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**Towards a Study of  
Aldous Huxley  
as a Political Thinker:  
An Intellectual Biography**

INTRODUCTION

Behind the renowned artistic and literary production of Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) is a political thinking that proves decisive for a full analysis of the entire intellectual career of one of the most important figures of twentieth-century English literature.

After his encounter with Vilfredo Pareto's (1916) *Trattato di sociologia generale*, his early interest in human nature, his search for a true moral foundation, soon becomes a political interest characterised from then onwards by an attention to the *psychological factor*. Huxley is critical of the mass society that suffocates human nature, and of any form of totalitarianism that, thanks to scientific and technological development, endeavours to modify it in order to impose upon it a happiness that does not belong to it. His thinking, however, focuses on the search for a political idea that might favour improved individual and social conditions. He will find it in a pacifist and ecological communitarianism, to which he commits himself personally and, for the fulfilment of which, Pareto's indispensable lesson will convince him of the idea of a democratic elite, a sophocracy of scholars from differing backgrounds leading mankind.

This is the political thinking of a careful observer of the twentieth century, whose focus on the *scientific factor* opens up innumerable sources (ranging from biology to chemistry, from psychology to sociology and to physiology), and, at the same time, increases the risk of overstressing the analysis. It is a political thinking founded on specific philosophical bases, albeit not always solid, on the whole perhaps discontinuous, but never incoherent, especially if viewed in the light of the search for a gap in the web spun by the great ideologies, in which—and in this he is representative of the intellectuals of his time—Huxley remains fundamentally entangled.

In the light of the developments in applied science, his re-analysis of the political theories that inspired him—a map of which we will attempt to draw up here, in order of theme and not necessarily chronologically, in order to outline the principal sources of Huxley's political thinking—makes his reflections interesting, original and tremendously up-to-date. This intellectual biography is, then, the first step towards the study of Huxley, not as a literary figure, but as a political thinker who, in exploiting his indubitable literary talent, chooses literature to express his ideas. He particularly understands the impact of dystopia on twentieth-century thinking. *Brave New World*, with which Huxley (1932) is most commonly identified, is his most successful political manifesto and, at the same

time, his principal contribution to political philosophy in its reflections upon the great themes of the last century and of our present.

#### BEYOND MARXISM AND POSITIVISM

In the post-Victorian Britain in which Huxley was born and grew up, there were three principal factors which, each in a different way, influenced his cultural development and effectively directed his entire political thinking: the first was the family environment; the second and third were his involvement with the Fabian Society and with the circle of intellectuals at Garsington Manor.

Aldous' maternal grandfather was the poet Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), while his paternal grandfather was the positivist Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895). Both belonged to the upper middleclass that the Industrial Revolution had raised to the status of British intellectual aristocracy. They were two champions of Victorian morality, with its moral duty to help the poorer classes by encouraging the spread of culture within society: Arnold believed in *widespread humanistic education*, while T.H. Huxley was in favour of *widespread scientific education* (see particularly Sawyer 2002, 21-30). Their political ideas coincided with an elitism in which only an aristocracy, "enlightened and of wise men" for the former, "technocratic and scientific" for the latter, would be able to solve the problems of the society of their time (Gabrieli 1946, XXIX; La Vergata 1995, LI).

In 1911, Huxley chose a course of studies that "was increasingly leading him in the direction of science" (Sawyer 2002, 32). He appears to have been following in the footsteps of his paternal rather than his maternal grandfather, also because this was the period of his first contacts with the Fabian Society (see Reinecke 2010, 31-35; Bradshaw 1994, viii-x), notoriously hostile towards the positions of the post-Carlyle conservative literati—and Arnold was certainly one of them—and which at the same time claimed, in line with T.H. Huxley's positivism, the necessity to detach itself from the dialectical conception of history of Marxist doctrine (see particularly Webb 1889, 59-60; Palazzolo 1999, 6).

