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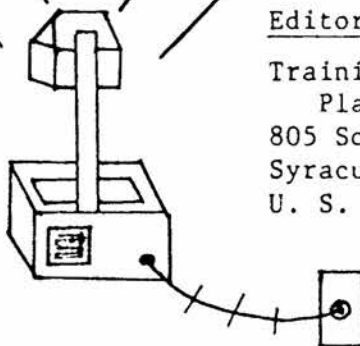
TIPS

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This is a double issue that lets us deal in some depth with the signs of our times.

Signs of The Times

We will break down some of the signs of our times into several subcategories. However, we have so much material that the coverage of drug dependence (which is a subset of modernistic externalism and sensualism) has to await another issue. We also have to postpone for a later date an exposé on the role of the mass media in modernism and mind control.

Individualism

A pernicious kind of individualism is a major value undercurrent of the decadence of modernism. One searching discussion of this individualism occurred in Bellah et al. (1985), Habits of the Heart. The authors find that Americans generally define that which either "works" or "feels right" as being what is bound to be good. Further, they tend to emphasize that their values are highly personal, need not coincide with anybody else's, and are intimately tied to their own sense of autonomy. Even communal and collective efforts, including marriage, are not seen as related to a larger societal goal or benefit, but as contracts negotiated for the mutual benefit of autonomous individuals. This individualism calls upon people to be self-made, self-aware, and self-actualizing. The authors noted that in such a society of individualists, this orientation makes notions of community, or work as a calling, very precarious. The authors also noted that in no other society before had growing up been considered to necessitate the discarding of one's family relationships, one's belonging to a particular community, and even one's membership in a church. Even the mental therapies designed to cure the ills of this insane individualism merely offer more of the same. For instance, instead of being challenged to surrender some of their individualism and autonomy, clients are encouraged to discover their own true feelings, verbalize them, and actualize them.

The book also said that the thinking of even educated Americans is based on an inadequate and erroneous social science, an impoverished philosophy, and a vacuous theology.

Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. A., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

The Externalism & Emptiness of the People of Modernism

The modernistic values and culture of materialism, individualism, and sensualism make for the phenomenon we call "externalism." Externalism means that people are unhealthily dependent on things and people outside of themselves to provide them with meaning, structure, purpose, identity, etc. But much of what is outside them to which they are oriented, and that they get, is the decadent culture, the media, the entertainment and fashion world, gurus, cults, their peer culture, noise, entertainment apparatus, and drugs. We see many people who cannot function without the radio or television on, or carry blaring radios or tape recorders with them wherever they go. Externalistic people can also be described in the words of T. S. Eliot as "hollow men." They certainly are shallow, empty and weak, and are therefore easily manipulated from without, and end up awash in endless fads and crazes. This externalism with its information-overloaded input style also contributes to the peculiar here-and-nowism of modernistic people, and hence their inability to remember things, or to relate to the past.

*The average American child watches 4 hours of TV each day! (Newsweek, 30/5/88). The TIPS editor is convinced that the most fundamental perceptual processes and mind-"wiring" of contemporary children has been shaped by the media, and is different than it has been in any previous generations.

*In our workshops, we often make the point that increasingly, the entertainment world has become a "moral authority" to the empty and externalistic people of our day. By "moral authority," we mean an entity to whom people look for moral guidance, instruction, expertise, and pronouncement. Other moral authorities for various people are religious and church bodies, government and political leaders, and the scientific and medical fields. But one of the most peculiar things about entertainment as a moral authority is that it is not real: i.e., the characters in television shows and movies are fictional, and "act." Nonetheless, people so idolize the entertainment world that they treat it as not only real but as a supreme being. An example is the response of the educated classes to the 1987 TV show "Thirtysomething," which portrays the lives of several Yuppie couples. Viewers of this program will stop cast members of the show on the street to ask advice about their domestic affairs, and professional counselors and psychotherapists use videotapes of episodes of the program at therapy sessions (Newsweek, 21/12/87). Some modernistic people will view the same film hundreds of times (Newsweek, 21/12/87). A close analogue to this is going to church, or even more particularly, going to mass where one participates in the same thing being done again and again. This helps us further to see how entertainment media may assume the identity of a religious source to externalistic people.

*There are now nightclubs and television shows across the country which invite people to imitate their favorite performers, in everything from dress, mannerisms, and stage acts. These agencies provide the music to which the imitator "lip-syncs," and prizes range anywhere from \$150 to \$31,000. To lip-sync means that while a recorded song or performance is being played, one mouths the words to a song and mimics the performance, as, for instance, of Elvis Presley. Some lip-syncers consider doing this as their career. Often, their imitation of a performer goes as far as dressing and talking like the star not just "on stage," but in the rest of their lives too (Time, 14/12/87). Thus, people's entire identity can become a false one--probably because there is not much inside them to begin with. It is particularly striking that it is not "real people" or heroes who are being aped (at one time, it might have been a saint, George Washington, Robert E. Lee, etc.), but people who are acting themselves. Can one imagine a contest and prizes for the imitation of great moral leaders of the past?

*Many children, from an early age on, try to imitate decadent entertainment figures in appearance, attire, behavior, and sexualization.

*In airports, one used to see prominent signs for things like arrival/ departure, baggage, restrooms, restaurants. Now a new prominent sign has appeared at some airports: "videogames." It is almost as if the video games have become as important or essential to people as the toilets. (Submitted by Susan Thomas)

*Not long ago, very few people had enough to eat, and even as we read in the Bible, one of the greatest pleasures was the eating of animal fat. Our society has now gone to the other extreme and has so exalted skinniness in (particularly young) women that an increasing number of women have internalized the ideal to such a degree that they are killing themselves to obtain it, namely through conditions now called anorexia nervosa and, to somewhat lesser extreme, through so-called bulimia. In anorexia nervosa, people essentially quit eating and claim that there is nothing abnormal about this at all, and that they are overweight even as they shrink down to a skeleton. In bulimia, people vomit up their food, often after unbelievable binges of eating. Most of the victims are women, and most of these are young ones. At this point, about 4000 Americans are starving themselves to death in this fashion, while another 2.3 million exhibit bulimia. According to our perspective, they have to be considered to be victims of what we call "externalism," which means that they rely for their functioning on external rather than internalized standards. This is underlined by the fact that most of the affected people come from upper socio-economic homes where the skinny-culture is most likely to be celebrated.

*A very large proportion of the population, especially the younger one, has become addicted to walkman-type portable audio equipment. A lot of people are wearing earphones while they are engaged in activities that really require auditory alertness, or in the presence of potentially transcendent experiences. One of the many awful consequences is a rapid increase in hearing loss in the younger population, though this is merely one of a number of such loud noise contributors in the contemporary environment (Newsweek, 1 Aug. 89). It is apparently becoming difficult to find any that have not experienced at least subtle hearing impairments. When a Russian submarine was temporarily trapped in a bay on the Swedish coast, a Swedish defense spokesman said that Swedish armed forces have a hard time finding young seamen who can work on sonar; too many of them have hearing impairments in conjunction with a history of exposure to loud disco music. One rock band musician said that deafness was just one of the little sacrifices one would have to make for rock. Indeed, losing one's hearing does not deter many fans. There is even a San Francisco night spot called The Deaf Club where people who have already lost their hearing continue to dance to the vibrations of the rock music. Interestingly, rock performers themselves have begun to protect themselves. The music is aimed at the audience and is thus much quieter on stage. Some performers wear ear protections of some sort. Ironically, rather than tell people to stay away from places where rock is played loud, and to quit playing it loudly themselves, a typical response of our age has been the advice to rock fans to get regular hearing checkups! (Time, 26/9/88)

*Some people are rigging up their cars to become mobile sound machines that can emit "music" at 155 decibels. These are called boom cars. Even brief exposure to noise above 150 dbs. can result in permanent hearing damage. Apparently, this is not illegal in a lot of localities and states (Time, 6 March 89).

* Most people who keep up with any news media have probably heard by now of the new numbers one can call to receive a 57-second recorded message (e.g., from women such as Holly-0) that has been described as "aural sex," or the equivalent of an "ersatz liaison" in which the caller can pretend that he or she is a participant. Where the answering party is female, one may hear moans, groans, pants, gasps, squeals and shrieks, punctuated by pleas to "touch me here," "touch me there," and oohs and aahs. Calls have been coming in at the clip of 600,000 a day! Apparently some of the things that they say about blind people must be true because a disproportionate number of calls to one such number in New York came from the Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped. Let's hope their hearing holds up.

*For externalistic city dwellers who regrettably should find themselves stranded outside the city on some trip, there is now available a \$5 audiotape to help them fall asleep, featuring garbage cans clinking, horns honking, sirens screaming, and drunks brawling. If that is not enough, another version has all these features, plus music playing right along.

*A study of teenagers over a 20 year period (The Adolescent: A Psychological Self-portrait) claimed that 20% of recent teenagers reported feeling emotionally empty, being confused most of the time, and preferring death to life. Interestingly, more teenagers feel "sexually behind" other youngsters today than ten or twenty years ago, but the authors apparently think that this means things have gotten worse.

*Externalistic people can be so externalistic that they not only imitate the behaviors, language, morals and customs of the particular group to which they want to belong, but that they even imitate such drastic behaviors as suicide. For instance, social scientists are beginning to conclude that one reason why there are occasional waves of teenage suicide in a particular school or community is that youngsters imitate someone's suicide, in part in order to capture the same outpouring of sympathy that surrounded the earlier death(s). The fact that some rock music lyrics also celebrate suicide certainly doesn't help (Time, 24/2/86).

*Devoid of internal substance and unwilling or incapable of engaging in relationships, some people in our age have taken recourse to entering a long-distance telephone computer relationship network in which they assume fantasy identities, and sometimes spend hours every day acting these out with the fantasy identities of the other computer network members far away. These electronic relationships are often erotic, or even pornographic. One pitiful participant in this modern cult said about it: "I have not felt so connected and vital in a long time." (Time, 19/9/83)

*It is estimated (Discover, 10/84) that 20 million people listen to radio and TV programs in which thousands of other people bare all of the personal and intimate details of their lives to radio and TV psychologists and psychotherapists. Surely, this extraordinary phenomenon must be understood at least in part as just one of many expressions of externalism.

*We have commented before on the incredible fact that some nut can call up women at random on the telephone and make them do the most outlandish and bizarre things. In Wisconsin, one called women, telling them that it had been discovered that they had a disease that could only be cured by raising their adrenal output, which they could achieve by permitting themselves to suffer extreme embarrassment. He then got them to do things such as walking bare-breasted down the street, and some women have even mutilated themselves, piercing their breasts with needles, and so on. The caller was most skilled at keeping women from hanging up on him.

*Beginning with the Victorian age, and steadily increasing ever since, a small army of women in affluent nations have begun to literally starve themselves to death in order to achieve a bizarre beauty ideal of skeletal appearance. The 1988 book, Fasting Girls, deals with these eating disorders in the class of anorexia nervosa, of which bulimia is seen as a subset. The author notes that this is a modern disorder, is only found under conditions of plenty, and is therefore only highly prevalent today in North America, Western Europe and Japan. The book therefore calls it "a disease of capitalism." The analysis also extensively confirms our own that this is a disease of what we have called externalism, in that it is almost exclusively found in people who lack internal substance and are highly controlled by the media and the peer culture. The book anticipates a further increase in the disorder.

*It is really amazing how many women have embraced the silly externalistic aerobics cult, which in turn is heavily tied to the decadence of modernistic music. We ran across one person who used the term "aerobics bimbos." Similarly, a lot of yuppies who lead an office life in which they take a lot of elevators between floors are now buying stair-climbing simulation machines for exercise; and being externalistic people, they do not just simply exercise on these machines at home,

but put on fancy exercise attire and do it in places such as gym and aerobic clubs, together with others of their kind, and in a fashion so as to be seen in this attire (Time, 18/12/89).

*Externalism is penetrating ever more deeply into society, so that people cannot even engage themselves any longer in activities that demand one's full attention without their external props to hold them up. For instance, we have heard of a 1989 participant in a PASSING workshop putting on earphones to listen to music during team conciliation (of rating differences)--and, as anyone who has been through PASSING or PASS training knows, conciliation is the most intense part of a very intensive training session, and requires very close attention and full participation from all team members. Similarly, we have heard of one PASSING team member running out to a nearby store during each break in conciliation, to purchase new clothes! This seemed to reflect the materialism and sensualism of our culture that we mention often in TI workshops.

*Newsweek (23/1/89) wistfully reviewed a new genre of books by authors who seem to lack a clear sense of identity, and consequently may be different people at different times. We call such people externalistic. Reviewing the memoirs of former slaves, Newsweek commented that they probably would have referred to these authors as "book-learned fools." But it seems that they appeal to externalistic modern people of slippery self-identity. Similarly, Gary Hart almost became president even though no one knew who and what he was, not even he himself. And there are strong indications that both the finalists, Bush and Dukakis, are almost as slippery and shadowy in their identities.

*It used to be that the advertising business classified its targets into rich and poor, old and young, male and female, and similar old-fashioned categories. With much greater finesse, they now divide potential consumers into outer-directed (i.e., a whopping 68%), inner-directed (19%) need-driven (11%), and integrated (only 2%). The need-driven appears to include people who are poor and marginal. The outer-directed include belongers, emulators and achievers. At the TI, we might call the inner-directed those who have exalted individualism to the point of selfishness.

Materialism

Materialism and sensualism (covered later) are closely related.

*We had difficulty deciding whether to put this in the good news or the bad news column: until recently, surveys consistently found that except for children and elderly people, the No. 1 mental occupation of people was sex. For the first time, as of 1984, money has replaced sex. Relatedly, more than three-fourths of college freshmen in 1988 said that "being very well-off financially" was either an "essential" or "very important" life goal, up from less than 40% in 1970! A record 73% said that making money was a very important factor in their decision to go to college in the first place (American Scientist, Fall 89).

A survey published in 1989 concluded from the values of the trend-setting population segments in 14 countries that a materialistic preoccupation will continue for the foreseeable future, and possibly intensify (UPI, in Indianapolis Star, 20/7/89; source item from Joe Osburn). American materialism seems to be expressed in the fact that more college freshmen have been majoring in business and economics, hitting 26% in 1987, with engineering a distant second at 9% (Time, 12/9/88).

*In our materialistic society, and particularly one where people want to get rich quick and without doing anything for it, we should not be surprised that there are 1500 financial newsletters handing out financial advice. They have titles such as "The Astute Investor," "The Busy Investor," "The Patient Investor," "The Contrary Investor," "The Cheap Investor." However, people who took the advice of "the Prudent Investor" lost 50% of their investments in 1987. Equally popular are investment workshops by all sorts of gurus, which resemble revivals. These newsletters and workshops are vastly more expensive than TIPS or TI workshops. The financial investor book that we think is most concordant with the message of TIPS is entitled "How to Profit from a World on the Brink" (Time, 8 May 89).

*America had 833,000 millionaires in early 1985, and this number was increasing by about 70,000 a year, at least until the 10/1987 Wall Street crash. By now, the number should have recovered and increased even more. This means that there is one millionaire for every 400-500 people. If one assumes that the average family consists of four persons, that would mean that roughly one family in every 110 is of millionaire status. Generally, people do not realize just how many millionaires there are in the US. The one bit about millionaires that is good news is that one of their most widely-shared characteristics is that they work 70 and more hours a week. 80% are first-generation millionaires rather than "old money," and most of these have earned rather than inherited their wealth, most of which consists of assets other than money. On the average, one can say that they are boring but self-disciplined persons in their late 50s who have two children, three cars, and two houses, but who wear wrist watches which on the average are only worth \$50.

*Attention Fat Cat readers. We are told that a few years ago, there was a full page ad in the New York Times for a \$5,000,000 wrist watch. Would anybody care to buy a diamond-studded copy of The Principle of Normalization?

*Materialism, especially in combination with erosion of other values, and in the presence of sensualism, can take possession of people and drive them to such greed that they start stealing, both in little ways (shoplifting) and big ways (on the financial markets). Often, this is also tied in to an entitlement attitude discussed later. According to FBI statistics, shoplifting is the fastest-growing crime in the US, up 33% in just 4 years. US retailers alone are losing about \$35 million a day to theft by customers and dishonest employees (Newsweek, 3 July 89). The item most highly prized by shoplifters is women's designer apparel (SHJ, 4 January 89). Forty-four percent of theft from stores is not by shoplifters but by employees. Shoplifters themselves are found in all social classes and professions. In 1983, 700,000 people were arrested for shoplifting, but few are prosecuted because of the cost (Time, 31/12/84). Altogether, US employees steal \$40 billion every year from their employers (Time, 23/1/89).

