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The major theme of this issue is a look at all sorts of contemporary human service concepts and practices—most of them peculiar, to say the least. In order to make some of these, and our comments on them, more intelligible, we repeat a point made in previous issues and in several of our workshops, namely that ours has become a post-primary production (PPP) economy in which 20% of the people produce everything that everybody, including the other 80%, consume. Even within the productive sector, farming now occupies less than 10% of the labor force, and this percentage is continuing to shrink.

In such an economy, one of the major ways of circulating the wealth, aside from activities connected with militarism (which is the biggest), are human services which now circulate almost as much wealth as militarism. But in order to employ a large enough number of people in unproductive capacities, yet another large pool of people must be defined as "needing" services. Thus, in this kind of an economy, healing and habilitation are de facto no longer useful but outright inimical to economic and political interests. So society at large, and those human services that are part of its mainstream (the "service supersystem"), actually function to employ people who, in turn, make and keep a certain percentage of the population dependent, which they obviously do easily and well these days as by inventing new "needs" and new service forms, making people poor, etc. In turn, all this is achieved in many ways, including via service practices that are absurd and invalid at best, irrational and even insane, atrocious and hurtful at worst. The system is so good at making people dependent that a surplus dependent population is created, and these are made dead at the rate of somewhere between 200,000-400,000 a year in the US. If our human service system were less good at making people dependent, or if more people were actually restored and habilitated, we could not afford to kill as many. Several of our workshops explain these realities which can be only telegraphically mentioned here, and some elaboration (but not as well as at our workshops) is found in our recent monograph on the The New Genocide which can be obtained from the TI.

Because human services in a PPP society have as their major—though undeclared—function the redistribution of wealth from the productive to the unproductive sector, the government, law, regulators, funders, and various customs set up patterns that make it virtually impossible for workers within the supersystem to be effective if they wanted to be. This has a devastating impact on workers.
The PPP service practices that we review here are virtually all bad, but some other practices reviewed here are disfunctional for other reasons. Some laudable contemporary practices (which are the exception) are found in the section on Social Role Valorization.

Post-Primary Production (PPP) Phenomena

In a PPP society, unproductive workers reap the highest rewards, and those who produce all the wealth (those in farming, mining, construction, etc.) get the least—if anything.

*A major article in Science (9/10/87) analyzed the composition and change in the labor force in major developed countries. It is very clear that in almost all of them (with the exception of Japan and Sweden), the PPP economy has dramatically increased the unemployment rate on a long-term basis to somewhere around 10%. As we mentioned before, it must be kept in mind that official unemployment rates do not include unemployed people who are no longer looking for work, people adjudged handicapped and put on some sort of pension, or those who have never been in the labor market.

*How bureaucratic developed societies have become is indicated by the fact that both in Russia and the US, there is one government worker for every 15 citizens, children included (Newsweek, 14/12/87).

*After the 10/87 Wall Street crash, one of the rich unproductive Wall Street people was dejected--because his wife expected a new Jaguar every year, and their three houses weren't paid for yet (Newsweek, 26/10/87).

*One of the most expensive weapon systems ever is the B-1B bomber. By the time they begin to be delivered, they are estimated to cost $200 million each—yet they will not be able to perform a single one of the missions for which they were meant to be designed. The Air Force knew of these deficiencies but delayed for 3 years telling anyone else. Then it took another 1.5 years before Congress and the Defense Secretary were told. We find this a marvelous example of the PPP economy (SHJ, 2/4/87).

*Art for the end of times? The 28/12/87 issue of Time featured another artist who made headlines around the world by firing shotguns at paint cans set in front of wooden panels or canvas, which he then exhibits or sells.

An "artist" who creates "art works" by setting off explosives against various kinds of metals was featured in a major article in the Smithsonian (12/87, p. 166-173).

*In 1985, the Australian Prime Minister pledged to eliminate unemployment for 16 and 17-year old youths within three years, and to create 150,000 traineeships for them. Two years later, less than 10,000 young people had been served by such training schemes, and youth unemployment was actually up by at least 30,000. However, the government was spending $2 million advertising its youth training and employment program (Times on Sunday, 1/87; source item from Michael Steer).

*The executive director of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities said that 8% of the US gross national product is being consumed by people who are handicapped and unemployed. As we have emphasized before, there is also another way of looking at it: our PPP human service system consumes probably a much larger proportion than 8% of the population—and thrives on its feast. (Source clipping from Mark Johnson)
Reification of Modes of Living and Thinking as "Diseases"

By interpreting certain of people's feelings, thought processes and modes of dealing with life's problems as "diseases," a PPP economy can lay claim to legitimate ownership of them as clients.

*Would you want to fly high with Mead, Johnson?* Mead, Johnson sent a mass mailing advertisement to physicians showing a picture of a harried air traffic controller and the message that "he needs anxiolytic therapy," i.e., one of the tranquilizers that the company sells. The fact is that the tranquilizer at issue can cause dizziness, nervousness, insomnia, confusion, blurred vision, uncoordination, tremor, weakness and fatigue (Health Letter, 12/87).

*Do you have ISD?* At one time, shrinkery identified all sorts of sexual practices as diseases. The latest such "disease," according to shrinkery, is not having an overpowering sexual urge, or not having sex "often enough." We are now told that 15% of men and 35% of women "suffer from the problem" which was "only identified as a clinical entity in the past decade," and which has been scientifized with labels such as "hypoactive sexual desire," "inhibited sexual desire," and "sexual aversion disorder" (Newsweek, 26/10/87).

*We often use the example of an elderly woman who becomes forgetful and therefore occasionally leaves her gas stove on and thus gets placed in a nursing home as a service response, whereas a much more normative (not even to mention less expensive) option would be to simply replace her gas stove with an electric one. We recently heard of a similar incident from Australia, where an elderly woman was given a "prescription" for nursing home placement because of medical reasons. When the elderly woman was interviewed by people concerned in preventing her institutionalization, it turned out that her "medical condition" resulted from the fact that she could not bear the heat in her apartment during the hottest months of the year. Obviously, a much less expensive and more normative response would be to install air-conditioning in the woman's flat, which in this case was done, thereby sparing her a sentence to spend the remainder of her life in bondage. (Vignette contributed by Mike Rungie)

*The citizen-based Alliance for the Mentally Ill continues to propagate the mythology developed decades ago by the National Association on Mental Health that "mental illness" is much like a common cold that anybody could "catch," and that there is no way to tell who will. One corollary could be that there is relatively little one can do preventively—but then, we cannot expect such theories to be entirely coherent.

*Depression has been called the common cold of psychiatry, and it has been, and probably will continue to be, a gold mine for physicians and psychiatrists. Its symptomatology is infinitely elusive and is said to include things as commonplace as feeling tired, being indecisive, irritability, or temporary indifference to hobbies. In fact, when such manifestations occur "without relief for a week or longer," then people are urged by the drug ads to "see your doctor"—who will be almost certain to prescribe some psychoactive drugs. Indeed, everybody furiously prescribes psychoactive drugs against this elusive condition, and as soon as one drug has been on the market for a few years, a new one gets promoted and prescribed—not because it is necessarily superior to the older ones, but merely because it is new—and usually more expensive, perhaps even ten times as expensive.

One of the depressions we covered before, SAD, for "seasonal affective disorder," was formerly known as "the winter blahs." Estimates of its victims range up to 5,000,000 in the US. Not surprisingly, "experts" suspect a gene, but they combat it with "light therapy" (Time, 11/1/88). Another version is "Labor Day depression." According to various shrinks, it strikes people when they realize that their summer sun and fun is about to end and they have to get back to school and work. We dread the discovery of symptom-less or pre-symptomatic forms of this dread illness, and the usual that goes with it: new institutes, doctoral degrees, etc.
Furthermore, depression may be said to be the cause of other ailments which are a bit hard to pin down. One drug ad says "When you find no reason for chronic back pain...think of depression as the underlying cause." According to one authority, prescription antidepressant drugs often actually become the means for a person who is in fact depressed to commit suicide. This authority claimed that between 5000-10,000 people try to kill themselves annually with these drugs, and many succeed (Augustus, 5/87).

The High Shenanigans of Shrinkery in a PPP Society

For lack of a better overarching term, and in order to withhold the appearance of legitimacy, we use the term shrinkery to refer to the entire domain of mental, mentalized and talking therapies—what one critic (reviewed earlier) called "the scandal of office-hour psychiatry."

