





Insane asylums are the conscious and premeditated repositories of black magic,

and this isn't just because doctors promote magic by their ill-timed and hybrid methods of treatment, it's because they practice it.

If there had been no doctors  
There would never have been any sick people,  
No dead skeletons  
Sick people to be butchered and flayed,  
For it was with doctors and not with sick people that society began.

Those who live, live off the dead.  
And death too must live;  
And there's nothing like an insane asylum to tenderly incubate death, and to keep the dead in an incubator.

It began 400 years before with Jesus Christ, this therapy of slow death, and modern medicine, in collusion with the most sinister and debauched magic, subjects its dead to electric shocks, to insulin therapy so that every day it may drain its stud farms of men of their selves, and may present them thus empty,

and there is in electric shock a splash state through which every traumatised person passes, and which causes him at that instant no longer to understand, but horribly and desperately to misunderstand what he was, when he was he, what, law, me, king, thee, what the hell, and THAT.

I went through it myself and I won't forget it.



# Nervemeter



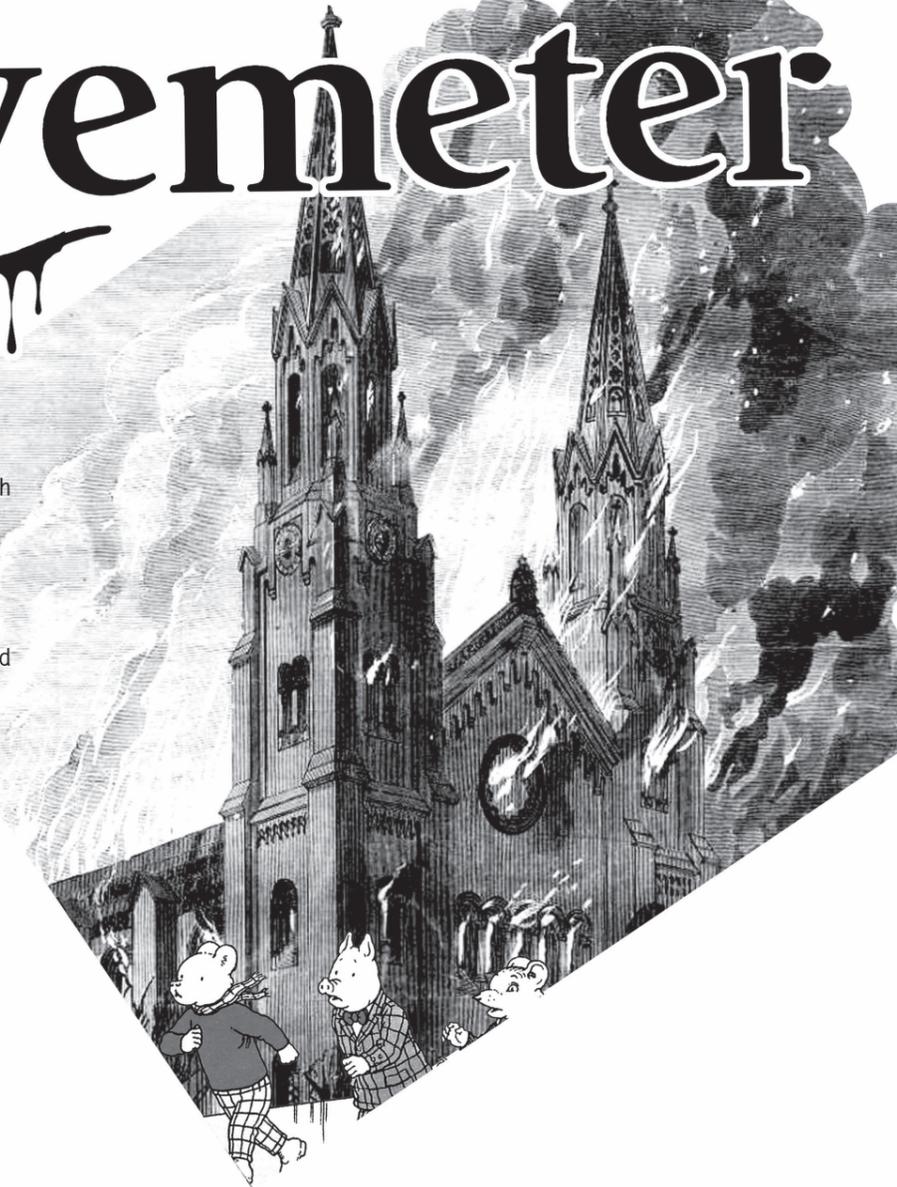
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The Nerve Meter invites you to sell its magazine and get involved in its distribution strategy. You need no accreditation or badge to sell this magazine. 100 per cent of the donation goes to the vendor.

We are an autonomous, not-for-profit organisation, and in need of more funding.

Would you like to get involved in helping to raise funding for this magazine? We await you.

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**LUCIFER** **JEHOVAH**

**CHRIST**

**SATAN**

# SUFFERING FOR YOUR ART: WAS IT WORTH IT?

"Rouze up, O Young Men of the New Age! Set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings! For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court & the University, who would, if they could, for ever depress Mental, and prolong Corporeal War. Painters! on you I call. Sculptors! Architects!"

(from preface to "Milton: A Prophecy" by William Blake)

Here we consider artistry that screams at us from within the otherwise serene world of mental illness. Life and art sometimes combine to form a kind of lived aesthetical event - in some cases a terrifying one - of which fragments and traces have been left behind. The focus here is on biographical detail and anecdote relating to the work and the travails experienced by a select group of artists. They are mainly artists we like; this is a fanzine after all. But they also constitute part of an accredited pantheon of mentally impaired artists, remembered and romanticised. We are not judging their merit or anything else about them despite what the title says. Unlike the literature that is taught in schools and colleges or appears in anthologies (Shakespeare, Dante, Milton etc) we think an insane canon of artistic achievement can be more literally related to the act of canonisation, because it is bound up with the suffering and martyrdom of those who created it. In extreme cases, such as Antonin Artaud's aphasia, absence assumes an artistic aura; suffering and silence - that is the work of art itself.

The archetype of the mad, artistic genius emerged rapidly during the period of self-conscious artistry now known as Romanticism (from about 1780 -1840). Around that time perception of the madman was transformed from an unfeeling animal devoid of reason into a heroic devotee of unchained imagination. This romanticised image again spiked in popularity with the avant-garde movements of the late 19th and early 20th century. It's significant that the alliance between madness and creativity became really popular around the same time as the appearance of another set of influential ideas: the constitution of madness as a mental illness and the emergence of the language of psychiatry to describe it. The dialectic between the psychiatric appropriation of madness, and "insane" art is explored in the work of philosopher, Michel Foucault:

"By the madness which interrupts it, a work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without answer provokes a break without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself. What is necessarily a profanation in the work of art returns to the point, and, in the time of that work swamped in madness, it is the world that becomes culpable (for the first time in the Western world) in relation to the work of art; it is now arraigned by the work of art ... the world that thought to measure and justify madness through psychology must justify itself before madness, since in its struggles and agonies it measures itself by the excess of works like those of Nietzsche, of Van Gogh, of Artaud. And nothing in itself, especially not what it can know of madness, assures the world that it is justified by such works of madness."

We would say the social criteria that denote mental unbalance would reveal most creative types to be at least neurotic. But we are not qualified to discuss clinical definitions or categories of psychosis, not in the context of creativity nor in any other context. There are plenty of books on the subject of mental impairment and artistic ability which include statements like this one:

"Manic depressives will while ascending the excitement phase of the illness reflect that with wild choices of colour, and disordered, incoherent lines. Mild depressives, on the other hand, will choose somber colours and their pictures tend to exhibit the poverty of their ideas. Severely depressed patients do not produce pictures at all because of the effect of the illness. Drawings from people suffering from general paralysis of the insane are ataxic, vulgar and deteriorate into disorder. Senile drawings exemplify ataxia of patients. Epileptics are the most willing dilettantes with a great gusto for pedantic detail. But in general the major wealth of artistry comes from schizophrenics, whether insidious or acute, suffering from perplexity, confusion, emotional turmoil or a state akin to being in a dream."

## Francisco Goya (1746-1828)

Goya was perhaps the greatest painter of the Romantic period. As a youth he was quick tempered and was at one point considered to be the finest swordsman in Spain. By 1785 he was showing signs of being unwell but was not really affected by his illness until 1792 when he left Madrid for Cadiz and was severely struck down. At that time he was unable to see, hear, speak, swallow food or drink; he had fever, nausea, vomiting, delirium, hallucinations and was confused to the point where he could no longer recall his name or birthplace. It was thought he was dying and although he slowly recovered, his hearing never returned.

Art critics are divided about the exact nature of Goya's mysterious illness. Modern diagnosis opts for Vogt-Koyanagi Syndrome, an autoimmune disorder affecting the pigment melanin inside the inner ear, which results in deafness and also affects the eyes and can be accompanied by nausea and loss of balance. There is no doubt the illness involved an acute period of neurological disturbance. From 1797 Goya chose to work from a garret rather than studio and depicted prisoners, lunatics, war atrocities, violent bullfighting scenes, witches, demons. He wrote to his wealthy and influential patron, Don Bernardo de Iriarte in 1794:

"Sir, in order to occupy my imagination mortified by the contemplation of my suffering and in order to compensate in part for the considerable expense which they have caused me, I devoted myself to painting a set of cabinet pictures in which I have managed to make observations for which there is normally no opportunity in commissioned works which give me the scope for fantasy and invention."