*About one automobile is stolen in New York City every five minutes or so. At least a few years ago, there were approximately 1000 workshops in New York City in which stolen automobiles were dismembered so that their parts could be sold. The chances for an auto thief to end up in prison is a mere 1 in 1200.

*A remarkably large number of people--mostly teenagers--are held up by robbers who want their fancy jackets or athletic shoes, and many are killed in such robbery attempts. This happens mostly in the big cities, and mostly among ghetto youths (SHJ, 6 Feb. 90).

*Greed also drives people into debt, both on the individual and national levels. Apparently, more private people have gotten into debt because they have yuppie aspirations and cannot postpone gratification. Even while being \$100,000 in debt and only having a \$35,000 income, they may have 2 European vacations a year, belong to expensive athletic clubs, go on shopping binges in designer boutiques, drive very expensive cars, etc.

Sensualism

Sensualism refers to an exaggerated indulgence of the bodily appetites, often in lieu of lofty and transcending engagements and experiences.

*At one time, people read books on how to live that were based on religious, philosophical and moral ideas. Today, they read health books, such as those emphasizing exercise and diet. In our materialistic society, bodily well-being has replaced self-knowledge, self-mastery and the good life. Recent ideas that one gets sick because one loses immunity, and that one loses immunity because of bad mind sets, have implied to people that getting sick is their fault, speaks to some mental aberration of theirs, and implies that they can remain healthy by becoming masters of their fate. They also have lost a sense of fate, and fully expect that technology and technique can give them mastery and salvation (columnist George Will, in Newsweek 16/1/89).

*Supermarkets are having to make all sorts of adjustments in order to cater to Yuppie tastes. Yuppies buy more vegetables--but only if they look cute. Thus, they are apt to buy potatoes and carrots only if they look like the small versions that they are used to eating in the more expensive restaurants. Also, they have an insatiable craving for exotic fruits and vegetables. (Source item from Elizabeth Carmichael.) Also, many stores are beginning to specialize in outright bizarrely exotic food items which Time (27/7/87) called haute junque, and which represents no more than a desperate attempt to ever increase the level of novelty and sensory saturation.

*One modernistic sensualistic thrill sought by the sensually saturated but empty youths of modernism in West Germany is to hang as far as possible on the outside of doors and windows of fast-moving trains and subways. This is called "surfing," and entire such surfing clubs have even formed. Both boys and girls aged 12 and up have become virtually addicted to this thrill, and nothing that the authorities have been able to think up has been able to stop it. Of course, there are plenty of accidents, injuries and deaths, but this apparently only increases the thrill.

*A virtually bizarre phenomenon of our times is that there are places in the southwestern American desert which during summertime are bare and deserted, without amenities, but to which in winter, thousands of recreational vehicles inhabited by elderly people converge to set up camp for anywhere from a few days to a few months. Although such places are not incorporated, have no civil structure, and no water or sewer system, as many as 200,000 people may convert them into almost metropolitan areas on an ad hoc basis. Time (22/5/89) likened these ad hoc towns to part summer camp, part fair and part bedouin bazaar.

*Berliners were asked what they thought of when they thought of America, and 94% spontaneously said "McDonald's."

*Reductio ad obscenitatem. There has been quite a bit of public discussion (including the cover story of the 7 May 90 Time) of the fact that a big segment of pop culture has fallen to what is the bottom--or nearly so--of foul-mouthedness, which in visual performances often includes lewd gestures, as when the Beastie Boys mimic masturbation. Lyrics revolve around every conceivable form of sex--a lot of it violent. "The loudest laughter comes from women" (Time, 7 May 90). Strangely enough, Newsweek (2/2/87) said that groups like the Beastie Boys do not really make music or sing, but shout out insane or obscene messages to the accompaniment of rhythms and incoherent music, taunting their audiences with four letter words, wrecking the hotels where they are staying, etc. The lyrics, such as they are, are often those that might be taken out of the case record of incoherent schizophrenic ramblings (Newsweek, 2/2/87).

A guest editorial in USN & WR (19/3/90) commented on the fact that it appears to be a sacred mission of the rock culture to invent new ways of insulting and shocking society, but that at the same time, this is becoming increasingly difficult in a culture growing cruder by the day where few taboos are left. The columnist noted that people who are numbed by crudity are not easily shocked anymore. Among other things, he noted that rock bands used to have names that were disguised sexual allusions (e.g., "stones"), but now there are at least 1 that are named after the male genitals, 6 after the female, 4 after sperm, 8 after abortion, and 1 after a vaginal infection; 10 bands are named for various sex acts; 8 include the F word in their names; 24 refer nonflatteringly to handicapped or homosexual people or racial minorities; 6 bands are named after some form of vomiting, probably in admiration of rock star Johnny Vomit; a good number of groups have allusions to death in their names. Apparently, the adult culture puts up with all of this from the largely juvenile one in order to prove that it is not easily shocked, and truly open-minded. Of course, this gives all of this a social legitimization.

In case someone is not in a position to see decadent performances, radio compensates. Thus, an example of the thirst for ever greater intensification of sensualistic input has been the explosive growth in radio programs that use

grossness as their major feature of attraction. They insult the listeners, tell crude and offensive jokes, tell disgusting stories involving bodily functions, and so on (Newsweek, 17/11/86).

The media, largely in liberal hands, are standing on their heads in paroxysms of self-contradiction and hypocrisy about all this. Virtually all decry any attempt at censoring even the vilest performances, verbal or gestural obscenities, or lyrical or rap incitement to violence, rape, etc.--but fervently support the current proliferation of rules and even laws that forbid ethnic slurs--even those of marginal innuendo.

*The ultimate in modern sensualism is drug immersion, to be covered in a later issue.

Sexual Obsession or Depravity

One expression of modernistic sensualism is the saturation of our culture and its media with sex messages which, in a feedback loop, both flow from, and fuel, sex obsession and sexual depravity.

*In many cultures, and for a long time, modesty has been considered a virtue, especially for females. In Judeo-Christian history, women have died rather than expose their bodies to lascivious gazers. Lascivious self-display outside the bonds of marriage was generally left to prostitutes. No longer so! The 3/89 issue of Playboy prominently featured "Eastern college girls," including several from Syracuse University. These girls were extensively interviewed, and largely interpreted their posing in various stages of nudity as "an opportunity," including "an opportunity of a life-time" which, if not taken, might leave one regretful the rest of one's life. Some of the girls belonged to churches and church-related groups that not long ago would have interpreted such behavior as mortal sin. When this issue of Playboy went on sale at the Syracuse University Bookstore, several of the girls who had exposed themselves in it were on hand to autograph them. A line, made up to a significant degree of students, formed that was so long it wound around the block. The boyfriend of one of the girls who was interviewed about the episode interpreted her being featured in a denuded state as in the same category as doing well on a test, i.e., an accomplishment.

*One aspect of pornography is parents posing their young daughters in sexy undergarments, taking their photographs, and then selling these.

*A business in Des Moines, Iowa, provided rapid grease jobs and car cleaning, and called itself Grease and Go--until it started hiring "topless" women to do the vacuuming and window washing, whereupon it renamed itself Boob & Lube. However, the ploy didn't work too well, and the business folded. Some cars came more for the boob than the lube, and on days when some of his women laborers didn't show up, the customers would drive off if all they could get was lube. The owner said it was because he "couldn't get good help" even though it was "a clean business" according to him. (Source clipping from John Morris.)

*A woman wrote to Ann Landers complaining that she found that her 14-year old son kept swiping her bikini swimming bottoms and playing with it, and that despite having confronted him, he kept doing this. Rather than advising the mother to shift to more modest bathing attire, Ann Landers mindlessly prescribed her stock remedy: both parents should have psychotherapy so that they can understand their son better, not alienate him or make him feel like a freak.

*In 1985, the Journal of Psychohistory presented a study of sex behavior in the youth culture, and concluded that virtually all the pressures on teenagers today are in the direction of engaging in sexual activity at an ever earlier age. Indeed, that is what is happening, and there is still no end to the lowering of the average age at which young people engage in heterosexual intercourse. Apparently, the "average American teenager" loses virginity at age 16 (U.S. News & World Report, 23/10/89). Instead of countering the trend with moral values, the normative response is to teach ever more and earlier sex education, which largely implies efforts to teach contraception. However, this effort is also not too successful, and teenage pregnancies are predicted to remain high for at least another 20 years.

*One of the major and successful promoters of wanton sex is the rock culture. Behind the sometimes very poorly intelligible lyrics of many rock songs lurk some amazing messages that celebrate pornography, promiscuity, precocious sex and murder. Songs that rather explicitly urge youngsters to engage in sex (such as "Do It, Do It, Do It Till You're Satisfied" or "Push, Push In The Bush"), which once represented a tiny part of top songs, now constitute about 62%. Other titles that may include violence are Murder by Number, Let's Go to Bed, You Shook Me All Night Long, Love At First Feel, Hot Love, You Give Good Love, and Fire Down Below. Some of these songs are performed by groups called AC/DC, the Cure, and Cheap Trick. Before the US Senate Commerce Committee, it was alleged that the lyrics to rock music have become ever more macabre, and increasingly turned to the exaltation of rape, sado-masochism, incest, suicide and the occult, all this by an increasing number of rock bands. One rock album cover showed a bloody buzz saw protruding from the fly of a man's trousers. We are concerned about sex abuse in the schools--but one rock song is entitled "Hot for Teacher." Other song or album titles (not to mention "I Can't Get No Satisfaction") have been "I...like a beast," "Gonna Drive My Love Inside You," and "I'm Going to Force You At Gun Point to Eat Me Alive" (SHJ, 20/9/85).

*According to one survey of British unmarried females aged 15 and above, almost all opined that there was nothing morally objectionable to premarital sex, 60% had sex at least twice a week, 5% have had sex with more than 21 men, 10% have had lesbian experiences, and 10% claim to have been sexually attacked. In a survey of Brown University students, only 6% felt strongly that casual sex was wrong, with 76% agreeing that it was the thing to do. And while during a period of 8 years, about 40-50 women students a year got pregnant, all but one of the pregnancies were aborted! (Brown Alumni Monthly 3/89; source item from Peggy Campbell). Brown University is one of the most expensive private colleges in the US.

*Time, and apparently other publications as well, rendered a devastating judgment on the character of Georges Simenon, the writer of the Inspector Maigret novels. Among other things, he "conquered" "tens of thousands" of women, sometimes at a pace of five a day. This would have been much more understandable during the days of slavery when one could buy women, but raises the puzzling question: who would want to be the 10,000th woman to be conquered, or the fifth one in a single day, unless she were a slave or a prostitute. How many women are there who would be clamoring to "let me set your record?"

*In Syracuse, the local models decided to organize a Penthouse boycott rather than to boycott nude or pornographic photography.

*In Belgium, posters along the expressways show a seductively smiling blonde who tells drivers "You can't seduce me if you drive fast."

*Would you guess what the modern world's most popular musical has been? "Oh! Calcutta!," which not only features nudity but simulated sex. How outdated!

*The value revolution (degeneration) in our society is symbolized by the way Falstaff has been portrayed in the theatre. He used to be a lecherous, unprincipled drunkard scoundrel, but now has begun to be portrayed as a glorious virile pagan god of pleasure to be admired and imitated (Time, 13/2/89).

*Both men and women shown a series of films of so-called "explicit sex" subsequently recommended much more lenient sentencing of a male convicted of rape (CMH, 3/85).

*In Hartford, Conn., people paid \$250 to get beaten and whipped by a sado-masochistic prostitution outfit operated by a vice president of the respected E. F. Hutton financial firm. It seems to us that there are cheaper ways of getting beaten. Maybe some of the people who constantly get arrested for assault should put out a sign, "Get Beat for Free Here."

*There have been stories for a long time that in the far extreme of pornographic movies, young women are killed as part of sexual orgies. These are called snuff films. Some of them were acted, but others were apparently for real. New reports are coming in that in so-called satanic cults, babies are being put to death as sacrifices, and sometimes a form of cannibalism takes place, with the babies' blood being drunk or the flesh eaten. Actually, given the contemporary context, this should not surprise us in the least, and if it hasn't happened, we should expect it to happen soon (FI, 5/89).

*The world's first professor of transsexuality has been appointed at Amsterdam's Free University in 1988. (Source item Ruth Abrahams)

*We have mentioned previously how certain circles in our society, including people solidly established in the mainstream of the mental therapies and sciences, have been trying to promote the idea that incest and adult-child sexual relations are good, beneficial, beautiful, etc. In certain men's magazines, one can find stories of loving daddies initiating their daughters into the "beauty of daughter-father sex," and instead of featuring merely a nude or quasi-nude female on its centerfold, Playboy may show a young woman who wears bobby sox and saddle shoes, and wears a little girl's ribbon in her hair. Of course, the latter is a very subtle way to shape men's sexual preferences and desires toward prepubescent females. Ever since 1975, the British Sexual Law Reform Society has recommended that the age of consent for sexual relationship should be reduced to 14, and should also include incestuous relationships. The Family Planning Association supported this report, and the National Council of Women supported the provision of contraceptives to children known to be engaged in incestuous relationships. The British Criminal Law Revision Committee proposed that incest between siblings over 20 be legalized. The British Pedophile Information Exchange has even worked toward having the age of consent for sexual relationships lowered to 4.

In Quebec, legal sex between children and adults has been promoted by a prominent sociologist, a writer-politician, and a well-known poet. The Dutch government itself proposed in 1985 that the age of consent be lowered to 12.

*As we have emphasized over and over, when society has decided what it wants, its intellectuals and scientists will prove that what is wanted is what is right and good. Yet another example of this is a 1982 book, entitled The Sexual Aspects of Paedophile Relations, which studied the lives of 25 abused boys and concluded that they experienced nothing but positive benefits and consequences therefrom. The author, a faculty member at the Institute of Clinical Psychology and Personality Psychology of the State University of Utrecht, then argued that homosexual contact between men and boys should be decriminalized.

*The growing acceptance of the idea that (a) children can give a meaningful consent to sexual activities and (b) that if they do, there is nothing wrong when adults have sex with them, was underlined by the dispositions in a number of such cases in a Cincinnati court. In one case, two men had sex with an 8-year old girl, but because she supposedly did it willingly, the judge sentenced the men to only 90 days in prison and changed the charge from rape to sexual imposition.

*Time (24/11/86) ran a cover story on sex education.

Sex education in the schools had its beginning in the early 1900s, and its initial goal was to promote sexual restraint, thereby banishing extra-marital sex, prostitution and venereal disease, in part by deflecting curiosity toward facts. By the mid-1980s, 86% of Americans wanted the schools to teach sex education, and almost all of these wanted to include birth control information to children as young as 12. Some people wanted to teach 8-year olds about things such as anal sex. In many schools, at least a portion of the program has simply been farmed out to speakers from Planned Parenthood. When school staff do sex education, it is so often done by either the nurse or the gym teacher. Does that not tell us something?

Modern educators have insisted that they can teach a valid sex education curriculum in a value-free fashion, but when certain practices or life styles are described in this fashion, one might just as lief talk about having sex with monkeys or chickens in the same neutral fashion. In fact, there is gross denial

about how such curricula may encourage sex. For instance, after discussing vaginal and anal intercourse and use of condoms, one sex educator casually comments, "If you decide not to have sex, that's okay too," which sounds akin to telling someone who is insane that there is no shame in becoming sane.

Despite almost a century of such practices, actual research on the impact of any school sex education has been scarce, and the findings inconclusive. For instance, despite having used the sex education courses promoted by Planned Parenthood since 1967, the Baltimore school system has had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the US. Its response has been--to call for more sex education (SHJ, 13/1/86).

As of 1988, more than 30 states were implementing mandatory sex education curricula such as the one entitled "Family Life Education." In some states, even bus drivers, pool life guards and secretaries must participate, and are confronted with models of male sex organs and demonstrations on how to apply condoms. They are told that if they do not want to put the condoms on with their hands, "you can always put it on with your mouth," and the teacher demonstrates on the model. One of the exercises asks teachers to imagine they are in Hawaii without current spouses or sex partners, and pretend that they are on a sex spree (SHJ, 12/9/88).

In the vast majority of public school health clinics, contraceptives are prescribed, and in a large proportion, they are also dispensed.

A very difficult question confronts parents who do not want their children exposed to this sort of thing, and there may soon be few refuges left other than home schools, and states are notoriously hostile against them even though (or because) they are so good at educating children.

