

There are very many millions of people in this country who still believe that alcohol, tobacco, and the associated sins of dancing and card playing and things of this sort weaken the character, weaken the fiber of the Nation, and it should be disapproved of.

Now psychotropic drugs get involved in this Puritan tradition, and they also to some extent have gotten involved in the Catholic tradition because the Catholic Church in this country has still stood for facing grief whereas, on the whole, the Protestant and secularized community has abandoned grief or attempted to abandon any recognition of grief for quite a long time.

Additionally, within our religious and moral ethic in the past there has been a tremendous emphasis on self-control, on an individual being his own master, being in control of himself through will power, so that any drug that is regarded as addictive, and this includes alcohol—when one becomes what is called an alcoholic, which means hopelessly addicted—comes under reprobation not only for the other effects that it has on the personality but because of the weakening of the will and the loss of self-control.

These are traditions that came from Europe, they are still very important in Europe, and they are still a very important component of the criticism of this country made by Europeans, and especially by European theologians in many instances, and European psychiatrists who also share the same general cultural position.

But there is also a distinctively American emphasis that has developed out of the frontier and out of the demands that founding a new country made on Americans that is different. It contrasts with our European cultural roots. This is the general belief that if something is wrong you ought to fix it and as against the European notion that if something is wrong you should fix your character and bear it.

This was very well represented in conflicts between the Americans and British during World War II, where the Americans thought the British notion that you fixed your character, you just got a little more willpower and left everything exactly as it was, was ridiculous. The American idea was if this building isn't any good knock it down and build another one.

There is a general emphasis in this country upon finding external solutions to all problems; if you don't like where you are living move somewhere else; if you haven't got any land make it; if you have the wrong shaped nose get it fixed; if you have too big a nose and too small a chin take a piece of your nose and put it on your chin and don't complain that you are going to have to sing in the choir or as a spinster all your life. Right straight through our history we have adopted a policy that invention, technology, ingenuity, resources ought to be available to deal with anything that we want to have dealt with.

These three attitudes occur, in different mixtures in different constituencies, in different parts of the country and in different individuals, including the advertisers who advertise for the pharmaceutical industry and the detail men and the physicians who receive their ministrations. The practical desire to fix things comes into conflict with a belief that some measure of pain is part of man's lot in the world. If you carry that far enough you use no analgesics of any sort in childbirth because pain is what man was born to and woman was condemned to and she should continue to bear the pain.