

Office: Mental Patients Assn.



In A Nutshell

Autumn 2004

An Interview with Roberta Chapman

by Jim Gifford

J.G.: Roberta, briefly talk about your background before coming to the MPA Society as Executive Director in March of last year. I understand you worked with the St. James Society.

ROBERTA: Yes, I was there for eight years as Administrator, which is second-in-command to the Executive Director. We had similar clients although they are more diversified and working with different Ministries, as well. The St. James Society is about the same size as the MPA but different in complexity.

J.G.: How have your first impressions of the MPA changed and/or evolved as you've become familiar with the realities and hurdles to be faced on a day-to-day basis?

ROBERTA: It's not really a surprise. With the attempted cutbacks in funding, it's been wonderful to have such a high percentage of very good staff.

J.G.: Is MPA accredited and what is accreditation?

ROBERTA: Accreditation is a form of licensing, so it dictates a standard of service and quality. My understanding of MPA's history is that we did not want to go the accreditation route in that it's just one more bureaucratic step we don't necessarily believe is required. I've checked with the Health Authority and it appears there won't be any requirement to be accredited.

J.G.: Under your leadership, the head office has moved from Kitsilano to the Downtown Eastside, at 122 Powell. What was the impetus behind making this decision?

ROBERTA: Our lease on West 4th Avenue was up and we were going to have to renew for another six years. There were a lot of problems with the building and

also being faced with having to reduce costs, it was much more cost-effective for us to move into our own building on the main floor of the Hampton Hotel (an MPA residence).

J.G.: By membership vote at our General Meeting, our organization is now known as MPA – Motivation Power & Achievement Society. What does this imply regarding our image and possible funding in areas such as corporate sponsorship?

ROBERTA: We've been turned down for donations, on several occasions, because people didn't want to be associated with the negative side of the process. They wanted to be part of the helping future side, be part of the solution rather than donating to what seems to be the problems. We've had an extremely positive response to the name change.

J.G.: Roberta, personally I'd like to thank you for your openness, competence, and initiative in the running of MPA. Continued success. Any closing comments?

ROBERTA: Glad to be here!

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Guided Imagery for Wellness

by Judith Wallace

One of the many alternative healing resources available to us is that of guided imagery. It is closely related to creative visualization, some forms of meditation and self-hypnosis, essentially the deliberate use of the mind and imagination to aid in our healing and wellness. The principles of guided imagery are straightforward and the practice can produce deep change. It creates feelings of comfort and ease, assists in discovering new understandings about ourselves and grants wellness in our minds and bodies. If, while working with guided imagery, you are not completely comfortable, relaxed and safe with what you are experiencing consider changing the imagery to something that is absolutely right for you or perhaps consider that this is not the wellness tool most suited to your particular needs.

The basic components are as follows. First, time is spent preparing the body and mind by deep breathing exercises and focused relaxation of our body. One of the healthiest skills we can develop for stress reduction is the ability to relax our bodies and breathe properly.

Second, we improve on our ability to work with our mind and imagination by focusing on sensory imagery. For example, imagine the taste of a lemon, the sound of waves lapping on a beach, the feeling of velvet or the sight of a sunset. The ability to add smells, taste, sound and touch to our inner journey makes the

experience more real to our minds and bodies. If you are interested in developing your imagination even more deeply consider switching the sensory information. Try seeing how velvet feels, hearing the tart taste of a lemon or touching a sunset. You get the idea.

Third, structure is incorporated in the experience, often by the deliberate use of location. To illustrate, we begin by imagining ourselves in a comfortable safe space with which we are already familiar, then move into a new space, which represents a new level of consciousness. In the new place, which is always characterized as a sacred, safe, and healthy place, we experience various states of being, knowing and healing. After some time is spent in this sacred space we return to our daily reality, the place where we started the journey.

Fourth, the narration for the experience is meant to stimulate the imagination not describe the experience in detail. Enough guidance is given to provide structure and suggest some useful areas to explore; the imagery that is invoked comes from inside ourselves. A few examples include: experiencing forgiveness and letting go, healing of a physical condition, awareness and understanding about a life circumstance, finding guidance and support for a life decision, experiencing peace and a feeling of wholeness.

The Editorial Board of *In A Nutshell* welcomes letters, articles, and poetry on mental health issues from you, our readers.

Warning! Do not abruptly stop psychiatric medications! Most psychiatric medications are powerful drugs and should be withdrawn from gradually under the care of a physician or other health practitioner.

In A Nutshell is a publication of the MPA Society, 122 Powell St., Vancouver, BC, V6A 1G1, ph. (604) 482-3700, fax (604) 738-4132. The MPA is a non-profit organization that offers a variety of programs in ADVOCACY, HOUSING, RECREATIONAL and SOCIAL ACTIVITIES for former mental patients. For more information on any of the above programs or housing waiting lists, please phone the office at (604) 482-3700. Editorial Board: Jim Gifford, Ely Swann, Reinhart, Byron Fraser, D. Paul Strashok.

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Finally, time is spent bringing this experience into our daily lives. This can be done either by keeping a journal of our sessions, creating art to express what we have imagined, incorporating healthy changes into our lives, or by meditating further on what we have learned, discovering how this guided imagery can best unfold in our world.

*P.S. I invite you to consider utilizing this resource for your health and wellness. There are a number of excellent books and tapes on the subject. Two books that I have found useful are: *Rituals of Healing Using Guided Imagery for Health and Wellness* by J. Achterberg, B. Dossey and L. Kilkmeier and *Staying Well with Guided Imagery* by B. Naparstek.*

My Favourite Teacher

by Sam Roddan

Sometimes, in pensive mood, I try to remember the best teacher I ever had. No easy task when you have spent your own life at the chalk rail. But I did have one teacher who made a difference. Helped me over the hurdles, taught me to hold my head high, roll with the punches.

Mr. Spencer was tough as nails and seldom under the weather. Three mornings a week, Mr. Spencer taught us manual training in his woodworking room in the school basement at old Laura Secord.

Last period every afternoon, Mr. Spencer brushed the sawdust from his pant cuffs, slipped on a tie and became our English teacher upstairs in Room 222.

Mr. Spencer always jogged into our English class carrying an Oxford dictionary and a well-worn copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. His very first job was to open the windows and pull up the blinds.

"Let there be light!" he'd shout. Then he'd have us back on our feet doing deep breathing and touching our toes to get the circulation going. Next came the mental push-ups and we'd get our heads down, grab our pencils and sweat out 12 lines on a topic such as "Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread".

Often Mr. Spencer would call "time out" and give us a pep talk about words and how the right word must slip into the right slot. And how words must fit together like the joints in the spice racks and footstools we made in our woodworking class.

"Don't be afraid of words!" he'd shout. "Care for them. Respect them. Don't push them around. Don't throw them away."

Last period on Friday was the big test for the week. This was the time when each of us had to swing

out on the high bar of our imagination, get up on tip-toe, grab the rings, see what we could do with a topic such as, "Man's Reach Should Exceed His Grasp or What's a Heaven For?"

"Hang in there!" Mr. Spencer would shout. "Blot out the blather. Cut the guff and the twaddle." Everyone in Room 222 recognized Mr. Spencer as head coach and chief spiritual advisor in the school. If the going got rough, Mr. Spencer was right beside you. For instance, when we had *Pilgrim's Progress* for silent reading, Mr. Spencer never tried to sneak out to the staff room for a quick smoke. Instead, he jogged up

and down the aisles helping us through parts such as the Slough of Despond and Hill Difficulty. "Atta Boy!" he whispered to Joe Antonelli who had trouble with his vocab. "Atta Boy, Joe, Atta Boy!" Then, when we came face to face with Giant Despair on Page 211, Mr. Spencer was cheering us on as we pounded Despair to the canvas with solid verbs to the flab and the pulp in the mid-section.

Even to this day, I can still hear his advice when it came time to check our copy and rewrite draft number five:

"Drill out the dry rot, lads. Hit the nail on the head. Sand down the adverbs. Polish that final draft. Let the chips fall where they may!"

I spent 25 years in the classroom, burned out a couple of times. Luckily not third degree but hurtful enough. More than once I was ready to throw in the towel. But it was then I thought of Mr. Spencer, his spirit, his goodwill, his words etched in wisdom:

"Hang in there, lads! Don't lose your grip. Reach for the top! Eyeball the stars!"

"Don't be afraid of words!" he'd shout. 'Care for them. Respect them.'"

Man Bites Black Dogs - News Briefs From All Over

Compiled by Scott Dixon

Let Them Eat Coffee-Cake

The 2004 Marie Antoinette Award goes to an anonymous letter writer to Vancouver's *WestEnder* newspaper. She complained she could no longer enjoy her favorite coffee bar at Davie and Granville because of being 'repeatedly harassed by street folk with significant mental health issues.' Signing the letter 'Saddened and Dismayed', she included only her first name. And, yes, it was Marie.

Granville Street? She'd *HATE* Wall Street

A recent study published in the *Washington Times* concluded there is a stigma against mental illness among young, highly-paid Wall Street professionals. Sadness, depression, illness, and anxiety are viewed as a weakness in character or ability in the financial center of the world. Often, people are afraid that if others find out, they'll be fired. Instead of seeking help, the young brokers, investment bankers and analysts are turning to alcohol to cope. Catalyst Strategies Group, which conducted the study, found that 32 percent had six or more drinks at least once a week, and 54 percent indulged in binge drinking at least once a month.

Teach Your Children Well

A Little League coach in Grand Junction, Colorado says a new mental health treatment center across from a baseball field will "bring us the worst of the worst." The town's newspaper - *The Daily Sentinel* - reported that opponents feared the facility could jeopardize the

safety of children who frequent the area.