*The number of people who have begun to give some form of mental therapy in the US on either a full-time or part-time basis now stands at about 300,000. A good number of these give therapy to each other, and some of them teach others how to market themselves more successfully. Lack of relevant training is no particular obstacle, because even in those states that require licensing, all one has to do is to avoid saying one is a therapist in order to be able to practice it. Furthermore, a license does not tell anything about competency, and at most indicates that the person has had some relevant training. Not only have psychologists and psychiatrists streamed into this enterprise, but also social workers, nurses, and even actors and dancers (often giving esoteric forms of therapy, such as dance therapy). Just between 1982-1986, the proportion of social workers doing part- or full-time therapy rose from about one-quarter to about two-thirds. In part, this explosion is the result of broadened health insurance coverage for such services,” and in part the result of media promotion. The American Psychological Association has even set up an office to promote the education of people "to think of psychologists as a natural part of their lives." (Newsweek, 14/12/87)

*"Validation therapy" is "a tested model of practice that helps old disoriented people reduce stress, enhance dignity and happiness." "The validation worker tunes into the person's inner world." This latest craze is accompanied by all sorts of similar kinds of psycho-babble. Its technique includes "mirroring" and "ambiguity." Already, conferences on this craze are being given. (Source item from Ray Lemay)

*Someone has invented "therapeutic case advocacy," and a "model" of how this service is to be constructed.

*"Driving therapy" is being offered to victims of freeway shootings and their immediate families as of 1987.

*Sex Addicts Anonymous was founded in 1978, and now there are similar groups such as Sexual Compulsives Anonymous, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, and Sexaholics. As at Alcoholics Anonymous sessions, which serve as the model for hundreds of other types of organizations, members introduce themselves as "I am so-and-so and I am a sex addict," and then tell all. Most members are middle class people, and sadly, a number of them are themselves counselors and therapists. Some psychiatrists have said that sex addicts are "coming out of the woodwork in hordes," and those who offer therapy against this "disorder" claim to have a long waiting list. We consider this development both sad and amusing (Newsweek, 20/7/87).

*In ages past, infants might fret at night, and parents might not always know what to do. Today, they can turn to the new specialty of infant psychiatry that will apply psychotherapy to newborn infants and apply their gruesome knowledge where formerly, wise older women were able to instruct newer, less experienced and less wise ones. Among the absurd things that infant psychiatrists do is to help premature infants get used to 24 hour-a-day bright lights, and help older children to respond to signs of societal failures such as child kidnapping. Among the absurdities of this field is to
have mothers bring high-chairs and food to the psychiatrist's office and demonstrate a feeding there in cases where eating disorders are at issue. Infant psychiatrists are chagrined that people have not yet taken them at full value. (Clipping from Michael Kendrick)

*In relation to children in Syracuse who are hospitalized as a result of accidents, someone who has been brainwashed by the PPP human service culture said in amazement, "They are doing very well despite the fact they haven't had any counseling." (CS, 9/12/87)

*Some major American corporations send their senior employees to psychotherapy at the same time they fire them. What a most peculiar society we have become.

Roping People in as Clients

*It is amazing that many people within shrinkery are trying to make money from promoting the idea that the mental and emotional development of the unborn child must be fostered even before it is born, including by talking and singing to it--and then some of these very same people turn around and claim that the unborn are not human.

*You got to teach 'em before they are eight....We are concerned about a campaign by Pediatric Projects Incorporated out of Santa Monica, California, to socialize children into cheerful acceptance of future patienthood. The organization publishes books with titles such as A Visit to the Sesame Street Hospital, a book to help explain the hospital to young children, and Hospitals are for Learning. It also publishes a "medical play kit" that has all the equipment to "play doctor." The rationales for these things are all very well stated if one looks at it from a low level, but we, always striving for the higher level of truth, are apprehensive about these messages that being in a hospital or a patient can be lots of fun, aimed at future client generations. How about a booklet such as "Watch out like a hawk when they want to send you to the hospital, you might be killed there"?

*According to some people, adult incontinence is "the last of the closet issues." Some people claim that there are up to 12 million Americans with this problem. Self-help groups of such adults sprung up in the mid-1980s, one of them somewhat problematically called HIP (Help for Incontinent People) (Time, 6/10/86). The problem with the problem is that at one time or another, everybody is apt to have a little of it at least temporarily, as when they sneeze or laugh hard. Thus, this could turn into a very fertile PPP focus, so to speak.

#4 PERVERSION -- We have commented before on the concept of a "nursing home without walls," and alert our readers to the fact that they should not be seduced into using this term when it refers to services being provided to people who live in their own homes. The implication is that anybody who needs any services in order to continue living in their own homes instead of a nursing home is in fact already living in a nursing home. Thus, one's own home is considered to be merely an extension of the nursing home--perhaps its vestibule. It would make just about as much sense to speak of anybody's residence as being a nursing home without nursing facilities. Thus, by using the above term, one legitimizes the identity--and even more so the scope--of nursing homes, almost to the point of interpreting the world as a nursing home.

*In Victoria, Australia, a 60-year old man who was somewhat unkempt because he could not afford new clothing, and who had poor short-term memory as a result of spinal meningitis suffered at age 18, had carried a diagnosis of alcoholism for most of his life because of these symptoms. The fact was that he was not particularly fond of alcohol, and there was no record that he had ever been drunk. Thus, for almost a lifetime, he had carried the wrong diagnosis; and in part because of it, he had been institutionalized for decades (Action, 9/87).
Enlarging or Defending the Scope of the PPP Service Empire
Via Insane Service Practices

The one good thing about insane human service practices is that once they are recognized as what they are, a fair proportion are uproariously funny.

*Now we have heard everything. At the 20th Annual Gatlinburg Conference on Research and Theory in MR and Developmental Disability, a supposed scientist gave a presentation on "The Relationship Between the Full Moon and the Behavior of Females with Profound Mental Retardation." We were scandalized to hear of F. Moon's blatant sexual exploitation of helpless profoundly retarded women, and hope that the government will do something about it.

*But above all, keep them dancing. Civic leaders and community groups in Syracuse were concerned about the desperate condition of inner city youths, what with high unemployment, crime and widely-prevalent drug use--and in response arranged a teen dance for them which thousands attended. We thought it rather poetic justice that after the dance, the crowd smashed 5 cars, 4 of them those of police officers.

*Considering that most people in human services have an extremely short memory, and that human service agencies themselves have an even shorter one, and that we have concluded in recent years that the human service memory horizon is about two years, we recently became convulsed in merriment upon running across a "3-year plan" by an agency, and a 10-year plan by a state. Chances are overwhelming that within one year, no one in the agency will remember that the 3-year plan exists. If they remember it, they will probably disavow it and write a new one.

*Who are the mental people here? We have heard of an instance where a resident in a facility for the mentally retarded touched one of the women residents on the arm--and the staff called a rape crisis center. Apparently, this is not an infrequent occurrence.

*We were told that a counselor at a training center determined on the basis of a vocational assessment that one of the trainees there was not "job-ready." When the trainee nonetheless said that she wanted to work in the community, the counselor interpreted this to mean that she needed psychotherapy instead, and told her that if she passed that, then she would be put into a pre-vocational training program. (Source item from Colleen Lampman, via John McKnight.)

*According to This Month in Mental Health (7/87), the first state-operated "community residence" for the mentally disordered on Long Island opened in 6/87--but it turns out that it is merely one of the old buildings on the grounds of the Central Islip Psychiatric Center, and is for 24 residents. One would think that even the imperial mental health system of New York with its 100 year-long history of perversions and abuse would at least do this sort of thing secretly if it did it at all, rather than in a deceptive fashion which is not likely to deceive many people.

*An example of another insane, and possibly disincentiving, service practice was recently provided by a handicapped friend of ours who uses a home aide-type service. With this kind of service, an aide spends so many hours a day at a person's home to provide assistance with housekeeping, cooking, shopping, personal hygiene, etc. Such services are often reimbursed by either Medicaid/Medicare or insurance-type programs. Our friend was supposed to have an aide come in for several hours starting early in the morning, but the scheduled aide called the day before to say she wouldn't be able to make it, and that she had already notified the home aide office to send a substitute for her. When the home aide office was called to confirm that a substitute was coming, it claimed that it did not know that a substitute was needed, but that it would find one. But when the time came for the aide to arrive, no substitute showed up, and the home aide office never called back. About an hour after the aide was supposed to
have been there, things were reaching a crisis point because this man could not be left alone, but a volunteer who had stayed with him overnight had already stayed longer than he had planned and had to be somewhere else soon. Because of the desperateness of the situation, another volunteer agreed to take the man for the rest of the hours during which he would have had an aide, and therefore, the home aide office was called and told to call off the search for a substitute aide for that day.

Later in the day, his friends received a very angry phone call from the aide office, telling them that if they had not cancelled the request for a substitute aide, the office could have received federal reimbursement for the aide’s time—even if they had not been able to recruit an aide, which appeared to have been the case. But because the office had been told that an aide would no longer be needed that day, federal reimbursement for that day was lost. Obviously, it is to the financial advantage of the agency to have on its record as many people as possible needing aides, but to actually deploy as few aides as possible, so as to reap federal payments while having to pay out as little as possible. Further, it is in the interest of the agency to delay finding substitute aides, even if the client is desperately in need of one, because they can be reimbursed for an aide’s services even if no aide actually works.

