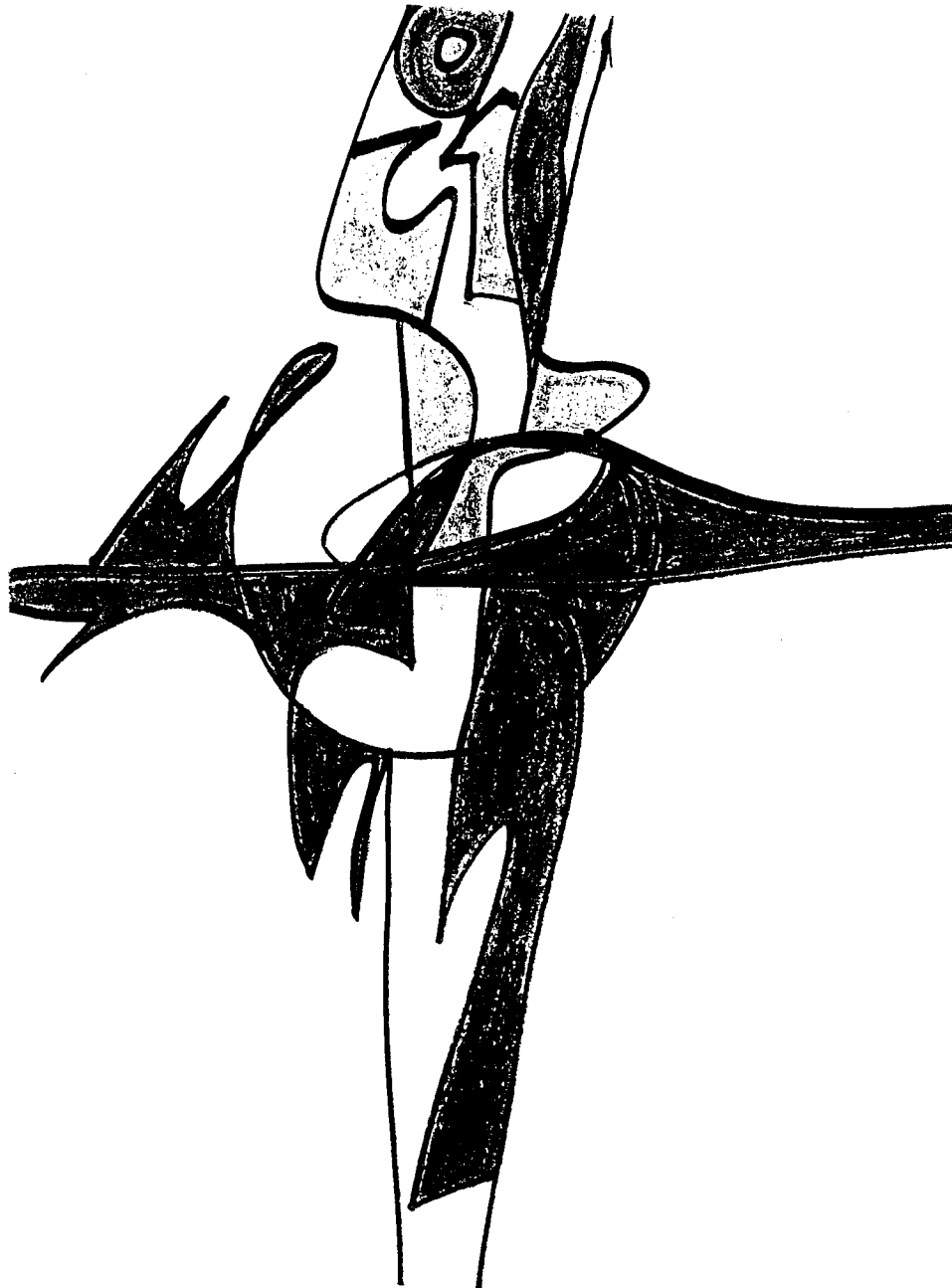


Spring - Summer '98

In A Nutshell

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION



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Schizophrenia: Medical Diagnosis or Moral Verdict?

**by James Mancuso and
Theodore Sarbin
Reviewed by Byron Fraser**

I recently had the pleasure of reading a classic piece of literature in the antipsychiatry tradition which ranks as a "must read" for any serious student of the subject. I heartily recommend it also to anyone unfortunate enough to be in the position of having to "talk back" to the pernicious label: "schizophrenic". James Mancuso and Theodore Sarbin's **Schizophrenia: Medical Diagnosis or Moral Verdict?** was referred to in Seth Farber's **Madness, Heresy, and the Rumor of Angels: The Revolt Against The Mental Health System** as a "monumental work" and indeed it is. It is the book which should have put the kibosh to the virulent medical/disease model once and for all back in the 80's. But, as we all know, it has lingered on into the 90's buoyed by the perverse incentives of power and ill-gotten profit which keep the Psycho-Pharmaceutical Complex afloat. Hopefully, the more recent work of Peter Breggin, such as **Toxic Psychiatry**, will succeed in driving the final stake through its ugly and unrepentant heart.