At Garsington Manor, the home of Philip Morrell and Lady Ottoline, Huxley frequented the future protagonists of the political, economic and literary worlds of twentieth-century Britain and Europe. He encountered the alternative modernism of the Bloomsbury Group and, more importantly for his political development, the elitism and realism of Keynes (see De Cecco 1983, 15-16), as well as Russell's (1963[1917], 5, 9, 40) criticism of ideologies. In general, he came into contact with a climate that was hostile to the blind faith in progress so characteristic of the Victorian age: science and its Darwinist law of the *survival of the fittest* (see Sawyer 2002, 40) raised to the status of a moral value, which had led to the application of the "way of the laboratory" (Sawyer 2002, 28) to the study of the human being, had failed. Such failure, however, proved liberating: the lack of faith in the ability of science to provide moral values was accompanied by the conviction that only a careful search for the true foundation of human nature could provide them and fill the consequent temporary but necessary *moral vacuum*.

This was the air of reaction to the First World War that Huxley breathed at Garsington and of which he so perfectly incarnated the spirit. During the Twenties, his friendship with D.H. Lawrence intensified, which is to be read as his drawing closer to the result of

the author's moral, and effectively psychological, search: the discovery of the decisive role of irrationality, doubtlessly inspired by Nietzsche, at the base of human action, at the very time in which Freud was scientifically formulating the concept of the Unconscious (see Sawyer 2002, 57-58). And in Pareto's individual and social psychology, Huxley found objective confirmation through the "reality principle" (Portinaro 1999, 13).

#### MASS SOCIETY AND FORDISM

The influence that this *psychological factor* has on Huxley's political thinking is evident in his criticism of mass society and Fordism. Mass society, in fact, takes advantage of the *moral vacuum*, sarcastically depicted by Huxley (1921; 1923; 1925; 1928; 1930) in his early novels, including *Chrome Yellow*, *Antic Hay*, *Those Barren Leaves*, *Point Counter Point* and *Brief Candles*, and substitutes Victorian moral values with "the ethic of the machine" (Huxley 2001a, 219).

His principal source is *La morale de la machine*, by the French writer Alphonse Séché (1929), but he is influenced no doubt by that *moral of science* heatedly debated at Garsington and of which Huxley, along with Russell (1931), will be the strongest critic in a Britain where it is no coincidence that the Thirties open with *The Scientific Outlook* and *Brave New World*. Spengler, who denounces the culture of *technology for technology's sake*, also inspires Huxley's criticism of the culture of science, propagated in Britain by his paternal grandfather, and becomes the source for his criticism of another faith implicit in the *ethic of technology* (and of the machine): the faith in civilisation and progress (see Huxley 2000, 104). A further element in his criticism of mass society can be found in the contrast made by Italian historian, Guglielmo Ferrero, between *qualitative civilisation* and *quantitative civilisation*, in which he identifies a clash between the ethical and the economic spheres (see Huxley 2001a, 211). Even so, Huxley's criticism remains psychological: the *ethic of the machine* does not correspond to the real needs of human nature. Huxley analyses this idea further through his studies of Pareto, Rougier, Sorel, Wallas, Lévy-Bruhl and Jung (see Huxley 1927, 18-19).

In order to produce this *immoral moral*, then, capitalism, of which Huxley underlines the "overproduction", whereas Keynes talks of "under-consumption" (see Huxley 2001a, 283), conditions the mind and behaviour of the individual, through working practices. This leads Huxley (1931, 76) to speak explicitly of "Fordism". He dedicates much attention to the control of leisure time and the "amusement industry" (Huxley 2001a, 339), including sexual prohibition and rationalization, for which the role of advertising is fundamental. His analysis (Huxley 1926) of such aspects becomes much more precise following his trip to America in 1925-26, narrated in *Jesting Pilate*, where the opinions read previously in *The American Credo* by Mencken and Nathan (1920) find confirmation (see Bradshaw 1994, 5).

