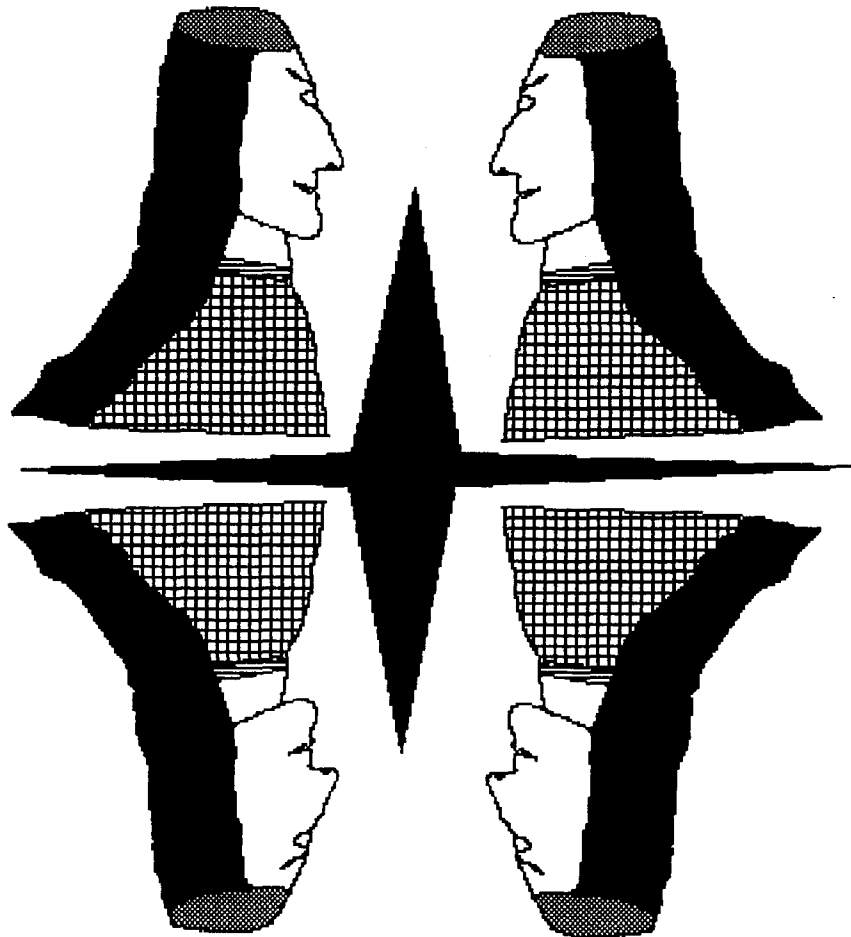


Fall - Winter 96-97

In A NutShell

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION



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One Flew Over the Christmas Tree

by Reinhart

We had so many lights along the valleys, and one valley behind the next. Was there anything to number? Sometimes when it got dark and we were coming home on the track and across the fields, we'd see the fire-glow from all the houses. Light in specks, sparks of life: running with the hills and lots back where the town was. And what songs we had. The music swirled around and away and so high it must have been frightening.

"We have nothing to eat tonight. So instead I'm going to take you out for a long walk and when we get back we'll be so tired we'll fall right asleep and won't even miss supper."

"Yes Papa," he said, "I've never been out at night in the winter."

It was fresh cold. The moon and snow left clear footprints from the house toward the wood.

"We'll get lost in the night Papa."

"No, look how light it is. It's not like summer, the snow makes it light. The stars and the moon too I guess. We can even go into the forest a ways."

"You're right, Papa, it's different." The darkish tree shapes played the wind and small creaks whispered from their hiding places. An owl hooed and from somewhere the crash of wings.

"When's Christmas, Papa?"

"Soon."

"When?"

"Ah it's coming, it's coming."

The deer was beside a small evergreen. Its head flew up and everything was eyes and frozen stillness. A shudder — it was gone from the tree. Both of them kept looking. Patches of snow on the branches glistened more than white and although young, the tree seemed complete, somehow finished.

"They stay green all year long, when the leaves fall off the other trees, Just look at it!"

"I'm glad we came out tonight, Papa."

"You know, I think I'll come back sometime and take it home. Yes, I will. Come, let's turn around now and start back."

The evergreen stood inside the house. And Papa stood in front of it. He didn't seem to hear anything. All the snow was melted off the branches and the tree remained bright green.

"Go get all those birthday candles from the drawer. All of

them, we're going to put them on the tree." They spent much time putting the candles on the branches. Papa did all the high ones but as soon as he was finished he said,

"A star on the very tip to make it perfect."

"Are you going to light the candles, Papa?"

"Yes, right now." The lights flickered and danced, ascended the green cone, higher, flew toward the pointed crown on top. Papa stepped back, he advanced.

"What are you doing?"

"Counting the many lights, Papa." For several minutes he circled the burning evergreen.

"Well, how many are there?"

"I don't know Papa, I stopped counting."

"Is something wrong... Never mind, you'll get older and learn more. Here look, that's the star of Bethlehem where the Christ child was born. All the lights come from Him. He's the one who brings all gifts to all the people in the world."