Despite the illness, in the ten years after the age of 62 Goya produced 700 paintings and numerous drawings. The frescoes he painted on the walls of the Quinto del Sordo were removed after his death and were shown to the public at the Paris Exhibition of 1878, and caused controversy. The contemporary English critic, Philips Gilbert Hamerton voiced the indignation of those who took offence.

He said the paintings "proved how Goya's mind groveled in a hideous inferno of its own, a disgusting region, horrible without sublimity, shapeless as chaos, foul in colour and forlorn of light, peopled by the vilest aberrations that ever came from the brain of a sinner. He surrounded himself, I say, with these abominations, finding in them I know not what devilish satisfaction, and rejoicing in a manner altogether incomprehensible to us, in the audacities of an art in perfect keeping with its revolting subjects."

Foucault also uses the word "grovel", in this case to describe Goya's painting, The Madhouse. He states that the painter "must have experienced before that grovel of flesh in the void, that nakedness among the bare walls, something related to a contemporary pathos..." Foucault argues that the later work of Goya, of the Disparates and the Quinto del Sordo, addresses a different madness from that of the madman cast into prison - that of the man cast into darkness:

"Goya's forms are born out of nothing: they have no background in the double sense that they are silhouetted against only the monotonous darkness... it is indeed a question of that Sleep of Reason which Goya, in 1797, had already made the first image of the 'universal idiom'; it is a question of a night which is doubtless that of classical unreason, that triple night into which Orestes sank. But in that night, man communicates what is deepest in himself, and with what is most solitary."



## Jonathan Martin of Darlington (1782-1838)

There's a portrait of Jonathan Martin, the fanatical Wesleyan and incendiarist, in which he is wearing a sealskin cape and wide-brimmed hat, looking like a Venetian nobleman and holding a copy of his autobiography. He was a self-styled prophet of apocalypse who first gained notoriety after escaping from Gateshead asylum, where he had been sentenced to life imprisonment for threatening to shoot the Bishop of Oxford. He was not incarcerated again until 11 years later when he famously tried to burn down York Minster. He was found not guilty of arson by reason of insanity. His picaresque life, his madness and art converge in his illustrated memoir, which he produced to earn some money while he was a fugitive. The introduction reads:

"The Life of John Martin of Darlington, Tanner, written by Himself. Containing an Account of the Extraordinary interposition of Divine Providence on his behalf during a period of six years of service in the Navy, including his wonderful escapes in the Action of Copenhagen and in many affairs on the coasts of Spain and Portugal, Egypt & c. Also, an Account of his subsequent Conversion and christian Experience with the Persecution he suffered for Conscience' sake, being locked up in an insane asylum and ironed, describing his miraculous Escape through the roof of the house, having first ground off his Fetters with a Sandy Stone. His Singular Dream of the Destruction of London and a Host of Armed Men overrunning England & c."

It is not easy to understand why this almost illiterate man, long before the deed that ensured his fame, felt so strong a need to communicate his private conception of the world. At his trial it was repeatedly pointed out that he believed in dreams; the decision to burn York Minster was the result of a dream. He saw himself as a man more sinned against than sinner. After having escaped and eluded his captors once, he was kept in irons constantly for the first five years of his second life sentence. His later drawing activities were restricted because it was said this could over excite him. His younger brother, John Martin, was mildly eccentric, yet was elegant and educated and had international recognition and financial success from painting epic biblical scenes like The Fall of Ninevah. Jonathan Martin's Overthrow of London is a brilliantly chaotic reworking of the same picture. It's also epic and apocalyptic, but prophetic rather than historical. Jonathan Martin's autobiography says of his family: "God has raised of us four brothers: my eldest brother he has made a natural philosopher, my youngest an Historical Painter, his drawings and engravings has made Kings and Emperors to wonder. I, the unworthiest, God has given the gift of prophecy."



# Richard Dadd (1817-1886)

Richard Dadd, a classically trained artist, was far more celebrated in his day as an insane murderer than as an insane artist. After a tour visiting Europe and the near east in 1843 Dadd returned to London in a state recognisable to family and friends as insane. He continued painting and behaving weirdly and then in August of that year he was diagnosed as mad and potentially dangerous but was not hospitalised. Then on 28th August he murdered his father with no apparent provocation and fled to France, where he attempted a second murder of a stranger. After a few months in a French asylum at Claremont he was returned to England and the criminal lunatics' ward at Bedlam Hospital. He stayed at Bedlam until 1864 and was then transferred to the new Broadmoor Hospital where he died in 1886. Dadd was 26 at the onset of his illness and lived a total of 42 years in hospitals. He apparently hallucinated and heard voices and could be violent during an acute attack of delirium. When calmer he spoke of having murdered the devil and believed he was divinely inspired, namely the envoy of Osiris.

The impact of the murder was sensational. It was known he was ill before it happened so the scene was set for a retrospective evaluation of his early work in terms of the approaching madness. The press speculated wildly, indulging in all manner of gory detail. And in one report he was actually declared dead: Art Union, a prestigious art magazine, ran an article, headed up like an obituary:

"The Late Richard Dadd... Alas! We must so preface the name of a youth of genius that promised to do honour to the world; for although the grave has not actually closed over him, he must be classed among the dead... Alas! It is indeed heavy penalty that which poor humanity pays for enjoying the gift of a fertile imagination."

The sudden elevation to the rank of genius was an invention of the newspapers. The Kentish Independent for second September 1843 referred to Dadd as "the murderer, an artist of acknowledging genius." The Pictorial Times said, "No living artist possessed a more vivid or delicate imagination, and there is no doubt that the excess of this quality predisposes to the disease which has triumphed over him."

His work immediately prior to the murder, such as Caravan Halted by the Sea Shore, of which there is nothing odd or particularly imaginative, became the subject of public scrutiny. A cartoon, St George after the Dragon, which was entered into a competition for frescos to adorn the Houses of Parliament was on exhibition at the time of the murder and attracted curious crowds of people. Press reports commented that the cartoon evidenced, "signs of mental infirmity".

No one anticipated that Dadd would continue to paint in hospital. As early as 1845 it was known among London art circles that he was working again and soon his new material was being discussed in art magazines. Art Union was quick to start talking up his new drawings: "They are absolutely wonderful in delicate finish... marvelous production, such as scarcely any of our living painters could produce... How singular these outpourings of disease and mind will be to future collectors."

An exhibition in Manchester of works selected by Dadd's friend, Augustus Leopold Egg included six Dadd paintings, done before his illness. However they were interpreted in those terms: "These fairy paintings have a melancholy interest as the workings of a teeming but disordered brain," stated the Manchester Guardian. "William Blake and Richard Dadd may be classed together as examples of painters in whom a disordered brain rather aided than impeded the workings of a fertile and original fancy." The critics found works like Dead Camel were "full of gloomy madness... a ghostly little invention of desert horror, framed as by demons such as his disturbed brain could devise."

Richard Dadd produced a respectable oeuvre of work during his incarceration but it was rarely purchased and by the time of his death he was largely forgotten. Just over fifty years later in 1937, Sir Sacheverell Sitwell's "Narrative Pictures" announced the rediscovery of Richard Dadd. The attractive quality was the pathological element; Dadd was linked to mysterious cult figures of the emergent avant-garde such as the Comte de Lautreamont. The same year an essay on Dadd appeared in the US in the Magazine of Art which asked whether it was insanity that released the original artist in Dadd. Had he not been incarcerated for murder it seems probable he'd be forgotten today.



## Adolf Wolfli (1864-1930)

The Wolfli Collection is made up of 44 enormous volumes of drawings, writings and musical compositions which has come to reside with the Paul Klee Collection in the Museum of Art in Bern, Switzerland. Adolf Wolfli was born in 1864 near Bern. His mother died when he was nine and he was fostered, abused and became deeply withdrawn. Later he made his way as a wandering labourer and heavy drinker, as his father had been. He was 26 years old when he was first sent to prison in 1890 for a series of assaults on young girls. His hospitalisation in 1895 followed a similar offence. He was pronounced mentally ill and a danger to society, which he doubtless was.

In hospital his condition deteriorated rapidly. He fell into a delusional state, heard voices, experienced visions. He'd never had any artistic training nor showed any interest in drawing during his first five years in hospital. Then, in 1899, he began spontaneously to draw. His drawings typically featured human and divine people, animals, architecture, mechanical objects, plants and incorporated written scripts, letters, musical notation and cut-ups.

After 1916 Wolfli adopted the celestial guise of "St Adolf II", whose punishment and execution were recurring motifs in his work. His doctor, Walter Morgenthaler, stated: "It is symbolic subjects which are by far the most common in his drawings; all that he represents has a symbolic value in his eyes, far more than is the case with the normal artist... his abstracts were geometric; his chaos, in these drawings, became ordered. The schizophrenic artist inhabits their created worlds; they are the true and only proponents of realising lived metaphors. Their words and drawings are an excrescence: a presentation rather than a representation, unsanitised by the desire to communicate." To Morgenthaler's consternation Wolfli's explanations of symbolic significance fluctuated from day to day depending on his mood.