*A Planned Parenthood "sexuality educator" in the Ithaca, NY, area acts as master of ceremonies for "safer sex dance parties" that revolve entirely around sex. *"This educational and entertaining event features games, crazy condoms, and hot music with sexual messages. Includes a danceable history of sex and rock 'n' roll, and up to four hours of sexually-explicit dance music interspersed with educational activities."* One such educational game is "called 'Puttin' on the Condom,'...During the course of the evening, each person receives and wears a nametag depicting a different step in condom use. During this activity, participants arrange themselves in a line (or a circle) according to how they think the condom is used.... After the line is formed, have the participants read off their tags in order...." from physical attraction to--naturally--consummation. At midnight, a condom pinata is broken, etc. (ALL, 2/89). Can you imagine what a party like this will do to sex-starved teenagers?

*For really stupid people, there is a book out called Sex for One: The Joy of Self-Loving in which "A noted sex authority and feminist shares the techniques she's pioneered in workshops for women and men to help establish masturbation as an essential part of sexual growth and a primary source of pleasure throughout adulthood."

Collapse of Family Structure & Family Values

The prevailing materialistic and individualistic values that relegate transcendent belief systems into irrelevance, and that combine with the weakness of externalism, are undermining family life. Since this is even being glorified by redefining the family, we hasten to note that we mean at least the ideal of one man marrying with one woman and remaining monogamous, having and rearing children together, and possibly being closely tied to their mutual close relatives. Since so many modernists acknowledge no divine institution for such families, nor have willingness or capacity for making or keeping such commitments, but since the term "family" still has a nice sheen to it, they are trying to define anything and everything they like as family--just like to some people, urine is art (see later section on art).

Among the many signs of family collapse is the rapid rise of people living alone, couples without children, and children growing up with one--or no--parents. Another sign of collapsing family values is the continuing rise in all sorts of "artificial baby-making."

*When Daniel Patrick Moynihan diagnosed family collapse in his 1967 Report on the Negro Family, he was crucified for racism, but Negro family collapse is now more than twice what it was in 1965, and there is no end in sight.

*Some 80% of babies in general hospitals in New York, Chicago, Detroit and Boston are born to unwed mothers (US N & WR, 5 Feb. 90).

*A law passed in California would promote "honor and respect for monogamous heterosexual marriage" and premarital chastity in the schools, but the American Civil Liberties Union says that the law is unconstitutional in promoting "religious doctrines" in public schools (ALL, 1/89). We have commented before that US schools are now reduced to teaching the Constitution as the only permissible value, every teaching of other values (except license and utility) having just about been struck down.

*Between 1965-74, about 11% of Americans who got married first co-habited with their future spouses. By the early 1980s, this figure had jumped to 44% among first marriers, and 58% among re-marriers. Contrary to common claims, co-habitation did not improve stability in marriage; in fact, co-habitors found divorce easier and more acceptable (Context, 15/6/88).

*Under an Ontario tax policy, a couple who simply shack up together would pay \$180 a year less taxes than if they got married (Interim, 4/87).

*January 2, 1990, marked the 20th anniversary of the passage of the first so-called "no-fault" divorce law in the United States, namely, in California. Prior to this law, it had only been possible to obtain a divorce if one party to the marriage could prove that the other party had been at fault, such as having physically abused the spouse, having committed adultery, etc. Almost all states have adopted some similar legislation since then.

The change in the law had been anticipated as a liberation for people in all sorts of unhappy marriages, and particularly for women, but it has turned out not to be that at all. One of the biggest surprises was the role the legislation played in the continued economic diminishment, and even impoverishment, of women. As one analyst put it, "what happened in the past didn't matter, what matters is that you divide up the property and each go your own way." This was because the old bargaining chip of one party being at fault was no longer available. There is now a move afoot in legal and various advocacy circles to again reform divorce law, though this reform is aimed primarily at revision of child support and alimony laws, new definitions of property, such as professional credentials and unpaid contributions by one partner to another's economic advancement, exemplified by helping a spouse get an education.

All of this is very interesting, but as Michael Kendrick pointed out, more interesting than the unintended effects of the divorce law itself is the tone of the analysis, both in a syndicated newspaper column marking the anniversary as well as in other analyses of the issue. He notes, "the assumption seems to be that divorce is a given, that inequity is a structural problem divorced" (we presume he intended no pun) "from moral/spiritual matters, and that reform is manageable by humans--even at a (purely) technical level." We also have here another example of our societal tendency to address problems on a technical level and in a segmented fashion, separated from any moral or spiritual considerations on either an individual or a collective level. That this fundamental problem in our society's approach to problem-solving has not yet been identified and addressed is shown by the fact that even the reforms of the reforms are still functioning within that same paradigm. Kendrick says, "Certainly this trend is contrary to the whole Western (and Eastern) concept that one's personal actions have moral meaning. If this is no longer believed to be true, what are the implications? Obviously, moral consequences and problems remain even if they are widely denied. It is my impression that at the personal level, it creates an ideological ethos where it is conceivable to people that they are incapable of doing wrong, beyond the necessity for reparations and repentance, and insulated from consequences." (Source item and initial analysis from Michael Kendrick.)

*Since there are about 1.2 million divorces in the US annually, about 20,000 lawyers are specializing in divorce alone (Time, 9 Jan. 89). They must be praying for divorces every night since otherwise, they would be destitute. Divorces are also good news in the housing market, because a divorce usually means the setting up of an additional separate household. Real estate people are now beginning to worry that they may have "exhausted the supply of divorceable households" (CP, 1/89).

*A psychologist by the name of Wallerstein published a book, Second Chances, that gives us the big news that divorces are bad for children. This made a lot of other shrink people mad (many of whom are divorced themselves), some of them complaining that the book will make divorcing parents feel guilty. Of course, the rest of the shrink sector that has been celebrating how good divorce is for everybody will also not like this. By the way, Wallerstein herself is not at all opposed to divorce.

*There now is a new name for single parents with children getting married to other single parents with children: "blended families."

*For better or for worse, the US is in the process of handing childrearing over to the paid agency sector.

*As we have said many times before, the intellectuals always rise up to legitimize the practices and values of their society. Now that many put their newborn infants into day care within weeks or months of birth so that they can resume their jobs, a team at the University of North Carolina has now "proven" that such children not only do not suffer any drawbacks from this practice, but actually come out ahead. If that were true, it would make a lot of sense for parents to quit parenting their babies altogether, and for many of them to take jobs in day care services, and there attend to other people's babies for pay while someone else is taking care of one's own babies for pay. (Source item from Griff Hogan)

*What is one to think of various types of services through which one can rent a family member, such as Rent-A-Mom or Rent-A-Grannie? Could one message be that now that we are junking our traditional family structure, we are still sentimental enough to want to imitate the real thing, and we do it by going out and trying to buy it?

*A rather pitiful sign of our times is a firm called "Dear Mom...", operating out of California, that appeals to people to show that they love their mother by paying the firm \$240 a year to send their mothers a "care-pack" once a month, filled with "goodies and essentials" like shampoo, skin cream, stationary, postage stamps, etc. One implication is that Mom lives in an old-age home. "You supply the love and reap the good feelings. 'Dear Mom' does the rest." "It's the thoughtful, intelligent way. Feel good about yourself. Make Mom happy right now." (Source item from Hank Bersani.)

*An interesting index of change in American family life is how many adults eat their major dinner at home made from scratch, using mostly fresh ingredients. The dinners of 60% of American adults do not meet these criteria for anywhere between 2 to 7 days a week (USN & WR, 15/1/90).

*Abdication of parental authority and responsibility was sadly illustrated in a vignette from South Salt Lake. Instead of straightening out her three apparently ill-socialized children between the ages 6 and 9, a mother instead started picketing her own home, demanding that her children behave better. Even worse, she demanded that they make their own meals, illustrating how far the parents apparently abdicated their parental role (AP in SHJ, 9/9/83).

*A matter of priorities. We mentioned before the dramatic increase in sex abuse by family members. Another example is a woman in Syracuse who helped her boyfriend rape and sodomize her own 14-year old daughter. A local assistant district attorney's explanation was that "the mother's priorities were kind of mixed up" (SHJ, 8/9/88). She was only sentenced to probation.

*An advice column by Pat Taub, entitled Coping, run in the Syracuse Herald American (11 Dec. 1988) gave some remarkably enlightened modernistic advice to a mother who wanted to know the proper etiquette of dealing with her children when she had men sleeping over with her. The columnist advised her to deal with her guilt feelings by first being "easier on yourself" since "for the most part you are doing just fine," and "I wish there were more single parents like you, worried about neglecting their children." The answer was to have a boyfriend first visit several times at the house "before he arrived with his toilet kit," and to "tell the kids he'll be spending the night because he is special." However, she should not let her children join her and her lover in bed.

*In all developed western nations, the birth rate has been dropping below the replacement rate, which is about 2.2 children per 2 adults of child-"bearing" age. In some countries (e.g., West Germany), the rate is the lowest recorded in history. In W. Germany, this is widely interpreted to be a reflection of hostility to children (Kinderfeindlichkeit) and reproduction flowing from modernistic hedonistic values. The phenomenon poses unprecedented demographic problems that will play themselves out over a period of decades. One way in which such populations have maintained themselves is by immigration--usually from poorer and child-rich countries. This means that eventually the poor (and usually also the darker-skinned) shall inherit the land.

*Paul de Parrie wrote us the following, in response to the theme of the 2/89 issue: *"I have noticed that this insane society has conspired to destroy the family and then to institutionalize everything the family (or personal responsibility or church) used to handle. When young people have children, they seek 'professionals' to help them learn to 'parent' instead of calling mother or grandmother or asking the older ladies in the church. Dying people were cherished and cared for at home, but now are handed to professionals who 'treat' them to death. When troubles came, we prayed, put on a 'stiff upper lip,' and weathered the storm. Now we Rolf, visualize, regress to past lives, or blame our pre-natal trauma and whine a lot. Plenty of examples come to mind, but the rising of the 'support group' for everything from pedophiles to mothers of pre-schoolers, crime victims to bereaved pet owners, tells the tale of family dissolution and a self-preening society."*

*We continue to comment on the grotesque phenomenon of interspousal or inter-"lover" violence being almost entirely interpreted in terms of violence of man toward woman, even though violence of wife toward husband is about as common as vice versa. Thus, the Ontario Medical Association republished two articles on "reports on wife assaults," and "approaches to treatment of the male batterer and his family." The Canadian National Clearinghouse for Family Violence published a monograph entitled The Abusive Husband (CMH, 12/89). It is sad to find that since 1977, the New York State Department of Social Services has been publishing a Handbook for Beaten Women. Its 1985 edition ran 32 pages.

*People regularly become agitated when we mention the fact that wives are as frequently violent toward their husbands as husbands are toward their wives. Yet one of the most recent and highly-hailed books on family violence (Intimate Violence, 1988) found that in 1985, 4.4% of husbands were beaten by their wives, while 3% of wives were beaten by their husbands. However, everyone agrees that because of their greater strength, wives usually suffer more damage than husbands.

*In 1990, a book on family violence was reviewed in Contemporary Psychology under the prominent title, "Facing the Truth About Our Most Violent Social Institution: The Family." Such a title will certainly draw attention, but will also raise at least unconsciously the question whether one should not do away with the one social institution of society that is one of the most violent of all.

*A professor of women's studies at Wichita State University said that the sexual union of mothers and fathers has some inherent flaws, one of these being that a woman's reproductive role is a "curse" on all of her other activities. Behind women's troubles and domination by males lurks the spectre of sexual love,

and she called for the formation of "families" through means other than such flawed sexual relationships (Cedar Rapids Gazette, 29/10/88; source item from John Morris). We admit to having some sympathy for the view that the world would be better off without people.

*We may understand better the goals and strategies of some extreme feminists if we consider that some of them have called for "the destruction of all conventional role playing, of genital sexuality, of couples." Why? Because the family unit is "the school of values in a sexist, sexually repressed society" (ALLAI, 5/89, p. 12). But then there are the kooks on the other extreme, exemplified by the playboy mentality, that seek to separate male sexual behavior from marriage, children, and bread-winning, and reduce women to temporary playthings. To both such wings, abortion on demand is a crucial goal, and reproduction preferably takes place in a petri dish in which the sperm and egg of people are joined who do not know each other.

*In the early 1980s, Los Angeles psychologist Afton Blake had herself inseminated from the California sperm bank which accepted sperm only from Nobel Prize-winners and similar illustrious men. She stated that she wanted to raise a child "without conflict from the spouse," and also thought that "an unborn child should be guaranteed the best genetic material" (Kevles, 1984d).

*Through means of reproductive technology, we have seen women bear their own grandchildren, and their nieces and nephews. They have apparently not yet born their brothers and sisters, but if not, it is sure to come, and they have already born their half-siblings. We can be thankful that women cannot bear their mothers and fathers because if they could, some would--and they may eventually be able to bear clones thereof. Imagine: bear your mother a perfect twin.

*The Bar Association of San Francisco claims that restricting marriage to people of opposite sexes is a "clear denial of equal protection under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution," and that the law should be changed so as to redefine marriage as "a personal relation arising out of the civil contract between two people," which would be a little bit like buying something on credit (AP in SHJ, 23/2/89).

*While there have been instances of churches cooperating in performing homosexual marriages, it was only in 1984 that a major church body legitimized the practice, i.e., the 1300 delegates at the Unitarian General Assembly. In the ceremony, the words "I declare you man and wife" were replaced by "I recognize you as being spiritually united."

*The governing body of the city of San Francisco has approved a rule that allows people to register with the city as "domestic partners," and thereby gain the rights to benefits previously only accorded to married couples, including sick, bereavement and maternity leave, and health insurance (NCR, 2 June 1989).

*In recent years, unmarried men have begun to adopt children, but the liberalization of such policies received a bad blow when it was found that the first unmarried man in Iowa to adopt a child, a 17-year veteran of the Cedar Falls police force, pled guilty to a charge of committing sex acts with an 11-year old boy. The man had also been a scout leader, a big brother, and a high school diving coach. (Source item supplied by John Morris.)

*The Massachusetts Department of Human Services has been operating on a presumption that the best home for a homeless child is either with a relative or with an intact family. This assumption has been challenged by homosexual organizations that called the ruling, among other things, a "witch hunt." In contrast, New York State forbids "discrimination" along these lines, meaning that these sound criteria may not be taken into account.

*A child who was living with his divorced homosexual father and the father's male homosexual lover identified the latter as "my dad's husband" (WDR, 15/3/90). We predict that there is a good chance that this poor child will some day be fodder for shrinkery--perhaps even become a shrink.

*The idea that the human being is his/her own creation that can freely choose to do or be anything is dramatically illustrated in a 1983 Broadway play called "La Cage Aux Folles" which celebrates the romance of two middle-aged homosexual men, one of whom is a transvestite. It has a chorus line of 11 girls of whom 8 are actually men. The author said "We are showing that marriage, commitment, family, don't have to belong to heterosexuals." One of the songs in the play is "I am my own special creation," which could very well be one of the slogans of materialistic hedonistic individualism.

*According to polls, marriage has gained "new appeal" because of the AIDS epidemic. What a sad state of affairs and poor image for marriage. An analogy would be to ask someone "what would you rather be: Leprous or married?" By the way, we have no doubt that in consequence of the growth of feminism, many more women than men these days would embrace leprosy in preference to a (male) spouse (Business Magazine, 11/88).

*Shrinkery and social research has "discovered" that the family is a closet of horror and violence, and this has been used as a delegitimization of the family ideal. If one listened to these intellectuals, one would get the idea that the counseling room is the only safe place left--but we now also know that it is a horror chamber too, as is everything else. Why not give up and admit that everything is imperfect and imperfectible, and that our quest is for the least worst of everything?

Child Verwahrlosung

A number of our friends and supporters send us newspaper and other clippings; these "gifts" constitute much of our source material for TIPS. One friend (Susan Ruff) recently sent us several on the sad state of services to children, and even of normative treatment of children outside of service contexts, with the brief plaintive comment that "there is much bad news about children these days."

*Some things can only be seen and analyzed clearly if one has a vocabulary for them. In the 1970s, Germans coined a term for the modernistic resentment toward children (Kinderfeindlichkeit), but they already had Kinderverwahrlosung for about a century. It is hard to translate, and to catch its meaning, you have to combine the images of child neglect, children going wild, and the appearance of a person who has let grooming and clothing go to pot.

In the presence of the values sketched above, and with family structure and values falling apart, and children being saturated themselves with values of decadence from birth on, they become verwahrlost. And what a sad vista that is! And how ill it bodes for their offspring in turn as verwahrloste children rear verwahrloste children in turn--if they reproduce at all, and reproduce children who survive.

*Family collapse and both parents working has meant that more and more children grow up without supervision or parental socialization. One manifestation is that there may now be close to 5 million so-called latch-key children. At least some studies have suggested that this is very harmful to children. (For some people, only "studies" will do to prove the obvious.) Among other things, many worry about break-ins, accidents or fires. If there are siblings, there is less fear and loneliness--but more violence and sexual molestation. Some parents instruct such children to watch TV when they come home, adding injury to injury in order to minimize injuries.

