Biology debate links Huxley and Baltimore

By William Lasser

We also predetermine and condition. We decent our beings as socialized human beings, as Alpha or Epilums, as future sewage workers or hero. . . . Directors of Hickory and YB.

— Aldous Huxley, Brave New World

We in Cambridge were present at the creation: we were witnesses to and participants in the multidimensional mind that will prove to be many debates and controversies in the social applications of biological science. Recombinant DNA research is just the beginning. The danger of P3 research lies not in the creation of monsters who will ravage the Cambridge countryside, but in the possibilities such research will afford someday for the ruination or elimination of the rights of human beings.

It is all so paradoxical, for the same research which could lead to such unholy results could also provide the cure for cancer and the common cold. But the dilemma we face is not unique — atomic power, which perhaps could solve our energy crisis, could also destroy the world in a matter of seconds.

The City Council decided and the procedures which led to it are remarkable in themselves. We have seen an attack first by the scientific community and then by a local government to limit basic research. We have seen a battle of the biologists, the laymen. We cannot accept advances in technology which are potentially hazardous because we have not yet established a social order capable of controlling them. Someone must be wrong with a society which relegates it to fear of its own base.

Biological research presents special problems. Many are fortified by the words "bacteria" and "viruses" simply because they do not know what they mean, or because such microorganisms conjure up images of disease and misery. "Genetic engineering" represents a threat to our family structure and to the present value system. We have accomplished all of this politics, a fear that the government will somehow gain a monopoly over genetic technology and use it to subjugate its citizens, rob them of their individuality and their humanity. "A really efficient totalitarian state," wrote Huxley in a 1946 preface to his 1932 classic, "would be one in which the all-powerful executive of society could -- in his way -- reduce violence to a fine science; could regulate the birth and death rates with a fine precision; could control the [population] with the same speed and the same ruthless efficiency as the电脑, perhaps could solve our energy crisis, could also destroy the world in a matter of seconds.

We are angry at society, so angry that we have just been through. Atomic energy, for all it can do to us, does not require a totalitarian regime to wreck its havoc. And such a government incident, would have been weathered within a month or two, and an unfortunate chapter of history might have been allaved.

So perhaps the answer is to continue giving any crazy with the press in the city, and then getting the whole issue hijacked as the spellbind the public, and only adding as much background

The reporting of terrorism

By Glen Brownstone

Are they publicity-seeking, genuinely disturbed, or a combination of the two? All of them notoriety by insisting on their right to die. Some have called his actions "expediency" way to publicize their protest, to shame the government, to cause a furor, to make the authorities look as though they were weak in their handling of the situation.

There have been seven hostage-taking incidents in the United States in the last five years, an epidemic that is likely to spread further before any cure can be found. On March 2, the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism, a government organization commissioned to prepare a report on the widespread terrorist violence, warned in its report that an increase in terrorism and violent political protests was expected. To quote from the report, "general ordinariness in the nation is a false claim, and we must see in the current social situation an assassination [sic] of the trouble of the future."

Why the current upsurge in terrorist incidents in the US? Is the nation involved in more crazes than in past years? Has the American bureaucracy become so tangle that citizens must resort to violence to get their way? Not likely. What is likely is that there are more Americans are learning of the power of the media to glorify not only the good, but the evil. There are many of us who often consider the word "terrorist" to be negative and uncontrolled behavior. If we are always talking and if we feel we must lash out at something or someone, the appropriate kind of action will not only publicize our plight, but reasonable limits, filling newswEEKLYs and dailies with stories of life on "death row." Gilmore's motives, his background, his friends, his lawyers, the last night in prison, and a minute-by-minute account of the execution day. If Gilmore had followed the normal course of appeal, and fought the death sentence, he would probably be alive today. And unknown. It is true that the first execution in this country since 1967 is news, but not to the extent that it was sensationalized.

It is that tendency of modern media to sensationalize dramatic stories that has led us into an era of hostage crimes, terrorism, and other forms of violent protest. Would Stephen Gregory have felt that the best way to "make a point" was to hold seven hostages in a bank for several hours if his action would have gone unnoticed by the public? The Hanafi Muslim sect that had murdered 134 hostages by Hanafi Moslem terrorists in the United States in the last five weeks, an epidemic that is likely to spread further before any cure can be found.

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