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Ferment

Vol. XI, #8 Jan. 20, 1997

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“Malicious Malpractice”

*The Flowering of Psychiatric Abuse
in the Last Quarter of the 20th Century*

Introduction

“Bounded in a Nutshell”

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"Psychotherapy is, above all, beyond whatever scientific claims, a belief system..." (Robyn Dawes , *House Of Cards* , pg. 33)

"Patients are trash..." (Sigmund Freud, as quoted by Sándor Ferenczi)

Since the term 'psychotherapy' has such different meanings, both technical and popular, we make our own definition: For the purposes of this series of articles, 'psychotherapy' is defined as the application, (by persons possessing some credential recognized by state and federal governments) , of ideas drawn from the canon of modern psychology, (that is to say the ideas, findings and provided by, universities, medical schools and accredited institutes) , to the relief of symptoms of mental distress and/or the cure of mental illness. This definition brings into prominence its credibility vis-a-vis the laws, the schools and the medical profession. Psychotherapy therefore includes psychoanalysis, clinical psychology, social psychiatry, biopsychiatry, behavioral psychiatry, Marriage-Family-Child Counselors, (MFCC), and several other categories of counselors and therapists. It does not include herbalists, witch doctors, religious figures, football coaches, Christian Science practitioners, gurus, wise hermits, or others , competent or otherwise , lacking the professional credential.

The thesis of this set of articles is that psychotherapy, so defined, is a plague on society, a science gone out of control, and a major threat to the survival of any civilization based upon the respect for science and scientific values.

Psychotherapy has always been with us. Most of today's psychotherapies either derive directly, or have incorporated a substantial part of the language, concepts and methods of Freud's synthesis of existing knowledge at the turn of the century: His delusions may have been egregious , but Freud had a very good idea of current research ,

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belief and practice . One cannot fault his intelligence, nor charge him with not having done his homework.

People normally assume that psychotherapists are rigorously trained in certain professional methods to relieve anxieties, cast away irrational fears, root out delusions, raise morale and, in general, provide the insight, courage and energy for coping with the problems of living.

There has been quite a bit of research over the past thirty years which shows that psychotherapy has not been very successful in doing this . It must be admitted that the experimental procedures of its detractors are on occasion as slipshod as those of its adherents ; yet there is no doubt in my mind that the balance of credibility tips in their direction. Specifically, what this research has shown is that:

(a) The extent of a therapists' credentials is totally uncorrelated with the recovery rates of his 'clients' .¹

(b) A famous study² published in 1977 concluded that the credentials, the kind of therapy, and the length of therapy are all irrelevant to either cure rates or remission of symptoms . All subsequent attempts to this finding have failed.³

(c) There is a certain artificiality to the generic psychology experiment that naturally invites skepticism from this writer, who has been in turns mathematician ,(thereby involved in science), and writer of fiction, (thus pre-occupied with the behavior of human beings in their natural settings) . Still he attributes some validity in the conclusions drawn from a most unusual experiment done in 1979⁴ : A group of

¹The cute euphemism of Carl Rogers .

²"Meta-Analysis of Psychotherapy Outcome Studies" Smith and Glass, *American Psychologist* 32(1977) :752-60

³This work is summarized in *Berman & Norton, Psychological Bulletin* 98 (1985): 401-407

⁴Strupp and Hadley: Specific vs. Non-specific Factors in Psychotherapy" *Archives of General Psychiatry* 36 (1979) 1125-1136

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individuals diagnosed with easily identifiable conditions such as depression, anxiety neurosis, obsessive compulsive behavior and so forth were distributed, via some standard statistical scheme, to a pool of persons they believed to be 'psychotherapists', but which actually consisted of a mixture of professional psychotherapists and an assortment of college professors, whose only credential was an occupation that gave them a magisterial manner. The cure rates between the two groups were found to be statistically indistinguishable.

