon, in addition to his other and varied duties, would "like to resume teaching in some college and give principal attention to developing a course in the history of modern thought since Huxley".

It is clear that Morison's attitude to Sheldon is, at least, guarded and cautious. Apparently Sheldon's reputation for striking people as arrogant and intolerant precedes him.⁴ The concluding paragraph of Morison's December 4 interview is a candid and practical assessment of Sheldon the man and man of science: "S. is an exceedingly difficult person to evaluate" declares Morison. "Apparently since early in life he has been obsessed by the necessity of finding some scheme for giving a quantitative description of human beings. He has spent months living and consulting with such outstanding figures such [sic] as Freud, Jung and Kretchmer [sic] in the hope of finding some answer to his problem". While Morison concedes that "S. himself certainly has a sound naturalistic outlook" he is, nevertheless, "disturbed that he has such a need for derogating other points of view with an irony which sometimes comes

⁴ Documentation for Sheldon's irracible personality is legion. James Tanner, in a review of Carter & Heath's Somatotyping: developments and applications (1990), says that while Sheldon was "a real prophet...he was an awkward cuss too, and made enemies with the practised ease of the true paranoid." (Carter and Heath p. 94). Even Robert Osborne, one of Sheldon's closest friends, has remarked that "Sheldon was an individualist....He rejected publication in refereed scientific journals for he saw them as the organs of prosaic minds and structured to protect the 'establishment' from the threat of original thought. He was intolerant of those he viewed as slow-witted or pompous....In his later years he managed in his way to isolate himself from all but his closest friends and alienated many of those actually necessary to the promotion and practical application of his ideas" (Osborne 1981, p. 716).

perilously close to flippancy". Morison also points out that "Although in his [Sheldon's] own work he makes elaborate efforts at objectivity, it seems to me that he frequently has difficulty in restraining his natural bent for speculative philosophy. It is not that he is incompetent in the latter field but rather that he leaves the reader a little unsure as to what is sound science and what is speculation".

Morison mentions an aspect of Sheldon's character that is confirmed even by Sheldon's closest friends and supporters: that he had little interest in administration and he tended to overobligate himself with projects. "On the tactical level" relates Morison, "he has a tendency to take on a good many projects at once and one wonders if support for the nuclear project at Columbia would finally result in at least one completed facet of his whole problem". Later Morison adds that Sheldon "is apparently none too interested in administrative affairs". It seems that Sheldon had failed to follow up with Loeb on some details about how to set up the Clinic at Presbyterian Hospital. Sheldon, it seems, spends most of his time writing, while Dupertuis assumes the routine duties. Yet, Morison is sufficiently influenced by Loeb to entertain further Rockefeller support for the Clinic. "If Loeb seems disposed to give the necessary backing for a routine review of all patients, RSM would be disposed to gamble RF support

for about half the budget. Incidentally, S. feels that he could raise the other half from friends".

In fact, Sheldon was apparently quite good at raising money from "friends" and foundations. One gathers that Sheldon could behave somewhat independently in the face of the Foundation officers because, having been diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease while he was in the military (and managing to survive for more than thirty years after the diagnosis), he was retired on a Major's salary, which, one assumes, eliminated the threat of penury and allowed Sheldon to be the independent, free-floating, agent he was. Sheldon could afford to behave cavalierly toward his many projects, because he did not have to rely on any one of them for survival. Indeed, it appears from Foundation interviews at this time that Sheldon's financial resourcefulness is keeping the Clinic at Columbia afloat. A diary entry from "WO" on April 23, 1948, suggests that things are getting especially tight financially: "There is a question" remarks WO, "as to whether the clinic can carry on for another year....RF support terminated when George Draper retired". But WO continues: "A Texas friend [of Sheldon's] has contributed \$10,000 for the last two years". This "friend" is Eugene McDermott, who was later to found Texas Instruments, and who was collaborating at the time, along with Emil Hartl in Boston, on Sheldon's forthcoming book,

Varieties of Delinquent Youth (1949).⁵ Sheldon also had \$11,500 in support at the time from the Viking Fund. Robert Loeb, according to Dupertuis, "is interested in the work [of the Clinic] but wants nothing thrown in his lap so far as support is concerned".

Sheldon's lack of "official status" also troubles Morison. Morison reflects that "In the early negotiations before he [Sheldon] came to New York, Walter W. Palmer assured him of an associate professorship in medicine; this fell through when the other members of the department felt S. should have a license to practice. P. then made an attempt at an appointment in the Department of Psychology but nothing ever came of it. S. therefore has no official status. He is not particularly worried about this except for the fact that he would very much like to have some graduate students". And Morison seems vaguely irritated with Sheldon's lack of attention to administrative conventions. Apparently, Sheldon does not play ball. He does not stay in touch. "Further discussions" Morison asserts, "will have to be carried on with Loeb rather than S." After a discussion with Sheldon about "the new book" (Varieties of Delinquent Youth), which Morison was then

⁵ Eugene McDermott's support of Sheldon's work was long standing. Even after McDermott's death, his daughter continued to provide Sheldon with financial support. According to Emil Hartl and Edward Monnelly, authors of the thirty-year follow-up study of Delinquent Youth published in 1982, they continue to receive money from this source.

reading in manuscript, "S. confirmed the impression previously made that he is a brilliant investigator of the lone wolf type. He does not find it easy to discuss controversial points and became upset when RSM said quite frankly that making wisecracks about psychoanalysis is perhaps not the best way of obtaining converts to a new point of view".

Yet, when Ruth M. Wilson from the University of Washington writes to Morison on September 23, 1949, regarding the nature of Sheldon's work (Sheldon had applied to do somatotyping from Columbia on women at the School of Physical and Health Education at Seattle), Morison moderates any personal feelings about Sheldon and presents a public image of him that is positive and fair-minded. Morison states that "Although there has been some controversy as to details [of Sheldon's somatotyping system], I think it is fair to say that the method is now generally used and respected by people working in the field. Some of Dr. Sheldon's work on classifications of personality types is perhaps more controversial but in view of the complexity of the field this is hardly surprising". Morison concludes with a sentence that reinforces Sheldon's capacity for making himself scarce, even to his patrons: "It has been somewhat over a year since I last seen [sic] Dr. Sheldon". He suggests that she contact Dr. Loeb if she wishes to learn more of Sheldon's "recent activities".

6.3 The Rockefeller Foundation and the Oregon Constitution Project

Rockefeller Foundation involvement with the project in constitutional medicine at the University of Oregon Medical School begins with a letter from Dr. D.W.E. Baird, Dean of the Medical School, to Dr. Alan Gregg, dated April 10, 1950. Sheldon, apparently, had not been neglecting his sales work since he last saw Morison the previous year. "We have been interested for some time" declares Baird, "in the fascinating studies in constitutional medicine conducted by Doctor William Sheldon. An usual opportunity exists in our Outpatient Clinic to amplify these studies...,and Doctor Sheldon has persistently encouraged us to take advantage of this opportunity". But Baird says they would need financial assistance to carry out the project. Accordingly, he asks Gregg if he would be willing to meet with Dr. Howard P. Lewis, their Professor of Medicine, to discuss the project and prospects for funding.

Gregg's diary, dated April 14, 1950, rehearses his impressions of Lewis at a meeting in New York, which were generally positive. "I judge" says Gregg, "that he [Lewis] has been rather directly in touch with Sheldon....L. impressed me as a solid, careful, hard-working individual, perhaps more sympathetic and open-minded than personally imaginative...not sophisticated nor in any way pretentious". Morison and Gregg et. al. were impressed enough with Lewis

and Baird and the financial need at Oregon to appropriate \$100,000 to the University of Oregon Medical School on January 19, 1951. It is interesting that Sheldon, housed at Columbia, could make little headway with further Rockefeller Foundation funding directly. According to a letter from Morison, one reason Oregon was chosen for the site of new constitutional work was because they were the "only one that had come to our attention which provided the possibility of routine somatotyping of a large unselected group of patients". But there is also reason to believe that Drs. Lewis and Baird, perhaps due to their candor and earnestness and their location on the opposite coast, achieved what Sheldon could not achieve directly with his coterie of technicians just down the street in Manhattan. On the other hand, of course, it was Sheldon (perhaps along with Barbara Honeyman) who orchestrated the Oregon grant behind the scenes.

Morison suggests in an interview on October 11, 1950, that he had become jaded by the self-consciousness and high seriousness of the typical petitioners for Rockefeller funds at New York luncheons. He agrees with a comment made by Dr. Lewis regarding the man who has been chosen to be in immediate charge of the work at Oregon, Dr. Joseph Franklin Griggs: "[Griggs] who will be in charge of the work, is a very hard-working, steady but somewhat unoriginal person", says Morison, "but L. feels this is just the type that is

needed to do a thoroughly critical job in a field which has so far had, if anything, too much originality and brilliance". One cannot help but suspect that Morison is alluding to Sheldon here. Again, Morison exhibits a predilection for the solid and the empirical in scientific research, which, of course, is not surprising coming from a medical doctor, then or now. Such a comment from Morison implies, too, an antipathy towards Sheldon's--and those of his ilk--high-flying speculations. Moreover, Morison, on meeting Griggs for the first time on Wednesday, October 11, 1950, notes that "I was delighted to get a very good impression....It is my impression that Howard P. Lewis erred on the conservative side in his appraisal of G's abilities". Clearly Morison is favorably impressed with both Drs. Lewis and Griggs. And the wording of the grant to Lewis and Griggs--probably written by Morison, also--is careful to qualify the status of Sheldon's role in the project, even as it argues that Sheldon's system is the best one for the purpose at hand: "Like many pioneers, Dr. Sheldon has proposed his system with a vigor which frequently verges on dogmatism and the whole scheme, especially in its psychological aspects, is still a subject of controversy. The fact remains, however, that he has given us a system of classification of physical type which is simple to use, reliable among different observers, and easily susceptible of statistical analysis". [my emphasis]

But there is immediately a personnel conflict within the Oregon team. Several letters that pass between Lewis and Morison and Gregg provide a general, if partial, account of the trouble. Based on a letter from Dr. Lewis, dated April 28, 1951, a "disturbing note came up in our [Lewis's and Sheldon's] conference...in connection with Dr. Griggs". The upshot of the letter is that Sheldon does not think Griggs "should be included in the project now, and perhaps not in the future". Sheldon states that "he thinks it highly desirable that his 'team', composed of himself, Miss Honeyman and a Dr. Eastlake...should start this project off. Sheldon says he is ready to appear here July 1 and is prepared to spend about 6 months per year with us". Sheldon is asserting his authority, and perhaps, in this case, not unreasonably. Sheldon had originated the art of taking these highly stylized somatotype photographs and had taught it to his associates. It seems that Miss Honeyman--who "is so well grounded in the mechanics of the photography, filing, classification, etc., as to make her indispensable to us"--cannot work with Dr. Griggs. And Lewis concedes that he has "come to entertain doubts about Dr. Griggs [him]self in the last six months....I am not quite sure of Dr. Griggs' balance. He is quite religious, [and] a bit pontifical scientifically". Lewis is "fearful, in the light of this and what Dr. Sheldon has told me and will tell you, that he will not have the open mind and objective approach

that is so essential if we are to keep our feet on the ground in this work". Lewis is apologetic towards Gregg and the Foundation and does not want such a hitch to "jeopardize the successful operation of the project". But the idea is to get rid of Griggs entirely.