A group of MPA members having a good time at the Christmas Party

A Cynic About Love?

by D. Paul Strashok

When first I came to this empty page, I saw no recourse but to lay down lines, lines of truth and beauty, lines that would shimmer and move and create a wake of something more than just the letter upon the page. Shake me, move me, make me with and in the word.

We are shaken by the matters all around us, especially when our hearts' interests and emotions travel out from our own sphere toward another, whether friend, foe or lover, sister or brother, Heavenly Father or Wisdom as Mother.

I have had my emotional hands cut off by the carelessness and indifference of others so many times that it is a wonder that I still

reach out at all. What is it that prevents me from becoming a total cynic about love? Love undefined is not love at all for there is both agapé, phileos, pathos, and eros. Let us all strive to the highest form and substance of love, which is agapé.

And when will I be moved again, so firmly entrenched in the daily struggle for mere existence, when will these heart-strings rise in chorus to some lofty, higher call. Only at night upon my bed in the stillness and quiet of solemn reflection do I feel a stirring towards inner anointing and life that far supercedes some mere physical sensation. Are there those who dwell in that realm all the time?

Make me — what a word shaken and maken. This is my biggest struggle - to be made, to create, to have my own being and identity as someone who can accomplish, do, achieve, become, go beyond his own limits into new territory. In the vast expanse of what has already been done and accomplished, I feel so insignificant and voiceless to proclaim anything new or important.

But what does all of this say? It says that I still believe in love, not only because I know that God is love, but because I know that to stop believing would be to die, to waste away into the void, to disappear as mist in the early morning sun. So allow me to be that morning mist of love in your conscience calling you back to true emotions and thoughts, to the One who is all Love.



Laughs with Lewry

Did you hear about the patient who didn't like his psychiatrist?

He was shrink resistant.



Communication

To listen well is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well.

Chinese Proverb.

**Madness, Heresy, and the
Rumour of Angels: The Revolt Against
the Mental Health System**

By Seth Farber

Forward by Thomas Szasz

reviewed by Byron Fraser

When I read Peter Breggin's "Toxic Psychiatry" I thought it would be difficult to top as the most thoroughgoing critique of modern-day psychiatry in the last decade or so. But now a new book has come along which, while not as meticulous as Breggin's in referring to the scientific literature, is perhaps even more inspirational. Seth Farber has put together a veritable manual of revolution which is a genuine tool for empowerment of mental health system victims. Here is a breath-taking expose of the mad doctors, their delusional belief systems, and their religious commitment to the efficacy of drugs, electro-shock, and other tools of the trade. Farber presents an enlightening and liberating counterpoise to the disinformation of the mental health establishment. Included are case histories of mental health system "survivors", interviews with anti-establishment psychiatrists and activists, and a review of the relevant anti-psychiatry literature. Reading this book is a highly therapeutic experience and it gives you the necessary intellectual ammunition to fight back against the on-going tyranny.

Farber's book begins with a cogent Forward by Thomas Szasz, the dean of anti-psychiatry psychiatrists. Szasz makes the telling point that psychiatry's victims are at least partly to blame for their victimization. This is because those who would be self-governors have a duty to inform themselves about the evils of society. And this means being aware of the official and unofficial criminals— including politicians and mad-doctors who prey upon the innocent and helpless while aggrandizing power and self. In short, it is imperative that you arm yourself against the depredations of these pseudo-scientific quacks, these glorified agents of social control. You must fight back against their life-threatening "diagnosis" which are designed to fit you for a career as a lifetime mental patient, forever subservient and dependent. As Jesse Jackson said: "If they can't define you, they can't confine you."

The first section of Farber's book contains the stories of seven "survivors" who endured the horror of hospital incarceration and the "therapy" of forced drugging and went on to

escape the system, to fight back against their diagnosis, and eventually live full and healthy lives without drugs. They successfully defied the officials of the medical/disease model who unanimously said that these people were afflicted with lifelong acute mental illness. Farber tells these stories in a straight-forward and factual manner. Along the way he interposes examples of what the standard psychiatric diagnosis would be to show that he is thoroughly familiar with the standard practices and theoretical orientations. These are most revealing and will be familiar to all of us who have been through the system. You will recognize the commonplace assertions that one will have to stay on drugs for the rest of one's life, that one has a "genetic predisposition" to schizophrenia, that one has a "chemical imbalance" in one's brain, and all of the usual nonsense. Farber's own analysis is far more humane and insightful. He views what is called "mental illness" as a crisis of the spirit, predominantly due to environmental factors and, echoing R.D. Laing, as an evolutionary process through which one can grow towards a new and more holistic integration. While Farber is influenced in his spiritual orientation by his mentor, Sri Aurobindo (the great Indian sage and philosopher), what he has to say

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Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmar

On the morning of December 28th, when I woke up and found the streets of Vancouver covered with a thicker blanket of snow than usual, I noticed how quickly I felt flooded with anxiety. I was worried about the roof of our house collapsing, I felt trapped, cut off, isolated. These feelings weren't entirely unreasonable, but their intensity made me think there was more to this than meets the eye. So, I sat down and observed the turmoil of emotions, letting them take me where they would. From past experience, I suspected that the flames of my feelings were fanned by memories that I was unaware of.