Wolfli's art was non-existent outside of the institution, making him a prolific representative of "Brute Art". Once Wolfli realised he had become famous and that his work was sought after, he did certain pictures just to be sold and so allow him to obtain crayons, paper and other drawing materials which he went through at a prodigious rate. The work that went into his collection books was done for himself out of an internal necessity.

The artist Jean Debuffet coined the term "Brute Art" and spent much of his life collecting and curating it. He stated: "We understand by this term [Brute Art] works produced by persons unscathed by artistic culture, where mimicry plays little or no part (contrary to the activities of intellectuals). These artists derive everything - subjects, choice of materials, means of transposition, rhythms, styles of writing etc - from their own depths, and not from the conventions of classical or fashionable art. We are witness here to a completely pure artistic operation, raw, brute and entirely reinvented in all of its phases solely by means of the artists' own impulses."

Another major figure within institutional art was a German psychiatrist called Hans Prinzhorn. He conducted a famous study of institutional art and in 1923 published what has become the most comprehensive text on the subject, "Artistry of the Mentally Ill". Prinzhorn's study compiled over 5000 works by some 450 patients. Out of these he selected a group he called "Schizophrenic Masters".

Prinzhorn said: "All the works possess an affective impression - something that is hard to put into words; a fascinating strangeness. They refer to experience that is sinister to us, a crass discrepancy between unity and integrity... Rich ornamental drawings show tendency towards luxuriant growth - their undeniable charm is due to nothing more than uniform rhythm of strokes. It contains the genuine vitality so easily throttled by convention and training, which thrives only with absence of inhibitions.

"Such drawings appear therefore justly as the bearers of genuine artistic values. They have a quality generally lacking in common stylised art, which we admire in many pictures by neophytes, whether children or primitives... "

## Gerard de Nerval (1808-1855),

Gerard de Nerval was one of the main precursors to Surrealism, a lineage which can be traced back to the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) and which also includes the likes of Rimbaud, Lautremont, Jarry, Appolinaire and Baudelaire. According to his contemporaries Nerval was without doubt insane. His eccentricities became famous. He had a pet lobster named Thibault, which he took for walks in Paris on the end of a blue silk ribbon.

He stated in a letter:

"Why should a lobster be any more ridiculous than a dog? ... or a cat, or a gazelle, or a lion, or any other animal that one chooses to take for a walk? I have a liking for lobsters. They are peaceful, serious creatures. They know the secrets of the sea, they don't bark, and they don't gnaw upon one's monadic privacy like dogs do."

Nerval was also described as suffering from erotomania. His writing features a number of goddess-like female characters, partly constructed out of women he knew and obsessed about. Nerval's "Aurelia: le reve de la vie" was described as "insanity caught in the act - described by a madman at the point of lucidity." During an acute attack of mental illness he would become dangerous to others and himself and was taken to an asylum in Paris directed by a Dr Blanche. Nerval took to drawing and painting and completed a series of frescos on the walls of the hospital. Described as "an iconography of his madness", the paintings became famous among his literary circle but sadly no trace of them exists today. His attacks never lasted more than six months and he would slowly come out of them like a man half awake and still under the influence of a dream.

Nerval famously wrote: "I have never felt any rest in sleep. For a few seconds I am numbed, then a new life begins, freed from the conditions of time and space, and doubtless similar to that state which awaits us after death. Who knows if there is not some link between those two existences and if it is not possible for the soul to unite them now?"

Nerval became impoverished, his condition worsened and eventually he committed suicide. He was found hanging from a window grating near his lodgings one morning. He had pages of his unfinished novel stuffed in his pockets.



# MARTIN

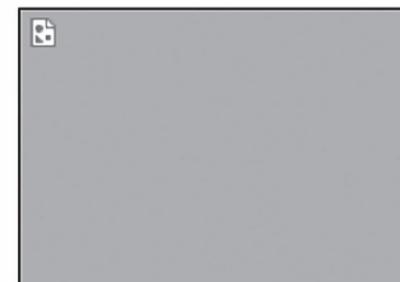
## *Apprehended.*

**Jonathan Martin,**  
Who stands charged with having set  
Fire to York Minster, on the Night  
of the 1st of February instant, was  
**APPREHENDED** near to Hexham,  
on **FRIDAY, the 6th inst., and lodged in  
the House of Correction at that place.**

**CHRIS. JNO. NEWSTEAD,**

Clerk of the Peace for the Liberty of St. Peter, York.  
Residence, York, Saturday Morning, February 7, 1820, Half past Ten o'Clock.

H. Bellamy, Printer, Gazette-Office, York.



## Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890)

Van Gogh’s life has been well documented. There have been two Hollywood movies and even pop music has eulogised his suffering. He was born in 1853; his father was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. He described his home life as “gloomy, cold, sterile”. He left the family home aged 16 and followed a rootless existence. His places of abode were: four years in The Hague, two years in London, ten months in Paris, ten months in London as a vagabond minister, three months in Dordrecht as an assistant librarian, 14 months in Amsterdam as a student in a religious seminary, four months in Brussels in a school for missionaries, 22 months in a village in Belgium as a resident pastor, six months in Brussels studying painting, eight months rest at his father’s home, 22 months in The Hague again, two months wandering around Holland as a vagabond, two years in a mental institution in Asile Nuenen, two months in Paris, 15 months in Arles, one year in a mental institution in Saint Remy and, finally two months in Auvers-Sur-Oise, where he committed suicide.

Epilepsy was in his family and he was diagnosed as suffering from epileptic seizures early on in his life. Other attempts to explain his “illness” refer to the fact that his sister was diagnosed as schizophrenic; that he could have contracted syphilis from his mistress, a prostitute in Antwerp; that he was possibly bi-polar; that he was an absinthe drinker. In his final year in St Remy-en-Provence, he painted 150 oils, 100 drawings, ten watercolours and wrote 750 letters.

Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo: “There are moments when I am shaken by enthusiasm of lunacy as a visionary gift like a Greek oracle... Hours when the veil of time and immutability seem to be raised for a moment.” He adopted an existential belief that one should find meaning and grace in the process of creativity itself without ulterior motive. In another letter to his brother he said: “Fortunately for me, I do not hanker for victory anymore and all that I seek in painting is a way to make life bearable.”

Everything that has been said about Van Gogh sounds shrill in comparison to Artaud’s writing. This is taken from his essay, “Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society”:

“One can speak of the good mental health of Van Gogh who, in his whole adult life, cooked only one of his hands and did nothing else except once to cut off his left ear,

in a world in which every day one eats vagina cooked in green sauce or penis of newborn child whipped and beaten to a pulp, just as it is when plucked from the sex of its mother.

And this is not an image, but a fact abundantly and daily repeated and cultivated throughout the world.

And this, however delirious this statement may seem, is how modern life maintains its old atmosphere of debauchery, anarchy, disorder, delirium, derangement, chronic insanity, bourgeois inertia, psychic anomaly (for it is not man but the world which has become abnormal), deliberate dishonesty and notorious hypocrisy, stingy contempt for everything that shows breeding.

insistence on an entire order based on the fulfillment of a primitive injustice, in short, of organised crime.

Things are going badly because sick consciousness has a vested interest right now in not recovering from its sickness. This is why a tainted society has invented psychiatry to defend itself against the investigations of certain superior intellects whose faculties of divination would be troublesome.

...In comparison with the lucidity of Van Gogh, which is a dynamic force, psychiatry is no better than a den of apes who are themselves obsessed and persecuted and who possess nothing to mitigate the most appalling states of anguish and human suffocation but a ridiculous terminology,

worthy product of their damaged brains...

## Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

Some artists used intoxication to explore the imagination; in many cases this ended badly. For instance Edgar Allen Poe famously said after the death of his young wife, “I went insane, interrupted by terrible periods of sanity.” He was later found delirious wandering the streets of Baltimore at the end of a prodigious drug and alcohol bender, which turned out to be his last. Charles Baudelaire struggled for recognition throughout his career and died in his mother’s arms after drinking and drugging heavily for years. Artaud was a chronic heroin addict throughout his adult life. Looking forward, we could suggest a subset of creatively motivated drug abusers: the acid casualties. We would include Pink Floyd’s Syd Barrett; Peter Green of Fleetwood Mac; Alexander “skip” Spence of Moby Grape; Rocky Ericsson of The 13th Floor Elevators.

We have chosen Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the great English Romantic poet, to represent the class of artists who were maddened by their addiction to drugs and alcohol. Coleridge wrote the “fragment” Kubla Khan immediately after being on the nod, in the midst of an opium-induced dream. The poet claims he would have written more but he was interrupted by some trifling affair and later could not return to his state of reverie. Coleridge, like the other Romantic poets, experimented with ways to unleash the primal imagination. Kubla Khan contains some of the finest lines of poetry ever written in the English language:

“In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.”

