

futuribles - no. 400 - May-June 2014

Humanity and Illness: Reflections on the Patient-Doctor Relationship

André Khayat

The French system of sickness insurance regularly makes the headlines on account of the financial problems besetting it, and there is a danger its difficulties will increase as the population ages and the state experiences budgetary restraints. Various scenarios and options for reforming the system are frequently proposed, some of which verge on the idea of rationing care. Though it is clear that savings are going to have to be made and efforts will have to be undertaken to rationalize health expenditure, it shouldn't be forgotten that behind the figures lie flesh-and-blood patients and doctors. These patients and their doctors are engaged in individual relations around a pathological situation, relations which become increasingly complex with the advances of science and the spreading of information. It is of this that André Khayat –himself a medical practitioner– reminds us here, in order that this human relationship to illness and to those attempting to treat it should be correctly perceived and incorporated into current thinking with regard to health system reform.

After a brief review of the history of medical solidarity between human beings, this article shows how the doctor-patient relationship, which was at first exclusively individual, has gradually come to be a collective issue. Khayat then describes the mechanisms of doctor-patient communication (language elements, the relation to the body, keys for understanding etc.) and shows how we have moved from a paternalistic model to a relationship based on autonomous decision-making by the patient –and also the limitations of this latter. Lastly, he offers some lines of thinking with regard to future issues surrounding this relationship to sickness and medicine.

For the Establishment of a Genuine Health System: From the Health-Care Machinery to the Development of a Coherent Health Pathway in France

Jean-Claude Angoulvant

Total health expenditure represents 240 billion euros in France today or 12% of GDP, after 60 years of substantial growth. This upward trend is doubtless not going to end, even if recurrent attempts to moderate it manage to restrict, to some extent, the proportion of this expenditure that is covered –and socialized– by sickness insurance, at the risk, as Jean-Claude Angoulvant reminds us here, of thwarting its social objectives. The very notion of health and the practices associated with it have been transformed by technical and societal developments, as Professor André Khayat explains in this same issue.

If we carry this logic to its extremes, as the present article shows, the current organization of care and its funding could be transformed into a genuine system of health “production” (in addition to remedy and prevention), capable of incorporating the changes at work (linked in particular to the evolution of health “demand”, taken in an increasingly wide sense) and seeing us through a break with the old practices.

In this context, Jean-Claude Angoulvant sketches a broad systemic vision built around the “care pathway” –which should, in his view, become a “health pathway”. The idea involves bringing together the various strands of the “health-care machinery” –definition and content of health, practices and techniques, governance, regulation, funding etc.– and the related interconnections.

This work is conceived as an introduction to the necessary foresight approach to feed into a coherent public policy that covers all the fields concerned by future developments.

Futuribles in Retrospect

Hugues de Jouvenel

Futuribles journal, which was launched in 1975 by Hugues de Jouvenel, has been in existence now for 40 years and the current issue is number 400. *Futuribles* occupies a special place in the world of so-called generalist magazines, both by its longevity and its continuity of editorship. It is also distinguished by its resolutely forward-looking orientation and the desire to deliver the

kind of information and thinking to its readers that are indispensable for understanding the contemporary world and for acting, as a consequence, with maximum lucidity. The aim, to quote the argument of Hugues de Jouvenel, is ultimately to empower ourselves to be architects of a chosen future, not victims of one that we simply undergo.

But always looking forward doesn't prevent us, from time to time, from taking a glance in the rear-view mirror and, on the occasion of this 400th issue, attempting a brief retrospective assessment. And so Hugues de Jouvenel, the founder and editor of *Futuribles*, has scanned these 40 years of *Futuribles* and identified some of the major topics covered in our pages on which we can claim to have been farsighted and even pioneering. These include foresight methods and ethics, development indicators and models, the resources and limits of our ecosystem, and social change. He also points up certain editorial weaknesses, particularly in the field of science and technology, and a number of blind spots with regard to geopolitics. After 40 years of observing and reflecting on the world and how it may develop, readers will, we hope, have acquired the conviction that the future remains, in many ways, open; and that, provided one has the right information and knows how to distinguish the essential from the merely incidental—which is one of *Futuribles's* prime objectives—it remains possible to build that future or to modify its course.

Sustainable Development: Looking at Contrasting Discourses and Practices in France and Germany

Cornelia Findeisen

Emerging in the late 1980s, the concept of sustainable development is well-established today and figures widely in the thinking of the political and economic leaders of the developed nations. France is no exception and sustainable development (though its definition may vary from one person or organization to another) is quite a widely shared objective. Yet, though the idea has become familiar to most French people, in practice it is difficult to find evidence of the implementation of its underlying principles.

By contrast, as Cornelia Findeisen shows here, the Germans are not so aware of the discourses around sustainable development, the notion as such being a relatively unfamiliar one to them, but it is something they

practice on a very regular basis and this has been the case for a long time (since long before it became “fashionable”), both in their daily lives and public policies. Might there be a cultural explanation for this behavioural difference between the two nations? And, if so, is it set to persist? Should we rethink the way we talk about sustainable development in both France and Germany in order to make way for practices that actually conform to the precept and/or ensure the continuity of such practices? These are the main questions explored in this article.

The European Union in the World: Influence, Challenges and Prospects

Michel Foucher

After more than two decades of relative calm around its borders, since 2010 the European Union has been faced with increased tension in the South of its territory in the wake of the Arab revolutions that occurred in several countries in North Africa. In recent weeks it has also faced tensions in the East as a result of the events that have taken place in Ukraine and the Moscow-supported secession of Crimea. Such a context represents a genuine test of the Union's capacity to assert itself as a player of substance on the international stage. Is it capable of passing such a test?