**Enlarging or Defending the Scope of the PPP Via Destructive Service Practices**

*The state administrators of vocational rehabilitation programs in the US are fighting tooth and claw against the concept of supported employment and the inclusion of more severely handicapped people in it. This reminds the TIPS editor of the olden days when school administrators would do everything short of murder to keep retarded people out of the schools.

*A survey found that about 10% of all the households in western Massachusetts were quite willing to adopt a teenager, yet the state’s Department of Social Services has reported having had trouble finding such homes for teenagers. Quite likely there is a good reason: if all of its teenagers were placed, it might have no more business. In fact, while 600 teenagers in the region were waiting for some kind of family placement, the state only managed to place about 40 per year. After the survey was announced, the state announced a supreme effort to try to raise its success rate by 20% (AP, 11/86).

*Home health aides can be a godsend to impaired people, but as we reported before, a significant proportion engage in crimes of theft and violence against their charges, including rape. (This also came to light at public hearings of the US Senate Special Committee on Aging.) When the fault lies with the employing agency in not adequately screening their applicants, then we can call this yet another form of systematized deathmaking of dependent people (AP, in SHJ, 28/4/87).

*A physically handicapped friend of ours who relies on home aide-type help in order to take care of her personal needs told us that she has begun to experience home aide assistance as narrowing her world of experience and keeping her limited to her own home, rather than freeing her to be able to do all sorts of things that non-handicapped people do. For instance, one of the rules of this type of assistance is that a client cannot spend more than two nights out of his/her own home and still continue to receive home aide help. This effectively means that a person is confined to his/her own home, which our friend described as being "institutionalized in my own home."

*As of 1986, there were about 750 articles in the medical literature on psychotropic medication with children, but fewer than 10, and thus about only 1%, dealt with the issue of how to reduce or terminate such medication (CEC, 1986).

*In the mid-1980s, the term "case management" began to assume a new meaning in the US hospital system. It began to refer to efforts by insurance companies to get patients out of the hospital as soon as possible so as to keep their costs down (SHJ, 10/4/87).
*The Salvation Army's Hope Acres Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre in Glencairn, Ontario, made and sold "wife beating paddles," that carried the prominent legend "When you can't reason with 'em--beat 'em!" Probably just the thing that alcohol-addicted people need, though we would think that equality demands that husband-beating paddles also be made and sold, particularly in light of the fact that more women beat their husbands than vice versa (Globe and Mail, 20/11/87; source item from Judith Sandys).

*It has come to light that the empty and unruly children of the empty middle and upper classes of Atlanta had been put wholesale on prescription drugs to control their behavior—supposedly hyperactivity and "attention deficit disorder." Apparently, the schools had put pressure on everybody else, including the families, to have their children put on these drugs in order to make schooling easier for the schools. Some children had been put on one drug during the day and another one to counteract it at night (Newsweek, 20/4/87). It seems that they need our human service technology workshop awfully badly down in Georgia.

Enlarging or Defending the PPP Economy by Preventing Adaptive Use of Service Funds

*A dramatic example of a phenomenon that is almost too PPP to believe was reported in a news item in the (British) Guardian (6/11/87). One of the governmental authorities in the London area spent about $2 million on hotel rooms for homeless people—and then failed to place any homeless people into these rooms. The department that engaged in this absurdity was comprised of 46 staff members who were all suspended while this scandal was being investigated. An official in another department opined that the event was the result of a management breakdown. Nor is that all: the news item was adjacent to a large advertisement for special "bedding" to give "comfort for your favorite animal."

*The phoniness of the alleged commitment of the imperial powers to convert PPP efforts into actual employment were dramatically illustrated when the Reagan administration sponsored "supported employment" (SE) forums all over the country in 1985 (thus unproductive consumptive activities)—but in 1987, it requested that $22 million designated in the congressional budget for supported employment be withheld, and proposed no funds at all in the 1988 budget for SE (Ability & Enterprise, Summer 1987).

*A committee of the US National Academy of Sciences said in 1985 that many nursing home patients received "shockingly deficient care." In the same year, the US government spent $10.1 billion on nursing home care under Medicare and Medicaid (NY Times, in SHJ, 5/7/86).

*In 1987, the Syracuse United Way raised funds by means of billboards and brochures featuring photos of service vignettes, in most instances juxtaposing a helper and a helpee in some fashion. It turned out that these photos had all been faked by actors, thus showing where some of one's money would go if one contributed through this route.

Problematic Human Service Practices not Intrinsically Linked to PPP Realities

*Lipsky, M. (1980). Street level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Lipsky (1980) describes street-level bureaucracies as those that deal directly with clients, including schools, law courts, police departments, welfare offices, etc. He very lucidly describes many of the problems encountered in such bureaucracies, including that clients' needs are in conflict with organizational interests and workers' desire to not be inconvenienced; that procedures and regulations passed down to direct workers from above are often impossible to understand and/or to apply; that many workers who enter such service
with idealism soon become infected and eventually corrupted by the real functions and purposes of the bureaucracy, which are not to serve clients' needs or to promote other social goods; that procedures designed to introduce equality into service quickly become obstacles to people receiving any service at all; that demand for service always rises to exceed its supply; etc. Unfortunately, the strategies that he proposes as solutions do not seem to hold much hope of effectiveness, because they do not address the root problem. He suggests such things as greater exercise of autonomy and rights by clients, often in the form of consumer organizations (such as the welfare rights organization of the 1970s), both financial and other rewards to keep servers enthusiastic and involved, and that some of the calcification introduced by civil service unions be removed so as to allow greater flexibility. While these things would probably help, they do not address the fundamental problem of a bureaucratic approach to service, of formalized and organized charity (Staatscaritas), nor the fact that our social problems are becoming so huge as to be practically unaddressable via anything short of a societal repentance and fundamental reform.

However, the book can probably be recommended for service workers who need to have these insights about bureaucracies pointed out to them, as well as for entrenched workers who may be able to recognize their plight in Lipsky's descriptions, though reading the book may leave workers with a sense that there is little to be done—but then, that is how it is.

So often in history, human beings with certain undesired characteristics have been subjected to scientific research which was so profoundly reflective, or at least approximative, of prevailing devaluing perceptions as to have lost much or all of its scientific identity. A good example is the history of scientific research with Down Syndrome. One typical progression of research questions has been as follows.

1. Studies are conducted to resolve whether the human-like creatures with a certain condition at issue can be said to be human at all.
2. The families of the affected individuals are studied in order to see what deficiency within them might have caused the condition, and siblings or offspring may be studied to see to what degree they too might be afflicted by it.
3. Behavioral studies are conducted on the group to see whether laws already known to be valid with humans generally also apply to them. When I came into the field of mental retardation in the 1950s, this was the thrust of a significant portion of the psychological research studies with retarded persons. One particular question that was raised was whether the laws of learning known up to then also applied to retarded persons.
4. When it comes to the scientific/professional literature having to do with presumed treatment of these dubiously human creatures with such conditions, one can infer from the literature, even if it is not spelled out, that two questions are really on the minds of human service leaders: (a) might strategies that are not very effective with ordinary people (e.g., purely verbal counseling) be effective with these individuals? (b) Are treatments known to harm ordinary people (e.g., electroshock to the brain) good and effective treatments for these kinds of persons?
5. Finally, it is decided that the group at issue is really not much different, that what works with other people works with them (and vice versa), etc. At that point, the cycle starts all over with a new group.

According to a UPI article in the Honolulu Sunday Star Bulletin & Advertiser (27/9/87), social scientists have "discovered" that people who are alone and abandoned are not necessarily lonely. A professor of gerontology in Florida has "found" that people who have no friends at all are the least lonely among people in general. Similarly, he claims to have "found" that elderly people who live alone are less lonely than people who live with their families or their children all the time. To us, this sounds like another example of social scientists "proving" that a course of action that a society has embarked on is good and moral. That is, once society has decided that it will reject and abandon its elderly members, then scientists will be found who can prove that this is actually not harmful to the elderly—and may, in fact,
be good for them. The same sort of reasoning could of course be extended to justify the abandonment of handicapped people into unsupported "community living" (what we would call dumping), as well as the abandonment of all sorts of homeless street people.

*This may be hard to believe, but yet another absurdity in the federal funding-associated regulations for "skilled nursing facilities" is that it is only necessary for a registered nurse to be on duty for 8 hours per day. Perhaps it would have been better to call these facilities "residential care facilities" instead.

*Yet another version of the IPP and the IEP is IFSP, the "individualized family service plan."

*We do not approve of the phrase "having challenging needs" as a euphemism for being very severely and multiply handicapped. After all, even a sex maniac can have very challenging needs.

**Human Service Crazes**

A human service craze is a relatively short-lived, faddish practice in human services that has either no validity, or only a very modest amount, but that is widely embraced as a major concept, tool, or even "breakthrough."

Human service crazes became routine when human service began to be "materialized" (as we explain in some of our workshops), and people expected quick and easy miracles from the new deity, a rationalistic science, especially in medicine, and hence human service in general.

While crazes are not intrinsically tied to a PPP economy, they de facto play a large PPP service role in a PPP society.