Coleridge became completely addicted to laudanum, which is tincture of opium dissolved in wine or brandy. He battled his addiction. He would cloister himself away and do a turkey or travel abroad in the hope of starting anew somewhere else. We have selected the following section from his journals during one such geographical relocation which took place in 1804. The poet had boarded a ship called the “Speedwell” bound for various ports in the Mediterranean.

Coleridge set off in a delicate condition but otherwise full of hope and anticipation. However the cramped conditions of the common hold became an ordeal as he found himself unable to sleep on the narrow bunks provided. The situation worsened when the bilge overflowed causing a foul, mephitic stench. After a while Coleridge was unable to hold down food properly and in desperation resorted to opium once again.

He must have overdone it. A high dosage of opiates over time will anesthetise the user’s alimentary canal and can cause constipation, among other things. After being dosed continually for some time the poet found that his bowels were completely blocked. His journal entry for Tuesday 8th May 1804 says: “Tues night, a dreadful labour, fruitless throes of costiveness - individual faeces, and constricted orifices. Went to bed, dozed & started in great distress.”

There was no privacy on board the Speedwell so Coleridge was forced to suffer his constipated ordeal in front of a group of other passengers. His journal for Wednesday 9th May reads: “a day of horror. Spent the morning sitting over a bucket of hot water, face convulsed, the sweat streaming from me like rain... the surgeon came, went back [to another ship moored nearby] for pipe and syringe & returned - with great difficulty & the exertion of his utmost strength injected the latter. Good God! - what a sensation when the obstruction suddenly shot up!” Poor Coleridge lay with hot water bottle on his belly, “with pains and the sore uneasiness & indescribable desires. Oh what a time! Equal in pain to any before. Anguish took away all disgust and I picked out the hardened matter & after a while was relieved.”

The humiliation of picking fossilised turds out of his arse in public never left Coleridge. He knew it was caused by opium; he dreaded the enema, as the secret sign and punishment for his addiction. The pain of “frightful constipation when the dead filth impales the lower gut” was unlike other illnesses and could not be talked about. Images of unproductivity and false birth haunted his dreams and imagination: “To weep & sweat & moan & scream for parturience of an excrement with such pangs & such convulsions as a woman with an infant heir of mortality.”

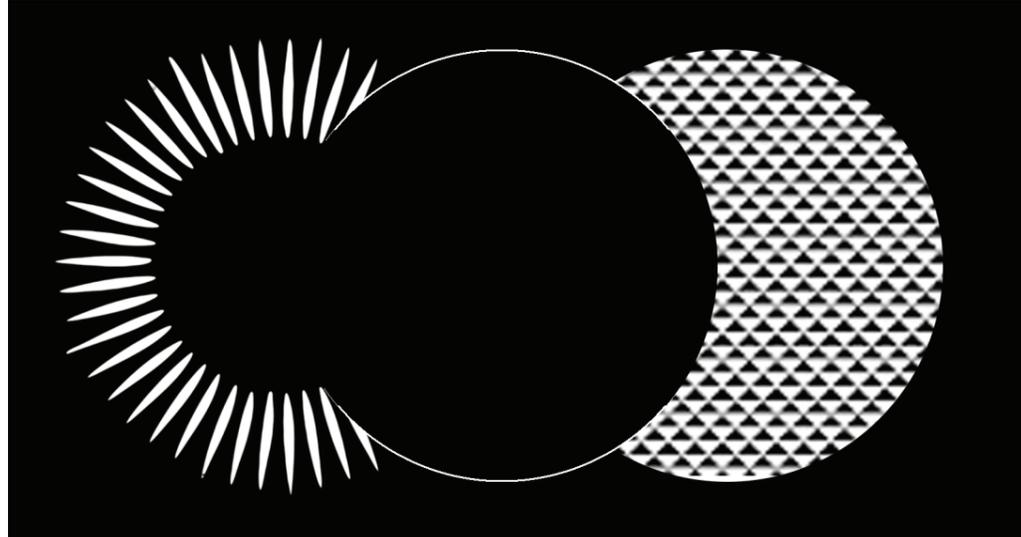
Complete withdrawal was beyond Coleridge. He remained caught up in a circular pattern of relapse and recovery until his death.

## Salvador Dali (1904-1989)

We have included Salvador Dali to represent the acceptable face of madness. In Dali's idealised state of madness he always visualised himself going mad with his ego intact. It is no secret that Dali attempted to cultivate the clinical notion of psychosis, despite not being predisposed towards it. He stated his intention in a 1939 manifesto: "Declaration of Independence of the Imagination and Man's Right to his Own Madness".

He attempted "by every possible means to go mad - or rather, doing everything in my conscious power to welcome and help that madness which I felt clearly intended to take up its abode in my spirit... at the time when I had my first and only hallucination I derived satisfaction from each of the phenomena of my growing psychic abnormality to such a point that everything served to stimulate them. I made desperate efforts to repeat each of them adding each morning a little fuel to my folly."

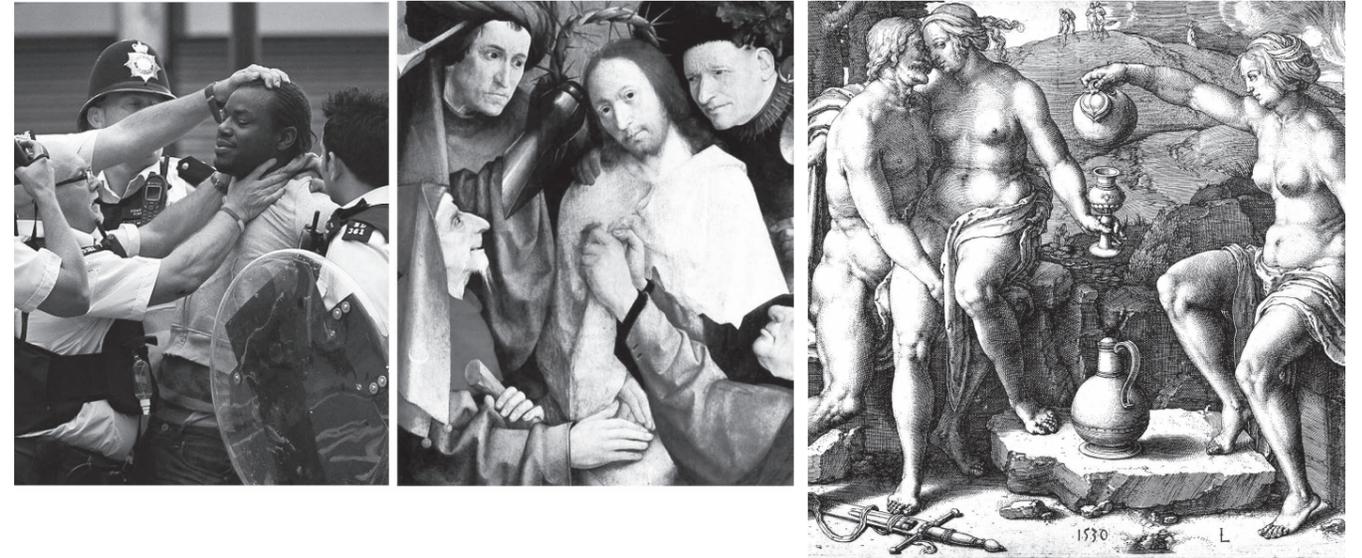
Dali had met Freud and Andre Breton, the head of the Surrealists, and also the psychiatric theorist, Jacques Lacan. Dali called his approach to creativity the "paranoid critical method". An article that appeared in Life magazine said of him: "Dali, an excitable Spanish artist, now scorned by his fellow Surrealists, has succeeded in making deliberate lunacy a paying proposition." Breton also enthusiastically advocated experimenting with psychotic states, but only from the safe distance of his theories and manifestos. He said: "Psychosis equals a guarantee of total authenticity to be found nowhere else... the art of those individuals who are included today in the category of the mentally ill, constitutes a reservoir of moral health." But when Breton came up against the real thing in the persona of Antonin Artaud, it proved to be too much for him or his Surrealist movement.



## Antonin Artaud

"The frequency in the modern world of works of art that explode out of madness no doubt proves nothing about the reason of that world, about the meaning of such works, or even about the relation formed and broken between the real world and the artist's who produced such works. And yet the frequency must be taken seriously, as if it were the insistence of a question: from the time of Holderin and Nerval, the number of writers, painters and musicians who have 'succumbed' to madness has increased; but let us make no mistake here: between madmen and the work of art there has been no accommodation, no more constant exchange, no more communication of languages: their opposition is much more dangerous than formerly; and their comprehension now allows no quarter; theirs is a game of life and death. Artaud's madness does not slip through the fissures of the work of art; his madness is precisely the absence of the work of art, the reiterated presence of that absence, its central void experienced and measured in all its endless dimensions... And Van Gogh, who did not want to ask 'permission from doctors to paint pictures', knew quite well that his work and his madness were incompatible.

"Madness is the absolute break with the work of art; it forms the constitutive moment of abolition, which dissolves in time the truth of the work of art; it draws the exterior edge, the line of dissolution, the contour against the void. Artaud's oeuvre experiences its own absence in madness, but that experience, the fresh courage of that ordeal, all those words hurled against a fundamental absence of language, all that space of physical suffering and terror which surrounds or rather coincides with the void - that is the work of art itself; the sheer cliff over the abyss of the work's absence. Madness is no longer the space of indecision through which it was possible to glimpse the original truth of the work of art, but the decision beyond which this truth ceases irrevocably, and hangs forever over history."