*The proportion of children living in poverty in the US has risen dramatically.

*In the US, 1 million teenagers run away from home every year, 1 million get pregnant, 600,000 attempt suicide, and teen gangs in Los Angeles alone killed a record 406 people in 1988. For the first time, teenagers have topped adults in the percentage of serious crimes per capita. Rock lyrics (to which most teenagers these days listen, sometimes for thousands of hours) relentlessly whip teenagers up toward violence, sex and crime (Newsweek, 29/5/89).

*For the first time ever, the US government tried to count how many children below age 18 are either thrown away by their families, or run away from them and were not allowed to return by their parents, many of them single parents or parents who use drugs. It concluded that there were 500,000 of them as of 1989, and that many of them were homeless. This figure does not include youngsters who have been taken from their homes by the authorities. At the same time, about 500 shelters for youths had sprung up around the US (SHJ, 5 Feb. 90). About 40% of homeless children attend school irregularly or not at all. Some homeless children have been found to be sleeping in school yards, and things like that have prompted some schools to actually start operating night shelters for children--a most sorry admission of societal bankruptcy. In some locales, schools even house entire families and their children in their gymnasiums. Not surprisingly, homeless students do poorly in school. Other schools have started running special "centers" for homeless children on the argument that since all the pupils will be homeless, the children will be less stigmatized and can build up self-confidence before returning to a regular school. Child advocates have argued that such centers are separate, unequal, and thus unconstitutional. Other child advocacy groups have also opposed the opening of school shelters because it would institutionalize homelessness. It is also widely believed that a large percentage of homeless children have been abused via violence or sex. Most of them are far behind in school achievement, and lack job skills or a work ethic. Many of them will die from violence, disease or deprivation, and some of them will be violent themselves. If these reports are true, they are a terrible portent for the future.

*One estimate is that 20,000 homeless young people roam the streets of New York. Some of these children are not runaways but castaways. For instance, some parents simply disappear without a word or trace. Between 80-90% of these children are believed to live off prostitution.

Some of the boys are so desperate that they charge only \$5 for sex with men. In 1988, it was found that over 100 such boys lived in disabled sanitation trucks in the city's sanitation department while working the streets as prostitutes (AP in SHJ, 6/9/88). One authority said that "these children live under the most extreme conditions of adversity of any child population in the developed world. They are the closest thing we have to refugees in the third world. It is total deprivation. They have been disconnected from a useful support system a civilized society tries to provide." Interestingly, homeless children are not included in the official count of the homeless in New York City!! This is one way of denying and hiding an unpleasant truth! (AP in SHJ, 20/9/88).

*According to a Carnegie Corporation report of 6/89, one half of all junior high school students engage in either smoking, drinking, other drug use, and "unprotected sex," and one quarter of them engage in at least one of these (Newsweek, 26/6/89).

*Look what sex education can accomplish! A girl in Syracuse met a boy on her 13th birthday, and when he suggested they have sex, she consented, and caught gonorrhoea from him. This was followed by promiscuity on her part which spread the gonorrhoea in short order to at least 16 boys, a number of them much younger than she, some as young as five. In many cases, the girl did not even know the names of the boys. The mother allegedly was totally unaware of what was going on. The police officer who investigates child abuse characterized the girl as a nice shy kid (SHJ, 23/9/88).

*A new development in juvenile gang warfare in cities such as Los Angeles is that increasingly, girls do the shooting. They also join gangs at ever younger ages, being now down to about age 10, which usually also means that they begin to engage in sex at that age. In South Central LA alone, there were 26,000 youth gang members as of 1988 (AW, 26/11/88).

*A frightening sign of the times is that more and more children are committing very serious crimes, including murder and sexual molestation of other children. In the US in the 1980s, rape arrests of children aged 13 and 14 doubled, and in New York State, there has been more than a 10% increase in child sex-crime suspects. In 8/1989, police arrested a 10-year old in California for committing a series of rapes. Children as young as four and five have committed such offenses. Even the experts who are otherwise reluctant to admit social decadence admit that among other things, our society's sexual license contributes to this development. For instance, an expert in child sexual aggression said that girls who molest are often looking for a release of sexual tensions that are stimulated by watching sexually suggestive or explicit TV and movies.

*In Australia, a couple went on one of those heroic quests for in vitro fertilization, and when the mother finally got pregnant after several attempts, she ended up having quadruplets, of which the parents promptly gave up three for fostering and adoption (Advertiser, 16/9/89)--a big improvement over aborting them, as some such couples do, but still in the category of treating children like commodities that one manipulates for one's own whims and pleasures.

*The sad state of our society can be read from the titles and topics of current children's books. Crowding the fairy tale and nursery rhyme books in the stores is a burgeoning category of "self-help volumes for the pre-school set," as one newspaper article put it, that deal with children's anxieties or parents' imagined anxieties. Too tired, confused, or reluctant to deal with such difficult issues as divorce, early parent-child separation, sexual abuse, etc., themselves, parents are turning to such books to do much of their child-rearing for them. The tales of Dr. Seuss and Beatrix Potter are a far cry from Do I Have to Go Home? and Why Are You so Mean to Me? (Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin, 17/9/89).

*In despair at the destruction of children wreaked by the so-called child welfare service system, experts are now calling for the reintroduction of the orphanage, claiming it is a more humane, better, and safer refuge than many natural or foster families.

Sexual Abuse, Especially of Children

*No one should be surprised that obsessive or depraved sex leads to sexual crimes, including rape and child molestation.

*The FBI has estimated that if current trends continue, one in four women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. The pornography business increased ten-fold between about 1972-1984, and of the ten most profitable US magazines, six are aimed at men's sexual lusts. Playboy and Penthouse outsell Time and Newsweek. Child pornography alone is a \$1 billion a year industry, with about 1.5 million children under 16 being used every year in some form of commercialized sex. One researcher found 264 different child pornography magazines, one of these listed 378 places in 59 cities where children can be rented for sexual use. There are supposedly more sex book stores in the US than McDonald's restaurants.

*The Seattle Rape Relief Disabilities Project claims that 500 mentally and physically handicapped people of all ages are sexually abused each year in the Seattle area alone.

*There has been much debate just how much pornography is tied to violence. Some people believe that the 1986 US federal pornography commission report actually underemphasized the connection. As evidence, they point to studies such as the following. In 40 consecutive cases of child sex abuse in Los Angeles, pornographic material was found; more than three-quarters of child molesters have admitted being influenced by pornographic material; and more than half of a sample of rapists admitted the same. They have also pointed to instances in which children were being induced into sex activities by showing them pornographic materials. While pornography is certainly not the ultimate cause of sexual offences, we would be surprised if it were not one of the contributory factors in this age of media control of so many people on so many things.

*In some states, sexual abuse reports shot up by more than 100% in a single year (AP, in SHJ, 7 November 85).

*In 1989, over 2 million charges of child sex abuse were lodged in the US, overwhelming child welfare authorities. While we have no doubt that this kind of child junking, like all kinds, is on the increase, no one knows how many of these charges are valid, particularly since so many people--particularly alienated spouses--make false charges.

*Experts on sex abuse say that both the perpetrators and the victims are becoming younger. There has been a dramatic increase in apprehension of children between ages 8-16 for sexual abuse, and the average age of child victims has declined from 12 to age 8. There are still some fools around who claim that this is all simply a matter of better reporting of what has always been happening (SHJ, 30/5/89).

*This is another one that is hard to believe: a 28-year old man on trial in Iowa for sexually molesting a five-year old girl was acquitted because the prosecution was unable to prove that the man was an adult, i.e., that he was over 18 (source item furnished by John Morris).

*When some of the major day care center sex abuse cases started breaking in 1983/84, we started keeping newspaper clippings on similar cases. To our amazement, we have accumulated a sizeable file of such clippings from all over North America. Only a small proportion of these achieved national notoriety. Surely, only a fraction of abuse cases ever come to the attention of authorities, and only a fraction of these are apt to get into the newspapers, and only a fraction of these are apt to get on the wire services. Thus, our file of such clippings must represent a phenomenal prevalence of sex abuse in early childhood programs. A controversial question is whether this abuse has always been there, or whether it is a novel phenomenon. We believe that both are the case, but that it has been dramatically on the increase and must be expected to continue increasing. In no way should that surprise us, because all we have to do is look at the overarching value trends of our society which are bound to express themselves in all aspects of human services.

Because of the rash of sexual and other abuse of children at early childhood centers, some locales have begun to require the finger-printing of all workers in such services, presumably in order to check their criminal records. School teachers in New York City have also had to submit to such finger-printing. Neither this strategy, nor the other major ones on the scene, address the broader context of child-rearing, character formation, and personality formation or moral growth. Aside from that, the purely technological strategies will probably fail even on the technical level, as pilot studies already indicate (Respect Life Report, 4/86). One wonders what the technocrats will come up with when the next round of failures become apparent. It is also interesting to note that a family life education program for teenagers that emphasizes a moral stance and the importance of saying "no" to premature sexual involvement has received only about 10% of the funding allocated to technology-based strategies. One critic characterized this whole strategy as equivalent to one in which a school would tell students not to shoplift, but in case they were thinking of shoplifting anyway, there just happened to be a team of shoplifting counselors in room 301 who would tell you how to avoid getting caught. And how serious would the message not to shoplift be taken in the first place in this kind of a teaching context?

*The McMartin child abuse trial in Los Angeles, which came to an end in 1/90, is said to have been the longest and most expensive trial in jurisprudence history, taking 6.5 years and \$15 million, ending in an equivocal acquittal that left unresolved the question whether child abuse took place in the McMartin pre-school, and if so, who committed it. Despite the fact that a new McMartin trial may be in the offing, we may never know the full truth regardless of its results, because the child witnesses were so brainwashed and confused by stupid and crazy sex and child abuse experts that their early testimony soon sounded like it came from sex-sophisticated adults (the people who had tested and interviewed

them) rather than from themselves, and the intervening years have so mixed up memories with interpretations and fantasies that a legal verdict will probably be meaningless--even if large-scale abuse did take place.

*There may always have been cases of intra-familial sexual abuse, but it really does appear as if this has been dramatically on the rise. Also, it now seems not merely to be one parent (often a male member, such as the father) who is the guilty party, but mothers are more and more involved, and sometimes it is both parents. For instance, in Syracuse, a man admitted raping one of his daughters, and some time later, the wife admitted sodomizing one of her sons.

*There is one angle to the current alarm about the widespread sexual abuse of children that to our knowledge has not as yet been revealed. One element of this alarm focuses very intensely on sexual abuse of children--primarily girls--by their fathers. While there are such cases, this particular emphasis conveys the impression (a) that a huge proportion of sexual abuse is by fathers, and (b) that a very large proportion of fathers sexually abuse their children (e.g., Amerika Woche, 3 Feb. 90). We are beginning to suspect that we see here yet another attack on the idea that the family structure has validity and importance. The strong implication here is that mothers and their children are better off without their husbands and fathers, and perhaps that the very family structure itself should no longer be idealized. Once these beliefs are accepted, a dramatic legitimization spillover would occur to all sorts of other arrangements being defined as families, ideals, or normal and wholesome, such as we are indeed increasingly seeing anyway as part of our decadent society and morality, and the collapse of the family institution.

*The counter-tragedy to paternal child abuse is that more and more women are accusing their (former) husbands falsely, and maliciously as an act of vengeance, of abusing their children. In such cases, an almost unbearable onus falls on the father which, in many cases, results in an almost unavoidable cessation of relationships between father and child--which is what some mothers want.

*A new twist to child sex abuse took place in England where the parents of three families, with the consent and encouragement of all six of them, systematically sexually abused 6 of the children from the three families, and that yet in front of the other children. Two older brothers also participated in the sex abuse (Guardian, 10/88; source item from Ruth Abrahams).

*The scandals of sexual abuses in human service contexts are becoming worse and worse. Yet another episode took place in the Albany, NY, area where a 61-year old male nursing home attendant was charged with sodomizing a severely impaired 74-year old woman. The nursing home administrator said that this was the first time in the county "of anything like this," but the medical director of the nursing home said that "These things probably happen a lot of times." He also opined that the woman was not injured by the incident and was "okay." Presumably, when you are severely impaired, things like that do not make much difference. (Source item submitted by Betty Pieper.)

*It is a sad fact that professional workers who deal with children as part of their work furnish a very disproportionately large percentage of child molesters. This includes teachers, bus drivers, scout leaders, camp counselors, etc. This has been exemplified on a number of occasions in Syracuse where, on a regular basis, people in such positions have gotten caught molesting children. One scandal in 1985 involved a person with a doctorate in educational psychology who was also an assistant dean at the local medical school.

*When the city of New York checked the fingerprints of a mere 82 workers at city-funded day care centers, they discovered that 36 had criminal records and 6 still had outstanding arrest warrants. Previous convictions included prostitution, robbery, arson and weapons possessions.

*A law suit was filed in New York state that claimed that at least 100 children were sexually abused while they were "patients" at the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center near Buffalo, by personnel or other child inmates. One of the defenses of the administration was that all of this was "normal" (AP, in SHJ, 21/3/89). Statistically, it may now well be.

*Indians screwed yet again. A US Senate panel was told that pedophiles tend to seek jobs with schools on Indian reservations because it is easier for them there to find victims (Scripps Howard NS, in SHJ, 22/2/89). One non-Indian English teacher in Arizona who had received all sorts of recognition for his good teaching was sentenced in 1987 to life imprisonment for sexually abusing 142 Indian boys, many of whom have since "become behavior problems." Four other non-Indian school officials had been charged in recent years with molesting a total of 42 other boys and girls (Newsweek, 26/12/88). There also seems to be a high prevalence of child sexual abuse on Canadian Indian reservations, but the authorities have reassured us that this is all in order because it is "normal" in such settings (PC, in La Presse, 20/10/88).

*In some locales at least, there appears to be taking place an increase in child abuse in foster homes. In the Syracuse area, such incidents appear to have risen between 300-400% during the late 1980s alone, with some foster children not only being abused, sexually and otherwise, by their foster parents, but also by other children in the foster homes, some of whom are foster children in bad shape themselves.

*As usual, the mental professions have jumped into the sex business with some rather bizarre projects. One man raped and killed a two-year old girl, and as part of his "treatment," his wife, who weighs 300 pounds, was asked to dress up as a little girl, and he was then supposed to have sex with her to "work out his fantasies."

*The Illusion Theater Child Abuse Prevention Education Program in Minneapolis produced an "Illusion Theater Guide for Teaching Mentally Retarded People About Sexual Abuse Prevention Education." Some of the very people in this project ended up as defendants in one of the more sensational child sex abuse investigations of the 1980s. We wonder who illuded whom?

*In 1946, a man molested some children and was given the choice by a judge to either go to prison or be castrated. He accepted castration and was placed on long-term probation. No sooner was he off probation than he began to take weekly hormone injections, and wonder of wonders, at age 69, started again to molest little girls for whom he was babysitting. (Source item from Michael Kendrick.)

*In addition to the items above, we have clippings of child rape or sex abuse by grandmothers, grandfathers, pastors, nurses, both male and female day care workers and owners, teachers, an assistant commissioner of a state education department, employees of institutions for the retarded, school bus drivers, scoutmasters, social workers, Little League coaches, nursery school directors, a porno/sex ring of 25 people, sheltered workshop employees, 82 psychotherapists (not all involving children, but some involving children as young as age 3), an author of Christian books for parents, FBI agents, a foundation president and millionaire businessman, and a group of 5 high school role models. One prominent Hawaii gynecologist sexually assaulted several women, and in late 1988, there was a big scandal in Columbus, Ohio, when a gynecologist was charged with performing "sexual enhancement surgery" on his women patients--without their knowledge! A number of the above offenders were women.

*Pedophiles are said to be most likely to be aroused by children just prior to their puberty, and to use two-door cars to abduct children (mostly between 3 and 6 p.m.) because it is more difficult to escape from them. The most common lure is to ask a child for help. It has been estimated that the typical child molester will molest 30 children if homosexual, and 73 if heterosexual. This seems to argue powerfully for trying to help heterosexual pedophiles to become homosexual.

*According to one estimate, only about 5% of those arrested in California on child sex charges in 1980 spent even a day in prison.

*One fascinating phenomenon in many child sex abuse exposés (so to speak) is the ravingly positive character witness testimony that the perpetrators receive from fellow citizens; and people who have been uncovering cases of abuse have themselves often been subjected to persecution and abuse by other citizens who apparently simply do not want to face the truth.