This 1980 book can be most profitably read in conjunc-

tion with Thomas Szasz's slightly earlier (1976) work, **Schizophrenia: The Sacred Symbol of Psychiatry**, which gives an authoritative and detailed account of the history of the concept of "schizophrenia". Following upon Szasz's lead — though they don't acknowledge a direct linear descent — Mancuso and Sarbin conclude that "schizophrenia" is a mythic entity with a scientific status equivalent to the discredited notions of phlogiston, animal magnetism, and ether. Indeed, after surveying 374 major studies done over the 20 years preceding 1980, in which numerous hypotheses were put forward and tested trying to establish the existence of a variable which would distinguish what "schizophrenia" actually was, Mancuso and Sarbin had to conclude that "From the inspection of the data, it is abundantly clear that most persons identified as schizophrenics do not function differently from most persons identified as nonschizophrenics". Where there exists a slight mean variation, this is explained with reference to socioeconomic and environmental factors. They state further that "Not one dependent measure has

been identified that would allow a professional diagnostician to make a reliable diagnosis. If schizophrenia could be diagnosed like pneumonia, then 60 years of research would have identified at least one causal agent". Moreover, they point out that the categories of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual are totally unreliable — unscientific, subjective, and arbitrary — as demonstrated especially in the work of Rosenhan (1973). Rosenhan concludes "...we have known for a long time that diagnosis are often not useful or reliable, but we nevertheless continued to use them. We now know that we cannot distinguish insanity from sanity".

Mancuso and Sarbin examine the medical/disease paradigm as articulated theory in both its "mechanistic" and its "idiographic" manifestations. Briefly, mechanism refers to the reduction-type analysis in terms of efficient causes — such as the relationships we find established between chemicals in biology, etc. The thoroughly discredited (but still much talked about) dopamine hypothesis would be an example of this sort of attempt at a quantifiable materialistic explanation. Although this approach has been the guiding premise of numerous research efforts to determine a biochemical or genetic "cause" of schizophrenia, Mancuso and Sarbin's overview of all the relevant literature shows

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Schizophrenia: Medical Diagnosis or Moral Verdict?

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that no scientific etiology of disease has ever been established. (For a more current — 1991 — update, which covers much of the same ground, see the chapter, “The Biology and Genetics of ‘Schizophrenic’ Overwhelm”, in Peter Breggin’s *Toxic Psychiatry* — pp. 92-117”. The ideographic solution, on the other hand, is a species of postulating a Platonic form or abstraction, then correlating this with one’s model, and deluding oneself with the belief that one “thing” has caused another “thing”. Thus your Diagnostician’s Manual tells you that “bizarre ideation”, “inappropriate affect”, or “hallucinations”, etc., are symptomatic of “schizophrenia”. Finding these, you conclude that “hallucinations cause schizophrenia”, etc. Other popular postulates are “attention deficit”, “overinclusion”, “loose associations”, “decompensation”, “cognitive dissonance”, and so on. In every case, some or other floating abstraction is found to have a correspondence with another abstraction and it is presumed that a thing has been identified according to a causal relation. Actually the explanatory power of such formism is zero and only developed because of the vacuum created by the repeated failures to uphold the medical/disease model on the basis of scientific mecha-

nism. It nevertheless has comforted many psychiatrists with the notion that their “scientific expertise” was enabling them to identify a concrete referent “out there” corresponding to the “thing” they had in their heads. Objectivity!

As an alternative to the medical/disease paradigm for understanding unwanted behavior Mancuso and Sarbin posit what they term a “contextualist” solution. They stress that not only is every doctor-patient transaction unique and a product of constant change — and therefore, not easily analyzable in terms of fixed codified categories — but also the deviant thought and conduct of the so-called “mentally ill” person is often highly meaningful (and “logical”, “insightful”, “perceptive”, etc.) within the context of their individual conceptual framework. As Mancuso says in his interview with Farber on “Rejecting Mental Illness” (in *Madness, Heresy, and the Rumor of Angels*): “We go after people who are different and refuse to understand that their statements may make sense in the context of their system of construction”. An example of this from my own experience would be the case of the fellow inmate who wrote a long piece for our newsmagazine about how he had

tried to “lose his ego”. A resident psychiatrist declared that this was a species of “typical delusional thinking” and I confess that I didn’t understand it myself until much later I came across the same idea expressed by Nietzsche in his discussion of “self-overcoming” and further in the writings of Buddhists where they talk about the “dissolution of the ego” as a prerequisite to enlightenment. But, at the time, the doctor and I “just didn’t get it” because of our respective socialized blinders whereas the “madman” was way ahead of us. (For a related discussion of this subject see my article: **New Breakthrough: Schizophrenia Cured**, “The Colonist”, May 1994, or available upon request from the author at: Byron Fraser, #302 — 590 Whiting Way, Coquitlam B.C., V3J 3R9).

