



to military research, is an international disgrace which cannot be repeated too often. Harrington is convinced that enough research will eventually solve the "problem" of ageing. Since we are going to master the engineering of divinity eventually—why wait? While Harrington does not admit the possibility that his generation (aged 45 or older) can benefit, he does wish it for his grandchildren and urges us to press on with the "Battle against Death". He does not provide a concrete programme of action—only general guidelines and some platitudes that will appeal especially to those activists trying to prevent man from blowing himself from the face of the Earth, no matter how long they choose to live.

*The Immortalist* will and should become a landmark. It does not go into detail on the highly relevant question, "why medical research?". If we are not willing to admit that the ultimate result, if not overt objective, is indefinite prolongation of life, then why bother? Shall we cure all the common and

known diseases and thereby condemn each and every citizen to senescence and a living death as vegetables? He might also have observed that while man's life *expectancy* at birth has significantly increased in the past century, in fact, his life expectancy at middle age has declined somewhat primarily due to accidental deaths—another badly neglected area of medico-technological research. Harrington does not grapple with the political reality facing the immortalists and especially the world's scientists. Politics is an exercise in the obvious. The public must be constantly, repeatedly, and energetically reminded of the consequences of continuing our present insane courses of action. Unless we are still afraid to offend the gods, as Harrington claims is true for most of us, we will speak out now.

Who knows—immortality may not be that far off. More money was spent last year in killing the Vietnamese than has been spent on basic and biomedical research in the entire history of mankind!

1. E. Garfield, "The Long Cold Sleep" (Book Review), *New Scientist*, 46, 590 (June 18, 1970).
2. D.E. Goldman, Book Review on "Prospect of Immortality", *Science*, 145(3631), 475 (1964).
3. R.C.W. Ettinger, "The Prospect of Immortality", Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1964, 190 pp.
4. A. Harrington, "The Immortalist", Random House, New York, 1969, 324 pp.
5. A. Comfort, "Biological Theories of Aging", *Human Development*, 13, 127 (1970).