

which it is forever beyond our faculties to obtain; it is to make claims which, in the nature of things, can never be supported.

Yet, for all that, it is no misrepresentation to consider Hume an atheistic philosopher. He may indeed occasionally profess a 'genuine theism', but the phrase has so little content for him that one might invoke Newman's comment: 'I do not see much difference between avowing that there is no God, and implying that nothing definite can be known for certain about him'.<sup>10</sup> No consequences flow from theism of Hume's, no ethical code extracted, 'No new fact can ever be inferred from the religious hypothesis; no reward or punishment expected or dreaded, beyond what is already known by practice and observation'.<sup>11</sup> And if, nevertheless, Hume does sometimes recommend that hypothesis, it can only be in the way of a counterbalance to the general weight of his philosophy, a tacit admonition that a balanced scepticism should not deteriorate into an unwarranted atheism. Hume's professions of faith are, in short, a covert warning against intellectual arrogance and against any temptation to trespassers outside the strictly limited, 'narrow capacity of human understanding'.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Newman: *The Idea of a University*.

<sup>11</sup>*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

# Adam, Abraham and Health

by Stan Windass

*Draft Impressionistic Report on Alternative Society Week-end  
'Towards an Alternative Concept of Health'*

Held at Ammerdown House, Radstock, February 8-10, 1974

This is not meant as an academic report. Statements are bald and unqualified, intended to recall themes to those who took part and to suggest themes to others.

Good wages, good heating, tea-breaks, are Adam needs  
Meeting Adam needs does not produce satisfaction  
Abraham needs are responsibility, participation, creativity  
Meeting Abraham needs leads to satisfaction  
Adam needs hygiene  
Abraham needs fulfilment

The Health Service is an Illness Service  
It aims at Wellness, not at Health  
Wellness is necessary  
It is part of Hygiene  
Hygiene means good housing, food, water, fuel, transport, education  
Hygiene is necessary; but it is not health  
Health builds on hygiene

Health is a gift  
Health arises, it cannot be planned  
Health is like a good joke (Michael Wilson)

In Africa many villagers have hook worm, parasites, poor food  
In the evening the darkness echoes as they celebrate together  
They are unwell  
But healthy (Michael Wilson)

Western medicine does not produce wellness  
This is a myth  
Good food, good water, good houses,  
produce wellness  
Declines in mortality relate to economic advance  
not medical techniques (Sandy Macara & Martin Richards)

The new National Health Service will be tidier  
It will unify hospitals, general practice, public health  
Under the D.H.S.S. vertically descending will be :  
    Regional Health Authorities  
    Area Health Authorities  
    District Health Authorities  
None are elected from below  
The smallest authority will administer 200,000 souls (Sandy Macara)  
Politics are necessary  
But can you get a new society this way?

We need to think of the street, the small community  
This is where authority should originate

We can work from the top downwards or from the bottom upwards  
Both approaches are good  
Neither can succeed without the other

The Health Service is a vast institution  
Processing patients  
Patients must be passive  
Then they need rehabilitating  
Passively  
The sickness service escalates  
Generating dependency disease (Tom Hood)

Low morale in an army generates illness (James Mathers)  
Bad conditions are tolerated where morale is high

We are wrong about cause and effect  
Our medicine deals only with effects  
With symptoms  
Causes are in behaviour  
in a way of life  
Causes are in the spirit

Many die from degenerative diseases  
Products of civilisation  
Cures must be sought where causes are (Hertha Larive)

In Guatemala Dr Behrhorst teaches village leaders to diagnose and  
prescribe  
They may not read or write  
They treat nine out of ten of their patients  
They do not leave their villages (Alan Greenwood)

But traditional village healers are not selected for this role  
Are communities growing upwards, or is a cancer spreading down-  
wards?  
Doctors should stop pretending to cure  
They have useful drugs, techniques and equipment  
They could offer wares at a shop front  
People must choose  
People must cure themselves  
Dependence is never ending (Martin Richards)

Healing is no business of doctors  
Healing means closeness, reassurance, contact (Martin Richards)  
Healing is a gift  
Doctors learn to be objective  
Healers could use doctors  
Hospitals are places of hospitality  
Doctors should be nurses' aids

Medicine is a paranursing profession

Psychiatrists listen  
But people cure themselves  
    People Need People  
    People Not Psychiatrists

Some people are doctors  
Some doctors are people (Pat Day)

Having babies is not a medical problem  
A mother is the first health worker (Martin Richards)

There are two modes of relating

One is agonistic, rigid  
It has to do with separation  
With territory, role definition  
With fear and aggression

The other is hedonic, flexible  
It has to do with contact  
With closeness, interchange  
With mothering and with mating

It is built on reassurance

To practise medicine in the agonistic mode  
Is to replace one disorder  
By another (Michael Chance)

If education is exalted,  
Teachers can either exalt their role  
    or diminish it  
If health is exalted,  
Doctors can exalt their role  
    or diminish it

Should we make schools into temples?  
or hospitals. . . ?  
or health centres. . . ?

We need professionals; the best  
But who can be professional about health?  
Who can be professional about education?  
Who can be professional about life?  
A community decides for itself about such things

Engineering disease away is an endless task  
It costs more and more, swallows up life  
Continuing in this direction we should all become patients looked  
after by specialists  
But death remains, the ultimate engineering failure  
Darkness is real as well as light  
Accepting darkness is part of health