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We usually do one double issue a year, and this is it, combining the June and August issues. There is no specific theme as we try to catch up with a miscellany of developments.

Miscellaneous Human Service-Related News

"Perversions..."

*Massachusetts led the nation for a very long time in the development of human services for handicapped people. The state has overseen or operated services for mentally handicapped people for well over 100 years. Yet when it was decided that the Department of Mental Health should be split into one for mental health and one for mental retardation, a plan for this division had to be drawn up in great haste, underlining once again (a) the irrationalities that prevail in human services, (b) the lack of any systematized planning tied to a historical consciousness, and (c) the alienation of empires from time, and the notion that their end will eventually come.

*In order to use the facilities of the old Mansfield Training School (a state institution for the retarded in CT), the state may place a prison on its grounds, either using old buildings and/or constructing new ones. Also, some retarded people may continue to reside at the facility even while it is being used as a prison. (Willimantic Chronicle, 28/4/87; source clipping from Tom Spudic.)

*Plans are continuing to use former ferry ships and/or floating military housing as floating prisons in the New York harbor area (Augustus, 9(10)).
The journal for the Office of MR & DD of the state of New York heralded the closing of the Willowbrook and Westchester institutions in one article—and on the very same page showed the ground-breaking for the construction of a new 200-acre facility to be known as the Richmond Complex, apparently on the old campus of the Staten Island Developmental Center (recent name for Willowbrook), heralded as a "new beginning for the Staten Island Borough Developmental Services Office." What all this language manipulation amounted to was that the Willowbrook institution was subjected to a series of name changes and resurrected.

It is truly hard to find a jurisdiction that is as diabolically clever and brazen in its manipulation of the reality of human services as NY state.

The wife of a Massachusetts police officer miscarried their first child, and the father requested bereavement leave to which he was entitled. After first granting it, it was rescinded on the argument that the unborn child was not alive or a family member (NRL, 26/5/87).

More and more, we hear of the relatively low-paid employees of a number of human services being comprised of a remarkably large proportion of people with criminal records. This includes attendants in institutions and assistants at children's day care centers, though mostly in more urban settings:

Concluding that the insanities in his service agency were going to get worse rather than better, and bad being better than worse, one of our friends recently moaned, "Give us back the bad old days."

It is rather alarming to hear that a citizen advocacy society (in Powell River, BC) has gone into the business of procuring and operating community residences (BCMHP News, 1(4)). Next thing you know, we might hear of some citizen advocacy organization operating a Willowbrook, a Bedlam, an Attica prison, and maybe even a Pentagon. If Wolfensberger were not still alive, he would be turning in his grave.

Good Human Service News

An objective outside expert witness consulted by a court in Oklahoma who had testified that the state institution there will still be needed for at least some people totally reversed himself after visiting mental retardation programs in Nebraska, apologized for his earlier recommendation, and proclaimed that such institutions "must now be closed" (Focus, 1/87).

Other or Mixed Human Service-Related News

There is a new device supposedly capable of detecting brain damage in the unborn. In essence, it emits a voice-like sound to the pregnant woman's abdomen and then records the resultant startle and activity of the fetus. The theory is that unborn children who do not respond have suffered a lack of oxygen and will be handicapped. We suspect that the tool will be used to promote abortion of under-responsive fetuses, and will even be used so in the absence of compelling proof of its predictive validity. We are also concerned about the 110 decibel sound that is administered for a full 5 seconds to the immature auditory system of the unborn (Entourage, Spring 87).
*Puer intactus? Organizing furor has reached a point where we now have a National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers Newsletter—as if it were not bad enough to have a National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers itself, which apparently started up in 1986. Somewhat incongruously, the above newsletter noted (Winter 87) that somebody or other had designated 1987 the "year of the intact child." (Source item from David Schwartz.)

*Several Canadian organizations co-sponsored an "alternative futures" conference in 1987 about people with severe and multiple handicaps—at the Fantasyland Hotel of the famous West Edmonton Mall. What good can come of that?

*BACON stands for Buy A Catholic Old Nun, which is a program promoted by Catholics in some localities to "purchase" an elderly nun by supporting her retirement and having her, in turn, pray for the benefactors.

*We kid you not, but two authors named Tiger and Fox wrote a scholarly book in 1972, entitled The Imperial Animal.

*Elizabeth Carmichael furnished us the following aphorism: "Education is what's left after you forget what you learned in school."

Societal News Relevant to Human Services

*More consolation for TIPS subscribers: there are people who pay several hundred dollars in subscription fees for some investment advice newsletter, often written by people who are not spectacularly successful investors themselves. But apparently, more people in the financial sphere are passionate about making money than people in human service are passionate about the kinds of issues that TIPS addresses.

*No matter how modest TI workshop fees are, there are always some people who think that they are high. Yet 4000 women, many of them teachers, thought nothing about spending $300 apiece out of their own money to attend a 2-day women's computer literacy workshop (Time, 3 Nov. 86).

*Largely as a result of the developments in computer science, computers are being increasingly interpreted to function and "think" like human minds. At the same time, human minds are increasingly being interpreted to function and to think like computers. All of this is exemplified by several recent books, including Reichman's (1985) Getting Computers to Talk Like You and Me, Haugeland's (1981) Mind Design: Philosophy, Psychology, Artificial Intelligence, and Lynch's (1986) Synapses, Circuits, and the Beginnings of Memory. These books (all from MIT Press at Cambridge, Massachusetts) treat human thinking and language as capable of being modelled like computers are modelled. To us, this sounds like the contemporary version of previous interpretations of the human brain and mind as analogous to a telephone switchboard, or an electric switchbox.

*Between 1970 and 1985, the percentage of families with children headed by single parents has doubled, as has the percentage headed by women. The minimum wage has not increased between 1981 and 1987. In 1986, it cost farmers $2.42 to raise a bushel of corn, for which they received $2.35 on the market. Rural poverty decreased from 13.8 to 18.3% between 1979-1985 (Consumer Reports, 7/87).

*A conservative party member in Britain in 1986 referred to certain people as the "probably most evil product of our time." Who were these people so unequivocally cast into a menace role? The sons of single women! (Speakout, 1/87)
*According to Newsweek (1 June 81), a Manhattan newsstand sells Woman, New Woman, Complete Woman, Working Woman, and New York Woman.

*It seems that the feminists are never there when they are really needed. All sorts of pornographic or otherwise bad things are going on without even a token feminist protest presence: female beauty contests; advertisements capitalizing upon female sexuality abound in all the media; and the surrogate motherhood cases like that evolving around the famous Baby M, which the mother lost mostly because she seemed to have poor legal representation. One sees all sorts of pro-life demonstrations in front of abortion clinics, but not once has the TIPS editor seen feminist groups demonstrate in front of any establishment that pandered to pornography or cheesecake.

*The Ontario Medical Association has announced that there are 363,000 children below the age of 14 in the province who live below the poverty line. As compared to other Canadian children, these children are twice as likely to die of accidents, and 2.5 times as likely to die of infectious diseases, and twice as likely to die in infancy.

*Readers may have seen the "60 Minutes" coverage of gangs of gypsy children in Italy and France who engage in pocket thievery, particularly of tourists, usually while harassing them. These children are managed by adults who live off the children's ill-gained earnings. Even worse, gangs have now appeared in other countries (such as Germany) who not merely pick pockets but commit a vast number of burglaries. The gypsies are so slippery, and the laws on juveniles so lenient, that so far, hardly any successful counter-measures have been developed. This situation might conceivably get much worse and lead to all sorts of other problems, including a deep reinforcement of centuries-old European hatred of gypsies which has occasionally erupted into genocide (AW, 2 May 87).

