

Extracts from *The Little History*

Francis John Mott

Francis John Mott (1901-1980) started The Society of Life in 1937, an offshoot of Annie Bill's The Christian Science Parent Church (itself an offshoot of Christian Science). Francis Mott wrote several books on his cosmology which was influenced by popular science and early Freudian analysis. Mott had undergone therapy with Nandor Fodor, and conducted group psychology and individual dream analysis himself. He met F. M. Alexander and quotes short extracts from letters from Alexander. He also met Alexander's pupil and friend, Dr J. E. R. McDonagh, and the Alexander teacher Charles Neil. He relates he had lessons in Alexander's technique from Miss Ida Stamm (who is not a known teacher of the Technique). His two-volume work (a third volume was planned but not finished), *The Little History*, relates the development of his philosophy on the "nature and origin of mind". These extracts concerning Alexander, McDonagh, Neil, Magnus, Coghill, are from *The Little History*, Mark Beech Publishers, 1972. vol. 2. The original footnote numbering is preserved in square brackets [].

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

THE SECOND CONFRONTATION

The term confrontation often implies a hostile encounter, but I use it here in the sense of the challenge which the Little History must make to all external forms of thought. For the Little History is the experience of the embodiment of the Universal Design of Creation in a human social form: and by that fact it must in principle challenge every other human thought to stand and reveal in itself the presence of that one design of Being.

This it must do, I repeat, *in principle*, quite apart from the relatively few cases where it has so far been able to instrument its challenge. The Little History thus acts as the representative of the Creator, perpetually demonstrating the presence of God in the forms of the world and of human mind. Thus the sequential embodiments of the Little History represent the organization of the Church in one of its potential manifestations in the form schematized in Vol. I, page 175 by the circle E.

The confrontations made by the Little History are, therefore, potentially of planetary significance, a fact which the other parties to these confrontations could hardly be expected at this stage to understand, much less to acquiesce in. This, as will shortly be seen, was particularly true of that confrontation which this chapter is to describe. There is another factor which has militated against our efforts to make these syntheses, namely the automatic assumption of their essentially hostile intent. This suspicion is wholly comprehensible since what we are attempting is so new that our intent is almost bound to appear unfriendly. Indeed, synthesis can come only through opposition, and if the opposing parties do not understand that the intent is not to oppose for opposition's sake, but to secure an outcome in synthesis, then inevitably hostility is aroused.

It should not be supposed that the confrontations which we of the Little History experience are always initiated by us. Indeed, as the previous chapter will have made clear, they can just as easily arise from 'the other side'. But it is necessary to see that there is bound to be, at least for the time being, a diametric opposition between our intent and theirs. For *our* intent is to reveal in the thought of others that universal element which we have collectively embodied. This puts us in a unique position. It is hardly likely, at any rate for the time being, that anyone outside the stream of the Little History will deliberately approach *us* with the intent to acquire the knowledge of our central theme for synthesis with their own. For what other reason then, *would* they approach us save to disprove the validity of what they would consider our presumption, and so either to rid themselves of an irritant or, having reacted with lofty contempt, to justify that reaction. That such situations are indeed capable of developing will surely have been demonstrated by the previous chapter: for the astrologer friend, benign though he may personally have been, had the intent to show that the Little History was something quite other than we believed it to be. In short, though he probably never realized it, he was in principle out to destroy us by confronting us with what he believed to be the truth about something which we thought we knew about and did not. This is never the spirit of the confrontations which *we* initiate. Their intent

is always to produce a fruitful synthesis, a synthesis which must bless 'the other side' as much as ours.

In this connection, and at this very point, it may be of great value for the reader to be reminded of the purpose of this historical presentation of our discoveries. It is to describe not simply the discoveries themselves, but the mechanism of collective mind through which the discoveries were made. The purpose is, as it were, to present not only the golden eggs, but the goose that laid them. Unless the reader bears this in mind he may, in spite of the many warnings already offered on this matter, slip now and then unwittingly into the assumption that these discoveries are *mine*, and that the description offered of their history is a personal one. Nothing could be further from the truth. The discoveries are in no sense mine except that I have been the articulate focus of the collective mind that made them. The operation of that mind is to be seen at work in the persistent manifestation of the law of coincidence. This law has been given an instrument in the organization of the Little History, which is to say its covenant, and this covenant has focussed and intensified the natural processes of coincidence which are everywhere at work, unharnessed and unrecognized. The description of the result of the harnessing of this law always naturally involves its effect upon *me*, namely in the way in which it brings me into touch with certain individuals at certain times. But also there arises at this point the matter of my reaction to the people and circumstances to which these coincidences relate me. And this cannot be adequately described without some little concern for the personalities involved. To omit all mention of this factor would make the record meaningless, for the nature of these personalities and their social, moral, national and intellectual status plays a considerable part in their reaction to the relations in which, often against their will and to their considerable irritation, I have been led, as instrument of the Little History, to involve them. To give an account of our experiences shorn of all personal elements would be to offer the reader what Macaulay called that most boring of descriptions, a mere epitome. The discerning reader will read the descriptions given here as descriptions of a process as real as the growth of a crystal in a solution. And he will see that just as a reliable description of such a growth will call for a description of the nature and habit of the materials involved, so also I must describe the nature and habit of the human beings who have instrumented the peripheral forces of human thought in their convergence upon the nuclear, seed focus operating through the Little History. Indeed, the growth of a crystal offers a certain analogy with the syntheses which the Little History instruments. For as the tiny 'seed' crystal, set in

an appropriate solution, acts as the focus upon which the formative forces of the crystalline principles can converge, to build up a manifestation of the nature of those principles, so the tiny 'seed' form of the Society of Life, progressively set into synthetic relations with the total mental-moral environment, acts as a centre to which all knowledge can progressively converge, there to build up a manifestation of the principles of Being. It is important that men shall be offered the opportunity of seeing this process in operation, and it is for that reason alone that the discoveries and syntheses made by the Little History are given an historical setting, and not presented entirely without a human and emotional background.

The history of the confrontations here being described goes back to a time before the Society of Life was formed. It can be seen germinating during Mrs. Bill's period of organization - see Vol. I, pages 138, 139. At that time I did not think in terms of confrontation, nor would I then have had the confidence to believe that I could carry such an activity to success. Indeed, as I have said above, the first confrontation was forced upon me. I was thrown into the water and compelled to swim for my life. But yet at heart I knew that the Little History, if it were what I believed it to be, must be like a potentially mighty ship which, moving through the mental-moral waters of the world, must stir and draw into its wake an ever-increasing sum of the flotsam and jetsam of divisive thought and organization which the breakdown of Israel had unwittingly released - see Vol. I, pages 183-196 and 398-403.

The first confrontation, namely that with astrology was, as I have said, forced upon me at a time when I was entirely without Covenant protection. The second took place in very different circumstances, for in May, 1937, the tiny Society of Life was transformed 'overnight' into a *relatively* large international organization - see Vol. I, pages 160-162 and 299. I suddenly found myself at the centre of a circle of ardent people, most of whom very quickly saw the need to act as a sort of scanning instrument designed to detect in the outside world, points of view that seemed to offer a possibility of synthesis with our central theme and, having detected such, to bring it to my attention - see Vol. I, page 313.¹ [1]

The speedy success of this scanning mechanism took me completely by surprise, for within a few weeks it had impelled me into a confrontation which, both directly and indirectly through ancillary connections, yielded invaluable illumination over a period of a dozen years, and culminated in the year 1949 in the revelation of a vital new aspect of the Little History.

1 It was this rough mechanism which formed the prototype of what is schematized in Vol. I, page 317.

The initial and fundamental confrontation was with Frederick Matthias Alexander, who claimed to have discovered and to have applied the key to human integration. This confrontation was initiated by Fanny Culver Buxton,² [2] who sent me one of Mr Alexander's books. The very circumstances of Mrs Buxton's *own* introduction to Alexander's work was itself to prove of value to the Little History, for she learned of it from a medical friend to whom she had mentioned the Society of Life and its ideas. This man, a then-prominent London surgeon, Mr J. E. R. McDonagh, had himself tried to create a cosmology. He was also interested in Alexander's concept of integration which, though of a different order, appealed to him from the standpoint of medicine as a science of the total integration of man. It seems that McDonagh handed Mrs Buxton a copy of Alexander's book as a reciprocal to her representation to him of the Society of Life. This book, sent on to me, could be seen, therefore, as a first very small step in the confrontation of three distinct concepts of integration.

It required only a very short acquaintance with Alexander's writings to show me that he had grasped principles of integration familiar to us of the Little History. He presented ideas and practices which could be seen to offer a clear psycho-physical parallel with those known to us in the mental-moral field. I foresaw the hopeful possibility that Alexander would only too gladly associate with those who could confirm the universality of his ideas and show how his integrated individuals could ultimately become accommodated in social forms whose collective principles supported those which such individuals were applying in their own bodies. I had, however, reckoned without Alexander's assumption that he alone understood, or was on the way to understanding, the whole subject of integration. It was *his* domain. As to how he proposed to apply his discoveries to society, that was (to him!) simplicity itself: the multiplication of 'Alexanderized' individuals would transform society into an integrated whole. Thus when Mrs Buxton brought me into contact with McDonagh and Alexander, the latter listened superciliously to my first sentences, then turned away abruptly saying that I did not know what I was talking about. Mrs Buxton and McDonagh were visibly embarrassed, and arrangements were made for me to visit McDonagh's house to discuss not only his medically-derived cosmology, but also his peculiar *protégé*, F. Matthias Alexander - see the Seventysixth appendix.

2 Mrs Buxton (an American then living in London) was one of those who came over to the Society of Life from Mrs Bill's organization, thus helping to demonstrate the validity of the principle which Mrs Bill had hoped to instrument in terms of Vol. I, page 42.