At this time, a major portion of human service practice consists of an incoherent amalgam of crazes. One can image human services as a steamroller where the roller is made up of a patchwork of craze plates. After every revolution of the roller, some old crazes are gone, and some new ones have appeared. By the time the juggernaut has rolled forward a few revolutions, a whole new quilt of crazes has taken the place of the previous ones. Commonly, one finds that every new craze is announced with such ballyhoo that one could conclude that no one has ever seen or heard of crazes before.

We should note that the duration of a craze or "wave" seems to be somewhere between 3-7 years before it vanishes or collapses. Apparently, there is a certain pool of people susceptible to a particular "wave," or a class of waves, and a certain amount of time is needed for the existence of a wave to be adequately communicated to its susceptible victims whom we can interpret as craze seekers or wave seekers. Then we estimate that a craze seeker "practices" the wave for maybe 1-3 years before being either disillusioned, or encaptured by another wave, and often both. Indeed, many become susceptible to another wave for the very reason that they have become disillusioned with the previous one but not yet disillusioned about waves and crazes in general.

The remarkable thing about modern crazes is that some of them may actually last only about a year, even in human services. For instance, in response to Nancy Reagan's initiative in 1985, about 1000 "Say No" clubs sprang up trying to keep youngsters from becoming hooked on drugs. A year later, one hardly heard of them anymore.

Of course, some waves last considerably longer, and there are bound to be very good and discernible reasons for this other than their inherent validity and merit. For instance, the "learning disability" wave has lasted much longer than most, and must therefore either fill some significant needs or play some very important functions which have not as yet been met or captured by other waves. Conceivably, some perversions, such as the learning disabilities wave, may be so absolutely "perfect" that none of the replacement waves will ever meet the needs or play the functions equally well. They may only gain entry because the absurdity or invalidity of the "perfect" wave became so patent that no amount of cognitive dissonance could deal with it anymore.
Craze Syndromes

At any given time, some syndromes (usually of little or no scientific validity) are "in," or at least are even more associated with crazes than others.

Autism crazes. Few human mental afflictions are as surrounded by irrationality and crazes as so-called autism. The new journal, Autism Research Review, is chock full of craze theories, false announcements (e.g., see Nos. 2 & 3) and premature euphoria about various "discoveries." One of the crazes announced in the No. 3 1987 issue is "holding therapy," which had been given a rave coverage in the 8/87 issue of LIFE magazine. It consists of tightly embracing a child, if need be with both arms and legs, for extended periods regardless of the child's resistance. Some people are convinced that this brings about "total recovery." However, dramatic improvement with this technique had been reported as early as 1920--and yet there is still no convincing research on it one way or the other. If things were rational, then one would think that the more grandiose the claims for a technique are, the more people would be concerned about establishing its validity in research.

The latest drug craze with autistic children is to administer them drugs which presumably block the opiate receptors in the brain, on the assumption that such children are producing too many opiates themselves, and that this is what cuts them off from the environment. Early results have been reported to be "impressive," and negative effects "mild and transient." Again, we warn that this is an almost universal finding early during the introduction of a new drug. Yet other researchers believe that autism is due to a genetic enzyme abnormality which they are trying to treat with a special diet and nutritional substance. Yet other scientists claim to have found immune system abnormalities in autistic persons. Yet others put their money on peptide abnormalities, some find chromosome abnormalities, some believe there is a link to tuberous sclerosis, and on and on. These things are reported side by side in the Autism Research Review International without any critical interlinkage, and certainly without any sense of humour. Each is described as a free-standing discovery of great importance. Nor of course are those types of reports and theories exhaustive.

The Fra X craze. First there was the "fragile X syndrome," also scientificated by making it look like a scientific formula, Fra X, a vague entity interpreted to be associated with "learning disability," "autism," even Down Syndrome, and a condition consisting of an amalgamate of peculiar symptoms, including a long face. Now comes the additional discovery of "Fra(2)(q13) and Inv(9)(p11q12)," which will probably soon be called syndromes, and which have already been said to cause "autism."

Science (24/7/87) carried yet another article on a research study of the so-called "fragile X syndrome" which experimented on a "hybrid" i.e., a rodent chromosome joined to the human sex chromosome X. We once more assure our readers that scientists will stop at absolutely nothing that is doable, and should laws ever outlaw certain scientifically doable things, they will undoubtedly do them secretly if they think that they can get away with it.

The Alzheimer's craze. Our past mockeries of the recent announcements of the discovery of the genetic causes of so-called "Alzheimer's disease" have not been in vain. A major article in Science (31/7/87) announced the discovery of a degenerative neural disease on certain Pacific islands that might present as dementia (thus "Alzheimer's"), Parkinsonism, and other degenerative disorders. The disease seems to result from the consumption of a certain amino acid found in traditional local foods. As the populations began to shift from these traditional to other kinds of foods, these degenerative conditions began to disappear.

Finally, a National Institutes of Health panel has come out warning physicians to be cautious in attaching a dementia diagnosis to a patient, or to imply that the dementia is irreversible. Among other things, the panel noted that virtually every medication or disease can cause dementia, and many dementia cases are reversible. Unfortunately, the panel still swallowed the Alzheimer's mythology, even though it agreed that it is a diagnosis by subtraction, so to speak, i.e., it is the diagnosis given when nothing else accounts for the symptoms, plus the symptoms are believed to be irreversible.
The Alcoholism craze. Alcohol takes a dreadful toll. It is implicated in about 30% of the 30,000 suicides in the US annually, and half of the 46,000 driving fatalities in the US in 1987; it accounts for about 70% of the 4,000 drowning deaths in 1986; and nearly 1/3 of the 523,000 inmates in state prisons had been drinkers. About 45% of the country's homeless are believed to have been heavy drinkers.

Alcoholism first appeared listed as a disease in the American Standard Classified Nomenclature of Disease in 1933. Since then, there has been a campaign, recently become relentless, to medicalize alcoholism. It has been so successful that both the professional community and the public has just about swallowed this propaganda and interpreted alcoholism as a disease, as exemplified by a cover story of Time 13/11/87. As is so often the case, not only is alcoholism interpreted as a disease but as a genetic one, and thus "nothing to be ashamed of." Some promoters of this quasi-cult even speak of alcoholic people having the X-factor, much like the Rh factor in the blood. Because alcoholism appears more commonly in men, the inheritance is interpreted as sex-linked. There have even been claims that people with the disease have a distinct EEG pattern. We are now also told that it will probably not be long before the very gene for alcoholism will be discovered, and then it will be possible to identify people who "have the disease."

Fascinatingly, even though alcoholism is supposed to be a disease, there are no clear criteria for its "diagnosis," and there is as much disagreement on its diagnosis as there has long been on the diagnosis of any number of mental disorders.

It is also fascinating to learn that two veterans have brought suit against the US Veterans' Administration because they wanted disability payments and the VA said that their drinking was willful misconduct. Arguing that they are alcoholic and under the control of forces beyond their control (which is exactly what the National Council on Alcoholism has been saying), they have claimed that they are being discriminated against in having their rightful medical disability payments withheld.

Whether an individual is under forces beyond his or her control is probably not an empirically provable statement (Science, 4/9/87). As such, by the criteria of the philosophy of science, it is not in the scientific domain but in that of religion. This should not be surprising since the entire alcoholism ideology of the establishment is, in our opinion, non-scientific, and at least quasi-religious.

Ironically, but not surprisingly, a lot of experts in alcoholism pin their hopes on curing the disease by means of other drugs, either those that block craving for alcohol or those that make a person deadly nauseous upon drinking. It is also ironic that so many of the so-called treatment programs ultimately rely on Alcoholics Anonymous, who in turn do not believe that there is such a thing as treatment, but only the decision to begin a new life.

The Hepatitis craze. One of the more recent crazes in human services is the promotion of hepatitis B vaccination, or at least screening for hepatitis B exposure or infection, of human service workers who are in contact with client groups that have a relatively high risk for contracting hepatitis B. Until roughly 1975, one rarely heard anything about a systematic contraction of hepatitis A or B by client groups—not even in institutional contexts. Around the time a hepatitis B vaccine began to become available, consciousness of hepatitis infections increased. Since roughly the mid-1980s, this consciousness has turned almost into alarm by, or supposedly on behalf of, human service workers, something like a baby AIDS scare.

Chances are that the incidence of hepatitis B was high among mentally retarded people during the days of large crowded institutions which were often unsanitary. We are not aware of any information that hepatitis B is currently on any significant increase in the mentally retarded population, though it probably is among those populations who are highest at risk of catching AIDS. So what is
one to make of a bit of a mini-craze in recent years of warning non-retarded people
not to eat next to retarded individuals, to wear gloves around them, to forbid
retarded persons to go on community trips, and so on—all supposedly in order to
prevent retarded people from infecting others with hepatitis B? A friend of ours,
Jack Yates, thinks that this is a classical case of image transfer from AIDS to
hepatitis, and from people at risk of AIDS to people who are retarded. One therefore
has to ask further what unconscious motives may have been behind the recent distribution
of brochures on hepatitis by the Association for Retarded Citizens-US. It gives an
800 toll-free call-in number for further information on hepatitis, which unfortunately
is called the HEP line. (Also, "hep-hep" is the war cry of anti-Jewish pogroms.)
ARC may thereby play powerfully into latent negative imagery about retarded persons,
and contribute to all sorts of negative long-term impacts on them.