Morison in inter-office correspondence dated May 29, 1951, confirms his extant reservations about Sheldon and fills in some details about the problem. "...I am not entirely happy" says Morison, "about the situation which has developed. As you know, William H. Sheldon is the originator of the method which Howard P. Lewis proposes to use in his studies and is in many ways quite a brilliant person. On the other hand I think most people regard him as fairly erratic and difficult to get along with". Morison asserts that it was his understanding, as well as Alan Gregg's, that "Lewis would call on Sheldon from time to time for advice" but "that the continuing responsibility [for the long-term operation of the project] would be in the hands of Joseph F. Griggs". It is clear from Morison's earlier correspondence that he likes Griggs, and that he is piqued at this reversal of original negotiations. The situation, as cited previously in Lewis's letter to Gregg, is entangled with the fact that Sheldon has brought with him "a Portland girl [Miss Honeyman] who has been his assistant for several years....I have the distinct memory that when I mentioned her name to Lewis he said that, although he might be willing

to have her for a month or two to help get the project set up, he would under no circumstances want her permanently as she had many enemies in Portland and was difficult to get on with".

Morison relates a further anecdote about Miss Honeyman: "I happened to run into her at a cocktail party about a week after the grant was made and she was quite outspoken about the fact that she and Sheldon were going to take over this project and keep Griggs out of the picture, in part because his wife was a very unstable person." Remarks Morison: "I merely listened to this and may have raised my eyebrows." Morison doesn't care to get involved. He only wants to make it clear to Lewis that the responsibility for the decision to get rid of Griggs is his and not Morison's or Gregg's. "The situation", he concludes, "can turn out all right but it also may become an embarrassment".

Morison's apprehensions about Sheldon's involvement in the project may have been accentuated when he receives a letter from Dr. Robert A. Holt, dated July 10, 1951, and received into the Foundation offices on July 18. This letter follows on the heels of Holt's scathing review of Sheldon's book Varieties of Delinquent Youth in The Nation on November 25, 1950. On the same day that the letter from Holt was received Morison, not Gregg, answers it, since Gregg, states Morison, "will be away from the office for the better part of six months". Morison's reply might be

construed as a diplomatic handling of an awkward situation. But basically he avoids the issues Holt raises. Instead, he simply says that "I do not think it is ever possible to explain in detail how a decision is made by a foundation to support a particular project. There are always various shades of opinion among the Officers and Trustees which are difficult to describe. The final judgment is a kind of distillation from these". While these statements from Morison may be perfectly true on one level, they say essentially nothing in the way of actually addressing Holt's principal concern: why exactly did the Foundation give this much money to a man who holds such hostile social and racial opinions as those expressed in Varieties of Delinquent Youth? Morison mentions the fact that the Oregon study will allow somatotyping on "a large, unselected group of patients" and that the project will "provide favorable opportunities for rigorous tests of hypotheses regarding the influence of constitution". Morison sticks to empirical considerations. He neither acknowledges nor addresses Holt's concerns about racism, fascism, and bad science, but merely thanks Holt for a copy of the book review and ends his letter on a minor point: "It seems to me that you have dealt most carefully and fairly with Sheldon's unusual treatment of the subject. Have you by any chance made any similar comment on the quite different book prepared by the Gluecks?"

On Thursday, November 1, 1951, Morison states that "it is possible to say that this project is going rather better than one might have feared....L. seems to be catching on to some of the problems connected with Sheldon's personality and I tried as tactfully as possible to strengthen L.'s determination to assume over-all responsibility...and compensate for S.'s very obvious defects. Fortunately S. is associated with the project in only a part-time way and is not in Portland at present." Formal progress reports for the project for the years 1951 and 1952, written by Drs. Baird and Lewis, give no indication of problems. But it is clear by 1953 and 1954, based on notes from Morison, that there are, in fact, serious problems with Sheldon's involvement.

On Friday, November 6, 1953, Morison indicates that Miss Barbara Honeyman "is very much upset by the way William H. Sheldon has managed to confuse the whole picture." It appears that Sheldon "has done a good deal to sabotage [the original plan for the project] on his visits which have proved longer than planned. He apparently does not like the system of rigid controls which have been introduced and seems to rely increasingly on impressionistic appraisals....Eastlake, who was in direct charge of the program under Lewis, has resigned and the statistician [Carl Hopkins] has indicated that he will report only to Lewis, himself, and will not be responsible for the statistical

aspects if Sheldon continues to behave as at present." Also, Honeyman is leaving for New York to do a Ph.D. "This account" reflects Morison, "confirms RSM's worst fears. It looks as though we may have to make a more direct intervention than is usual in the case of RF grants".

By January 5, 1954, Morison relates his opinion of Mr. Carl Hopkins, who apparently has stood his ground against Sheldon's interference. "He turns out to be a pleasant, personable young man", says Morison, "with what appears to be an excellent training in statistics with E. B. Wilson....He is much disturbed [however] by the way in which Lewis has fallen under Sheldon's spell and seems unable to insist on anything like a rigorous experimental design". Even worse, Morison laments that as Sheldon "grows older, [he] seems to be emphasizing all the defects as a scientist which have hitherto been apparent in his publications." And, at least from Morison's perspective, Sheldon is departing radically from what Morison has considered the merits of the "relatively objective somatotype scheme" by "paying more and more attention to subjective factors such as his "T factor (for thoroughbredness), "dysplasia" and the like...."

Hopkins tells Morison that he believes the project can be "salvaged" if Sheldon "can be pushed to one side". "Lewis", according to Hopkins, "lacks the backbone to put Sheldon in his place and take over proper direction". It is

apparent that Morison had placed far greater confidence in Lewis's ability to control Sheldon than had turned out to be the case. And at this point Morison is willing, he says, "to charge the thing off as bad judgment originally". Morison concludes: "Certainly we were frank enough in pointing out the dangers of too close an association with Sheldon and the original proposal implied that Sheldon's participation would be kept to a consulting capacity for one or two months each year. The difficulty seems to be that we did not make an accurate enough appraisal of Lewis's abilities as an administrator or his strength of character."

6.4 Sheldon the "Cultural Physician"

Based on the two files examined here, the Rockefeller Foundation officers Morison and Gregg, who agreed initially to Sheldon's limited participation in the Oregon project in constitutional medicine, come to regret their decision. Although the project finishes up more or less according to expectations and with a minimum of negative publicity, the grant decision ends up being something of a private embarrassment for several of the officers, as they rehearse repeatedly in their inter-office correspondence and interviews. Sheldon's status as a researcher is suspected all along, based on Morison's and Gregg's familiarity with his published work. And we might assume that the officers have other reasons, in addition to those revealed here, for

wanting to marginalize Sheldon's role in the project. It is clear from these interviews that Sheldon already had a reputation as a trouble-maker, for being difficult to get along with, and for being highly opinionated. Sheldon's penchant for mixing "philosophical speculation" with "exact science", while recognized and criticised early on by Morison, is not, initially at least, sufficient grounds for excluding Sheldon's expertise in somatotypy. Indeed, Sheldon's somatotype system comprizes the bed-rock methodology for the entire project.

But once the project is underway Sheldon begins to behave as Morison and Gregg feared. And Dr. Lewis, the project director, whom the officers hoped could manage Sheldon, does not live up to expectations. According to Carl Hopkins, a project statistician, Lewis himself falls under Sheldon's spell. Sheldon's passion for aesthetics of form and physiognomic "thoroughbredness" threatens to compromise what several other members of the team, along with Morison, consider sound scientific methodology.

Implicit in Morison's judgment of Sheldon's work lies the empiricist assumption that one can separate the observations and measurements inherent in somatotypy from the man and the personality that attends it. No less a philosopher of science than Carl Hempel could endorse

Sheldon's methodology on these grounds.⁶ That is, the somatotyping scheme arrived at by Sheldon is acceptable from a quantitative perspective, even while the qualitative aspect of it may remain controversial. It is clear that Morison and Gregg have many second thoughts about Sheldon, but they appear to rationalize going ahead with the grant because:

1) The money is really going to Lewis and Baird at Oregon, and Sheldon will serve only in an advisory capacity,

2) Sheldon's system, for all of his personal defects as a researcher, is the one best suited for the quantitative and statistical analyses,

3) Work in constitutional medicine is perfectly legitimate and needs to be done, and

4) Oregon, as Morison indicates, allows for "a large, unselected group of patients" that was apparently unavailable elsewhere.