My interest in Alexander's work was completely unaffected by his behaviour. During such time as I could then spare from my arduous labours,³ [3] I read a good deal from his books, but I knew that reading could not give one any real idea of the Alexander method. To go to him for lessons proved out of the question, but once again the guiding hand of coincidence (See Vol. I, pages 127, 128) put me in the way of gaining a small preliminary idea.⁴ [4]

At this juncture I think it advisable for me to offer an idea of how it appeared that Alexander's work and ideas reflected our own. This can be best done, I think, by means of a tabular comparison:

1. Alexander demonstrated a system of *dynamic* psycho-physical integration, in which the unity of the human organism is preserved and fostered in its activities. Professor John Dewey asserted that Alexander had 'created what may be truly called a physiology of the *living* organism'.⁵ [5]
 1. The Little History has evolved a system of dynamic mental-moral integration. The first demonstration of this was in the form of a *Gedanken* (see Vol. I, page 234) which clearly showed how the Christian Science church could have passed from a state of static integration⁶ [6] to the *dynamic* form schematized in Vol. I, page 42.
 2. Alexander demonstrated the utter unreliability of feeling as a guide to the right use of the self. He showed that activity which *feels* right is simply the outcome of habitual performance.
 2. Mrs Bill's struggle with the Christian Science church revealed the utter unreliability of feeling as a guide to the right use of organization. The Christian Scientists had completely inherited
- 3 During this period I was writing a book; giving lectures; conducting a fairly large correspondence; preparing for the publication of a monthly magazine and making preparations to leave for the United States in September [1937].
- 4 I went to stay in a small hotel, and found that the proprietor had trained with Alexander. She (a Miss Ida Stamm) gladly gave me some free lessons in the use of the self by Alexander's methods.
- 5 Alexander, F. Matthias: *The Use of the Self*, page xiv. London, Methuen, 1932.
- 6 Static integration around the image of a dead leader, controlled by a specifically unchangeable constitution - see the Manual of The Mother Church, Article xxxv, Section 3.

the immemorial feeling that 'of course' organization *must* be maintained. Not even the demands of their own sacred constitution, and Mrs Bill's insistent representations, could shake them from the stupor laid upon them by conventional feelings.

3. Alexander showed that any attempt to change a feeling of use may engender a sense of insecurity, and create a state of fear, and that this condition may compel the individual to revert to his old habits of use, because they *feel* right, and so make him feel secure again.
 3. The Christian Scientists, shown by Mrs Bill the wrong usage which they were collectively making of their constitutional mechanism, were afflicted by a great sense of insecurity, and were over taken by a fear of losing the safety of The Mother Church. They recoiled from the demands of principle and insisted upon maintaining those conditions of collective action which satisfied their feelings.
4. Alexander showed that the man who acts by feeling is self-condemned to be an end-gainer. That is to say, he impulsively carries out his wishes without regard for the means whereby he will carry them out, and so he concerns himself only with gaining the desired end without a thought for the strain he puts upon the psycho-physical mechanism during the gaining of that end.
 4. Seen in the light of Alexander's concept, the Christian Scientists (regarded as an organized body) were end-gainers. Their one desire was to maintain their church organization in a condition as nearly as possible like that left by Mrs Eddy. To gain this end they disrupted the delicate covenant mechanism which Mrs Eddy had set up. Acting by feeling, they refused to consider (refused even to hear the possibility) that the delicate mental-moral mechanism of their Covenant was being debauched.
5. Alexander wrote that in the performance of any muscular action by conscious guidance and control there are four essential stages:
 - i) The conception of the movement required;
 - ii) The inhibition of erroneous preconceived ideas which subcon-

- sciously suggest the manner in which the movement or series of movements should be performed;
- iii) The new and conscious mental orders which will set in motion the muscular mechanism essential to the correct performance of the action;
 - iv) The movements of the muscles which carry out the mental orders.⁷ [7]

5. Here we see a certain reflection of the fourfold order of unfoldment - see Vol. I, pages 155-159. Alexander's stage 1 corresponds to the adventive point in an emergent series. It is the point of conception. Alexander's stage 2 is definitely the stage in which the *feelings* must be mastered and made to submit to the new impulse. Alexander's stage 3 is the stage in which the right *ideas* are formulated. Alexander's stage 4 is the stage of action. Here we see a complete parallel with the stages of Ego, Emotion, Reason and Will which we had discerned at work in an entirely different context, namely that provided by the Little History.

6. The crux of Alexander's whole system is the Primary Control, which he discovered in the course of seeking to correct his own mistaken use of himself. This control he found to be located in the relation of the head to the trunk - that is to say, inevitably, in the use of the neck.⁸ ⁹[8] To this central point all the psycho-physical integration of the body had to be referred at every stage.

⁷ Alexander, F. Matthias: *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, pages 135, 136. London, Methuen, 1935.

⁸ Some of Alexander's medical supporters sought to identify this primary control in the neck with the 'central control' discovered by Professor Rudolph Magnus of Utrecht and reported in his *Körperstellung*. This 'central control' is apparently composed of the tiny muscles which direct the positioning of the head, namely the atlas-occipital, axis-occipital, and the atlas-axis muscles taken together as a unit. [See footnote 9.] But this identification has been questioned. I prefer to say only that the primary control seems to lie in the relation of the head to the trunk which, of course, *means* in the use of the neck.

⁹ See, for instance, the brochure by Mungo Douglas, M. B., entitled 'Re-orientation of the Viewpoint upon the Study of Anatomy', self-published, November, 1937.

6. This was from our point of view the most stunningly important of all Alexander's discoveries, for it so closely resembled the concept of the Universal Design of Creation. This matter is so important that I propose to give it special attention in the immediately following paragraphs. Here I would add that Mrs Bill showed a parallel system in the Christian Science church, namely its dependence for its controlled evolution upon a Vital Moral Point at every stage of that evolution.

Underlying Alexander's concept of the psycho-physical integration of the animal organism was a clearly discernable sense of the presence of the Universal Design and the Periodic Order - Mrs Bill's two great concepts - Vol. I, pages 95 - 104. For it was clear that Alexander thought of every human act as ideally relatable to a central focus, which was instrumented by the relation of the head to the trunk. It was from this focus that all muscular action ideally stemmed, radiating from this alleged focal point to the periphery of the body and beyond it into the periphery of space - see Figure Twentyfive. Indeed, when Alexander adduced the work of Coghill on this general subject, and received Coghill's unqualified approval, this idea of a flow of neuro-muscular action from a central point in the organism was given concrete support and considerable weight.¹⁰ [10]

For Coghill actually described how, in his study of *Amblystoma*,¹¹ [11] the development of movement began at the head end of the creature and flowed down, as it were, to the peripheral organs, this development taking place in the organism as an integrated whole - see the Seventyseventh appendix. Alexander, long before he heard of Coghill (or Coghill heard of *him*) had developed the idea that all changes in the habits of use must be initiated at, or referred to, the primary control. Thus it can be seen that a parallel can be drawn between his concept of psycho-physical integration, and our concept of mental-moral integration. For as Alexander thought of all action as referring back to a 'central point'¹² [12] so we showed that all mental-moral action unfolds from a central point which we identified

10 I do not mean, of course, that the primary control is anatomically central, any more than the telephone exchange, called in the old days 'Central' was in the centre of the town it served.

11 The little creature named *amblystoma* is a miniature amphibian, whose larval tail persists in adult life.

12 Or, at any rate, to some neuro-muscular organ or set of organs which had assumed in the adult the function of such a point. That it should be the *neck* that acts in this role is interesting for the fact that (among other things) the mid-point of the cervical stem is the neural focus of that most 'peripheral' of functions, the act of breathing - see the Sixtythird appendix.

with the human ego. When to this we added the fact (see Vol. I, pages 154-160) that such unfoldment always takes place through four stages, stages which bore a close relation to Alexander's ideas (see Item 5 of the tabulation above), then it seemed clear that the possibility of making a synthesis with his ideas was an absolute certainty. Unfortunately, as I have shown, the possibility of our being able to make that synthesis with and through Alexander himself seemed remote.

It was in this somewhat excited but frustrated state of mind that I arrived in New York in October 1937, to begin my first lecture tour - see Vol. I, pages 300-303. Naturally I told the Members of the Society of Life there about my experiences in London with Alexander.¹³ [13] The outcome was that a highly percipient and sensitive Member gave me a copy of a book by a Dr Trigant Burrow, a book which he believed dealt with matters related to Alexander's chosen field. He was entirely right in this belief, and I at once sought out Burrow, who proved to be even more co-operative than McDonagh - see the Seventy-eighth appendix. But the fact remained that neither of these men held for me the interest that Alexander continued to offer. Yet while *they* were accessible, *he* was the very *reverse*. But once again the Little History demonstrated its power to create integration through the provision of coincidence; on July 5th, 1940, I boarded a ship for Canada¹⁴ [14] and there I found Mr Alexander in the act of taking himself, his little school and its teachers to America as refugees from Hitler. He proved surprisingly (if relatively) tractable, and we were able to discuss his work, but I felt it inadvisable to try to discuss my own!¹⁵ [15] Only once did he show his old form, and that was when I mentioned to him that I knew Trigant Burrow. 'That man!' he snapped, 'he has stolen all his ideas from me.' When I mildly expostulated that this

13 The New York Members had a special, personal interest in the history of my meeting with Alexander and McDonagh, as Mrs Fanny C. Buxton was a New Yorker, and well known to all the New York field.

14 The Fodor affair had caused me to leave England on May 3, 1940, (see Note 11 of Chapter One), and Hitler's invasion of Holland, France and Belgium had caused me to return precipitately. On reaching England, I volunteered for war service, but only men of air-crew age were then wanted. I was allowed to leave to complete my business in the U.S., and my wife was permitted to accompany me because of our child. We sailed from Greenock on 'The Monarch of Bermuda' on July 5, 1940. When my military class was called in 1941, I sought to return but could not. I joined the Canadian Air Force - see note 26.

15 I suspect that Hitler's under-water presence had some effect in curbing Mr Alexander's natural cantankerousness.

did not appear from Burrow's writings, which were on a theme markedly different from Alexander's, he almost shouted that he had exposed Burrow in a book then about to be published; that he would send me a copy, and that I should then see for myself that Burrow was nothing more than a common plagiarist. At that moment I formed the suspicion that Alexander, the supremely psycho-physically integrated organism, was not merely unintegrated in the mental-moral field, but that he was virtually an ego-maniac. It may be wondered why I should bother to concern myself with the work of a man whom I suspected of being thus unbalanced. There were two reasons. First, I still believed that in the field of individual psycho-physical co-ordination he was a unique genius. Second, I felt that I had as yet no incontestable proof of his imbalance. It was to be the *dénouement* of his accusation of plagiarism against Burrow that would, a year later, prove beyond doubt his rabid ego-mania.

