

roles in sport, play, and whatever enlivening rewards modern life has to offer—a criticism he has developed elsewhere—enters this novel in the unsurpassed image of the "feelies." The moral of withdrawal and rejection is on all such occasions very well founded both as philosophy and, for its imagistic value, as fiction. But the total withdrawal and rejection exhibit journalism's typical impudence. The confounding on one level in "Brave New World" of Henry Ford, Mussolini, Marx, Lenin, and Freud has no more to recommend its intelligence than a Hearst-press witch hunt, where similar modes of thought are employed.

Perhaps one reason why the social concern of Huxley's fiction is not so broad or so careful as it seems, or certainly as it ought to be, is that his *bête noire* is not the whole of modern social relations but mainly the sexual part. The real horror in "Brave New World" is sex, from the embryo bottle to the contraceptive belt, and the big thing, as in all his novels, is the seduction scene, meant to tie together all the themes and summarize his evaluation, but most fascinating on its own account. The sexual atmosphere in Huxley's books is always one of voluptuous or promiscuous or decadent or undignified, cold, or queasy fornication; and this atmosphere is so heavy that it stifles the moral that love is lacking. Huxley's attempt to give sex its due as a proper reward of life led to such unhappy results as Mark Rampion, the vulgar prude of "Point Counter-Point," who called Beethoven a eunuch, and made Huxley's nature myth as unnatural and inhibited a thing as his subsequent transcendence of nature is forced and old-mannish. Sex, as it seems to have obsessed him, and as it appears in "Brave New World" in transition between mythologies, is the pit in which lies waiting the two-backed beast of our perpetual embarrassment. It traps all with its promise of compensation; it is the escape from horror, from which in turn there is no escape, as the horror itself is deeply sexual. A man, he insists in "Brave New World," has the right to be unhappy, alone, detached, free in his individuality; but while one indorses these precepts, it would seem that they would carry greater conviction, and the satire which surrounds them, greater weight, if the horror to which they represent the recoil had less to do with the sexual attachment. Yet satire is not without an item of ironic self-expense, in that its distortion, which is to shock the world back to sanity, is often itself the most insane thing; without its own disorder it would never call attention to the world's. Thus the distortion of sex, in Huxley's case, its predominance and overwrought horror to which one may attribute his lack of a wider social scope, may actually be responsible for such scope as he has.

ISAAC ROSENFELD

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What makes it so difficult to review this philosophy is that it is equally hard to agree or to disagree with it. How could one possibly agree with a philosophy, priding itself on its closeness to reality and experience, which is actually so lost in abstract argument that, following it, and its evaluation of past and present history, one feels oneself happily inside a paradise which rapidly turns out to be a fool's paradise? Dewey earnestly holds that the source of all the social and political evils of our time is *laissez faire* (supposed to have caused the outstripping of social knowledge by scientific knowledge); but a glance at today's or yesterday's newspaper invariably teaches us that hell can be properly established only through the very opposite of *laissez faire*, through scientific planning. (This, of course, does not say anything against science as such.) Even more out of tune with reality are Dewey's complacent judgments on those evil times of the past in which men were still slaves and serfs; only a great scholar living in the ivory tower of common sense could be so completely unaware of the fact that certain categories of men today are far worse off than any slave or serf ever was. Nor do we need to evoke the extremities of the death factories. Concentration camps have outlived the downfall of the Nazi regime and are accepted as a matter of course; their inmates belong to a new class of human beings who have lost even the elementary human usefulness for society as a whole of which slaves and serfs were never deprived.

But hard as it is to agree with Dewey, it seems even harder to disagree with him, for such disagreement is like disagreement with common sense personified. And who

would dare or like to do that? Dewey's arguments, taken in themselves, without any reflection upon reality and experience, and without any remembrance of the commonplace philosophical questions as they appear and have appeared throughout all times (in proverbs, in prophecy, in tragedy, in art, up to the highest philosophical speculations)—those arguments are always sound and obvious, as though one simply could not think otherwise. This fantastic disparity between the argumentation itself, which in an abstract sense is always right, and the basis of experience, which in its historical actuality is always wrong, may be understood in the light of Dewey's central concept, which is not a concept of Man but a concept of Science. Dewey's main effort aims at an application to the social sciences of the scientific concepts of truth as a working hypothesis. This is supposed to put them on a sound scientific basis from which they and we will progress until the supposed gap between natural and social science is closed.