#### THE TOTALITARIAN ELITE

Parallel to his psychological research into human nature, Huxley intensifies his attention to scientific development. The reason lies in the fact that scientific progress is focusing on

the psychological background of human nature: applied science (initially, Huxley meant applied psychology) can condition this background at the root, thus determining the individual's thoughts and behaviour. The human "affective compartment full of emotions" described by Freud becomes Huxley's principle source together with Jung's "extraverted attitude" and Jules de Gaultier's "Bovarysme" (Huxley 2000, 195, 187, 389). Huxley directs his attention towards mass psychology, in that it conditions individual psychology. He reaches the same conclusion as that of Le Bon and Tarde: "mass psychology is highly influential in politics, philosophy and even literature" (Moscovici 1985, 8). Huxley is definitely influenced by the French school, if only for the fact that Freud was its best pupil (see Moscovici 1985, 219).

The totalitarian leaders and the elites in control of the (pseudo)democracies are (or are sustained by) post-Freudian experts in the field of applied psychology. They understand mass psychology, the desire to adore, to belong and to transcend present in human nature, and they exploit it to their own advantage in the personality cult and the cult of the nation, which they wish to extend through war knowing that hatred pays "enormous psychological dividends" (Huxley 2001a, 492). In short, we are dealing with *scientific Machiavellis*, where by *scientific* Huxley means everything that acts on the individual's mind: the proof is the creation of Propaganda Ministries in every European country, whether totalitarian or (pseudo)democratic.

Huxley believes that conditioning human nature through applied psychology corresponds to the definition of totalitarianism: to paraphrase Hannah Arendt, it is basically *ideology and scientific persuasion*. And scientific persuasion, among the applied sciences, may not be limited to psychology alone, but could be extended to biology and chemistry: Pavlov's studies into the *conditioned reflex* become the principal source for Huxley (2001a, 151). In short, the post-Pavlov *scientific Machiavellis* could condition the individual at the roots, genetically and biologically, through brainwashing, subliminal projections and hypnopaedia, fulfilling the dream of every leader: a benevolent totalitarianism which, by guaranteeing the (conditioned) mass (conditioned) happiness, would become infallible.

*Brave New World* represents the nightmare come true of perfect totalitarianism and the manifesto of political realism carried to the utmost consequences in the century of applied science.

#### POLITICAL REALISM AND ELITISM

Behind the criticism of mass society, Fordism and totalitarianism, it is Vilfredo Pareto's undisputed lesson that dominates: it is undoubtedly the principal source of Huxley's political thinking.

In the *Trattato di sociologia generale*, Huxley finds confirmation of Lawrence's theses on the importance of instincts and feelings at the base of human action, making Pareto's Machiavellian conclusions on the nature of this base his own: it is made up of egoism, "hatred and vanity" (Huxley 2001a, 492). In Pareto's criticism of historical materialism, Huxley uncovers the missing link between his cultural distance from Marxism, the anti-Marxism of which the principal exponent at Garsington had been Keynes (see particularly Lunghini 1991, 8-9), and the Fabian criticism of Marxist dialectics. And he finds it in the

*psychological factor*, deriving from the Italian sociologist's lesson on the necessity to broaden the factors determining social phenomena from uniqueness (*economic factor*) to multiplicity (see Huxley 1935, 1-2). Furthermore, in Pareto's criticism of ideologies, whether they be revolutionary, socialist, democratic or progressive religions, Huxley (2000, 274-275) discovers a more complete articulation, since it is not without psychological justification, than the criticism of ideals contained in *Political Ideals* and later in *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* of his friend Russell (1963[1917]; 1920).

