and ways of life, the great majority are likely to continue to interpret the present and future in terms of their parochial short-lived interests in wealth, power, and security.

True, it is theoretically possible that the total crisis will reach such proportions that the antagonistic forces - mass ideologies, social movements, and world powers - will be evenly and precariously balanced. In that unique constellation an authoritative prognosis could be imagined to turn the course of events in the predicted direction, transforming itself thereby into an active force in world history. But whereas in a therapeutic relationship the prediction of the psychiatrist will frequently be instrumental in producing the predicted result, the socio-historical scene is characterized by forces of such magnitude and complexity that a perfectly unstable equilibrium can hardly ever be achieved.

Supposing then that it is beyond the power of Futurology to shape the future nearer to our heart's desire, we must proceed on the assumption that it will have to restrict itself to telling us what is in store for us. In so doing it will base its forecasts among other things upon our fears and hopes, our omissions and actions. Still if it were to show that our civilization was doomed, if it were to demonstrate that a new global war was inevitable, if it were to establish that a rejected ideology had the best chance of success, we would have no way of preventing these developments. Possibly many a friend of humanity will, under these circumstances, oppose a systematic attempt to lift the veil that hides tomorrow.

Concealing this truth would equal outright intellectual dishonesty, however. Moreover, even if it were true that complete ignorance is preferable to all knowledge, the fact remains that ours is not the choice between knowing and not knowing. There is no way of returning to a condition of "blessed innocence" - our real and only choice lies between less knowledge and more knowledge. And more knowledge about the days to come may, after all, help dispell some of the worst fears that are plaguing us. In this case, Futurology would on its part corroborate Pope's dictum that "a little learning is a dangerous thing". But even if Futurology were to confirm the gloomiest expectations of the pessimist, it could at least, like meteorology, serve the personal welfare of some favored individuals. As the weather forecast helps people to protect themselves against storms and floods, so futurological predictions might enable some to escape the social tempests, cultural deluges, and historical catastrophes. And if this lucky minority were to preserve not only their lives, but also some of the best social achievements and cultural values of the past, Futurology would have rendered some service to the future. By the same token, a knowledge of the future could help avoid disappointment which springs from vain and futile venture. Furthermore, a clear knowledge of the impending collapse of our society might be accompanied by the consolation that the Western civilization, in its dis-