*Absurdities of Surrogate Motherhood. Some of the language surrounding surrogate motherhood may be used either in order to raise consciousness about its absurdities, or legitimate it. It is sometimes hard to tell the difference when one hears language such as a woman "renting her womb," the unborn baby being "her tenant" who "resides in the rented womb," the woman herself being described as "the woman attached to the rented womb," the biological father and his wife being said to have or not to have "lost the lease on the womb," and the mother being said to be "claiming her property." Then there is the question of whether the biological father can really be certain that the "investment" is really his unless the surrogate mother had been isolated from all other male contacts (FL, 4/87).

It is interesting that the sire of Baby M in New Jersey was almost consistently referred to as "father" rather than "sperm donor," while the mother was rather consistently referred to as only a "surrogate mother," or even only as "surrogate uterus."

We should also note that there is a certain amount of deception contained in the term "surrogate mother" in the first place, because the so-called surrogate mother is in fact the real mother in most cases.

One surrogate mother who actually carried a child to term was later discovered to have been a man who had previously undergone a sex change operation.
Yet another absurdity in current surrogate arrangements is that while women can abort their babies without as much as informing their husbands who fathered the baby, a surrogate mother in some surrogate contracts is legally obligated not to have an abortion. Thus, the absentee-non-husband-father has more rights over his surrogated baby than over a baby of his by his own wife. This seems a powerful incentive for men to have their babies with surrogates rather than wives.

Next, consider the meaning of the early 1987 Baby M surrogate mothering case court ruling. Mothers may kill their unborn babies any time they wish, without even informing the father. If an unmarried couple who do not reside together have a baby, the baby is considered to belong to the mother, and would only be taken away from her if there was strong proof of child abuse and/or maternal incompetence. When it is now ruled that a father may take possession of a baby that he begat of a woman not his wife and not residing with him, merely because he paid her a child incubation fee, then the court is saying that legal contracts along these lines override the right that any unmarried mother would have to a baby conceived out of wedlock from an absentee father. Furthermore, the ruling stands in grossest conflict with the entire abortion law. However, this should not surprise us since laws pertaining to the issue of who "owns" a particular person have increasingly become irrational, contradictory, and essentially utilitarianly pragmatic. (This was pointed out to us by David Schwartz.)

"Herculean efforts are underfoot in the federal government in Canada to establish definitions of sexual intercourse, erotica, and pornography, and then to subdivide pornography definitions into violent and child pornography. If these efforts succeed, then there might be legislation and regulations that might curb at least certain kinds of pornography (Interim, 6/87).

"As of 1986, 76% of all working-age blind and visually impaired persons in the US were unemployed, and half of the remainder were underemployed (American Rehabilitation, Spring 1987).

"Some firms that shy away from firing certain employees try to harass them into resigning by assigning them to spend their work hours in a small motel room doing nothing. Nobody should get the idea that they could use this time to sleep, because that would be sleeping on the job--for which they could be fired (AP, in SHJ, 2 December 86).

"An ad by a "memorial park" in the Honolulu newspaper congratulated a certain person for being the "memorial counselor of the month" who had produced more than $97,000 of business (in one month) in his "before-need profession" (Consumer Reports, 2/87).

"This may be hard to believe, but two-thirds of Americans believe that genetic engineering is all to the good (NCR, 5 June 87).

"According to Newsweek (11 May 87), the citizens of some uppity Chicago suburbs do not believe that certain ones among their number are mobster kingpins, because after all, they look like everybody else, live in very fancy houses, and as far as neighborhood relations are concerned, are very good citizens. Even suburban police officers don't perceive a problem because the hoods don't drive drunk, don't assault people in public, don't commit burglary and rape, and so on. This underlines once again the normative difficulty people have in identifying institutionalized crime, disintegrated crime, and the fact that ordinary-
appearing people can be exceedingly evil. The lesson to human service of course is that so many people cannot perceive the evil there because of the ordinariness of the perpetrators.

*A new book, The Making of the Atomic Bomb, documents how virtually all the major contributors to the making of the nuclear weapons were bright people of good intentions, showing yet again (for those who really do not believe it yet) how thoroughly evil developments can come from the hands of "good people," both in the world at large and in human services. Why do so many people find that so hard to believe? What profoundly fallacious but often unexplained assumptions underlie such a disbelief?

An interesting and as yet virtually unremarked phenomenon is occurring in our society. On the one hand, people who commit offenses of civil disobedience in response to the dictates of their conscience—offenses which often involve merely symbolic actions or minor property damage—are being subjected to extremely severe punishments, with additional severity in denial of parole or pardons. We have already cited Helen Woodson in past TIPS issues as one example; she received an 18-year sentence for entering a nuclear missile base and striking some of the armaments with hammers. Another example is a woman who did no more than enter a Florida abortion clinic in an attempt to unplug a suction machine. She was sentenced to 5 years in prison in 1986, and even put into solitary confinement. The very same judge who sentenced her on the very same day sent two men convicted as accessories to murder to 4-year prison terms (CT, 15/5/87; source item from John Morris). On the other hand, people who commit the most heinous crimes of violence, both in the destruction of property and the destruction of humans, either receive relatively light sentences, or are paroled in relatively short order. Examples of this latter abound, ranging from small-time petty criminals to national-level politicians.

Once a pattern like this begins to emerge, it is really urgent that we understand the underlying meaning and message. One hypothesis that we offer here is that the truly criminal acts of violence involve only a challenge to the social order, and that the imperial powers perceive them (and correctly so) as no real challenge to the established structures, including themselves. Acts of civil disobedience, on the other hand, however small, are correctly perceived by the imperium as a challenge to its very nature, existence and assumptions. They proclaim that the imperial consciousness is not a valid one, nor even the only one, and that it is possible to become freed of imperial controls over the mind and soul. In the perception of the empire, that is much more dangerous than a little murder, robbery, or arson, because if that spreads, then other subjects will also throw off their chains. Thus, that sort of thing must be severely punished.

We invite readers to contemplate this issue, and to send in relevant observations.

Health and Hospital-Related News

*US 1987 health expenditures are estimated to amount to $514 billion (Health Letter, 4/87).

*Since it was launched in 1983, the People's Medical Society, a non-profit advocacy group on behalf of the patients of the health service system, has grown to 85,000 members in all 50 states, and is continuing to grow. The organization promotes patients' rights, better procedures for communicating exchange and informed consent, etc. The president of the organization is also the author of Take This Book to the Hospital_with You (1985) which advises patients on how to survive a hospital stay (MM, Spring 87).
He have commented repeatedly in the past on the evolution of the salmonella strain. It is closely related to cholera, and the cholera strain itself has now undergone considerable evolution so that it is beginning to behave like a new disease. One new transmitter is shellfish. Therefore, it is unwise to eat shellfish in places where one has not been able to assure that it has been boiled long enough, such as restaurants and picnics. Twenty-five residents of a Connecticut nursing home (the Mountain View Health Care Home in Windsor) were stricken with salmonella poisoning, and five died (AP, in SHJ, 30/11/86).

Every year, an estimated 200,000 premature babies spend several weeks to several months in intensive care units. Some of them undergo major surgery, and in half of these cases, it had recently become customary not to administer an anesthetic! The argument for this torturous practice is two-fold: the anesthetic is dangerous to the baby's life, and premature babies do not have nervous systems mature enough to feel pain. (Source clipping from Joe Osburn.) The first argument is essentially true, but the second one is almost certainly not true. It is the same argument that has often been used to justify various abortion procedures such as dismemberment, but if it is true, why do premature babies cry when stuck? Furthermore, even though humans do not retain conscious memory of early events, it is quite possible that an unconscious memory of an intense early experience does persist and could be a cause of all sorts of later craziness. Furthermore, it is also quite possible that an infant could die from the stress of the pain. We conclude that as long as an anesthetic is not used as an outright cover-up for a desired deathmaking, that the risk of the anesthetic is a justified one. At any rate, parents may never be asked for their preferences, nor their preferences be implemented, and they may never be told what was actually done.