As I cast my eyes towards the past, the first memories that presented themselves were from about ten years ago when on New Year's day I attended a meeting on Cortes Island and promptly got snowed in. No cars could get to the ferry, and then the lights went out. Now, the others, cheerfully cozied up around candles, wrapped in blankets, seemed to enjoy, were able to surrender to, the circumstances. Not I! Like a prisoner planning escape, my

mind couldn't stop trying to find ways of getting off the island. I was afraid of freezing, of going hungry, of being forgotten and remaining cut off from my family forever. Rationally, I knew that the situation was 'hopeless but not serious'. The panic and anxiety I felt were fueled by demons I had no control over.

I moved farther back into my past. The images now clustered around the time I was 16, living in Budapest, struggling for independence from my possessive and controlling mother, being in love with a girl for the very first time, and wondering if I could keep up academically in high school. Suddenly, school was cancelled, Hungary was declared to be free and independent for about a week, and then the Soviets came in, bombing, shooting, with tanks and airplanes. It was exactly 40 years ago, between Christmas and New Year's that my father offered to finance my escape to The West, but I had to go alone, he and my mother were too old to take the risk. It took me 3 minutes to decide to leave.

During the night of December 27, 1956, I was with forty others hiding in an unused railroad carriage. The ice created intricate white flowers on the windows, I could see my breath, we had to be quiet, no one slept, I was hungry and cold and secretly hoped that I would be caught and returned to my home. I was terrified at the unknown, felt stuck and forlorn and frightened. It wasn't until the next night that two of us, who had not been caught by the swarming border guards, attempted to cross over to Austria. We had to wrap ourselves in bedsheets to minimize the chances of being seen from the guard towers while crossing the snow-covered fields. I was so nervous and exhausted that the guides had to carry me, one on either side, by my elbows, for at least a mile.

Was I so weak and fearful even then because of memories that set of circumstances conjured up? Possibly: at age 3 1/2 I lost contact with my parents to hide those who were going to incinerate me because I was born Jewish; when I was born I had to leave a familiar warm place, cross the border between inside and outside, and end up in the cold and unfamiliar, alone, for what must have seemed like an eternity.

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UnderDog by Jim Gifford



Bundled up, I was returning home on the bus. I had spent the evening at The Vancouver Mental Patients' Association Community Resource Centre, playing pool, watching T.V. and just hanging out with the downtrodden. A winter's night, it had been snowing for a few hours and was starting to settle and gather.

At a stop near my destination, a raggedy man got on the transit. He was dressed in tattered, stinky clothes, beat up boots, with a dilapidated blanket over his shoulder. He didn't have fare.

The driver beckoned him to take a seat. I recognized him instantly. It was Paul.

We had both attended Lester Pearson Senior Secondary in New Westminster in the 'Sixties'. Both of us had subsequently suffered mental breakdowns.

I was well on the way to fitting back into the fold of soci-

ety. Such a goal seemed beyond Paul's grasp. He was homeless, broken-hearted by a past of pain.

I invited him to my modest place on the second floor of an old rooming house on 3rd Avenue in Kitsilano. While he had a warm shower down the hallway, I made a hot meal.

After he'd eagerly devoured his meal and had some tea, he talked. He got lots off his chest. That night I stayed up reading and writing, while Paul slept in my warm bed.

In the morning, after breakfast, I gave him an Indian sweater, sundries, food. As we parted at the front door, we shook hands and he touched my heart with a 'thank you' full of depth and feeling.

Several months later we crossed paths downtown, near Burrard and Robson. He was groomed, suitably dressed, and told me he was living in a half-way house and was taking courses at school.

In 1986, I was waiting tables at 'Flavour of India' restaurant on Fourth avenue. At closing time, myself and Dave Sandhu, the owner-chef were relaxing over beers. There was a knock at the door. It was Paul.

Down-and-out, he was starving. Sandhu told him to wait

while he got food from the kitchen. In a few minutes he returned with a bag of goodies. Paul, too groggy with hunger to say anything, turned and disappeared out the door.

Leaving later, I saw him, empty plastic dishes at his side, huddled in a doorway, sleeping. Over the years, I've seen his bedraggled figure shuffling along the streets of Vancouver. He is a lost soul.

May he find peace, happiness and health and the grace to rise above his circumstances. I wish him well.



Possessions

A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone.

Henry David Thoreau

Last Smoke of a Boyhood Hero by Sam Roddan

The last time I saw old Alex Brown he was in hospital in one of those ancient annexes off Heather street in Vancouver. Things hadn't gone well for Alex. He was very weak and his face was paper white.

"It's my water works, this time," he whispered. "I've got a bad stop in the line."

On his bedside table was a medicine cup with his glass eye. He had lost the original in a whip-lash from a towing cable when he was deckhand on the old Sea Lion, last of the great ocean-going tugs out of Coal Harbor.

Alex asked me to rub up a bit of Old Glory for him. He kept a plug of his favorite pipe tobacco under his pillow where he could take a sniff when lights went out at nine.