I felt that Alexander's position was so important to the Little History that, immediately upon becoming settled in Canada, I wrote an article on his work and published it in the official journal of the Society of Life.¹⁶ [16] The object of the article was, so far as possible, to set Alexander's work in right perspective for our members. Its tone may be judged by the following excerpt:

Despite what Mr Alexander might say to the contrary (and I think this is almost my only point of disagreement with him), the co-ordination of individuals does not mean the co-ordination of society, any more than a million individual driving licences can be substituted for the traffic regulations and signals which constitute the collective end of automobilism. The co-ordination of individual man, and the co-ordination of human society, must indeed go hand in hand. And both must be based upon the existence of the Universal Design. It is to me a miracle that Mr Alexander's work manifests at every turn evidence that by his patient research he also has discovered the Universal Design and the Periodic Order of Creation.¹⁷ [17]

To this there was little or no immediate reaction,¹⁸ [18] but six months

16 Entitled 'A Genius of Integration', it was published in the *Societon*, Vol. 3, No. 9, September 1940.

17 Ibid., page 29. [In retrospect it appears to have been an act of superlative innocence on my part to have left my adulation so unqualified. I doubt very much whether Alexander even so much as glanced at the article, but I am of the opinion that the title of his then-forthcoming book owed something to the Little History, for it was named *The Universal Constant in Living* - the italics are mine.]

18 I sent out a number of copies, but only the Earl of Lytton, a great admirer of

or so later there came an entirely surprising reaction from a member of the Society of Life. This member, a Swiss woman named Bertha Elise Baertschi, decided to go to Alexander clandestinely.¹⁹ [19] The result was foreseeable, though even I, with my experience of Alexander, was not prepared for the shameless exhibition of callous and treacherous behaviour which he made in relation to her appearance at his temporary home in Maine - see the Seventyninth appendix. One piece of his behaviour is specially relevant in this immediate context, for it concerns Trigant Burrow. In one of the letters which Miss Baertschi sent to members of the Society of Life, the following passage appears:

‘What do you think? [Trigant] Burrow stole his stuff from Alexander - he has it black on white. He is publishing a new book which he expects to be out in September, revealing this and other plagiarisms...’²⁰ [20]

It was in this roundabout fashion that I received confirmation of Alexander’s slanderous attacks upon Burrow. Until I held in my hands the letter from which the above passage is taken, I was inclined to feel that I surely must have misheard his impassioned outburst on the ‘Monarch of Bermuda’ almost a year before. If not that, then I felt that possibly he had been carried away with his gnawing irritations, and had said something foolish which, if indeed he remembered it at all, he would by now have regretted. But not at all. Evidently he was rashly broadcasting to those in his circle the self-evidently idiotic lie that Burrow had stolen his work. Moreover, what was still more incredible, he was evidently broadcasting the news that his new book (already presumably set up in type in America) contained an *exposé* of the plagiarist and his nefarious behaviour.²¹ [21]

But now this small and intimate circle of affairs was suddenly, though not unexpectedly, broken into by the chaos of world war. Our little pool of relations and ideas suddenly felt the surge of the tidal wave of mass history, for I received notice that my military class had been called to register, and that I must return to England. This involved me in all man-

Alexander, replied - a bland little reply, saying that Mr Alexander was in the United States, and that perhaps we might meet!

19 See Note 2 of the Fifth Appendix.

20 Extract from a letter dated Monday [June 30, 1941] addressed to Mrs Mabel Kelly Nunn of the New York Board of the Society of Life. The letter remains in my files.

21 I simply did not believe that any publisher would be willing to publish such a libel. Clearly, whichever way things went now, Alexander must stand revealed as a mental-moral incompetent.

ner of urgent activities, not only those which concerned my own movements, but those which concerned the maintenance of a certain minimal activity in the Society of Life during my absence from my post. However, I failed to secure a passage, and joined up instead in Canada. This also called for a great deal of work in arranging for my family. I was given a slightly deferred date of call-up, and used that period for the writing of a book in which I sought to sum up the knowledge gained to date in the stream of the Little History.^{22 23}[22] This I did with a certain sense of foreboding, not knowing what would happen in the years ahead. One matter claimed my special attention: I was determined to see Alexander's forthcoming book as soon as it was published, and made arrangements to have it sent on to me at once to wherever I might be. I received it some time in November 1941.²⁴ [24] It contained one reference to Trigant Burrow, and only one, as follows:

The following extract from a letter written by Dr Trigant Burrow, Scientific Director of the Lyfwynn [*sic*] Foundation, New York, and well known as a Psychiatrist, to Mr Walter Carrington, of March 2, 1939, may be of interest . . . :

'One cannot fail to recognize in reading his book, *The Use of the Self*, that Alexander has done much in getting at certain physiological reactions, and I was greatly impressed with the originality of his method and the very thorough and precise procedures he developed in the observation of his own behaviour. My own feeling is . . . that his work, expressive of innate scientific endowment, needs no endorsement beyond the objective evidence upon which it is based. To me his patient, painstaking and carefully controlled observations represent an amazing achievement in the field of human behaviour. I myself could not possibly lay claim to having contributed anything of a like nature . . . Alexander's contribution in the field of behaviour is, as you mention in your letter, a half century old. His thesis has indeed become a commonplace.'²⁵ [25]

Burrow, slandered behind his back as a plagiarist, had been roped in to supply a paean to his slanderer. The threatened exposure of Burrow

22 This work was produced in a little more than two weeks. It was serialized in the *Societon*, the official journal of the Society of Life, and later was produced as a book. [See footnote 23.]

23 Mott, Francis J.: *The Crisis of Opinion*, Boston, Beauchamp, 1944.

24 I received it while doing basic training at Camp Valcartier, in the province of Quebec.

25 Alexander, Matthias F.: *The Universal Constant in Living*, pages 151, 152. New York, Dutton, 1941.

and its dénouement had provided culminating evidence of Alexander's ego-mania.²⁶ [26] In all this unhappy business there was one bright element: Alexander had not bungled the revelation of his perfidy and moral sickness. Nobody now could deny my contention that he represented the awful example of the outcome of seeking to press individual integration beyond its natural boundaries, and confusing psycho-physical with mental-moral integration.

As will I hope, be clear, the exposure of Alexander's errors was not a personal matter. It was one more step in the confirmation of our central theme of the levels of integration - see Figure Twentyeight. It showed very clearly that all thinking is impaired which is deprived of that theme. Above all it showed that all concern with human nature is crippled by neglect of it. Alexander, claiming consummate personal integration, had spurned our representations concerning a parallel development in the mental-moral sphere. He had insisted that his methods would serve in that sphere as well, and had by his acts shown that this was not merely untrue, but that his error invited the manifestation of gross evil in the mental-moral field.

The demonstration of Alexander's fundamental error was a matter of great importance for the Little History. We had already admitted that he had undoubtedly discovered the lineaments of the Universal Design and of the Periodic Order in the operation of the psycho-physical system - see Note 17 above. And yet we had to resist his claim to possess the Master Key to the integration of the human species. This must certainly have appeared to Alexander a perverse situation. It must so appear to anyone who does not see that the Universal Design and the Periodic Order appear on a number of levels of integration - see again Figure Twentyeight.

This demonstration had immediate significance not only for us of the Little History, but also for those by-no-means negligible minds which had unaccountably embraced Alexander's folly - see the Eightieth appendix. And beyond them stretched the whole human species, which could in the mass hardly be immune from that infection which had already debilitated so many intelligent minds. The demonstration of Alexander's folly was in the long run important to them (the mass) also, for in the end they would suffer the results of a general acceptance of that folly.

As soon as it could be done, I wrote to Alexander to the effect that his treatment of Burrow had finally demonstrated to my complete satisfaction the folly of his contention that psycho-physical integration leads over

26 Supplementing his letter to me dated July 28, 1941, see the Seventyninth appendix.

to mental-moral integration.²⁷ [27] Naturally he did not reply. It was to be seven years before I reverted to his work through the mediation of another.



Early in the year 1949 an alert member of the Society of Life sent me a newspaper article which mentioned Alexander's work. From this article I learned that a Mr Charles Neil, a former pupil-teacher of Alexander's, had started a clinic in London under the aegis of Lady Cripps.²⁸ [28] I at once booked a series of lessons with Mr Neil. Neil knew nothing of my interests. So far as he was concerned, I was simply a man who was interested in the Alexander method.²⁹ [29] It is important that this point should be clearly understood, because otherwise it might be assumed that I had invited the sudden revelation which Neil made to me during my first interview with him.

He told me that in certain cases, when the neck of the pupil is felt suddenly to assume the right 'Alexander position', a mild shock of some kind could be felt to take place 'in the air' over the pupil's head. It was, he said, something like an electric shock. He had discovered the phenomenon by accident, he said. He had had his right hand as usual on the back of his pupil's neck, the purpose being to determine the moment when the neck achieved the right alignment. Suddenly he felt the neck to assume that right alignment, and at the very same moment he felt a mild shock in the left hand, which he was about to place on the top of the pupil's head. At first, he said, he doubted the testimony of his senses, but over a period of time he experienced the phenomenon again and again, until at last he came to regard it as a fact of human nature. He little realized what a profound impact this revelation had upon my mind.

27 This was written from New York on April 11, 1942, I being then on my first leave from the R. C. A. F.

28 The Hon. Lady Cripps, G. B. E., the wife of Sir Stafford Cripps, then Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Labour Government.

29 He knew, however, that I had had a struggle of some kind with Alexander, and he told me some of his own. This served to give me confidence that my failure with Alexander had not been necessarily in any sense due to my own fault. When I paid his bill, he wrote a letter of thanks in which the following passage occurs:

'We all like to be appreciated, and your kind letter and the material expression of my work made me very happy, especially coming as it did so soon after Alexander's sweeping denunciation of my character and my work.'