Another tenet of contextualism is that, for a full understanding of the interpersonal dynamics entailed in the assignment of the “schizophrenia” label, one must diagnose the diagnostician. What one will invariably find, state Mancuso and Sarbin, is that “nonvisible stigmata in the form of diagnostic labels” provide a codified means to “designate a degraded social identity” or “nonperson status”. In the aforementioned interview, Mancuso is emphatic:

Farber: The professionals respond to the mental patient’s self-definition by completely contesting it

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Branches Over the Wall

Syntropy

by Dennis Strashok

When I was reading the interesting thoughts of Buckminster Fuller a few years ago, I came across a new concept, one that I found very exciting and one that has provided much inspiration and food for thought over the ensuing passage of time.

"Bucky" (as he was affectionately called by his colleagues and those who followed his thinking) made mention of the fact that modern science had found in the laws of thermodynamics, the concept of 'entropy', i.e. that the energy in the universe is constantly breaking down and becoming less and that energy naturally tends to move from higher states of order to lower states of order. Well, Bucky in his brilliant thinking came up with another concept, the concept of 'syntropy'. He proposed that humanity, as part of the universe, is the only thing that is not governed by entropy and that humanity rather than moving from higher to lower states of order is actually doing the opposite, it is moving from lower states of energy and order to higher states of energy and order. He purported that we finite human beings, rather than being governed by entropy, are in a growth process that will eventually lead us to the

stars and that we are the positive, vital source of an upward mobility in the universe.

In my most trying and darkest times, I have found the concept of the syntropy of humanity and the syntropy of my own personal identity and journey to be powerfully uplifting, restoring a vision and a sense of purpose to my life. It is wonderful to think that we are a part of a process that defies the finite laws of physics and leads to realms of infinity.

Now Bucky in his thinking was not supposing that man was alone in this journey, this ascent. As a matter of fact, he offered a new version of the Lord's prayer in which he called the Creator "Our father and furtherer of our eternal destinies". In fact Fuller saw this syntropy as something that had been placed in us by the Divine and something that was to be carried out in a union with the Divine. This is not a small vision, but one that encompasses all of humankind and every person individually as well.

I have considered the process of social change and evolution, and there are times when I think that humanity has learned much since the ancient times. There are other times, however,

when I hear of war and brutality, poverty, inhumanity and rampant strife, that I know that we still have a long way to go. I think that North Americans (those of us in Canada and the U.S.) live a very sheltered lifestyle and often we do not realize the vast amount of suffering that is going on in other parts of the world. In the Bible it says "To whom much is given much is required". This speaks to a whole generation of the needs that are all around us in other parts of the world.

In closing, let me say that despite the fact that there are so many injustices and so much inhumanity in the world, Buckminster Fuller's revelation of syntropy gives me new hope for a better society and better lifestyle for all of us. As well in my personal times of suffering, I have taken heart that it is not meaningless and that we are indeed headed on a journey to the stars.



Inner Life

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmar

There were 1.6 million Jewish children in Europe in 1939. By 1945 1.5 million were dead. Six in a hundred survived. I am one of the six. I was three-and-a-half when I had to be hidden, assume an "Aryan" identity, and feign a strange religion, new personal history including a last name that literally meant, in Hungarian, Truth. I had to lie, to save my life and the lives of those who were hiding me, and say my name was Andrew Truth. I had to adjust my table manners, how to hold a knife and fork, to match the habits of my Catholic foster parents. Survival required guile and iron self-control. I had to suppress my personality, feelings and thoughts; there was no room for the anguish of parental abandonment. This torment didn't end with "liberation". I was reclaimed by a woman when I was five, whom I failed to recognize as my mother, and felt ashamed for having forgotten her during the 18 months of separation. She was emotionally damaged by her experiences in Auschwitz, and jealously ended all contact between me and the woman who kept me

safe, creating a second experience of loss and separation. I had every reason never to trust the world.

Do you believe me? Did these things really happen or are they fantasies, false memories, lies and fabrications. And if, instead of being persecuted and hunted by the Nazis, I were to talk about aliens from outer space who abducted my father for a time, or if my story was about narrowly escaping capture by members of a satanic cult, would you believe me then? Of all the stories people tell me during the countless hours of psychotherapy, which ones am I to believe, which ones do I doubt? Does it matter?

