

The elimination of pain, infirmity, disease and death is a new objective that has never before served as a guideline for life in society. Pain, infirmity, and death have been transformed by medical ritual and its corresponding myth from essential experiences that everyone has to live with to a series of pitfalls that threaten well-being and force everyone to constantly resort to products whose manufacture is monopolized by the medical establishment. Man, a weak organism equipped with the genius of recovery, becomes a fragile mechanism subject to continual repair. Consequently, there is a contradiction between the dominant medical civilization and each of the traditional cultures it encounters when, in the name of progress, it bursts into rural areas or so-called underdeveloped countries. Traditional cultures derive their sanitary role precisely from their ability to support each person facing pain, illness, and death by providing them with meaning and organizing the way they are cared for by themselves or their immediate entourage. Traditional hygiene involves first and foremost rules for eating, sleeping, loving, playing, singing, suffering, and dying.

IVAN ILLICH, *MEDICAL NEMESIS, THE EXPROPRIATION OF HEALTH*

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