In the first place, it helped to reassure me on the subject of those of my experiences related in Vol. I, pages 141-144. It is true that by the year 1949 I had already begun to discover dream material which suggested that my sense of a 'head-sky' link was not peculiar to me. Neil's experiences helped to confirm me in my new feeling that the link between head and sky is a reality, and one commonly if not universally experienced. In the second place, Neil's testimony pointed to the possibility that my intuitions concerning Alexander's work in its relation to the Little History had been far sounder than I had ever dared to assume. For the implication was that the achievement of the right Alexander posture could evoke an experience akin to that schematized in Vol. I, page 142. Akin to it, I say advisedly, since I could see that my relation to the Little History might well act to amplify what otherwise would be a passing personal experience. In short, I could see a relation between Alexander's system of psycho-physical integration and the experience schematized in Vol. I, page 142. Since also I eventually saw a relation between that experience and the down-going arrow in Vol. I, page 175, it is obvious that I thereby became able to link the Alexander method with the integration of society. And this enabled me at last to establish a theoretical link between the primary control of the human organism and the primary control of the social organism. I now for the first time envisaged it as possible that the focal point of integration in the individual, and the focal point of integration in the socio-spiritual seeding group, were identical in essence.

The struggle with Alexander had been long and frustrating. I had at times been tempted to abandon it altogether. But with the emergence of this new aspect through the instrumentation of Charles Neil, I felt that the struggle had been completely justified.

SEVENTYSIXTH APPENDIX

THE UNIVERSE THROUGH MEDICINE

Mr J. E. R. McDonagh³⁰ [1] was a man of many parts,³¹ [2] as his interest in cosmology and in Alexander will suggest. He was also a very generous minded man, as will be evident from his willingness to concede that Alexander's idea of disease was possibly more fundamental than his own.³² [3] His public praise of Alexander had not prepared me for the vehemence of his private criticism. I discovered to my astonishment that although he greatly admired Alexander's work he had considerable reservations about Alexander the man. It appeared to me that McDonagh had become a little ashamed of his association with Alexander. I did not flatter myself that this was due to any concern for me, or that his embarrassment was caused by Alexander's treatment of me. But I *did* learn afterwards that Alexander had been rude to so many people that my own experience must have been a common one. It seemed likely, in retrospect, that I was the one whose experience of Alexander may have been the last straw which broke the back of McDonagh's sympathy. In any case, McDonagh told me that in his view Alexander was one of that breed of human beings which, though lacking in any real education, had a mysterious capacity that could not be ignored. He went so far as to compare Alexander in a small way with Hitler, whose ignorance was manifest, but whose mysterious capacities were proving at that time every day less ignorable. McDonagh quickly dispelled any lingering hopes I may have had of making some kind of synthesis with Alexander. In spite of the thirty odd years that have elapsed since my meeting with him, I can still report his words with a certainty that makes possible an almost *verbatim* quotation:

Don't waste your time in thinking that you will ever make what you call a synthesis with Alexander; because you won't. And let me tell you *why* you will not: Alexander has become so inflated with the importance of his views that he is beginning to think of himself as a generalist. That is to say, to

30 McDonagh was a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and therefore in British medicine was properly designated 'mister'. [Sometimes in reviewing his work I have called him Dr McDonagh, but that was only because the review was mainly addressed to non-British readers, and it seemed tiresome to have to explain that a medical man, if he is a surgeon, is not called a doctor in Britain.]

31 A Fellow of the Zoological Society of London from 1906 to 1958, he interested himself in veterinary medicine.

32 McDonagh, J. E. R., F. R. C. S.: *The Nature of Disease*, Part Three.

use your style of language (if I understand you aright), he thinks that it is he and nobody else that has grasped the universal principle of integration. That is why he was so rude to you. He knew in advance from Mrs Buxton what your views are, and the very thought of your claiming a universal pattern of creation infuriated him. You were treading, so to say, on a corn of nearly cosmic proportions.

He said no more about Alexander, but he had told me all I needed at that moment to know.³³ [4] We turned at once to the discussion of his cosmology, which he had created entirely from the basis of his medical knowledge and experience. I saw very quickly that he was consumed by the idea of integration, not only as touching the nature of the physical universe itself, but also as touching all human knowledge *about* that universe. However, he did not commonly employ the term ‘integration’, but used the term ‘condensation’ when dealing with the physical processes, and ‘correlation’ when considering human efforts to join the scattered knowledge of the specialists into a meaningful whole. It would have appeared on the surface that McDonagh’s views and intents were so close to our own that he and I could not fail to enjoy an interesting and valuable discussion. But if I had entertained any hopes on that score, they were quickly dispelled. For he made it plain by his manner that he regarded me as an amateur who could have nothing to tell him that could be of the slightest value to him. In terms of Vol. I, page 272, I had no established competence in terms of figure X, and he was completely ‘tone deaf’ whenever anything related to figure Y was even hinted at. I resigned myself to listen to his statements which, when they concerned his specialist knowledge were largely incomprehensible to me, but which, when they approached the subject of cosmic integration, were trivial even when judged by what I knew in 1937. When I left, he presented me with a copy of a talk which he had given the previous year before a gathering of medical colleagues. The following extract from that paper seems germane to this present brief exposition:

The time comes to nearly everyone who has been engaged in scientific research for many years, when he feels he must take stock of his work in relation to the whole body of science - when he must attempt to fit his little corner into the whole jigsaw. I regard this process of correlation as of the greatest importance. Too much research work today is of less value than

33 It crossed my mind that McDonagh himself had done more than his share to promote Alexander’s inflated views, see Note 32 above.

it might be because the workers see too little of their wider surroundings. There is too much specialisation. Everyone who studies any department of science must be struck by the orderliness of nature. Every event is governed by some kind of rule or habit, and one need not have a very intimate knowledge of the various branches of science to see that the same pattern tends to run through them all - that the behaviour of matter or energy at one level is similar to its behaviour at other levels of evolution. For example, a rough similarity can be traced between the behaviour of such highly developed substances as the proteins, and even, pushing the analogy further, with the social behaviour of living beings. It is this constant pattern which particularly intrigues me; and in what follows I am going to try to expand my own particular field of research and apply its pattern to the ultimate mysteries of the Universe.³⁴ [5]

Consider briefly how close the expressed thoughts run to our own:
McDonagh

1. Correlation is of the greatest importance. [Note that he conceived of correlation only - not of *synthesis* that could fire the correlated parts into a living whole.]
2. One need not have a very intimate knowledge of the various branches of science to see that the same pattern runs through them all.....
3. A rough similarity may be traced between the behaviour of elementary matter; the behaviour of proteins, and even of living beings in society.

The Society of Life

1. We offer the *Synthesis* of the correlated items in terms of the Universal Design of Creation.
2. We have always insisted that our task is not to delve into specialisms in too great a detail.³⁵ [6] We have revealed the transcendent source of the unity of pattern, which we have come upon through a science of its manifestation in the human mental-moral forms.
3. Whereas, of course, McDonagh was, so to speak, working up from elementary matter to moral behaviour, we were working

³⁴ From a paper read by McDonagh on March 25, 1936, before the Bournemouth Division of the Dorset and West Rants Branch of the British Medical Association.

³⁵ See Vol. I, pages 312, 313.

from experience of a precise pattern operative in the mental-moral field.

Later in his paper McDonagh brought out his views on the origins of the physical universe:

Space was once uniformly filled with energy, but for some unknown and unknowable reason its distribution became uneven. That is to say, the energy became more concentrated in some regions than in others. This is one of the fundamental type reactions of the universe, and for my own convenience I have given it the name -‘condensation’. Condensation may refer to the clumping together of energy, or of matter in any of its myriad forms; but in all cases it gives rise to denser areas, in the form of waves or particles (two indivisible forms of matter) surrounded by a less dense matrix.³⁶ [7]

It is possible to compare (and sometimes to contrast) McDonagh’s outline cosmology with our own:

McDonagh

1. Space was once uniformly filled with energy, but it became more concentrated in some regions than in others.
2. This subsequent concentration or condensation of energy takes place for some *unknown* and *unknowable* reason.

The Society of Life

1. The first stage of creation produced the plenum,³⁷ [8] but then this state of expansion contracted into the atoms - see chapter Nineteen.
2. We regard the cause of this condensation as the outcome of the overriding influence of the Universal Design of Creation, which demands periodic integration and unfoldment as expressions of its fundamental pattern of Point and Periphery.

I could have shown McDonagh that the reason for the universal trend to ‘condensation’ is *not unknowable*. But I realized that he was almost certainly looking for a *physical* first cause of this persistent phenomenon -

³⁶ See Note 34 above.

³⁷ See chapter Nineteen, especially Figure Twentyeight. [The term ‘plenum’ had not, however, been used by me in this sense in 1937 nor, indeed, was it so used for some time afterwards.]

whereas *my* proof lay in the field of mental-moral integration. I doubt whether he would have been patient enough to have waited as I developed my subtle evidence. Possibly I ought to have been more forceful, but at that time I had hardly any 'big guns' to bring to bear. I had made none of the discoveries which a few years later were to give me not only strong evidential material, but also the courage and self-confidence to adduce it in the presence of men of great knowledge, powerful character, and appropriate social standing. I certainly could not have hoped to impress him favourably with evidence drawn from the past of the Little History, for that would have meant bringing in the Christian Science church, and would almost certainly have set his mind on quite the wrong track - see Vol. I, page 314. Had I had the slightest sense of possessing any authority in McDonagh's eyes, I should have told him that integration and unfoldment represent the twin laws of Being.