During therapy I don't have to be a detective. Everything I am told I take to be significant, but the meaning and truth/falsity of someone's tale may never fully come to light. And it doesn't matter. My consulting room is a sacred place, a play space, where thoughts, emotions, memories and actions can be explored freely, without dire consequences. As soon as you enter my consulting room both you and I find ourselves within a frame whose func-

tion is to keep us safe. I don't keep notes, and I warn my patients that under no circumstances would I appear in court giving so-called expert testimony either for or against them. Only the strictest confidentiality allows for the truth to show itself. Gregory Bateson in 1954, D.W. Winnicott in 1971, called attention to the profound resemblance between the process of therapy and the phenomenon of play. I often suggest to distraught parents who are upset by the lies their children tell that if you don't want your children to lie, don't ask them any questions! A 2000-years-old wisdom says, "In mendacio veritas, or "In There Lies the Truth".

When foster parents and social workers induced children to tell tales of having been abused by the Devil's disciples in Satanic Cults, there never was any evidence for an international cult, but the children were abused sexually and physically in their own homes. The abuse was so extreme and the children so disturbed that those involved with them were only able to cope if they believed the source of the crime to be supernatural. The children were hurt, and the Devil wasn't to blame!

To heal from the wounds of the past, the exact nature of transgressions and the exact identities of the abusers need not be known. The lengthy search for

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UnderDog

by Jim Gifford



Two roads diverged in a
wood, and I -
Took the one less traveled
by
And that has made all the
difference.

These lines from *The Road Not Taken*, by poet Robert Frost, echo in my mind these days, as I turn 50 years old.

In the spring of 1970, I experienced a 'breakthrough breakdown', followed by years of mental anguish, physical stress, emotional turmoil, and spiritual crisis. Today I count my blessings for these times of danger and opportunity.

The dangers are now by-gone; threatening, if rare, suicidal moods, doubts about recovering from the up-and-down episodes of bi-polar affective disorder, and moments of lack of judgment that could have drastically altered my

life circumstances. Yet, in countless ways, I am thankful for my dis-ease since it allowed me to develop a deeper and broader sense of life and meaning.

Due to my illness, I found myself in a new lifestyle. I began receiving a government pension which turned my financial world topsy-turvy. Raised in an affluent family, I was suddenly living below the poverty level. Yet the possibilities for growth and a rich inward life soon became apparent. I turned a lemon into lemonade.

The 'less is more' philosophy of voluntary simplicity, expounded and lived by the likes of Diogenes, Francis of Assisi and Henry David Thoreau, was a Godsend. In the Kitsilano neighbourhood of Vancouver, I always had a room or two in an old house and, in these cozy quarters, I lived a bohemian existence.

I pursued writing poetry, publishing here and there, and organizing and giving readings. Not able to afford to buy many books, I sought knowledge by means of the public library and Banyan Bookstore, where I could leisurely sit and get into works of poetry, psychology, shamanism, mysticism, metaphysics, and astro and quantum physics that fascinated me. My intellectual

world opened wide and thrived. I heeded poet Ezra Pound's axiom that 'it is better to have more free time and less money than more money and less free time.' My life was (and is) gratifying. But it was the people I met along the way that made the difference.

Those souls, also struggling with their psychic demons, with whom I laughed, cried, argued, and played, in hospitals, halfway houses, on the street, at centres like that of the Mental Patients' Association. To these men and women I am indebted for a wealth of experience. I also received exceptional health care.

I recall many, many hours of therapy with devoted nurses like Emi Tsutsumi and Marg McAnerin, and especially the comraderie with psych-aide, the late Herb Bice. Of the psychiatrists I saw over a twenty-five year period, two stand out; Dr. George Tilser and Dr. Paul Devlin. Thank you, one and all, for helping me to exorcise myself.

I remember many late nights and early mornings in the Naam Cafe, confabulating over coffees with fellow 'philosopher-kings', as Dr. Devlin called us in jest. Amusing and informative discourses with my former English teacher and mentor, writer Sam Roddan, are still going strong. Along my journey, Sidhu and Kewal appeared almost magically.

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Growing Up in the East End

by Sam Roddan

As a boy I knew the East End of Vancouver like my own face in a mirror. The dark lanes, the fire escape up the side of the old Empress theatre on Gore Avenue. The White Lunch. The pawnshop on Columbia. The rooming houses that smelled of sour cabbage along Cordova. Whore houses along Pender that my Dad called "Dens of Iniquity".

Like many of my generation I lived in and out of two worlds. There was the painful, constricted world of the church pew. It was here I felt myself tied down, bound hand and foot by the protective life of the church, its saints, Jesus, the words of my father. Everything clothed in raiment white as the driven snow.

On the street outside our Mission Church I could smell the salt air, sour beer smells from the taverns. Listen to the blast of the ferries. The song of the sirens from the firehall along Cordova. At dingy hotel entrances, rouged and lip-sticked faces smiled and beckoned like flowers in a Dufy painting.