Town Council approved the center by a 3-2 vote.

Classical Gas

The gassing of mental patients went out of fashion with Hitler, we thought. But one of the reasons the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission pulled the plug on Quebec City's CHOI radio was this "joke" from top-rated announcer Jeff Fillion. Referring to a local mental health facility, he said (translated from French by the *Toronto Star*): "What I think they should do in that zoo is fill up the rooms, and then there'd be a switch, and once every four months, they press the button and just a little bit of gas comes out; and then you go in and pick it all up and put it in bags."

Something's Happening Here

A just-released military survey of paratroopers who were part of the Iraq invasion found that 17.4 percent of the soldiers have post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. The survey of 1,300 soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade was taken three months after they returned to Fort Bragg, N.C., after a year in Iraq, according to a *Fayetteville Observer* report. The researchers found that only 38 percent to 45 percent of service personnel who met the criteria for a mental disorder expressed interest in receiving help, and only 23 percent to 40 percent of those people sought professional help. ■

Quotes from the Roundtable by M.D. Arthurs

"once a population reaches a critical size, and a certain level of sophistication, competition becomes self-destructive."

Mental Health Court Forum

Consumer Perspective

by Jim Gifford

Of the sixteen times that I have been admitted for psychiatric care, on three occasions I was placed in jail overnight. In each case, I was taken to hospital the next day and not subjected to the criminal court system. Like others, less fortunate, who have been behind bars for longer periods, I exhibited symptoms of mental illness.

In my case, these were classic signs of aberrance during the manic phase of bi-polar disorder: extreme emotional excitability, impetuosity, frenzy of ideas, rambling speech, and delusions of grandeur. Although I sympathize with my arresting officers, who were dealing as best they could with someone out-of-control, jail is not the proper place for a person in psychotic state.

I vividly recall my first arrest, in August of 1973, after getting into fisticuffs with several soldiers at the Canada Games, in my hometown of New Westminster. When put in my cell, I felt an immense sense of freedom and simplicity, accentuated by the fact I compared myself to two other jailbirds, Mahatma Gandhi and Malcolm X – now that's delusional!

For many of those suffering from mental illness, being incarcerated, however briefly, may cause despair and even lead to desperate measures such as suicide attempts. It is important to remember that, when one of these individuals comes into contact with the law, he or she undoubtedly has stopped taking their prescription medications, if indeed they even have a history of taking them. In such a state of scattered attention, there are no boundaries in one's mindset, and consequent behaviour is erratic, unconventional and disturbing.

Recently CBC reported that a UBC law professor said the treatment of a mentally ill man at a Whitehorse jail was a gross human rights violation. Professor Michael Jackson said putting the man in an isolation cell for more than a month goes against both international and Canadian standards. The man, who was in a psychotic state, was kept in a tiny cell until a judge ordered his transfer to a hospital. The judge called the man's treatment "cruel and unusual punishment."

Jackson said mentally ill prisoners were treated

the same way at the old B.C. Penitentiary until the 1970's. "What this man needed was some compassionate, professional help and compassionate, professional help usually doesn't take place in an isolation cell."

Despite my own experiences of questionable quality of care at Riverview Mental Hospital, its deinstitutionalization in the 80's and 90's, and its grand vision of reintegrating the asylum's residents into the mainstream, has been a failure. Due to lack of foresight, planning, and follow-through, and especially the will of government, the original high hopes were faltered by inadequate affordable and available social housing. Thousands of ex-patients, as well as those drawn to our area by the milder climate, flooded the Downtown Eastside.

In many cases, they were and are exposed to violence, the ravages of illicit drug-dealing, prostitution, and the general criminal element, and thus must endure living on the edge, with an already debilitating and estranging illness. Against the onslaught of pressure and strains, in the underbelly of modern urban life, it is small wonder that those with mental infirmities come in contact with the law.

As a society and culture, that to the sensitive eye seems in the throes of breakdown, we need to broaden our scope of what constitutes mental and emotional distress. From my point-of-view, as our world keeps going at a faster and faster pace, I sense the stress fractures symptomatic of a widespread bi-polar disorder that appears at every turn. For example, extreme excitability and impetuosity may be found in road rage, hockey brawls, government/union strife, indeed the use of such drugs as the youth-oriented ecstasy.

Today, countless numbers are struggling to stay psychologically afloat. When they come up against the law, those who have committed offences, that are the result of mental dis-ease, find themselves in the criminal justice system. The time for a Mental Health Court, in our community, is now.

■

Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmár

On the telephone, making arrangements for the first consultation, he says that he doesn't mind coming in with his wife, but really, it is she who needs to see me. When they sit down in my office, I see that he is at least 15 years older than she is, handsome, clean-cut, in-shape, but subdued, low-energy, obfuscating, and sad. She is quick, bright, perky, articulate, serious, and candid. Very quickly it becomes clear that they are on the point of breaking up because neither of them want to go on without sex, and for the past two years they haven't gotten together to make love more than five or six times, if that. The way their story goes, he wants to be physically intimate, and she avoids or refuses almost all of his overtures. Neither of them seems to know why, both feel stuck in a disheartening mystery.

My mind goes to the basics: the operational definition of *enjoy* boils down to *let's do it again*. How could I say I enjoyed doing something, if I don't make efforts to do it again? So, if sex disappears from a relationship, it's because it's not enjoyable for one, the other, or both partners. Or, withholding it must be more fun than having it. There are, of course, a million reasons why sexual desire might peter out in a lasting union but I think they all converge in lack of enjoyment.

Soul-and-mind-inseparable-from-the-body meets another. The other is infinitely, unimaginably other, and so there is the temptation to colonize, subjugate, dominate, rule, or, equally the temptation to submit, to allow oneself to be colonized, subjugated or ruled. Power struggles, overt or covert, can become habitual. Sex is such a delicate matter; it cannot bear the weight of chronic hostilities, resentments, regrets, and reluctances.

"When you do engage in sex," I ask, "how long does it take, from first touch to the post-coital cigarette?" She is quick to answer, "Ten minutes." He corrects her, "At least fifteen!" I put to both of them, "What would you say, if I suggested, don't even start making love unless you intend to play with each other for at least four hours?" Silence. She visibly comes to

life, smiles, and says, "I'd go for that! That would be fabulous!" He seems frozen, scratches his head and mutters, "I don't have that kind of time, I have to attend to my business, I'd go bankrupt." What a peculiar turn our conversation has taken: in the beginning he was desirous, she resistant; now, she was eager, he was having second thoughts. Later he confessed that he didn't think he could last that long. Their lovemaking has been punctuated, like the end of a sentence by a period, by his ejaculation. I asked him if he wouldn't enjoy coming three or four times during a night of passionate sex? He thought that was a physical impossibility. He actually had a strange, mythical notion that semen came from the grey matter of his brain, via the spine, and that multiple orgasms would make him stupid. First fear, loss of income; second fear, loss of intelligence. What then, in fact, did he desire from her in the first place?

I think he wanted access to her body, unimpeded, unconditional access, on demand. Not unlike what a nursing infant needs from his mother. There is no love in that, babies don't yet have the capacity to love mother, they devour her with a ruthless appetite. The expression of sexual desire as *need or demand* kills the other's desire. The moment sex feels like a chore, its days are numbered.

Sexual desire can arise between two people, from their shared intimacy, their dance, their play and they both feel it, at once, unmistakably, powerfully. Or it can arise within one person, but sparked by the sensual reality of the other. Joanna Frueh writes, "... you are washing dishes in our kitchen. You wear your usual worn jeans and T-shirt. You are as creamy, strong, and elegant as ever. I stand near you and my eyes fix on your forearms as your strong sweat and sweet, warm voice impel me closer, as much as the muscles and tendons that focus my vision of you at this moment. The smell, the sound, and the sight of you impel me to say, 'I want to fuck you.'" Or, sexual desire can arise as a totally impersonal itch that needs to be scratched, by somebody, anybody! This feeling comes from a deep anxiety, the anxiety of separateness, of feeling cut off and isolated. In this instance, sex

*"The expression
of sexual desire as
need or demand
kills the other's
desire."*

becomes a palliative, a painkiller. The partner who is asked to dispense it will not feel seen, loved, or cared for, but used, manipulated, and taken advantage of.

I remember that during my teen years, my heterosexual desire was articulated and configured in my psyche as an immense male yearning aimed at reluctant and uninterested females. I felt like a petitioner before a cruel but bountiful donor. Sex was a reward, a gift, or a favor dispensed for impeccable behavior, ardent and everlasting love, and heroic enterprise. The mutuality of desire, the possibility of being desired had not even occurred to me until I was in my thirties.

There is a great difference between *giving and receiving*, and *being taken from and taking*: it's the difference between heaven and hell, between love and the curse of eternal lovelessness that creates vampires. From an observer's point of view one may not be able to tell the difference. In one's very own experience, however, it's crystal clear whether one is *giving* a kiss or whether a kiss is *taken from* one; whether one is *receiving* the other's rapt and generous attention or

whether one is *taking* the other's precious time and reluctant attention.

I encouraged the couple that came to see me to continue to talk with each other at least as intimately as the three of us had been talking in my consulting room. It takes courage to say, "When you do that, or don't do that, this is what I experience, this is what I feel, think, sense..." I also questioned their unexamined assumption that perhaps their individual sexualities were incompatible. I don't think that an individual *has* a "sexuality". I do think that sex, sexual experience, arises between people, so there is *our* sexuality, but not *mine* or *yours*.

At best, sex is a fountain of rejuvenating vital energy that is always there, freely, abundantly, and magnanimously gushing forth; the only catch is that you cannot drink from it when alone. To experience the joy of sexual communion you need company. And one has to learn to keep company all the way to the fountain. ■

Satya's Soapbox

by Satya Devi

Quote from Agathon:

"This only is denied to God: the power to undo the past."

