

Huxley

(largely inaudible)....."Isn't it lovely to know things?" And in fact Bertie has always loved knowing things. (story about a latter-day Noah and his Ark, and the Devil suggested he should take with him all the information of science, the Arts etc.) And this is the point - are we to take with us on our new journey of exploration - because these bits of information, in the way that they are presented, are the very poisons that we're all trying to get rid of. And we're in a terrible dilemma. Either we leave..... without knowledge, or we carry..... and poison the atmosphere the new planet.....and what Gregory Bateson was talking about in his first lecture..... that we know things in such a way that all our knowledge is a poison to us. But is there another way of knowing things which is not poisonous? Now this I take it is the plan for setting up new centres around the world, in which we should use our imagination in rather different ways - not in the linear fashion that has been going on so much, in science certainly, but in a way which..... involves.... pre-body..... You can always tell how two/^{planetary}bodies are interacting if you measure their mass and density and their gravitational there's nothing much to it - very accurately..... but there's no way, as far as I know,..... you can take three bodies and work out.... ..Now this very thing seems to have something to do with the 3-body

things in opposition one to the other. So what do we do about this problem, it's a very difficult one. And maybe these consciousness-expanding techniques that we have may give us a clue somewhere. But otherwise..... I heard one very interesting suggestion - by

..... and he suggested that you could get children to think in three dimensions, graphically. That is you get them to draw - you get them to be ambidextrous. Now it's a very odd thing about the body because people who are immensely right-handed are very bad with their left hand, and they think all lop-sidedly. You can see them leaning over... their right hand because that's the only way they can do it. If people..... quite physically to get to know the other side of their bodies..... you become ambidextrous, not only physically, but.... psychologically. And this may be one of the ways we should do it. Because I think a lot of the discussion today is looking for an enemy - which is yourself of course all the time - and trying to destroy something, instead of seeing where, in the human being himself,..... Christian civilisation has always been very afraid of the body, afraid of sexuality, afraid of having more to do with each other than is good for you, and there is this immense bias against taking physical things seriously - which one notices all over the place. I mean, it's not just a Christian thing..... difficulty, it is in fact a human We start thinking in terms of oppositions, we like categorising the world.... something here, something over there

..... And so all civilisation all over the world had the right hand as being the lucky and good one, and the ~~the~~ left hand as the sinister and the dirty one. I don't think there's a single exception - in the culture..... individual people are supposed to use the left hand because they are sacred. That is to say, they're going over on to the other side of this peculiar psychological-physical division, and they're expected to use their left hand because they deal with things that are normally thought of as being dirty. Now we're talking a tremendous amount of dirt here....

the time and getting very angry because none's paying attention to all
 divided ourselves in two, + one side is clean, + the other side is dirty.

We have to use our dirty side in the way that our dirty side has to be used..... things that are intangible and non-rational, but yet have a shape and a meaning. And this shape and meaning have something to do with our physical bodies, with the physical imagination in man. I always think of it as what psychologists call "the body image". And when you consider what happens.... it is a very curious thing.... the perceptual method by which we understand our way of being in the world, you see that most of our psychological difficulties stem from a perfectly obvious physical disposition of our attitudes. If we start relearning physical our/attitudes in conjunction with our social ones and in conjunction with our psychological ones, then I think there's a chance that we can get the type of systemic imagination going that we're talking about this evening.....

they

Look at ^{how} ~~they~~ scientists work. Most of the time they're sitting down, and now how much can you actually think with all of yourself when you're just cramped like this, in one position. This, after all, is the prison that we put ourselves in in order to concentrate. We screw ourselves up like this, in order to be able to focus a beam of so-called thought upon one little object there. But we can't see things in a large expanse,

Huxley because this is how we are inside all the time, we go about looking like this, a small little thing, hoping that we can see the whole expanse.

Now if you see, for instance how - I have ~~some~~^{two} very nice examples of how poets work. Now one is Wordsworth - however you like Wordsworth, it doesn't matter - but he couldn't actually compose poetry while sitting down. What he did was to walk up and down a gravel path, and as he walked up and down sedately, out came the Prelude and the Excursion, and you can see how it worked because the rhythm of his poetry actually follows the way in which his feet went up and down that gravel path.

His friend Coleridge however always composed while walking over mountains, and you can see this in his rhythms because they're not classical rhythms at all, they're jerky, they're counterpointed, they're little obstacles, they're rocks he has to get over, streams he has to jump.

You can feel it in most people. Shelley for instance, you can see it in his voice - he had a very shrill voice, and if you actually look at the poetry he wrote, all his images are shrill ones. He was filled with an ideal enthusiasm, and when he recited he flung his arms about all over the place and his voice mounted like a desperate angel into the sky, and there was something about his whole physical tension which came out in his poetry. I admit that Keats used to sit down when he wrote his poetry, but he tied his shoelaces very tightly, so that he should feel his feet as though they were doing something. Now all these examples are fascinating for us because they show how much the body is involved in actually thinking. And if scientists are all the time going to cramp themselves on the kind of lavatory of thought (applause).....

