
mantic liaisons, deteriorating physical and emotional health, financial losses to the family corporation from the Kenya venture. Blixen justified it all by saying it was her Destiny. But the stronger justification of her life was the fiction that issued from it.

Science & Technology

PLUTO'S REPUBLIC
by Peter Medawar
Oxford, 1982
351 pp. \$25

"Instead of wringing our hands over the human predicament, we should attend to those parts of it which are wholly remediable." Behind zoologist Medawar's tart pronouncement stands a long English tradition of imperturbable common sense. In 25 essays, Medawar castigates fuzzy thinkers, airy system builders, dogmatists, pseudoscientists, and other denizens of the intellectual underworld—Pluto's Republic. Critical of IQ scientists who insist intelligence is a fixed, measurable trait, he also raps psychoanalysts who assign psychic causes to neurological disorders. In "Ethology and Human Behavior," he pleads for a biology-based psychology to replace the "weird farrago of beliefs" that is psychology today. Medawar challenges the notion of a strict Scientific Method (e.g., the induction of general truths from known cases). A scientist makes up a story, much as a poet does; then he must test it to see if it can be found false. Stressing this modest view of scientific truth, the Nobel Prize winner is still optimistic about progress. In "Science and the Sanctity of Life," he argues that there are no technology-created problems that technology cannot solve. The reader may find much that is debatable here, but little that is not refreshing.