"The professionals charged higher fees, but they were no more effective as therapists than the professors. The only slight difference was that after therapy the clients of the professionals tended to be a bit more optimistic about life than those of the untrained professors, but they didn't function any better on any of the multiple measures the investigators evaluated. " (Robyn Dawes, "House of Cards" pg. 56)

(d) It has also been demonstrated, (given, once again, the great difficulties involved in setting up experiments in the human sciences) that the differences between the abilities of professionals and amateurs to diagnose mental illness, or even to distinguish between genuine and crudely faked symptoms, is nil. By all credible research , plain common sense and empirical tests based on statistical correlations of symptoms with some basic data on background and life history, have always proven to be superior to the intuitive appraisals of experts. ⁵

⁵(i.) Paul Meehl " Clinical vs. Statistical Prediction: A Theoretical Analysis and Review of the Literature" U. Minn Press 1954

(ii.) J. Sawyer: "Measurement & Prediction" Psychological Bulletin 66(1966) 178-200

(iii.) Dawes, Faust and Meehl, Science 243 (1989) 1668-1674

(iv) Bloom & Brundage

(v.) Faust, Hart, Guilmette: Pediatric Malingering... Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 56(1988) 578-582 ; 58(1990) 244-247

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It appears that in this field, unlike chess or piano playing, an experts 'expertise' does not increase through talent, study, or length of practice. These findings ought not be dismissed when psychologists are called to testify in court proceedings , or hired to run psychological evaluations on plaintiffs, defendants, job applicants, disturbed children, and so on. It has also influenced insurance companies in calculating rates of payment to professional psychologists, or when covering their malpractice damages.

A few factors have been positively correlated with cure rates:

(a) The degree of personal empathy between the client and the practitioner

(b) The positive mental attitude which leads someone to seek help in the first place , (no matter how foolish that help may be) .

Parenthetically this was true in my case. In the spring of 1975 I had myself committed to the Philadelphia General Hospital because I finally recognized that it was not wise for a person in my condition to be out on the streets. The 'therapies' I received there ranged from sensible to foolish to comical to brutally manipulative , (*One of the doctors told my parents and I separately that our hatred of each other was so extreme that we never wanted to see each other again. This disrupted family life for two years. His technique resembles that of the notorious John Rosen - even psychotherapists concede that he was a monster - who may have been his teacher. Rosen was for many years professor of psychiatry at Temple University .*) I now feel that it was this emergence of this new mental attitude on my part that was the first sign that a psychotic episode that had lasted almost exactly a year was coming to an end.)

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(c) Everyone must overcome a considerable amount of emotional distress merely through participation in the human condition.⁶ It is not “abnormal” for persons suffering from acute depression because of failure at school, frustrated ambitions, ruined careers, involvement in unhappy love affairs, or the lose of loved one to, all by themselves, rediscover hope and adventure in living. It is only the psychotherapists who have a vested interest in telling us that such ‘illnesses’, (as Americans tend to label all ‘negative’ emotions), cannot get better without professional care.

Statistical regression is another factor that comes into play : people normally go to therapists when they are in crisis. As this is an exceptional, not a normal event, they will tend to be less upset in future visits, something that has nothing to do with the psychiatrist, but which he is often inclined to take credit for .

These are serious criticisms, yet they do not, in and of themselves, indict the entire enterprise. Thus: it is reasonable to conjecture that it might be impossible to provide reliable statistics in support of the hypothesis that a belief in the divinity of Christ saves people from Hell. One can, however, show that the belief in the truth of *this claim* , does give a great many people a purpose for living. Many Christians will assure you that their well being and their ability to do good for others depends heavily on their belief in the above hypothesis. Likewise , it might not matter at all if the ideas of Freud, Jung, Reich, Laing, Rogers, Sullivan, Ferenczi, B. F. Skinner and other behaviorists, the biopsychiatrists, the ECT advocates and so forth were nothing more than an insalubrious mass of superstitions (as I believe them to be) if, like the ideas of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism , (which I *do* believe to be a sound scientific psychology) , they give social

⁶Some astronomers are searching for a planet where this might not be the case.

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coherency and reasons for living a good life to most of the world's population .

But that is not what we see. Psychotherapy has clouded the Western mind with morbidity. It does not make people good: it makes them selfish, self-centered and mean-spirited. It compares badly with religion, even with the most mediocre forms of conventional faith, even with the insidious cults, in its' stated objective of relieving the world's toll of psychic torment. It appears to make little difference that ...*"Unlike medical practitioners, well-paid mental health practitioners have hardly caused even a blip in alleviating society's rate of distress...."* (House of Cards , pg 199) . Over the last quarter century, despite innumerable shocking revelations, investigations and calls for reform, despite the raging in-house warfare between the 'pep-pill' biopsychiatrists, the behaviorists, and the wide range of 'talking therapies', the status, power and wealth of the profession as a whole is on the increase. The new unholy alliance of the American Psychiatric Association, the National Institutes of Mental Health, and the giant pharmaceutical houses such as Eli Lilly (Prozac), Upjohn (Xanax) and Ciba-Geigy (Ritalin) has given biopsychiatry in particular unprecedented strength.