The Carnegie library at Main and Hastings was a green pasture. Books were a lively intoxicant. My senses reeled under the taste, texture, perfumes of words. Even to this day I still feel my flesh tingle and my heart leap

when I recall those words of James Joyce:

"Welcome, O Life. I go to encounter for the millionth time, the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul, the uncreated conscience of my race."

I was fifteen. The blood was hot, hormones still bubbled on the back burner, even when I took cold showers, ran around Powell Street Grounds, said prayers, read the Bible and did push-ups till my arms ached. None of that would do any good of course. It was only a matter of time. (Oh, Lord, How Long).

My Dad was a very good painter. Oils were his favourite. At home he had his easel in the kitchen. At the church he worked in his study. The pungent smell of turpentine was a portion of my life. Paint rags and brushes were part of the decorative scheme of things.

I liked to watch Dad squeeze out the colors from the paint tubes onto his palette. He was very saving of the paint and careful to roll up the tube and replace the cap. He said paint was far more precious than toothpaste.

The paint curled out like fat, juicy worms wrapped in brilliant coats of vermilion, ochre and yellow. Dad worked mostly with a palette knife. He layered on the

paint with quick, deft strokes. He never fussed. We could watch the Douglas Firs, the forest, the mountains spring alive, full-blown from his canvas.

Dad loved to paint scenes from his boyhood; Loch Lomond, the Bridge of Ayr, Gibraltar, where he was stationed as a young worker for the Y.M.C.A. In his later years he painted scenes from Howe sound, Gambier Island. A series of great sailing ships. One of his most popular paintings was The Rock of Ages. A huge granite boulder swept by enormous waves and sheets of spray.

In the early days of the Depression, even the church gym became a focal point for painting. It was here, surrounded by hungry down-and-outers, that Orville Fisher, Paul Goranson and Ed Hughes worked on a set of murals commissioned by the church.

Some of the unemployed, waiting for the soup kitchen to open became lively art critics. Good natured banter flew back and forth.

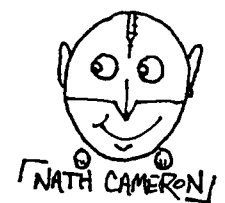
"If I had a calsomine brush, I could finish that job in a couple of days," said one.

"You could buy a lot of soup bones for one of those tubes of paint," said another.

Few of the down-and-outers realized that Paul, Orville and Ed were down on their luck too and getting their own bowls

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MEDICATION MAN



HOW TO CREATE A CARTOON OR

THE SCHIZOPHRENIC CARTOONISTS
CREATIVE THOUGHT PROCESSES...
FIRST HAND STARE
AT BLANK SHEET OF PAPER & WONDER
AT IT

REALIZE YOU HAVE BEEN DOING
SO FOR THE LAST HOUR.

ALSO REALIZE THAT SOMEONE HAS
BEEN WATCHING YOU MOTIONLESSLY
STARING AT THE PAPER

BECOME APPARANT THIS PATICULAR PERSON
WAS CONCERNED FOR YOUR HEALTH &
NOTIFIED THE AUTHORITIES.

THEY ASK YOU HOW YOU ARE FEELING,
YOU SAY "FINE-THANK-YOU" AS
THEY WISK YOU AWAY.

YOU FIND YOURSELF ACCOMMODATED
WITH FREE ROOM & BOARD WITH
A TABLE WITH PAPER ON IT.

A. Cameron

YOU STARE AT THE PAPER

REALIZE THIS IS WHERE IT GOT YOU
IN THE FIRST PLACE.

Dawn to Dusk

by Reinhart

The city streets go slithering out,
the steaming vapours rise.
The town is empty and asleep
in death's benign disguise.
You set your feet upon the road
while the sun begins its climb.
Your clothes are wet, your feet are clay —
the fading church bells chime.

The shadows on the highway shrink
but they will grow again.
The desert heat comes hard and fast;
cold night will bring the rain.
And now the dust begins to blow,
the dry wind stings your eyes.
Three days without food or drink —
the hungry vulture cries.

For years you've been upon the road
without a bed or home.
Lay failing body on the land,
your pillow is a stone.
There is no place that you're going to
but still you never stay.
The seasons pass across your face
as your hair turns slowly grey.

Dawn to Dusk (cont.)

by Reinhart

At noon the blaze burns your soul,
your clothes are soaked with sweat.
The sea flows fifty miles away
but you're still not half there yet.
A lonesome rail track makes you trip,
a freight train whistle blares,
you heave yourself up from the dust —
your shoe leather tears.

Your clothes, your pack and your roll
are all the things you own.
Friends and women are strange to you,
you were always meant to roam.
Then evening finds you by the sea,
the rain begins to fall,
an orange sun goes sinking down -
you hear a coyote call.

In the last rays of dying day
you take a look around,
remember broken vows and dreams
and watch the sun go down.
A dark rain chills your heat and head,
the rainbow's at your back.
You think of Noah, Cain, God and then
you want to paint it black.