As early as 1972, Margaret Mead vehemently warned that one of the major achievements of the human race was the separation of the functions of healing and killing, and that the two should never be united in a single functionary, such as the physician. It is interesting to speculate whether, being a leading liberal, she would have reversed herself in order to endorse abortion if she had lived long enough. Chances are very high that she would have, because so many other people who have wanted to be thought liberal have also reversed themselves.

According to Speakout (1/87), British health services are being strongly infiltrated by former military personnel. Thirty-two percent of district health managers had such a background as of 9/85. It is very ominous when people whose profession is death administer a sector the goal of which is supposed to be life.

For the first time ever, American firms will be allowed to produce and export drugs which are not allowed to be sold in the US because they have not been proven safe or effective (Health Letter, 1/87).

Isn't it time to face the fact that sexual license just doesn't work very well? In addition to innumerable other problems associated with it, even the bacterial venereal diseases are becoming more resistive to antibiotics because the bacteria at issue are evolving toward ever greater resistance thereto. An example is gonorrhea, which increased by 90% in 1986. (Source item from Elizabeth Carmichael.)
AIDS-Related Developments

*Empires are empires whenever and wherever they are. The empires of the Third World function under the same sort of dynamics as those of the developed world. As we have mentioned, one thing that empires do not do is to admit that they have problems, that things might get significantly worse, or that they might end. African nations have denied for years that either AIDS exists there or that it is a problem. However, more informed estimates are that Africa may soon see an AIDS epidemic somewhat analogous to the Black Pest in Europe in the 14th century. Low estimates are that a million Africans will die in the next 10 years of AIDS, while other estimates are that it will take every 5th African. Entire villages may disappear from the landscape. Among the infected are thousands of infants (AW, 25/4/87).

*According to some estimates, as many as one victim of AIDS out of 8 is being put to death by physicians in the Netherlands, supposedly on a voluntary basis (UPI, in Phila. Inquirer, 3/87; source item from Mark Friedman).

*Prison overcrowding may find a tragic resolution. Up to 70% of inmates in urban states have habits that put them highly at risk of getting AIDS, and AIDS is indeed widespread in prison populations, and continuing to spread. Paradoxically, the very same prisoners who engage in behaviors that spread AIDS have a penchant for wanting to murder fellow prisoners who are identified as having it (Newsweek, 23/3/87). Even though prisoners who have AIDS are apparently major contributors to the spread of AIDS in prisons, there has been strong resistance to testing new prisoners for AIDS and putting them into separate units if they test positive. On the one hand, there may be civil libertarian motives for this, but on the other hand, there probably also are deathmaking motives behind it, because the AIDS epidemic in prisons will probably soon solve the prison overcrowding problem and enable society to sentence vastly more people to prison than it can at present.

One thing that has contributed to the dramatic increase of AIDS among drug users is the advent of cocaine, because people addicted to it will inject themselves up to 30 times a day, which is much more apt to lead to needle-sharing than heroin use with its one or two injections a day. Obviously, some human service technologists will discover that the cure for cocaine dependence is heroin dependence.

*There are people in hospitals who go about with a tray of paraphernalia, and draw the blood of patients for laboratory tests. Upon seeing an effeminate-appearing man in this role recently, the thought sprung up that if anybody should be tested for AIDS, it would probably be people who deal in human blood.

*More information on the falsehood of the "safe sex" campaign: someone has figured out from standard probability data that if 100 couples in which one partner has AIDS have intercourse twice a week for one year while using condoms, 40% of the partners without AIDS would become infected with it (PT, 4/87). Even if the probabilities were exaggerated tenfold, that would still leave four new victims a year. Data such as this seem to suggest that there are some peculiar and unexplained motives behind the safe sex campaign.
*A virtual AIDS gold rush has broken out on Wall Street, with people trying to figure out ways to benefit financially from the enlarging AIDS disaster. (Source clipping from Elizabeth Carmichael.)

*A number of families in the Greater Cleveland area have begun to open their homes to specific individuals with AIDS so as to take care of person and enable the person to die under pleasant circumstances in a home-like environment. These families range from single adults to parents with children. (Source clipping from Elizabeth Carmichael.)

Signs of the Times

*We recently became alert to major efforts by non-profit organizations in human services to prevent the US Internal Revenue Service from imposing regulations limiting their lobbying activities. This drew our attention to the fact that in former days, activists in the field worked for positive changes, while nowadays, they have to invest more and more efforts and time into warding off negative ones.

*The first condom ad that we have seen in a major news periodical appeared on 26 January 87 in Newsweek. It was a full page, and also had a most unfortunate modernistic caption. It showed a pretty young woman saying, in very large type, "I'll do a lot for love, but I'm not ready to die for it." Further reflective of modernistic values is that the condoms that were being advertised were named Lifestyles.

*At one time, we would have been horrified at the thought of passing a law to allow the schools to hand out contraceptives to children. Instead, Arizona passed a law to prohibit schools in the state from doing so. Apparently, the legislators had no confidence in school boards or school functionaries refraining from such practices unless they were forbidden to do so by law (Interim, 4/87).

*A Post-Primary Production Pee Phenomenon (PPPP). People who have reason to be afraid of a urine test for illicit drug use can buy an 8-ounce shot of "100% drug-free" pure urine through a mail order house, for "unanticipated urine demand," at $50. Surely, this is an enterprise that would have been utterly unimaginable to an earlier age. Business is brisk, because people don't want to ask anyone they know for a free sample, either because they don't want them to know that they are on drugs, or because they can't be sure that the others aren't secretly on drugs either. Another entrepreneur sells a little package of powder to which one adds water and passes it on as one's own urine—for a mere $20. He aspires to become known as the urine king (AP, in SHJ, 28/11/86; US News and World Report, 23/2/87; source item from John Morris).

*In the mid-1970s, there were only about 15 natives in Nepal addicted to heroin. Ten years later, several ten thousand were addicted, including about 15,000 in the capital alone, comprising one of every 20 young men in it (National Geographic, 7/87).

*The reason we have liked the ABC television series "Max Headroom" is that it mercilessly spoofs our modern media culture. The show depicts a future with a great deal of plausibility of occurring. It presents a society which at the same time is highly technologized and yet also "junked," i.e., very run-down, with a lot of people on the edge of starvation living in slums and quasi-abandoned quarters, eating rats, and enjoying gladiator-type bloody sports. In this world,
it has been made impossible to turn TV sets off— but one can choose from among hundreds of channels. The show spoofs the ruthlessness of advertising and portrays a form of deathmaking not far removed from reality: when a man who was watching a new kind of TV commercial exploded from the impact of the ad, and his wife tried to tell a TV reporter what happened, she was ruthlessly rendered silent by a policeman who applied his stun gun to her. Also, it features a snooty child, aged perhaps 13, who is a computer genius and the brains behind a major national television network. The world is full of immature computer whiz people who know little about life or the world but end up controlling things, because of their skills in the abstract domain of computer programming. What we don't like about Max Headroom is that Max, with his clever and ironic little platitudes, is beginning to be treated as a moral authority, much like Ann Landers. One spectre before us is the possibility that an unexisting quasi-plastic TV personality will become one of America's moral opinion leaders. On the other hand, because the program mercilessly lampoons the video industry, we find it difficult to believe that it will be around very long.

*It is a sign of our times that vacuous people (one might say of the media culture) are telling society what they should consider to be the in or upcoming trend that they should quickly "buy in on." One such entrepreneur is a young woman by the name of Faith Popcorn, who, amazingly, is respectfully listened to by America's leading commercial firms and media, and who to our amazement became "one of the most interviewed women on the planet" (Newsweek, 15/6/87). Not surprisingly, her own training was in acting. She charges a million dollars for sharing her wisdom with a company, and up to $20,000 for making a speech. We have a feeling that the medium (she and others like her) is the message, as Marshall McLuhan predicted.