It is said that Allan Ginsberg wrote his immortal poem, "Howl", at the age of 30, when he was above shame. I am now almost 55 and still struggling to write my autobiography - could it be that Catholic guilt outdoes Jewish shame?

I was discharged from the Mental Hospital after a 5 year stay and within a month, ended up in a General Hospital for two weeks, having been beaten and as I discovered, a few weeks pregnant. I had used up all my lucky charms, otherwise known as survival. Nowhere to go; that included, especially to my parents' home - but in the middle of a melodramatic, self-manipulation, I called my father and asked him if I could come there for a while, and he said something about just needing a rest. So, I hitchhiked back to Cape Breton, although I knew nothing had changed between me and my mother, who was standing at the screen door,

looking straight at me and saying, she's not staying here, and then ran into the bedroom crying, and I let myself in as my father ran into the bedroom after her, saying what's wrong? She said, the way she looked at me. It would solve everything if I had a heart attack tonight. Little sister climbed on the bed to comfort mother and says, the difference between you and me, Satya, is I pray and you don't - you're afraid and I'm not. Ah, if ever there was a bumper sticker! My father said, you'll have to go, dear; I didn't know your mother would get this upset. I'll drive you out tomorrow. No, I said, tonight - but it's getting dark - it's okay. I can hitch a ride from the highway, no sweat. I wanted it over fast and the drive to the highway seemed to take an eternity. I had thought of staying overnight there and committing suicide to punish them, but they would be consoled and not hold themselves responsible, and besides, everyone knows that Satya's nuts and didn't know what she was doing; as well, on that particular night, I wasn't so sure that I'd be killing much. We both stared straight ahead in the car. I was

(Continued page over)

trying to be strong for Dad and not make him feel any worse than he already must have been feeling, but suddenly I burst into slobbering tears and fell apart and blurted out, I'll never see you again, Dad. He kept looking at the road and said don't say that. Maybe in a couple of years your mother will change her mind. I stopped crying and pulled myself together for my caring but gutless father, and finally, finally, we were at the highway. Dad pulled a \$20 bill out of his wallet and without another word between us, I took the twenty and got out of the car. He wasn't the only one who ever drove me to the highway and gave me a \$20 bill. He put the inside car light on to check his wallet, and I caught a glimpse of my vacant reflection in the window. I had only seen it before in photographs by Margaret Bourke-White when the Allies liberated the camps. It was beyond vacant. It is beyond belief. It is uncertainty as to whether one is still alive and why, not

alive but undead, unable to die. I watched Dad pull away in the car, but I felt it was I being pulled away at a terrible speed and being released like a stick-girl on the end of the whiplash of the world, all the way to Hell.

And then, the hard part began.....Red rover, red rover, let Satya come over. A Christmas birthday, guttering sounds of the wind's refuse, cast off brown leaves pass by like half-written notes on their way to the Jerusalem Wall. Walking again in this familiar land to the sounds of my childhood: I see the old schoolyard and hear the wind crying through the chained swings, now empty. At first, the children of my time are the sound of the wind pleading in Latin through the chains, and then they are the chains. ■

Screwing In My Lightbulb

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

How many Franks does it take to screw in a lightbulb? One. He holds the lightbulb up into the socket and the whole world revolves around him.

Regardless of the fact that the preceding lightbulb joke has in other forms already been used, it's one that two people (of whom I'm aware) would attribute to me — i.e., a psychiatrist and a friend. Unlike the psychiatrist, though, the friend has on more than a few occasions labeled me as being narcissistic: People can't run their lives according to Frank's needs, she'd say. (I prefer to think of her terse words as tough love rather than viciousness; although, she has been diagnosed with a personality disorder and might be inappropriately spewing "information" and specious "facts" at me). She once told me that it's really too bad that I don't have piles of money so that I could afford sessions with a professional cognitive therapist. She's quite right: my OCD and chronic anxiety disorder is putting me through hell. And that's just where my problem is — "... is putting *me* through hell." Me. I focus on me and my problems. But at the same time, the suffering around the world is too intense for me. I, like many others, feel guilty about doing so much materialistically better than the majority of Earth's populace. My mother, bless her soul, tries to make me feel better by saying to me, "See, Frank, how others suffer; so don't be so depressed." Ironically, when she tells me this, it just makes me feel worse: for not only do I have my terrible mental illnesses with which to deal, I'm left feeling guilty about wallowing in those illnesses while so much of the planet's people are in agony or dying. During the labor unrest between hospital employees

and the provincial government in the Spring, what concerned me was whether the unrest would spread to include postal workers and thus hinder the circulation of two of my published articles that were imminently going into the postal system. And this despite the fact that my very own sister and an aunt are members of the union(s) at unrest. How can I be so selfish, I repeatedly told/tell myself? But whenever I tried/try to disperse my thoughts onto external issues (e.g., world hunger), my thoughts soon lingered/linger back onto me and my published articles (which could, if hindered by postal-worker action, be upheld so long that the two publications would become outdated and perhaps thus unread).

But, I ask myself, if I'm so self-absorbed, why then do I feel so uncomfortably conspicuous when I, for example, walk through a mall (though perhaps much of which is because of my unusual size and color of hair)? However, there I go again — the mall crowd is noticing *me*. Me. Without doubt, I've intensely suffered with mental illness in my life. But I have to quit my habitual catastrophization, during which I make volcanoes out of ant hills; and I have to quit my too-frequent fortune-teller errors, during which I assume I'll be the recipient of bad luck. I have to stop thinking about me. Rather, I should focus on the other, whether that other be a bankrupt neighbor or a starving and ill Third World child.

While I hold it up to the socket, it should be my hand that rotates the light bulb around in the socket. It should be me that rotates around this planet's axis along with the rest of Earth's populace. ■

Frozen Time

by Oliver Cross

"Time is a great teacher,
Who can live without hope?"

— Carl Sandburg

When things change, we become aware of time. We become aware of time when things change at a pace that is unnatural to us, either too quickly or too slowly. The experience of time is subjective. Sometimes it "flies", and sometimes it "drags". Why? We can say that it is our interest. When we are interested in something, time flows smoothly. When we are not so interested in something, time stagnates. But, someone's disinterests are someone else's interests, so this doesn't quite explain.

The truth is, in part, we make a choice. To an extent we make a choice to engage time gently, playfully, warmly, flexibly, with openness- or aggressively, with expectation, demand, hardness, coldness, and certainty in terms of what we want from it.

What are the benefits of considering time? When we start from a position of trying to imagine the things, or objects that we may find ourselves relating to, we prepare ourselves for a finite list, the objects that we can imagine. We know from experience we don't really know what may come in the future, so this has potential to lead to worry about whether or not we are well prepared for whatever happens next. When we prepare ourselves to respond "when" an object appears, we are more easily able to prepare ourselves to respond "how" we may wish, in a way that is consistent regardless of the particular object or objects we are responding to. When we respond from a position of time, we approach universality and leave prejudice further and further behind.

Time responds to us the way we respond to it. Time is like a pool of water. If you engage it gently it ripples back at you. If you are impatient, it will dissipate the energy as well as possible, but it will disturb you. We formulate our beliefs about ourselves from conclusions we draw indirectly, based on the way others treat us. In this way, we are other peoples' pools of water. We

naturally will respond based on the way we have been treated. People sometimes treat each other horribly, violently. The balance of time is always towards neutrality, as the balance of a pool of water is always towards stillness. In a lifetime, there is always enough time to return to stillness.

When I say "frozen time", I mean the acknowledgment of something to exist that is believed to last forever. Another way of considering frozen time is in terms of attachment. When you are attached to something, you are invested in making sure that it

never changes. The psychiatric diagnosis of someone is designed to last forever. "Everybody knows" that mental patients can't heal, that is why we have to drug them. We live in such a culture: "there are no secrets" — "there's no such thing as something for nothing". Lies, too, are a form of violence. They are horrifying.

Relating gently to time is an aspect of love; it is an example of practicing love. Awareness of time, and particularly being open to noticing the timing involved in the things going on around at any particular time, allows us to participate in and predict or go with those things without interfering or getting in the way, even effortlessly. Time is always there for us when things change, an underlying constant to turn to in times when things around us change continually. How well we are able physically to match the timings we observe is a practice and is learned, as is our interest in being able to do so.

When boredom encroaches even the body itself has timing that is always there to be observed, for example the gait of the walk, the rate of the breath, the beating of the heart to stay open, even the rhythm of lovemaking. Unfortunately though, in my experience, rather than gifts all of these signs of life can become physical burdens one wishes one didn't have to contend with at all when on psychiatric medications. How can room be made for hope in that?

*"Relating gently
to time is an
aspect of love; it
is an example of
practicing love."*

Bookworm

Mockingbird Years: A Life In and Out of Therapy

By Emily Fox Gordon

Basic Books, 2000

Reviewed by Andrew Feldmár

This is the autobiography of a woman, who as a child and later as an adolescent was forced to be in therapy. Her last therapist, Dr. B, whom she stayed with for seven years, is the only one she sought out by herself, and by then she was married, had an eighteen month old baby, and was working on her master's degree in English. "In the nine years since I left Dr. B's office, I've lived without therapy. I have a feeling," Gordon writes, "bordering on a conviction, that I've walked all the way through that house, and heard the door close behind me. It's an odd sensation to be done with therapy, to believe it is no longer available to me as a recourse."

The star of the book is the maverick psychoanalyst Dr. Leslie H. Farber whom she encounters at the Austen Riggs sanatorium, a hospital in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where she stayed for three years, one as an inpatient, two as an outpatient. She was 18 when her parents left her there.