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# ALCHEMY, TORTURE & ANTIPSYCHOTICS

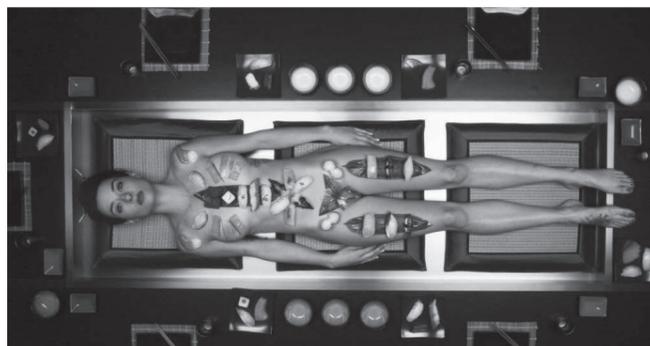
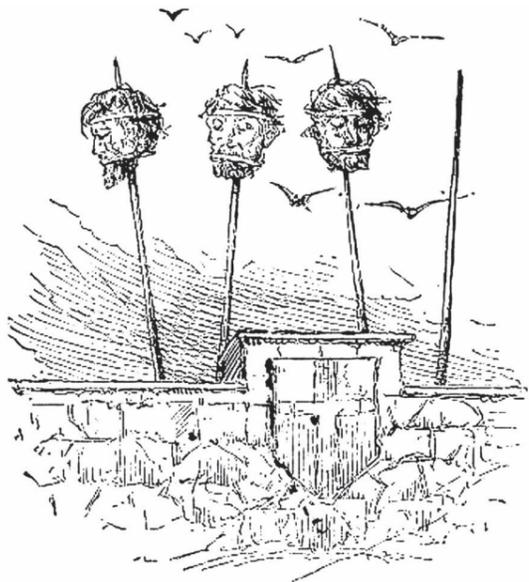
## Traditional cures for madness

**Ailment:** general madness, confusion, amnesia, melancholy (production in the body of too much black bile)

**Treatment:** “mummmia”; dried corpse flesh (lung for instance) sprinkled with powder of myrrh and aloes and vinegar to obtain brilliant red tincture. Rubbed into body.

**Side effects:** none

**Comments:** corpse medicine was widely used throughout history to treat all sorts of ailments, mental and physical. Authentic Egyptian mummmia was much prized, used by kings and VIPs, which resulted in the ransacking of archeological sites (1600s-1800s). Non-Egyptian mummy was also commonly used to treat ailments. It could take the form of smoked and cured strips of human flesh. It could be scavenged from execution sites - known as “gallows fruit” - or it could also be robbed from graves.

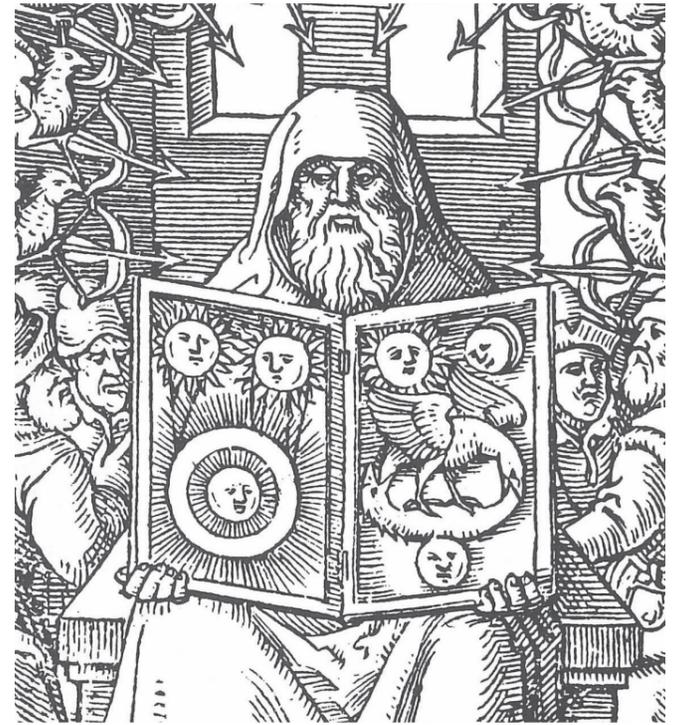
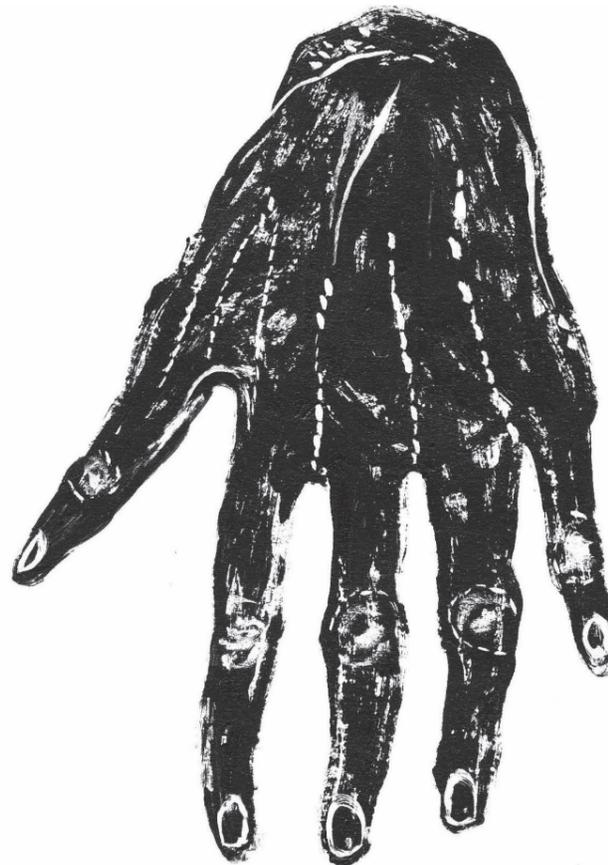


**Ailment:** epilepsy, also known as “Falling Sickness”

**Treatment:** human blood from a living or recently expired person; combined with sleeping out of doors, naked, covered with herbs (preferably in summer).

**Side effects:** none

**Comments:** blood, the *elixir vitae*, was known to be an effective treatment for epilepsy as far back as ancient Rome when sufferers would collect blood from wounded or killed gladiators. Gladiators’ blood was prized because they were fit and strong and died a violent death. Imbibing fresh human blood from executed criminals was recorded as late as 1865 in Germany. The herb garden cure listed above, was promoted by the alchemic doctor, Christopher Irvine (1620-1693)



**Ailment:** general madness

**Treatment:** peony seeds, oak mistletoe and powdered human skull

**Side effects:** none

**Comments:** powdered human skull was a popular treatment for psychological disorders in the 17th century. The moss which grew on unburied skulls was also prized, and could sometimes be collected on old battlefields. The concoction listed above was taken from Nicholas Culpepper’s Pharmacopeia (1649).

Other cures for mental disorders included eating the placenta of a woman who has given birth to male child; mixture of human fat, opium, hemlock; whale’s sperm, human blood, bull marrow incorporated together; crocuses, hyacinth, borage and melissa - kept in the mouth to promote serenity; sucking the milk from a young maiden’s breast on the ninth or tenth septenary, at the waxing of the moon.

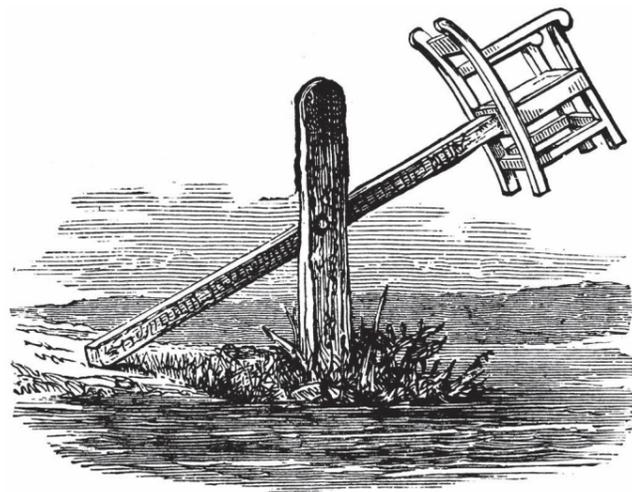
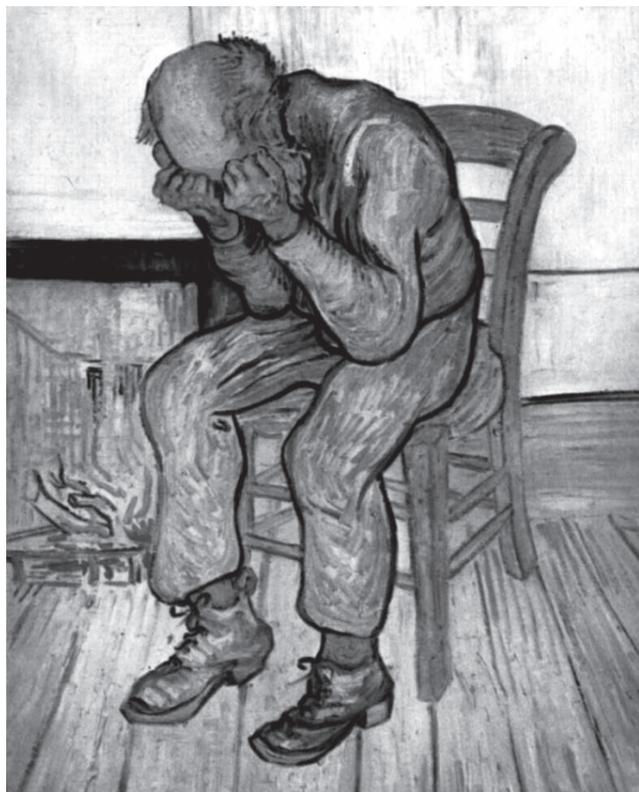
### Early anti-psychotic treatments

**Ailment:** general madness of the brain, delirium, hysteria, epilepsy

**Treatment:** aversion therapies such as being dunked in freezing water; being clapped in irons; wearing of restraints such as a straight-jacket; electric shock treatment.