Resources

*Announcing*Announcing*Announcing*Announcing*Announcing*Announcing*Announcing*
The Availability of a New Monograph on the Topic of Deathmaking of Devalued People

The Training Institute now has available for sale a new monograph by Prof. Wolfensberger, which is an edited transcript of a one-day workshop given by the Training Institute on societal deathmaking of devalued people, and especially the handicapped, impaired and elderly. The monograph is approximately 120 pages long. It addresses the following:
- how societal devaluation leads to deathmaking;
- the many indirect and subtle ways in which people can be made dead, and examples of these;
- how the attachment of death imagery to people invites and legitimizes their deathmaking;
- how deathmaking is a logical result of the adoption of a hedonistic value system in our society;
- how and why deathmaking is "detoxified," that is, made to appear good, including many examples of such detoxifications;
- how different forms of deathmaking are connected;
- the most common ways in which devalued people in our society are made dead, including in human services;
- the groups of devalued people who are most at risk of being made dead;
- estimates of the numbers of various devalued classes that are made dead;
- the toll that deathmaking is taking on society in general;
- one set of coherent responses to the ominous reality of widespread contemporary deathmaking;
- guidelines for protecting the lives of people—especially if they are devalued—while they are patients in hospital.
The monograph should be of special interest to those who want to defend the sanctity of the lives of vulnerable people. Other groups who will find the monograph very useful are TIPS readers, people who have attended past workshops on this topic offered by the TI, and those who want to attend such an event but have so far been unable to do so.

The cost is $8 US funds per copy; orders of 10 or more copies receive a 20% discount. Add $1.50 postage and handling charge to single orders, 10% for all other orders.

*LaPierre, D. (1985). *The city of joy.* (K. Spink, Trans.). New York: Warner Books. This is the almost unbelievable story of the tragedies of poor people of Calcutta, one of India's most heavily populated and most desperately troubled cities. The book is at once inspiring because of the commitment and courage of so many of the people in it, but at the same time, it is almost unbearable reading because of its ceaseless vignettes after vignettes of severe suffering, with no prospect of alleviation in sight. At least one of the contributors to the desperate situation of India today is that it is still recovering from its rape and subjugation at the hands of the British empire for over a century. For instance, it is as a result of British imperial domination that Calcutta became a major industrial city, and that peasants began to be uprooted from their land and brought in as cheap labor to enrich the colonialists.

Reportedly, one of the latest big money-making but clandestine professions in Calcutta is the sale of aborted fetuses. "The mainsprings of the industry are a network of foreign buyers who scour the Third World on behalf of international laboratories or institutes for genetic research....They use the embryos and fetuses either for scientific work or in the manufacture of rejuvenating products for a clientele of privileged people..." (p. 186).

At the same time as people die in vast numbers every day from the most miserable andaddressable conditions, and at the same time as there is insufficient bedding, food, and basic medical supplies in hospitals, Calcutta is one of the places in which doctors have brought a "test tube baby" into the world (p. 346).

In describing the desperate and despicable conditions in the Indian hospitals, one newspaper reported, "The only piece of equipment that seems to function properly, but then again, only when there are no power cuts, is the apparatus for electric shock treatment in Gobra Mental Hospital." (Source item from Carolyn B. Wheeler)

*Vanier, J. (1985). *Man and woman He made them.* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. This recent book by Jean Vanier, the founder of the l'Arche movement, is an excellent example of a phenomenological approach in interpreting all sorts of disorders of mind, soul, and heart of both retarded and non-retarded people, and then being able to sketch an appropriate response by the persons around the individual. This book goes vastly further than the issue of human sexuality. Among other things, there is a great deal of discussion on the meaning of human identity, needs, and of "home."

Vanier says that ethics should orient human activities to the service and well-being of others, and that this in turn combats egotism and preoccupation with self, one's own pleasure and one's power. He also states strongly that individual liberty should not be perceived as an ultimate value.

Vanier also says that people need to have either family or community if they are to be able to contribute in any genuine fashion to society. Too many people today think that they can make all sorts of great contributions to society while they themselves live in a lonely or even conflictful fashion. However, Vanier also believes that the loss of community life all over the world is intimately linked...
with the increased preoccupation with genital pleasure. The loss of community
turns people inward upon themselves on the one hand, and on the other hand, it
deprees people of those communal aspects which traditionally have made it easier
for people to sustain chastity. Finding themselves isolated and anguished, people
also then often lack inner strength. Further, the ideals which were sustained in
a community context become eroded when they are not confirmed, modeled, taught,
etc., as they used to be in a more communitized society. Thus, one of the challenges
ahead is to create communities in which people love each other very much, where
there is an authentic covenant relationship between them, and where this is
celebrated with joy, enthusiasm and creativity. Vanier says that modern culture
knows parties, leisure activities and holidays, but no longer knows celebration.

The book abounds with profound insights into the nature of men and women
and their sexuality. It boldly reaffirms at least some traditional beliefs about
the difference between men and women, and likens men and women to mirrors to each
other, the differences revealing to each other who each is.

Vanier also reasserts that in the mutual attraction between the sexes and
their choice of each other, there lies a deep desire to give new life. He also
says that woman differs from man in carrying her own (different) kind of bond with
death within her body because her fecundity dies relatively early in life, unlike
that of the male.

Again and again, Vanier makes the point that violence and purely genital sexuality
are so often closely linked with each other. He implies that a lot of people
promote illicit, promiscuous or unnatural sex in others not because it helps
these others to grow, but in order to justify their own licentious attitudes
towards sex. He also hypothesizes that the common precocious sexual experiences
of young adults today may actually hinder the process of maturation of the
personality rather than promote or support it, as is so often pretended.

Most explicitly, sex must not be viewed as either a therapy nor as what nowadays is called a means of "expression." Instead, it is to be viewed as a mystery,
one of the highest gifts that one can give to a person of the opposite sex, a
profound communion, and part of a reciprocal and permanent commitment and a
deeply-seated desire between two lovers to generate new life. I would add that
if the latter is not present, then there is something wrong with either the love
itself or the development of the person.

As regards the handicapped, Vanier applies his broader principles while
adding all sorts of more specific information. He has much to say about the
sexual abuse or seduction of handicapped people. For instance, Seattle Rape
Relief has estimated that in the state of Washington, where there is a population
of about 4 million, 30,000 mentally or physically handicapped persons were being
sexually abused each year. Vanier says that in his extensive experience with
homosexuality in l'Arche, he has found that in all cases, an older homosexual
person had exploited a younger one at an early age, often in an abusive fashion,
and quite often inside an institution. Also, is it not a sad sign of our times
that so many parents of handicapped adults, as well as human service workers, think
that handicapped young women should be sterilized because the likelihood of their
being sexually abused is so high? Further, it seems that instead of investing
their efforts in the prevention of abuse, they displace it in a most remarkable
psychological process onto the prevention of conception. Whatever else this does,
it says that getting pregnant (even if not by rape or exploitation) is worse
then being sexually abused.
Vanier also says that in so many human service settings, some of the earlier secret sexual abuse of handicapped people by staff has been replaced by the promotion of a genital sexuality in a quasi-open manner that is vulgarized and promoted by seduction that comes from the staff. Particularly when human service workers have sex with clients, he interprets it as a form of institutionalized violence.