We thus ask the following questions: Have hepatitis infections actually become
dramatically more frequent among either client or staff populations? If not, then
why has a scare sprung up? And if yes, why would that be the case? We do not know
the answers to these questions, but would appreciate any relevant information from
among the readership.

Miscellaneous other syndrome crazes. We have already mentioned winter depression
(SAD) and Labor Day depression. Here is a miscellany of other syndrome crazes.

We are both astonished and amused to read about the latest craze disease, namely
so-called "Yuppie Disease." It consists of people losing all their energy and being
really dragged down, falling asleep readily, and hardly able to do anything. It
affects mostly young Caucasian professionals. Of course, everyone is looking for an
as yet unidentified virus (Time, 29/6/87). We would ascribe it to the anomic,
emptiness and boredom of the kinds of lives that the vast majority of the victims
of this disease lead. If they find it, we shall eat crow; if they don't, we shall
crow.

In 1987 there was yet another announcement (there has been at least one a year
for 30 years), this time from the University of British Columbia, that one of the major
genesis for schizophrenia had apparently been identified (NYS Advocate, 6/87).

Epidemic breaks out at Training Institute. Not only Dr. Wolfensberger, but his
entire staff, have been diagnosed as having pre-Alzheimer syndrome. Further, some of
us have it much worse than others. While the pre-Alzheimer syndrome is asymptomatic,
it's diagnosis at the Training Institute has nevertheless precipitated profound
consternation. The prognosis is that all those thusly diagnosed will, if only they
live long enough, one day have Alzheimer syndrome. However, it should be noted with
some relief that Alzheimer himself died before he got it. We are told that short of
a premature death, there is neither prevention nor cure.

The Animal Craze

By mid-1986, at least 1100 US human services were relying on animals as therapists
(Newsweek, 1/9/86).

*One of the ancestors of the current companion animal craze was apparently a
British government program during World War II which furnished any person who could
prove to be widowed or handicapped and alone with a parakeet and a monthly stipend
for bird seed—apparently a version of Staatscaritas (A Story That I Heard (1987)).

*The president of the Delta Society called its 1986 Boston Conference "the most
remarkable event on humans and animals since Noah's ark." 850 people showed up for it
from all over the world. Research results reported there included such esoteric ones
as that women who had owned dogs in childhood scored higher on tests of self-reliance,
social skills, sociability and tolerance. (We also assume that they would never dignify
a male cad by referring to him as 'you dog.') The Delta Society has, in essence,
promoted the idea that animals are human (or vice versa) and has begun to announce
that it will give away grants on topics such as 'What is the meaning of Dogs/Cats'
Relationships to People," "How Do Such Relationships Develop," "What is their Impact," etc. This was announced with utter gravity in between announcements of grants for energy research, steroid interaction, chromosome structures, multiphoton phenomena, etc., in the Syracuse University periodical on research and its funding at the university.

*There is a service in Boston called Helping Hands which sets up handicapped people with "simian aides," i.e., with trained monkeys (source item from Sandra Meucci).

*To those who think that the current animal as service worker craze is only happening in the US, we can tell that we saw an ad in The Guardian (a major British daily, 4/11/87) advertising an opening for the directorship of the Society for Companion Animal Studies.

*Some authorities opine that one reason for the popularity of pets is that pets are for many people the last remaining contact with living nature. But some of the people in the animal companion craze business say that it is the response to a decline in tender affectionate social exchanges in our society. If that is so, it is certainly a sad admission of defeat to reach for the cat or dog instead of addressing the causes of this decline.

*We remember Brigitte Bardot in the films of our youth constantly coyly dropping her underpants when a man was around, which in those days created quite a sensation. In 1987, Bardot announced "I gave my beauty and my youth to men, but now I am giving my wisdom and experience, the best of me, to animals." She was referring to her animal protection work (Time, 29/6/87).

*Gone to the dogs. In Syracuse, a chihuahua dog (one of the smallest species of dogs) was removed from its owner's home and placed in a "foster home" when it was learned that two boys were having sexual relations with the animal. However, though the boys, both teenagers, were ordered to undergo counseling, they were also granted "visitation rights." (SHJ, 10/4/87)

*One of the last installments of the Prairie Home Companion radio show spoofed the companion animal craze by featuring a dog rental agency with "dogs for all occasions," including pacer dogs for joggers--presumably dogs that would chase a jogger into a very fast trot indeed.

*Finally, the Institute of Exotica-Erotica-Bullotica has hit upon the brilliant idea of grooming "hounds" as humanistic psychotherapists, noting their natural attributes of unconditional positive regard, warmth, compassion, and the ability to openly express emotions—all qualities long ago identified as crucial preconditions to the success of any form of psychotherapy. The proposal was conceived after the Institute had to admit that its earlier-designed bullotica therapy (ordinarily referred to as bull therapy for short), though widely successful, simply could not deal with the vast need, considering the long periods of preparation required for bull therapists. In contrast, hounds are instant humanists and require no further training. Also, unlike bull therapists, they neither repress, suppress nor deny their emotions. They never ask embarrassing questions, waste time designing experiments, nor do they petulantly whine for data. An additional boon is that they are instantly comfortable in nude therapy, and a hound being observed licking its genitals has been found to be a great ice-breaker for such groups. Further, the hounds are available 'round the clock on call, and rarely demand vacations. They can operate right in patients' homes at low cost—a marked savings over sending out social workers. Drawbacks are relatively few and minor, such as urinating on the floor, and occasionally inappropriate responses (licking their patients sloppily across the face at the wrong time). Bassett hounds appear to be best suited for analytical therapies, Dobermans for behavioral ones, and Chihuahuas for rational-emotive ones. (Article, by Bartz and Vogler, from Hank Bersani.)
Miscellaneous Other Crazes

*Despite lack of evidence for its validity, the US army has put hundreds of its generals through a crazed psychopop training program called Neurolinguistic Programming which borders on being a religion (Science, 11/12/87). Apparently, this came about because army psychologists who were enamoured of the human potential movement and various utopianisms managed to persuade top brass of the validity of their pseudoscientific religions.

*Story-telling is one of the in-crazes these days. Combining this craze with the psychotherapy cult is a new book entitled Oriental Stories as Tools in Psychotherapy.

*Death and dying (mostly other people's) has become such a popular human service craze that people hardly blink when told that there is such a thing as a "death and dying specialist." (Source clipping from Elizabeth Carmichael.)

*Yet another "networking" perversion has come to our attention. A new organization, called EnterNet, is being established as a "national affiliate network of networking consultants." Networkers International is a "professional society for people who want to become more effective networkers." These organizations are holding a workshop entitled "Cultivating skills in such areas as fund raising, media relations, governmental affairs, volunteer development, and corporate relations."

*People have been hyped so much into a mentality of expecting medicine to perform miracles and to defeat any human ill--preferably by "magic bullet" drugs—that one phenomenon of contemporary medicine is the advent of "miracle drugs" in search of a disease (Newsweek, 3/11/86). These are drugs that have been highly publicized as being bound to be highly effective against something, with their manufacturers often applying for approval to apply the drug for one or even many diseases, and the stock market heavily betting on a great success. Perhaps the first such drug in the modern era was DMSO which enjoyed a brief craze. One drug industrialist admitted that some of the hype is connected with trying to maintain the "optimism of investors."

*The TIPS editor received a letter in the mail on which the cover proclaimed: "The Johns Hopkins University announces a breakthrough in the treatment of self-injurious behavior," thus playing on the expectations of the people of our times that science can do anything, breakthroughs are everywhere, and the problem of self-injury (mostly by profoundly handicapped people) is now solved. What the "breakthrough" amounted to was a feedback device: a person has to wear a special headgear which records any violent movement of the head, and which then triggers an electric shock to an arm or leg. The device is marketed by Human Technologies Inc. out of St. Petersburg, Florida.

Dismantling the Imperial Services

One way of dismantling and delegitimizing the disfunctionalities and shenanigans of something is to unveil its falsehoods and pretensions, and poke fun at it. In addition to the dismantling we did in other sections, we add the following.

*We read of a wonderfully PPP project in the 17/8/87 Newsweek: the US government first spent $3.2 billion to construct a launching complex for the space shuttle in California—and no sooner was it completed than the government spent a huge sum to have it moth-balled and maintained in moth balls. We could easily image similar human service related projects. For instance, the government could underwrite the construction of thousands of institutions and prisons all over the country, particularly in economically depressed areas, and then stimulate the economies of those areas by having these institutions operate "in moth balls," without any residents.
They would still need all kinds of maintenance personnel and groundskeepers, engineers, and a constant process of renovation to keep the facility in a condition so that it could be almost instantly deployed to use. Further, such construction would also take time out of farming and thereby contribute to the alleviating of the "farm problem."