Psychotherapy has become a menace far more fearful than any real or imagined source of terror in the minds of its consumers . Psychotherapy ruins lives; destroys families; undermines civil liberties; sends innocent people to prison. It has contributed its share to the epidemic of homelessness. It has created millions of drug addicts, hooked on tranquilizers and neuroleptic drugs whose worth is doubtful yet whose dangerous side effects are well known . It tells children to ' Say No' to the drug-pusher in the school yard, but feeds millions of them *Ritalin* , a first cousin to speed , goof-balls, and amphetamines, to make them more tractable in class. To it we owe the modern epidemic

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of *tardive dyskinesia* ,⁷ Peter Breggin, director of the Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology in Bethesda, Maryland, a man who has devoted his life to psychiatric reform, characterizes it as *“the worst plague of brain damage in medical history.”* (*Toxic Psychiatry*, Chapter 13).

It is responsible for emotional damage, educational disruption, social ostracism, brain damage , physical injuries and suicides on a scale that ought to cause much more concern than it does. Such persistent malpractice would not be tolerated in any other traditional area of medicine. Although powerful organizations such as the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association want to police licensing, and never tire in stressing the need for more rigorous standards of teaching and ‘training’, most trainings do little more than promote dogma, superstition and ignorance from one generation of practitioners to the next:

“ The problem is that licensing simply requires training - not training in something valid, or in something that works, but simply training. As far as licensing is concerned, one can be ‘equally ‘well-trained’ in the best established techniques of behavior modification or in ‘repressed memory recovery through hypnosis’.... thus, in areas where there is little or no scientific understanding, the training requirement does absolutely nothing whatsoever to enhance quality service.... it creates a pretense of knowledge where none exists, because the practitioner is required to ‘acquire’ it. This pretense misleads both the clients and the general public, who support the whole enterprise through third-party payments.”

(House of Cards , pgs 140-141)

⁷a Tourette-like condition of muscular tics and spasms. I suffered from it for several months after I got out of the hospitals. The medication that gave it to me was Prolixin.

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Grossly distorted and diluted spin-offs of psychologic dogmas , (which from the beginning had little true science to recommend them) , seep into the mainstream of social discourse, generating clichés that poison human interactions in families, education , law and medicine. Examples abound: ‘schizophrenogenic mothers’ ; ‘addictive personalities’ ; the ‘link between homosexuality and paranoia’ ; ‘attention deficit disorder’ (ADD) .

“ For example, the belief that schizophrenia and autism are due to a ‘schizophrenogenic’ (or ‘iceberg’) mother, who was unwilling to or incapable of providing the afflicted child with the affection required for normal development, has caused untold misery among the families of such disturbed children” . (House of Cards , pg. 20)

What Diane McGuinness writes ⁸ apropos of ADD could be said about many another manufactured ‘condition’:

“ We have invented a disease, given it medical sanction and now must disown it. The major question is how we go about destroying the monster we have created. It is no easy to do this and still save face, another reason why physicians and many researchers with years of funding and an academic reputation to protect are reluctant to believe the data.”



Recently we have witnessed a phenomenon which, although truly horrifying, has the gratifying feature of revealing to the world the true locus of psychotherapy’s intellectual antecedents. I am speaking of the syncretism of recovered memory therapy, multiple personality disorder, (which despite a tradition from Morton Prince to the present day, remains hypothetical), and demonology , witchcraft, Satanism,

⁸The Limits of Biological Treatment for Psychological Distress, 1989, eds. Fisher and Greenberg

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exorcisms, alien abductions and so on . There is an advantage of bringing together primitive superstition, castration complexes, lithium medication and electroshock, in that one is no longer speaking of apples and oranges. Their spiritual kinship is indeed manifest. One must agree that there is more sense in this classification scheme , than in the grouping of lobotomy with statistics and Newtonian mechanics. Consider how successful the aura of real science was in prolonging the life of this senseless and cruel procedure!