Farber published *Lying, Despair, Jealousy, Envy, Sex, Suicide, Drugs, and the Good Life*, a book of thought-provoking essays, and later, *Ways of the Will: Selected Essays*, some of which were included in the previous book, some of which were new. I came across these essays over twenty years ago and they impressed me with their wit and wisdom so much that I kept searching for more. Unfortunately Farber died without publishing more, so imagine my delight when I found out that Gordon masterfully depicts her years of involvement with this master therapist, giving insight into the practice, not just the theory of psychotherapy.

Gordon is sensitive to the intricacies of therapy, and she is irreverent enough to speak her experience, not what is intended, wanted or suggested. I like it when she notes, "It was a revolution in our thinking to understand that Dr. Farber considered himself to be responsible *to* us, not *for* us." The medical model still today rules the professions of psychiatry, psychology, and many forms of psychotherapy. Professionals are taught to pretend that they can be responsible for their patients. I have trouble enough being fully responsible

for myself, let alone for anyone else! When I accept someone into therapy, I respect the other as a fully responsible, legitimate other with whom I will engage, fully, for better or worse, whom I will challenge, and who will challenge me. Gordon thinks that what "was unique about Farber was that when he encouraged his patients to talk, he talked back – that is, he *really* talked back. It was his acceptance of the implications of mutuality that distinguished him." Early in the book she writes, "I had come to view guilt as a noxious psychic by-product, something to be gotten rid of in the interest of health. It took me a while to grasp that Dr. Farber's idea was different: For him guilt was real. It was a moral state rather than a psychological condition."

Farber was deeply influenced by Buber's notion of the "interhuman". Talking, and listening, wrestling for the truth that might show itself *between* patient and therapist is an ethical endeavor, not a medical one. Gordon says, "Dr. Farber's attitude toward me was never the 'unconditional positive regard' with which therapists are charged to view their patients. His regard was highly qualified and partial, and it was as real as rock."

When the Farbers move to New York from Stockbridge, almost without thought or hesitation, Gordon also relocates to New York and continues her therapy. There, Anne, Farber's wife begins to take care of Gordon. She becomes part of the Farber family: "I ate at least two dinners a week at her table, and many breakfasts too, on mornings after the nights when it got too late to contemplate taking the subway home." Providing shelter is certainly one thing a human being can do for another. I know R. D. Laing invited patients to stay in his home, as did D. W. Winnicott. Today such humane generosity would be considered malpractice. Farber allowed the young Gordon "to cross the boundary of his private and family life – making friends with his wife, eating at his table, drinking with his friends, and caring for his children." Professional organizations declare unethical all so-that

(Continued on pg.17)

The Librarian

by reinhart

He carefully lifts the tome
Weighs, feels and smells it; lays it on the table
Clap, lets it slide from his grasp
Those last three inches, from the hand
To the furniture, unopened, unread
It remains the center of his room
Waiting eternally.
But he is mortal, a man
And such as it is
Makes decisions, like reading
Or not.

He stands, in the middle of his age, alone
The product of his training
A smattering of information, gleaned
Here, there; fragments only
Pieces made of words, haphazard retrieval
A lifetime of experience, remembered with words
Relationships, defined by words
Certainly, a small library
Considering the countless volumes there to embrace.

A man
With things to say, explain, expurge
And there, still waiting
A book
From a colosseum of books
One arena among millions
Ceaseless writing, a leviathan of words
Growing, spreading, devouring lives
Consuming energy; making some silly with reading
Since the beginning of history
Till the end of time
A futile infinity of literature.

Before him, the lesson
No ending, no beginning. The book is worn
Scratches, dog-ears, scuffs, stained yellow.
Obviously others have been here
Considering the question. But how
Why this book, or another
What subject, what author, what story, what word
The choices are endless, the task always incom-
plete.
When the list goes on forever
Where does reference begin
There can be no catalogue, no glossary, no index.

The librarian has stopped reading,
How does one program oneself?

This Loving Space

by D. Paul Strashok

My heart needs revival
I know this is true
my soul and my breathing
cling close to You.

This soul is a garment
this colour of cloth
this fragrance of heaven
enfolds us both.

This certain dominion
that speaks now to me
has changed our persuasion
our spirits rise free.

This loving space
calls now to you
a-pace, a-pace
it rings clear and true.

This content of mercy
that shines beyond earth
for this we have known
a time of re-birth.

This glorious unravelling
from things of the past
we're moving and travelling
in mercy that will last.

Moving from past to the future it is true
moving from here, moving toward you
travelling in grace, laying down lines
the earnest of heaven, the fullness of times.

Allowing the lines of nature to break through
found in this vessel, close, next to you
found in the fabric, woven through time
this victory stance both yours and mine.

The earnest and foretaste reside in the heart
from all of the shadows now let us depart
to enter that substance, the content of faith
where heaven and earth meet, there we are safe.

“Yes!” to live on

by D. Paul Strashok

Returning to the center, the core
expanding out to circumference and more
redeemed from sorrow and leanness of soul
we were meant, we were made to be perfectly whole.

When marrow and center, revived once again,
push out past the tangents of residual pain
our hearts will arise to shine in new day
as the colours of love our souls do display.

For all of the crosses we've known in the past
give place to pure joy once our lot is cast
with the lovers of truth, where're it be found
and we are restored in sight, sense and sound.

Don't be satisfied with less when the craft calls for more
as out from the center comes a rich treasure-store
to be joined or unjoined is not the real question
but the matters of heart stir beyond all mention.

Wisdom is found in expression of the Walk
so now it's not matter of the tongue and talk
but it certainly resides in the contemplative heart
whether joined or unjoined, true wisdom to impart.

Now where is the content, what is the price
of dying to self, the grace will suffice
of loosing the soul from the chains of death
of living in truth, of living on yet?

And already the planets stray in their course
i've forsaken the drunkenness of physical force.
Although i've suffered at the hands of others -
they acted in violence though they may have been brothers.

Let the chain now fall so that grace would break through
grace to flow both through me and you
for our love is greater, stronger still
as we turn from the race and the triumph of will

For the question came clear – “Do you want to live on?”
The answer came through at last, 'til the Dawn
A resounding “Yes!” echoes through now
when a former “No!” caused a great fall.

Revived from the killing floor the answer came through
not living just for self but for all the you
not living in shame but triumphant in cause
for man without purpose is man at a loss.

And purpose and presence call us forward
past pain and loss; the glory our reward
i've died many times to know death no more
And presence and earnest are laid up in store.

Archaeologist

by reinhart

What do they expect when you're thirty-nine inches tall.
Most often they don't see you; the big ones
That are facing you with a certain blindness.
As they miss you again by a foot
For something behind you, overtop;
You turn away to avoid their moving knees.

What do you do when you're five years old.
Up on your toes to see, leaning to hear,
The big ones always doing something
- papers, stamps, tools, telephone, soap,
machines, tweezers, wires and things –
They never stop or explain what it means.

And they've given you stuff like the tiny cars
You unpacked, found out how the wheels work,
Put away in a drawer, not interested,
But it's the mystery of their restlessness,
The talk and strange laughing explosions
When there's more big ones come to the house
The ones you know act different than before.
You don't know them anymore, nor why.

You observe the artifacts in every place.
Objects in cupboards, closets and drawers,
All through the house, the corners of each room.
The unused and forgotten places
Where nobody goes, that are never mentioned
There you go, there you become an archaeologist.

Up in the attic where the dust is old over everything,
Where time is in storage amidst the silence.
You look for people left behind, left over,
Clues to recognition, proofs of the living.
You summon your knowledge, identify material;
Owners, uses and times stack in your memory.
Putting each piece back as before
So history might be preserved, might be revealed,
Answering thousands of questions
You can't yet formulate, which clog your understanding.

Then down to the basement: uncle's blacksmith shop.
With a thousand varieties of nuts and bolts
Myriad strange, intriguing,
mysterious shapes of weighty metal.
The glowing forge
Blazing tight and fierce
The solid, heavy anvils and the
Electric powered pounding machine that can
Pulverize bone with a single blow.
The acrid and leaden smell of burning and
Molten steel and iron. Hammers and tongs
Of every conceivable shape and size and
Everything a treasure trove for a young lad's
Imagination.

And further down the cellar.
Where the darkness is undisturbed,
Where you smell the exposed earth.
You continue to search for the past and the present
The secret that will disperse the illusion,
The nonsense you feel everywhere.

Your hands move to the sand
The ground which upholds your existence,
The cool silt that does not decay;
Flowing through your fingers and over your skin,
As you probe for the solid, the real,
The solution that's waiting on you.

A plate made of tin and pressed with the contours
Of a face. Whose lines and contours gaze out of
The metal with intense eyes and a strange moustache,
Unlike any you've ever seen.
It was made to last forever
But hidden here where vegetables once lay.

So you bury the face back in the sand,
Brushing the surface to leave no trace of your knowing,
Savouring the possession of somebody's link.
And when finished you come to the table
With all of them there together eating.
You listen for echoes of your discoveries
For connections to your research.
You eat, and you don't say a word.

The Cynic, His 'Realities' & the (somewhat cynical) Angel

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr

When his next-corporeal-body-to-be was completing its ninth month of gestation in his next-mother-to-be's womb, the cynic's pre-born soul was met (just like the last time round) by the Angel of Newborn, who readily revealed to him that his next life (just like the last time round) would indeed be difficult.

"As though I don't already expect it to be," he replied to the angel.

The angel then further stated that one of the purposes of the cynic's next-life-to-be would be to contribute, through his purchases of lottery tickets, toward the large prizes won by others—others, who mostly consisted of persons needing the plethora of money about as much as cities need more concrete and Earth needs more ocean.

And the angel added that the cynic's next-life-to-be would (just like the last time round) indeed be filled to the proverbial brim with cynicism-inducing luck.