*Children have been socialized systematically to become sexualized from babyhood on. One result is that children are becoming sexually more provocative, and this greatly adds to the temptation of those others around them (both peers and adults) who are themselves weakened by their own upbringing and the relentless sex messages of the culture around them. This is bound to push many over their control thresholds, especially further considering how externalistic they too are apt to be in this day and age.

Violence: The Trashing of People and Disdain for Human Life

*Today, human life is no longer considered intrinsically sacred, people observe violence in the media all the time, and weak, sensualistic people with rotten values are extremely likely to be violent; after all, about the only things that hold back the animal violence in humans are strong character in combination with higher values, and/or not having grown up in a context of violence. Also, modern people are developing almost a disregard--even disdain--for life, most pronounced in the disdain for babes in the womb. A lot of violence these days is cathartic--almost therapeutic. One can be surprised that the shrinks have not yet instituted violence therapy in which clients are helped to better feelings by violating others, who can then be therapized for victim complexes.

*Reassurance. It is rather symbolic that the District of Columbia is edging toward the top in violent urban killings in the US. On a single day in February there were 14 shootings, 11 of these between nightfall and midnight, resulting in three slayings. Consistent with imperial style, the mayor assured the public that "downtown Washington is safe...Washington is not Dodge City," that the city residents need not fear for their lives; after all, these "are not random killings--they are assassinations...targeted murders" (AP in Edmonton Journal, 16/2/89).

*Arson has become the most costly crime in New York State, and quite likely in many other locales as well. In Syracuse, more than a third, and close to a half, of all fires may be due to arson. On the average, that means one to two arson fires per day. Children, especially between ages 13-15, are particularly heavily involved in arson.

*Police officers report that the violence that has arisen in the 1980s is different from what used to be, that they are much more afraid than they used to be, and that their survival is often a matter of chance. A veteran Chicago policeman compared the constant threat of random violence on city streets today to his days of walking jungle patrol in Vietnam (Newsweek, 29/5/89).

*In recent years, there have been killings and assaults in the US that sometimes were witnessed by up to several hundred people, none of whom would not only not intervene, but not even call the police. One example, in Chicago, was an ice cream truck driver who was set upon by two robbers who shot him twice and made off with \$75. As he lay bleeding on the ground, 100 children from a nearby housing project--an estimated 75% of the children in the neighborhood--rushed to the truck and cleaned out its goodies, about \$195 worth. The driver pleaded for their help, but to no avail. It was some time before police arrived.

*Dallas has one of the highest homicide rates in the civilized world, yet a recruiter for the Dallas police department said that "Dallas is not a dangerous city. Just 100 homicides were committed there last year" (Charleston Daily Mail, 22/2/85; submitted by Chuck Burkhouse).

*It appears that an increasing number of children who have not previously been identified as psychopathic or as members of a crime culture are committing murder, often in a cold-blooded and even premeditated fashion, and on relatively little provocation. Nationwide, 1311 youths under 18 were charged with murder in 1985 (AP in Cleveland Plain Dealer, 29/12/86; source item from Elizabeth Carmichael). One cherubic looking boy in Colorado was told by his mother that he could not have a waterbed, whereupon he took a bar from his weight set and hit her over the head, and when that did not work, he choked her, got a knife and stabbed her, then he dragged her to the bathroom and ran the water and finally drowned her. Many children are killing their playmates. One 13-year old clubbed

and stabbed to death a neighbor's 9- and 13-year old girls in their own home. The human service worker-type who studied the case interpreted it in these terms: "He was testing the limits of his aggression and panicked." Two 17-year olds pretended that their car was disabled, and when a college student charitably stopped to help them, they murdered him, "just to see what it feels like." Many of these children are called "borderline" by the people in the mental business. This is a new diagnostic category for a relatively new condition. In actuality, it is applied to children who are raised in a narcissistic hedonistic age without being given proper moral structure and tuition, and whom psychiatry cannot easily fit into any other category. They are not psychotic nor even borderline psychotic, but essentially so "spoiled" that they are rotten to the core.

*In Detroit, one teenager in 1500 gets wounded or killed by gunfire. In turn, most of the shooting is done by other teenagers (Newsweek, 2/12/85).

*Teenagers and young adults have begun to kill each other in order to rob the victim's fancy jackets or high-prestige shoes. Some high schools have had to ban all sorts of fancy clothing in order to keep down school violence (USN & WR, 26/2/90).

*Some recent toys include a mini-trap whereby children can get their little siblings to get their fingers snapped in something like a mouse trap; air sickness toys; and brain blasters, which are heads out of which will come flying pieces of brain when the mechanism is activated.

*Why not a sibling mini-trap awareness education program? On a typical school day in the US, at least 100,000 pupils carry guns in school; 15 US schools use metal detectors (Time, 20/11/89); in Dade County (Florida) in which Miami is located, 100 guns have been found on school grounds in 1988. The response was to start a gun awareness education program for all students. A student who starts in kindergarten will be subjected to several versions of this program prior to graduation, each aimed at a different age level (Newsweek, 5 Dec. 88).

*In a recent 12-month period, 400 teachers in New York City had to seek hospital services in consequence of assaults from students.

*Schools are only mirrors of society, and if society is violent, schools are unsafe. One school in Long Beach, California, built a bulletproof wall between itself and its neighborhood (Time, 20/11/89). A few years ago, people would have acknowledged something like this as a sure sign of a societal end-stage; today, they shrug.

*France united to modern omniculture. In southeastern France, a gang of teenage boys was arrested after they had terrorized the area for months, breaking at night into the homes of aged people and beating them severely, killing a number of them. Sometimes, they shot their victims, or severely crippled them. None had had a criminal record, and in other respects they "looked, dressed and acted like nice little French lads." People were puzzled because there was no precedent for this type of crime "except in cheap American TV serials" (Guardian, late 1988). Not far from Paris, a car overturned on a slippery road leaving the driver unconscious. His 12-year old daughter set off for help, but was run over by at least 20 cars (which killed her) without a single driver voluntarily reporting the incident (Guardian, late 1988; source item from Ruth Abrahams).

*A gang of black teenage girls (ages 13-15) in Manhattan developed the custom of "going wilding" in their own way, by walking down Broadway and sticking long pins into Caucasian women walking by. The girls would do this in groups of 3-8 on the assumption that this would deter the victims from taking countermeasures. In a week's time, they stuck 41 victims before 10 of the girls got caught. As urban violence goes these days, this was almost harmless, equivalent to running in the halls in the schools of old.

*A survey of one northern and one southern American city indicated that a typical 12- to 15-year old child watches an average of 4 "slasher" video movies (depicting things such as murder, beheadings, cannibalism and rape) a month, and another study found that in California, nearly a third of 9-year olds had seen at least one video involving sexual violence. A study has also shown that only 6% of American parents ever vetoed a child's use of the home VCR (USN & WR, 22/1/90).

*According to some authorities, comic books have become the most violent sector of bookstores. A study found that 87% of comics sold in regular bookstores featured harmful themes of violence, while 95% did of those sold by specialty comic book stores. Common themes are brutal and sadistic combat, torture, decapitation, cannibalism and satan worship. A certain percentage of them feature teenage killer heros. College-oriented magazines feature brutal rape and murder themes. Ironically, the comic industry is now aimed mostly at young adults-- exactly the group with the highest violence, murder, and rape rate. Of course, all of this parallels what is taking place in the sectors of TV and movie entertainment, rock music, and adolescent role-playing games (USA Today, 6/6/1989; source item from John Morris).

*For years, whenever somebody seems to be contemplating suicide by jumping off a high structure, members of the public below urge the person on with loud shouts of "jump!" (Clipping sent by Paul Williams).

*In August 1984, in Orlando, Florida, an 18-month old baby clad only in a diaper crawled across a busy highway without any of the motorists stopping to do anything about it.

*Ten million people are reported missing in the US every year, and while 95% are found--usually soon--the disappearing remainder is nonetheless remarkably large: about 500,000.

*A sign of the times is the development of housing projects for more affluent people that are constructed as fortresses against the ever-encroaching culture of street crime. There may be walls, fences and elaborate security for the entrance gates, sometimes staffed around the clock by security personnel. On the inside, some of the fanciest such projects may look like tranquil parks with amenities such as swimming pools, garages, laundries, garden pavilions, a club house, playing courts, etc. One ad for such a project in Australia is particularly telling because it took up a half page and was headed "Love thy neighbor as thyself but choose your neighborhood," and appealed to customers with its around-the-clock security, closed circuit TV in each home, etc. (Advertiser, 5/8/89; source item from Ruth Prescott).

*Surely, surely, surely it is a sign of our times that as of 1989, we now have a new Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, published by Haworth Press.

*One of the signs of our times is the growing popularity of bullet-proof designer clothing. Said a manufacturer snobbishly, "Each garment must win approval by the Israeli Defense Forces." Who needs to wear fashionable clothes where bullets fly? "We don't question people, we try to be as discreet as possible," replied the manufacturer.

Trashing the Earth and Its Resources

Mindless materialistic affluence, coupled with here-and-nowism and a disdain (or ignorance) for the poor contributes to a peculiar, prodigious trashing of resources, exemplified by the vast throwing away, or playing with, food, or its decadent consumption, especially in face of so much deprivation and want both at home and abroad, and even famine. When the TIPS editor was a child, he heard numerous German fairy tales which told of awful things happening to people who wasted food. One such story told of the city by the sea in which the burghers were so wealthy and wanton that they took loaves of bread, hollowed them out, and used them for shoes to dance in. In punishment, their city was swallowed by the ocean.

*It is hard to believe that the Jenos frozen pizza plant in Wellston, Ohio, generated 300,000 gallons of waste consisting of edible stuff, such as flour, cheese, sausage, meat and tomatoes. The waste of the earth's resources represented by these figures is staggering.

*About 20% of the entire food production of the United States, or enough to feed about 50 million Americans, is thrown away.

*With mass starvation in the world, and a lot of hunger and malnutrition in the US, we are scandalized by wrestling contests held in an edible medium that replaces mud wrestling. Such contests may be held in chocolate pudding, jello, applesauce, oatmeal, sweet potatoes, creamed spinach and peanut butter. It takes 600 pounds of pudding to prepare the arena. Unfortunately, such events may even be held as fund-raisers. One in Syracuse was held to raise funds for a high school senior class and a special education class (SHJ, 28/1/88).

*In Vinton, Iowa, a state championship hot dog eating contest was held in which 525 hot dogs were consumed by the contestants, each of which was given a precautionary bucket to vomit in and some Alka-seltzer. The two winners devoured 20 hot dogs, but many other contestants had to quit because they were sickened by yet other contestants who were vomiting what they had eaten. For their heroic feat, the winners received \$600 each. Iowa, a state richly blessed with a fruitful earth and agriculture production, is even now losing its topsoil at a phenomenal rate. No good can come from such an abuse of plenty (UPI, in SHJ, 13 September 82).

*Too much to Chow An? A sad sign of the times occurred a few years ago at what was to be a Halloween banquet in the student cafeteria of Chowan College in Murfreesboro, North Carolina. The cafeteria had been decorated, and a special meal of turkey, yams and mashed potatoes was being served. The students, most of whom had probably never experienced privation, started an obscene and insane "food fight," which meant that everybody threw everything they could throw in the line of food and dishes at each other and around the cafeteria. By the time it was over, food was all over the ceiling, walls and the floor, and it was almost impossible to walk around. The cafeteria manager made things worse by locking the doors so that non-participating students were not able to escape, and ended up trying to hide by crouching under tables and in corners. Furniture was broken up and other damage done. Fortunately, and perhaps miraculously, no serious injuries ensued, although some people were hit very hard in the head and face by plates and apples. The mayor had to declare an emergency and ban local alcohol sales. One observer said that he had never seen anything like this before except in the movie "Animal House."

*There is a new kind of candy out which is called garbage candy, is sold in miniature replicas of garbage pails, and is very popular with children. The candy is relatively good, being made largely of dextrose, but it is a sign of our time that the shapes of the candy in the garbage pail consist in part of-- food, such as pieces of bread, pears, etc. Thus, children are taught to expect that candy is food while real food is garbage, contributing to the tendency to throw things away that are still useable, and thus despoil the world.

*At a 12-floor Fort Lauderdale, Fla., hotel, a manager said that during Spring break, vacationing college students do about \$10,000 damage each week, and that was only one hotel.

Entitlement Mentalities

*Hedonistic individualistic people alienated from labor and other realities develop the idea that they are entitled to the good life. Big contemporary expressions of this include the idea that everyone can have and exercise unlimited rights, and that one is entitled to material wealth. Also, in olden days, when a loved one died, one grieved. No longer so. Modern people feel that among the things one is entitled to are all the relationships that one values. Therefore, upon the death of a loved one, a new modernistic emotion has

become normative, and that is anger and resentment. Naturally, this quite often turns into anger and resentment toward the deceased person, as if that person had played a dirty trick on one by dying (AARP News Bulletin, 11/88). We should think well how thoroughly modernistic this development is.

*Shoplifting is the largest monetary crime in the US. Even in Georgia, one of three youngsters has done shoplifting, with teenaged boys being the worst. Girls steal on impulse and in groups, boys plan it and are more apt to do it alone. In 1983, 700,000 people were arrested for shoplifting, and one can only wonder how many more got away with it. Even those who get arrested usually get away with it, since only about 10% of them get prosecuted. This must be considered as yet another sign of an attitude of "entitlement" which comes when people are alienated from primary production and the relationship between toil and livelihood. Looking at the value of what is stolen, then store employees are the biggest thieves, stealing about 50% more in terms of dollar value than even shoppers.

*In early 1988, Onondaga County in which Syracuse is located had 800 law suits pending against it. Many of them were by citizens who hurt themselves somewhere or other (as by slipping on the sidewalk) who felt that they were entitled to a few thousand dollars. Rather than fight these cases, the county often shells out somewheres between \$1,000-10,000 to a claimant, no matter how absurd the claims. Of course, the taxpayers pay for all this. This is just one single county in one state, and when one adds up all the other counties, municipalities, states and other governmental units, one can easily see a huge disablement process at work.

*A Kansas firefighter helped to perform an emergency amputation in order to save the life of a person caught in a structural collapse. He claimed that this shook him up so badly as to "deprive him of the joys of life," and he sued the owner of the collapsed structure for \$426 (!) million.

*In Massachusetts, a fishing boat owner broke his arm, and sued himself. The jury awarded him \$525,000 (Time, 26/8/85).

*Entitlement to tallness. A man hired 2 evil-doers to cut up the face of a model who spurned him. When caught, and going up for trial, his lawyers prepared an insanity defense based on the claim that he was traumatized by growing up short--he was 5' even.

*In 6/89, a United Airlines plane made a crash landing in Iowa. That the plane and about half the passengers survived at all was a miracle, and a superb credit to the pilot, since all hydraulic systems were lost. Yet within only two days after the crash, one of the passengers entered a damage suit to compensate him for "fear of death"! His lawyer expressed a typical contemporary entitlement attitude: "Somebody did something wrong, and somebody has to recover" (Newsweek, 7 Aug 89).

*It has always been known that skiing is very dangerous business, but in recent years, every skier who gets hurt seems to have an attitude of entitlement to damage payments from somebody or other. Commercial ski slopes are favorite targets and have been beset by so many suits that they in turn have turned to the absurd practice of posting signs all over warning skiers that skiing is dangerous, and even announcing refunds to any skier who decides that skiing is, in fact, too dangerous (SHJ, 20/9/88).

*A woman drank heavily while she was pregnant, and when her baby turned out to have multiple birth defects, she turned around and sued one of the liquor firms for having failed to warn drinkers on their bottles of the dangers of drinking too much (SHJ, 14/5/89).

*A 7-11 convenience store was being robbed and the clerk pistol-whipped when a police officer appeared and rescued the clerk. Southland Corp., that ran the store, sued the police department for damages incurred when the police officer struggled with the robber (Philadelphia City Paper, 17/3/89; source item from Ed Cohle).

*At a company picnic near New York City, a man told a woman fellow worker that he had had a "very nice dream" about her, and suggested that there should be a wet T-shirt contest at the picnic. Claiming that the incident "totally disabled" her, the woman sued and was awarded \$38,000 in workers' compensation (AP, in SHJ, 12 May 89).

*San Francisco may very well be the homosexuality capital of the US. A 48-year old male teacher there was fired for writing passionate love letters (up to 4 a day) to a 17-year old high school boy, but the teacher showed no remorse, sued for \$4 million and reinstatement in the same school, claiming it as his "entitlement."

*A modernistic woman went for plastic surgery, as a result of which her navel was left a bit off-center. She sued the surgeon, and won \$850,000.