Commonly, the sexual drive of a mentally handicapped person is much more a cry for relationship than for pleasure. Thus, the practice in so many residential services today of pushing mentally handicapped people into sexuality, Vanier interprets as an escape on the part of staff from the demands of presence—which is what the handicapped people really need—and for the lack of a real home. The widespread custom of supporting promiscuous sex among handicapped people also does damage in other ways. It undermines their capacity to develop true love and intimacy, engenders false aspiration and hopes, abdicates the inculcation of responsibility and permanent commitments, and usually negates the validity of fecundity. The result is often new disappointments and isolations, and far from promoting a true sense of identity, it diminishes it. It promotes an imprisoning of a person in a search for sensualistic and self-centered pleasure which contributes to the psychological isolation of the person.

Vanier speaks of the "courage to forbid," meaning that an educational process must include the knowledge of when and how to forbid somebody something.

Vanier also regrets the obsessive and strident insistence of so many moderns that group residences for mentally handicapped adults simply must be of mixed sex. He says that some people simply do not live well with members of the opposite sex. Some people—whether handicapped or not—like to incite physical attraction in multiple others, and play multiple lovers against each other. Some have their sexual passions or compulsions aroused uncontrollable. Some have other passions or complexes aroused: jealousy, rivalry, dependency, hatred, etc. It does not take much of these things to render a home non-harmonious.

Vanier also says that when handicapped women are persuaded to have abortions, it conveys to them the idea that there is something seriously wrong with the fruit of their womb and therefore with themselves as well, in turn reinforcing the broken images that they often have of themselves in the first place. On top of all this, they subsequently are likely to live with serious guilt. About a lot of human service workers, Vanier (1985) had this to say. "The tragedy of the young is their emotional fragility. Their hearts are rich in the capacity to love. They are intuitive; they see clearly the dangers and the hypocrisies of our world and of so many of the political movements and social organizations. They desire to live authentic lives. They wish to be committed, but where and how? They feel so vulnerable and powerless in front of the forces which shape society and the world. They need examples to encourage and strengthen them. They need those who, by the witness of their lives, invite others to a permanent commitment. Often they cannot find such models. Confronted with the gap between their fragility and their ideals, they fall into discouragement and often despair."

Vanier uses the term "intermediary" for a healer who stands in place of a parent who never existed or was disfunctional. A l'Arche leader once said about a deeply wounded person that in order to be able to help her to live, the hope of those around the person in the person's growth potential had to be greater than the despair within the person. Some children are so wounded that they cut themselves off from their hearts and the pains of the past in order to forget them. Some people's wounds are so severe that they are never able to integrate the past.

Though written from a Christian perspective, this book can be of great value to anyone serving very wounded people, or trying to clarify the issues of love, home and community in one's own life. One drawback of the book is that it is very loosely written, and could have benefited greatly from rigorous editing, which would also have probably reduced its size considerably.

Available from Paulist Press, 997 Macarthur Boulevard, Mahwah, NJ 07430. $6.55 plus shipping.
*Network Against Psychiatric Assault. (1984). Dr. Caligari's psychiatric drugs. Berkeley, CA: Author. $4.50 from NAPA, 2054 University Avenue, Room 406, Berkeley, CA 94704. This is a major resource on the awful truth about prescription psychoactive drugs. All human service workers should read it. Includes reproduction of outrageous advertisements for these drugs, capitalizing on sexism, racism and agism, and appealing to psychiatrists' need to be in charge.

The Deathmaking Scene

Abortion Facts & News

It is estimated that up to 200,000 pregnancies in western Europe were aborted for no other reason than a fear of the radiation effects from the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster (NRL News, 5 March 87).

It is rather remarkable that abortion statistics are very hard to come by. The most recent US data are reportedly from 1982. It appears that in 1979, the US total hit about 1.5 million, and then approximated 1.6 million by 1982 and 1983. By now, there is reason to believe that because of Medicaid cutbacks to abortions, the US number has gone down. However, the fact that on this important issue, statistics limp 5 years behind is scandalous. There are any number of other issues both in the public and the supposedly private domain on which much better statistics are gathered.

Perhaps surprisingly, in states that have ceased paying for abortions for poor women, not only have the abortion rates gone down but so have birth rates. It is difficult to interpret this other than with the hypothesis that poor women who know that they will not get free or very inexpensive abortions do something other that makes it less likely that they conceive (RLE, 5/87).

150 Stanford University undergraduate women became pregnant in 1986, and 100% of them opted for abortion (NRL News, 14/5/87).

In a garbage dumpster in an alley behind one of Chicago's busiest abortion clinics, the dismembered pieces of 500 aborted unborn babies were found over a two-month period in early 1987 (NCR, 22/5/87). A Maryland dentist was found to have 19 boxes of bodies and body parts of aborted babies stored in his garage, allegedly for potential future research. No charges were filed because no laws were broken (NRL News, 2 April 87). In Minneapolis, the bodies of 13 aborted babies were found tossed in a garbage dumpster together with cigarette butts, coffee grounds and other trash (Interim, 4/87) in January 87. A senior editor of the National Review participated in the clandestine recovery and analysis of a dumpster behind an abortion clinic, where in just one night, the remains of 70 abortions were discovered. He said that if a child did to a small animal what the abortion doctors do to unborn children (i.e., ripping them apart) the child would be judged emotionally disturbed. He further thought that if the public actually saw this evidence, abortion would probably be delegalized, and there might even be Nurnberg-type trials for abortionists—though we doubt it. Our public is a rather hard-boiled one.

Birth control and abortion referral clinics have also made their appearance now in Canadian schools (Interim, 4/87).

In 1987, the government of Ontario committed itself to a dramatic facilitation of abortions within the province, to be carried out in general hospitals. The policy
was deeply disguised by newspaper headlines such as "Ontario rejects special clinics for abortions" (CLM 4/87).

*As late as December 1970, a spokesperson for the American Medical Association announced that the association was "violently opposed" to abortion in advanced stages of pregnancy, such as then were already legal in the state of New York. The spokesperson called the practice "just horrible, whether you call it murder or anything else" (e.g., Chicago Tribune, 19/12/70).

*The US Supreme Court has upheld a Washington State Supreme Court ruling that forbade picketers at an abortion clinic to use the word "murder" to refer to abortion—a most remarkable abridgment of free speech when, at the same time, almost any atrocity can be perpetrated and propagated (e.g., pornography) in the name of free speech (Lex Vitae, Winter 87).

*A most peculiar way of trying to express a pro-life sentiment in an anti-life legal system are laws passed in 3 US states that make the killing of an unborn child murder from the moment of conception—unless an abortionist or the mother kill the child (NRL News', 16/4/87).

*In light of thousands of years of Jewish emphasis on fecundity, it is remarkable that the state of Israel supposedly has one of the highest abortion rates in the world. In contrast, the Arabs surrounding Israel have a vigorous birth rate that is more than double that in Israel. Another paradox is that the reportedly major advocate of abortion in the Israeli parliament has been a woman who suffered horribly at Auschwitz (HLI, no. 25, 1987).

*Ireland and the Philippines are the only two nations which in modern times have provided explicit protection for the unborn in their constitutions (NRL, 19/3/87).

*We reported before on the drastic government attempts in Singapore to reduce the birth rate. This campaign has been so successful that suddenly, leaders decided that some years hence, there will not be enough young males to constitute a sufficient defensive force. Attempts are now underfoot to increase the birth rate again (HLI, no. 25, 1987).

*In 6/87, on the way to work, the TIPS editor passed by the Planned Parenthood building and saw to his amazement little groups of pre-school toddlers, perhaps three or four years of age, being led into the building by various women from different directions. One of the first thoughts that occurred to him was the story of the Pied Piper of Hamlin, and he wondered if the children would ever be seen again. Then the question arose why such little children would be brought to Planned Parenthood as a group, and all thoughts of other gruesome things came to mind, such as perhaps lectures on how lucky they were that their mommy had the good sense to abort their little brother or sister, perhaps with a demonstration of the body parts. But of course, there is bound to be a perfectly good, natural and rational explanation.