I carefully pared off a few slices and rubbed them in my hand the way he liked it and filled his pipe. Then I tamped it down and got her going. The pipe tasted rich and sweet and I leaned over and put the stubby stem to his lips.

Alex puffed and said to hell with orderlies and regulations. He coughed and spluttered.

His voice was so low I could barely catch his words. I noticed the tattoo of the Union Jack on his arm had faded to a mere shadow,

"What is it Alex?" I asked.

Alex moved his head and tried to get closer.

"It's the bloody formalities around here," he whispered. "A guy in a black suit keeps coming around giving me those damned pep talks about the future. And besides he hates my pipe. Says there's No Smoking, Upstairs. But listen, laddie, in case of serious emergency and the words aren't coming out right, I got two more plugs of Old Glory in my duffle bag under the bed."

Alex Brown was sleeping when I tip-toed from the ward that night. I like to think he was dreaming of some foggy beach with the breakers pounding. And he was tamping down the Old Glory, with smoke rings as big as doughnuts circling above his bed. And all the time he was getting comfort and the full taste and bite of a tossing sea.

Footnote:

During World War II, I think we might have lost the whole business if it weren't for the smokes in the "flat fifties" that came in our "care packages" from home. In the British Army in which I served, every soldier in the front line got a tot of rum first thing in the morning. It was only then, and after a quick smoke, that we could get down to the business at hand which was fighting off the Boche.

Years later, when I was back "in the trenches" (teaching school), I had much the same experience. No tot of rum then but a precious Sweet Cap or an Export, or several "rollings" before I "went over the top" and readied the class, and myself, "for action".

I finally stopped smoking long before I quit teaching. But it was only by the Grace of God, and family - Huddy, George, Janet and Maggie - and, of course, by silent prayer... But what made it really hard was the memory of Alex Brown, and the comfort he received from his pipe, and the rich, golden smell of Old Glory as the smoke circled, not in doughnuts, but now in wayward halos above his head.

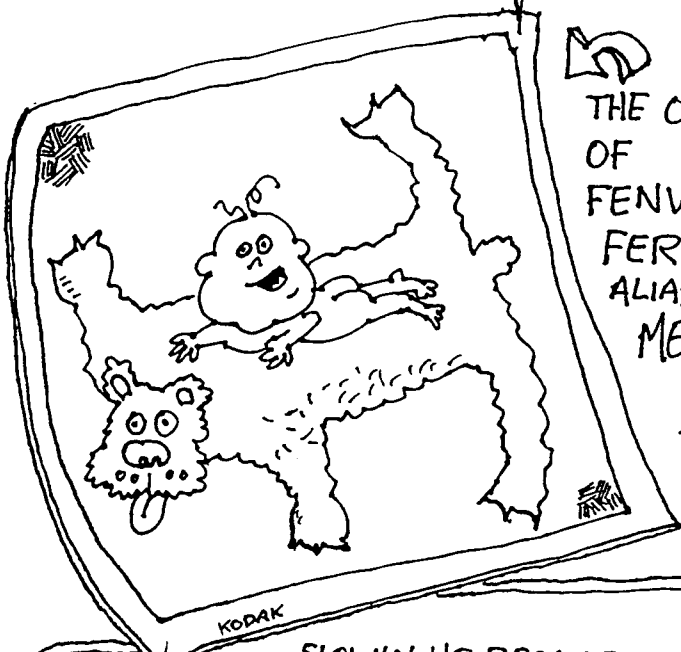
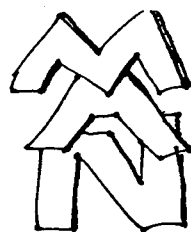