I turn now to McDonagh's book,³⁸ [9] in which he continued his presentation of the theme outlined in the above quotations. In the prologue to the book he reasserted his basic theme that the fundamental process of the universe is condensation. As to what it is that condenses (integrates), and as to what it is that is integrated, McDonagh offered no more than the blanket term 'activity'. He confessed that he did not really know what this meant. But he said that this activity had in the course of evolution become progressively condensed into ever and ever more complex forms. These forms he agreed, have always taken on the same pattern; that of a dense nucleus surrounded by a less dense field. He went on to say that 'activity' manifests three functions: (1) attraction, (2) storing, (3) radiation. Finally he recognized the necessity of what *we* call levels of integration, and what *he* termed 'segments of the circle of condensation'. These 'segments' he identified as:

1. The sub-atomic segment;
2. The atomic segment;
3. The segment of chemical combination;
4. The colloid segment;
5. The vegetable segment;
6. The animal segment.

38 McDonagh, J. E. R., F. R. C. S.: *The Universe Through Medicine*. London, Heinemann (Medical Books), 1940.

Again, it is possible to compare and to contrast McDonagh's ideas with those of the Society of Life:

McDonagh

1. The fundamental process of the universe is condensation.
2. The forms created by condensation always take on the same pattern; that of a dense nucleus surrounded by a less dense field.
3. What he calls activity manifests three functions: attraction, storing, radiation.
4. McDonagh indicates six segments of what he called the circle of condensation.

The Society of Life

1. McDonagh ignores the counter-process of unfoldment. The fundamental process is a dual one, whose two halves are in absolute balance.
2. This in all forms is the appearance of the nature of the archetype, the Universal Design of Creation. McDonagh omits all mention of a periodic process.
3. Here he comes close to the rhythmic process in which the Periodic Order manifests. The process seen at work in the Little History in terms of Vol. I, pages 5 and 42.³⁹ [10]
4. This appears to be a very poor approximation to the Periodic Table of Creation schematized in Figure Twentyeight.

In a review which I wrote of McDonagh's book, I said:

It will be seen that, as compared with our conception, Dr McDonagh's omits the space-time level, the stellar-molecular (save that his segment of chemical combination covers something of the same ground), and the levels of society and mind. Thus his world is a peculiar creation. First, it has no space-time in which to exist.⁴⁰ [11] Then it has no planets upon which

39 It is reflected also in the pattern shown in Figure Omicron, but to have mentioned this to McDonagh would have been disastrous, even if I had known in 1937 what I was to discover two years later.

40 By this I meant, of course, that unlike our own cosmology, in which the space-time field represents the first level of manifestation of the Universal Design of Creation, McDonagh's scheme merely took that field for granted.

living forms can exist. Finally, it has no human society and no mental processes. A queer kind of universe - not even one which provides for the good author himself.⁴¹ [12]

McDonagh's fellow doctors were not so kind. One of them wrote a review in which he confessed sadly:

[In reading this book the] mind goes blank very soon, under a burn of words which curiously appears to be consistent. All I can say is that there is certainly room for a big scale thinker in the field McDonagh occupies, supposing I am not wrong in what I imagine that field to be.⁴² [13]

In my own review I commented upon this comment as follows:

The fact is, Dr McDonagh is operating in the field of the Universal Design, and in that field there is already established the 'big scale thinker'. That thinker is not an individual human being, but a collective form of mentation.⁴³ [14]



I could see that McDonagh had several points of interest in Alexander. Not only was he, as a broad-minded medical man, interested in Alexander's therapy, but he was also interested in the fact that this therapy stood upon the basis of a concept of the total integration of the human organism, which again might be said to involve correlation. Moreover, although he was inclined to be caustic about Alexander's claim to be a 'generalist', yet even that claim could be seen to have a certain basis in principle, though Alexander had perverted the application of it. They were both, furthermore, united on the somewhat vague idea that there is only one disease. They made strange bedfellows, but I could see (after studying McDonagh's efforts at cosmology) that he was really in no position to resist Alexander's claims. So far as the total integration of world knowledge was concerned, McDonagh clearly did not have the qualifications to assess or to restrain Alexander's reckless extrapolations, which, as I shall show in the Eightieth Appendix, deluded men of far keener philosophical insight than he. The contact with McDonagh was nevertheless, quite

41 See the *Societon*, June, 1941. Vol. 4, No. 6.

42 From an anonymous review in the *New English Weekly* for October 3rd, 1940.

43 See Note 41 above.

apart from the Alexander problem, of great value to me. On the positive side it showed me that a man who was something of a secular scientist, and who was driven by an inner need to create a total cosmology, could bring out a scheme which was like enough to our own to warrant fairly detailed comparison. This showed me that the general principle of our central theme could be induced from external facts by a serious and competent specialist, and thus send centripetal feelers, as it were, in to our central experimental nucleus. This reassured me at a time when I was in great need of every crumb of assurance I could gather. It also was a factor in leading my mind to that consummation which is schematized in Vol. I, page 317. On the negative side, it showed me that there was no need in principle for me to be afraid of the authority of the specialists in the field where universal syntheses are attempted. For no matter how vast a competence a man, or any group of men, might achieve in the gathering and comparison of external knowledge and hypothesis, they would still be centripetal thrusts seeking for a centre that is not there: is not there, that is to say, until religion of an order so far not even suspected puts it there - see Vol. I, page 272. Just such a religion, I was every day more certain, was the religion that was developing in the stream of the Little History.

SEVENTYSEVENTH APPENDIX

PROFESSOR GEORGE E. COGHILL

Professor Coghill worked at the Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology in Philadelphia. He studied the development of a small amphibian called *Amblystoma* - see Note 11 of chapter Twentythree. This he did from its earliest movements until its general adult pattern of action had become established. As a result of his studies he wrote:

As a result of this investigation of the development of behavior a general principle has been discovered which, in my opinion, has wide; if not universal application in vertebrates. The principle may be stated thus: The behavior pattern from the beginning expands throughout the growing normal animal as a perfectly integrated unit, whereas partial patterns arise within the total pattern and, by a process of individuation, acquire secondarily varying degrees of independence. According to this principle, such an entity as a 'simple reflex' never occurs in the life of the individual; complexity of behavior is not derived by progressive integration of more and more

originally discrete units: the conception of chain reflexes as usually presented is not in accord with the actual working of the nervous system.⁴⁴ [1]

Professor Coghill asserted that, so far as the early foetal movements of man are known, the same law prevails in the development of behaviour in the human being.⁴⁵ [2] Alexander, in seeking to make a comparison between Coghill's work and his own, made the following observations:

[I was led to] discover that a particular relativity of the head to the neck and the head and neck to the other parts of the organism brought about a tendency to right or wrong use and functioning of the organism as a whole, and that the motivation for this use was from the head downwards. This finding corresponds with that of Prof. Coghill who observed that the primary impulses in the lower vertebrates involved in tissue development and behaviour are projected along motor and sensory lines of communication from the head downwards towards the tail, and further, that any interference with the working of the mechanisms associated with the 'total pattern' affects adversely the growth and working of the 'partial patterns' which means a tendency of the 'partial patterns' to gain a more or less dominating influence over the 'total pattern' causing interference with growth and development.⁴⁶ [3]

Two years after meeting with Alexander, and after studying Coghill's general theme, I wrote as follows:

It is clear to me that what Dr Coghill has discovered in the primitive creature *amblystoma* is true not only of all [vertebrate] organisms, but of all human society also. Indeed, what happens in human society is an extra-organic extension of what happens in the individual organism.⁴⁷ [4] My own experience with the scientifically organized social group has shown me clearly that . . . there is a constant tendency in every social group for the integrative pattern of the universe to impel therein the formation of a crea-

44 *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 21, No. 5, May 1929, page 989.

45 *Ibid.*

46 Alexander; F. Matthias: *The Universal Constant in Living*, page 149. New York, Dutton, 1941.

47 In retrospect this appears to have been an unfortunate lapse of exposition. For the idea that anything that happens in human society could be an extra-organic extension of something that happens in the body could hardly be protected from identification with the spirit of Alexander's own error that right psycho-physical integration could spill over, as it were, into society.

tive minority. From this minority comes all the creative vision of the group. This minority, and its leader, emerging step by step from the whole, is the 'primary control' of society.⁴⁸ [5]

And, I might have added, the leader comes into being as a result of an experience of the relation of his head to 'the sky' - see Vol. I, page 142. But I did not in 1940 dare to draw so long a bow. Nine years later it was drawn for me by a former pupil-teacher of Alexander's - see the description at the end of chapter Twentythree of my experience with Charles Neil.

SEVENTYEIGHTH APPENDIX

THE LOST SENSE OF RIGHT

It soon became evident that Burrow⁴⁹ [1] and Alexander were dealing in the same general field. But it also became quickly apparent that each was active in a special area of their common field. It furthermore became apparent that their chosen areas overlapped. Yet this over-lapping area was completely unco-ordinated between them. Indeed, not merely the overlapping parts were unco-ordinated, but the borders of their special interests, where they impinged one upon the other, were totally unexplored.⁵⁰ [2] I quickly saw that this situation was a dangerous one, assuming that the work and idea of each man was as important as he claimed it to be. For in each case, as I shall shortly show, though with different emphasis, the claim was that the work being done was of phyletic importance - that it concerned the nature of the human being, and virtually held the key to his survival. In short, each man was concerned with the integration of the human organism, not only within its own economy, but in the field where many such organisms were joined into societies. Here, then, were two men engaged in the field of human integration whose work had many points of contact, but who were as between themselves totally

48 The *Societon*, official journal of the Society of Life, Vol. 3, No. 9, September 1940, pages 7, 8.

49 Burrow, Trigant, M.D., Ph. D., began his professional career as a Freudian analyst.

50 Indeed, I have reason to believe that neither knew of the other's existence until I informed him. This certainly appeared true in the case of Burrow, for when I saw him in late 1937 or early 1938 he seemed not to have heard of Alexander. It may well have been that when I informed him on this point he took steps which indirectly led to Alexander's learning of his (Burrow's) existence.

unco-ordinated. The clear and inescapable implication of this situation was that if each man's work were even half as important as represented, then their mutual lack of co-ordination must in principle be a condition of blight at the very apex of the evolutionary *élan* of the human species. Burrow at any rate must have recognized in principle the inevitability of this condition, for he used the following words of Herbert Spencer as the epigraph to his major book:

If the part is conceived without any reference to the whole, it becomes itself a whole - an independent entity: and its relations to existence in general are misapprehended.⁵¹ [3]

To recognize in theory the truth of such statements is of little use, however, unless it leads to the discovery or recognition of some means whereby such truth can be applied in practice. I tried in vain to awaken Burrow to the fact that the Society of Life, small as it was, and undeveloped as its understanding then was, offered the only available instrument among men for the representation of the whole - not in theory, but through its embodiment of the Universal Design of Creation in a mental-moral form. My efforts *could* only be tentative, for I had no standing whatsoever in the eyes of a man like Burrow. I had to hint and suggest and hope that he might experience a need to ask a question. He never did, though he was infinitely kind and courteous, and never showed the slightest desire to avoid meeting me, since I went to his house again and again. Alexander, of course, was an entirely different character, and he not only never asked a question, but met every approach with an insult.⁵² [4] He was convinced that he alone in the world had the answer to the problem of human integration, even as McDonagh had warned me - see the Seventysixth appendix. The idea that the psycho-physical integration of a human organism could somehow radiate out into the social field, and there join with the similar radiations of millions of others to form an integrated mental-moral unit, was to me an idea so absurd as hardly to call for refutation. But Burrow subscribed to the same folly, and Alexander was confirmed in it by the laudatory agreement of men whom one would have thought must have seen through it - see the Eightieth appendix.