All the same, what one has witnessed in the last decade is no laughing matter. This perverse alloy of pseudo-science and black magic has destroyed entire communities, (McMartin family case of 1983; see Pendergrast, *Victims of Memory* , pgs. 360-363) . The catastrophe that fell upon Paul Ingram and his family, (reported by Lawrence Wright in the New Yorker then published as *Remembering Satan* , 1994) shook the political stability of the entire state of Washington.

There is a natural tendency to sneer at, even to ridicule people who willingly place themselves under the control of quack psychologists, unquestioningly accept the most lurid nonsense, and ruin their lives. The extreme fragility of psychic equilibrium is a fact none of us want to deal with. I don't think that one can find anyone who has not experienced the need to cling to trusted authority in times of serious crisis. In its proper time, anyone might become vulnerable to the malevolent malpractice of some doctor of the psyche.

Periodically cases involving notoriously bad therapists will receive lots of publicity: Ewen Cameron, Sheldon Ziegelbaum , Margaret Bean-Bayog, John Rosen, Bennett Braun, Kenneth Olson,... Their ordeal of public disgrace may temporarily interfere with, but will rarely put an end to their professional career The dust settles; the insurance companies pay huge sums in out of court settlements; the 'psychotherapist' now

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becomes simply a 'therapist', the 'psychologist' a 'counselor'. Indeed, often enough a change of venue, a move from California to Hawaii, Wisconsin to Montana, may lead to a job with higher status and more pay.

It often happens that the most esteemed and honored professionals, presidents and directors of major institutes and professional organizations, have eventually been found guilty of the worst abuses. Throughout the decade (1953-63), while D. Ewen Cameron was president of the American and Canadian Psychiatric Associations, president of the World Association of Psychiatrists, director of the Allen Memorial Institutes and chairman of the department of psychiatry at McGill University, and professor of psychiatry at Albany Medical College, he was also receiving funds from the CIA to run torture chambers at the Allen Institute for brain-washing and memory - destroying experiments on his patients. (John Marks: *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate*, W.W. Norton, 1991)

While Jules Masserman was president of the World Association of Psychiatrists and the American Psychiatric Association he used sodium amytal to put his female patients into comas and raped them . (Barbara Noel, *You Must Be Dreaming* , Poseidon Press, 1992)

Beginning in the mid-50's, while John Rosen was a professor of psychiatry at Temple University Medical School, director of the Institute for Direct Analysis, director of the Institute for the Study of Psychoanalysis , and chairman of the Philadelphia Mental Health and Mental Retardation Foundation , he was terrorizing, abducting, imprisoning, raping, beating and physically torturing his patients. His license was not revoked until 1983, at the age of 81. (Masson, *Against Therapy* , pgs. 124-152)

All in the name of science.

The list is quite long; these and other names will be re-appearing throughout this series of articles. Everything is in the public record. Most of it can be traced through any serviceable public library. The revisionist movement against psychiatry has been around for 40 years. My only reason for writing on this topic is that, despite an already enormous literature, the situation with respect to flagrant malpractice appears just as horrible in the 90's as it did in the 60's.

Although it is true that the neuroleptic drug 'revolution' has emptied out the snake pits which passed for mental hospitals for 150 years ,
(themselves the product of major reforms at the beginning of the 19th century), the plight of the brain-damaged populations of homeless psychotics that fill the streets is scarcely more enviable. ⁹



*“ There is no question but that Hitler belongs in the category of the truly mystic medicine man. As somebody commented about him in the last Nürnberg conference, since the time of Mohammed nothing like it has been seen in the world. This markedly mystical characteristic of Hitler's is what makes him do things which seem to us illogical, inexplicable, curious and impardonable...So you see, Hitler is a medicine man, a form of spiritual vessel, a demi-deity, or even better, a myth” ... (C.G. Jung,1939, quoted in *Against Therapy* , pg. 106)*

Were I to give way to a tendency towards literary over-indulgence, this evocation of familiar horrors might win me the enthusiastic endorsement of Stephen King addicts. My stronger obligation is rather

⁹Let us however agree with Ho Chi Minh that, “Nothing is more precious than liberty and freedom”. Karl Scheibe, professor of psychology here at Wesleyan, is of the opinion that most classical schizophrenia was hospital induced,(iatrogenic).

