

PROGRESSIVE PRESTIGOPENIA

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Our young frontiersmen, New Father of his country, Mr. Kennedy, who campaigned so successfully on issues of prestige, and who has utilized and popularized image creation, seems to be exhibiting advanced signs and symptoms of that occupational, political disease called “progressive prestigopenia”—characterized by atrophy and metamorphosis of the image.

Early changes were first suspected several months ago when the administration’s urban renewal legislation did not get congressional approval, became more noticeable when the House defeated the farm bill, and seemed obvious recently after the Senate voted to table the modified Medicare bill of King, Anderson and Javits. Initial symptoms of annoyance and irritability gave way to hostility, transference and mild paranoia. With the last episode have appeared the characteristic aggressive, hallucinatory manifestations and regression to juvenile reaction patterns.

Pampering in youth, isolation from realities by wealth, overexposure on ultra high frequency television waves and rapid ascendancy to heights of popularity and responsibility may have combined to produce the overdependency on imagery and were undoubtedly predisposing factors in the development of the disease in this case.

Following defeat of the Medicare legislation, Mr. Kennedy, defiantly determined to have the last word and certain that only he knows the correct answers, exhibited the shrinking presidential image of the adamant and spoiled child—frustrated and reprimanded by elders outside of his circle—who runs for the protective folds of the governess's apron and appeals over the heads of authority for help.

Except in extremely resistant cases of constitutional inadequacy, the prognosis is not too grave, in that the course of the disease may often be reversed by repeated and intensive infusions of maturity.