This story, told candidly by Sheldon's associates, confirms the reactionary attitude that was an integral part of both his personality and his scientific work. Sheldon's aesthetic concerns, his emphasis on the "t-component" of the somatotype photographs, his "authoritarian personality", as well as his flippant attitude to Freudian psychoanalysis,

⁶ See Carl G. Hempel's Aspects of Scientific Explanation. New York: The Free Press, 1970, especially pp. 143-171. I discuss Hempel's response to Sheldon's somatotypy in The Somatotype As Fiction (1992).

were symptomatic of his deep-seated antipathy to the new and relaxed world of post-war America. To appropriate Katherine Pandora's expression, Sheldon was a "rebel within the ranks" of mainstream psychology during the 1950s and beyond, although it is true that Sheldon's reputation was also at its zenith during these years. Somatotypy became was popularized at this time by Robert Coughlan (Coughlin 1952). But Sheldon's personality was entirely consistent with reactionary opinions he expressed some fifteen years earlier in Psychology and the Promethean Will, and which he reiterated even more decidedly in Varieties of Delinquent Youth in 1949.

Morison and Gregg were attempting to approach the project with some objectivity; that is, they appreciated Sheldon's personality early on, and they tried to guard against its worst "defects", which they saw as failings in his personality as well as in in his science. They could, after all, have granted the money to Sheldon directly, who was then head of the Columbia Constitution Laboratory. That they did not speaks for itself. Presumably there was no paucity of subjects for the research at Presbyterian Hospital, the site of long-standing Rockefeller involvement in constitutional research.

7.0 SHELDON MALGRE LUI

Dr. Robert A. Holt, a physician from Kansas, wrote the following letter in 1950 to the editor of The Nation, with regard to Sheldon's recently published book, Varieties of Delinquent Youth:

The book [is] a piece of dangerously fascistic pseudo-science....The Buchenwald stench drifts from the pages when Sheldon blandly refers to the recently arrived Jewish and Italian population as 'vermin' to be wiped out....Sheldon starts out to report a study of two hundred boys and ends up with a plan to rule the world and cure it by the worship of his own ideology....Sheldon has written a scientifically incompetent and socially vicious book (Holt 1950, p. 495).

Holt was apparently the only person who commented so forcefully and publicly about the book. He followed up this letter with another letter to Alan Gregg at the Rockefeller Foundation: "As a citizen in the general scientific community, I find that it does concern me how one of the most powerful forces in the support--and thus, partly in the directing--of medical research, decides to exert its influence...I hope very much that you will have something to tell me that will allay my fears that your Foundation's \$100,000 is going down a rat-hole, and that the prestige of Rockefeller support is being lent to an enterprise that will in the long run be an embarrassment to you" (Holt to Gregg,

July 10, 1951, Rockefeller Archives).

Sheldon and Ludovici fought the same "aristocratic" battle after World War II. Both men became alienated from colleagues and from society generally. Sheldon's increasingly flippant attitude to modern social science is evident from remarks in a paper he read to the Cold Spring Harbor Symposium on the Evolution of Man in 1950:

The central problem of social science...is that of controlled human breeding. We can substitute the term applied genetics for controlled human breeding, and of course there will not be 'human stud farms' but bureaus of genetic research. It does make a difference how things are put, as a certain prominent politician found when he hired a biographer to write him up. He was worried about his brother who had been sent to the electric chair, and about his father who had been hanged. Brother Joe, the biographer wrote, occupied the chair of applied electricity in one of our largest institutions. Joe died in harness, and the father too died at the very height of his career (Sheldon 1952, p. 374).

Sheldon's performance at this Cold Spring Harbor Symposium was treated in a Rockefeller Foundation "Interview" from "RSM", Robert S. Morison, dated June 21, 1950, just four days after the event:

William H. Sheldon of the Constitution Laboratory at

Columbia gave a very long and rather wandering discussion of the relation of somatotype to morphogenotype, morphogenotype, psychological temperament and several other things. Some of the things he said appeared to infuriate a couple of the physical anthropologists present, and it was clear to anyone that he made a great many loose statements. After thinking about S. and his work for several years I have come to the conclusion that his anxiety to solve a great many problems in a hurry has rather obscured the small kernel of usefulness there may be in the invention of the somatotype method. If one looks at his last three books there seems to be a progressive deterioration in critique and there was at least one in his audience on Friday who equated this deterioration to frank pathology, although I would hardly go so far myself. It is difficult to find any other good explanation for some of the more violent statements in his last book, "Varieties of Delinquent Youth". I personally think it will remain for a few workers like Stanley M. Garn to demonstrate the usefulness of the somatotype method in the correlation of bodily constitution with the appearance of disease. Whether or not someone can be found to do a similar job on the genetic side is problematical. The physical anthropologists and blood group people are definitely

hostile to the Sheldon ideas and so far have demonstrated a higher capacity to relate their fields to modern genetic theory (Morison, 1950, Rockefeller Archives).

Morison's assessment of Sheldon is illuminating on several counts, and it is consistent with other comments that he and Alan Gregg (and Robert Holt, above) were to make about Sheldon in the coming months (see chapter 6). However, Sheldon's talk, while admittedly colorful and entertaining in spots, was not longer than other talks included in the Symposium Collection, published in 1952. Also, Sheldon's talk might be taken as "rather wandering" if one were predisposed against philosophical speculation of the variety that intrigued Sheldon, namely his application in this instance of Hans Vaihinger's philosophy of Als Ob to somatotypy (Sheldon 1952, 1950, p. 373). Sheldon was a duck out of water at a symposium like this one. It is likely that we have something of C.P. Snow's "Two Cultures" intruding here. Morison, probably like many of Sheldon's colleagues and associates--including biologists, geneticists, and anthropologists at this conference--were put off by Sheldon's personality and his speculative bent as much as they were by his science. Finally, Morison is at a loss to account for Sheldon's "violent statements". At least one member of the audience, according to Morison, suggested the same thing about Sheldon that Havelock Ellis

had suggested about Anthony Ludovici: that he was "probably cracked" and should be ignored (see chapter 1). Morrison, in fact, regarded Sheldon in the same way that most everyone tended to regard him after the War: with suspicions, if not about his actual sanity, about his emotional maturity, his politics, and his integrity as a scientist. The suspicions extend to Barbara Heath, as we shall see below.

For all of his degrees and publications, Sheldon regarded himself as an "amateur" (Sheldon 1949, p. 52). He sometimes alluded to his work as a "hobby" (Sheldon 1952, p. 375). While a tireless worker, he apparently did not care for the idea of working for others or even working in a profession. Sheldon was as much a physical anthropologist in the manner of Ernest Hooten, to whom he dedicated Varieties of Human Physique (1940), as he was an academic psychologist. Neither was he a psychiatrist, as his medical residency at Chicago was in pediatrics. Sheldon never bothered to become licensed to practice medicine, a point that nettled Alan Gregg and Robert Morrison (see chapter 6) during their dealings with him in the early 1950s, as we have seen.

Neither was Sheldon a full-time academic. He was an outsider during his temporary academic appointments at Chicago, Texas, Columbia, Wisconsin, and Harvard. Sheldon detested garden-variety academics and academic work for reasons that should be, by now, clear. According to his

long-time friend Robert Osborne, Sheldon rejected publication in refereed scientific journals. He thought they were the work of prosaic minds bent on suppressing originality (Osborne 1981, p. 716). "Privatdozent" status offered Sheldon a detachment, a freedom from potentially compromising involvement, in an increasingly alien ("mongrel", "socially chaotic") world, as well as a license to cross disciplinary boundaries duty-free.

In fact, the reception of Sheldon's work may have been hampered at times by its sheer breadth and interdisciplinarity. The audience for somatotypy may have been, at once, broad and rather limited. It wasn't at all clear, for example, that a behaviorist operating out of a psychology department in Texas was qualified to pass judgements on constitutional psychology, anchored as it was in anthropology, medicine, and religion, not to mention the modernist, literary, component I have treated here. One of the things that probably bothered Sheldon most was that his work was treated too often treated only as science--and by scientists. Huxley's reception of Sheldon's work, as we have seen, was much more in keeping with Sheldon's tastes and predilections.

In 1949, the same year that he published Varieties of Delinquent Youth, Sheldon, a life-long numismatist, published another book entitled Early American Cents, 1793-1814. His other books in the Human Constitution Series, he

lamented in the introduction, were "less soul-satisfying" than the one now before him (Sheldon 1949, p. 4). The rhapsody with which Sheldon speaks of the "early American cents" (a play, no doubt, on early American sense) is telling and parallels the nostalgia and anti-modernism we have seen elsewhere. The pennies are marked with:

the bright hopes of yesterday morning....They are an intriguing family and they never die, fade, or get broken [recall similar remarks about nature in chapter 3]....The early cents carry the memory, and an indelible impress, of a little stretch of human time that was fragrant with high hope. It was the flowering period for what may have become a great people in a land of unmatched beauty....To own a family of the early cents is in some measure to command a causeway between what for Americans is becoming a dearly remembered island of the past, and the grim urban mainland of the future (Sheldon, 1949, p. 335).

Sheldon's dogged independence was a means of remaining, to some extent, unanswerable to academic fashion, especially to liberals and environmentalists. Sheldon had fun. He laughed at himself and others. Life to him became a "Human Comedy", about which he mused in the manner of a novelist or satiric poet, and he lived in many ways his own prescriptions for personal redemption. Sheldon lived modestly. He ate simply and inexpensively in refectories

and city cafeterias. He never owned a house. He preferred a private life, and a relatively unencumbered life, which may help account for his several failed marriages.

Certainly he resisted mightily the role of the bourgeois medical entrepreneur.

Financial support for Sheldon's work after World War II came increasingly from private sources, and his books, like Ludovici's, were published by minor presses after 1954. Harper Brothers apparently had no interest in publishing Sheldon by the 1970s, and Prometheus Revisited (1975) was published by the small Boston publisher, Schenkman. Even the second printing of Atlas of Men (1954) was taken up by Gramercy Publishing in New York. Eugene McDermott, Chairman of the Geophysical Service in Dallas during the 1950s and later founder of Texas Instruments, gave Sheldon substantial sums of money for his research (Hartl 1992). McDermott's inclusion as a co-author of Varieties of Delinquent Youth was done merely as a formality. His contribution to the project was purely financial. Emil Hartl reports that he and Edward Monnelly still receive money from sources connected with McDermott to nominally carry on Sheldon's work. Hartl's and Monnelly's 30-year follow-up study in 1982 to Varieties of Delinquent Youth was funded largely from this source.