**Side effects:** seizures resulting in broken bones or vertebrae, loss of teeth, permanent loss of memory or some motor functions.

**Comments:** aversion therapies generally brutalise the patient until they “learn” to behave in a “sane” manner. Their psychosis is generally internalised, rather than “cured”.

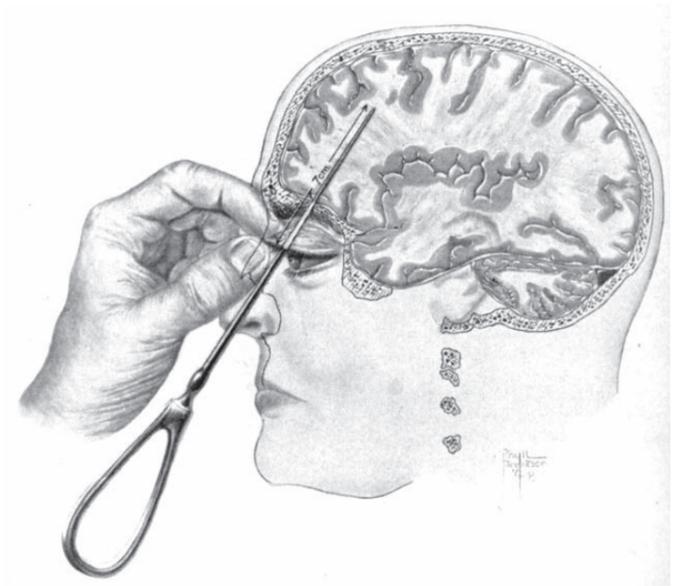


### First generation ant-psychotic drugs

**Chlorpromazine** (trade name, Thorazine, Largactil) was used in the treatment of both acute and chronic psychosis, including schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder and amphetamine-induced psychosis.

**Side effects:** slurred speech, dry mouth, constipation, urinary retention, weight gain, dizziness, memory loss and amnesia. It can also trigger dermatological reactions, loss of libido with long-term risk of osteoporosis in women and impotence in men. Continued use results in significant risk of blindness, research has shown. Also causes “akathisia”, or restlessness: the patient takes small, shuffling steps constantly, despite probably having nowhere to go - known as the “Thorazine shuffle”.

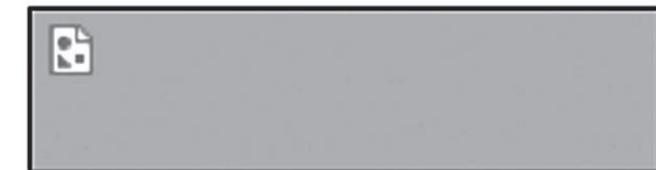
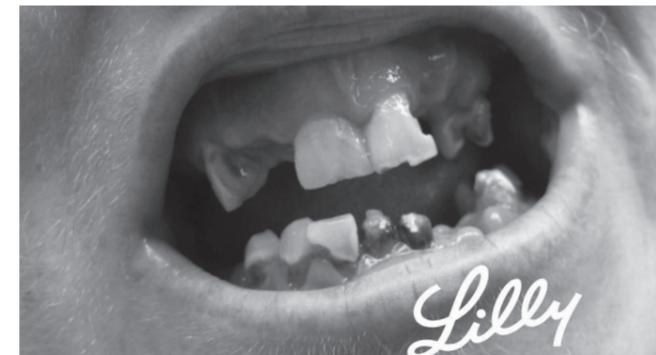
**Comments:** Chlorpromazine was initially developed in 1950 as a surgical anesthetic and used for psychiatric patients because of its calming effects. It was also regarded as a non-permanent pharmacological lobotomy.



**Haloperidol:** sold under the name Haldol in the US and UK, it is also known as Aloperidin, Bioperidolo, Brotopon, Dozic, Duraperidol, Halosten, Keselan, Linton, Peluces, Serenace, Serenase. Haloperidol is used to treat schizophrenia, acute psychotic states and delirium

**Side effects:** “tardive dyskinesia”, a disorder characterised by repetitive, involuntary, purposeless facial movements such as grimacing, tongue protrusion, lip smacking, puckering and pursing of the lips, and rapid eye blinking. Also results in restlessness of muscles and limbs, lethargy, weight gain, stiffness and cramping. Depression, severe enough to cause suicide is quite often seen in long-term treatment.

**Comments:** long-acting injections of Haloperidol can be given to patients who have poor adherence to medication regimens. Haloperidol injection can be ordered by a court at the request of a psychiatrist. Haloperidol was also used in the Soviet Union, where it was produced in large amounts, to punish Soviet dissidents or to break the will of prisoners. Haloperidol has also been used for its sedating effects during the deportations of immigrants by the United States.

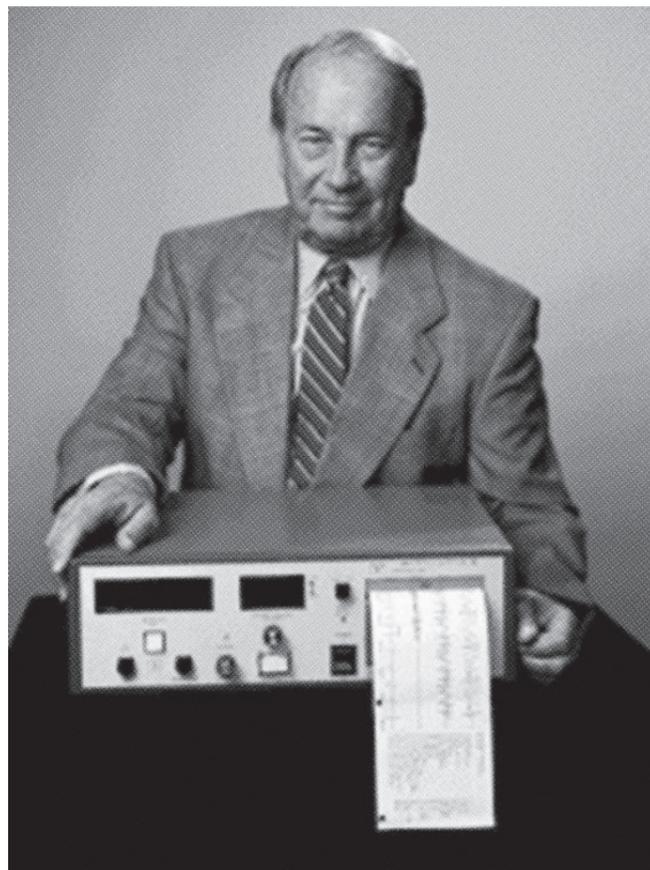


## Second generation ant-psychotic drugs

**Quetiapine** (branded as Seroquel, Xeroquel, Ketipinor) is a so-called “second-generation” anti-psychotic, used to treat schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and severe depression.

**Side effects:** somnolence, or extreme drowsiness, near-sleep. Other common side-effects include: sluggishness, fatigue, dry mouth, sore throat, dizziness, abdominal pain, constipation, upset stomach, inflammation or swelling of the sinuses or pharynx, blurred vision, increased appetite, weight gain.

**Comments:** “second-generation” or “atypical” antipsychotics still block dopamine, but also work on different chemical messengers in the brain, such as serotonin. However, they still have many of the same effects as the older drugs. There is an emerging controversy regarding quetiapine side effects, including some fatalities. There have been approximately 10,000 lawsuits against AstraZeneca for problems ranging from slurred speech and chronic insomnia to death. Annual sales are approximately \$5.7 billion worldwide, with \$2.9 billion in the United States.



**Pimozide** (branded as Orap) is used to treat schizophrenia and chronic psychosis. It is also used to treat Tourette’s syndrome and resistant tics.

**Side effects:** in particular Pimozide is known for causing the unpleasant side effect, akathisia (commonly referred to as restless pacing) in a large percentage of people who take it. Other side effects include: insomnia, excitement, agitation, irritability, tension, anxiety, and nightmares.