*TIPS readers are once again warned that a great momentum is building up to use tissues from aborted babies for all kinds of medical treatments. Soon, one of the major arguments that may be advanced in support of abortion might be the medical benefits to the rest of mankind.
The impression was given that those who would defend the life of a handicapped newborn are always irrational people butting into other people's personal affairs, that parents always want what is best for their child, and that the nurse of infantilism that now rule most hospitals are typically cases of such pedantically impeded infants as this one, when in fact they are rarely ever this sick.

Unfortunately, the objections that were made by the various characters to ending the baby's life, and especially the nurses and physicians who advocated that every possible measure be taken that could extend her life, were all depicted as irrational, arrogant, and/or unsympathetic to the parents' plight. Even when the mother accused the father of not wanting anything but a perfect baby, she was presented as speaking irrationally and almost hysterically. A lawyer warned the parents that if they decided to go to court to have life supports withdrawn from their child, they would be attacked and made to look like awful people—with the clear implication that those who would try to defend life at all costs, and who would "attack" the parents, were the real villains. The film was also an excellent example of the "Purple Macedonian" case vignette approach to questions of withholding and withdrawing life supports, in that it seemed that after each commercial break, the viewer was clued in to yet another weakness that the child had been discovered to have, and yet another detail of her treatment and likely future.

*In 2/87, a law was signed in New Jersey that forbids the withholding of treatment and nutrition from newborn infants (NRL News, 19/1/87).

*Baby No-one dies. "A sickly infant died during a 22-minute power failure at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, when a respirator providing him with oxygen shut down, hospital officials said. "It was an act of God. The staff did wonderfully in making sure no one died," said hospital official Diana Goldin after electrical generators failed Friday." (Syracuse Herald-Journal, 6/6/87).

Suicide & Its Promotion

*Prior to the advent of modern medicine, and even into the early 1900s, a great many sick or wounded people died extremely painful deaths, sometimes lingering in agony and incapacitation for months and years. That was then a very normative way to die. Yet since only ca. 1970, there has been a craze of publicity and concern about people dying slow and/or painful deaths as if such deaths were a new phenomenon, or as if it were this age that had discovered painful dying. Many recent fiction and non-fiction books, and some professional ones, have reflected this new craze, and most end up promoting assisted or unassisted suicide, and in some instances even "euthanasia." One recent work along these lines is This Far and No More by New York Times correspondent Andrew Malcolm which dealt with a woman who developed a degenerative neuro-muscular disease in her forties and then died a "negotiated death." Insofar as this is a phony discovery, and lingering painful deaths are in fact very much rarer than they used to be, we must be up against some other phenomenon. We believe that this other phenomenon is the horror of suffering born out of modernistic hedonism—which sees suffering as the modern devil, one which believes that the human being is entitled to freedom therefrom. People who do in fact suffer grievously for any length of time become unacceptable witnesses to the lies of modernism, and must be gotten rid of.

*A proposal has been submitted in the Netherlands to allow children under the age of 16 to request physician-assisted suicide without parental consent (NRL News, 14/5/87).

*American suicide rates plotted against age are roughly U-shaped, with people above 65 now having the highest suicide rates (NRL News, 14/5/87).
It is estimated that one adolescent in the US attempts suicide every 80 seconds, for a total of 400,000 a year; 5000 are officially recognized as having succeeded, but the unofficial estimates are that the number is more like 10,000. As of early 1987, there were at least 32 youth suicide prevention programs and many more can be expected soon (Newsweek, 23/3/87). According to one study in rural Minnesota, teenagers who had abortions were four times more likely to be suicidal than peers (NRL News, 2/4/87). Of course, this finding reveals nothing about whether one of these phenomena is causally linked to the other.

The board of directors of the American Association of Suicidology, specifically founded to address "suicide prevention, crisis intervention and life-threatening behaviors" was not able to agree to oppose "assisted suicide." One almost gets the message that unassisted suicide is to be prevented, but assisted suicide may be okay. In fact, papers at its conferences appear to be swinging more and more toward "rational suicide," and the society might soon redefine its goals. In that case, it would recapitulate what Planned Parenthood once did, in totally reversing its position on deathmaking (NRL News, 18/6/87).

A 17-year old girl 7 months pregnant shot herself in the abdomen. A prosecution for "criminal abortion" was dropped because the court concluded that the girl had intended to kill herself rather than her unborn child (NRL News, 14/5/87).

A 34-year old quadriplegic man in Colorado wanted to gain the "right" to starve himself to death. A local branch of the American Civil Liberties Union entered the case and asked permission for him to receive a "lethal injection." When this became public, it withdrew its request. The episode once again shows that there is indeed such a thing as a slippery slope (NRLN, 30/4/87).

Euthanasia

Today it is often said by advocates of voluntary suicide and "euthanasia" that certain people end up suffering from a great deal of pain, and that this protracted pain justifies the termination of life. We have to be clear that there are at least two levels of arguments here, very distinct from each other. One level implies that there is indeed such a thing these days as very severe pain that cannot be alleviated. There are a good number of authorities, some of them associated with the hospice movement, who vigorously deny the validity of this claim.

On the second level, we receive the message that even if one granted that there were such a thing as protracted severe pain, that this now justifies termination of life. In response to this argument, we should consider that until relatively recently —roughly the age of our grandparents or great-grandparents—severe and extreme pain was in fact very common and, unlike today, was associated with most fatal diseases that did not kill suddenly. Yet, for thousands and even perhaps millions of years, people have somehow borne this pain, and at least in the Western world, it was not seen as a sufficient cause to legalize, or even merely legitimize, suicide, suicide assistance or euthanasia. True, such deathmaking practices did occasionally occur, but the fact is that the vast majority of sufferers simply suffered.

What is it about pain today that is so drastically different from the pain of yesterday that was heroically endured? The proportion of people who suffered severe pain has certainly declined drastically; and, as we said, there may no longer even be any such thing as unalleviatable excruciating pain. Yet at the same time, willingness and capacity to endure our pain has dramatically declined. Even minor pain is anathema to us, and even death is seen as preferable to such pain. In fact, one could almost suspect that the idea of other people suffering and enduring pain has become "insupportable" to people of our age. Maybe that is one of the big reasons why people want sufferers made dead rather than have their suffering truly alleviated.
Because Dutch physicians "euthanize" between 6000-10,000 patients each year, the Royal Dutch Pharmacists' Association came up with a list of the most efficient drugs for a quick and painless death, lest the physicians "make a mistake" (Washington Post, 30/3/87; source item from John O'Brien). Apparently, the above number does not even include the withdrawal of life supports.

In a recent English trial of a physician committing "euthanasia" on a 63-year-old cancer patient, the jury ignored the instructions of the judge and acquitted the defendant (The Age; 2 May 87). Leaders of the nursing profession in Britain are admitting openly that British nurses are often involved in "euthanasia," deliberately shortening life as well as omitting life-prolonging treatments (The Age, 2 May 87; clipping from Mike Steer).

According to a sympathetic review of a new pro-"euthanasia" book in the Australian newspaper, The Age (2 May 87), "euthanasia" is practiced in Australian hospitals "every day". (Source clipping from Michael Steer)

The Toronto Transit Commission has given Dying with Dignity free advertising space on its buses, street cars and subways to promote living wills—at the same time as it refused to accept paid or unpaid advertisements by a right-to-life association (Interim, 4/87).

A telephone poll of 1500 Americans commissioned by the American Medical Association in May & June 1986 showed that 73% favored withdrawing life supports, including food and water, from "hopelessly ill or irreversibly comatose patients if they or their family requested it." Only 15% were opposed. Interestingly, this poll was conducted after, rather than before, the AMA decided to support this strategy (American Medical News, 28/11/86).

About 70% of the US population favors permissibility of lethal injections for terminally ill people (NRL News, 5 March 87).