*Another modest proposal. The TIPS editor had another one of his brilliant ideas. Noting that in some New York State institutions for the mentally handicapped, many or even all of the staff physicians may be unlicensed to practice in the community, in some instances because of histories of mental disorder or drugs, it occurred to us that the state could save a fortune by simply hiring thousands of mentally disordered persons into the positions of "psychiatrist." This would enable the state to fire all psychiatrists who are not insane (since they would no longer be needed), and probably save millions of dollars--after all, psychiatrists can probably be hired at a lower rate than what it costs to keep a mentally disordered person in one of the institutions of the state of New York. Also, since so many of the problems of the mentally disordered are financial ones, this would not only solve many of their problems but possibly even result in their total rehabilitation. The homelessness rate would also be dramatically lowered, since so many homeless people in New York State are mentally disordered and at one time resided in an institution.

*If the TI announced a workshop on "Preparing oneself morally for the imminent end of the world," we would be amazed if more than a dozen people showed up. However, if we announced "A novel therapeutic technique (hyper-superbo-supremo therapy), with live demonstration, for victims of eschatological phobias," hundreds would clamor for admission.

*Another one of our friends simulated the following announcement at an airport: "Will the relatives and friends awaiting the arrival of Flight 372 from Chicago please report to the Grief Therapy Lounge?"

Flash Flash Flash Flash Flash

As this is going to press, several additional items relevant to the above sections have come in.

*In regard to the alcoholism craze: Time and Newsweek commonly have cover stories on the same topics within days or weeks of each other, and Newsweek had its alcoholism cover story 18/1/88, but focusing on children of alcoholic parents, and reporting that they have abnormal brains and brain waves, and it gave positive interpretations to bat therapy (hitting pillows with bats), art therapy, a Sobriety board game, and--of course--counseling. Poor alcoholic people: their counselors sometimes have sexual affairs with them. It was more forthright on the genetics issue, admitting that there is a genetic intolerance for alcohol (many Asians have it), but no evidence for an alcohol-craving gene; and that 60% of those who drink excessively have no alcoholism history in their families.

*In regard to shrinkery: imagine that in all of Tokyo, there are only four psychiatrists (Time, 18/1/88). How do the Japanese manage to be so productive? Also, we learned that "deprivation neurosis" has just been discovered, caused by "lack of affirmation." Read all about it in a book entitled Healing the Unaffirmed.

Signs of the Times

For some reason we have more signs of the times than usual. Is it a sign of the times that such signs are increasing? Several of these signs also relate to the theme of the PPP society.
One of our friends recently decided to go back and reread TIPS from the first issue to the most recent. He said that this had a more profound impact on him than having read TIPS 5-6 times a year as it came out. He also noted an interesting thought about the concept of something being a sign of our times. The fact that A kills B is not a sign of our times. It has always happened. It probably always will. But the fact that A is then applauded, B seen as worthless, and the fact that killing has occurred is denied, now that is a sign of our times.

The American labor movement suffered a terrible blow to its integrity and credibility when, in fall 1987, it lent its prestige to a strike by football players who were making $90,000 a week, and when sports patrons that attended games played by "non-union players" were harrassed by picket lines accusing them of being scabs, and when unionists barely on the edge of employment themselves supported this sorry charade.

There has been a dramatic increase in cosmetic surgery, and particularly so among men during the mid-1980s. The increase comes mostly from middle class people in their 30s and 40s. The obsession with appearance can go so far that some women start having face lifts in their early 20s, and have had several by the time they are in their 30s (Time, 14/9/87).

On weekends or holidays, and particularly when the weather is bad, West Germany becomes one big traffic jam on its highways. Such traffic jams may be 50 miles long.

The good news is that the McDonald's Corporation has announced in Fall '87 its intent to hire 10,000 handicapped young persons. The bad news of course is that they will be at least somewhat clown-imaged because of the corporation's long affiliation with clownery.

In 1977, a Hartford, Conn., foundation appointed a panel of experts who appointed sculptor Carl Andre to create a "major piece of sculpture" for the center of the city. The artist deposited 36 rocks on a bit of park land and presented his bill for $87,000. The citizens (who had common sense) roared in protest, but the art panel (who didn't) made sure the artist got paid (Newsweek, 14/7/86).

In 11/87, a picture of flowers painted by van Gogh when the artist was locked up in a mental asylum sold for $53.9 million—the highest price ever fetched at an auction for a work of art. Farmers who grow food, or even flowers, have their farms taken away by those who would pay $53.9 million for a mere facsimile.

Even though there were 1.8 million drunk driving arrests in the US in 1986, drunken driving has been on the increase. As we mentioned before, it is very difficult to make progress against drunken driving because our society in essence approves of it, probably because so many people do it. One of the states that has made greatest progress is Minnesota, where an astonishing 42,000 people lost driving privileges in 1986 because of drinking. As a result, highway fatalities there declined dramatically (Newsweek, 21/12/87).

There are some indications that use of street drugs is down among the middle classes, even as it continues to rise in the lower social classes (Newsweek, 23/11/87). In 1987, Detroit was estimated to have 10,000 so-called "crack houses," i.e., places where cocaine is sold (Time, 7/12/87). One out of 6 members of the US federal work force is believed to use illicit drugs on a regular basis, and 1/3 of the employees of the New York Transit Authority do. Altogether, 23 million Americans use illicit drugs, which is almost 10%, and of course a much higher figure when one eliminates young children and the elderly (Science, 6/11/87).
We have mentioned that alienation from the time dimension is one of the peculiar characteristics of people of this age. Yet another example of this is the fact that General Motors starts making certain automobiles advertised as being the 19xx model two years before the model year. For instance, if anyone buys a 1988 vehicle, they may be buying a car made in 1986. Further, someone who buys a used car of a certain model may actually buy a car that could be almost two years older than the model year would indicate (CR, 1/88).

In 1986, a genetics professor offered a course on AIDS for 10 students, but managed to squeeze in 14. A year later, the course enrolled 500 students, and had to use the biggest classroom on campus (Science, 23/10/87).

A woman took her small grandson shopping for some shirts, and to her amazement and shock discovered that at the end of a rack of boys' shirts, there was a display of condoms (AAI, 1/88). What is next? Condoms in the candy store, at the bottom of ice cream cones, as special prizes in cereal boxes?

One child to another: "I found a condom on the veranda." Other child, "What's a veranda?" (Context, 1/12/87).

There have been efforts to ban the sale of cigarettes in government buildings. One problem is that in many of these buildings, blind vendors hold the sales concessions (as a result of a long-standing practice of rehabilitation services), and these vendors are very much opposed to the ban. As a consolation prize, the director of the Lung Association suggested to the blind vendors that they might sell condoms to make up for the loss of cigarette income (Braille Monitor, 1987; source item from Griff Hogan).

Certain sunglasses have now appeared that are being advertised as safer in this era of depletion of the atmospheric ozone. (Source item from Michael Rungie)

Just since 1980, there have been dramatic increases in the number of liability suits filed in the US, the probability that a suit will be successful (that figure doubled between the 1960s and 1980s), and the average damage award. One of the contributors to all this has been a rapid expansion of awards for "pain and suffering." Federal product liability cases more than doubled, with an average litigation growth rate of 20% a year. Medical malpractice suits increased about 600% between 1976 and 1984. There were similar but not quite as dramatic increases in suits against municipalities and physician-owned companies. Just between 1983 and 1985, New York had to pay out double for liability claims, namely $150 million. The size of municipal liability awards rose about 8-fold between 1982 and 1985. (Science, 2/10 & 18/12/87)

The US Patent Office in 1987 awarded a patent for a device that would keep the severed head of an animal alive for an extended period of time. (EA, 11 & 12/87)

When the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory was put together in the 1930s, the item "I am an important person" was included in order to test for grandiose ideas, and thereby for potential mental disorder. Indeed, only 9% of the original sample replied yes, but just what impact the human potential movement and the growth of self-centered individualism has accomplished in only a few decades was revealed by the fact that in recent samples, 80% of Negro males, 69% of Caucasian females, and 49% of Caucasian males said "yes." (Science, 19/9/86)
We were perturbed to read about the incredible farrago of insane and cultic beliefs and practices that actress Shirley MacLaine has stirred together into a quasi-religion which she now promotes at workshops which, though they are very expensive ($300 for 2 days), have already been taken during the first half of 1987 by more than 10,000 suckers with too much money, too much time and too little sense, in 15 cities. There are elements of astrology, reincarnation, licentious sex phantasies, numerology, color-theory, psychic phenomena, diets, healing crystals, and so on (Newsweek, 27/7/87; see also Time cover story, 7/12/87). Her "system" even includes a belief that humans are divine. If ever there can be such a thing as an unequivocally false religion, this must be it, yet she has become the guru of throngs. Thank goodness that so far, there do not appear to have been any child or other human sacrifices yet, but we would not be surprised if that were next, particularly since there is something witchy about it all. Developments such as these bear out many things the TI has been teaching about our times.