**Comments:** Pimozide’s restlessness side effect can be treated with other drugs such as benzodiazepines, particularly clonazepam. Unfortunately, in many cases this side effect can be so intense that even large doses of these drugs are unable to counter it. It can lead to self-destructive behaviour, including attempting suicide.



**Olanzapine** (trade name Zyprexa) is used to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

**Side effects:** may be linked to diabetes; also causes restlessness, dizziness, irritability, facial twitching, weight gain, impaired judgment and motor skills, impaired spatial orientation, dental problems and discoloration of teeth, in some cases can cause heart failure, heart attack, or stroke.

**Comments:** manufactured and marketed by the pharmaceutical firm, Eli Lilly and Company, sales of Zyprexa in 2008 were \$2.2 billion in the US and \$4.7 billion in total. In 2002, British and Japanese regulatory agencies warned that Zyprexa may be linked to diabetes, but even after the FDA issued a similar warning in 2003, Eli Lilly did not publicly disclose their own findings. In 2007 Eli Lilly agreed to pay up to \$500 million to settle 18,000 lawsuits from people who claimed they developed diabetes or other diseases after taking Zyprexa. In 2009 Eli Lilly pled guilty to a criminal misdemeanor charge of illegally marketing Zyprexa for off-label use: although the firm had evidence that it is not effective for dementia, Zyprexa was marketed for elderly Alzheimer’s patients. It in fact increases risk of death in older patients with dementia-related psychosis. Eli Lilly agreed to pay \$1.4 billion.



**Aripiprazole** (trade name Abilify) is described as a third-generation anti-psychotic. It is used to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and used to treat autism in adolescents (aged 13-17). Because it acts on the brain’s dopamine receptors, there is some evidence to suggest that aripiprazole can be used to treat cocaine dependency without affecting other reward mechanisms such as food self-administration.

**Side effects:** nausea, vomiting, constipation, headache, dizziness, inner sense of restlessness/need to move (akathisia), weight gain, headaches, anxiety, insomnia, stiffness, cramps, dermatological conditions.

**Comments:** due to compensatory changes at dopamine, serotonin, adrenergic and histamine receptor sites in the central nervous system, a rapid dosage reduction of aripiprazole results in acute withdrawal symptoms. These include, nausea and vomiting, nervousness, dizziness, headache, anxiety and excessive non-stop crying. Coming off aripiprazole can also cause acute psychosis, which has led some to suggest that the withdrawal process might itself be schizo-mimetic, producing schizophrenia-like symptoms, indicating a possible pharmacological origin of mental illness in a yet unknown percentage of patients.

Bristol-Myers Squibb was penalised in the US for promoting the use of Aripiprazole to treat dementia-related psychosis in geriatric patients.



**"Bomb, Bomb, Bomb for mental health"**  
**"Kill, Kill, Kill for inner peace"**  
**"Turn Illness Into a Weapon"**  
**"Therapy through violence"**

SPK (Sozialistisches Patientenkollektiv) is a "pro-illness" group founded by Dr Wolfgang Huber at Heidelberg University in 1968. The group members were mental patients, and were considered by the media to be a leftist Marxist group. A number of radical left-wing groups had sprung up in Germany at that time, the most famous being the Baader-Meinhof gang or Red Army Faction as it later became known

SPK forwarded the view that the "capitalist performance of the Federal Republic was sick within itself and was thus producing mentally sick people which could only be changed by violent revolution."

In 1970, Huber and 120 patients were thrown out of the clinics they were using. The patients revolted, occupied offices and went on a hunger strike, until they were provided with a few rooms. After further revolts and demands for blank prescription pads, the university lost patience with the situation and kicked Huber out. There were several attempts to evict SPK; after one patient committed suicide the group released a communique titled "Suicide equals murder - starvation equals murder".

Huber and some patients were arrested in 1971, prompting the group to release another communique titled "Turn Illness into a Weapon". The group's workshops included crime, guerilla activities and sex magic. Interaction between SPK and Baader-Meinhof group was widely suspected, though SPK denied any connection.

SPK actions and activities included, setting fire to the State Psychiatric Clinic near Hiedleberg; attempting to blow up a train; robbing banks; shooting and killing policemen. SPK members carried out their best-known action under another name. On April 27, 1975, six people who called themselves the "Holger Meins Commando" seized the West German embassy in Stockholm, resulting in the deaths of the West German economic and military attachés.

SPK was unique among radical left-wing groups because of its mental illness component. SPK, like RAF, saw society as so corrupted that it should be destroyed allowing something better to take its place. Following that ideology, anybody deemed to be mentally ill by such a society was completely justified in revolting.

Below we've reprinted a section from Huber's website, which provides an update of SPK plans and strategies. More information is available at [www.spkpfh.de](http://www.spkpfh.de)

The secret of illness is human species  
Our theory of revolution (outline)

"the warfare against the medical doctors is the strategic main point, if that is being missed no end of oppression and no beginning of liberation in not any of the liberation movements will ever be feasible, no utopathy, that is: no human species, ever. Well then, everything forming a unified whole cast, namely: principle, method, and aim. That's what we call Diapathics, because it is a materialistic dialectics, indeed, for the first time a materialistic dialectics: materialistic, because it is pre-set in the substance of the dynamics of illness (illness substance, matter), and the human species that is to be brought about is the energetic field of tension belonging to it, the strength of illness being the driving force (catalyzing agents) that is going to happen with it, recognizable from its influences and effects that are bringing about a new reality, blasting off the existing reality. That's our theory of the revolution. And the practice, the pathopractice?: We all are already, as different as we are amongst ourselves, most closely bound to each other, at least as close as illness is bound to any single one of us. That's the strongest binding force. Who attempts to bring about separation, will be experiencing it."



# “ If you talk to God, you are praying; If God talks to you, you have schizophrenia.”

Thomas Szasz, statement and manifesto

## 1. Myth of mental illness

Mental illness is a metaphor (metaphorical disease). The word “disease” denotes a demonstrable biological process that affects the bodies of living organisms (plants, animals, and humans). The term “mental illness” refers to the undesirable thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of persons. Classifying thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as diseases is a logical and semantic error, like classifying the whale as a fish. As the whale is not a fish, mental illness is not a disease. Individuals with brain diseases (bad brains) or kidney diseases (bad kidneys) are literally sick. Individuals with mental diseases (bad behaviors), like societies with economic diseases (bad fiscal policies), are metaphorically sick. The classification of (mis)behavior as illness provides an ideological justification for state-sponsored social control as medical treatment.

## 2. Separation of psychiatry and the state

If we recognise that “mental illness” is a metaphor for disapproved thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, we are compelled to recognise as well that the primary function of psychiatry is to control thought, mood, and behavior. Hence, like church and state, psychiatry and the state ought to be separated by a “wall.” At the same time, the State ought not to interfere with mental health practices between consenting adults. The role of psychiatrists and mental health experts with regard to law, the school system, and other organisations ought to be similar to the role of clergymen in those situations.

## 3. Presumption of competence

Because being accused of mental illness is similar to being accused of crime, we ought to presume that psychiatric “defendants” are mentally competent, just as we presume that criminal defendants are legally innocent. Individuals charged with criminal, civil, or interpersonal offenses ought never to be treated as incompetent solely on the basis of the opinion of mental health experts. Incompetence ought to be a judicial determination and the “accused” ought to have access to legal representation and a right to trial by jury.

## 4. Abolition of involuntary mental hospitalisation

Involuntary mental hospitalisation is imprisonment under the guise of treatment; it is a covert form of social control that subverts the rule of law. No one ought to be deprived of liberty except for a criminal offense, after a trial by jury guided by legal rules of evidence. No one ought to be detained against his will in a building called “hospital,” or in any other medical institution, or on the basis of expert opinion. Medicine ought to be clearly distinguished and separated from penology, treatment from punishment, the hospital from the prison. No person ought to be detained involuntarily for a purpose other than punishment or in an institution other than one formally defined as a part of the state’s criminal justice system.

## 5. Abolition of the insanity defense

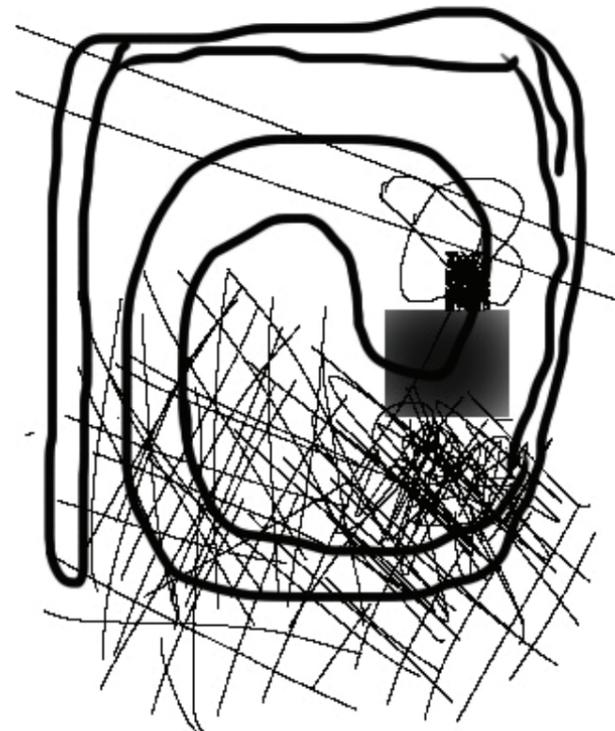
Insanity is a legal concept involving the courtroom determination that a person is not capable of forming conscious intent and, therefore, cannot be held responsible for an otherwise criminal act. The opinions of experts about the “mental state” of defendants ought to be inadmissible in court, exactly as the opinions of experts about the “religious state” of defendants are inadmissible. No one ought to be excused of lawbreaking or any other offense on the basis of so-called expert opinion rendered by psychiatric or mental health experts. Excusing a person of responsibility for an otherwise criminal act on the basis of inability to form conscious intent is an act of legal mercy masquerading as an act of medical science. Being merciful or merciless toward lawbreakers is a moral and legal matter, unrelated to the actual or alleged expertise of medical and mental health professionals.