51 Burrow, Trigant: *The Biology of Human Conflict*, page vi, New York, Macmillan, 1937.

52 "You don't know what you're talking about", were almost his first words to me and, except for the brief Atlantic encounter (see chapter Twentythree), this remained his attitude.

When at last the two men *did* learn of each other's work, their reactions were predictable.

Burrow freely admitted Alexander's primacy in his own field, and wrote about him as follows:

To me his patient, painstaking and carefully controlled self-observations represent an amazing achievement in the field of human behaviour. I myself could not possibly lay claim to having contributed anything of a like nature. I have not worked at all in the field of consciously controlled reflexes.⁵³ [5]

Alexander's reaction to Burrow was to take such laudatory remarks and to publicize them,⁵⁴ [6] while in return clandestinely accusing Burrow of having stolen his [Alexander's] work. These mutual reactions showed that both men understood that they were dealing in the same field, but that their positions were utterly unco-ordinated. Burrow confessed this in terms of a recognition that Alexander was a master in a related part of their common field. Alexander expressed it in terms of his possession of the whole field, into which Burrow had dared to set foot as a dishonest interloper. Nothing could more clearly show that they were concerned with the same matters; that their concerns were utterly unco-ordinated; and that they had thus become major instances of non-integration in the field of integrative science. To paraphrase Herbert Spencer, since neither Burrow nor Alexander recognized even the possibility of a discipline that could unite their work in a higher whole, the work of each was thereby doomed to stand as an independent entity, and its relation to existence in general fated to be misapprehended.⁵⁵ [7] It was precisely the Society of Life that was offered to both as the instrument of 'existence in general', with which it could (especially if it had had their help!) have given them the first, but rapidly developable, links.



It would be impossible to relate and compare Alexander and Burrow satisfactorily without writing a major work, but it is certainly possible to give

53 From a letter written by Burrow on March 2, 1939, to a Mr W. M. Carrington.

54 As my files clearly show, Alexander arranged that I should be sent a copy of Burrow's letter to Carrington - see Note 53 above.

55 See Note 3 above.

at least a thumbnail sketch of the point of their potential convergence and the lines of their divergence. In order to make the comparisons sharp and simple, I propose to consider their theory and practice in terms of the identification in human affairs of a lost sense of right. Allied to this, will inevitably be a reference to the unreliability of feeling as a guide to right, and the absolute necessity to establish principles in place of feeling as the instruments of such guidance. I have already, in chapter Twentythree, given an indication of Alexander's views as to the unreliability of feeling in the effort to determine the right use of the self. It seems now logically necessary to offer similar indications as to Burrow's position. The following passage offers, I think, a clear and direct guide to that position:

Due to the development of language or the symbol, man's feelings, interests and preoccupations as a race tend now to centre almost exclusively in the cerebral region. His social intellectualities, or his interchange inter-individually through mental ideas or images, tend to appropriate to themselves feelings and activities which once occupied the organism as a whole.⁵⁶ [8]

It is important to take careful note here that Burrow, although he freely employs mental terms, is in effect a materialist. He nowhere states, to the best of my knowledge, any definition of mind, but at every point he implies that he accepts the common mind-body idea. Alexander was of the same general persuasion, but he revealed himself on this point, whereas Burrow did not.^{57 58} [9] For the moment, however, let us pursue Burrow, who clearly identified the source and criterion of social right as arising within the human organism as a specimen of the Class Mammalia.

What else can he have meant by the following statement:

Nothing is more important, of course, than the *organic* discrimination between right and wrong. Every animal possesses an organic acquaintance with the right movement, the right co-ordination Man is quite as well equipped as any other animal to further the needs and to promote the proper care of his organism. In man, however, there has come about an

56 Ibid., pages 116, 117.

57 He offered some observations which can only be interpreted as attempts to show that the alternative to the mind-body view must inevitably be one that might be generally called 'spiritualistic'. His efforts were a clear case of *ignotio elenchi*, not to say of the *False Antithesis* - see Vol. I, pages 321-324. [See footnote 58.]

58 See his book *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, chapter IV. London, Methuen, 1937.

accidental maladjustment in the sphere of his organism's right relation to his environment. He has substituted a secondary, mentally agreed or social picture - a mental image of his organism's correct function or behaviour in relation to the external world. And this symbolic, secondarily acquired measure of his organism's precise or faulty adaptation he now knows as the dichotomous image he calls 'right and wrong'. It is this mishap, this emphasis upon the mental picture rather than upon the organism's internally precise motivation which I shall hope to show is primarily answerable for the phenomena of nervous disorders and crime. Crime, like insanity, is a disorder of the individual that implicates society at large.⁵⁹ [11] The outstanding symptom invariably present in both these disorders is found in the individual's reaction to sensations of right and wrong.⁶⁰ [12]

As a result of this internal maladjustment, the natural original, organic sense of right has been commonly lost to human kind. This is what Burrow asserted:

. . . that the sense of right commonly involved in our social interchange represents a standard that is purely imaginal, symbolic, and therefore organically fictitious. It has shown that this sense of right is external, that it has nothing to do with the inherent biological fitness of the organism as a functioning whole and that when applied to the tangible, biological processes underlying human behavior, it proves to be a purely arbitrary and uncontrollable unit of measure.⁶¹ [13]

During the period when I had contacts with Burrow and Alexander, I was in no position to challenge them on any matter outside my experience in the stream of the Little History, and at that time this offered me no psychological insight whatsoever. I had then not the slightest intimation of the fact that mind is the outcome of a configurational resonance between the human organism and the cosmos. Even had I known it, I feel sure that neither Burrow nor Alexander would have paid me any attention. But I should not have been (as too often I was!) dragged unwillingly at the tail

59 Does one detect here one of the first notes of what has now risen to a shrill chorus of inanity, the demi-semi-truth that 'We are all guilty'?

60 Burrow, Trigant: *The Biology of Human Conflict*, pages 46, 47, New York, Macmillan, 1937.

61 *Ibid.*, pages 53, 54. [In order to hammer home the importance of this statement, Burrow related it to the dangerously schizoid state of American and world politics - see Vol. I, page 364, Note 3.]

of the chariot of their mind-body theory. For though I could not believe in it, I had no basis upon which to dispute it. I therefore saved my energy.



Burrow's ideas, unlike those of Alexander, appear to have had no direct physical application. His diagnostic instrument was a group composed of himself and his associates, who met three times a day at a kind of 'family table' and freely 'revealed themselves'. In this way Burrow seems to have revealed to himself and to his associates the existence of a steady organismic norm of feeling underlying the divisive, socially-engendered mental-moral behaviours of the average modern man or woman. There appears to have been no account taken of any physical elements except those implied in the divisive condition of mind and feeling revealed by the communal talking.⁶² [14] I confess that I have never been able to understand precisely how Burrow hoped to change the human perverted condition revealed by his group analyses. Nor, indeed, have I ever been able being myself to believe that Burrow really intended to say what he seemed to be saying as to the ideal condition to which the human species should be restored. So far as I could see in the years 1937-1939, his ideal would have been to have restored the human species to that organismic condition of society which was natural to the ancient tribes. He adduced the state of mind of the Aran islanders as an example of the kind of consciousness which he seemed to regard as the ideal. He quoted and commented upon the descriptions given of these island people by an Irish poet who had lived among them:

On some days I feel this island as a perfect home and resting place: on other days I feel that I am a waif among the people. I can feel more with them than they can feel with me, and while I wander among them, they like me sometimes, and laugh at me sometimes, yet never know what I am

62 By this I mean that Burrow attributed the divisive element in the organism to an imbalance in the relation of the total organism to the head. Thus, as in Alexander's view, there is a direct cause (or at least correlate) of the mental state in terms of the *use* of organs rather than of their physical state. [In the year 1937 I was nearly twenty years away from the final conclusion that each human being embodies a head-arm self and a trunk-leg self in terms of Figure Twenty and CV 636-642. I could, therefore, add nothing to Burrow's or Alexander's ideas at that time. But I do not deceive myself with the thought that either of them would have taken the slightest notice even had I been able to tell them of these things.]

doing.⁶³ [15] And he might well have added that they will never know; for Synge, poet though he was, naively assumed, like the rest of us, that his mere symbolic knowing could somehow be reconciled, also symbolically, with the rhythm and music that indicate the primary integrative function of all living processes. No, they could not 'know' for, after all, the poet *was* a waif, a wanderer in a 'normal' world of images and symbols that had lost their savor. Like the rest of mankind, who have become civilized, and accustomed to symbolic or image-knowing, Synge searches everywhere for a mood that is consonant, found it momentarily in this sea-girt people . . . goes on searching, searching for a symbol, an *idea* of unity, searching everywhere with never ceasing clash and shock – everywhere except within the primary integrative processes of his own physiological organism, the primary physiological organism of man as a race.⁶⁴ [16]