Sheldon's maverick, "lone-wolf", status was encouraged, apparently, by two events. The first concerns a scandal at

Harvard shortly after his return from England in the mid 1930s and the publication of Psychology and the Promethean Will. This incident is related by Barbara Honeyman Heath, a once-devoted assistant to Sheldon during the 1950s.

Sheldon's golden dreams came to an abrupt end in 1936, in an emotional crisis involving a girl he called 'Starlight'. He said he was engaged to her. When she unexpectedly married another man, he wrote to the new husband an emotional, ill-advised and threatening letter. Its outraged recipient widely distributed copies of the offending document in high academic circles. The repercussions from this incident prejudiced Sheldon's opportunities for academic appointment for the rest of his life. Several loyal colleagues at various institutions arranged for him to share space for carrying out his research and for writing his books. But after 1936 he held no formal, salaried academic posts. Thereafter, he was dependent on his own resources and privately obtained funds to pay research assistants and to meet other expenses (Carter and Heath 1990, p. 6).

The second event was Sheldon's contraction of Hodgkin's Disease while in the Air Force during World War II. The prognosis was bleak. After a course of deep radiation therapy he was retired from the Air Force with the permanent rank of Major on full disability pension (Carter and Heath

1990, p. 7). But Sheldon, against the odds, recovered. The pension ensured against penury. But, more importantly, it provided Sheldon, I believe, with a base income that guaranteed he could exploit his passions without recourse to regular employment.

Sheldon, without doubt, was a difficult character and, according to Heath and others, a bad scientist (Holt 1952, Gregg and Morison 1954). Until she learned better, says Heath, she accepted "Sheldon's apparent view of himself as a 'misunderstood genius' who had the bad luck not to attract competent and loyal associates" (Carter and Heath 1990, p. 8). But Heath's indictment of Sheldon may have been influenced by her own disappointing romance with him during the 1950s (Hartl 1992). Photographs of Heath and Sheldon taken during this time were smart and carried a nimbus of romantic promise. In any event, Heath's account is probably not without biases of its own, and her comments about Sheldon are clearly self serving (Carter and Heath, 1990, pp. 9-15).¹

¹ Robert Morison at the Rockefeller Foundation, in a memo dated May 29, 1951, confides that "Sheldon proposes to take with him a Portland girl [Barbara Heath] who has been his assistant for several years. According to her own account she was the first person to interest Lewis [the head of the Oregon project] in the possibilities of this research before she knew Sheldon. I have the distinct memory that when I mentioned her name to Lewis he said that, although he might be willing to have her for a month or two to help get the project set up, he would under no circumstances want her permanently as she had many enemies in Portland and was difficult to get on with. I happened to run into her at a

Heath's most serious indictment of Sheldon as a scientist concerned his willingness to alter photographs in his Atlas of Men (1952) to fit what amounted, she says, to preconceived "theological" conceptions. Heath suggests that Sheldon wanted a "girl" to do what she was told, and she was not a good candidate for the job. Says Heath:

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

cocktail party about a week after the grant was made and she was quite outspoken about the fact that she and Sheldon were going to take over this project and keep Griggs out of the picture, in part because his wife was a very unstable person. I merely listened to this and may have raised my eyebrows" (Morison, 1951, Rockefeller Archives).

[me] to trim a little from each view of a somatotype rated 1 1/2-2 1/2-7 (see photograph no. 1 in Atlas of Men, as an example). (Carter and Heath 1990, p. 12).

Heath's summation of Sheldon's character and status as a scientist is blunt and points to the same "inferior function" indicated earlier by James Arraj (see chapter 5):

Sheldon was a gifted man. His conceptual insights were stunning. His personal insights were often dulled by his incapacity for redeeming empathy. His self-insights suffered from his lack of humility. He had the gift of charm without the warmth and generosity for friendship. He knew the answers without completing the research, and was unwilling to ask the appropriate questions....He seemed to have a romantic image of himself as a tragic Arthurian knight destined to be victimized by those less cultivated and less sensitive, by prosaic intellects who referee scientific journals and deny space to 'original thought'. He was a 70-inch (178-cm) 3-3 1/2-5 who saw himself as a 72-inch (183-cm) 2-4-5. In conversation he showed open contempt for all the human species except those of certified Anglo-Saxon lineage. His racism and male chauvinism are shockingly evident in his writing (Carter and Heath, 1990, p. 15).

Heath's derogatory remarks are insightful about Sheldon's "racism" and "male chauvinism". But Heath,

whatever her insights, may have been just the sort of "scientific", thoroughly "modern", democratic, individual--male or female--whom Sheldon, at bottom, loathed. Aldous Huxley never made such comments about Sheldon, and not, I propose, simply for chauvinistic or polite reasons. Nor did any of the other intellectuals who admired Sheldon and his work whom I have tracked in the course of this study, make such comments, just because they often shared the reactionary posture that Heath interprets simply as a personality disorder. The "insane" Ezra Pound was confined to St. Elizabeth's Hospital at this time, except that his racism and male chauvinism extended to treason against the United States.

In "patrician" (especially male intellectual) company, Sheldon's personality was probably unexceptional. Sheldon was deferential around those whom he regarded as equals, especially those, perhaps, who he felt understood and shared his cultural pessimism. One thinks of such contemporaries as H. G. Wells, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, Bertrand Russell, D. H. Lawrence, and Ernest Hemingway, all of whom Heath could have not have approved. Aldous Huxley was, for Sheldon, a "secret sharer" of his reactionary beliefs and passions, as was Anthony Ludovici.² Barbara Heath, or those

² Sheldon wrote confidential letters to Huxley, such as the following one on August 8, 1951. Sheldon was just setting up in Portland for the Rockefeller Foundation Project: "If you should by any chance come to Portland, I

of her ilk, was not. And not just because she was a woman-- although this was probably a factor, too--but because she did not harbor the otiose idealism against modernity that made scientific technicalities pale in importance.

Sheldon's lack of empathy, humility, and generosity, was, for Heath, a matter of pathology, which she discusses, interestingly, in terms of somatotypy: Sheldon, according to the principle of "bovarism" (see chapter 5), had built up a "persona" that was inconsistent with his actual physique. "Neurosis", "inferiority", was the result. Sheldon, as we have seen, did not see things this simply, and in this difference lies the gulf that separated his feeling for the heroic from that of Freud and other moderns: it was just because of his own "Promethean" physique and its attending "mentality" that Sheldon was so at odds with the modern world. This is what Sheldon was really getting at when he lamented the physical splendor and maladjustment of "delinquent youth". Sheldon, like Freud, universalized his own modernist disease. Heath's attitude, which appears to

would really be delighted to see you. There is a certain joy to knowing that you remain both in and of this world even though the slide is, as you say, steadily down a slope. In a way, you know, sliding is fun. And there is comfort in the thought that one can never slide further downward than one, in the persons of predecessors and progenitors, has climbed upward. Yes, you [my emphasis] are decidedly a comforting thought, for so long as you live it remains possible to retain that delightful childhood thought that someone else is along--someone more responsible, more informed, and therefore also more blameworthy. All this is the main reason, I suppose, that I myself have so much fun" (Sheldon to Huxley, 1951, Sheldon Archives).

be typical among those who "diagnosed" Sheldon (see also James Arraj's comments in chapter 5 and James Tanner's in chapter 6), confirms a malady of the soul that was not amenable to therapy and self help schemes so characteristic of modernism: reading more Jung, enrolling in a Dale Carnegie course, getting Christianity, getting married, or getting psychoanalysed. Heath missed the greater point. The meaning (or the tragedy) of Sheldon's life and work were lost on her and others who saw in the aging Sheldon nothing more than, in James Arraj's words, a "man of the right". What was wrong with Sheldon was not likely to be corrected by palliatives. The overriding problem was the biological, social, moral, and aesthetic crash course of the modern world, a Spenglerian "decline of the west" that called for a desperate remedy.

Prometheus Revisited (1975), a revision of Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936), reveals the extent of Sheldon's deepening pessimism. "Biological humanics", his eugenic religious scheme for stemming the tide of modern "delinquency" in the five panels of consciousness (see chapter 3), became more urgent, more cynical, with the years. Together with a series of programs for Boston Public Television in 1975, Prometheus Revisited can be regarded as a final statement of Sheldon's philosophy.³ Sheldon the

³ I possess videocassettes of these television programs, thanks to Dr. Emil Hartl and Dr. Edward Monnelly

physician deploys pathological metaphors to capture the crisis state of the "body politic":

We are confronted, then, with Dionysian or manic psychosis in the first panel; catatonic schizophrenia in the second; fast-growing cancer in the third; a grave circulatory disorder in the fourth; and an ominous threat of loss of soul in the fifth--where natural aesthetics is being rapidly wiped out by the population cancer, and all three of our main branches of artefactual aesthetics have reverted toward a waster pattern. Modern art is of course now mainly a defiant anti-art; modern writing is mostly anti-fourth and fifth panel; modern music is almost wholly disruptive waster noise. There is wide-spread destruction in the fourth and fifth panels. Where is the lesion most crucially responsible? (Sheldon 1975, p. 246)

Sheldon's "prescription", to the extent that there is one at all, is: "Reduce the cancer. Stop promiscuously subsidizing reproduction" (1975, p. 247). For Sheldon, both religious direction (orientation in the time dimension) and aesthetic appreciation of beauty are bound up with human reproduction, with the quality of the human specimen. Given an ever-burgeoning population on the planet, religious and

in Boston. They are about four hours in length and comprize a candid portrayal of Sheldon's mannerisms and humor (which otherwise would have been lost to posterity) as well as cogent summary of his constitutionalism.

aesthetic considerations become impossible. If unchecked, overpopulation "will soon entirely wipe out the fourth and fifth panels as we have known them, and very possibly may wipe out the species as well" (1975, p. 247).

