



toring and telemedicine) eight faculties were able to muster 14 such programs, and one reported a move to a programmatic rather than discipline-based curriculum structure. Five deans stated that their faculties have a structure in place for instruction in the humanities. Given the uncertainty facing us, perhaps we need an enduring context from which to examine the future and by which to recognize the base and the false. In this sense we need to be in touch with those who have thought most penetratingly about the human condition — and the more so as universities are increasingly driven by utilitarian concerns.

On this, admittedly limited, evidence our medical faculties seem to be slowly mutating into the future. But our profession as a whole is in some disarray. We act as if the only remedy it requires consists in fixed fee schedules and injec-

tions of health care funding. Perhaps medicine would benefit from more futurism, that is, from an attempt to plot a future course on the basis of where we are headed rather than where we have been. The challenge of providing quality care in the future (and in doing so more cheaply) will demand new solutions. Our structures of specialization, our health care institutions and even our medical faculties are unlikely to survive unchanged for long into the next millennium. The choice may be between radical renewal and oblivion. Yet we seem to have a limited appetite for renewal.

Rich in wisdom and scholarship, Maddox's book is, although technically dense, well worth the reader's effort. His perspective is strongly historical and his prose expansive and, apart from the occasional lapse, lucid. His imagi-

nation lives as easily in the past as in the future; as easily in the theatre of ideas as at the bench. Read his book as an antidote to that which passes for a hold on the next century in too many of our corridors.

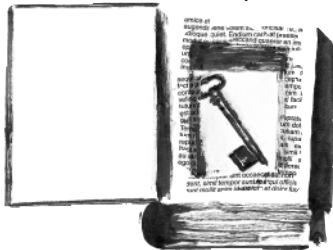
Peter Drucker observed that "Strategic planning does not deal with future decisions. It deals with the futurity of present decisions." Perhaps we should likewise consider that futurism is less about the future than about the futurity of the present. The other more shattering changes that are also probable as the years turn will almost inevitably surprise us — and futurists.

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Reference

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Fred Sebastian

Illness and metaphor

Tuberculosis

The child had a delicate little face, very wasted, with the serious expression I had seen on the faces of most of the children here, as if the cares of the adults had crushed them all too early. She might have been ten or eleven years old. If she had lived a little longer, I reminded myself, she would have been one of my pupils. She would have learned something from me. I would have given her something to keep. A bond would have been formed between me and this little stranger — who knows, perhaps even for life.

As I contemplated the dead child, those words "for life" — as if they implied a long existence — seemed to me the most rash and foolish of all the expressions we use so lightly.

In death the child looked as if she were regretting some poor little joy she had never known. I continued at least to prevent the flies from settling upon her.

The children were watching me. I realized that they now expected everything from me, though I didn't know much more than they and was just as confused. Still I had a sort of inspiration.

"Don't you think Yolande would like to have someone with her always till the time comes to commit her to the ground?"

The faces of the children told me I had struck the right note.

"We'll take turns then, four or five around her every two hours, until the funeral."

They agreed with a glow in their dark eyes.

"We must be careful not to let the flies touch Yolande's face."

They nodded to show they were in agreement. Standing around me, they now felt a trust in me so complete it terrified me.

In a clearing among the spruce trees a short distance away, I noticed a bright pink stain on the ground whose source I didn't yet know. The sun slanted upon it, making it flame, the one moment in this day that had been touched by a certain grace.

"What sort of girl was she?" I asked.

At first the children didn't understand. Then a boy of about the same age said with tender seriousness, "She was smart, Yolande."

The other children looked as if they agreed.

"And did she do well in school?"

"She didn't come very often this year. She was always being absent."

"Our teacher before last this year said Yolande could have done well."

"How many teachers have you had this year?"

"You're the third, mamzelle. I guess the teachers find it too lonesome here."

"What did Yolande die of?"

"T.B., mamzelle," they replied with a single voice, as if this was the customary way for children to die around here.

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