MEDICATION



NATH CAMERON



THE ORIGINS
OF
FENWICK
FERGUSEN:
ALIAS
MEDICATION
MAN

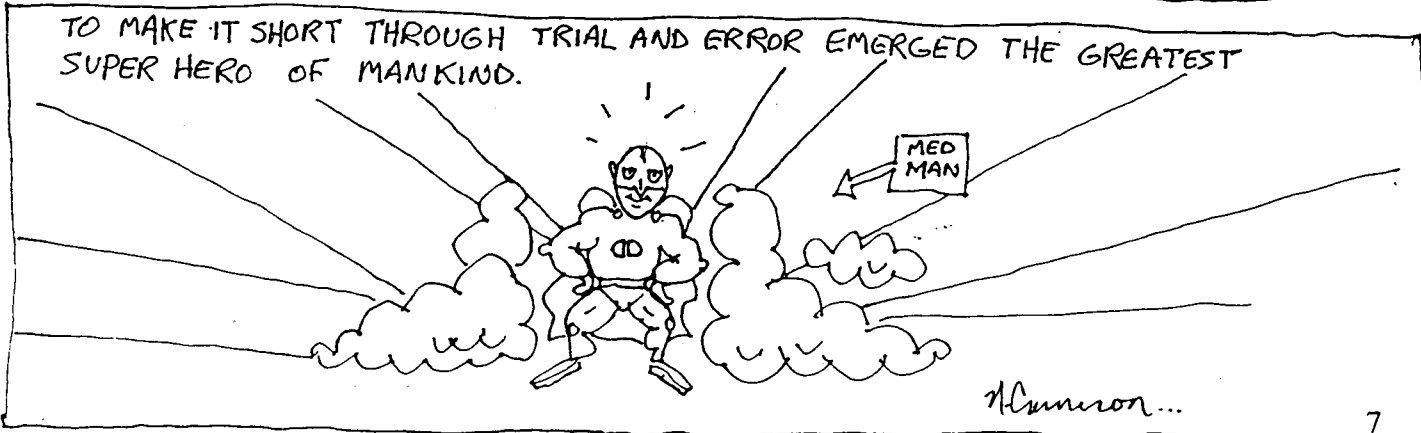


A MILD MANNERED YOUNG
MAN FENWICK MEANT NO HARM.
BUT INSTINCTIVELY HAD THE HEALING
ABILITY

PEOPLE NATURALLY SOUGHT HIS
HELP



SLOWLY HE BECAME
AWARE OF WIDE SPREAD
ILL HEALTH. EVEN IN HIS FAMILY.



TO MAKE IT SHORT THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR EMERGED THE GREATEST
SUPER HERO OF MANKIND.

N. Cameron...

Woman of Pain

© 1996 by Colin McFadzean

she has the emotions
of the oceans.
the eyes
of the skies.

wind and rain
calm and storm;
blue sky and grey
she is warm.

the features in her face
say human race.

she is here
now and again
when she is sane —
woman of pain.

Daily Pains

by Julien Lévesque

Were I to enjoy pain in any and all forms; a masochist would I be?

If I were to enjoy such a thing and receive a flower for each and every moment of pain, what would I now have for surely a lush Garden of roses, tulips, orchids, and other flowers of grace and beauty in great abundance.

However, such a person I am not. Hence; no lush garden, no roses, tulips or orchids, not a flower of grace and beauty, (But a barren lot!)

Yet solace is not to be found in such a way, but a self-discovery must be of a primordial and paramount need, thus allowing the self to better understanding.

Therefore, having explored and understood the source of my many pains, this I can only say. "Pain is not a blessing nor is it a curse, it just is." And that leads me to state, "As such pain is to be better understood as to be better, in ability to recover; hence becoming whole in body and spirit once healed." Then as I see the sunrise, I see a new life begin bringing warmth and joy to life.

The Course

by D. Paul Strashok

Lifting my hammer to the task
I chiseled away at the immenseness of possibility
in stages,
in progression;
in beginning,
enduring,
and never-ending
endings.

It is you that I think of
at times when I think of a lover.

It is you that I look at
when I look for another.

But those days are long dead
and I know it is true;
remembering the beauty,
the beauty that was you.

Then comes the serpent
to entice and beguile;
the serpent of commercial
and video smile.

But he's done his damndest
and I know he's still lost:
the price has been paid
and Christ counted the cost.

Chiseling away the possibilities
I am left with this-
the joy of the morning,
and the memory of your kiss.

Branches Over the Wall: The Shrine In Babylon

by D. Paul Strashok

The Hollywood Dreamakers are always still there, pumping their illusory promises into both our conscious and subconscious minds and I have an experience to prove it. I recently became reacquainted with an old friend (of the feminine persuasion). We had an excellent night together, I walked her home and we parted on warm, loving terms. As I prepared for bed that night, I thought of many things - my age, my responsibilities, whether I was ready for another heartbreak hotel scene and I literally made a conscious decision that I wasn't going to let opportunity escape from me. I had known this person long enough and felt warm enough to ask her to marry me. With that half-fearful-half-wrought thought in my mind, I had one last cup of coffee and went to bed.

In the middle of the night I woke up with a startling dream that I was surrounded by a group of tough, age-wise (apparently mature) Hollywood starlets promising me that I could have anything I wanted as long as I stuck with them. I woke with a startled, disturbed feeling, but managed to get back to sleep. My resolve to

"pop the question" had been seriously compromised.

The next morning I walked out into the December downpour only to find that there was a movie crew up on the corner near my home attempting to shoot a scene for some upcoming Hollywood action flick. I was amazed at the amount of attention the police force gave them, redirecting traffic and acting as their personal bodyguards. Because of the weather conditions, I don't think much actual shooting was done, as they were gone a little later.

When I met the young lady of my dreams, a little later, she was in a much different mood from the night before and said "she had had a bad dream". We spent some time together and I was able, in a half-hearted way, to make my intentions known, only to find that the "bad dream" she had had the night before had similar elements in it to my dream, preventing us from becoming any closer.

At the old Vancouver Library site they are building Planet Hollywood. There is a sign in the window stating "If your god is entertainment, we're building your shrine". What will the end cost be of such a shrine? I think we see it around us all the time already.