"For example," said the angel, "it will rain if you fail to bring your umbrella with you on your long walks, and likewise the opposite."

"Really; you don't say."

"And in this life you'll be confronted with the never-published-writer's quite bitter *Catch-22*."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning that you will not acquire a good-writing reputation for yourself until you get published, but you'll not get published until you acquire such a reputation for yourself. Also, no matter how good your writing is, there will *always* be at least one person who's better."

"Figures," the cynic replied, releasing a frustrated sigh.

"Indeed," the angel nodded, so as not to needlessly and cruelly encourage the cynic to hope for anything else, but then added, "Though there's always the exception to every rule, but ..."

"But what?"

"... But it'll never be you. That kind of a break simply is not to be in the proverbial hand of cards about to be dealt to you in your new life."

"You know what, angel?" returned the cynic, "I'm not the least bit surprised, considering that life is the shitty way it is. Hell, even if my name will be the only one in a prize draw-box, Fate will still ensure that I not win."

"Yes, I recall your previous life. It indeed was cause to feel cynical."

"And that's an understatement," the cynic emphasized. "I recall in my last life some ideas I submitted to city bureaucrats and other public-sector policy makers getting rejected because my ideas simply made too much sense. For example, I said to one bureaucrat that perhaps electrical and telephone wires would be much less trouble if they would run underground; but the bureaucrat replied, 'that is no good: the repairmen would have more trouble reaching and repairing the wires when trees and such fall on them' ... And you know, it all was much like that of the public bus system—*man, was that system twisted!* The bus driver would always arrive at my bus stop on time when I was late, or early when I was on time; and he made sure to turn on the heater only when it was warm outside, and not needed, while he'd keep it off when it was freezing outside and the passengers could use the heat."

"Not surprising," said the angel.

"And I recall rebutting a newspaper letters-editor claim that the media are but a reflection of the society within which that media circulate; I suggested to him that society may be but a reflection of the media that circulate within that society. So he said that he'd prove me wrong, and he acquired mass public agreement that such opinions as mine should be censored, since they are in such error."

The angel nodded and then added that, "I recall as well that you'd be able to know that your letter-to-the-editor got published by the fact that there was a printing press malfunction or a major snow storm, meaning that many—if not the majority—of copies thus did not get delivered and not read."

"Yeah, that really pissed me off," said the cynic, exasperatedly, before adding, "but do you know what really burned me bad? It was when the best parts on TV—you know, those parts which you most wanted to see—made good markers indicating serious about-to-occur interruptions of my viewing ability."

"Yes; and when something very positive happened to you," said the angel, "it seemed to be but an indicator of an imminent crisis or negative event to keep you in your proverbial place."

(Continued on pg. 17)

Mad Woman Monocle IV

by Marie Annehart Baker

Onward! In *Out of Her Mind: Women Writing on Madness* edited by Rebecca Shannonhouse (NY: Random House, 2000), 20C writers like Zelda Fitzgerald, Sylvia Plath, Kate Millet express experiences of being institutionalized and drugged into passivity. Excerpts from Mary Jane Ward's novel *The Snake Pit* and *Girl Interrupted* by Susanna Kayson further document the suffering of women being treated or counseled by mental health professionals. In Linda Gray Sexton's memoir, the suicide of her mother, Anne Sexton, poet, is detailed. Allie Light, one of the contributors makes the following commentary on how madness and metaphor connect: "And I have escaped from madness by understanding transformation, how each thing transcends its own reality. I either go mad or I learn about metaphor." (175) Whatever does she mean by her use of metaphor? Documenting the actual recovery of mad women seems to be elusive even though current revelations and testimonies bear witness to the particular privilege or status held by each woman. It is not always evident what is the way to healing oneself even after a person has healed. It is difficult to tell that story with all the variables.

A suspicious example might be my own via the EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) way. In *Transforming Trauma EMDR* by Laurel Parnell (NY: W. W. Norton, 1977), the healing effect of EMDR on PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) was explained as I had to some degree experienced the benefits of this treatment. Three years later, I decide to figure out how this might have worked better for me than years of cognitive therapy. I did not know much about trauma and the link to mental health even though I did my utmost to understand why I had somehow survived frequent beatings and attempts on my life. I was already very PTSD by being raised in a dysfunctional alcoholic home in an urban poverty environment. That was not the only or worst thing but what was complicating an accidental recovery (doesn't anyone still believe in spontaneous silent recovery?) had to be that I lived prior to EMDR. Yes, I did suffer through feminist counseling! Yes, I did "talk therapy"! Yes, I did go to healing ceremonies and went back to "Indigenous ways". I was not exactly, a Woman of Scars Unable to Heal but I was a hit or miss participant in healing ventures because of low income or no health coverage. I happened on a Residential School healing program (now de-funded) and

managed to get a few good nights of sleep in many a year. The knock out pill for me was the EMDR treatment of childhood trauma.

Somewhere in my hippocampus, a part of the brain where memory may be consolidated, trauma had become locked into my own memory network where it became frozen over time in my body and mind. Preposterous! A hippowhatamus in the brain! EMDR clears psychological memory, which formed the basis of my personal identity. I thought I had an objective memory of this traumatic event as simply a fact of my traumatic upbringing. As a child, I had been surrounded by "perps" (perpetrators of abuse) and thought that I had always progressed beyond the limiting beliefs and terrifying images from the past. Even "small t" events obscure an ability to remember anything but a narrow view of one's past. I was into victimry especially Victimry Mega Plus X because I had also endured "big t" events. EMDR helped me to establish a "safe place" without the toting of double gun belts or packing a humongous submachine gun. Whenever I try to explain the "eye movement" aspect, I falter because the therapist who helped me used the tapping on the knees routine. EMDR got typed as the new Prozac, and as every medication goes, it doesn't work for everyone. Briefly, I got to revisit the site of emotional wounding through guided meditation and, through the process of remembering all the details not available to child memory, I did re-process the scary scene of being chased by a guy with butcher knife (the landlord) when I was 3 years old. My mother grabbed and dragged me out of the house. In going back to that scene, I was helped to see the aftermath of the event which was no doubt my mother putting me to sleep and assuring me all was "safe". I had many other nighttime scares to pile on that one in the progress of life but I noticed I did sleep much better after the EMDR.

I have not exactly experienced an inspirational transformation as I have read about. Again, I did not have access to lengthy treatment and was still taking meds. I expect that the layers of trauma lodged in my system might be re-visited at times though journaling and meditation. I seem to only chip away at the big hippo in the hippocampus! Someday the tiny hippo might stroll in the sunshine but at this time I am quite content with gradual betterment.

The Cynic

(Continued from pg. 15)

Both the Angel of Newborn and the cynic went into a dozen-or-so seconds of silence and thought.

"Anyway," the angel concluded, breaking the silence and giving the cynic a gentle push towards the bright Light of Life, "it's your time to go, now; it's your time."

"But don't you have any last words of advice for

me?" the cynic requested, slightly resisting the angel's subtle push.

"Yes, I do: Remember, the more you'll want something, the less likely you'll be to get it. Consider it an inversely proportional kind o' luck."

"You could've told me something I didn't already know and expect ..."

Bookworm

(Continued from pg.10)

called "dual relationships". Strictly speaking, this means that outside of the consulting room, the therapist and the patient are not supposed to know each other. The head of the Department of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, after a consultation I had with him, summarily looked through me when I greeted him in the cafeteria. I was in my twenties and a mathematician at the time, but the incident sure made me wonder about a profession that institutionalized boorishness.

Farber thought that the most prevalent condition that brought people into therapy was despair. In Latin *sperare* means to hope, *despair* then indicates the utter loss of hope. Farber is quoted, "Thus does the despairer appear before us to ask that most extraordinary and truly diabolical question — especially when addressed to a psychotherapist — 'is there any good in talking?' After this, we may recover our composure and succeed in engaging him imaginatively, so that real talk does, after all, begin to come about. Despite his absolute certainty of a few moments before that even momentary relief from the torment of despair was no longer possible, his despairing self-absorption may yield to forthright interest in the subject at hand, a yielding which goes beyond mere distraction. Relief has, in spite of everything, actually been granted him; his despairing certainty has been exposed to the real world of discourse and proved false. We might even say that a minor miracle has occurred. What are we to answer then, when, as the hour nears its end, our patient or friend, preparing to take his leave, turns to us and asks, 'But haven't you something *useful* to say to me — something I can use after I leave here?' If there is an answer to this question, it has not occurred to me."

Farber thought that therapy was an offer of hope to his patients through talk. "This was not talk

that centered, necessarily, around their problems — it was just the best and most honest talk that he and they were capable of," notes Gordon.

Reading this book, the question arises, "How can you participate in therapy and not become friends?" If both therapist and patient are courageous enough to engage in a prolonged, no-holds-barred conversation, how could they not become intimate and begin truly to care about each other? Gordon writes, "In his practice with patients, Dr. Farber was both far humbler than his more conventional colleagues and far bolder: He was humbler because he approached his patients as a whole human being, not as a semianonymous representative of his profession, and because he had abandoned his profession's claim to objectivity and curative power. He was bolder because when he took on a patient, he committed himself to a risky, open-ended friendship and to all the claims of responsibility that friendship entails. It was a brave venture to step from behind the mask of his profession, and a dangerous one."

Relationships are varied and complicated. Many people doubt and question the reality, the realness of therapeutic relationships. How can a relationship be real, if one person has to pay the other? The connection between parent and child is not symmetrical, yet it's real and can be loving or abusive or hostile or friendly. What goes on between therapist and patient can be alienating, degrading, supportive, caring, undermining or uplifting. Thanks to Emily Fox Gordon's candid story, we gain insight into the intricacies of her relationships with a number of therapists. Her devotion to Leslie H. Farber, and his to her, offers hope that being at the mercy of strangers, sometimes, can result in salvation.