A Positive Outlook

by Terry Levesque

We are all looking forward to the next century. As a mental health consumer, I'm hoping that there is a better understanding of mental health issues in the coming days. In this regard, it is very important to maintain a balanced frame of mind and to have a positive outlook on life. Too many of us have failed in the success oriented society around us and have not been able to live up to the rigid, high standards that have been set. Each of us has to cope with our daily lives and, in most cases, that is enough to handle. Beyond success and failure, there is an understanding and acceptance of lives lived. We travel a long journey on our way to better mental health.

On our journey, it is important that we accept the help that is available to us. It is very difficult to handle mental problems without some kind of assistance. All of us wish that these problems did not exist, however that is not reality. People do have legitimate mental health issues, and they should be dealt with in a sane, rational manner.

Whether it is talking to a friend, a worker, or a doctor, it is important to stay in contact with others and to stay in the real world. Whatever your diagnoses may be it is important to main-

tain social contact and good relationships with others. This will certainly help in improving a positive outlook on life.

We are rapidly moving ahead in time and our knowledge of mental health should be put to better use. We are not living in days gone by. Rather, we are up-to-date and aware of current issues. We should expect then that others would meet us on a common ground. Few of us will ever reach the knowledge level of psychiatric professionals. We should not have to. Nor should we try to excel where knowledge fails us. Each of us has his or her individual concerns. And it is as an individual that we present our-

selves. Psychology is the study of individual behaviour, perhaps we should go back to that premise.

Whether you are young or old, male or female, mental health is an important aspect of our lives. We should strive to maintain good mental health. The mental state of our citizens is a reflection of our society as a whole. By improving the mental state of our citizens we are contributing to the well-being of our society. Few things could be more worthwhile. I hope there is an improvement in the overall attitude toward mental health and mental illness. Certainly there is a lot of work to do. I hope the future is better for all of us and especially those afflicted with a mental illness.



Laughs with Lewry

Did you hear about the shrink who listened during group therapy?

He heard voices.



Schizophrenia: Medical Diagnosis or Moral Verdict?

(Continued from page 3)

and getting them to accept a degraded social identity.

Mancuso: The professional who accepts the concept of mental illness is going to degrade the person. That is basically the object of the mental health world.

This tendency is especially pronounced in forensic settings where the whole impetus of review boards and psychiatric interviews is to get the inmate to accept that he or she is "sick", "bad", "inferior, and/or "deficient". Compliant individuals are said to have "insight". Non-compliant ones are "in denial". And the "not guilty by reason of insanity" verdict is, in practice, a hypocritical farce. A more apt designation would be: "not guilty but guilty", for forensic inmates regularly serve as long, and often much longer, time as regular prisoners. Most of them exhibited temporary irrationality attendant to some crime, but little, if any, irrationality since; they are simply "doing time" as retributive punishment under the pretext of "therapy". As Toronto lawyer Carla McKague, has argued, if so-called "mentally ill" people are really "not guilty", why not let them go and allow them to seek treatment in the community. After all, statistics show that such

people are less prone to violence and/or criminal behavior than the general population.

An additional transpersonal aspect of the phenomena of "schizophrenia" is what the sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann have called "the social construction of reality". Thomas Szasz refers to the same thing as the "manufacture of madness". In the words of Mancuso and Sarbin: "The constructivist approach, unlike the idiographic or mechanistic, encourages the examination of such human actions as role creation and role enactment. A theorist can speak of society inventing constructs, amalgams of which define invented roles. One can speak of social transmission of constructs to individuals, and the means by which individuals learn the constructs applicable to transmitted roles." Implicit in this analysis is the realization that others can "put it on you" or act to co-author a negative reality production variously called a "crime" or a "sickness". And, as Thomas Szasz points out, this is especially the case in society's typical reaction to advocates of change which are initially not understood; they are almost always labeled "mad". Tim Leary says that jail is an occupational hazard of the successful philosopher. We might add

that the Nut House is a way station for many unacknowledged 'outsider' prophets.

In concluding their exposition, Mancuso and Sarbin make the following telling point:

"Rather than provide a new vocabulary, it has been our intention to demonstrate that no entity exists that corresponds to the ambiguous criteria for schizophrenia. When our critics ask, If not schizophrenia, what do you call it? We reply: There is no "it" to be labeled with a diagnostic term. We hasten to add that all of us exhibit behavior at one time or another that others might call crazy, but such behavior can be understood only in a context that includes the person who utters the valuational term."

I must admit that I, too have fallen into the trap of assuming that there was some sort of existential "it" alluded to by the term "schizophrenia", which I have referred to in my own alternative belief system as a "spiritual" or "bioenergetic" disturbance. But the contextualist approach probably represents an advance even on this. They go on to say:

"schizophrenia is a moral verdict masquerading as a medical diagnosis. We propose an unmasking. The recognition that the schizophrenia model persists because of its mythic quality should hasten the construction of new metaphors to communicate about unwanted conduct."