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to demonstrate that the custom of viewing each pathological manifestation as an isolated incident stemming from the diseased mind of some would-be Mengele, is incorrect. *We are in fact dealing with a science that is completely out of control* , a hideous cross-insemination of medicine, religion, superstition, politics and greed. It is this combination of public and scientific endorsement that has rendered psychotherapy as serious a risk to civilization as Stalinism, Maoism, Fascism, Nazism: the cruellest totalitarian ideologies afflicting our century.

In one respect psychotherapy outdistances even these. Its' place within the European medical tradition has been maintained with such political skill that public opinion, the medical profession, the schools and the law *have endowed it with the full authority of modern science* .

Even the psychiatrists who acknowledge all the abuses cited here will argue that its scientific credibility is not damaged because of them. The argument is old, worn, and deserves only to be admitted to an old-age home, (preferably one administered by the nefarious Columbia corporation) : science is essentially neutral. The argument goes, that even the most tough- minded sciences, physics, mathematics and chemistry, are employed in harmful ways, the obvious example being the connection between atomic weapons and elementary particle theory.

Nothing, not even Switzerland, is essentially neutral. The difference between psychiatry and particle physics however , and one can quibble over the fine points of the matter , is that the predominantly noxious legacy of psychotherapy since Freud is not based on science at all, but on superstition. Jeffrey Masson goes further: he maintains that there is a serious intellectual error in the very assumption that one person can cure another's mental distress. (The first

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sentence of *Against Therapy* is: *"This is a book about why I believe that psychotherapy, of any kind, is wrong."*)

Note that one rarely finds psychotherapists whose intentions are deliberately or consciously malevolent. There are, it is true, instances in which governments such as Russia, China, Brazil, Argentina, and the United States , (John Marks , op. cit.) , have funded programs of research and development into technologies of brain-washing and psychological torture. Such aberrations have less direct influence on the mainstream of psychology than nuclear weapons research does on basic physics.

Most psychiatric abuse derives from ignorance, indoctrination, righteous intentions, arrogance deriving from fear of the mentally ill, the mentality of power, appalling degrees of self-deception, and the normal concomitant of greed that pervades the entire medical profession.

Whence cometh this madness? Why does our civilization endorse a sick science for the cure of sick minds? It seems to have always been true that we know least about what is closest to us. In the 18th century, at a time when astronomy had reached a zenith with the publication of Flamsteed's star catalogues (1725) , both the great and the lowly could still die of a cut finger because nothing was known about infection. Medicine has always been the most primitive of sciences, even though the stars are many millions of miles away from us, but we carry our bodies around with us at all times, (whether we want to or not). Medical science today has much to be proud of, (and hardly inclined to give us any opportunity to forget it), and it is the science of mental disease that is as arbitrary, useless and dangerous as 18th century medicine.

Yet what can possibly be closer to us than our own minds ?

We do not now possess anything resembling a valid psychotherapy. What is promoted as such can and must be interrogated

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at many levels: What is the extent of the social damage caused by psychotherapy? The brain damage? Suicide? Crime? The undermining of basic civil liberties? The larger political ramifications? What are the historical roots of modern practices?

This series addresses these questions. In the first few articles we will select a canonical ensemble from the more flagrant psychiatric nightmares of our times . Next the political implications of these will be considered. There will then be an attempt to take an overview of Euro-American psychiatry since the 17th century, identifying those factors which have led to the contemporary psychotherapeutic world view.

The epilogue ? Well...I'll see how far I've come. *Ferment* , like much other fermentation, is unable to predict its intoxicated random walk more than a few steps at a time.

A. Canonical Ensemble

I. The Recovery of Repressed Memories.

II. Multiple Personality Disorder/Ritual Satanic Abuse

III. Biopsychiatry and Drug Addiction

IV. Electro-convulsive Shock Therapy

V. Psychosurgery

VI. Behavior Modification

B. The Politics of Psychotherapy

VI. The "Violence Initiative"

VII. The Therapy Jungle

VIII. The Tyranny of Social Services.

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**Sheila Taub, Institute for Pain Research. From a conference on
"Recovered Memories of Child Abuse: Legal, Scientific and
Clinical Issues", New Haven, Nov. 14, 1997**

I. The Recovery of Repressed Memories.

The Salem witch trials re-entered our history in the 1980's . It appears now that the worst is over, that the uncritical acceptance of recovered memory testimony by lawyers, judges and juries is rapidly becoming a thing of the past . There is still a danger that we may revert to an earlier tradition of treating claims of childhood abuse with patronizing disbelief.