Pareto's elitist theory, again in the psychologically complete formulation of a difference between "instinct for combinations" and "persistence of aggregates", constitutes Huxley's (2001a, 387) principal source for a criticism of democracy, which is not without a realistic and disenchanting analysis of its unfulfilled promises. It is a criticism that takes into account Sorel and Mosca, and Michels' (1915[1911]) *Political Parties* (see respectively Huxley 1927, 18-19 and 1937a, 28; Stankiewicz 2002, 34): Huxley's source is basically what James Burnham has defined as the *Machiavellian school*.

Pareto's same elitist lesson, then, leads Huxley (see 1936b, 309) to identify the elite in power, which he describes, in unmistakable Veblenian terms, as being made up of *industrialist-financiers*; but the cold reaction reserved for Burnham's (1941) *The Managerial Revolution* demonstrates how much of his (see Huxley 1969, 471-472) attention is focused not so much on who constitutes the elite, but rather on how that elite co-opts men of applied science (even after his analysis, in the early Fifties, of another pillar of elitism, *The Power Elite* by Charles Wright Mills [1956]). They are the true protagonists of the imperfect totalitarianism of the Thirties, and potentially—and even probably, according to the realist school which maintains that the only ethical commandment of those in power is to preserve and reinforce their power—of the perfect totalitarianism of the future.

#### THE DEMOCRATIC ELITISM FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

The journey *beyond the Mexique Bay* (1932-34) that follows the publication of *Brave New World* represents a definite watershed in Huxley's political thinking.

After a careful analysis of the causes of war, among which psychological causes inevitably occupy an important position, Huxley (1935b, 48) champions an ethical pacifism in which "the individual works for reform" (Huxley 1937a, 126)—especially, given the previous considerations, among the men of applied science<sup>1</sup>—become the sole instrument in breaking the depressing *reality principle* constituted by the spiralling violence caused by the egoism, hatred and vanity present in human nature: Gandhi becomes Huxley's (see 1937a, 146-147) principal source in his reflection upon the importance of the means in achieving the end (of international peace). Even so, the influence of Russell's (1936) *Which Way to Peace?* is evident—especially in *What Are You Going to Do About It?* (Huxley 1936a) and in *An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism* (Huxley 1937b).

Then, the lesson of Spengler, Sorokin and Toynbee teaches Huxley (2002a, 330) the importance of religious feeling in any civilisation. Huxley (2002a, 71) thus finds the sense

<sup>1</sup> See the attention Huxley dedicates to the "three kinds of action against war" that "as individuals or in organized groups, scientific workers can take" (Huxley 1946a, 59).

of religion necessary for peace in an ultimate impersonal reality, a *Uniting Divinity* for all human beings, a unique foundation that “transcends and yet is the most inward ground of our being”. Behind this *perennial philosophy* which unites rather than divides, makes no claim to exclusivity and deprives of meaning war against anyone else, because anyone else is oneself, there is above all oriental mysticism. In gaining a complete knowledge and understanding of this, the role of Krishnamurti, the Indian philosopher, becomes increasingly decisive (see Huxley 2002a, 206-218).

Finally, Huxley (1937a, 172; 1946a, 72-84) studies a democracy made for the individual that does not impose an individual made for democracy. He favours a communitarianism in which power is devolved to autonomous communities formed by independent men and women cooperating freely, an ecological communitarianism that pays attention to the planet’s resources by applying technology to the individual and not the individual to technology. In the Thirties, Huxley’s (1937a, 74-84) source is mainly *À chacun sa chance*, by the French trade unionist Hyacinthe Dubreuil (1934), although the more essentially political influences of Veblen, Jefferson and Kropotkin will later become decisive (Huxley 1946a, 69; 2002a, 28; 1946b, x).

In comparing this Huxley with the Huxley of *Brave New World* there is an evident element of discontinuity. Even so, he emphasises the coherence of the evolution of his political thinking.