Freedom Evolves

(New York, NY : Viking Penguin, 2003. 372 pages)

by Daniel C. Dennett

No Place for Sovereignty — What's Wrong with Freewill Theism

(InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, 1996. 252 pages.

www.ivpress.com/ Ph.: 630-734-4014 / Fax: 630-734-4200)

by R. K. McGregor Wright

Dual Review Essay by Byron Fraser

Recap and Overview

In the last two Issues of *In A Nutshell* I have been privileged to expound at some length— and with extensive quotational references —as regards the subject-matter in the above-noted books under review. And the Editorial Board of this publication has been very good about allowing me (and several others) to experiment with this more extended serialized format— the general consensus being that: if something is worth doing, it's worth doing right; and, while for some writers/thinkers “less” may well be “more”, for others “more” may equally be “more”. This serialization really helps to facilitate a broad-ranging sense of what John Milton termed “decorum”, when stating that this was the quintessential “key” to all good writing(17). His much-acclaimed poetic and prose theory stressed that, whatever the length, giving due fullness— or proportional space allotment —to the expression of all elements of thought and composition in accordance with the requirements of their “innate harmony” was the main thing. So, with this guiding principle in mind, I am, as I say, extremely grateful for having had the opportunity to range rather widely in pursuit of what I felt needed to be said.

The only drawback, in retrospect, has been that, with fully 3 months between Issues, many of the continuing themes and threads will not be “fresh” for those who have read previous installments— and, for those just “jumping in cold” as first-time readers of this series with *this* Issue, there is this complete void of “context”. (Eventually, of course, we will have many of the more substantive pieces of enduring interest and value easily available in one whole readable and/or portable[PDF] form at our MPA website, as a convenience for future readers— after/during the time the various work-in-progress developmental stages have been “previewed”, as it were.) At this particular interim, then, what I propose to do is to provide a brief interlude-of-restatement or summary recap of where, in a general sense, we've been thus far with this topic and “where I'm going” with all of this (hopefully in contradistinction to— or a separate question from —where sundry oppositional elements and “detractors” would dearly love to send me!). Some point form recapitulations and/or elucidations of propositions covered to date might say this best:

- Having been involved in writing/publishing on mental health issues for over a decade now, a recurrent theme which has “come up”, again and again, has been the question of free will.
- Whether one is discussing general mental disorders, disorders involving involuntary committal but no violence/harm-to-others behavior component, or forensic cases, free will issues are, in the words of an ex-mental patient colleague and friend of mine, “foundational”.
- In spite of having been indoctrinated at an early age with a variant of traditional Judaic moralistic teaching/preaching on this subject— what I subsequently came to term: “Adam-istic Individualism” —under the rubric of Ayn Rand's secular Right Wing Religion of Objectivism(18), it became clearer and clearer to me over time that both Leftist and Conservative critiques of such **metaphysical** individualism were essentially correct; that 1) society did indeed have “organic” components transcending discrete individuals, 2) consciousness, variously defined, was primary amongst these— and indisputably transpersonal in a great many of its manifestations, 3) this included, not insignificantly, matters pertaining to so-called “free” will, 4) how this “played out” interpersonally vis-a-vis numerous “problems”-of-living— be they crime, sickness, war or aberrant behavior, etc. —was that these were many times “socially produced” (or **constructed**, in the language of modern sociology) and/or **OTHER-motivated** without individually acting will having any “free” determination in the

matter; that is to say: **against** individually conscious free will and intention, such as it is, **and by** particular Collectivities of Transpersonal Causative Power – be they familial, cultural, religious, state, “racial”, vocational-associational “Field” or, variously, other-than-individual **SOCIOBIOLOGICAL** Group-Mind entities, and 5) the professional elites of our society in charge of social control have basically chosen to lie about, ignore or rationalize their way around these known scientific facts because they have not comported with the “neat”/economic-seeming facilitation of such control-functions within the current institutional frameworks of order-maintenance. Whatever the virtues of **political** individualism (clear, legally-defined-and-maintained, human and property rights [in many respects **indivisible** concepts **and realities!**], etc.) may be, then – and I, personally, think they are many – **metaphysical** individualism is not reality; in fact, its assertion is often a pernicious, ulterior motivated, lie – one fraught, moreover, with numerous “telling” implications in terms of the political-class and pecuniary advantages attendant to maintaining it.

- The more I studied the experiences of so-called “mentally ill” persons, prisoners and other prime candidates for social control in our society, the more compelling the critiques (mostly Leftist) of Original-Sin-as-Universally-Innate-**Individual-Responsibility** became. It was one thing to assert that everyone **should be** individually responsible(— i.e., optimally self-directed in thought and action while adhering to an ethic of equal liberty or respect for the sovereign rights-of-others), but quite another to assert that they **already were** and then to use this **false religious pose** as a guilt-inducement “stick” with which to beat them into submission to punishment/”treatment”, and so on.
- I was, of course, well-schooled in all the hard-assed and/or “bitchy” (you pick the expletive) usual Right-Wing/”Culturally Conservative” rationales for dismissing these transpersonal realities: “Don’t tell me ‘the Devil made you do it’, buddy[lady]”; “Don’t tell me you couldn’t have thought/acted differently; you **always** had a choice— and **complete** control —if you had **wanted** to exercise it!”; “Don’t tell me that others ‘did it to you’, that you were ‘not your Self’, that your ‘ environment determined you’, that ‘**THEY** put it on you— and so on —buddy[lady]”; those are all just pathetic excuses for the fact that you ‘made a mistake’, not me(/US)!” It’s a familiar litany but, in the final analysis, I had to agree with my Left-Wing friends and colleagues who’d been trying for years to tell me that these lines-of-reasoning were (for the **most** part) just so much politically/economically/socially selectively self-serving B.S., suited only to particular “class”-elites – **and**, moreover, usually **evasions** of the truth about **social** responsibility! The actual facts were that **FALSE PERSONA FOISTING** (“social” constructing) and Transpersonal “Reality Creation” (for “good” – but, more to the point, for “evil”) goes on **all the time**. And often under the rubric of “Class Warfare” – which, as Noam Chomsky says, is **not** at all any “outmoded concept”, seen aright. In short, we see why the **TRUTH** about the attribution of transpersonal mental causation is so feared by apologists for The Establishment and Old Religion, as in the work of philosopher Daniel Dennett, under review: criminal intentionality **properly/accurately** one-step-removed (“retraced”) **really does** very often sum to something like: “The Devil [you fill in the relevant transpersonal field-causative consciousness amalgam] **did it to me (you)** to ‘make’ me (you) do it.”
- What “really did it for me”, in terms of making a kind of “final break” with all of this moralistic garbage, was when I read Thomas Szasz’s “take” on the Reagan attempted-assassination figure, John W. Hinckley, Jr.(19), and compared this with that of Ronald Reagan himself. Now, regardless of whether or not one might think of Ronald Reagan as a “bad man” because of his politics, here is what he said about Hinckley shortly after the attempt on his life:

“I hope, indeed I pray, that he can find an answer to his problem. He seems to be a very disturbed young man. He comes from a fine family. They must be devastated by this. And I hope he gets well, too.”

Szasz takes vehement exception to this, roundly excoriating Reagan for this as a moral/judgmental lapse, on his way to arguing against **any** insanity— or not criminally responsible on the basis of mental disorder —defences in such cases. This whole passage **really has to be read to be believed**— but listen to these relevant samplers:

“In the old Westerns[such as Reagan used to act in], if memory doesn’t deceive me, the good

men first hanged the bad men and only then did they pray for their souls.”
“As I do not pray, I grant that my views on prayer may be impious and ‘incorrect’. Nevertheless, I believe that the dignity of prayer is cheapened when it is bestowed as indiscriminately as this. Is there anyone for whom Reagan would not pray?”
“I, for one, find... compassion for Hinckley premature..., I believe that Hinckley deserves punishment first, compassion and forgiveness later, if ever.... Hinckley is not disturbed, he is disturbing. He is not sick, he is sickening.”

And the segment concludes with:

“The fact is that the distinction between disturbance and depravity— between madness and badness, between mental illness and criminality, call it what you will —is not a specialized or technical judgment doctors can make because they possess an MD degree or psychiatrists can make because they possess training in diagnosing and treating mental illness; or the president of the United States can make because he holds a lofty office. That distinction is a **moral judgment**, which is why a jury, and no one else, is supposed to make it. If we forget that, we might as well forget about America.”

Absurdly enough, in his righteous pontificating here, Szasz seems to have forgotten that **he** just publicly fired off this stream of moralistic venom **prejudging** Hinckley as a “bad” man and the president of the United States as a stupid and immoral one (for his attitude of compassion and forgiveness!). That wasn’t the worst thing wrong with what he had to say, per se, but it was enough— thankfully—for “the blinders to drop” for me. For years, Leftists friends had been telling me, in no uncertain terms (the choicest of which I won’t repeat here!), what a “bourgeois” completely-out-of-touch-with-“the peoples”-everyday-realities **reactionary** Szasz was, and I had just brushed this off as so much partisan rhetoric. I had steadfastly defended him, as a fellow libertarian, on the grounds that he was just “feisty”, “iconoclastic”— that I admired his “chutzpah”, and so on. But now I saw him clearly, in all his spiritual nakedness.