Meat for the Industry

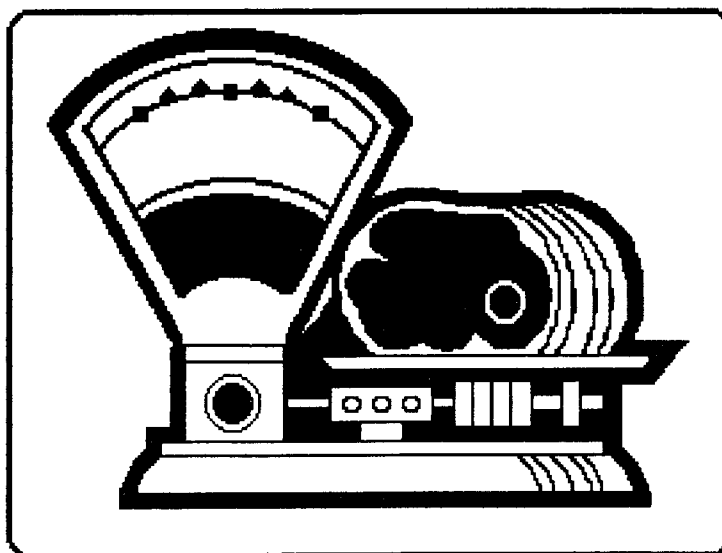
by Reinhart

There's bucks to be made. Millions mister. It's a growth industry, big time! Hey man, we got private enterprise, government subsidies, research, our own fuckin' department at welfare. Specialists by the thousands and the respect of the upper class. Our members come from the finest, best educated and richest families in the country. Would you like to be a doctor, psychologist, nurse, social worker, support staff? Good money, eh buddy? It's a regular club. And we got such pull in the courts that with the confusion and chaos that's rampant in our times, we practically run them. The police are at our beck and call; private enforcers practically. And you can be sure the media always prints the official (our) version of the story. We got spin-off employment, jobs for all sorts of positions and occasions. Consultants by the hundreds, meetings to keep us cashin' paychecks forever — hell, we got bureaucracy down to an art. Process, man, process.

And we got the meat. Ain't no misfit, no malcontent, no loser in the world that we can't give the treatment. Fresh meat all the time. Process buddy! Move 'em in. Strip 'em down naked. Number 'em. Codify and identify. Inspect, dissect and inject.

Process, man! Categorize. Axis, 1,2,3. Piece of cake. Schizophrenic, Manic, Depressive, Paranoid, Personality Disorder, Drug Addict, whatever. Got a label for everything — nice clear sticker baby — top of every printout that goes to all our agencies, and everybody else for that matter, when we put out the word. Ok, diagnose the meat, feed it medication, sedate and put it to sleep—fatten 'em up if necessary. Move 'em in, move 'em in. We got a slot and a spot for everybody. Now give 'em the treatment, move 'em around, get 'em jumpin' hoops. Observe interrogate and report. The label, sticker, frame of reference, will interpret any move they make. Let's us place and relocate 'em. Any questions, ok; process man! All right, fresh meat coming in. Let's have a prognosis for

those and see if we can clear up some space. Management considerations! Dangerous? Violent? Unmotivated? Uncooperative? Years of treatment, years of work and money. Job security baby, beautiful! It's a glorious process. Just takes a little time; the meat lines up quite nicely. The process is effective man, system works. All right, the meat over there is ready. Go ahead, ask it if it's ready. See what I mean, it's ready. Move 'em out. Dispose man, dispose. Find a new spot, free from the institute, out there in the crowd, the public. Some unobtrusive corner. Somewhere convenient, somewhere good for management; troublefree. Keep tabs on it, see if we need to bring it back and process it some more. Come on, move 'em out, move 'em out. Put out the word; market ready meat. Clear up some space, dispose — fresh meat comin' in. All right, next!



BookWorm

R.D. Laing: A Divided Self

by John Clay

Hodder and Stoughton, 1996

Reveiwed by Andrew Feldmar

"Dying is an art, like everything else" — quotes Clay from Plath's Lady Lazarus. Laing (1927 -1989) is one of the world's most famous psychiatrists: gifted, controversial, eloquent, bizarre, compassionate and always fascinating. On the afternoon of August 23, 1989, in St. Tropez, after winning the first set of a game of tennis, he collapsed on the court and died in the arms of his daughter, Natasha. He was 62 and full of plans. He had told me two months before then that he hadn't yet written his best work. He was going to publish on hypnosis, depression, alcoholism, Nietzsche, Lacan, and psychotherapy. At the same time he also let me know that he was tired of living and