Pacifism and cooperation between individuals, which form the basis of communitarianism, also in fact find confirmation in the *reality principle*: Huxley (1936c, 31-32; 1937a, 146-153; 1937b, 16-18, 29, 86; 1946a, 26; 2001b, 152; 1956, xii) studies historical examples of non-violence, non-collaboration and boycott, as well as autonomous cooperative communities. His conclusions (Huxley 1935a, 2; 1936c, 32) are no longer utterly “depressing”: even “love”, in its sense of charity, solidarity and cooperation, is one of the instincts and feelings that make up the basis of human action. In short, it is Pareto’s very lesson that, paradoxically, leads Huxley (1936c, 31) to conclude that “the world described by Machiavelli and in our own day by Pareto is not the only possible world”.

It is again the lesson learnt from Pareto that, again paradoxically (since it is too Utopian), convinces Huxley (2001a, 192) that communitarianism can only be achieved by an “aristocracy of intellect” made up of experts from the various fields of knowledge whose objective is the only *proper study*: man and his nature. Only the humanist elite, which understands the nature and the needs of the individual, can direct democratic scientific planning “in which the material advantages of progressive technology can be combined not only with security, but also with freedom” (Huxley 1946a, 25) and with “human potentialities”<sup>2</sup>—so that the progress of “a more humanly satisfying life” (Huxley 1946a, 29) corresponds with material progress. Huxley’s attention to the encounter between humanistic and scientific cultures is, of course, rooted in the distant family debate on the *widespread humanistic education* promoted by Matthew Arnold and the *widespread scientific education* of T.H. Huxley, but, above all, it is essentially part of his purely pedagogical interest in “education for freedom” (Huxley 2002b, 279)—influenced specifically by his studies of Montessori, Dewey and Skinner (Huxley 1937a, 181-185, 201-202; 2002a, 195-214; 2002b, 281, 291).

<sup>2</sup> See particularly Huxley (1961; 1977, 236-253; 1963). For an overall study of human potentialities according to Huxley, see particularly Nugel (2006).

Never against science, but always attentive to applied science; never against applied science, but always attentive to how a certain elite applies it; never convinced of a solution that leaves to one side real scientific and technological development in favour of a return to primitivism,<sup>3</sup> Huxley's alternative to totalitarianism remains, in the final analysis, caught up in the web spun by the two great ideologies, in his continual search, with its roots in Proudhon's political thinking, for "the advantages of Liberalism at the same time as the advantages of Socialism" (Huxley 2001a, 348).

#### BETWEEN DYSTOPIA AND UTOPIA

Besides the important role assigned in his analysis to the dangerous combination of the *psychological factor* and the *scientific factor*, in a framework with the contours of political realism—in its inextricable union with elitism with which it makes its entrance into the political theory of the twentieth century—the most original feature of Huxley's political thinking is the medium chosen to express it: the novel, by which he exploits his indubitable talent as a writer.

The fame of Huxley the author and the lack of fortune of Huxley the political thinker are a first but telling indication of the advantages and disadvantages of the intellectual's choice of the novel as a means of expressing his ideas. Indeed, the novel, in comparison with the essay or the treatise, ensures the message greater access to the public, both on the qualitative and on the quantitative levels. However, the price to pay for the *fictionalised translation* of a political analysis is its loss of depth behind the mask of fiction. Behind Huxley's choice to pay this price lies unquestionably his sense of duty, inherited from that Victorian morality of which Aldous, more than others, is certainly a product, towards the greatest possible spread of culture as the only means of improving the individual and social condition.

This price is considerably reduced thanks to his understanding of the impact of the genre chosen—the dystopian novel—on the political thinking of the twentieth century. In fact, if the aim of political realism is "to educate individuals *indirectly* for the heuristics of fear" (Portinaro 2002, XXIV), anti-Utopia represents its most complete manifesto. This aims to educate *directly* for the heuristics of fear, using fiction to unveil the future, but real and possible, threats to society in the present. On the one hand, it incarnates that *possible reality* that from Marx onwards renders the Utopian genre a realistic paradigm for contemporary political philosophy;<sup>4</sup> and on the other, the purely twentieth-century passage from Utopia to anti-Utopia via the *end of Utopia*.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the fact that Huxley does identify this passage in applied science gives the novel an originality that remains intact even in the light of the subsequent anti-Utopias.