*There are several items of relevance to the divisioning among genders and families.

A modernistic phenomenon in West Germany is that 61,000 juveniles are suing their own parents mostly for financial support that the parents no longer want to render because the juveniles have taken up a decadent lifestyle (AW, 5/12/87). This is yet another symptom of the dissolution of the family, and of the divisions among age groups.

There has been a small avalanche of books written almost entirely by women on how bad men are, promoting a vicious and hostile division between the sexes. Book titles in just 2 years have included the following: Women Who Love Too Much; Smart Women, Foolish Choices; Men Who Can't Love; No Good Men; Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them; Why Men Are the Way They Are; Successful Women, Angry Men; Women Men Love, Women Men Leave; and How to Love a Difficult Man. To this can be added the second so-called Hite Report of 1987, according to which it is almost impossible to find wives contented with their marriages. Oddly enough, according to this "report," women are vastly happier with men they are not married to. If one were scientific, one could conclude that the only men worth having are those who have affairs with married women. Amazingly, scores of millions of women eat this sort of literature up, particularly younger middle-class and upwardly mobile ones. One wonders what good can come of all this. Perhaps there is also a connection with many women having gone bonkers over the beast in the television series, "Beauty and the Beast." The beast is a deformed fur-covered and befanged mutant (Newsweek, 28/12/87), presumably an improvement over the real thing.

If that sounds far-fetched, consider that it was recently discovered (Newsweek, 11/1/88) that Shere Hite, the author of the 2 Hite Reports, was featured in a 1971 Playboy picture in such a pose as to suggest she was having sex with a dog.

More and more couples (700,000 now in the US) live in commuter marriages, i.e., they live apart (sometimes for decades), most of the time because they work in different locales. Academia now tells us that commuter marriages are happier than "normal" ones, and have lower adultery and divorce rates. We suspect that this is yet another way for the intelligentsia to legitimize the divisions and separations that mark our era. (E.g., Time, 16/11/87) On the other hand, perhaps the only men women can love and be happily married to are those who aren't there. After all, a woman writing in HERizons, a Canadian feminist periodical, said rather ambivalently, "Women must achieve equality with men. But who wants equality with animals?" (Interim, 12/87). Perhaps the writer would prefer women to oppress men?

Increasingly, women accuse ex-husbands of sexually abusing their children, with the men accusing the ex-wives of malicious slander aimed at winning child custody at any cost. In fact, 30% of child custody cases involve charges of sexual abuse. So far, the women seem to have the upper hand insofar as people are more apt to believe them, and because there is now an underground network of former child abuse victims who will shuffle contested children from one "safe house" to another. About this practice, one may wonder whether the risk of child abuse does not increase dramatically, particularly if it is true that people abused as children tend to be abusive themselves (Newsweek, 19/10/87).
And can we not all agree that the appearance of two songs ("Luka" and "Dear Mr. Jesus") about child abuse among the top 10 hits within a year's time constitutes a sign of the times?

*We have already mentioned the children's trading cards that are available (and very popular too) called Garbage Pail Kids, depicting children with all sorts of appalling habits, disgusting behaviors, etc. We have interpreted this as yet another expression of the hatred of children and their interpretation as monsters—one of the remarkable signs of our times—that leads to and legitimizes all sorts of child-trashing. In the same vein now comes another set of trading cards, called Grossville High, developed by an artist and a junior college professor (source item from Elizabeth Carmichael). These depict all sorts of disgusting high school teachers and other school personnel, as well as pretty revolting students. What's next? Maybe a set on Nasty Neighbors? Or Grotesque Grandparents? Or Nauseating Sick Patients, to become popular with hospital personnel?

*Just in time for Christmas 1987, a new gadget came out that drivers could put on their cars whereby they could give other drivers the impression that they were being fired at with machine guns, grenade launchers or laser rays. The items began to sell like hotcakes. The question is whether this sort of thing will reduce highway violence or contribute to it even further.

*If readers think that TIPS is gloomy, they should start watching TV comedies, so-called sitcoms. In late 1987, they featured such hilarious themes as an elderly landlady being brutally murdered by an intruder, a man who may have been drunk being killed when his truck tumbles over a bridge, a character dying of AIDS, someone else suffering from 'Alzheimer's disease,' a middle-class mother of two finding herself homeless in Manhattan, and a family watching in horror as their whole house goes up in flames. Three so-called comedies have very few jokes and no laughter on the sound track (Time, 19/9/87). After that, you should watch the dramas that aren't supposed to be comedies, or even the tragedies—or perhaps even read TIPS.

Social Role Valorization

*The NBC television series "L.A. Law" began in the fall of 1987 to feature a mentally retarded man as a regular character in the show. He is a middle-aged man who is given various office errands to perform. So far, he has been depicted the way many mentally retarded people actually act, namely, somewhat spontaneous and uninhibited, unrestrained by artificial social codes, and just a little bit child-like. The character is generally interpreted very positively, and in the first episode in which he appeared, the issues of reasonable payment for work, as well as of the necessity of high expectations for such persons, were dealt with.

*A $450,000 playground was constructed in Orlando, Florida so as to enable both handicapped and non-handicapped children to use it. 150 children with and without handicaps were consulted in its design, and 3000 volunteers helped build it over a 5-day period, the event being likened to an old-fashioned barn raising. The entire project has been a big community affair (Insights, 11/ & 12/87).

*A little girl with an electric wheelchair in Sutherlin, Oregon, is a big hit with the neighbor children because 5 of them on roller skates can line up behind her and have themselves dragged along (source clipping from Joe Osburn).

*A young man in Australia blinded in his teens decided to take up running, and then began to train for the real Olympics, rather than the handicapped or blind Olympics (Link, 8/87; source item from Peter Millier).

*Down Syndrome News occasionally runs small vignettes of remarkable achievements, and/or the assumption or according of valued social roles by/to people with Down Syndrome. The 9/87 issue has two pages of such vignettes.
*A 30-year old man with Down Syndrome is a square-dance caller (DSN, 12/87).

*An unusually positive "philosophical principle" statement was issued by the British Columbia Ministry of Health. It stated a commitment to integration of its clients, supporting as normal a lifestyle for them as feasible, age-appropriateness of services, cost-effective service delivery, the dignity of risk, and a number of other positive points (TASH Newsletter, 7/87).

*There is a home for aged volunteer firemen not far from Albany, New York, called the Firemen's Home of New York State. Of course, one huge disadvantage is that it could receive residents from all over the state and thus remote from their home locations. On the positive side, the facility gives emphasis to the fire-fighting tradition, and features many positive role tokens of its residents' fire-fighting culture in its decor, observances, language, etc. Not particularly enhancing is that one has to cross the Rip Van Winkle Bridge to get there from some directions, and the presence of the American Museum of Fire Fighting on the grounds is a mixed blessing. It may enhance the vocational role cues of the retired residents, but may also image them as has-been museum pieces. (Source material from Hank Bersani.)

*We were recently told about the mother of a retarded young man who, after he completed his last year of schooling, out of desperation found him odd jobs in the neighborhood for which he received some under-the-table payment. For example, he would clean up neighbors' lawns, run errands, etc. She asked a social worker for assistance in getting a "real job" for her son, and what the social worker did was to place the young man in a "day treatment program," for which, of course, he receives no payment at all. Eventually, the mother had to pay a lawyer to become her son's legal guardian in order to protect him from being "served" by programs such as this. This is a good example of the fact that as trying as service-less situations with a devalued person may be, in general and over the long run, one may encounter more problems once the person becomes a client of the service super-system than one had to deal with before. It is also a good example of how a valued adult work role is preferrable, even if it is not paid, to being the devalued subject/client of the service system.

*The good news is that an advocate was invited "in loco parentis" to his protegé's assessment in England. The bad news is that the protegé was 93 years old. (Source item from Paul Williams)

*Some handicapped people are also heavily involved in the animal rights movement, sometimes to the image detriment of handicapped people. For instance, a handicapped person in England insisted that a study be conducted on her instead of on experimental animals. At the University of California at Berkeley, a blind woman and her seeing-eye dog were taken into custody for protesting animal exploitation (PETA News, 9/87; source item from Hank Bersani).

*Gone to the dogs. The Irvine, California, city council decided to convert a dog kennel to a 50-bed shelter for the homeless 50 yards away from a facility that would continue to serve as the city pound. Amazingly, the city was prepared to spend $6500 per bed on the conversion alone (Time, 5/10/87).

The Deathmaking Scene

So much material on deathmaking keeps coming in that we have to devote between 1 and 2 issues a year to it, despite our efforts to also have at least some coverage in each issue.