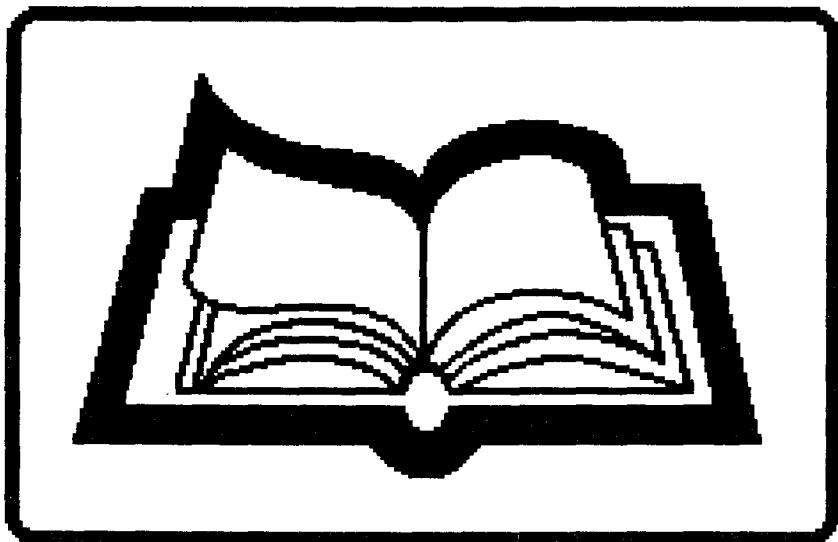
could hardly wait "to get to the other side, where four musicians I used to know have formed a string quartet and I can hear them calling for me, they need me to play the piano". G.B. Shaw's words could have been Laing's: I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch that I have got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations". He hoped that his ideas would prove to be resilient and contagious. John Clay's biography attempts to realize this hope.

Clay treats both the man and his work with respect, care and sympathy. Because of his complexity, Laing is not easy to write about. Francis Huxley, a close friend of Laing, told me that whatever came to his mind to say about Laing, he found the opposite to be also apropos. At a memorial service, Huxley referred to Laing's 'psychic fist' hitting at the 'navel of insincerity'. In The Guardian, Huxley recalled Laing as a "deeply loving man, if often rough, and one who fought his way continually back to moral principles". In his later years Laing could only recommend unconditional love. He was fond of W.Blake:

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair".

Clay's book has a three-fold focus: Laing as a person, a psychiatrist, and cultural icon of the 1960s. Clay researched his subject carefully. When Leon Redler, another friend and colleague of Laing, and I gave a four-day seminar on Laing's written work in Oxford, clay was there, taking notes and working hard to make meaning out of the material. From Clay's approach, from how he writes, one can tell that he recognized the unique value of Laing's spirit. In contrast, Daniel Burston's more academic study, published around the same

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Madness, Heresy, and The Rumor of Angels

(continued from page 3)

could easily be translated into the more secular language of Wilhelm Reich's bioenergetics. That would be my preference. The point in either case is that bioenergetic or "spiritual" disturbances which result in temporary irrationality are not indicative of a deficient biochemical substructure. Energetic components can fluctuate substantially, reflecting a greater or lesser "reality-orientation"; they are the ever-changing software which do not necessarily indicate any alteration in the underlying neurological hardware.

Part 2 of the book is titled "Heretics, Apostates, and Infidels" and begins with a chapter on the critics of the concept of mental illness. This is an overview of the major works in the anti-psychiatry tradition to date - works which every survivor should have in his or her library. First mentioned is Thomas Szasz's seminal and path-breaking, "**The Myth of Mental Illness**". Then there is R.D. Laing's "**The Politics of Experience**". Theodore Sarbin and James Mancuso's "**Schizophrenia: Medical Diagnosis or Moral Verdict?**" is discussed and quoted from. Ditto for Erving Goffman's "**Asylums**". The indispensable contributions of Peter Breggin in his "**Psychiatric Drugs: Hazards to the Brain**" and his "Electro-

shock: Its Brain-Disabling Effects" are explicated. And mention is made of many more relevant books and articles, too many to list.

Subsequent chapters include an interview with James Mancuso on "Rejecting 'Mental Illness'", an interview with psychiatrist Ron Leifer on "Psychiatry and Social Control", and an interview — also with Ron Leifer -- which is a most useful guide to "Getting Off Psychiatric Drugs". Part 3 is titled "In Revolt Against the System" and contains a speech by activist George Ebert, "to Break the silence", and a long interview with the famous survivor Leonard Frank, "From Victim to Revolutionary". I was particularly moved by the following words of Ebert on the currently fashionable designation of mental health victims as "consumers".

"One thing that happens is that other people categorize us. I do not think it is accurate to identify people who are denied basic human and civil rights, locked up in an institution, lied to, lied about, and incapacitated as 'consumers' of mental health services. I do not think it is right to refer to people who have been programmed into dependency, who exist under another's con-

trol and authority, who have no voice, no choice, no opportunity for informed decision-making and no representation as 'consumers'. I feel that calling people who have been victimized by these deprivations, and by isolation, with lobotomies, shock treatment, toxic drugs, behaviour modification and experimentation — that calling us 'the mentally ill' adds insult to our injuries.

The 'no hope' diagnosis, the allegation that we are sick and will always be sick, the claim that while our 'symptoms' may possibly remit, by no means will we ever be well or whole is a curse. That idea that our psyches, our very souls are irreparably diseased, is abuse."

The interview with Leonard Frank is one of the most valuable and inspiring sections of this book. Here is a man who has literally been to hell and back but who has emerged as a being of deep humanity and wisdom, who restored his shattered self to become a scintillating intellect and an indomitable freedom-fighter. Frank's story begins in the early 60's when he abandoned a real estate career to drop out, read a lot of books, and become something of a "beatnik". For this "crime" his parents had him committed and he was subjected to 50 insulin comas and 35 electroshocks over a nine month period. He emerged with his memory to-

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Minute Particulars

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By the end of my reverie, during the snow storm last December, I felt much better, much more present, far less haunted by frightening ghosts. Since we know nothing about the future, it's a good rule of thumb to assume that **WHATEVER YOU ARE AFRAID OF, HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.** We have an uncanny tendency to project our past into the future and then

dread its recurrence. When the past presents itself, especially without me even realizing it, I lose my connection with the here-and-now, and begin to sleep-walk in a fog of then-and-there, mad as a hatter.