A number of recent exposes have presented the public with evidence of ignorant and unscrupulous psychiatrists inducing horrible false memories in the minds of susceptible patients. Over Thanksgiving "60 Minutes "carried a report of the case of the malpractice suit of Nadean Cool vs. Kenneth Olson in a Wisconsin circuit court:

" Dr. Olson informed Cool that she had more than 120 personalities, including those of a duck and angels who talked to God. Cool came to believe that she had knifed the babies in the heart and passed them around for other cult members to eat. To become Satan's bride, Olson told Cool, she had to be raped by 60 or 70 men and have sex with animals... during this time, as a result, Cool made several suicide attempts... On February 25th, 1989, in a mental health unit at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Olson covered the nurses viewing windows with newspaper, 'tethered Cool spread eagle ' on a bed, and ordered that no one enter the room no matter what they heard. Armed with a fire extinguisher, because he had told Cool that 'she could burst into flames as a result of the exorcism', Olson screamed to Satan' while Cool begged 'let me go' for several hours."
(False Memory Foundation Newsletter. March 1,1997)

"In 1997, after 15 days of courtroom testimony, defendant agreed to settle for \$2.4 million. Testimony described how psychiatrist induced horrific false memories of childhood sexual and ritual abuse, including demonic possession and misdiagnosed MPD. Therapy techniques included hypnosis, age regression, exorcism and drugs which caused hallucinations. The patient had originally entered therapy for bulimia and help after a traumatic event had befallen family" ("Trial Outcomes of Malpractice Suits, Sheila Taub, Nov. 14, 1997)

On an encouraging note, modern research in cognitive science and related areas has come to understand to what extent memory is a reconstruction, not a reproduction, of the past. Elements of fact, fantasy and interpolation are always present. The crude 'repression' mechanism which is the cornerstone of Freud's psychoanalysis, and which, applied to the treatment of shell shock victims during WWI became incorporated into the rationale of "abreaction", has been substantially rejected by psychologists. We simply do not know how the psyche responds to extremely painful experiences in childhood. There are certain kinds of ignorance which are liberating: this is an example in point.

There is a direct connection between the etiology of Freud's theories and the present controversy on the veracity of recovered memories. As Masson has shown (*The Assault on Truth*; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984), psychoanalysis properly began when Freud decided that most of the accounts his patients were giving him of sexual abuse by their parents were fantasies. Since he already believed that all hysteria had a sexual origin, (a transmutation of the 'uterus' hypothesis dating from the mists of time), the elaboration of a theory by which *all* neuroses are caused by the repression of ungratified, forbidden or shameful fantasies of sexual activities with one's close relatives, was inevitable.

One cannot resist the fascinating lure of the epistemological challenge: weighing the correct proportions of fantasy and reality present in a patient's accounts of childhood sexual abuse seems to be psychotherapy's Quantum Uncertainty Principle. Faced with a gullible subject a strong-willed doctor, unaware of or uninterested in his own delusions, can reshape, even invent, memories, until she becomes convinced that real abuse is imagined, or that all fantasies are real.

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Freud's (extremely chauvinist) axiom that almost all accounts of childhood sexual abuse are fantasies, came full circle in the 80's. Now many psychiatrists, inspired by the puerile vindictiveness of *The Courage to Heal* of Ellen Bass and Laura Davis were claiming that *all* memories of childhood sexual abuse, including fantasies, daydreams, those prompted under hypnosis or sodium amythal, or even fictional, ('directed visualizing') were real.

What has unleashed this shock wave of hysteria, leaving a social devastation in its wake as widespread and irreversible as any natural disaster? Has prosperity bred a generation of shallow-minded children unaware of the inevitable consequences of accusing their parents of outrageous crimes? Has the end of the Cold War turned our paranoia inwards? Is this pathology related to the new gender feminism, the misandric racism that has poisoned the academic discourse, (never healthy in the best of circumstances), turning romance into a dirty word? Or is it our Puritan heritage that, like a recessive gene permanently embedded in our spiritual chromosomes, is always with us, finding its opportunity for expression from time to time?