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Schizophrenia: Medical Diagnosis or Moral Verdict?

(Continued from last page)

New paradigms for understanding unwanted behavior will emerge. And, "As they are applied, we predict, the 'disease of schizophrenia' will disappear, just as the 'venality of witchery' disappeared when the specialists in

the inquisition removed their services from the public marketplace". Finally, in a brilliant concluding epilogue to their book, Mancuso and Sarbin summarize their findings by illustrating a graphic analogy — everyone has

Four Corners Community Savings

Two years ago Four Corners Community Savings opened its doors for the first time. Truly a community institution, it exists because of the dedication and hard work of local residents of the Downtown Eastside.

Accessibility is key to Four Corners. For low-income people, especially seniors and those on income assistance, access means not having to pay service charges and cheques, and money orders, are free. As well, no minimum balance is required and everyone receives a free picture identification card.

As well, Four Corners is entirely wheelchair accessible. There are no steps or ramps and clients can be served either standing or sitting. In the lobby there is a public washroom, free phone, "take a number" instead of line-ups, and lots of chairs to make

people comfortable.

To help ensure that Four Corners continues to meet the needs of its clientele a new Community Outreach Team has started work. Annthea Whittaker, Blair Petrie and Barry Hames talked to clients last cheque day about services. "People said they were treated with respect here and are pleased with the services we provide" said Annthea Whittaker. She added "people want ATM cards for cash machines. This will be available very soon.

Electronic funds transfer is one of the new and important services at Four Corners. Some people know it as direct deposit. Client's income assistance cheques can be put directly into their bank account without having to wait in line at their MHR office. Electronic funds transfer can also make things easier for

the concept of a unicorn, a horse-like creature with a horn in the middle of its forehead but... it doesn't exist; they conclude that "Schizophrenia is a unicorn".



people who do not have a safe mailbox or whose mail comes later in the day. It especially benefits people who find themselves in the hospital unexpectedly. Their cheque is safe in the bank on issue day and not vulnerable to loss or theft.

Finally, the Outreach Team will be calling on community service organizations, businesses and unions to support the work of Four Corners by becoming clients themselves. The revenue generated by institutional deposits will ensure that Four Corners continues to operate and create funds for re-investment back into the community.

We are committed to continually fine-tuning the operations of Four Corners so that it better meets the needs of our clients and community.



BookWorm

Autobiography of a Tattoo

by Stan Persky
New star Books, 1997
Reviewed by Andrew Feldmar

The goal of psychotherapy is to bear the pain and suffering which naturally occasions the assumption of knowledge that our lives are ours to live in the dialectic of our aspirations and limitations. One can define a person as the ensemble of his/her desires and, alternately, psychopathology as the subversion, that is, the deadening, of those desires. Alan Ginsberg had a dream in which William Carlos Williams wrote this poem: As is, you're bearing a common truth, commonly known as desire. No need to dress it up as beauty, no need to distort

what's not standard, to be understandable. Pick your nose, eyes, ears, tongue, sex and brain to show the populace. Take your chances on your own accuracy, listen to yourself talk to yourself, and others will also, gladly, be relieved of the burden of their own thought and grief. What began as desire will end wiser."

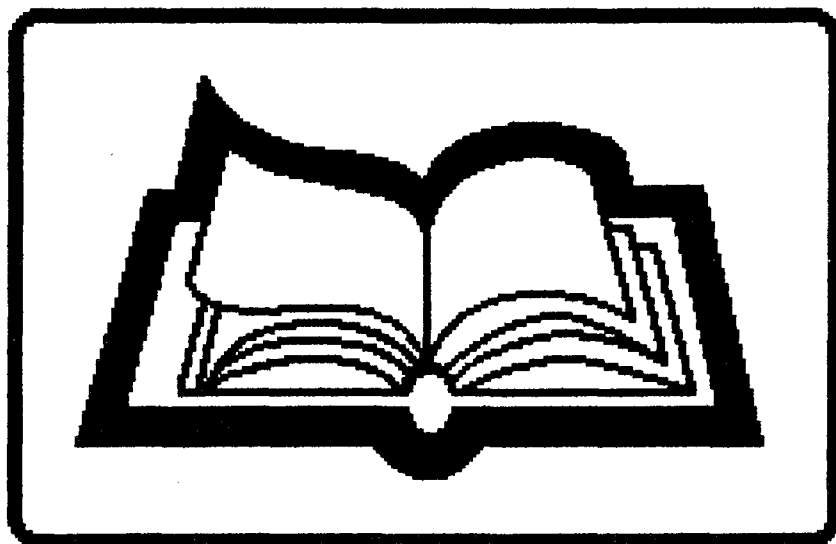
Persky's book is a meditation on desire. He knew and loved Ginsberg in the late fifties, early sixties. "I immediately (and ever since) took Ginsberg to be not only a friend, but one of my teachers," writes Persky. What

makes me think of Ginsberg most as I read Persky's intimate essays is the candor achieved through spontaneity.