It was clear to me that what Dr Burrow was presenting in rather tortured language, charged with neologism, was but an unwitting intellectual exposition of the very thing that at that time Adolph Hitler was busy doing in Germany. I could hardly tell him this in so many words, since the comparison was bound to have been insultingly odious to him. I could hardly tell him that though his analysis appeared to be unquestionably valid, his proposed cure would kill the patient. For that patient was modern civilized man, and to reduce him to the pre-conscious level would be to destroy him *as such*, though as a *physical* organism he might survive.⁶⁵ [17]



One of the tests I apply to any proposal affecting the phyletic destiny of man is to assume first that the vision of its proposer could be

63 Synge, J. M.: *The Aran Islands*, page 121. Boston, Luce, 1911.

64 Burrow, Trigant: *The Biology of Human Conflict*, pages 97, 98. New York, Macmillan, 1937.

65 But he well might not survive, for Hitler's atavistic frenzy would almost surely have led to the destruction of the world had nuclear weapons been available at the time of which I write. In fact, Hitler, declared that if he went down in destruction, he would gladly pull the pillars of the West down with him. With the latest weapons he could have pulled far more than the West down into the abyss. It is for this reason that it becomes more important than ever for the integration of our species to be total and cosmic, and not partial and opinionative as with Burrow and Alexander.

fulfilled, and then, like Yeats' ghost of Plato, to ask 'What then?' It is a test I apply constantly to the Little History itself, and to every step of its unfoldment. Applying this test to Burrow, I could see no *dénouement* other than that indicated above, namely a return to the old tribal consciousness which, attempted in a modern industrial community must, as Hitler's mania nearly did, wreck the world. Burrow's scheme, even if he could have instrumented it, had in it no provision for a focal point of collective integration. The spirit of his 'family table' was, indeed, a spirit of negation of any focal point, since in those tiny experimental aggregations it was specifically required that no-one, not even the analyst (Burrow) himself, should exert the slightest primacy in determining the sense of right in the group. For in that milieu the only sense of right that might be recognized was the deep organic right which belonged (though Burrow did not know it) to the physical seed of the Great Ancestor - whose simulacrum flitted unsuspected through that antiseptic New York atmosphere. Alexander's ideas appeared superficially to contrast markedly with Burrow's on this question of right. For had not Alexander discovered the key to right in the primary control of the human psycho-physical organism? Indeed he had, but having made that discovery, he perverted it by embracing the fallacy that individual psycho-physical right can somehow be 'radiated' from many individuals into the collective arena, there to become, he supposed, the source of collective (mental-moral) right. Both Burrow and Alexander were unwittingly headed towards a theoretical social condition of complete undifferentiation. At the end of the road of each man's dream there lay a dismal condition of complete mental-moral flatness. True, each offered a different kind of flatness. Burrow's flat mass would have lived on the mentally and morally undifferentiated level of the organismic dream. Alexander's flat mass would have consisted of an aggregation of delightfully well-integrated psycho-physical systems. That those systems would automatically have produced a condition of mental-moral right was not merely in principle a complete fallacy, but it was specifically denied by the mental-moral incapacity of Alexander himself. Alexander was not ready to hear the message which the Little History could have given him. This was that mental-moral right cannot come from any individual acting by himself, nor from any human grouping that is not organized to accommodate the seed-soma differentiation of its members. For it is by that differentiation that the human group is given the primary impulsion towards the creation of a mechanism of primary control through which its collective right alone can emerge. That mechanism is schematized in Vol. I, page 175.

SEVENTYNINTH APPENDIX

ALEXANDER - BAERTSCHI

A physicist draws vast conclusions from the detailed observation of minuscule physical events. So also do I from outwardly negligible mental-moral ones. It is difficult, I am sure, for anyone to believe that the petty behaviours herein to be examined, have any cosmic significance, but I hope to be able to demonstrate the contrary. It may be helpful to consider how odd the behaviour of the secular scientists might often appear but for the fact that their activities take place against a background of established consent. The sight of a physicist in absorbed contemplation of, say, the vapour trails in a cloud chamber, might appear peculiarly obsessive but for the fact that his activities take place within a well-established and accredited field. I enjoy no such immunity from vulgar misconception, and no doubt my concern for the petty doings of Miss Baertschi in relation to Mr Alexander, and his reactions, may appear at least mildly obsessive or morbid. This I cannot help. Nor can I help it if the reader fails to follow me in seeing beyond the personalities to the principles. I can only alert him to the presence of these principles. I begin my brief dissertation with a statement (or re-statement) of the simple background against which these personalities acted. Miss Baertschi went to Mr Alexander to experience his methods. That at any rate was the superficial situation. In this there was nothing new for Alexander. Many thousands of people had done this before. Nor do I think that, for Alexander, there could have been anything particularly new in receiving a pupil who was a member of a religious organization - even of one as unconventional as the Society of Life.⁶⁶ [1] In any event, he was well prepared to deal with members of religious groups no matter of what kind. He had them all categorized in advance as pathetic clusters of psycho-physically debauched individuals, whose collective character could rise no higher than the sum of their individual deficiencies. He did not know that a collective entity arises from the group, and can be cultured by specific means - see Vol. I, page 13. He thought that the only kind of integration possible must be of the order which he himself taught - and in his own field taught with the competence of unique genius. Indeed, so competent was he in the field of psycho-physical integration that he shut off the very idea that there might be any

66 He probably would have said, not without a certain rough truth, that all minority religious groups claim that they or their teachings are new and peculiar.

other. He was a most tantalizing man for me to deal with because he was often so *right*, and yet through the failure to understand the levels of integration, his right was *always* converted into wrong. Take, for example, the following reply he made to a letter of mine in which I spoke of my efforts in the field of correlation:

The idea of correlation becomes a myth when it comes to the practical side. My friend McD.⁶⁷ [2] found that out. In one edition of his book he announced that he would in his next correlate my work with medicine, but in that book he explained why this is impossible. Carrel has indirectly exposed the same fallacy in his book, *Man, the Unknown*, by showing that the mass of data collected in bits cannot be made whole. So all the correlation of ideas (if we admit the possibility for the sake of argument) must come to naught when the ideas and also the means whereby of their interpretation for practice are dependent upon the working of the mechanism of masses of ill-conditioned, mal-adjusted, mis-directed, self-deceived humans.⁶⁸ [3]

I agreed that Alexander was absolutely right in saying (after Carrel⁶⁹) [4] that ‘the mass of data collected in bits cannot be made whole.’ This is precisely what I had always realized, as I was later to express in the terms of Vol. I, pages 267-272. But the integrative mechanism for the correlation of *ideas* is not at all identical (though it is configurationally parallel) with that for the correlation of the psycho-physical organism. The mechanism for the co-ordination of ideas must be a *collective* mechanism, and the first such instrument is schematized in Vol. I, page 317. Alexander gave me cause to believe that he did not even know that there was any such thing as a mental-moral sphere as distinct from a psycho-physical one. The following passage from a letter which he wrote to me admits of no other evident interpretation. I had written to him to say that whereas *he* was working on the level of bodily integration, *I* was working on the level of mental-moral integration, and that I did not agree with the implication that if the individual were psycho-physically co-ordinated, then the rest would follow.⁷⁰ [5] In his reply, Alexander included the following passage:

67 McD. stands, of course, for McDonagh, see the Seventysixth appendix.

68 From a letter dated 6th July 1941.

69 Alexis Carrel, an American surgeon of French origin.

70 It was perhaps unfortunate that I should have used the phrase ‘the rest will follow’, when I meant that ‘mental-moral integration will follow’, but I am of the opinion that this would have made no difference.

I cannot understand why you put this to me unless you hold me responsible for the implication. If you do it goes to show how little you understand the principle of my work or its implications. A person's use may be harmful, yet that does not prevent that person from improving his co-ordination in a specific game or being born with a co-ordination that enables him to play that game well. But this only serves to hasten the appearance of the harmful effects which follow harmful use. I have a lad here now who has never spoken, his co-ordination is hopeless in many ways, but he has the co-ordination of an acrobat in all acrobatic stunts.⁷¹ [6]

This passage surely makes it clear that Alexander could not even conceive of *mental-moral* co-ordination. He could think of co-ordination only in *psycho-physical* terms. How otherwise could he have supposed for one moment that my standpoint could be related to the co-ordination of a games-player or an acrobat! How could Alexander possibly have thought that a number of people who were co-ordinated by his methods could make a better job of mental-moral correlation (the making of universal syntheses) than any number of 'ill conditioned, mal-adjusted, misdirected, self-deceived' people - see Note 3 above. I was slowly driven to the conclusion that Alexander's mind lacked some vital organ, or that that organ was undeveloped or atrophied. Or perhaps one might liken his deficiency to colour blindness or tone deafness. Thus when I talked about mental-moral (social) integration, as distinct from psycho-physical integration, he simply did not know what I was talking about - quite apart from whether he would have agreed or disagreed had he known it. So 'colour blind' or 'tone deaf' was he on this subject that, incredible as it must seem, he evidently believed that a person integrated by his methods must automatically use himself better not only psycho-physically, but morally-socially. To drive the argument to its ultimate logical absurdity, he evidently must have thought that an improved use of the self would not only enable a man to use a machine gun more efficiently, but to be so changed that he would not use it at all. The following suggests that he did indeed think precisely *that*, or something very near it:

The crisis of 1914 serves to show us that [man] has released forces which he is not capable of controlling... This horrible recrudescence of barbarity is for the moment held in check, but, like a fire whose white-heated embers

⁷¹ From a letter dated July 19, 1941. I did not then know that Miss Baertschi was there with him as a pupil.

have been cooled by water on the outside . . . it will sooner or later burst once more into flame. Every ember, which in our analogy represents an individual human being, must be dealt with singly and separately, and if we wish to prevent another fierce outbreak we must treat each ember in such a way that it will be as difficult to fire it as it is to fire a piece of stone.... It is clear, then, that our first efforts to enable man to rise above the depths in which he is now struggling, and from which many people to-day believe he cannot extricate himself, should be devoted to the establishment in the individual of a reliable sensory appreciation by means of conscious, reasoning guidance, so as to prevent the recurrence of the disasters which have hitherto been associated with the activities of men and women whose judgments, opinions and policies have been based more upon a deteriorated sense of feeling than upon reasoning.⁷² [7]