For me the latter argument has never carried much weight: it implies a metaphysical essence called "national character" persisting unchanged over 3 and a half centuries, that is to say, 1 fermat.¹⁰

National Character may well be the deadliest superstition ever to take up residence in the human mind. From the 15th century onward, for good or ill, there has never been a time when the population of North America has not been abundantly ethnically diverse. It defies simple logic to imagine that a peculiar cult that got its jollies from hanging Quakers and branding women with scarlet letters could have set the spiritual tone for a heterogeneous empire of 300,000,000+ souls.

¹⁰The unit of time required to prove a Fermat's Last Theorem.

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My own understanding begins with the acknowledgment that there is nothing unhealthy in the mind of a girl growing up in our culture, because she happens to be terrified of men. Men are encouraged, even trained, to terrorize women and fight with one another. There are women who tend to imagine a rapist lurking behind every chance encounter with a man. Rape however is merely one of the forms of violence, including assault and the many species of humiliation, while violence is as intrinsic to our way of life as is nitrogen in the air we breathe.

There are, of course, considerable differences between:

(a) being terrified of a certain group of people who do everything they can to terrify you ;

(b) the experience of being molested, assaulted or raped by them; and (c) coming to believe or being persuaded to believe, that your most lurid fantasies recall things that actually happened to you at one time or another.

It is in this third area that psychiatric malpractice intervenes. Psychiatry has never placed the struggle for women's rights among its goal. In the 19th century, it was customary to bring in a psychiatrist to persuade a recalcitrant wife to sleep with their husband.

Drugs, scoldings, rebukes, lectures were not the only weapons in his arsenal: terror and even torture were applied when necessary ¹¹

The penumbra of this historical tradition extends as far as Freud's celebrated "case of Dora", the account that is credited with bringing the light of psychoanalysis to the attention of suffering mankind. " *Asked to pinpoint the beginning of what we know as modern psychotherapy, many*

¹¹See the account of van Helmont's "water therapy" in the author's book, 'Shrinking Expectations', available nowhere but from him for \$6.00 .

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people would cite Freud's treatment of the patient he called Dora (Ida Bauer). " (Against Therapy, pg. 45)

Freud was out to convince Dora that she was really in love with Herr K-, the husband of the mistress of Dora's father, himself a close personal friend of Freud's. Freud wanted her to agree to have sex with Herr K- , and confesses himself astonished that Dora should have found a spontaneous, unsolicited kiss from K- "disgusting". All 14 year old girls, he argues, should be aroused by the kisses of older men. He then reasons as follows:

" If I may suppose that the scene of the kiss took place in this way, I can arrive at the following derivation for the feelings of disgust . Such feelings seem originally to be a reaction to the smell (and afterwards also to the sight) of excrement. But the genitals can act as a reminder of the excretory functions; and this applies especially to the male member, for that organ performs the function of micturation as well as the sexual function. Indeed, the function of micturation is the earliest known of the two, and the only one known during the pre-sexual period. Thus it happens that disgust becomes one of the means of affective expression in the sphere of sexual life. The Early Christian Father's 'inter urinas et faeces nascimur' clings to sexual life and cannot be detached from it in spite of every effort at idealization. " (Freud Reader , editor Peter Gay, pg. 186)

Those psychiatrists who have imagined that they were *liberating* their clients by goading them to recall instances of childhood sexual abuse, have been *themselves* guilty of psychic violation and rape as terrible as the supposed crimes they uncovered . All that they have done is to continue the tradition of physical and spiritual domination of women. Everyone has suffered from this catastrophe, but its worst victims have been the patients themselves: victims first of dysfunctional

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homes that provided the soil for the cultivation of mental illness; victims next of a culture of violence that treats all relations between men and women as regimes of hunter and prey (in both directions); victims finally of a pseudo-science triumphant, that has never had any capacity for self-criticism or self-regulation, that vaunts its cherished delusions at a greater value than its (important) handful of hard-won insights.

The recovered memory witch hunt has not been without salutary consequences. Within the past 5 years it has compelled critical reforms, even revolutions, in law, jurisprudence, biology, cognitive science, forensic medicine and psychotherapy itself. 40 legal precedents stemming from malpractice suits around the country have changed the rules of evidence and done away with the uncritical acceptance of so-called expert scientific testimony . Alleged memories solicited under hypnosis or truth serums like sodium amythal are no longer accepted by most courts. In a growing number of states it is no longer possible to prosecute individuals on the basis of someone's presumption of infallibility in recognizing the authenticity of a recovered memory. Cognitive science has cast out the traditional models for the functioning of memory. Repression, the cornerstone of Freud's theory of neurosis, has been delivered a knock-out blow.¹²

These are the vicarious benefits of a decade of the unchecked activities of a therapeutic pathology based on the theory that all manifestations of mental illness in adulthood are caused by the repression of sexual abuse in childhood. Most psychotherapists would probably demonize the false memory hucksters as uneducated,

¹²Not that it matters: history shows that the survival of an idea has the weakest of correlations with its' credibility. "Repression" may hang around like the Shroud of Turin for another 600 years .