*Both graduate students and professors should take note of the incident where a young man entered a doctoral program in mathematics at Stanford University and tried for 19 years to get his PhD. During the last 8 of these years, he schemed how to murder his professor, which he eventually did with a hammer. He felt no remorse because, to him, the murder had been a rational act.

*Entitlement to immortality. A Los Angeles mathematician who discovered that he had a brain tumor petitioned the courts in 5/90 to let him quick-freeze his head while still alive so that he could be restored to life and health in the future when science had found a way to do so.

The Contribution of Complexity to Disfunctionality of People, Social Structures & Physical Systems & Things: Nothing Works Anymore

In complex systems, a failure in even the smallest part can bring everything down. Since everything is getting more complex these days--both physical and social systems--everything is also more vulnerable to disfunctionality.

*A royal flush. One example of the breakdown of complex systems due to failure of some of its minimalist parts occurred in Newport Beach, California. An overflowing toilet short-circuited an electric line that fed power to every floor of the nearly new 17-story Wells Fargo Bank Building, causing an explosion that triggered the fire sprinklers that practically flushed the building and brought 14 fire trucks from 4 fire departments. About 1000 lawyers, brokers, accountants and others were put out of work. Not being able to use their files, adding machines, or typewriters, many of them suffered great financial losses, so that some may even go bankrupt (AP, in SHJ, 21/10/83).

*In ten years, between 1974 and 1984, the number of laws passed in California alone increased from roughly 1500 a year to almost 2100 a year. This underlines the increasing disfunctionality of our society as a result of ever greater formalization.

*The way our legal system gets bogged down is exemplified by the large number of new laws being promoted or passed in order to control the kinds of offenses that previously did not occur, have not occurred for a long time, or occur very rarely. For instance, body-snatching has apparently once again become a problem, with people digging up freshly-buried bodies, perhaps for satanic rites. At any rate, Minnesota is one of the states that passed a law in 1989 requiring that when a body disappears from a cemetery, the next of kin must be notified. Who in their wildest imagination could have conceived of the necessity for such a law except in the face of perverse practices. (Source information from Paul Hagen.)

*A letter in the 3 Nov. 89 issue of Science pointed out that communications technology has advanced to such a point that data acquisition far outstrips capacity for data analysis, utilization, and even archiving. For instance, the Landsat satellite has been collecting far more data in 17 years on the world's geography than can be properly analyzed--or even properly archived. One result, is, of course, information overload, as dramatically evident in air traffic control.

*A study of clinical information management in British hospitals, published in 1988, found that such information systems have become unmanageable. Out-patient nurses spent half their time sorting, transporting or searching for medical records. One hospital pathology department processed 1.3 million pathology forms annually. One hospital had 59 staff members in its medical records department. The national health service overall spent something like \$40 million a year looking for lost medical records. Ironically, the experts saw salvation in high-tech automated centralized computer systems that can interface with multiple input and output modalities (such as type, microfiche, film, various computer formats, etc.). (Source clipping from Ruth Abrahams.) What no one ever seems to consider is that these improvements routinely bring with them yet additional complexities and breakdowns that overall make systems yet less manageable.

*When the American Airlines computer reservation system broke down for 12 hours in 5/89, chaos ensued, and even the news media admitted that while computer technology has made the work of travel agencies and airlines "easier and more economical," it has also made it "more vulnerable to disruption," and that the same problem is faced elsewhere in society (SHJ, 13/5/89).

*Computers can make some very funny errors. On his 17th birthday, a boy received a driver's license unsolicitedly in the mail--together with 12 traffic citations and a suspension of his new driver's license. Another man received through the mail sacks and sacks of the same bill which a computer obviously was not able to quit printing. One computer assumed that everyone was born in the 20th century, and abolished all people born earlier, while another allowed two digits for people's ages, and recorded every person above the age of 99 as starting all over in life, which explains why a 107-year old monk got an order to report to school. In Sweden, authorities have tried (unsuccessfully) for 5 years to revive the computer identity of a man that had been declared dead by a computer. A Greek man was supposed to get a check for \$700 but received one for \$700,000, and sans hesitation, cashed it on the spot and disappeared without a trace. Finally, a man in Canada received a computer letter that addressed him as follows:

„Ilmh het
eidtquee talah psleqalq-
ludh pwl 3pp“

*More imperial pretensions unmasked. In 4/89, a man from mid-state New York said that with the radio control box in his car with which he does such things as open and close his garage door, he can turn on all the washers and dryers in his neighborhood. His cordless telephone can raise and lower the stage curtains at the local Civic Center and pick up conversations among police patrol cars some distance away; and so on. No wonder that one of the ill-fated nuclear power stations in the area that has never had anything but troubles closed down automatically because someone in the neighborhood was using a handheld radio.

*A social psychology professor at the University of California said (Newsweek, 5/5/86) that his telephone bill, his airline frequent flier programs, his home mortgage arrangement, his insurance options and his shopping for medical services had all become too complex for him to understand. Even disclosure statements which were supposed to increase the rationality of consumer choice have, in the presence of a proliferation of options, become actually fairly meaningless.

*We like the Wizard of Id cartoon of 25/2/90 (in SHA) where the dialogue between the Little King and a future-forecaster goes as follows.

"Well, what do you predict for the coming decade?"

"I see corruption, decadence, immorality, perversion, wars, famine, pestilence and disease, vandalism, drugs, street gangs, terrorists, bad schools, potholes, toxic waste, acid rain, fraud, embezzlement, government waste...."

"What about the downside?"

Other Signs of Growing Inability of Structures to Cope

*A major Newsweek article (24/4/89) said in so many words that the US Congress is bankrupt, calling it a "fortress of unreality...only barely connected to life beyond the moat." It said that the single overriding goal of people who get elected to Congress is to get re-elected, and that almost all legislation is dealt with entirely in relation to one's re-election. Image projection has replaced almost all reality, and some legislators do almost nothing but relate to the media. One remarkable development is that the less Congress actually accomplishes, the larger grows its payroll, having tripled just in the last 30 years. Some of all this is symbolized by the fact that Congress has automatic elevators, but employs patronage workers who pretend to run the elevators by pushing buttons. Again, people in human services need to be aware of such realities, because the higher and broader societal phenomena will have their parallels and derivatives in human services.

*One way to render the mandate of regulatory agencies irrelevant was illustrated in the US when, between 1980-1989, Congress passed more than 20 laws increasing the responsibilities of the federal Food and Drug Administration while at the same time reducing the number of employees of the FDA (at least in work not related to AIDS) by 13% (Consumer Reports, 5/90). This also shows how structures are ever less able to deliver on their promises.

*The legislature in New York State is notorious for being incapable of preparing and approving a budget every year, or dealing with any number of vital issues in this trouble-plagued state--but they have no difficulty dealing with the most inane trivialities, such as becoming the first state legislature to designate a state bottle (a mineral spring bottle) to be added to such esoterica as official state flower, bird, insect, shell and muffin (AP, in SHJ, 19/2/90).

*More and more local US school districts are slipping into what some people have called "academic bankruptcy," as to have to be taken over by state authorities. However, we should not assume that this will necessarily solve the problem. It may merely slow down the rate of further structural collapses (US News & World Report, 23/10/89).

*Short-term long-term care. An article in the Denver Post (1/4/90) reported that in some long-term care facilities, the turnover rate has now reached 400% a year in staff.

*In parts of New York City, children go to school in buildings in which nothing works: in many, windows are boarded up or nailed shut, the thermostats do not work, the rooms get either too hot or too cold, the sun cannot be curtained off, walls are cracked, and the rain leaks in. Some children have said things such as, "our school looks like a slum" (AP in SHJ, 1 March 90).

*Here is a crazy paradox of our age. Some firms have instituted policies that do not permit women of child-bearing age to work in certain jobs that are a hazard to the unborn, and a federal court has upheld the permissibility of such a policy. Ironically, women who bear impaired offspring may sue their employer for big damages, and yet labor unions, women's groups and civil libertarians have been on the war path against the decision, which may very well end up in the Supreme Court. Some feminists have called this the most important sex discrimination case since 1964 (Time, 16/10/89). This is a classical example of mutual disablement, where each party may end up doing dirt to the other, but no one can come out the winner.

*In Spring 1990, there was big media coverage in the Canadian press of the child care system in Ontario and other provinces. There were the usual horror stories of children being moved around from home to home, one child committing suicide after having been moved among 16 foster homes in 13 years, a casual approach to high-risk cases, and failure to keep track of child placements. In Ontario alone, the government is the guardian of 4500 children. In addition, another 5500 children are under the care of these agencies. Child care agencies

complained that so much paperwork was required that they could not keep up with the real work. The number of troubled children has been increasing, foster homes have been decreasing, and personnel turnover has been increasing. In a 5-year period, the average child ward of the government will have had 3 different social workers and been in 3 different foster homes, though by the time a child becomes a teenager, chances are that the child will have been moved 7 times in a 5-year period, at least in some geographic areas. Some children are placed 600 kilometers away from their homes. Because of these discontinuities, there is no one in the child care agencies that can be said to carry a child's progress "in his or her head." The investigation also discovered, not surprisingly, that the children do not usually trust people from the child care system (Globe & Mail, 30/4 & 1/5 1990).

*With human services falling apart at the seams, there has been a growing popularity of workshops which de facto train human service workers to function as a sort of human services police. These workshops may be called "incident investigation" workshops, and people who attend them may be certified as investigators and work somewhat as undercover in-house spies. The fact is that any human service worker should report abuse, theft, etc., by colleagues, and when employee crime gets so far out of hand that one needs this type of formal peer policing, maybe it is time to declare bankruptcy officially.

*Signs of the times can undoubtedly be classified as to degree of patheticness, but surely one of the more pathetic ones must be that some churches that since time immemorial have had poor boxes (usually near the door) for alms are now setting up boxes for donations to fund the hiring of security guards (NY Times, in SHJ 20/8/88).

*Some true artists do see things before most others do. In 1981 The Clowns of God, novelist Morris West depicted the world in the throes of famine, upheaval, terrorism, and rationally-managed irrationality, in which nuclear destruction is systematically being planned despite the foreseen consequences. It is a world near social collapse and nuclear war in which "no leader, no junta, no parliamentary assembly could compass or control the conflicts of geo-polity of a world haunted by the depletion and debasement of every currency of human intercourse. Reason rocked under the barrage of contradictions. The corporate world seemed frozen in a syncope of impotence." There are elements of the novel that we dislike, including some silly elements (e.g., Christ comes as a physical therapist), but also much food for thought. Handicapped and retarded people play a very positive role in the novel.

The Normative Insanity of People Within Modernism

The values and lifestyles of modernism, coupled with information overload, is wreaking havoc with peoples' minds. We are witnessing a phenomenon that we call normative (in contrast to clinical) insanity that is engulfing the majority of people.

*As others see us. A German friend of the editor recently visited the United States and wrote a report to his students and friends. One of the things that shocked him was the large number of people he encountered who seemed to be mentally disturbed and/or living in a state of apathy and "mental desert." He also noted that a large proportion of people were overweight, and that their movements focused heavily between the key points of icebox, TV and bed. He thought that we had used technology to create an environment that makes few demands on people and renders them helpless. He also told of trying to visit a colleague on Long Island in a dreamily beautiful area of luxury villas, each located in a miniature park. He had difficulty finding the right house number and therefore rang the doorbell on one of the homes in order to inquire. Finally, a tiny window opened in the door and a woman with fear-trembling voice screeched through the hole that he should immediately get lost or she would call the police. He had no chance to ask his question or give an explanation. Of course, people in many countries abroad see in us what they themselves will soon become, much as we often see our own future when we look at California.

*A normative insanity "tradition" grew up in Detroit in recent decades, where every Halloween, a certain proportion of its citizens try to burn down the town. In one single such night in the 1980s, 300 fires were set to cars, garages, homes, and other buildings. The fire department had to call in help from outlying areas.

*Is it possible that in our insane society, it is becoming more popular to give backward names and/or symbols to things? For instance, we noticed that a deep-ocean research vessel was called Egabrag III, which is garbage backward, because the first such vessel was a former Navy garbage scow, and this is the third such vessel in a row to be so named. We have previously commented on the Canadian Military Cemetery being named Adanac, which is Canada spelled backward, the MR journal for many years sporting a reversed R in its logo, and the former Euthanasia Society using a backward E. Of course, the satanists do and call all sorts of things backward. Some shout "redrum" before they try to kill someone. (Source item from Regrebsneflow W.)

*According to Newsweek, playing Russian roulette has become a favorite diversion among young men in Lebanon, with many casualties. The craze started when the film, "The Deer Hunter," was shown to sell-out crowds. Apparently, this is merely yet another expression of the collective insanity that has struck the people who inhabit that part of the world, and because there does not appear to be anything to look forward to. One of our frequent contributors, John Morris, commented that this is "clearly the end result of a society gone mad in an orgy of killing and rampant hatred." He likened this to the suicide wave in Germany, Italy, and Japan at the end of World War II.

*A guest editorial in Newsweek (5 May 87) bemoaned the fact that reality has become so bizarre that it is putting the fictional arts out of business. It asked "what can writers possibly invent that the public has not already tried or been subjected to?" He said that one thing behind this is the loss of inhibitions, with people now actually doing what formerly they might have thought of for one guilty moment--and then pushed out of their minds. Examples are the incredible and inexhaustive range of violence and sexual activities and abuses, not to mention the President bargaining with the terrorists whom he said he would never negotiate with, and so on. In essence, he says what has happened is a breakdown between what people imagine and what they do. As a result, the fictional arts have to become ever more bizarre, imitate reality, or perhaps even pose as docu-drama. Soon, he warns, there will be nothing left in the imagination--and then we have to face the dreadful possibility of having to live with reality.

*It seems that among the sophisticated crowd, the mental anomie engendered by modernism has been dignified by being interpreted as being merely the "chronic fatigue syndrome," sometimes also called the yuppie disease. It is said to include such various elements as exhaustion, disorientation, sore throat, depression, fever, swollen lymph nodes, headaches and insomnia. We of course call it what it is, but there now exists a Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Society, and its president complained about people poking fun at its "sufferers," whereas "many of these people are wheelchair bound, have lost jobs, savings, relationships, houses and a normal lifestyle." Of course, what they needed in the first place was a normal lifestyle, which they lost when they let the culture dictate its values and lifestyles to them, with them embracing it enthusiastically.

*The pathologies of a society will reflect its value system. The latest pathology discovered by the shrink world is shopping addiction. It consists of an obsession to go shopping and buy things, no matter how useless or how many of them one already possesses. The impulse becomes particularly strong when one is stressed, much as stress precipitates any number of other maladaptive behaviors. Shopping addiction can be viewed as a pathology that is mighty coherent with a materialistic society (Newsweek, 18/3/85).

*In West Germany, a study found that most taxicab passengers prefer to be driven in silence, but those who do want to talk quite often feel a compulsion to talk about very personal problems they are experiencing, particularly in the areas of marriage, employment and domiciliation. In fact, many of these did not want to exit the taxi at the end of the trip but continue talking about their problem. This underlines the alienation of modern people who lust for cardboard intimacy because they lack the real thing. (AW, 15/11/86)

*80% of American workers believe that they are better than the norm (Newsweek, 14/11/88, p. 45).

*Wish you were here. In a public toilet on a toll-free interstate highway in Ohio, we encountered a guest book into which patrons were invited to sign themselves. It is little things like this multiplied a thousand times over that inform us how insane our society is.

*Heaven help us, because the police won't. Seven police officers in NY went on a rampage, cavorted nude or nearly so around Grand Central Station, and harassed homeless people and others (AP in SHJ, 3/8/88).

*A friend has given us some documents put out by a residential service in which staff have looked upon their clients so much as sub-human that the agency has seen itself driven to teach staff not to hurt clients, rather than to do good things for them. As part of this effort, the agency put out a very detailed list that tried to explain to staff what kinds of actions constitute abuse, such as pulling a client's hair, yanking at a client's earring hanging from pierced ears, spitting at clients, dragging clients along the floor, throwing large, heavy, sharp or pointed objects at clients, etc.

*Someone actually recommended setting up a counseling service for teenagers who have low self-esteem because they are not promiscuous. As an example, a 16-year old girl was cited who told her mother tearfully that she was the only virgin in her circles and wondered what was wrong with her.

*In olden days, cities were commonly permeated by so-called street cries by various vendors, delivery people, trades people, etc. Many of these were quite poetic and melodic, as exemplified by the London street cry of "oranges and lemons" or "cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o," both captured in old folk songs. The distinctive melodiousness of these cries served to help hearers to distinguish among the things that were being called out. One such distinctively melodic German street cry used to be "rags, old iron, bottles and paper," sung out by men with horse carts collecting what has since come to be called recyclables. Today, one could easily imagine human service workers pushing carts through urban streets calling out something like "condoms, needles, bleach--don't worry, be happy."