A local court actually issued an order for a "rehabilitation hospital" to stop food and liquids for a patient who wanted to die, though he was conscious and responsive (Links, 4/87).

A pregnant young NJ woman had an accident in 1980, as a result of which she lost her baby and was severely brain-injured. She has been living at the Lincoln Park Nursing and Convalescent Home in NJ ever since, and even though she can react to pain, follows the movement of people with her eyes, and is neither comatose nor terminally ill, her husband and family asked the nursing home to remove her feeding tube and cause her death. For once, not only the nursing home administration but the nursing staff as well has vigorously resisted this attempt (NRL News, 28/5/87).

The parents of a 28-year old woman comatose for 2 years in Hollywood, FL were told by the physicians that their daughter would die within 3-9 days if nourishment were withdrawn. They then secured a court order to remove her feeding tube—but the daughter frustrated and embarrassed the medicos and the parents by taking 43 days to die (AAI, May & June, 1987).

*Speaker after speaker at the Catholic Health Association Conference on "Ethical Issues Surrounding Nutrition and Hydration" condemned the Catholic bishops of NJ for opposing judicial legitimization of the withholding of nutrition and liquid from seriously impaired patients (NRL News, 19/3/87).
A law was passed in OK in 6/87 that required physicians to assume that mentally impaired patients would wish to receive food and water, and that further released human service personnel from the obligation to participate in starvation deaths of mentally impaired patients. However, this still left unresolved the situation when competent patients request dying facilitation. The National Right to Life Committee hailed this bill as a "major pro-life breakthrough." We instead view it as a sign of the times of how low we have sunk that this sort of thing should be so perceived (NRL News, 18/6/87).

In one of her columns (SHA, 1/2/87), Ann Landers spoke against "euthanasia" not because it was wrong, but because it "is not without complications," such as people promoting it in order to inherit from their elders.

Nathanson (1983) made fun of the scientists who indirectly endorse abortion by saying that no one knows when life begins. He sketched a scenario where the scientists say that no one knows when life ends either, and therefore what one does toward the end of life, such as killing people, should really be a matter of freedom of choice.

Langone (1974, pp. 148-150) cites two letters to the editor of a NY newspaper approximately one year apart from a woman who had been painfully paralyzed and bedridden for three years. In the first letter, she begs that "euthanasia" be legalized and performed on her; in the second, she explains that an operation was performed on her that relieved her pain and enabled her to sit up, and rescinds her earlier request that "euthanasia" be legalized.

The news and entertainment media very heavily promote all sorts of deathmaking, but now comes along a futuristic novel by Walker Percy entitled The Thanatos Syndrome which is written from a perspective that interprets all sorts of deathmaking negatively rather than positively. (Source item from Matt Cashin)

Miscellaneous Deathmaking Items

A remarkable court decision right along the lines which we have predicted for over a decade was rendered--of all places--in VT. A 53-year old retarded man was transferred from the VT state institution for the retarded to a group home where he died within a month. He told his supervisors that he felt ill and began to stay home from his job at a sheltered workshop. His health was only checked a week later by a nurse who arrived just in time to find him a corpse. His sister sued for neglect, but a judge ruled in March 1987 that she had no claim on damages--because her brother's life had no financial value (Boston Sunday Globe, 29/3/87; source item from Carl Cignoni).

It has forcefully come to our attention just how much deathmaking is taking place in connection with the dental problems of poor and handicapped people. Without an intact and comfortably fitting pair of dentures, some people withdraw from food, become poorly nourished, and then fall prey to all sorts of other problems, and particularly so if they already have certain prior health problems, such as diabetes. In the span of only a few weeks, we learned of at least three people whose deaths were at the very least accelerated because of their dental problems, and in each case they were dependent people where the health service structures defaulted in either attending to their dental needs, or in attending to them in a timely fashion. One of our diabetic friends who recently died had been waiting almost three months for a replacement of his broken dentures, but the work never did get done, and in fact the clinic that had been dealing with them excruciatingly slowly and had been making false promises on top even lost his records, and thus "forgot" that he was a client and was waiting on his tooth work.
A friend recently told us of a middle-aged man who died of a progressive hereditary disease. His brother who was mentally retarded was immediately declared to have the same condition, to be dying, and not to be expected to live more than a few months. Furthermore, plans were made to immediately (i.e., within days) jerk him out of his residential situation and insert him into a medically structured place where he could die. This is another good example of people being cast into the dying and, sometimes by implication, the "already dead" role. In this case, as is often the case, the retarded brother outlived the prediction.

It used to be that one sometimes heard yelling in hospitals when patients were confused or in pain. We have discovered to our amazement and distress that it has become quite common now in hospitals to administer tranquillizers, such as Valium, to patients in order to reduce the demands they make upon nursing care. A tranquillized patient is less likely to cry out and cause distress to others, to report pain, to call for bedpans, to emit signs of distress that might be taken as demands on nurses to administer tender loving bedside care, and so on.

As of 1985, 83 million prescriptions were being written for benzodiazepines (which include at least 11 drugs, such as Valium, Librium and Restoril) for a total of 3.7 billion pills taken by about 2.9 million Americans every day, about 70% of which have used them daily for at least a year (Health Letter, 4/87).

Some people are advocating that handicapped persons who have outbursts (called "rage reactions") be "treated" with up to 1500 mgs. of a drug called Indecel, and that this is a "specific therapy" for this "condition." In actuality, the drug blocks the nerves to the heart, and even 10% of the above dose can incapacitate an average person from as simple a task as swimming. One can easily see yet more deathmaking in connection with efforts to supposedly control supposedly violent clients if this drug is used with them (Leaders' Alliance News, 4/87; source item from John Morris).

Training Institute workshops are attended almost exclusively by human service workers. We have become very accustomed to participants complaining of long or late hours, and many of them take great liberties in leaving at their own convenience in a self-indulging fashion. Yet members of the death-dealing empire think nothing of giving their all in pursuit of some atrocity. For instance, it was ironically during one of our workshop evening sessions that ran a bit longer than anticipated that we learned that in a certain hospital, a considerable group of professional staff thought nothing of meeting from 8:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. in order to come to a decision to kill a baby, i.e., to withhold life supports when they should not have been withheld. It is just about around 8:30 or 9:00 that our workshop participants commonly start leaving.

An article in the 5/87 issue of the American Journal of Mental Deficiency reported that a study in CA discovered that "sudden death also predisposed to pulmonary edema," thereby strongly suggesting that sudden deaths may be bad for one's health.

An Australian parliamentary committee submitted a report in 4/87 that concluded that it was "neither desirable nor practicable" to establish a legal "right to die," but did support the right of patients to refuse medical treatment and proposed the new offense of "medical trespass," consisting of treating patients against their wishes (The Age, 2 May 87; clipping from Mike Steer).
Research has shown that when kittens are reared with special apparatus in such a fashion that they never see vertical lines for the first few months of their lives, they are thereafter unable to learn to recognize images that contain vertical lines. Analogously, those who are in control of other people's language and perceptual systems can create images of reality for their "subjects" so that the subjects become almost incapacitated in their recognition of reality and truth.

In his book, Mein Kampf, Hitler wrote in the 1920s that "the great masses of the people will more easily fall victim to a big lie than to a small one."

We have commented before on the fact that people will often respond to a tragedy or injustice far from home, yet ignore or deny similar or even worse oppression much closer to home. In connection with this point, it has been noted that sometimes, people only respond to injustices in their own locale once they have been made aware of similar injustices elsewhere. It is a good question why this should be so, and we propose the following hypotheses.

1. People are often unaware of, and take for granted, what is around them everyday. It becomes like the air they breathe. Perceiving an injustice elsewhere may heighten their consciousness of injustice generally, so that they become more conscious of nearby realities that they only unconsciously perceived before.