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incompetent, crazy and so on. Yet it must be emphasized that the rise and fall of this fashion belongs to the history of psychotherapy, that it was legitimized by an illegitimate science:

(a) The hundreds of psychiatrists who have pressured, intimidated and drugged their patients, mostly women, into believing that they were raped by their parents have never been charged with doing anything illegal. They have not served a day in jail for their malpractice, yet their word alone has been responsible for the incarceration of dozens of innocent people.

(b) Few of them, (if any), have been expelled from the American Psychiatric Association or the American Psychological Association, (organizations which rarely clean house).

(c) It is only in recent years, after over a decade of untrammelled irresponsibility, that the testimony of such psychotherapists has received anything less than unqualified acceptance in the courts.

(d) These so-called 'deviant' psychotherapists have employed standard procedures based on traditional beliefs.

Including:

(i) *The repression mechanism* : Painful experiences in childhood are not forgotten. Still in the mind, they are 'repressed' into the unconscious. Unless they are remembered, they will continue to cause neurotic and psychotic symptoms, in the same way that a lodged splinter continues to generate infections.

(ii) *Abreaction* : The notion that the way to restore such memories is to provoke, by some means, (drugs, hypnosis, massage, primal screams), an emotional crisis. A folk belief associated with abreaction is that the things that are said during such crises must be true. Abreaction goes back to Franz Anton Mesmer. His magnetic therapy

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sought to bring about the “salutary crisis” that discharged the “magnetic fluid”. His model being more simplistic than Freud’s, he probably caused less harm by its’ application. Like Freud, Mesmer was a perverse mixture of scientist and charlatan. I tend to think he was no worse as a scientist, but a *much* better doctor.(See *Ferment* , vol. VIII, 1991-92)

(iii) *The denial syllogism* . Freud’s great contribution to Aristotelian logic. One might call it Inquisitorial Logic. It goes as follows:

To Be Proven : X is Y

Premise A: X is not Y

Premise B: Premise A is asserted by the patient

Conclusion: X is Y

Q.E.D.

The denial syllogism proves that whatever the patient believes about herself must be false. This is called being ‘in denial’ . Further proof is obtained through taking note of the hostility aroused by the application of the denial syllogism. This is called ‘resistance’.

“Denial’ was the buzzword that reverberated throughout the room, the quick diagnosis that explained everything. If one of the women expressed doubts about being abused, she was in ‘denial’ . If you are in denial , the therapist explained, that is further proof that you were, in fact, abused. If a parent or sibling resists your story, accuses you of getting your facts wrong, or asks for external proof or corroboration, then they are ‘in denial’ . Most likely they have repressed memories of their own.” (Loftus and Ketchum, *The Myth of Repressed Memory* , page 16)

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(iv) The erroneous belief that under hypnosis, people will always tell the truth rather than what they think the hypnotist wants to hear.

(5) The belief in the efficacy of truth serums .

(6) The ancient superstition that all mental illness has a sexual basis.

(7) The tendency to treat people who have been diagnosed as mentally ill, like gadgets that have to be fixed, leading to the search for the missing or defective element.

These ideas reflect all the features of a hundred years of psychiatric theory . There is no way that one can hope to isolate a class of 'professionally incompetent' psychiatrists, specializing in recovered memory therapy, without condemning the profession as a whole .

An excellent prescription for society's mental health, by the way .

Allowing that the recent changes in science, medicine and law produced by the decade of false memory accusations have been positive, is a bit like saying that the Holocaust was not altogether bad because it produced the Nuremberg Conventions and the state of Israel. The damage in terms of lives, families and communities is beyond belief. For further information and accounts of dozens of specific cases, one may consult the bibliography, or contact the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, director Pamela Freyd. 3401 Market Street Suite 130, Philadelphia , PA. 19104-3315 215-387-1865 FAX: 215-387-1917.

(First of a series)

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