Interviewed in a series of programs on constitutional psychology and psychiatry in 1975, Sheldon explained to Vaunda Carter, the program host:

Well, we have to admit the existence of the fifth panel. The fifth [panel] has to do with the quality of your performance, the quality of your physical texture, the quality of your relationships, the quality of your appreciation for other people, the quality of your sexual performance and your appreciation of other peoples' sexual performance. And it especially has to do with the quality of your relationship with the whole human social tribe as it exists over the earth.

We have produced a situation on this planet which is in every biological sense a cancer--we have created and produced it...by failing completely in the fourth [religious] panel, by failing very widely in the fifth [aesthetic] panel, and by failing to control in the third [reproductive] panel. [Carter says that the time is up and thanks Sheldon. Sheldon smiles at friends off-stage and laughs] Well, now we're not afraid [he

says] to seize the bull by the tail and look the situation right in the face (Sheldon 1975).

The human physique in Sheldon's hands was a flashpoint for modernist anxieties about overpopulation, which, in turn, reflected a constellation of reactionary obsessions about the decline of culture, morality, and society.

Sheldon wrote a "humanist revision of the Lord's Prayer" (Sheldon 1975, p. 241) which might be regarded as the last word on the subject:

Our supernal Father-mother and Epi-Promethean fourth panel Navigator who also art God and dwelleth everywhere in the life-giving heavenly earth, Hallowed be thy name. Bless life we pray. Bless our earth-creature cousins who are now desperately endangered by the human overpopulative blight. Protect them from pain and destruction. Give them their chance for further evolution, even though we meanwhile dally in the face of our own darkening emergency.

Give us the strength and the wit, we pray, to do our part to curb the ravage of the human cancer; to help evoke more appreciative human compassion, more valiant courage, and the discriminative reproductive constraint now urgently required if we are to cope with our acute third panel malignancy.

May we thus help to sustain the basic virtues cardinal to a biologically sound religious humanism; help to

provide for Emerson's oversoul a nutriment of health,
and for our own souls the hope of being nearer to God.
Nearer to God within and beyond us, and beyond the
human adventure.

In the name of endotonic compassion, mesotonic courage,
and ectotonic constraint.

Amen.

8.0 CONCLUSION: MODERNISM, EUGENICS, AND LITERATURE

The history of eugenics and genetics has been marked by disciplinary parochialism and scientific apology since the early 1960s (e.g. Haller 1963, Ludmerer 1972), despite putative efforts on the part of historians to explore, in Garland Allen's words, "how scientific work is influenced by, and in turn influences, the social, political, and economic life of society" (Allen 1975). More recent accounts of scientific racism, race hygiene, and eugenics (Kevles 1985, Kuznick 1987, Proctor 1988, Barken 1992, Paul 1995) demonstrate similar commitments. Historians of biology have tended to embrace a narrow historical and scientific purview (e.g., Provine 1973, Kevles 1985), one that has ensured the exclusion of the entirety of modernist literary and artistic culture from their work. The critical "literary" or "heroic" component of eugenic thought, what I have chosen to call its "hubris",¹ and which was inculcated chiefly into modernist thought with Nietzsche's idea of the "superman", has never figured into the history of eugenics. The unspoken segregation of these worlds, the scientific and the heroic, by historians of eugenics prompted this investigation.

¹ Hubris is defined as overweening pride or self-assurance which, in Greek tragedy, often resulted in retribution. The word is appropriate in this context, because it denotes the attitude of eugenists who felt it was their prerogative to order life and death among the poor and the sick, in order to create a world that lived up to their "Promethean" expectations.

Extant histories of and critical writing on eugenics and genetics generally have sought to justify the human genome project to a public suspicious of genetics' grisly past (Kevles 1985, Kevles and Hood 1994). These histories have eliminated, consciously or by default, Nietzschean and irrational elements in eugenics, and hence have denied eugenics' embeddedness in modernist (and romantic) reaction. Sheldon's studies in human physique and constitution, which were intended to elaborate eugenic claims via physical anthropology, have languished for decades, alienated from the culture that gave them birth.

"Modernist impulses" (Ross 1994) in eugenics have gone entirely unattended in the secondary literature, even in those studies that concentrate on Nazi race hygiene, arguably the most obvious site for neo-romantic involvement (Lifton 1986). I have addressed here a shamefully neglected component of the history of eugenics, William H. Sheldon's massive project in somatotypy, his "constitutional psychology" (Sheldon 1940, 1942, 1954) and "constitutional psychiatry" (Sheldon 1949), in light of modernist artistic and literary thought. Sheldon's unique Prometheism and countermodernity demand such an interdisciplinary perspective. Historians have not accessed this richly reactionary dimension of eugenics--what we might regard as a "counterparadigm" in eugenic thought--because this paradigm has resided outside the range of academic fashion and

acceptability. Sheldon's broader sensibilities, which defined him as a man and man of science, resonated to and reflected the same cultural and ethical dilemmas expressed in modernist literature and art. "Modernist impulses" imply both modern and reactionary elements in the arts and literature in the first half of the twentieth century that were also evident in the social sciences and medicine. These involved a deep-seated desire, on the one hand, to democratize the world with science and technology, end feudalism, and bring about utopia--which was evident in the political Left as well as the Right (Paul 1984)--and the equally commanding and retrograde tendency to retrench and reaffirm "aristocratic" prerogative, what the English poet Stephen Spender called "the struggle of the modern" (Spender 1963). This is the same generalized dynamic that we find as a special case in fascism and nazism--an irrational and aesthetically-based concatenation of castles and machine-guns. "Modernist impulses" in the social sciences I have taken to mean those qualities that "reacted" against a reductionist paradigm in science and which advanced a holistic program of one description or another, and in Sheldon's case by means of modern quantitative methodology. Sheldon deployed a creditable empiricism, thanks in part to the assistance of S. S. Stevens, to support holistic ideas, a move which has made his work all the more difficult to access.

The overriding assumption of historians of eugenics appears to be that eugenics is amenable to discussion only as a scientific and historical matter, without regard to the affecting spirit of irrationality that so marked the literary and artistic intelligentsia during high modernism, from roughly 1900-1945. This reaction, with eugenics at its passionate core, entailed a romantic convulsion that climaxed in the nazi death camps.² It was a global hubris that was not confined either culturally or scientifically to nazi Germany, but was one that marked much of the intelligentsia on both sides of the Atlantic. Historians, however, have tended to limit the definition of eugenics to denote a scientific activity engaged in by a coterie of geneticists/eugenists whose names are by now familiar enough, including Davenport, East, Morgan, and Castle; and the second generation, Dobzhansky, Dunn, and Muller. The

² George L. Mosse has claimed recently that the aesthetics of fascism was deeply ingrained in the middle classes of Europe. "The aesthetic which stood at the centre of this civic religion was the climax of a long development", says Mosse. "The ideal of beauty [captured "scientifically" by eugenics] was central to this aesthetic, whether that of the human body or of the political liturgy. The longing for a set standard of beauty was deeply ingrained in the European middle classes, and the definition of the beautiful as the 'good, the true, and the holy' [one of the burdens of Sheldon's somatotypy] was an important background to the fascist cult....[which was] to annex [this ideal] as its own. The rediscovery of classical antiquity in the eighteenth century [via, among other vehicles, Lavaterian physiognomy] set a standard of beauty which never lost its attraction for the educated, who in Germany and Italy--but elsewhere as well--saw it as their own particular heritage" (Mosse 1996, pp. 246-247).

image of eugenics portrayed by accounts of these men is tame, prosaic, and unencumbered by heroic connotation. Sheldon's somatotypy, however, does not reward the disciplinary myopia we too often encounter in the history of science.

The challenge here has been to recalibrate this standard account in such a way as to see eugenics holistically, as a cultural convention that was not confined to a closet-drama for eugenicists, geneticists, or even politicians, but was brought about by the same social and intellectual factors that spurred modernist reaction in the arts and letters. We enrich our understanding of eugenics by realizing that it not only had a lively existence outside a select circle of scientists, but that artistic and literary culture overlapped in synergistic ways with eugenic theorizing among a broad spectrum of the intelligentsia. There were, in fact, varieties of eugenic thought. Ludovici's was one, Sheldon's another. But, because of academic squeamishness, disciplinary specialization, and political bias, these have not been explored. To locate these varieties one often has to mine "literary" sources, both primary and secondary, which possess the virtue of taking seriously all manner of irrational and far-fetched things (such as euhemerism) that historians of eugenics, concentrating on science, have ignored. Physicians, novelists, poets, anthropologists, and practising eugenicists

resonated to common passions and fears in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Modernist literature, at the same time that it was blazing a new world, was nostalgic for the old.

Eugenics, understood foundationally and in terms of the history of ideas, was not primarily a scientific matter--although it was at times, no doubt, just this for geneticists--but a matter of intellectual pride and prejudice that was harbored by Mandarins in both Europe and America. Certainly eugenics and genetics were mustered variously to both implement and resist the modern. My aim has not been to tar garden-variety eugenists and geneticists with the same broad brush used on the nazis, although the culture wars in the United States, Britain, and Germany during the 1930s were far closer in kind than the eugenics literature would suggest. I concede that some geneticists and eugenists resisted in varying degrees, or did not comprehend, the refined irrationalities of the modernists--the "Faustian Bargain" in Thomas Mann's words (Kuznick 1987). Rather, I have sought to reinvigorate an appreciation for how reactionary passion was inherent in eugenics itself and not confined to recent historians' limited categorizations. By reuniting eugenics with modernist complaints about science, technology, and capitalism--the "wasteland" of the reactionary literati--we position ourselves for an overdue rapprochement between

cultural reaction in the arts and letters and what Jeffrey Herf has called "reactionary modernism" in the sciences.