I could have rushed to a psychiatrist with my anguish, and the drugs he would have prescribed probably would have

eased my panic. But I would have been poisoned by his diagnosis and think of myself as ill, in need of treatment. Mindfulness, as psychotherapy or meditation or contemplation, has no side effects and it's not degrading. It even has an excitement of its own: the excitement of discovery, of getting to know oneself.



**Madness, Heresy, and
The Rumor of Angels**
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tally blanked and it took him approximately six years to get back to some semblance of his former self — in spite of learning disabilities incurred as a consequence of his “treatment”. He went on to write the book, “The History of Shock Treatment”, and many articles for anti-psychiatry journals. He also co-founded the Network Against Psychiatric Assault in 1974 and has worked over the years to organize protests, demonstrations, and sit-ins, etc., as well as to agitate for legislative reform. Frank speaks with a calm and dignified eloquence about his sufferings and

struggles— he is a much-needed leader in our times.

Farber’s book ends with three Appendixes: “Required Reading for Revolvers”, “Why Deinstitutionalization Failed”, and “The Network Against Coercive Psychiatry”. In these you will find all of the information you need to get connected with the best within you and within others. Nobody will help you if you don’t help yourself. And by helping yourself you will heal yourself. With my deepest heartfelt empathy for my brothers and sisters who are still “inside”, I urge you to buy this book and ... join

Bookworm

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time as Clay’s book, The Wing Of Madness, suffers from Burston’s supercilious, arrogant, condescending view of a man who was living and thinking and practicing his art way beyond Burston’s prosaic, limited understanding.

Sandor Ferenczi, the Hungarian psychoanalyst, around 1900, was prepared to meet his patients on equal terms, he understood children’s need to be told the truth, and though about why, at times, he was frightened of his patients. In many ways his

thought anticipated Bateson, Winnicot and Laing. Until recently, his work was nearly forgotten, Now, that, more and more, psychiatry undermines our confidence in our basic capacity to live and the ‘disabling professions’ erode the capacity to care for each other, Ferenczi’s gentle, unheroic ways of caring are being remembered. Laing also was always interested in meeting, in learning from those who were being distraught. Clay’s book will help, I hope, to rescue Laing from being marginalized and forgotten by a

the revolution.

(“Madness, Heresy and the Rumour of Angels” is available from Laissez Faire Books, Dept. C119, 938 Howard Street, #202, San Francisco, CA 94103 for \$20.95 U.S.)

Note— This review was originally written for “The Colonist”, the inmate newsmagazine at the Forensic Psychiatric Prison called “Colony Farm”. Byron Fraser was incarcerated there for 4 1/2 years after being diagnosed as a “paranoid schizophrenic” who had an acute incurable lifelong biological disease. He is now out living in the community, completely off drugs, and doing fine.



profession that is heading more and more in the direction of controlling, invalidating and poisoning people whose suffering it’s too busy and frightened to even understand.

Through kything (Scottish derivative of ‘to appear’), communion between people is enhanced heart-to-heart and spirit-to-spirit, until those involved experience healing, affirmation, forgiveness and love. Laing was a master of kything and John Clay presents him as that.



Bulletin Board

New Primal Location

The Primal Mental Health Productions Association will be meeting at a new place come mid-February. Their new address is 1595 East 13th St. at the back basement entrance. The schedule of activities will probably include:

Writer's Den — Mondays 6 to 8 p.m. with Nellie McClung and Tessa Warburton

Acting — Tuesdays 6 to 8 p.m. with Bernie Hodgson

Painting — Wednesdays 6 to 8 pm. with Carole Thompson and Aldo

Exercises — Thursdays at noon with Carole Thompson

Crafts — Sunday afternoon with Carole Thompson

The Primal Coffeehouse will be held as usual every second Sunday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Drive.

Come out to learn and enjoy!

Scholarship Fund

In memory of Sheri Mescaniuk, a scholarship fund in her name had been set up at U.B.C. for students in psychiatry and/or psychiatric care. More information available from the family or MPA.

"Moments"

"Moments", is a collection of stories by consumers in B.C. about special experiences in their life journey while working towards mental health. It is available through the Canadian Mental Health Association, B.C. Division, 405-611 Alexander St. Vancouver B.C., V6A 1E1, Ph. (604)254-3211

Mental Health Information Line

For free, 24-hour, confidential information on mental illnesses contact the Mental Health Information Line at 1-800-661-2121. In the Lower Mainland, dial 669-7600.

Freebies:

For those in need: Free clothing; Dishes

Choose from a variety of donations

At Community Resource Centre, 1731 W. 4th Ave., Monday to Friday,
9 am to 9 pm on request.