2. One may have to overcome a certain amount of defensiveness in admitting injustices close to one, and especially if one is somehow involved in perpetrating these, even if only indirectly. By first admitting these injustices elsewhere, some of this defensiveness may be breached, making the acknowledgement of injustice close to home subsequently easier.

3. It is a well-known psychological phenomenon that after people have been party to something that their conscience judges as wrong, they will repress their own complicity in it by projecting the same "crime" on to others, and especially others far away. Attention to injustices is thus diverted away from home, so to speak, to a safe distance.

4. Learning of an injustice far away may serve as a conceptual pattern, against which one can refer and measure other entities to see whether they conform to its general outlines. Until one has the concept, one is not equipped to categorize, and perhaps even to perceive, phenomena that are expressions of that concept. (This is comparable to the pedagogic strategy of teaching issues universally, or on the level of principle, enabling learners to then recognize particularistic expressions of the principle.)

People today have a hard time appreciating the difference between using language creatively and playfully versus degrading and perverting it. Shakespeare invented more words for English than anybody else who ever lived, and used the English language as his playground. He was apparently the person who started the custom of making verbs out of nouns, i.e., of "verbing" nouns.

Words and things. The Ten Commandments were encapsulated in just over 300 words. The Gettysburg Address took fewer than 275, most of which consisted of single syllables. The American government's specifications for the purchase of mouse traps used to contain more than 100,000 words, and weigh more than two pounds. The good news is that the Reagan Administration condensed all of this to a single page.

The questionnaire that only one single federal regulatory commission sent to gas-producing firms weighed 10 pounds and would have required 17,000 hours of work by accountants to complete.

There are computers that can print verbiage at 200 times the speed it takes even the fastest readers to read (Smithsonian, January, 1981).
A columnist in the Saint John Telegraph Journal commented wryly about the contemporary degradation of language, particularly the one that tries to ban bad thoughts. Wars have become military exercises, and war departments have become departments of defense. He poked fun at the outlawing of the concept of insanity, the conversion of stupid kids into learning disabled ones who are mostly behind because it is the teachers' fault, and reported about a woman who, when described in court records as a spinster, had the words changed to "militant feminist." The columnist proposed that the words fat and old be banned, the latter accomplishing that even quite elderly persons instead become senior citizens and no longer have the ailments that old folks used to have. After all, fifty years ago, almost anybody could name all the parts of a horse, a harness and a buggy, and now hardly anybody can—and lo and behold, horses, harnesses and buggies have actually disappeared. Now all we need to do is outlaw words like fat or insanity, and these phenomena will surely also go away.

One of the most interesting developments in the domain of babble is the development of a secular science of babble, called "jargonaphasia" (e.g., Brown, 1981), which does not lag far behind its quarry. For instance, one expert on the topic wrote to J. W. Brown (Jargonaphasia. New York: Academic, 1981) of his interest in the "anosognosic disintegration of the semantic value of language."

In 1984, a PR executive gave a speech in Syracuse, entitled "Sesquipedalianism, Linguistic Obsfuscation and Bafflebag." We only wish we had thought of it first! (Source item from Doug Mouncey)

It is fascinating to consider that the term "family planning" is being used as a euphemism for contraception, even in instances where the people engaging in sex are neither planning nor intending to be a family.

Prolific use of acronyms is a relatively recent invention which probably received a big boost in World War II, and by the military ever since. Human services are now full of acronyms, sometimes ad nauseum. The latest escalation in acronym "deployment" is to name entities after acronyms of acronyms. An example is PEAR, developed by Southern Microsystems for Educators, which stands for, believe it or not, PIAT Error Analysis Report (Exc. Qty., 10/83).

Language specialization versus jargon. Because of the universal debasement of language that we are currently experiencing, people are having a hard time differentiating between language idioms that should be specialized, and jargon that should not exist. The TI has sometimes been accused of using jargon when it tried to use a special language to refer to phenomena that otherwise might not be communicated through another idiom. Those who may think that the TI language has sometimes been jargon might consider the following passage which we recently found in Science (31/8/84) on that part of chemistry that deals with the definition of what one might call the morphology or shape of chemicals. The passage deals with a proposed new nomenclature for the area. "The revised nomenclature makes the distinction clear: the centers in both types of molecules are chirotopic, but only the vespirenes possess a stereocenter."

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the purely stereogenic character of "elements of chirality" in a molecule must not be confused with the chirality properties of that molecule," Mislow adds. For example, a stereospecific rearrangement of a chiral molecule with a single stereocenter M to a chiral product with a single stereocenter N is commonly referred to as a "transfer of chirality from M to N." In fact, however, what is transferred in the process are stereocenters (M→N); chirality is retained throughout, not transferred. "It is equally misleading to speak of a molecule as being "chiral (or optically active) at M where the intent is to express M's property as a stereocenter in a chiral molecule," Mislow concludes. "Neither chirality nor optical activity are exclusively attributable to individual atoms in a molecule."
A curse in technical language these days is the use of nouns as adjectives, especially if they are linked in strings. A worst case example is a title of a 1984 article in Education & Training of the Mentally Retarded: "Vocational Assembly Skills Using Isometric Projection Exploded View Assembly Drawings for Mentally Handicapped Students."

A new school of psychology has come up with the term "fallabilistic realism," which refers to a theory of how to deal with complex open systems. Whatever meaning its authors may have given it, it sounds like a very promising term to us.

Our society has more different words for colors than do many other societies. A humorous article in the January 1983 Smithsonian commented on the peculiar fact that our marketing world is inventing ever more color names in order to promote the sale of products, and that so many of these names are those of foods or drinks. Thus brown becomes caramel, cinnamon, chocolate, cocoa, toast, or ginger. Purple becomes dusty plum, white is winter wheat, yellow is warm cornhusk. Something as straightforward as black might become sable, ebony, or midnight coal. A recent mail-order for blouses offered only these colors: avocado, mist and smoke (cigar or chimney?). Some of the color names aim decidedly at snob appeal, such as calling off-white "antique white," or naming some color "Anjou pear." Some color names fared poorly on the market, such as "city pigeon," "Freudian gilt," and "hulla blue."

The language practices in human services remind us of the secret language that criminal classes develop so others will not know what they are up to. An example from ca. 1910 is this English pickpocket's account of his arrest (Wines, 1910).

"I was jogging down a blooming slum in the Chapel, when I butted a reeler who was sporting a red slang. I broke off his jerry, and boned the clock, which was a red one, but I was sported by a copper who claimed me. I was lugged before the beak, who gave me six doss in the Steel. The week after I was chucked up, I did a snatch near St. Paul's, was collared, lagged, and got this bit of seven stretch."

We are not the only ones who have noted how absurd it is to talk about "labeling." As columnist Middleton noted in the Saturday Review a few years back, a woman told him, "I think grammar is important, but I don't believe in labeling." "What do you mean by labeling?" "Oh, you know--adverbs, adjectives, nouns, stuff like that." To put an end to such nonsense, Middleton recommended that we read a book entitled What's Happening to American English? by Tibbets and Tibbets.

Useful understatement alert. In Seattle, the door of an airplane fell out of the sky onto a spot in a backyard on which two minutes previously a young man had been standing. An official of the Federal Aviation Administration said the episode was "definitely unusual, to say the least." Certainly a phrase to remember for potential future use!

Perhaps one of the most confusing program names we have run across in a long time is the Preserve the Prevention of Significant Deterioration Program. It was a proposal to supposedly protect the air while allowing for economic development (Environmental Action, February 1982).

Psychology: the promised land. Linguists have noted a new language of "psychogeography," exemplified by advertising phrases such as "Camel, where a man belongs" (Saturday Review, March 82). One can readily think of all sorts of human service implications and usages of psychogeography, such as "insanity--where a psychiatrist belongs," "mental retardation--where teachers are at," etc.
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