Critical writing on eugenics, especially that covering the American scene, is more remarkable for what it does not include than for what it does. It is often "relevant" to present issues such as genetic counseling (Paul 1992), the Human Genome Project (Kevles and Hood 1994), and "The Bell Curve Debate" (Jacoby and Glauberman 1995), at the price of being irrelevant to early twentieth-century cultural history and much of the history of medicine and psychology. The medical profession's commerce with eugenics has hardly been a topic the medical profession has wanted to highlight since World War II (Kuehl 1994). Actual historical entities such as constitutional medicine (Tucker and Lessa 1940, Cawadias et.al. 1944); physical and medical anthropology (Lessa 1943); clinical endocrinology (Cawadias 1947); psychosomatic medicine (Draper 1944, Tracy 1992); and eugenically-based psychology and psychiatry (Sheldon 1949), have lain dormant and have played virtually no role at all in the history of eugenics. Perhaps these activities have been regarded by historians as extraneous, if not superfluous, to the task at hand. In fact, these various disciplines, professions, and specialities outstrip the modest categories of inquiry that have governed the writing of eugenics' past.

For it was these disciplines and professions that most clearly displayed, expanded, and valorized eugenic claims;

and it was here that we see eugenics interacting with psychological and psychiatric theorizing and artistic expression in ways that challenge oversimplified and presentist accounts of eugenics serving as an objectionable prelude to genetic counseling (Paul 1995). Studies in human physique and physiognomy carried out in the first half of this century by American medical doctors and psychologists such as Sheldon have been effectively purged from the extant accounts of eugenics, perhaps in historians' zeal to isolate eugenic mischief from genetic science, as well as to distance science from the enormities of the Holocaust and the esoteric and reactionary literary past. Democracy has triumphed at considerable historical cost.

The connections that Sheldon sought to establish between constitution--the "backbone" of eugenic theorizing--and psychology and psychiatry are all but eclipsed today. Sheldon was carrying out in his constitutional work what Mark Micale has called the "synthesis of psychiatry and eugenics" (Micale 1995). Instead of actually scrutinizing and understanding this synthesis, we have simply deleted it from the historical record. We have a history of eugenics that serves contemporary interests and agendas and ignores the culture of eugenics in all its manifold and politically suspect dimensions, a culture that can probably tell us more interesting things about the eugenic past than can these politically correct histories.

It is understandable that early twentieth-century holists in medicine and psychology should have regarded the literati as their colleagues, because it was they who were promoting an essentially anti-modern vision, even if in modern guise (Sheldon 1942). We see this cultural schizophrenia in modernist poetry: avant garde, innovative, forms promoting archly conservative themes (Hallman 1984).³ It is entirely consistent that Aldous Huxley should have been the most eloquent and outspoken advocate of William Sheldon's somatotypy (Huxley 1937, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1957). Huxley's patrician social background, his hybrid literary and scientific interests, made him the ideal defender of hereditarian and reactionary thought.

Mark Micale and Roy Porter have commented recently on this phenomenon in the history of psychiatry (Micale and Porter 1994). Micale calls for "an informed awareness [among historians of psychiatry] of the manifold ways in

³ No less a liberal than Lionel Trilling wrote in The Liberal Imagination (1950):

It is in general true that the European literature to which we have an active reciprocal relationship, which is the right relationship to have, has been written by men who are indifferent to, or even hostile to, the tradition of democratic liberalism as we know it. Yeats and Eliot, Proust and Joyce, Lawrence and Gide--these men seem not to confirm in us the social and political ideals which we hold.

If we turn and consider the contemporary literature of America, we see that wherever we can describe it as patently liberal and democratic, we must say that it is not of lasting interest....Liberal ideology has produced a large literature of social and political protest, but not, for several decades, a single writer who commands our real literary admiration.

which ideology and paradigm may inform science history writing" (Micale 1995). Says Micale:

[Even as] Freud's early biography and the intellectual genesis of psychoanalysis have been charted minutely and repeatedly...and the unconscious meticulously reconstructed,...the available secondary literature tells us almost nothing about the case histories of other major theorists and practitioners from the same period. Many other crucially important events in the European psychological sciences...[have not commanded] the attention of scholars and clinicians [because their attention] has been riveted on the Freud drama to the exclusion of other, contemporaneous developments.... Today, as the psychoanalytic century closes, scholars are in an excellent position to explore these other historical trajectories (Micale 1995, p. 13).

William Sheldon's neglected and formidable opus in human physique and constitution forces upon us a renewed attention to eugenics and culture in a way that other eugenicists' work may not. We have forgotten Sheldon, one of Freud's detractors, because he took the losing side in the struggle between hereditarians and environmentalists. Freudianism was rejected in varying degrees by the more conservative medical community both in Europe and America during the interwar years and beyond, on both scientific and moral grounds (Hale 1995), a fact that itself has been

deemphasized.⁴ Since the "winners", the psychoanalysts and their sympathizers, have written twentieth-century history of psychiatry, as Micale has argued, the older, somatic, or constitutional approach to psychology and psychiatry has been pushed aside by historians. The Nature/Nurture controversy (Pastore 1949) following World War II captures the terms and conditions of this debate.

Nicholas Pastore claimed that this controversy came about in the atmosphere of social reform and in the rise of democracy and the growth of socialism. "In this atmosphere of impending social change" says Pastore, "the position of the hereditarian would be to favor the status quo since he could contend that the essential incorrigibility of man's inherent nature was at the basis of social evils" (Pastore 1949), concluding that "social evils could only be eliminated, from the point of view of the hereditarian, through appropriate changes in the innate characteristics of man". These changes were to be brought about via eugenics, by breeding "thoroughbreds", or, from a "heroic vitalist" perspective, by breeding "supermen" (Bentley 1944, 1957).

The suppression of the history of hereditarian thought

⁴ Hence it is possible to read today in Harvard Magazine (January-February 1997) an article such as Alan A. Stone's, "Where Will Psychoanalysis Survive?" It does not occur to Stone that Freud's doctrines were challenged on moral and scientific grounds from the beginning. He can ask "Why has psychoanalysis not become a cumulative discipline?" And "what remains of Freudianism when its scientific center crumbles?" The article is, simply, seventy-five years late.

has been evident on many levels. We witness it in the history of psychiatry (Micale 1995), as indicated above; in art history (Adam 1992, Barron 1992); and in psychology (Geuter 1992). Psychoanalysis has been a means of rationalizing and sealing away the reality of reactionary and eugenic passions. Psychoanalysis has encouraged us, Klaus Theweleit has said, to read nazi murder "as a story about something else, for example, sex...or the Oedipal triangle...or anything to help the mind drift off". But "the fascist", insists Theweleit, "is not doing 'something else', but doing what he wants to do" (Theweleit 1987). Reactionary thought was, in this sense, both terrible and legitimate. It is because we have not taken reactionary thought seriously that we have arrived at this historiographic state of affairs.

To the extent we see the reactionary as engaging in purely sick behavior, his rebellion will remain ruptured from the much touted romantic tradition that once gave him license. Psychoanalysis elides a reality and denies a legitimacy to over a century of repressed romanticism. Freud medicalized and trivialized primitive male prerogative and hence neutralized the ancient authority of virtue, honor, and heroic struggle. This was Sheldon's complaint in Psychology and the Promethean Will. Indeed, the modern abandonment of these once noble qualities (what Sheldon designated as the "Promethean conflict") has been the

psychological crux of modern life. The breach, of course, reached an apocalyptic state with political fascism in Europe.

A broader historical reality for eugenics, therefore, has been jettisoned by psychoanalytic theory. William Sheldon's philosophically and historically ambitious physique studies were a testament to just how bound up eugenic ideas and ideals were with romantic thought, and how opposed this heroic tradition was to the teachings of Sigmund Freud. When Sheldon opposed Freud he was doing so on the same grounds that motivated Adolf Hitler to oppose him: Freudian psychoanalysis meant, in Hermann Goering's words, "the end of the gentleman", or, to his mind, the end of "character" and male prerogative. The nazi rebellion was not directed exclusively against the Jews. Indeed, they were the scapegoats for a constellation of modernist woes, real or imagined, that afflicted Germany. The Third Reich began with romanticism. To Sheldon's mind the end of "character" meant an end to democracy in the old Republican tradition in America. American land had brought with it a virtue of its own, which had imparted a courage and rugged independence to its owners that modern cities were threatening. It was the battle southern yeoman farmers had fought some fifty years earlier. If we are liable to the vagaries of toilet training, what do we do with Achilles-- or, for that matter, Stonewall Jackson? The camera

valorized what the couch shrugged. Sheldon's somatotypy effectively finished out and encapsulated the eugenic and the romantic tradition in ways that we have not cared to understand and hence have ignored. Nietzsche preached power and the superman; Freud preached management and civilization, and, to the reactionary mind, cowardice. Ironically, Nietzsche has been reappropriated by the political Left and largely dehistoricised and emasculated, while Freud has become the idol of environmentalists (Bloom 1987, Himmelfarb 1994).

John Carey's recent book, The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939, (1992) suggests a way to see eugenic thinking in England and America that does not treat it exclusively as either a biological science or as a nazi spook, but rather as part of a generalized, reactionary culture. Carey understands, as did G. K. Chesterton (1927), C. S. Lewis (1944, 1979), Eric Bentley (1944, 1957), and a host of educated moderns, that eugenics, at least among the literati, had roots in a species of romanticism that has gone mostly undiscussed since the second World War. Perhaps we have found this dark underbelly of eugenics (the old beast-self of the warrior) undiscussable because it is so thoroughly objectionable, not to say terrifying. Perhaps it has not been discussed because it is a paradigm that has passed largely out of academic acceptability and

consciousness since 1945. But the silence continues, despite the fact that conventionally we have loathed fascism and all its works. Paradoxically, however, we have loathed fascism at the expense of forgetting its animus. Young nazi elites committed suicide by the dozens in Berlin offices in the spring of 1945 rather than live in a democratic world. This fact we grasp only dimly in these more egalitarian times. As Jonah Goldhagen has argued recently, Adolf Hitler indeed had "willing executioners" (Goldhagen 1996), a contention that does not sit well with many Germans. It is easier to blame Hitler.