The intention of this approach is certainly humanistic in essence; it tries sincerely to humanize science, to make scientific results usable for the human community. The trouble is only that, at the same time, science, and not man, takes the lead in the argument, with the result that man is degraded into a puppet which through education—through "formation of attitudes," through "techniques for dealing with human nature"—has to be fitted into a scientifically controlled world. As though it was not man who invented science but some superhuman ghost who prepared this world of ours and only, through some incomprehensible obliviousness, forgot to change man into a scientific animal; as though man's problem were to conform and to adjust himself to some abstract niceties. As though science could ever be more than man; and, consequently, as though such a gap between scientific and social knowledge could ever be more than wishful thinking.

Superstition lies at the basis of all radical optimism and all radical pessimism, whose basic concepts of progress and decline resemble each other like hostile brothers. Both are truths in Dewey's sense, for both are working hypotheses in the historical sciences. Both stem from old and time-honored myths without which they cannot be understood or properly appreciated. The myth of progress presupposes that the beginning of mankind was hell and that we move forward to some kind of paradise; the myth of decline presupposes that the beginning was paradise and that from then on, possibly with the help of the original sin, we come closer and closer to hell. There is no doubt that great historians have used the progress myth while others, no less great, have used the other. But if we are serious about truth in history, we had better leave the delightful playground of mythology.

Apart from these considerations, which are concerned only with Dewey as a philosopher and not with Dewey as a great scholar, this book becomes excellent as soon as it deals with analyses of the scientific mind and the functioning of scientific experience. Here Dewey is extremely modern, in the best sense of the word, especially when he tries to "discover in terms of an experienced state of affairs the connection that exists between physical subject-matter and the common-sense objects of everyday experience," and when

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he shows that "modern experience is expansive since it is marked off by its constant concern for potentialities of experience as yet unrealized." In other words, what Dewey can and does give is a kind of logic for the scientific mind. That this is an important subject for science and scientists is beyond doubt. That it is the only concern of philosophy, or even one of its chief concerns, is a highly controversial question.

HANNAH ARENDT

## The Doctor Will Return

The surgical mask, the rubber teat  
Are singed, give off an evil smell.  
You seem to weep more now that heat  
Spreads everywhere we look.  
It says here none of us is well.

The warty spottings on the figurines  
Are nothing you would care to claim.  
You seem to weep more since the magazines  
Began revivals on the Dundas book.  
It says here you were most to blame.

But though I cannot believe that this is so,  
I mark the doctor as a decent sort.  
I mix your medicine and go  
Downstairs to leave instructions for the cook.  
It says here time is getting short.

That I can believe. I hear you crying in your room  
While watching traffic, reconciled.  
Out in the park, black flowers are in bloom.  
I picked some once and pressed them in a book.  
You used to look at them, and smile.

## Routes to Headquarters

The first, preaxial digit of the hind  
Stubs back a little for a fresher start:  
We move this way to keep from going blind.

In great duststorms like these, the punctured heart  
Is hastypudding shaken in a bag,  
Which you could mold, effendi, with the art

You crowd together from your own unease—  
Some mildewed plunder fit for cats to drag  
Around the house, smashed congeries.

We limped too long, though, wanting you to stay.  
Those storms grew normal as the noise of guns,  
Our pulpy hearts leaked better every day.

We acted when you proved yourself a beast.  
Saw clearly how to end your life, made plans  
To ship ourselves in boxes to the East

Where we attained a bland maturity.  
—Then the long coma, hearts annealed, to stare  
With glassy eyeballs toward the churning sea.

WELDEN KES

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