"I'm a homosexual,' or whatever the currently fashionable predicate noun is: gay, queer, homo, etc. For homo, homosexuality is permanent trauma — trauma in both senses: dream and fundamental shock," says Persky and later adds his friend's, Brian Fawcett's, remark, "Isn't it true that consciousness itself is the permanent trauma? I.e. that one is conscious of the world and of self in a particular way."

The world teaches you very quickly which of your desires are desirable, and which undesirable. It takes courage and perseverance not to betray one's true self when there is pressure from many quarters to edit oneself into an acceptable persona. Persky writes, "It's that resistance to surrendering my desire that I think of as 'coming out again (and again and...),' whether to one's self or to the world." This problem of 'coming out' is not just a specifically homo issue. Each one of us has to become visible and risk attack and disapproval, if we ever wish to be known and loved.

Persky is very generous, the reader is left with a sense of gratitude for all the gifts wrapped between the covers. Intellectually, there are quotations from many exciting sources, from Plato to



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Minute Particulars

(Continued from page 4)

the details and efforts to exact revenge and restitution, may just elaborate ways to postpone or avoid the painful realization that I have been ripped off, I lost out on many things, irretrievably and forever. Sheer loss, nothing will

make up for it, done. Like losing a leg in a car accident. I have to mourn and grieve and then GET ON WITH IT, NEVERTHELESS. As R.D. Laing suggested, "Your future is not a function of your past..." Every moment is a

critical moment, habit is the illusion, freedom the reality. We can all use a bit of encouragement.



Book Worm

(Continued from page 13)

Foucault. There is a curriculum hidden in the book that could take years of reading to follow up, and one could gain good grounding in the history of ideas in the Western world. Emotionally, Persky allows you so close to himself that you can smell the intimacy, feel the arousal, taste the skin of obliging young men. One is left with memorable bits that are succinct and thought-provoking. For instance, "Neither kissing, becoming fucked, nor any other act of desire is half as reliable a protection against future injury as plain civility". Or, "I quoted, perhaps a bit pompously, a phrase of Maurice Blanchot's, which I'd read earlier in the day, to the effect that teaching 'is infinite attention to the other.' 'And what's learning?' Ilonka demanded, immediately suspicious of all mellifluous and potentially sentimen-

tal aphorisms. 'The willingness to change your life,' I replied without thinking." This last bit I like especially because change teaching to therapy and learning to what a patient's task is, and the assertion remains true.

Stan Persky teaches philosophy at Capilano college and although I have never met him, he seems familiar now, as if I had been a student of his for some time. His concern with perennial topics, such as love, desire, friendship, truth, suffering, etc. makes his Autobiography a classic, well worth reading.



UnderDog

(Continued from page 5)

These two restauranteurs and artists fed me spiritually as well as physically.

In these last four years, I have been caring for my ailing mother, now in her 80's. As a caregiver, I have exercised nurturing skills, developed into a great cook, and accepted the responsibilities of running a household. As for my compassion and the need to serve that have marked my growth, I now truly practice what I preach.

As a journalist, poet, and editor for In A NutShell, The

OceanParker and The Barnacle, I am using my gifts in mainstream society for the benefit of the community. My life is rich and full. Yes, there have been trade-offs and sacrifices, as there are for each of us along the way, but I sincerely have no regrets.

My life has unfolded and now, with contentment and acceptance, I am thankful for the road I have taken.



Growing Up in the East End

(Continued from page 6)

of soup and sandwiches and handouts when everyone had left.

Nor did those men ever realize that Paul, Orville and Ed all became Canada's best known war artists. And later, Paul, an eminent stage designer, Orville, a brilliant graphic art instructor and Ed Hughes, one of Canada's best known painters.

How little we really know about the talent and spirit of our fellows.



Simplicity

In order to seek one's own direction, one must simplify the mechanics of ordinary, everyday life.

Plato

Original Epigram by Al Barbeau

Cowards run, but heroes
retreat.

Bulletin Board

Four Corners Community Savings

If you have any suggestions for the Community Outreach Team or questions about electronic funds transfer, please call us at 606-0131 or drop in to Four Corners. We are located at 390 Main Street, right on the corner of Hastings and Main. We value your opinions and your business.

Mothers in Transition Support Group

Mothers who have lost custody of their offspring due to mental illness can meet other Moms of like mind and situation for coffee meetings.

We share experiences and interests. We hope in unison to lessen the burden of living without our offspring. We create friendships.

We meet one-to-one with Dawn and as a group.

For more information call dawn at 871-0151 and/or leave a message.

“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.