Current American scholarship on eugenics is, in fact, a euphemism, a polite, or technical, image of a diabolism that plumbs no deeper into the western male psyche than "fitter family contests" at county fairs (Paul 1995). Only historians of science forgetful of more messy and intractable cultural and gender issues could regard eugenics as it has been regarded for the past fifty years. That this should be the case despite recent claims to regard science in all its social and personal dimensions demands explanation.

For one thing, overall critical, historiographic, trends since World War II have not favored the kind of cultural and intellectual approach I have advocated here. Such an approach, presumably, is part of the intellectual past that itself requires deconstruction and is therefore

not "privileged". As Gertrude Himmelfarb has argued, modern literary theory, which made its hegemonic way into history writing, has effectively elided great segments of modern history with both impunity and arrogance (Himmelfarb 1994). Deconstructionists, for example, have fashioned a view of the recent past that, among other indignities, has denied the reality of evil and therefore the reality of good. The slippage isn't always palpable until serious matters are approached.

Asks Himmelfarb:

What happens to our sense of the past when we are told that there is no past save that which the historian creates? [And what of that] momentous historical event, the Holocaust, when it can be so readily "demystified" and "normalized", "structuralized" and "deconstructed"? And what happens when we look into the abyss and see no real beasts but only a pale reflection of ourselves--of our particular race, class, and gender; or, worse yet, when we see only the metaphorical, rhetorical, mythical, linguistic, semiotic, figurative, fictive simulations of our imaginations? (Himmelfarb 1994, p. 25)

It is remarkable that German scholars seem to excel in ignoring the relativism, not to say the sheer nihilism, of the deconstructionists. Perhaps their proximity to mass murder permits less academic indulgence. Klaus Theweleit's

monumental, two-volume opus, Male Fantasies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror (1987, 1989), is an admirable exception to denatured American accounts of eugenics and race hygiene as is Ulfried Geuter's The Professionalization of Psychology in Nazi Germany (1992). A salacious account of the mind of the German soldier, Theweleit's book belies the conventional intellectual categories within which fascism has been conceived. Both studies embrace the numbing reality of evil at face value, an office that appears to lie outside the range of those historians who want to put a more sanguine and winning face on the history of biology and genetics, and separate its history from the irrationalities of mass murder.

The social sciences, too, have been able to tell us very little about how the death camps came to be. Feminist Barbara Ehrenreich has suggested that liberal sociological, Marxist, and psychoanalytical, theories of totalitarianism "have very little to tell us about what we ultimately need most to understand, and that is murder. The 'irrational' for most social scientists is also the unknowable" (Theweleit 1987, p. xi).

Ulfried Geuter has emphasized how historians of psychology, possessed of a linear view of scientific development, tend to forget periods in history they find objectionable. "This period [the nazi era]" says Geuter, "does not fit well into the view of history held by

psychologists. Where the history of psychological theory is seen as a continual accumulation of knowledge, and the history of the application of psychology is understood as the progressive humanizing of social life, periods such as the Third Reich must be disavowed" (Geuter 1992, p. 26). Stefan Kuehl's recent book, The Nazi Connection (1994) serves as a partial corrective to accounts of eugenics that do not include a reactionary component. Kuehl has established beyond question the powerful commitment to "Lebensborn" that existed among American medical doctors during the 1930s. That a German sociologist was required for this job is significant.

I contend that eugenics and neo-romanticism are finally inseparable items, and that their separation among historians of eugenics has made for a one-dimensional, tidy, and convenient history. Charles Rosenberg, responding to Daniel Kevles' In the Name of Eugenics (1985), has implied as much. "Eugenics has become a familiar term to historians and informed readers", says Rosenberg, "but debate has on the whole stimulated more posturing and self-congratulatory moralizing than serious scholarship" (Rosenberg 1986). Although Diane Paul (1992) is sensitive to Rosenberg's remark--indeed she cites it--her own work as a political scientist falls into much the same category as Kevles', in that it is politically driven and obtains currency by capturing the state of the eugenics/genetics art for

policymakers. For all its veracity, Paul's work simply is not concerned with the awful depths (the sense of "injured merit") of the early twentieth-century male psyche. It is easier for her to simply omit it than face it squarely, a prospect that has the unsettling power to summon hell itself. Reading Diane Paul and reading Klaus Theweleit is the difference between discussing Shakespeare's Othello and surviving a year in combat.⁵

Eugenic utopianism in this century springs from a deep-seated moral reaction by intellectuals to the indignities and the cowardliness of modern life, to the perceived loss of the possibilities for male virtue, honor, and physical strength, and, finally, to the loss of male prerogative and power. It was a reaction that manifested itself in the barbarism of the interwar German Freikorps, a barbarism that Theweleit has ferreted out in Proustian detail. The Freikorps, as were the nazis proper, was motivated, according to Theweleit, by an iron refusal to accept what they regarded as the cowardly terms and conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, which is conventional wisdom. But

⁵ In this I echo Gertrude Himmelfarb: "The beasts of modernism have mutated into the beasts of postmodernism--relativism into nihilism, amorality into immorality, irrationality into insanity, sexual deviancy into polymorphous perversity. And since then generations of intelligent students under the guidance of their enlightened professors have looked into the abyss, have contemplated those beasts, and have said, "How interesting, how exciting" (Himmelfarb, 1995, p. 6).

they were motivated also by a fear of and disgust with the modern, the feminine, and a capitalist world they found too cowardly to command their respect. Capitalism was to these steeled war veterans pusilanimous and unmanly. It operated below the mark of courage and honor to which they had become used in the trenches, and to which their quasi-feudal upbringing in late nineteenth-century Germany had conditioned them.

Stefan Zweig's idyllic portrait of pre-World War I Germany, with its stable money, its leafy boulevards, its secure villages, even for much of the working class, affords an idea of what was idealized and what was perceived lost by educated Mandarins and their followers, both in Europe and in depression and "New-Deal" America. The reactionary Agrarian movement in the United States during the late 1920s and 1930s parallels the Freikorps antipathy for cities, for industrialization, for capitalists, for, in a word, modernism. The Southern "mythos" ⁶ advocated by agrarian poet and novelist Allen Tate posits a literary and heroic alternative to the positivist spirit of science and technology and speaks to the same antimodernism that we find in Weimar and nazi Germany. Richard Weaver's eloquent defense of tradition in America shares more with reactionary

⁶ In this context compare "The Fuehrer Mythos", an idealization that fulfilled similar psychological needs for the nazis. The confederate past was regarded as distinctly heroic by Tate and the agrarians.

feeling in Germany than anyone has cared to own (Genovese 1994). William Sheldon's book, Psychology and the Promethean Will (1936) affirms that this countermodernist passion applied to a Rhode Island naturalist as well as to a Sewanee aesthete. Joseph Goebbels' post-war novel, Michael (1921), depicts the same heroic, chauvinist, spirit refusing to buckle under to the demands of a insipid and compromising Weimar Republic. It was this fierce piety, this felt superiority to the commercial and money-making "herd", that comprized the psychic core of "reactionary modernism" in literature and the arts as well as in the heroic strain of eugenics I have described here.

We should begin to emphasize just those aspects of culture and mind that were so crucial for modernist intellectuals, yet have been all but ignored by scholarship on eugenics as it stands today, concentrating as it does on the "scientific" views of individual biologists and eugenicists of the past. Recent scholarship on eugenics, in fact, has suffered from the most appalling presentism for having ignored conservative thought. Biologists and historians have, no doubt, been justly outraged by the Holocaust and the scientific thought that contributed to it. To the degree that these could be blamed on the nazis exclusively, a saving of scientific and national and class face was allowed. In this way the nazis could be regarded as discrete and diabolical villians, enemies of the

Enlightenment; and the rest of western thought--the "holistic" games intellectuals played for decades--could be shriven of guilt by historical omission. Genuine science, thriving on democracy and obeying Mertonian Norms in a post World War II environment, could be distanced from the convulsions of neo-romanticism and irrationalism. We could pretend that neither the modernist revolt nor Anglo-American eugenics had anything to do with the racial pseudo-science promulgated by the nazis, and certainly nothing directly to do with mass murder.

The position I have advocated destabilizes a complacent history of eugenics and summons other sources and perspectives than those now embraced. It allows us to appreciate that the advocacy of eugenic reform was not just a platform motivated by science and social interests but one motivated by the perceived decadence and personal alienation that industrialization and capitalism had wreaked upon the old guard and their idealizers--their middle class devotees. "The center will not hold" exclaimed W. B. Yeats, eugenicist and aesthete. T. S. Eliot and Adolf Hitler recoiled about equally from the "wasteland", despite their polar orthodoxies in other ways, even as Dean Inge's advocacy of eugenics in London during the 1920s demonstrates just what a Christian identity modernist reaction assumed.⁷ Even

⁷ T.S. Eliot's comment in 1931 confirms a conservative and modernist connection between London-Paris and Nashville:

Hitler, no doubt to coopt Christian sentiment, could intone about "The Almighty" (Mosse 1966). By Eliot's royalist and reactionary standards, science and technology had created a hell on earth, and it is hardly surprising that Eliot's The Wasteland reverberates with damnation, and in a way prophetic of the actual hell contrived by the nazis some two decades later. We may have more to learn about the culture of eugenics from Dante and Thomas Mann than from Francis Galton, the original "boy-scout" of the eugenics movement.

We fall wide of the mark if we simply try to relate nazism to the American scene, which is as facile as it is unprofitable. But if we see eugenics as operating in a common culture driven by the "aristocratic" (or beleaguered middle-class) conviction that poor and ugly people were threatening the privileged world of the well favored and educated with vulgarity, promiscuous breeding, and ever-encroaching suburbs, then both nazis and the intellectual and social elite in Britain and America, from anthropologists to poets, are more equitably impugned, if this is our goal, as well as more thoroughly understood. Eugenics, population control, scientific and artistic utopianism, and intellectual pride, were cut from the same cloth, even if they did not always pull in the same political directions. Eugenics could be, and was, supported

"It is a sound and right reaction which impelled...[the] Southerners to write their book [I'll Take My Stand] (Hallman 1984, p. 183).

for very different reasons. One has only to remember Herman Muller's aborted attempt to introduce eugenics into Stalinist Russia to see that the political Left loathed the "masses"--never a very complimentary appellation--with as much choler as the political Right, even as they both wanted to defend workers from the evils of capitalism (Paul 1984).