Disorientation in Time & Loss of Memory as One of the Signs of Normative Insanity

*Modern people are so disoriented by rapid value shifts, crazes, relativism, disengagement from nature, etc., that they lose their sense of time, become rootless, cannot read the signs of their times, and lose both their cultural and personal memories.

*Jeremy Rifkin is one of our foremost advocates on behalf of the environment. He has written a book called Time Wars in which he says that war is being waged today between those who want to control nature and those who would participate in it. (Clearly, the controllers are also destroying nature, perhaps as an act of vengeance because nature ultimately will not be controlled by humans, and this offends their self-idolatry.) Rifkin also says that a crucial role in human affairs is played by the way in which time is experienced and related to. Long ago, humans related to time in terms of the rhythms of nature. Then along came the industrial revolution and what Rifkin calls "linear time," typified by clocks and schedules that tried to apply the lessons of the past to the events of the future. Now we are in "associative time" which is characterized by the computer,

and in which we loosely associate myriads of bits of information and thus experience time as temporary and fleeting. Also, the computer is increasingly creating simulated worlds that further divide us from reality. While we need not believe that this analysis is complete, it does make yet another contribution to an explanation as to why contemporary people hardly relate at all to either the past or the future, and certainly cannot relate to larger entireties of reality, but only to disassociated mini-fractions thereof.

*One of the big problems of our day is that people are overwhelmed with tiny bits of fragmentary information that have little relationship to each other, or at least no relationship that people are aware of or are being taught. One wit has called this "being bitted to death" (Newsweek, 28/10/85). This phenomenon may help explain why people these days have such atrocious memories, forgetting some of the things which were foremost on their minds only a few years earlier. It may also explain people flitting about from one issue, job, or location to another, because they are treating the environment much the way they perceive the world.

*A guest essay in Time (July 89) commented on the peculiar disorders and losses of memory of modern people, including the almost total focusing on the contemporary moment. Because modern people are so relentlessly bombarded with visual images, they have a hard time retaining anything. Thus, if the Ten Commandments were given today, they would probably be flashed on giant displays--not just on TV, but also in places such as sports stadiums--and be forgotten by the end of the day. The essay noted that in clinical practice, a person who lives entirely in the present would be considered psychotic or psychopathic, and perhaps be diagnosed as suffering from Korsakoff's psychosis, as one finds in certain brain syndromes, such as those caused by long-term alcoholism. The writer noticed that what we now have is an amnesic society that behaves much like amnesic individuals: much like the latter confabulate (i.e., make up stories) so as to pass as normal, our society recreates history in order to cover up its lack of knowledge thereof. The fictionalization and distortion of historical TV dramas is just one aspect of this.

*Time (16/6/86) claimed that a rapid expansion in express delivery of everything from pizzas to mail, as well as other kinds of instant products or instant performance, has to do with the modernistic lust for instant gratification, which we would say is one of the manifestations of contemporary hedonism.

*Newsweek (7 Sept. 87) noted that Johnny, the hapless composite American school child, flunked reading and writing in the 1970s, picked up grades of F in math and science around 1980, failed geography in 1986, and now, in 1987, was discovered to know virtually nothing about history and literature. E.g., even among 17-year olds, 68% did not know when the Civil War took place, and one out of 3 thought that Columbus arrived after 1750. The trouble is that these children, before long, will be applying to graduate schools--and getting in, becoming teachers themselves. Fortunately, the TIPS editor will then be of retirement age and be able to hand these students over to illiterate professors.

*Time (8/8/88) reported that within weeks after it became known that Salvadoran president Duarte had terminal cancer, the fact that he was still alive and still president was virtually forgotten in his country and his party. One commentator noted that this "is really quite chilling."

*We have been saying for some time that based on our experience, and that of our associates, the memory horizon in human services has shrunk to about 2 years. The good news for human service workers, such as it is, is that they are not the only ones who are losing their memories, particularly for things that happened more than 2 years ago. US Attorney General Edwin Meese claimed memory lapse no less than 340 times when testifying before a Congressional committee not long ago (Sojourners, 7/88).

*To illustrate what complexity and memory loss can mean these days: the US Veterans Administration "found" 10 million military records that had been believed lost since 1973 (AP, in Atlanta Journal, 24/6/88).

*One interesting symptom of the loss of memory in human services is that a lot of agency people have no idea what their agency's logo means, at least in the sense of what the rationale was when it was designed. Even agency directors sometimes cannot tell what their logo meant, sometimes offering inane guesses or retrospective misinterpretations.

The Decline in Personal Competency of Modernistic People

Disorientation, overload, media brain control, an individualistic materialistic sensualistic entitlement attitude, and other factors seem to be destroying people's competencies. This is particularly noteworthy in American culture with its long tradition of people being practical, inventive and quick problem-solvers.

We make a distinction between clinical insanities and mental disorders, which we put into the class of personal competency impairments, and normative insanities that do not require a basis in clinical insanity.

*One of the most devastating impacts of modernism is that in so many people, it creates a peculiar internal mental state that is even difficult to describe because there are so few precedents for it. Some people refer to it as a deadening of the soul. Not only is there little in the center of such persons that could come out, but there is also very little of any substance that touches their souls and can gain entry there, and instead, they respond to phenomena in a superficial fashion. Masses of children grow up not knowing any songs other than the pop songs they have heard on the radio, and even of these, they may only know fragments instead of entire songs. Except for such pop songs, they may not have any "songs in their hearts." Even after having taken several college history courses, they may know only the rudiments of the history of their own country, and virtually nothing about the great people or great literary works that have shaped our civilization, or even our language. They may not be able to recite a single poem from the world's great treasury of literature. They cannot recite, and may never even recognize as such, anything that Shakespeare wrote or that Plato taught.

*The 1984 chemistry Nobel prize-winner, Henry Taube of Stanford University, has loved to teach all his life, but has admitted that teaching recently lost its attraction for him. "High school and undergraduate education has changed so much that I am really not aware of what they know and don't know--I get virtually no response from the students." Chances are they did not respond because they knew nothing.

*Ca. 13% of 17-year olds in the US are functionally illiterate, and of course a much higher percentage are in certain categories, such as minority groups. Despite an almost 40% increase in per pupil school costs, the percentage of high school students who graduate has actually dropped in recent years (Time, 14/8/89). A 1989 poll of college seniors by the National Endowment for the Humanities found that 24% did not know when Columbus arrived in America, 42% could not place the US Civil War even within 50 years of its date, 55% did not know what the Magna Carta was, and 23% thought that a quotation from Karl Marx was part of the US Constitution. All this would be remarkable if high school seniors did not know it, but reveals the bankruptcy of the cultural education of Americans (SHJ, 9 Oct. 89).

*Not long after the US had invaded Grenada, the President of Bradford College in Massachusetts went to a high school and interviewed the students there. Not a single pupil in the "global studies" class knew that the US had invaded Grenada. Members of a senior honors class were unable to identify any "heroes" except a baseball batter and a movie star. Not a one of them could identify the name of any astronaut (UPI, in SHJ, 27/11/83).

*The experts are surmising that people will no longer have to learn to spell because they will be typing on computers, and the computers will learn to correct all their spelling errors (Newsweek, 6/6/88). That much for progress. What a peculiar age the future--should it survive--might be: bright people who never labor, can't speak in sentences, don't know anything about the past that occurred more than about 2 years ago, are spaced out on drugs a good part of the time, and think that the world somehow or other owes them every whim, including a living.

*President Garfield was able to write Latin with one hand, and Greek with the other simultaneously. Today, we are lucky if we get a president who can write.

*No wonder our children don't learn academic skills anymore. Hardly were sex education programs under various names established in all the schools than drug education programs were being implemented, with the governor of New York in 1/89 even calling for making such programs mandatory. By the time we add education about every major decadence and vice in our country, there will be little time left to teach and learn the three Rs. We might also reflect how moral teaching has changed over the millenia. Even thousands of years ago, much wisdom was taught about how to educate young people in a positive sense for the good life. Moral education now places a very heavy emphasis on avoiding disasters and traps. Relatively little is taught about the positive virtues.

*A columnist for the Canadian Globe & Mail (1 May 90) noted that Canadian children are taught in school to do all sorts of crafts work, dance, sing and lip sync, but literacy is a problem.

*It is a peculiar sign of our times that with schools having failed to teach even basic literacy and elementary mathematics to a large proportion of its students, employers now have to take up the slack and do the teaching themselves because they are running out of more intelligent and skilled labourers. This is now costing about \$300 million a year (Time 19/12/88). Some apologists for the education system claim that it is not true that people are less literate, but that employers are raising standards. We doubt it.

*Two out of three American adults reportedly do not read books.

*The competence problems of our culture are, among other things, illustrated by the difference between do-it-yourself kits for American and Japanese children. Japanese children receive kits with hundreds of parts which they painstakingly put together in long hours of work. American kits consist of very few parts and can be put together rapidly. American toys aim at instant gratification and thereby feed back into the impoverished psychic development of children (Science Digest, 6/86).

*Traditionally, Americans believed that the most crucial precondition of success was effort. However, the decadent culture of modernism has taken its toll so that by 1985, Americans, at least according to one poll, had come to believe that knowing the right people was more important than either hard work, ability or aggressiveness.

*One manifestation of both parents and their children being increasingly unable to cope has been a growth in private "hospitals" that cater to out-of-control adolescents, mostly under the pretext that they are mentally disturbed. These businesses aim mostly at the middle classes that produce these children. Such facilities rarely cost less than \$200 a day, and may cost above \$1000. Many hospitals that are going out of business are converting to this type of facility. Some authorities have referred to this development as a "hidden system of juvenile control." It is so hidden that some states do not even know what the number of young people in their private psychiatric institutions is. Adolescent admissions to private psychiatric residences (which may cost \$6000 a week) increased over 350% between 1980 and 1984 alone. Most admissions are involuntary, and while they are often brought about because the youth is out of control and/or the parents can no longer cope, some of these increases also appear to be paper shifts from the juvenile justice system to the mental health system, since there has been an almost 90% decline in juvenile residential facilities in just two or so years between 1979 and 1981 (Newsweek, 20/1/86).

*More and more people in America seem to be afraid of bridges. Some years ago, the police had to help about 200 people a year over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge near Washington, but by 1983 this had grown to 800. At the bridge that connects the two parts of Michigan, the number of people who required help doubled from 1983 to 1984. How is one to explain this craziness?

*Home health aides are often recruited from the bottom of the occupational ladder, just one step up from unemployment or even unemployability, and in the current context of cultural decadence, it has become more and more difficult to recruit such persons who either will work reliably, or who will not abuse their dependent charges in some way or other. What follows is one of thousands of typical case studies of how a disfunctional society responds to some of its disfunctionalities, such as the one mentioned. The response has been to pass a law in New York State requiring background checks on home health aides. But because these are so hard to recruit, agencies that employ them have commonly ignored the law, and hired people without these checks. Then the next round of efforts at futile safeguards was a movement to require the establishment of local registers of people eligible to work as home health aides. This even includes the fingerprinting of applicants, and a 30-day search for previous criminal activities (SHJ, 19/10/88).

Art Near the Endpoint of an Insane & Decadent Culture

*Above, we mentioned the deadening of modernistic people. When people with deadened souls "create" (if one can use that word in reference to the actions of such persons) works of art, these works commonly merely reflect the emptiness and chaos that prevails at the center of the "artist's" soul. When the center of one's being is empty, then one is not capable of harboring lofty ideals. Even when such are voiced, they are simply not there in the soul. Much of modern art springs from such emptiness and chaos, and that is probably why it has such wide appeal to other empty and chaotic people of our age, to whom great paintings of the past are merely a form of photography or a frozen video image that might have been made by pushing the "hold" button on a camera. This also helps to explain why so much modern art is a self-indulgence of the artist, i.e., the "art" consists in the making of it, as in much so-called "conceptual art," rather than in the product, if there is one. In contrast, in former days, art was a labor and a gift of the artist to others.

*When people are sensualistically sated and internally empty, they often develop anomie, a sort of indifferent boredom which motivates them to seek bizarre novelty and sensational experiences in order to further sate what is already sated. A good example of this are some of the things that are happening in modern art, such as draping millions of dollars worth of plastic (which is earth-destroying) over the landscape, across the Grand Canyon, around an island, etc. Another example is somebody's random dribblings of paint on a canvas which was grandiosely interpreted by Time as being "a highly charged sensibility at work."

*One of the signs of our times is that the domain of contemporary art has moved almost entirely away from esthetic concerns and into the realm of either a spectacle and/or financial speculation (Newsweek, 18/4/88). One manifestation of this has been a sudden onslaught of people into art auctions, which in turn have given them the atmosphere of sporting events.

*In 1983, students of the music school in Huntington, West Virginia, demanded more progressive music in their curriculum. In response, the school arranged a concert for three vacuum cleaners and a floor waxer, composed in the early 1950s.

*In mid-January 1990, an "artist" named Annie Sprinkle put on 12 theatre performances in New York which consisted of acts such as masturbating before the audience with various sex toys, and opening her vaginal canal with a speculum and inviting the audience to take a closer look at her cervix. All this was supported by federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

If anything one does is art, it would appear logical that nothing one does can therefore be non-art. When one considers how many people in the world take a poop or two every day, and that according to Sprinkle-people logic, every such

act is a work of art, then there sure is an awful lot of art in the world. What is so sad is that most people so insensitively flush it down the drain (UP, in SHJ, 11 March 90).

*It really was a little much to expect the American public to finance (as it did) a 1989 art exhibit with "art work," such as "Piss Christ" and "Piss Pope." One consisted of a photo of a cheap plastic crucifix floating in the artist's yellow urine. Another exhibitor specialized in photos of nude children in erotic poses, and "two men" adorned with the paraphernalia of bondage and torture, one of them a man urinating into another man's mouth (called "the golden shower" in homosexual circles), and a variety of other homosexual and lesbian poses, including violent ones, and apparently pictures of the exposed human anus. Some of these photos might have qualified the "artist" for child pornography charges--had he not first died of AIDS, and embarrassed even the arty avant-garde (Time, 3 July 89). Those who want to see such "art" should not expect taxpayers to pay for their artistic uplift. But how stupid or corrupt even the intelligentsia has become is apparent in the large amount of support for the Mapplethorpe exhibition that failed to draw the distinction between permitting the showing of decadent art, and funding it with public taxes.

*Some modern people, mostly younger ones, are so alienated from time and history that they think that the Mona Lisa is "old art"--but what they have in mind is Andy Warhol's Mona Lisa (Time 13/2/89).

People Thrashing About Mindlessly for Answers & Solutions,
& Ending Up Led by the Nose

The culture of modernism (a) is inherently stressful, (b) leads to personal and systemic disfunctionality, and (c) contains no basis for a meaningful and effective response to disfunctionality. Hence, as people either get stressed and disfunctional, and/or begin to perceive disfunctionality about them, they begin to thrash about mindlessly, crazily, and futilely for answers and solutions. As they externalistically fall prey to false promises, gurus, cults, etc., they end up being led by the noses--and sometimes, leading each other by the nose. Imagine a circle in which everyone leads everyone else by the nose! Note how so often, the offered solution is more of the same that led to problems in the first place.

*A high school curriculum for our times. We have mentioned earlier and elsewhere that the various strategies put forward to address the growing dangers to children in our society are largely strategies which can accomplish nothing. Examples are placing the pictures of disappeared children on milk cartons and highway toll tickets, and fingerprinting children. The reason that these efforts are largely failures is because they do not address the root of the problem, namely, a decadent society which teaches its members that anything they want is permissible, which has failed to inculcate self-control into its members, and which even promotes sexual perversion.

Another example of largely worthless and sad efforts to address societal problems without going to their roots is the introduction, in many high schools, of suicide education programs, because suicide has become the second largest cause of death of teenagers. Rather than addressing the cultural values that have created so many empty, alienated and desperate adolescents, these efforts try to teach high schoolers how to cope with such things as drugs, rape, venereal disease, divorce, etc.--in other words, the things that happen to teenagers that so often seem to be the trigger for their suicides. One can envision schools in the future which no longer teach reading, writing, arithmetic, history, foreign languages, etc., but sex education, how to avoid or cope with VD, how to live in a divorced family, how to cope with drugs, how to defend oneself against sexual abuse or rape, how to keep oneself and others from suicide, how to cope with physically abusive or alcoholic parents, and so on.