Surely we should be entitled, from the above, to gather that of all people in the world, Mr Alexander must have been the finest example of well-directed man in every sense of the word.⁷³ [8] Yet we already had cause to suspect that he was the very reverse of well-directed in that mental-moral sphere in which wars arise. How, then, should a world of Alexanders avoid the 'recrudescence of barbarism'? There is no doubt whatsoever that Alexander was carried away by his assumption that nobody else could possibly achieve anything at all unless co-ordinated by his methods. So convinced was he of his lone superiority that he did not think it necessary to hear what anyone else might have to say that might seem to question his unique supremacy in the field of human integration. He was convinced in advance that anything which did not put his ideas and techniques not merely first, but middle and last as well, could only be just one more manifestation of an ancient error, which his discoveries alone had exposed for the first time. This being so, why should he even bother to listen to what he knew *a priori* must be wrong. Though he dismissed all such work as mine as in principle useless, he did not care, it seems, to assert ignorance of it. Thus he wrote to me:

The one criticism that I have made in regard to your work is that as far as it is possible to understand it from your writings and the lecture I heard you

72 Alexander, F. Matthias: *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*, pages 96-98. London, Methuen, 1937.

73 We of the Little History could have shown him the example of the Christian Science church, which showed us clearly that individual right is ultimately impossible without a parallel collective right.

give, its underlying principle does not differ in any way from the principle that I have found to underlie all attempts, both new and old, to teach a new way of life, with the aim of ameliorating individual and social conditions.⁷⁴
[9]

In the first place, this was a dishonest statement because, although I had no means of knowing how much or how little he had read of my writings, I knew very well that he had not even bothered to listen to my lecture. For he sat in the front row whispering to his companions and mocking the posture of my poor chairman, who was suffering from a severe war wound. Quite apart from this, Alexander's letter showed that he was making the same kind of error that Fodor made when he persisted in assuming that I was concerned primarily with healing individuals and that I was doing 'psycho-analysis on the largest scale ever attempted' - see chapter One. For, contrary to Alexander, I did not have 'the aim of ameliorating individual and social conditions.' *That* would surely, in Alexander's own terms, have been 'end-gaining'. My aim was simply to obey the Covenant and to develop its principles, a true 'means-whereby'. So carried away was Alexander by his assumptions, that he could not help imposing them upon his pupils, to which his treatment of Miss Baertschi was no exception. He could not help denigrating the Society of Life, any more than a Communist can help denigrating Christianity. It was a built-in situation. McDonagh had likened Alexander a little to the Hitler type (see the Seventysixth appendix), but I thought of him more as a kind of Rasputin, without Rasputin's hypnotic faculties or his degenerate habits. Rasputin saved the life of the Tsarevitch and because of that benign personal influence gained ascendancy over the Tsarina and through that ascendancy accelerated, if he did not cause, the destruction of the Russian state. Alexander helped Miss Baertschi, but in doing so he unwittingly incited her to try to destroy the Society of Life. It was the same dangerous principle: a concentration upon individual healing resulting in a spreading of mental-moral poison. It may be thought that I am making over much of this, but the Eightieth appendix will show that Alexander had infected others with the same error. His seduction of Miss Baertschi's mind calls for no surprise, for once she abandoned the discipline of the Covenant, she was without the slightest capacity to withstand him. But that he also seduced the minds of men like John Dewey and Aldous Huxley shows the power which he wielded. A man who can, as Alexander often did, check an opponent in the middle of a discussion to point out that in the very act

74 From a letter from Alexander dated August 7, 1941.

of arguing, that opponent was misusing his organs of speech - that man is a danger. Furthermore, Alexander made so many people of note grateful to him by his demonstrations of psycho-physical integration, that they became putty in his hands. I repeat, in this respect, and in this respect only, he was a pale shadow of Rasputin.



The Fodor affair, as described in chapter One, was the first battle in a war against confusion under Covenant. On the successful conclusion of that battle the fruitful future of the Little History depended. Two achievements came from it. The most obvious is the psychological revolution reported in these pages. Less obvious, but hardly less important was the development of a mechanism of controlled collective synthesis. The nature of this mechanism I have outlined in the Fifth appendix. This mental-moral mechanism is the Goose that has laid the Golden Eggs of our major syntheses. It was designed to prevent the sort of error which the New York members of the Society of Life had made in dealing with Fodor as individuals in a matter which had come to their attention in their roles as members, and which called for orderly collective action. Yet Miss Baertschi actually used that mechanism to serve a repetition of the very error which the mechanism had been carefully constructed to prevent. This was an important crisis for us.

EIGHTIETH APPENDIX

THE SEDUCTION OF THE PROFESSORS

Mr Alexander cured Professor John Dewey of some painful physical condition, and that gentleman was naturally overwhelmed with gratitude. But he, in his large way was, like Miss Baertschi in her infinitely smaller way, seduced by Alexander. He accepted Alexander's absurd idea that the psycho-physical integration of an individual could transform his mental-moral state. Thus in a Foreword to Alexander's book *The Use of the Self*, Dewey wrote:

Physical science has for its fruit an astounding degree of new command of physical energies. Yet we are faced with a situation which is serious, per-

haps tragically so. There is everywhere increasing doubt as to whether this physical mastery of physical energies is going to further human welfare, or whether human happiness is going to be wrecked by it. Ultimately there is but one sure way of answering this question in the hopeful and constructive sense. If there can be developed a technique which will enable individuals really to secure the right use of themselves, then the factor upon which depends the final use of all other forms of energy will be brought under control. Mr Alexander has evolved this technique.

The high-level insanity represented by this statement can be recognized by any child who knows that the degree of his expertise with a catapult is no criterion of the degree of his moral use of it. Nobody supposes that a boy who can hit an innocent bird at one hundred feet will be less likely to do it than a boy who can manage only eighty feet. Dewey had clearly been caught in the net of Alexander's ego-maniacal fancy. He was not the only one by any means. Aldous Huxley joined in the chorus of confusion. The following is taken from his article in *The Saturday Review* of October 25, 1941:

We have a direct intuition of the value of the highest moral and religious ideals; and we know empirically that the accepted methods of inculcating those ideals are not very effective. Politicians may embark on large-scale social reforms, designed to improve the world, but these reforms cannot produce more than a fraction of the good results expected of them, unless educators discover means whereby preachers and preached-to can implement their good intentions and practice what is preached. To build this bridge between idealistic theory and actual practice has proved so difficult that most men and women have hitherto merely evaded the problem. For either they have gone on preaching and teaching as in the past, regardless of the fact that the old educational methods are only about ten per cent efficient. Or else, having realized that the gap between theory and practice is still un-bridged, they have turned against the preachers and even the ideals preached by them. Regardless of the fact that cynicism and blind fanaticism are equally disastrous, they have become moral and intellectual nihilists, and, from nihilism, have gone on, under the spell of some fascinating demagogue, to the service of one of the idolatrous pseudo-religions such as nationalism, fascism, or communism. Meanwhile, the original problem remains unsolved and the circumstances of the time become less and less favorable to the rational solution of any social or psychological problem whatsoever. Up to the present time only two solutions have been

discovered to the problem of bridging the gap between idealistic theory and actual practice. The first, which is very ancient, is the mystic's technique of transcending personality in a progressive awareness of ultimate reality. The second, which is very recent, was discovered some fifty years ago by F. M. Alexander and may be described as a technique for the proper use of the self, a method for the creative conscious control of the whole psycho-physical organism.

The idea that psycho-physical re-education could make a man impervious to cynicism, fanaticism, nihilism, demagoguery, nationalism, fascism, communism or idolatrous pseudo-religions in general - these are the mouthings of lunacy. Yet here they were being uttered by a man of considerable intellect and influence, and printed in a reputable magazine. The ideas expressed are intrinsically absurd, quite apart from the fact that Alexander himself was a living refutation of their validity. The error which Alexander inspired still lives on. Thus a writer named Olive L. Brown recently wrote the following in a little book entitled *Your Innate Power*:

It is vital that the world's statesmen and leaders should learn to consider events objectively and sincerely. If they would only seek the truth with open minds free from all personal emotions and prejudice, there would be some hope for humanity to find peace and happiness.

This outwardly innocent and earnest passage from a rather trivial little book is of interest only because it shows that the Alexander error is still very much alive. Whether held and expressed by high or low intellects, its every utterance serves to deflect the attention of our species from the simple fact that personal integration (so right and necessary in its proper place) cannot do duty for that collective metabiological integration schematized in Vol. I, page 175 - the establishment of which is the *sine qua non* of human survival.

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

THE NECK

In Chapter Twentythree I referred to discoveries which had been made concerning the operation of the neck. These discoveries, which were made by F. Matthias Alexander and his pupil Charles Neil, showed that the neck played far more than a physical role. It became apparent as early as 1937 that Alexander's discoveries were of special significance for the Little History. But it was not until nearly thirty years later that that significance became fully understood. Then it became plain that the configurational roles played by the neck have little or not direct relation to the physical nature and functions of that organ. . . .

. . . The fulfilment of this process involves the right use of the neck, since the head cannot become rightly related to the sun while it is felt to be stuck to the feet or to the penis or to any other organ whether of the self or of another. One cannot be too grateful to F. Matthias Alexander⁷⁵ for pioneering the idea of the importance of the neck, nor to his pupil Charles Neil for showing that the right use of that organ controlled the relation of the head to the sun.⁷⁶ Neither Alexander nor Neil ever suspected that there are, so to say, a number of necks, and that it is largely the overtones of these 'other necks' laid upon the physical neck, which inhibit it from the manifestation of its configurational nature. It has been the object of this chapter to describe these 'other necks'.

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75 See Chapter Twentythree and related appendices.

76 Not that Charles Neil understood his discovery in this light. He discovered that the rightly balanced neck often leads to a certain phenomenon which takes place 'in the air' above the patient's head. It is I who have interpreted this discovery in the terms here used.