This is why Ron Rosenbaum's recent article on William Sheldon's "posture-photos", as he mistakenly calls them in the New York Times (1995), is misguided. Rosenbaum's is bad history not because Sheldon was no racist. He was. But he was even more a eugenicist and a modernist reactionary. The emphases here are crucial, because we can dispatch racism with more facility than we can modernist discontent and elitism, which persists today in the political Left (in the forms of post-modernism, especially ecology) more than in the Right. Sheldon, philosopher manque and prophet of "biological humanics" (Sheldon 1949, 1975), was piping a reactionary tune that had its origin outside his constitutional laboratory at Columbia. Eugenics followed culture, not the other way around. The science of the thing was a question of consolidation and legitimation, not origination. Neither was eugenics refuted by science (Provine 1973, Bowler 1993). It was "refuted" by conscience and political expediency.

If we want to cast blame and provoke embarrassment, as Rosenbaum does, we need to point the finger at the modernist

literati and the political Left, who have managed to finesse blame for the holocaust. The terms and conditions of this achievement remain terrae incognitae, along with the history of constitutional medicine. Probably we would need to get tough with Bertrand Russell, T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, W.B. Yeats, Virginia Wolfe, H.G. Wells, to name only a few, an engagement from which Rosenbaum would likely flinch. For to do so would mean interrogating the modernist "Greats" in a way that could undermine current elitist assumptions, and this despite all the recent noise among literary deconstructionists about egalitarianism. To face the modernists historically would imply that we and Rosenbaum could not, with John Steinbeck, patronize the Joads with as much good conscience and urbanity; or delight in the embarrassments of Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*; or await the arrival of T.S. Eliot's "young man carbuncular" (the dysgenic commoner) in The Waste Land. The best in the modernist literary tradition was often the worst, just as the worst in the eugenic tradition was often the literary best.

A NOTE ON ARCHIVES

Many of Huxley's letters to Sheldon have survived and appear in the Collected Letters of Aldous Huxley (1961). Huxley was prolific and left a formidable paper trail. Some of Sheldon's letters to Huxley, which are presumably fewer in number and are uncollected (Sheldon was not an enthusiastic or faithful correspondent, according to friend and collaborator, Emil Hartl), appear in Sheldon's papers in the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., where they were deposited in 1978 by Sheldon's long-time friend and advocate, Roland Elderkin.

Sheldon's papers, unfortunately, are in an appalling state of disarray, so that it is not possible to even specify with any usefulness which file box contains given letters. To compound the disorder, when the article by Ron Rosenbaum, "The Great Ivy League Nude Posture Photo Scandal", appeared in the New York Times Magazine in January 1995, it prompted lawyers in Washington to confiscate Sheldon's papers for a time in order to comb through them for further offending photographs or negatives. This "raiding" of the files, of which there are approximately 25, only made things worse.

The overall content of the folders is somewhat disappointing for an historian with my immediate focus, because personal correspondence is relatively scarce and the bulk of the material is comprized of newspaper clippings,

letters to and from publishers, miscellaneous financial and insurance material, and other "jetsam and flotsam" that was in Sheldon's apartment at the time of his death. The letters I cite in this dissertation were exceptions to this rule: letters to and from notables like Charles Lindbergh, Aldous Huxley, Lewis Mumford, Ernst Kretschmer, Carl Jung, and Anthony M. Ludovici. It is very likely that much more scattered correspondence to and from Sheldon exists. Several folders do contain basic items such as diplomas, graduation programs, medical school notebooks, early drafts of books and articles, and an envelope of old photographs that would be useful for compiling a biography or full-blown critical study.

Sarah Tracy mentioned to me in conversation (April 5, 1992) that she saw in the attic of Emil Hartl's old office (Hartl has since moved to a new building in Boston which now houses the national headquarters for Goodwill Industries) a collection of stylized, professional, photographs of Sheldon. The photographs feature Sheldon in riding habit, tennis costume, etc. Sheldon cut an impresssive figure as a young man and even as a middled-aged man. Ellery Lanier in e-mail correspondence (March 14, 1995) reports that when Sheldon spoke at the Natural History Museum in the late 1940s, he looked very smart and was often in the habit of giving sartorial advice. This concern with dress and appearance is consistent with Sheldon's aesthetic interests

in the human physique.

The Rockefeller Archives contain two folders, approximately seventy five (75) pages in length, that deal with Sheldon and constitutional medicine (see Bibliography). Unfortunately, the material in the folders is not paginated; therefore, one must arrange the material based on the respective dates that appear throughout the files.

The Galton Institute in London houses a 30-page file that contains letters to and from Anthony M. Ludovici, the minutes of a meeting of the Nietzsche Society, and a paper that Ludovici read to the Eugenics Society in 1933 (see Bibliography).

The Francis A. Countway Countway Library of Medicine in Boston houses the Paul Richards Collection, which contains letters of Havelock Ellis, from which the references to Ludovici were derived. Lesley Hall at the Wellcome Institute in London for shared this material with me.

A. M. Ludovici's "Last Will and Testament" was obtained from the High Court of Justice in Ipswich, Suffolk, England.

Steve Wagner, Curator of the History of Science Collections at the University of Oklahoma, after repeated inquiries over the past year, has obtained legal permission from Ludovici's solicitors in England to have the manuscripts (see chapter 1) named in Ludovici's Will (an autobiography and a manuscript entitled The English Countryside) deposited in the archive center at the

University of Edinburgh, where they are presently being photocopied and mailed to the History of Science Collections, University of Oklahoma.

ARCHIVES

Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Paul Richards
Collection, Boston University.
The Galton Institute, London, England.
The Rockefeller Archives, New York.
The Sheldon Archives, National Anthropological Archives,
Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington D.C.
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London,
England.

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Academic Degrees

- 5/97 Ph.D., Science and Technology Studies (History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Dissertation: "William H. Sheldon and the Culture of the Somatotype"
- 5/92 M.S., Science and Technology Studies (History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Thesis: "The Somatotype as Fiction: William H. Sheldon's Constitutional Psychology"
- 5/71 B.A. English Literature (with Honors) University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Professional Positions

- 01/96 -- 07/97: Instructor in History of Science, Department of the History of Science, University of Oklahoma
- 09/95 -- 12/95: Teaching Assistant in History of Science, Department of the History of Science, University of Oklahoma
- 09/94 -- 05/95: Instructor in Science and Technology Studies, Department of Humanities, Science, and Technology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- 09/91 -- 12/93: Teaching Assistant in History, Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- 09/90 -- 09/91: Teaching Assistant in Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- 09/87 -- 05/90: Instructor (part-time), Department of Language Arts, Lee College, Cleveland, TN.
- 09/75 -- 09/87: Instructor (part-time), Department of English, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
- 09/82 -- 09/90: Field Representative (Sales), The Guardian Life Insurance Co. of America, 201 Park Ave. South, New York, New York.
- 09/76 -- 06/82: Editor/Writer, Senior Associate Manager of Publications/Communications, Planning Research Corp. (PRC Energy Analysis) McLean, Virginia.

Publications

"Charles Darwins Idee der natuerlichen Selektion im *Journal of Mental Science* (1859-1875)", pp. 262-280 in Eve-Marie Engels (ed.), *Die Rezeption von Evolutionstheorien im 19. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995. [German trans. by Eve-Marie Engels; English text available from the author.]

Presentations

- 10/96 "Saving the Physique: William Sheldon and the Revolt Against Psychoanalysis" Oklahoma Society for Psychoanalytic Studies, Division of American Psychological Association, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- 4/95 "A Brilliant Investigator of the Lone-wolf Type: Rockefeller Foundation Funding and William H. Sheldon's Research in Constitutional Medicine, 1942-1955," Center for the Study of Science in Society, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- 11/94 "The Culture of the Somatotype," History of Science Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, La.
- 5/92 "The Idealized Physique and the Fictional Somatotype," Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Memphis, Tn.
- 3/92 "William H. Sheldon and Aesthetic Eugenics," Mephistos Annual Meeting, Princeton University.

Courses Taught

- 1/96-7/96 History of Science Since the Seventeenth Century (two semesters), Department of the History of Science, University of Oklahoma.
- 1/93-5/94 Humanities, Science, and Technology (two semesters), Center for Programs in Humanities, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- 9/94-8/95 American History to 1860/American History since 1860 (three semesters), Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- 9/87-5/89 World Literature Survey and English Composition (five semesters), Department of Language Arts, Lee College, Cleveland, TN.
- 1/86-5/86 English Composition (two semesters), Department of English, and Western Civilization History (two semesters), Department of History, Cleveland State Community College, Cleveland, TN.
- 1/89-5/80 English Composition, Department of English, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Special Courses

1/94-5/94 "A History of Human Typologizing," Humanities, Science, and Technology Program, Center for Programs in the Humanities, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

1/95-5/95 "Intellectual Background to the Holocaust," with Dr. David Barzilai, Judaic Studies Program, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

6/89-7/89 "Introduction to Shakespeare," Program for Gifted Students (5th graders), Cleveland State Community College.

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Research Interests

- History of Twentieth-Century American Medicine, especially William H. Sheldon Ph.D./M.D. (1898-1977), American Constitutional Medicine, and the American Eugenics Movement
- History of Psychiatry and Psychology (French, German, American), especially pre-Freudian German somaticists and twentieth-century "Eugenic psychiatry"
- The Biological Sciences and Modernist Culture; History of the Holocaust and the Third Reich; Science in the English Novel; Science in the Ante-Bellum American South
- History of Science Since the Seventeenth Century; U.S. History

Professional Associations

American Association for the History of Medicine; History of Science Society; International Association for Teachers of History of Science; Society for Literature and Science; American Association of Life Underwriters