This is what Michel Foucher looks to evaluate in this article through an analysis of the EU's place in the world, its power of influence and the prospects for future development, given the major trends at work in global geopolitics. After reviewing the conditions for the Union's influence and the scale of that influence, all of which is very much interlinked with the impact of the national interests of the member states, Michel Foucher presents the international context in which the Union will operate in the medium term. This is, admittedly, a more interdependent world, but also a highly uncooperative one. As a result, two lines of action seem indispensable: to respond to the challenges by asserting itself as a real global player on the international scene, and to define shared centres of interest and strategic objectives. On this latter point, Michel Foucher frames a number of crucial strategic recommendations “for getting beyond the [current] discordance between the level of economic interests and that of political action”.

A Happy Vision of Europe in 2050: Utopia or Rallying Project?

Philippe Doucet and Jean-François Drevet

Between 22 and 25 May 2014 the citizens of the 28 member states of the European Union are invited to vote to elect their representatives to the European Parliament. Unfortunately, in today's crisis conditions which favour a withdrawal into domestic concerns in many European countries, it is highly probable these elections will not stir up any great enthusiasm. However, after six decades, European construction has pretty well achieved what it set out to do in terms of economic development and bringing peace to the region. And great prospects of political, economic and social developments remain, which are capable of improving the lives of Europeans in the era of globalization.

At any rate, it is this staunchly optimistic view the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) has taken in a foresight study on Europe up to the year 2050 which is aimed at setting objectives, at various different levels of decision-making, for the territorial policies to be implemented on the continent. Philippe Doucet and Jean-François Drevet, who took part in this study, here present the broad outlines of this happy vision of Europe in 2050 and the territorial dynamics at work within this timeframe (in terms of mobility, the residential economy, urban zones/rural zones, frontiers etc.), together with the possible developments in terms of territorial governance at the global, European, sub-regional, national and local levels. Some may perhaps view this approach as utopian, but the aim is to fuel strategic thinking in the service of a European rallying project with a time-horizon of 2050, so that this project can be put into effect if the Union wishes to do so.

For Competitiveness, All must Assume their Responsibilities: The Responsibility Pact in France and the Blurring of Categories

Jacques Bichot

Faced with a persistent economic and social crisis, France seems incapable of putting its public finances on a healthy footing, restoring the competitiveness of its enterprises, rethinking its social model and reducing its endemic unemployment rate. The recent Social-Democratic turn of its government and the "Responsibility Pact" proposal made

to French companies by the President are no doubt symptomatic of one of the most serious evils from which, in the view of Jacques Bichot, the country is suffering: namely, the confusion of roles and responsibilities.

Evidence of this, contends Bichot, comes from the fact that the smooth operation of markets –the labour market or the market for goods and services– is hampered by the interventions of a state that is itself incapable of properly organizing the functions allotted to it, whether these be its role of exercising sovereign authority or standing as guarantor of last resort for a welfare state that has substituted itself for functions that ought to be fulfilled by collective, social, contribution-based insurance.

Emblematic of this imbroglio, in Jacques Bichot's view, is the divergent understanding of the cost of labour which, as the employees see it, equates with net wages, whereas, from the employers' point of view, it is gauged by total wage costs, the gap between the two being made up by the sum of social contributions determined by a third party, the state. Jacques Bichot recommends that the different roles should not be blurred and that everyone's responsibilities should be clarified, particularly the responsibilities of companies, which have to define their strategies in terms of competitiveness and employment, and the –quite distinct– responsibilities of the state. And he argues here, for example, for the establishment of a "truthful [i.e. transparent] payslip".

Foresight Studies and the Run-up to the 1914-1918 War

Jean-François Drevet

As we are putting this issue to bed, Europe is undergoing one of its most serious diplomatic crises since the end of the Cold War. Ukraine is currently torn between those who favour closer relations with Europe and pro-Russian activists, Crimea having seceded and become part of Russia once again. The sound of marching armies is perhaps not far off, which seems staggering to several generations of Europeans just a century after the outbreak of the First World War. That was a war with enormous consequences for the continent. The retrospective analysis of the political and strategic choices that brought it about is not without interest from the standpoint of foresight studies.

Jean-François Drevet homes in here on three elements relating to strategy or for-

ward planning from the outbreak and conduct of the 1914-18 war, which had outcomes that were at variance, to say the least, with what the parties concerned had anticipated. These are the Franco-Russian Alliance, which, though presented as a force for peace, led to a generalization of the conflict; the Schlieffen Plan which, by violating Belgian neutrality, led to a British intervention that was decisive in the defeat of Germany; and the French strategy of all-out attack, which proved very costly in human lives in the age

of the machine gun. Such errors of foresight, committed by competent, well-informed personalities persuaded of the rightness of their positions, shouldn't be forgotten, says Jean-François Drevet, particularly in a current context of economic and financial crisis in which the forces of international high finance – the contemporary equivalent in power terms of the early 20th century's armies – regularly flout the warnings and calls for regulation emanating from the rest of society. ■

Futuribles is a bimonthly independent transdisciplinary policy oriented journal (6 issues a year), also available in electronic form on the *Futuribles* website.

Its objective is to provide its readers with a better understanding of contemporary societies dynamics, those facts, ideas and trends shaping their medium and long term possible futures.

Chief Editor : Hugues de Jouvenel

Futuribles: 47, rue de Babylone, 75007 Paris, France. - Tel.: + 33 (0)1 53 63 37 70
Fax: + 33 (0)1 42 22 65 54 - E-mail revue@futuribles.com - Website www.futuribles.com