

This was the Presidential Address to the British Association Meeting in Exeter in 1969 which Medawar gave two days before he suffered his fateful heart-attack in Exeter Cathedral which I had to report. [See Title 186] Medawar, a Nobel Laureate for his contributions to the science of immunology, had been a member of our Editorial board since its inception.

He took the title from Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), and his purpose was to compare the philosophy of the 17th century with the present and to ask why this did not bring us reassurance, as it done more than 300 years before. Amidst the philosophical gloom of the 17th century, Medawar continued, there were new voices of confidence such as human reason, and what human beings might achieve through an understanding of Nature, and a mastery of the physical world. An early example of the Scientific Temper.

"Once again we are oppressed by a sense of decay and deterioration, but this time, in part at least, by a fear of the deterioration of the world through technological innovation". Referring to the great sidereal adventures of today, Medawar thought them both elevating and frightening, as he compared an Apollo rocket on its launch tower to the shape and grandeur of a cathedral's spire. Both are economically pointless, a shocking waste of public money, but also symbols of aspiration towards higher things.

The tempo of innovation, when measured against the span of human life, was one of the reasons for present fear. "We wring our hands over the miscarriages of technology and take its benefactions for granted. We are dismayed by air pollution, but not proportionally cheered by, say, the virtual abolition of poliomyelitis. There is sense in which science and technology can be arraigned for new instruments of warfare, but another and more important sense in which it is the height of folly to blame the weapons for the crime."

"We can obviously do better," Medawar said. Only during the last centuries has there been progress, "but we cannot yet point to a single definite solution of any of the problems that confront us—political, economic, social or moral, having to do with the conduct of life. We are still beginners and for that reason, hope to improve." Quoting Hobbes's *Leviathan* Medawar said:

"Life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, or without fear, no more than without sense; there can be no contentment but in proceeding'. I agree", Medawar said in his address.

I concurred completely with Medawar and therefore published his outstanding logical analysis of human fears and hopes. He was not only a prominent scientist, but also an eminent scholar and philosopher and his death, 18 years later in 1987, was a great tragedy. [See titles 186 and 186 A]