

Humour

FORD, BRIAN, J. *Nonscience . . . Or How to Rule the World. A Quasi-Official Report.* 206pp. Wolfe. £2.

Self-reference is as dangerous a pitfall for the satirist as it is for the philosopher. Brian Ford has crashed into it gloriously. The reader can then choose whether to consider this as destroying whatever value the book might have had, or as adding another level of corruption to those he describes.

It may be that the author had to adopt the very style he parodies, that of the spurious "expert" purveying a "non-science"; for although he is vigorous in his exposures and denunciations, he is utterly innocent of any understanding of the problem. There are frequent indications that Things Were Better in the Good Old Days; but we find later that things are what they used to be.

All this is a pity, for the book shows occasional insights into the social pathologies of pure and applied science (a good example is metrication), but the work is evidence of such a tangle of contradictory perceptions and valuations, that one is left wondering about the author himself.

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