Huxley

Yes I think they are. Indeed Freud said that one of the first acts - one of the first ways of repressing knowledge that man had available to him was to lift his nose from the ground so that he could no longer smell what was most intimate to him. And it's also very interesting as a matter of fact that his first - in his interpretation of dreams, the very first dream that he analyses, one of his own called "The Dream of Irma's injection", has to do with the nose. He was ^{sniffing} ~~heating~~ cocaine at the time, and he ~~said~~ had a lot of sort of itchings of the nose, and he had a tremendous dream when he was identifying with one of his patients and one of his friends - one of his colleagues, this was a doctor. One finds that the nose, just like the left hand, in Haiti is talking about exactly the same thing. Most people when they start getting upset start having curious things happening to the nose, and when they get manic about it, or enraged, one finds curious religious - religious figures, figures in mythology or in religion, often called trickster figures. These are the hyena, in West Africa, the jackal in N. America, and a lot of similar creatures all over the world - and they always have something wrong with their nose. They smell too much, and they speak with nasal voices all the time. They're continually doing things with their left hand that their right hand knows nothing about, and it is one of the first things which is repressed. Indeed amongst two cannibal societies that I know of, ~~like~~ either the children or the initiates into the cannibal society - for instance amongst the ^{Kwakiwlt} Kwakiwlt - they have their nose pressed into their faces so that they can't be so long, because it is the prerogative of spirits only to have enormous noses by which you may intuit what the world is all about.

Huxley

Now this must mean that we are constantly picking up other people's smells and thinking that it's merely an intuition. That is, there is something about a smell which tells one exactly what a person is up to, in his physical self. People smell ~~xxxxxxx~~, they smell jealous, they smell sexy, they smell dirty - they smell in fact all the psychological states one can think of. And in West Africa - a programme on television some months ago - there was a witch doctor or whatever you like to call him there, who used to smell his patient's armpits to know whether they suffered from various kinds of disease. I've seen this myself in various other parts of the world, and I have a friend who's very good at smelling people and what this all means. But somehow this becomes impolite to us, just as in Islamic countries it is very impolite to use your left hand socially - because your left hand is the one that you use to clean up your own dirt, to wipe your bottom when you go to the lavatory, to touch women, and to do all the nasty unclean things. So you put it away from yourself, and you repress the thought that it actually belongs to you. And so you find, for instance, in the Dagon society in West Africa that a man always has to sleep on his right side when he's with his wife so that only his left hand is available to touch his wife. Now if you take this seriously, this kind of image, you have in your left hand and in your nose, you have certain social functions which you are aware of, and you do with your left hand what should be done with your left hand and you know what those things are - and the same thing with your right hand. But we seem to have completely forgotten this kind of knowledge, and all our - all the things of which our psychology is made up, that is all the physical states that come up in us, all our physical faculties which are immediately translated into psychological ones and then physical ones, are completely ignored, and if we try to make use of them - as poets

do - we're thought to be very odd indeed. Sorry - I've gone off a bit too far. But it's remarkable how these things of the left hand and the nose go so closely together that you can in fact do a little job of

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Huxley is going to be, not only amazing but great fun. And this is the one ~~xxxx~~ thing that I've lost any sense of in this Congress, is any sense of fun, or hope, or happiness, or - what are we doing, sort of sitting around pretending not to be bodies, and not using, in fact, all the resources that we have, and just talk talk talk talk talk....

Huxley

I think if Noah has taken all that knowledge just as knowledge it would have been, as I implied, a poison. But knowledge is very useful, and the more I know about the physiology of the body, and society, and psychology, if I have an idea of how to use it, the better it is for me. Because without it I get hungry, I get sad, I don't know how to act in this world. But it seems to me one has to make it practical for oneself. Now every time that one meets - in society, in this enormous machine - a person who has put himself in the place of a mechanical cog, as it were - if you meet a bureaucrat who, instead of treating you like yet another bit of information coming out, having to be processed, who is a person, who doesn't complain, who understands what you're after - then it does something for you. He's replaced that bit of cog by himself; that is, he's used the knowledge he has about that machine in order to provide himself, as it were, with a way of dealing with other people. And the relief that I feel myself is absolutely enormous. It's the same with bus-conductors or any of these other things. If you have sufficient knowledge to go, as it were on automatic to keep your place in the society, in the machine, and yet you're not an automat, you're still a person there; then, as it were, you put the machine in its place. You occupy the place that otherwise would be a merely destructive affair. I mean we can't do without knowledge, that's obvious. But if you put the knowledge in the experience that we have all the time of ourselves and our relation to people, then it becomes harmless. You know, it's just like all poisons: used in the right way they become tonics.