The other thing which probably really “hit home” with me, personally, around this too was that I, like Reagan, have had “crazed” men “flip out” and **attempt to murder me**— completely unprovoked —on more than one occasion (have even had to kill in self-defense under such circumstances) in my life. I’ve also survived many severely injurious **physical assaults** by “out-of-control”(for one reason or another) individuals in numerous hand-to-hand combat situations, etc. And looking back on all of this, I had to ask myself: did I ever blame or morally condemn **any** of those people who attacked or harmed me? And the honest-to-God truth— and I’m not saying this for any “special effect” —was that, no, I never **blamed** a single one of them. In fact, I forgave every one almost immediately; I never “held it against” a single one. I’d never really thought about it before this, and don’t now consider this any special virtue; I was “just born (and/or ‘raised’) that way”— it’s “instinctual”, something I’ve “never ‘thought twice’ about” — and I know that there are many more “common folk” just like me, in this regard. But then, I had to consider the contrast— and this is what I’m getting at (and the only reason I’m mentioning this at all) —that brought this all into stark relief, with Szasz. Here’s a man who was quite literally born with a silver spoon in his mouth, from a wealthy and distinguished European family background, all the best advantages of education and privilege(all of which I, of course, don’t begrudge the man from any petty sense of personal envy; the fact that I was not “born into” materialistic riches on this scale is neither here nor there with me)— and supposed to be a medical man, a **healer** by trade —and he’s so **soul-sick** and/or cut-off from THE REAL WORLD, by his religio-rationalism and academic/socio-economic seclusion/exclusion, that he can’t even see the plain fact that Hinckley was obviously totally “wacked out of his right mind” (in layman’s— but **accurate enough** —terms), and completely incapacitated from the perspective of forming the sort of consciously willful criminal intent which Szasz wrongfully attributes to him, when he shot Reagan. Now, of course we all have our faults— and it’s probably true that Szasz’s rationalistic literary prowess and/or analytical acuity **have been** a boon to us all in many other important respects — however, as I say, in terms of **seeing through** this pathetic facade of bogus righteousness and perverse need to see “evil”-in-men(persons) everywhere(instead of the reality of **the walking wounded**), this finally “did it for me”. And so emerged my “Some Reflections on Forensic Psychiatry”(IAN, Spring/Summer 2002)— the essential precursor to this **Free Will Redux** series —with not a little hell breaking loose (in certain circles) along with it. Not necessarily any “bad thing”, however, because...

- These initial reactions, both positive and negative, highlighted just what a concern this issue was/is for people. And this spurred me on to much further research, a greater cohesive/integrative interpretation of gathered source materials thus far consulted, and a fresh summary elaboration of theoretical developments to date. The lead-in quote to my “Reflections”, which brought so much into a radical new focus for so many people, bears repetition here, in this regard:

“**The error of free will.** We no longer have any sympathy today with the concept of ‘free will’: We know only too well what it is— the most infamous of all the arts of the theologian...for **making mankind dependant on him...** —Everywhere accountability is sought, it is usually the instinct for **punishing and judging** which seeks it. One has deprived becoming of its innocence if being in this or that state is traced back to will, to intentions, to accountable acts: the doctrine of will has been invented essentially for the purpose of punishment, that is of **finding guilty**. The whole of the old-style psychology, the psychology of will, has as its precondition the desire of its authors, the priests at the head of the ancient communities, to create for themselves a **right** to ordain punishments— or their desire to create for God a right to do so...Men were thought of as ‘free’ so that they could become **guilty**: consequently, every action **had** to be thought of as willed, the origin of every action as lying in the consciousness (— whereby the most **fundamental** falsification...was made into the very principle of psychology)...the theologians, ...continue to infect the innocence of becoming with ‘punishment’ and ‘guilt’ by means of the concept of the ‘moral world-order.’ Christianity is a hangman’s metaphysics...”

— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), Section 7.

One of the most poignant dialogues I had, in the wake of quoting this in conjunction with my subsequent dissection of the essence of Szasz’s critique of Forensic Psychiatry, was : “You’re saying he’s just a particularly nasty version of an Old Testament Priest masquerading in a modernist/secular garb”; my response: “I didn’t say that”; reply: “You didn’t have to!” And the rest is **history**.

- Beyond this religio-moral dimension, which I have tried to illustrate also with reference to some of my personal experience with “philosophical”/political-ideological frauds, there exists the **scientific** dimension of the whole free will question. The main problem, I’ve found, for many of society’s most vulnerable (to established mechanisms of institutionalized coercion— and often debilitating systemic abuse) person’s, is that they usually **do have** a very good intuitive grasp of what has been **done to them** within the context of transpersonal psychical imposition but they are completely invalidated, continually, due to their inadequacies when it comes to persuasively verbalizing this in the face of professional or power-&-authority “oppositional elements”, shall we say. Not only are they at a disadvantage because of not being familiar with the rationales which guide and/or justify the power-elites (in **their own** eyes), but they often don’t know of authoritative sources which can and do bolster and substantiate **what they already know to be the more WHOLE TRUTH**, albeit at an inchoate level of **pre-coherent** articulation. So I have tried to address this “gap” here with argumentative “threads” and a series of references which – followed through and followed-up on – will hopefully do just that.
- Worthy of especial note with regard to this last is Dr. Ty C. Colbert’s **Broken Brains or Wounded Hearts — What Causes Mental Illness**. You probably will not find any clearer, eminently layman-accessable, exposition of the distinction between **consciously** intended vs. **subconsciously** motivated purposeful thought-&-behavior anywhere. And his elucidation of his Emotional Pain (**woundedness** vs. “disease”) Model, in addition to how “the protective subconscious” continually precipitates “forced choice” by-passes (“psycho-spiritual overwhelm”, in the language of prominent psychiatrist, Dr. Peter Breggin) of any ability to exercise conscious free will are absolutely vital. Also extremely important is physicist, Amit Goswami’s, **The Self-Aware Universe — How Consciousness Creates the Material World**. This volume, in companion with the numerous works by psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof, basically cuts the feet right out from under the hitherto long-standing materialist-mechanistic underpinnings of biopsychiatry’s methodological “individualism” (— i.e., its pseudo-religious basis of shirking Collective/Transpersonal Responsibility via scientistic “sin” [as mental **sickness**/biological “disease”] – attribution assigned strictly **within the material parameters** of discrete individual’s bodies and brains). Further to Dr. Colbert’s expert descriptive work from the realm

of psychology, here is a particularly relevant excerpt from a subsection of **The Self-Aware Universe** titled “Unconscious Perception Experiments” (pp. 109-12):

“...new data in the cognitive laboratory point toward a distinction between the two concepts— perception and awareness....Clearly, there was perception...but there was no conscious awareness of that perception....So in unconscious perception, we are talking about events that we perceive (that is, events that are taken in as stimuli and processed) but that we are not aware of perceiving....The phenomenon of unconscious perception raises a crucial question. Are any of the three common concomitants of conscious experience (thought, feeling, and choice) absent in unconscious perception? The experiment...suggests that thought is present...Obviously, we go right on thinking even in our unconscious, and unconscious thoughts affect our conscious thoughts....feeling is also present during unconscious perception, and an unconscious feeling can produce an unexplainable conscious feeling....Finally, we ask, does choice, too, occur in unconscious perception?...Apparently, choice is a concomitant of conscious experience but not of unconscious perception. Our subject-consciousness arises when there is a choice made: **We choose, therefore we are....**”

What we see **scientifically verified** here is that both thought and feeling at the unconscious level significantly affect or motivate our conscious or ego-self thought and behavior but that, paradoxically, our total being consists of both intentional and non-intentional(or “unintentional”[not-conscious-“free will” - determined]) acting components— i.e., of free subject-consciousness and unfree object-consciousness, as it were. That is, to say it again, solid scientific research evidence tells us that purposeful actions can, and very often do, entail a complete by-pass of any capacity for the exercise of **conscious** choice or free will (viz., **Self-**formulated intent). And not only does this substantiate what our criminal law has **rightly** long recognized (my essential point when critiquing Szasz), but it also demonstrates that when we use common parlance expressions like “I was **not myself**” or say of others “they were **not themselves**(‘in their right[i.e., self-determined/owned] mind’)”, etc.— at particular times — these are (or **may be**) absolutely meaningful, accurate and **factual** statements. The obverse of Goswami’s above-formula, in other words, then obtains: **What we don’t choose, we therefore are not!**

One merely needs to take this research one step further (as, prominently, in the work of biologist, Rupert Sheldrake[most famously first in his **A New Science of Life—The Hypothesis of Formative Causation**] cited elsewhere) to see the obvious next conclusion: not only is the subconscious mind **in individual brains** a causative by-passer of conscious free will, but so **needs must** the transconscious mind and/or various amalgams of Group-Mind or “Field”-Consciousness be **similarly causative** (and, for anyone who might have wanted to tell you that **this** is some “wacky” idea or hopelessly “far out” **mere conjecture**, I have provided the eminently respectable authoritative Mansfield-&-Spiegelman quote in **FWR-Deux** [IAN, Summer 2004] along with other impeccable scientific research references). There is absolutely no escaping this logic— and the time and space I am taking to thoroughly spell out the implications of this, over-&-against both the philosophical and religious approaches in the books under review, is all being done with a view towards, again, intellectually “arming” laypeople most in need of comprehending “what they are ‘up against’” with some essential grounding in the entire context of this subject-matter, as it has evolved and is now emerging.

Summing, then, I hope all those following this particular series— or who may do so at some future date —will have found this retrospective and update helpful. I look forward to delivering more distilled intellectual complexities to you “in a nutshell”.

Notes

17) Biographical Introduction to **The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton** (Cambridge Edition, 1965), p. 21.