AIDS-Related Developments

*An Air Canada steward by the name of Dugas has been identified as one of the most active spreaders of AIDS in North America during the late 1970s and early 1980s. He had sexual relationships with about 250 men a year, or thousands altogether, right up until his death and even for years after he knew that he had AIDS. Many of his partners died before he did. He never showed any remorse. When physicians implored him to cease spreading his disease, he only replied, "After all, somebody infected me."
*For years, African nations have vehemently denied that they have an AIDS problem, even though AIDS is believed to have originated there. Now, they are finally beginning to admit the problem, in part because of its scope, and a peculiar danger that it poses: most African countries have only a small educated class, and it is particularly those who apparently lead the kind of decadent lifestyle that makes them most vulnerable to AIDS. As a result, there may be a gigantic dying-off in this leadership stratum, with immense impact of all sorts on the affected nations. However, unhygienic medical practices, such as repeated use of hypodermic needles, and inability to screen blood transfusions, is also contributing to the spread of AIDS (Science, 30/10/87).

*Man bites dog. In 11/87, a German court sentenced an American to 2 years in prison because, knowing he had AIDS, he nonetheless engaged in "unprotected" sexual acts with others. People of the left rose up in arms over this verdict, saying in essence that those who do not have AIDS are as responsible as those who do for the spread of AIDS, and to punish people with AIDS amounts to a life sentence to no sex. One almost gets the impression that they mean that those without AIDS should abstain, and those with can't possibly.

*There is still a controversy whether AIDS can be transmitted when a mosquito has fed from a person who has it, then alights on another person who squashes it and inadvertently rubs the blood from the mosquito into a skin opening (Science, 9/10/87).

*For many decades, health authorities have campaigned for mandatory pre-marital screening of the sexually transmitted disease of syphilis, and such testing did indeed become mandatory in many states. The craziness about AIDS is such that today, many health authorities oppose mandatory pre-marital screening for the AIDS virus. On the one hand, it is true that such screening would not be very effective where couples are already deeply involved in sex before marriage; but on the other hand, statistically the most likely victim is the wife and most of the offspring, if any. (FI, 10/87)

*Although we have said it before, we want to impress our readers once again with the fact that the entire condom campaign is one gigantic fraud, though largely underwritten by the imperial scientific establishment. Condoms do not protect from AIDS; they merely reduce the risk, and not very much at that. Readers should further focus their awareness on the fact that virtually everything that the establishment has said about AIDS from the beginning has been a fraud. But such is the memory loss in our society that it only takes one or two years for people to forget that today's facts were only yesterday vehemently denied. One of the crises ahead of us is what health care workers should do. Large hospitals may admit one or more patients who are unidentified carriers of the AIDS virus a week.

*A spokesperson for the AIDS committee of Toronto said that "The prevention of AIDS at the moment is a matter of good education, arming people with the facts." (CP, in Halifax Chronicle Herald, 24/10/87). This underlines again how displaced people's level of address is. Most problems of our society are not in the domains of knowledge, facts, science or technology, but values. Hardly anyone dares say as much; and because the real issues are hardly ever addressed, things quite naturally do not get much better but usually worse.

*Catholic bishops both in the US and Canada have gotten to the point where they appear to be saying that it is wrong to use condoms to prevent conception, but permissible to use them to avoid catching disease.

*In San Francisco, there was a witchcraft-like worship service held by protesters of the Pope's visit in which condoms were handed out for "holy communion," and referred to as "our holy savior." (FI 10/87) Buses in San Francisco carry the message, "Use condoms."
*Readers better prepare themselves for "National Condom Week," the third week in February, proclaimed by the Pharmacy Planning Service. We can expect all sorts of events, especially on college campuses, such as the "annual condom couplet contest" (AAT, 1/88).

*Condoms for the tongue? While it is a common custom for people who have sexual intercourse to kiss each other, it may turn out to be a rather unfortunate custom. According to at least some medical reports, free AIDS virus is even more plentiful in the saliva of infected persons than it is in their genital secretions. The nearly universally told story (deception?) that sexual intercourse is the most likely medium for the transmission of the AIDS virus may have failed to take into account the amount of kissing that goes with it. If these findings hold up, this would be yet another reason why the already deceptive "safe sex" condom campaign is even falser than it is (Healthwise, 12/87).

*Ludicrously, the US government developed a brochure entitled "America Responds to AIDS" which tries to "prompt feelings of pride, and patriotism," and which of course promotes the condom. Some people are very critical of it because it also promotes people's "family moral and religious values" and chastity, and monogamous marriages. Instead, people would like to see discussions of anal intercourse and similar things, as featured in a competing brochure put out by the government's Centers for Disease Control (Science, 18/9/87).

*Surprisingly, AIDS has joined heart disease and cancer as the favorite "charity" concern of the socialite world—and in fact, may have superceded the latter two. Perhaps this has something to do with high society being sexually more decadent. However, one cynic said, "They don't do the hard work, but at least they write checks." (Newsweek, 28/12/87) We have visions of an AIDS-ravaged figure suddenly bursting from the big cake or centerpiece of an AIDS charity party, with the guests scattering in shrieking panic.

Miscellaneous Deathmaking News

*Homelessness in the US may increase—by the millions—to staggering proportions in the next few years. While the mentally handicapped may have led the housing exodus, they may become a drop in the bucket in the years to come as compared to the simply out-and-out poor who can no longer find affordable housing. (US News & World Report, 3/8/87)

*In 12/87, the Reagan administration tried to slash benefits to the homeless even further by reducing the federal contributions to the family's stay in a shelter or welfare hotel to 30 days within any one-year period.

*A new psychoactive drug, Clozapine, is about to come on the market that is alleged to alleviate symptoms of severe schizophrenia in about one third of the subjects—but that has powerful and potentially fatal side effects in being apt to produce a dramatic decline in white blood cells, and therefore in resistance to infections. (APA Monitor, 8/87) We suspect this drug will go the route of so many other drugs before it: it is apt to be widely used, it is apt to turn out to be much less effective than ballyhooed, and is apt to kill an awful lot of people. Health Letter (10/87) has noted that the number of new "breakthrough" drugs that appear on the market that turn out to have no unique benefit, and that often even merely bring higher health risks than comparable drugs, has been rapidly growing.
Resources

*CAPE, recently out of print, will be republished out of Syracuse in the near future. For information contact Sandra Bufis, Person-to-Person Citizen Advocacy of Onondaga County, 501 East Fayette Street, Syracuse, NY 13202; 315/472-9190.

*Jeff Heath from Australia has developed a most unusual and informative monograph on Disability in the Pacific Islands, which also includes a review of provisions in that part of the world. (Source item from Peter Millier.)

CAPE Workshop

A combination CAPE Workshop/Evaluation of 4 citizen advocacy programs--one for mentally retarded people and three for mentally disordered persons. CAPE is an instrument for measuring the fidelity of a citizen advocacy project to citizen advocacy principles, and the quality of the project. Dates: Thursday, February 18 through Sunday, February 21, 1988. Place: Holyoke, Massachusetts. Fee: $50 per person; meals, lodging, and CAPE manual not included. However, fees can be waived and free lodging can be secured for people who need financial assistance. Space is limited, and people with a strong involvement and/or interest in citizen advocacy will be given first consideration. For information, or to register, contact: Michael Kendrick, Safeguards Project, 187 High Street, Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040; phone 413-536-2401.

Miscellaneous Human Service-Related News

PERVERSTON ALERT -- People in MR have for years put their hopes in the so-called Chaffee Bill that would shift federal monies from the support of institutions to the support of community services. Those naive about the prevailing dynamics thought that this sort of bill would surely pass, whereas we could not conceive how it could possibly pass unless it were first perverted. No such bill did pass, but we now fear that if some version of it should pass in the future, any such legislation might be used to boost the entrepreneurial residential service system and the nursing home sector. One major outcome might be that nursing homes will succeed in having mentally retarded persons in large numbers recertified as "eligible" for some category such as skilled nursing, acute care or personal care, which opens the doors of "local" nursing homes to them, and which in our contemporary nursing home context also means that the risk of deathmaking of such persons would skyrocket. (We are indebted to Wayne Marshall for drawing these possibilities to our attention.)

We had reported before on the manufacturers of IUDs finding themselves in deep legal trouble, but we were astonished to learn (Time, 11/1/88) that the manufacturer of the Dalkon Shield, A. H. Robins, has been sued by a total of 200,000 people, presumably all or nearly all women who claimed to have suffered primarily pelvic infections and permanent infertility. Readers should contemplate the enormity of these data and their implications. Maybe some day, we will see billions of people suing millions of other people for telling them a bunch of lies about condoms.

A community hospital in New York State recently initiated a day hospitalization program for sick children, open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. The program is obviously addressed to families where the parents work and cannot or will not stay home when one of their children becomes sick, and is virtually a give-away at $3 an hour, which also buys all the food and beverages the child may consume during the day. Ignoring for the moment that the program is called Teddy Bearracks, it sounds relatively positive until one remembers how desperately children need parental presence when they are sick. Also, one needs to consider the trip to and from the hospital every day.