

In a less bellicose manner let me put it this way. Any experimental outcome can be 'explained' by tailor-making a concept which is so close to the concrete operations of the research that it fits impressively well. But sufficient unto the experiment is *not* the concept thereof. Science is a continuing and elaborating business, and what is wrong with Williams' ingenious use of 'cue insensitivity' is not that it does not serve his immediate purposes but that it will be hard put to serve his purposes five years hence if he is then still seeking an integrated and developing way of understanding thought disorder.

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POLITICAL DISSENTERS IN MENTAL HOSPITALS

DEAR SIR,

I was extremely interested to come across Dr. Richter's letter in your *Journal* (August, 1971), in which he drew attention to certain psychiatric malpractices in Soviet Russia.

I write of course as a layman, but it is perhaps relevant that I am fortunate enough to enjoy the friendship of more than one Soviet citizen who has only recently had some experience of the latest methods of 'treatment' in the Soviet Union. I can therefore personally vouch for the authenticity of at least some of the large volume of evidence which points to the prostitution of certain Soviet psychiatrists 'in the interests of expediency' (to quote Dr. Richter's phrase).

Now the overwhelming impression one receives in this country from the people who might be expected to care most—writers, lawyers and psychiatrists—when their attention is drawn to this problem, is one of mingled indifference and suspicion. One possible explanation of this hostile reaction, if I may be

allowed to suggest it, is the fear that, in openly criticizing their Soviet colleagues, British psychiatrists might be offending medical protocol, or might be simply 'playing at politics'.

I think it was the Canadian psychiatrist Dr. Hirt who pointed out the dangers of such an attitude, comparing it with the negative role played by doctors generally before and during the Hitler regime.

And is this, in any case, purely a Soviet problem? One fears not. In many other countries there is growing evidence of an unhealthy collusion between State and medicine.

But to refuse to face facts emerging in one country, where the abuse of medicine happens to be the most flagrant, is surely to invite similar abuses nearer home. May one dare to hope that at your coming Congress in Mexico this subject will at last receive the open discussion that has so long been lacking.

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THE BURDEN RESEARCH MEDAL AND PRIZE

DEAR SIR,

I am again writing to draw your readers' attention to the above. Entry for the Burden Research Medal and Prize is open to all registered medical practitioners who are working in the field of mental sub-normality in the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland.

The award for 1971, total value £250, may be presented at Stoke Park Hospital on or about 1 April, 1972, for outstanding research work which has been published, accepted for publication, or presented as a paper to a learned society during 1971.

Five copies of the paper or papers, with application form, should be submitted to the Secretary of the Burden Trust by 10 January, 1972.

Further information and application forms are available from the Secretary, Burden Trust, 16 Orchard Street, Bristol 1.

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