<sup>3</sup> "No, back to Nature is not practical politics. The only cure for science is more science, not less. We are suffering from the effects of a little science badly applied. The remedy is a lot of science, well applied" (Huxley 2001a, 149).

<sup>4</sup> For the concept of *possible reality*, see Bloch (1959, trad. it. 1994, 262, 1577).

<sup>5</sup> For the concept of the *end of Utopia*, see Marcuse (1967).

From *Brave New World* to *Island* (1962), via *Ape and Essence* (1948), Huxley's anti-Utopias are nothing other than the mirror of the development of his political thinking, and in actual fact they mark the key turning points in that development, both in content and in form, even distorting the literary genre.

Herbert George Wells' (1923) *Men Like Gods* is the polemical source for *Brave New World*,<sup>6</sup> which represents the most radical form of criticism of Utopia in the terms of unconditional faith in scientific and technological progress. In *Brave New World* practically all the sources are present, many of them symbolised by the onomastics used within the text (see particularly Meckier 2004), which characterise Huxley's political thought up to 1932. And indeed Huxley's masterpiece, in the final analysis, represents the paradigm of political realism taken to its extreme consequences in the century of scientific and technological progress seen in terms of contact between the *psychological* and the *scientific factors*.

*Ape and Essence*, on the other hand, is the same paradigm of that progress seen, however, in terms of the atomic age. It contains a slight message of hope which distorts the canons of traditional anti-Utopia in exactly the same way that pacifism distorts the canons of traditional realism. The sources of this hope are what provoke Huxley's pacifist commitment after 1932, above all the idea of Gandhi: *Ape and Essence* opens on the very day of his assassination.

Finally, in *Island*, considered Huxley's testament, scientific and technological progress no longer condition and direct the individual and society, as in *Brave New World*, towards *Community Identity Stability*, but towards *Attention to Attention*. The sources are the same as those of the pacifist and ecological communitarianism under the leadership of a humanistic-scientific elite, the arrival point of Huxley's political thinking. *Island* is actually a Utopia, in the sense of a *real possibility*, which in the end succumbs to the lesson in *realpolitik*, the coherent container of Huxley's political thinking between originality and discontinuity.

In philosophical terms, *Brave New World* represents the most radical opposition to the *hope principle*, resulting from the lesson of the *reality principle*, in the terms of the *desperation principle*.<sup>7</sup> *Ape and Essence* and *Island* take up the call of *Brave New World* for the *responsibility principle*.<sup>8</sup> This call does not translate into the abandonment of the *desperation principle* in favour of the *hope principle*, but simply becomes a cautious (*real*) *possibility principle* between dystopian pessimism and Utopian optimism: the "cancer in Utopia" (Meckier 2006, 293) represents the necessity of the lesson in *realpolitik* so that Utopia can rise again after the anti-Utopia in the terms of a "reasonable Utopia" (Veca 2002, 118).

<sup>6</sup> "The first inspiration, the first impulse to write this book came to me after reading a volume by H.G. Wells, published in that period, at the end of '28, I believe, a book entitled *Men Like Gods*. This book represented Wells in, one might say, a near maniacal period. Throughout his life, Wells wavered between a kind of frenetic optimism and a pessimism that, at the end of his life, had become, one might say, cosmic. At that time, in the book *Men Like Gods*, was the optimism *à outrance*, and that book irritated me a little, and I thought about writing something comical against Wells' ideas" (Huxley 1959, 6).

<sup>7</sup> The three principles refer respectively to Bloch (1959) and Portinaro (1999, 13; 2003).

<sup>8</sup> The reference is to Jonas (1979).