*Packaged educational materials and programs to teach children morality, and to develop their character, are busting out all over, and some of them make good money for their designers. Some of these programs are taught in many countries of the world, to millions of children in tens of thousands of classrooms. The problem is that in the US, as we have noted before, court rulings have forbidden virtually any kind of morality teaching other than constitutionalism. The way things go these days, that should be a clear signal to us that things are more or less all over, as symbolized by one film/video in this category entitled "See Dick and Jane Lie, Cheat and Steal."

*An increasing number of people have lately been turning toward medical and helping forms which may be new or old, but which are often characterized as being "new age," which itself is an incoherent conglomerate of superstitions. Aside from biofeedback that may have selected technical validity, new age methods may include different kinds of "psychic healing" and "therapeutic touch," among others. If these things work, it is mostly because of the well-established placebo effect, which is known to be exceedingly powerful at least over the short run.

*A group of gurus goes around giving workshops on "guided imagery," aimed primarily at educators and other people in human services. The workshops are suffused with a great deal of New Age consciousness and gimmicks, including crystal meditations, "brain massage," howling in unison, and twirling to music in imaginary grass fields. Teachers of this workshop include psychology professors at reputable universities, and get endorsed by other professors, such as Princeton University ones. No wonder Syracuse University has been quite shameless about sponsoring such a workshop. As we have always said, if voodoo were popular, the universities would endorse it, and would hire voodoo professors in their religion departments. "After all, who is to say..." as they say in universities.

*More and more politicians, we learn, take recourse to astrology. Amazingly, when President Reagan and his wife disclosed that they relied on astrologists for decisions of state, there was very little uproar. (Perhaps there was more connection between Reagan's astrology and his Star Wars than people realized.) In 4/90, it became public that the mayor of Indianapolis also had been consulting a psychic, as had apparently a number of Indiana politicians (source clipping from Joe Osburn). Among the reasons one should not be surprised about any of this is that politicians really do not understand any better than anyone else what is going on, and probably feel quite impotent vis-à-vis world events. Functioning pretty much irrationally and at random, and the schemes that they consider to be rational normatively going awry, they probably fall back on the occult as something like a last desperate resort.

*Some homosexual men who don't want to be homosexual (shame on them, Qoheleth allegedly said) claim to have been changed through the "Aesthetic Realism" of one Eli Siegel.

*One remarkable thing about people joining witch cults is that they come from every level of society and walk of life, including from the most highly educated ones. We have seen them also increasingly in human services, which should not be surprising. One major element of this cult claims to be a "highly ethical religion. We say, harm none and do as thou wilt. You can do anything as long as it doesn't hurt others." (SHA, 30/10/88). This may sound good, but the TIPS editor has come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as private moral acts that--at least in time--do not have public or cosmic consequences. We should note that it is precisely this kind of mentality which has already proven to be wrong in such domains as sexual license even between the proverbial "consenting adults," which in time can affect everyone.

*There are cassette tapes that one can buy for oneself which blast all sorts of "affirmative" messages at one, such as "I believe in me...I will apply myself,...I am in the right...."

*A program supposed to prevent grade school youngsters from using drugs is called "Me, Me Inc.," which sounds like a name rather appropriate for a culture of self-centered individualistic people--not very promising for drug abandonment.

*Newsweek (22/5/89) ran a long article on the peculiar phenomenon of the advice-giving business, with armies of people setting themselves up as experts on something or other and telling other people what to do and how to live. Of course, we have seen this with the explosion of the human service vulture business (both in consulting and training), but now, people are telling people (of course for much money) how to run their weddings, how to manage their pets, how to raise their babies, how to organize their lives and schedules better, what to wear and how to wear it, how to design and give parties, how to baby-proof one's home and so on. In fact, one consultant has set up an entire national franchise just for helping executives to clean up their desks. About a quarter million people in the US now earn their living as so-called "specialty consultants" of this type, and we wager that a good proportion of them are no wiser in their own lives than the people they advise. Some of the really smart ones don't even advise anyone, but act as brokers in matching people with the advisers that they crave. Two entire companies offer nothing but consultation to consultants. Many people hire such advisers not because there is anything wrong or missing in their lives but merely in order to feel confirmed in what they are doing. Many of these consultants practice a great deal of psycho-babble.

*Elsewhere, we have mentioned that as the definition of who and what is human becomes blurred, those who are human may be defined as non-human, and literally anything (including non-live material) might be defined or interpreted as human. Perhaps it should come as no surprise, then, that one of the most popular new "entertainers" in British, and to some degree in American, television became an invention called Max Headroom, a computer-generated broadcaster. He is projected by means of computer graphics on a screen, and his voice is the tape recording of a real human. When Max first "appeared" on the air in April 1985, "his" show doubled the viewers for the time slot. Perhaps it is not unreasonable to perceive this as a harbinger of the future. Max has even "written" a book entitled Max Headroom's Guide to Life, which made it onto the British best-seller list three days after its publication (Newsweek, 13/1/86, p. 59).

*Newsweek (4 March 85) ran a hilarious item on the explosion in hotlines in the US. Hotlines began being modeled on the Washington-Moscow telephone link installed in 1963 in order to prevent accidental nuclear war. Now there are hotlines for almost anything--and nothing. One thing that they seem to reflect is that people have an insatiable need to talk to someone, and prefer to talk to an artificial substitute on the telephone than to real live people. Furthermore, people want answers now, which means that the faster hotlines answer incoming calls, and the more concrete the fix is that they offer to the caller, the more calls they get. However, the explosion in hotlines has led to an explosion of compulsive hotline callers. One hotline concluded that about half of its callers were people whose major problem was that they can't stop calling hotlines. Apparently, some of the people who staff the hotlines start calling other hotlines themselves when they start going crazy. With 14-year olds sometimes staffing hotlines for other teenagers, one wonders whether the blind are leading the blind, as the old saying used to go, or whether we need to update this with the immature leading the immature.

*US News & World Report (5 March 90) rank-ordered the 32 best-selling US paperbacks of all time, i.e., since 1939, excluding such items as dictionaries. Eight of them are how-to or self-help books, at least 2 revolve around shrinkery themes, several deal with sex in a more forward than usual fashion, and John Steinbeck, George Orwell, and J. R. R. Tolkien are the only ones with 2 or more listings.

*In its 8/85 issue, Institutions, Etc. reviewed a whole series of books of advice to parents (reprinted from Ms.) on how to deal with children who are out of control. With more children thusly out of control, the advice-givers are having a heyday and their books are eagerly gobbled up. The reviewer criticized these works for their generally strong emphasis on discipline, demanding expectations on the child, and tendency to disown noncompliant children. However, the review had little constructive alternatives to offer, and seemed unable to deal with the societal realities that have brought these phenomena about.

*Have catalog writing ability, will publish what sells. In 1969, Stuart Brand published The Whole Earth Catalog which capitalized on the flower generation's romantic environmentalism. This is hard to believe, but the same man has now published a book entitled The Whole Earth Software Catalog that is a guide to personal computer tools, thus capitalizing on the very opposite, i.e., high technology, of what the Whole Earth movement was about. One of the many things that this sort of thing points to is that there are true and false shepherds, and one needs to identify the inner identity of shepherds rather than to elevate persons to shepherdhood because they emit what appears to be a positive behavior.

*In the 10/88 TIPS issue, we documented the explosion of feminist books about how rotten men are and that women might as well give up on them. Amazingly, there now has erupted a counter-craze, though cautiously and defensively couched in feminist terms, that once again instructs women on how to catch men. Relevant titles include the following: "Love Tactics: How to Win the One You Want," "How to be Married One Year From Today," "How to Make a Man Fall in Love With You," "The Art of Attracting a New Man and Winning His Heart," "Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love." One of the feminist rationales for these books is that feminists postponed marriage and are now getting desperate, but that few of them know anymore the age-old wiles of women, which these books will teach them. Of course, at one time, these wiles were used largely unconsciously and spontaneously, but now they will be used like a stage role. Some feminist circles were very indignant about these books.

*A couple in San Jose, California, has started a business named Buddy Brokers which, for an initial fee of \$50, helps people to establish friendships with persons of the same sex outside their own circle of acquaintances and colleagues. Michael Kendrick, who provided the clipping, wonders what it means for Citizen Advocacy when even yuppies are lonely and need to be matched up with friends.

*The latest craze in the business world is to hire masseurs for one's employees, in order to soothe their nerves and dissipate tension. As many as 3000 of these "therapists" kneading away in offices all over the US are employed by firms with names such as Corporate Stress Busters and Second Wind.

*More of the same. A government-appointed (!) committee in Finland concluded that people should respond to the stresses of life by having more sex, including sex holidays (AP, early 1990).

*Just as we were about to become used to "anatomically correct dolls," things have escalated with the appearance of a new set of such dolls, called "teach-a-bodies," supposed to be used with people anywhere between aged 2 and adulthood, and coming in either "Black, Caucasian or Hispanic" types. The male adult comes with "body hair and a condom," the female with "breasts, sanitary napkin and tampon," and the baby with "umbilical cord and placenta which can be removed from the vaginal opening" (Pediatric Projects, late 1988). Yet another set of "anatomical dolls" are called Maple Hill Dolls, marketed by Janon' Inc. out of Grandledge, Michigan.

*Police officers are taught to resolve domestic disputes with the minimum amount of force, but we are not sure that the advice (recommended by some authorities) that they should start clowning around upon entry into such a scene is the answer. Among related advice given to officers is to first dishevel their

uniform, disarray their ties, and place their hats into ridiculous positions before entering the scene of a domestic dispute (AP, in SHJ, 10/10/88).

*On what a fragile and phony foundation so much of social science rests was dramatically illustrated by the fact that the 4th edition of a 1983 textbook entitled The Practice of Social Research, was dedicated to Werner Erhard, the inventor of est and Forum, quasi-religious psychopop cults that attained enormous popularity for a short period of time.

*A firm in Los Angeles has instituted a telephone call-in service called Apology Sound-Off Line which people can call up to deliver a 60-second message confessing some kind of transgression, and usually apologizing for it. About 200 people a day call up anonymously confessing murder, rape, robbery, theft, infidelity, sexual aberrations, incest, child sexual abuse, drug addiction, etc. Sometimes, the message is framed in terms of an apology to the wronged party, but the only way anybody will know what confessions people call in is by calling yet another line for which they must pay \$2 for the first minute and 45¢ a minute thereafter to listen in. This second number has received up to 10,000 calls a day! A most peculiar phenomenon, and certainly yet another sign of our times (Time, 3 October 88).

*In our presentations and publications, we have been predicting turbulent, dire, and possibly catastrophic times ahead. Along comes an entrepreneur by the name of John Lane who heads a corporation called Dax that similarly predicts disaster--but stands ready to advise you how to make the best of it. He warns "that only a few survive and prosper" from what is ahead during the "turmoil that jolts millions," but those who take advantage of his various schemas and publications and "grab your share of the wealth" can extract "pure gold" from participating in his system--at the mere cost of \$99.50.

Events

First World Congress on Citizen Advocacy

This will take place in conjunction with the 20th anniversary celebration of the founding of Citizen Advocacy (CA) in Lincoln, Nebraska, 5-7 October 1990. This will be an exciting and inspiring event. For more information contact John Murphy, Nebraska Advocacy Services, 522 Lincoln Center Building, 215 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508; telephone 402/474-3183 or toll-free 800/422-6691.

It is conceivable to us that there are CA offices that are not in touch with the network of CA offices in their respective countries, not to mention across the world. We thus urge everyone in CA who knows of the existence of CA offices that may not receive CAF, TIPS, or other potential information sources on CA, to make these addresses known to us so that we can send them notifications of the upcoming CA World Congress, and invite them to subscribe to CAF, and perhaps also to TIPS.

*The Training Institute has developed (and given) two new workshops that we humbly admit are most interesting and provocative.

1. The Tragic Implosion of Hospital Medicine Due to Its Humanly Unmanageable Complexity. The thesis of this event is that, because of a number of factors, hospital medicine has become so complex as to have overtaken the human capacity to deal with it; and that as a result, we see a phenomenon that we might call an "implosion" of hospital medicine, consisting of mounting disfunctionalities, skyrocketing human errors, various disasters succeeding each other, and an unhealthy attitude developing in those who function within hospital medicine. All these things impact negatively on patient health, cure rates, death rates and impairment rates. Even the most privileged, competent, and well-connected patients suffer these negative consequences, but on societally devalued people, and especially such people without a network of competent allies, the negative impact is absolutely devastating. Rightfully so, the public is becoming resentful toward the medical and hospital system, and this resentment is one of the fuels of

litigiousness, which in turn elicits yet further maladaptive response patterns. This event can be as short as 1.5 hours, or can take one or two days with more extensive coverage of the material. In the one-day event, there can be case vignettes, and stimulating expert panel responses. In the two-day version, there can be small group discussion.

2. Developments in the Field of Handicap, From Prior to the Reforms of the 1950s-70s Up to the Present, With Implications for the Future: What Has Gotten Better, What Has Gotten Worse, What is Still the Same, and What Lies Ahead As the title suggests, this presentation traces what has happened in services to handicapped people (with special emphasis on the field of mental retardation) since the 1950s. It examines the awful state of affairs in human services prior to the various reform movements, and what improvements these reforms were able to bring about. However, because so many people are apt to focus only on the good things, it also looks at what bad conditions still exist, and what has gotten even worse since the "bad old days."

In Dr. Wolfensberger's approximately 35 years' experience in human services, he was a witness to, participant in, or leader of many important service developments, which makes him one of the "living memories" of the field, and especially qualified to reflect on these issues. Some predictions are also presented about what the future holds for handicapped people, services to them, and people concerned about the welfare of handicapped people.

This presentation can be as brief as 2 hours, or can take up to a day. The latter format involves a panel response that has proven to be most stimulating.

Parties interested in sponsoring either or both these presentations may request more detailed descriptive materials from the TI.

Resources

*Disabilities Studies Quarterly is published by the Sociology Department at Brandeis University, P. O. Box 9110, Waltham, MA 02254-9110. It is a goldmine of information on resources, publications, organizations, meetings, etc. It is apparently still free for interested parties.

*The Wesley Central Mission of Melbourne, Victoria, has put out a very well-designed, illustrated, large-sized 12-page brochure that explains Social Role Valorization in relatively simple terms for citizens, parents, non-professional service workers, and students. Copies can be ordered via airmail from Wesley Central Mission, 148 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000, Australia, for US \$2.30 (which is very cheap), plus US \$1.50 for currency handling charges. This latter charge is the same regardless of how many copies are ordered. For quantity copies that are to be sent by surface (which could take three months), one may subtract 20¢ per copy.

Miscellaneous Human Service News

*Here is a remarkable story. In the rural and isolated community of Benalla, Victoria, Australia, a group of mothers of handicapped children formed a self-help/support group that eventually included 27 mothers who meet once a week. They have managed to get their children integrated into the schools (in good part because there are no special schools where they live), formed and spun off a siblings group, and staged a day just for grandparents. They got some money to fund a full-time employee at a hospital who presumably learns of newborn handicapped children and refers their mothers to the group. One woman who joined was considering adopting a child with Down's Syndrome, and with the help and support of the group, has done so.

*Portions of East Germany have gotten so polluted in recent years that at any one time, 60% of the population in some locales suffers from respiratory ailments, and children under the age of 10 should not even be living in some of those areas (Science, 19/1/90).

*Believe it or not, the US Congress has declared the 1990s as the "decade of the brain." (Source information from Rachel Janney.)

TIPS Editorial Policy. TIPS comes out every other month, and contains articles, news, insights, reviews and viewpoints that relate to the interests and mission of the Training Institute. At the present, this mission has to do with reading "the signs of the times," and interpreting their meaning for human services. While TIPS is mostly concerned with phenomena and developments that have to do with human services, reading and telling the "signs of the times" necessitates that TIPS also address some of the larger issues which affect our society and the quality of life on earth, as well as the ways in which decisions are made in our society, because these higher-order phenomena will eventually express themselves in human services in various ways, including in human service values and funding. Usually, each TIPS issue will focus primarily on one specific theme. TIPS addresses relevant developments whenever and wherever they occur, so disclosures of adaptive or horrific developments promoted by a particular political party or government should not be taken as partisan political statements. We assume that subscribers are people who lead hard lives struggling against great odds, and are aware of many shortcomings in human services. Thus, we try to inject levity into TIPS so as to make subscribers' lives more bearable (or less unbearable, as the case may be), even if not deliriously joyful. In fact, the "signs of the times" are depressing, and thus some TIPS content is in need of occasional levitation. TIPS tries to report developments truthfully, but since it gets many items from other sources, it cannot be responsible for errors contained in original sources. Specific items from TIPS may be reproduced without permission as long as the full TIPS reference is cited/acknowledged, and as long as only small portions of a TIPS issue are so reproduced.

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