18) In addition to the references cited in Note No. 1 (Spring 2004, **In A Nutshell**) exposing Objectivism— **in its essence** —as a typical ideological vehicle or construct for conveying theology (in this instance, Jewish theology) masked as philosophy and/or a political form of religion, see especially the recent excellent book by Canadian author, Jeff Walker, **The Ayn Rand Cult** (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1999). More specifically on the Jewish component, see in particular pages 275 through 287 with subsections on: “The Young Nietzschean”, “Ayn Rand’s Jewish Context”, “Jewish Influences in Objectivism” and “Jews and the Left”, etc. Unfortunately **not** “needless to say”, none of Walker’s treatment or analysis is “anti-Semitic”.

19) Richard E. Vatz and Lee S. Weinberg, eds., **Thomas Szasz— primary values and major contentions** (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1983), pp. 148-50. ■

Bulletin Board

The Self-Help Resource Association of B.C. (SHRA) conducts regular Facilitator Training Workshops for Self-Help and Mutual Aid Support Groups. They also publish a quarterly newsletter and the Directory of Self-Help/Support Groups in Greater Vancouver with approximately 600 listings, many of them dealing with mental health. The latest edition (2004-2005) of the Directory is now available for \$12.00 or \$10.00 at the office if you drop by and pick it up. SHRA is located at Suite 306 – 1212 West Broadway, Van. B.C. V6H 3V1. Tel: 604-733-6186. Fax: 604-730-1015. www.vcn.bc.ca/shra

The Alternative & Integrative Medical Society (AIMS) at UBC publishes the free AIMS Wellness Directory: Lower Mainland Guide to Complementary Health. It contains approximately 250 paid and many unpaid listings dealing with a broad spectrum of mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of healing. For a Directory and/or more info. about the Society, phone 604-822-7604. Fax: 604-822-2495. E-mail info@aims.ubc.ca. Web: www.aims.ubc.ca. AIMS, University of British Columbia, Box 81 – 6138 SUB Boulevard, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z1. Office: B80A Woodward Building, UBC.

Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network sponsors many self-help groups including a Women's Circle. Their address is #109 - 96 E. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5T 4N9 and the Co-ordinator of the Network may be reached at 604-733-5570.

Named after Vincent van Gough's homeopathic doctor, Paul Gachet, Gallery Gachet works to provide a safe, borderless place of artistic expression. It strives to be a place of healing and a center of artistic excellence. Founded in 1994 we provide opportunities to exhibit, perform, publish and sell work and to offer a place for support and community. We aim to use the canvas of the outside world to educate and demystify the public on issues related to mental health and abuse.

Call for Volunteers! Please call the Gallery for more information. Tel: 604-687-2468

Or visit our website www.gachet.org

GALLERY GACHET, 88 East Cordova St. , Vancouver BC, V6A 1K2

Public Resource Centre in the Areas of Mental Health, Wellness and Mental Illness. Books, videos, journals on loan for 2 weeks. Working and reading space, and internet access computers available.

Open: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Location: CMHA (Vancouver-Burnaby), 175 West Broadway Phone: 604-872-4902, Ext. 236 (Alan)

* Our newsletter 'All About Us' is created by Resource Centre volunteers and staff.

The University of Ottawa in cooperation with Our Voice present Alternatives Site

<http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~nstaman/alternatives/>

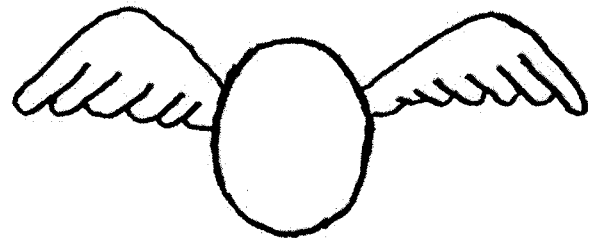
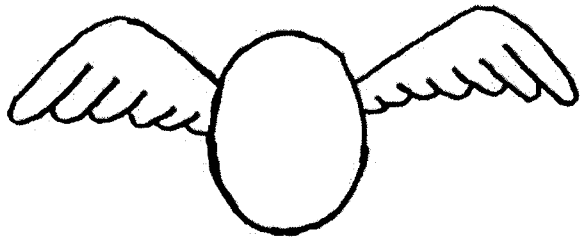
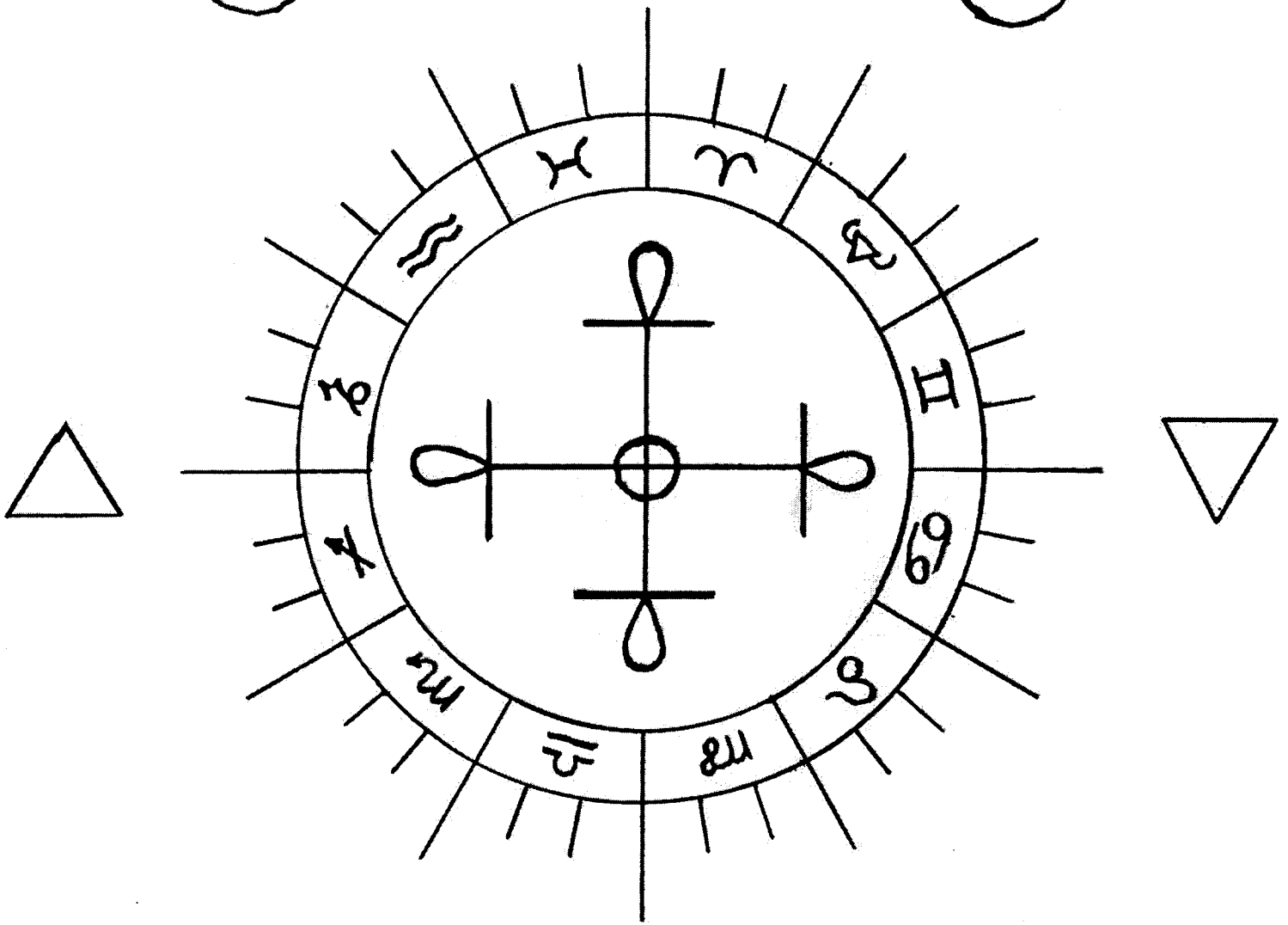
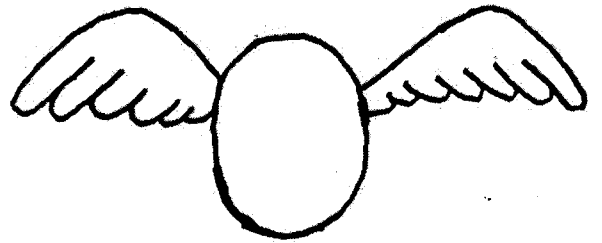
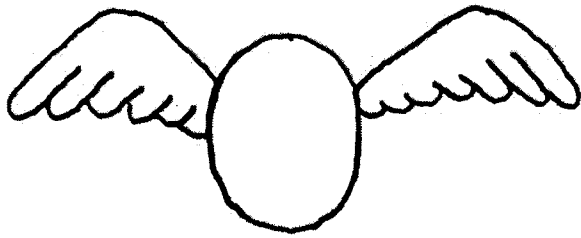
*Our Voice is a publication containing viewpoints of the psychiatricized since 1987.

The CIF sponsored Tardive Dyskinesia Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 2:00 pm at the Self-Help Resource Association, #306 - 1212 W. Broadway. Call 604-733-6186 for more information.

You can also get a free info-packet on tardive dyskinesia from the NEC; to contact, see below.

THEO BC provides education and employment services to people within the mental health community. Drop - in orientation sessions are held at our Vancouver location every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month starting at 9:30 a.m. We are located at #100 – 112 E. 3rd. Ave (one block west of Main.). For more information contact us at 604-872-0770 or check us out at www.theobc.org.

The National Empowerment Center (NEC) may be found on the Internet at www.power2u.org or by phoning toll-free 800-power2u. The NEC is a C/S/X information and self-help organization headed by Dr. Daniel B. Fisher and Laurie Ahern, both of whom have successfully recovered from psychiatric disorders.



rainhart