## BETWEEN THE IDEOLOGIES, BUT FOR LIBERALISM

In the century of applied science, the defence of individual freedom, of which *Brave New World* realistically traces the potentially tragic destiny, must rest on the devolution of power and on autonomy, “the true essence of democratic freedom”. The self-government of communities made up of “independent, freely co-operating and autonomous individuals” must be led by an elite of humanists and scientists, who have the role of planning society by promoting the applications of scientific and technological progress, which favours individual freedom and peaceful and democratic coexistence. First and foremost are birth control and the search for renewable energy sources which can ensure self-sufficiency in food and energy production for a democracy in which everyone has the equal opportunity to begin to develop his/her own *human potentialities*. Then comes eugenics, or “sterilisation of the unfit”, to provide “as wide a circle of men and women as possible with those inheritable qualities of the mind and body that might be, for their higher standards, most desirable” (Huxley 1946a, 35; 2001b, 152; 2001a, 153).

Huxley’s communitarianism, the roots of which lie in his religious search that resulted in the *perennial philosophy*, and in his non-Marxist socialism to which, once he had moved towards the Fabian Society, he never ceased to look at with a certain interest, does not only have the merit of developing the terms—particularly the psychological terms that oppose group psychology to mass psychology—which will be fundamental in the theory of the community of the second half of the twentieth century, as Robert Nisbet’s (1953) *The Quest of Community* shows. Starting with the analysis of the unfulfilled promises of democracy and in clearly grasping the link between democracy and peace, Huxley has indeed the merit of identifying in communitarianism, in planning, in democratic elitism and in applied science the challenges of liberalism in the second half of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. Conscious of actually drawing a *third way* between the unbridled individualism of ‘private capitalism’ and the total collectivism of ‘state capitalism’ (see Huxley 2001a, 348; 1946a, 32). Huxley makes it clear that he believes communitarianism to be the future of liberalism and of liberal democracy.

The challenges defined by Huxley have effectively been at the heart of the contemporary liberal-democratic debate. This includes the discussion between *liberals* and *communitarians* that came to a head in the Nineties, particularly in the United States, and which concluded by branding not only the radical differences but also the common ground of pluralism, market society and democratic coexistence (see Portinaro 2001). Then there was the discussion over planning: Mannheim (1959[1940], 132) theorised its necessity, but then Von Hayek (1944, 50-63, particularly 61-63) denounced its risks, despite being conceived “for freedom”. Then again there was the rehabilitation of the union of elitism and democracy, by means of certain processes of formation and recruitment of the elites, also studied by Huxley (2000, 227-230; 1937a, 194-196), in Mannheim and Schumpeter (see Sola 1993). Finally, the ecological issue, including birth control, which now represents the principal challenge facing the liberal democracies (see, for example, Sartori and Mazzoleni 2004) and of which Huxley has recently been indicated as one of the major prophets (see Sawyer 2010). And the debate on eugenics, which has to be a constant question in the liberal debate in the century of genetic engineering and biotechnologies (well summed up by Sandel 2008[2007], particularly pp. 71-88).

Considered as a body of solutions to these challenges, Huxley's pacifist and ecological communitarianism can evidently not have constituted, nor can it constitute the future of liberalism, or at least not so easily and perhaps a little superficially, because there is no doubt that an accurate analysis of the intrinsic risks to individual freedom is missing. But read alongside *Brave New World*, the authentic negative paradigm for contemporary liberal thinking, which can only draw the most excessive consequences from these same risks, Huxley's communitarianism becomes fertile ground for reflection, perspective, challenges, even provocations. Sometimes, these are just as excessive, especially with regard to birth control and eugenics, but obviously they tend towards the search for the fine red line that determines how, when and how far applied science, which has forever changed the political science of our times, might contribute to the *Brave New World* or to the defence of individual freedom and the development of democracy—in the awareness on Huxley's part that both scenarios are realistically possible.

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