## 6. Abolition of psychiatric slavery

In 1798, Americans were confronted with the task of abolishing slavery, peacefully and without violating the rights of others. They refused to face that daunting task and we are still paying the price of their refusal. In 1998, we Americans are faced with the task of abolishing psychiatric slavery, peacefully and without violating the rights of others. We accept that task and are committed to working for its successful resolution. As Americans before us have eventually replaced involuntary servitude (chattel slavery) with contractual relations between employers and employees, we seek to replace involuntary psychiatry (psychiatric slavery) with contractual relations between care givers and clients.



FUCK THE POPE



Thomas Szasz March 1998



**An Excerpt from Terrence McKenna's 'Eros and Eschaton' lecture at the University of Washington 1994**

How many psychiatric residents have ever seen an undrugged schizophrenic? Very, very few. Because the very first thing that happens is, for the convenience of physicians and the nursing staff, some outlandish drug is brought into the picture, which then deflects this healing process from ever reaching any kind of natural conclusion. Schizophrenia is just a catch-all term for forms of mental behaviour that we don't understand. In the 19th century, there was a term "melancholia", which we would now call bipolar depression, so forth and so on. But all forms of sadness, unhappiness, maladaptation, so forth and so on, were poured into this label "melancholia".

Schizophrenia is a similar thing. I can remember an experience I had years ago, it was in the Tolman Library at the University of California, which is the psych library, and I was looking up some drug or something, and I just saw a book and I pulled it off the shelf, a book about schizophrenia. And it said, the typical schizophrenic lives in a world of twilight imagining, marginal to his society, incapable of holding a regular job, these people live on the fringes, content to drift in their own self-created value systems. That's it! That's it! Now I understand! We have no tradition of shamanism. We have no tradition of journeying into these mental worlds. We are terrified of madness. We fear it because the Western mind is a house of cards, and the people who built that house of cards know that, and they are terrified of madness.

Tim Leary once said – or I gave him credit for saying; he later told me he never said it – but whoever said it, this was a brilliant statement; someone once said, "LSD is a psychedelic substance which occasionally causes psychotic behaviour in people who have not taken it." – right? And I would bet you that more people have exhibited psychotic behaviour from not taking LSD, but just thinking about it, than ever exhibited it from taking it – certainly in my family. I watched my parents both go psychotic from the mere fact that LSD existed; they would never have taken it. There is a great phobia about the mind: the Western mind is very queasy when first principles are questioned. Rarer than corpses in this society are the untreated mad, because we can't come to terms with that.

A shaman is someone who swims in the same ocean as the schizophrenic, but the shaman has thousands and thousands of years of sanctioned technique and tradition to draw upon. In a traditional society, if you exhibited "schizophrenic" tendencies, you are immediately drawn out of the pack and put under the care and tutelage of master shamans. You are told, You are special. Your abilities are very central to the health of our society. You will cure. You will prophesy. You will guide our society in its most fundamental decisions. Contrast this with what a person exhibiting schizophrenic activity in our society is told. They're told, You don't fit in. You are becoming a problem, You don't pull your own weight. You are not of equal worth to the rest of us. You are sick. You have to go to the hospital. You have to be locked up. You are on a par with prisoners and lost dogs in our society. So that treatment of schizophrenia makes it incurable. Imagine if you were slightly odd, and the solution were to take you and put you – lock you into a place where everyone was seriously mad. That would drive anyone mad! If you've ever been in a madhouse, you know that it's an environment calculated to make you crazy and to keep you crazy. This would never happen in an aboriginal or traditional society.

I wrote a book, I mean this has to be the wrap-up, because we're over time – but I wrote a book called The Archaic Revival; I signed it tonight for some of you. The idea there is that we have gone sick by following a path of untrammelled rationalism, male dominance, attention to the visible surface of things, practicality, bottom-line-ism. We have gone very, very sick. And the body politic, like any body, when it feels itself to be sick, it begins to produce antibodies, or strategies for overcoming the condition of dis-ease. And the 20th century is an enormous effort at self-healing. Phenomena as diverse as surrealism, body piercing, psychedelic drug use, sexual permissiveness, jazz, experimental dance, rave culture, tattooing, the list is endless. What do all these things have in common? They represent various styles of rejection of linear values. The society is trying to cure itself by an archaic revival, by a reversion to archaic values. So when I see people manifesting sexual ambiguity, or scarifying themselves, or showing a lot of flesh, or dancing to syncopated music, or getting loaded, or violating ordinary canons of sexual behaviour, I applaud all of this; because it's an impulse to return to what is felt by the body – what is authentic, what is archaic – and when you tease apart these archaic impulses, at the very centre of all these impulses is the desire to return to a world of magical empowerment of feeling.

And at the centre of that impulse is the shaman: stoned, intoxicated on plants, speaking with the spirit helpers, dancing in the moonlight, and vivifying and invoking a world of conscious, living mystery. That's what the world is. The world is not an unsolved problem for scientists or sociologists. The world is a living mystery: our birth, our death, our being in the moment – these are mysteries. They are doorways opening on to unimaginable vistas of self-exploration, empowerment and hope for the human enterprise. And our culture has killed that, taken it away from us, made us consumers of shoddy products and shoddier ideals. We have to get away from that; and the way to get away from it is by a return to the authentic experience of the body – and that means sexually empowering ourselves, and it means getting loaded, exploring the mind as a tool for personal and social transformation.

The hour is late; the clock is ticking; we will be judged very harshly if we fumble the ball. We are the inheritors of millions and millions of years of successfully lived lives and successful adaptations to changing conditions in the natural world. Now the challenge passes to us, the living, that the yet-to-be-born may have a place to put their feet and a sky to walk under; and that's what the psychedelic experience is about, is caring for, empowering, and building a future that honours the past, honours the planet and honours the power of the human imagination. There is nothing as powerful, as capable of transforming itself and the planet, as the human imagination. Let's not sell it straight. Let's not whore ourselves to nitwit ideologies. Let's not give our control over to the least among us. Rather, you know, claim your place in the sun and go forward into the light. The tools are there; the path is known; you simply have to turn your back on a culture that has gone sterile and dead, and get with the programme of a living world and a re-empowerment of the imagination.

Thank you very, very much.



# Interview: Antonin Artaud

I set off in search of Antonin Artaud to interview him for the magazine. It was not easy. Antonin Artaud was nowhere to be found. Wherever I asked I was told that he had not been seen for a long time. And yet I was certain that, after acting in Tarakanova, Antonin Artaud was back in Paris. I had given up all hope of finding him when, one day, in a bar near the Place Clichy, I heard a familiar voice behind me. I turned around: it was Antonin Artaud. I was delighted.

“You! It can't be true!” I exclaimed in surprise. “Now I've got you, my dear fellow, I won't let you go until you let me interview you.”

Antonin Artaud smiled. “Do you really think that what I will say will interest your readers?”

But of course, otherwise I wouldn't have chased after you.

**NM:** The theme of our magazine is madness. Can you tell us about your time incarcerated in asylums, perhaps under the charge of the psychiatrist, Gaston Ferdiere?

**AA:** I thought a lot about love: I dreamt that I had some daughters of my soul, who loved me like daughters, not as lovers – me, their pre-pubescent, lustful, salacious, erotic and incestuous father; and chaste also, so chaste that it makes him dangerous. I really do not believe that I have been affected by the least shadow of mental disturbance.

**NM:** Were you not tortured by psychiatric butchers?

**AA:** There were times when, faced with so many assaults, my actual brain felt like it would go up in smoke as under the action of one of those machines created to suck up filth from the floor.

**NM:** During the war years you must have suffered terribly.

**AA:** The war? In 1933 I traveled to Berlin where I saw upheavals preempted by the rise of the Nazis. The streets were full of admirably dressed beggars, some of whom must have been the former middle classes. I met Hitler at the Romanisches Café in Berlin. He told me about his plan to impose Hitlerism on Europe as gratuitously as hip-hip-hoorayism, and I told him that he was mad... mad to lead people by ideas rather than action. And of course we had a brawl about it. I dedicated a book to Hitler in fact.

[a pause and then, exclaiming]

Wait a minute – what is this??!! These are not my words. This is all completely fabricated pigshit. These words are completely false and evil, the words of an imposter! Answer me!!

**NM:** this is you ...

**AA:** All writing is garbage. People who come out of nowhere to try and put into words any part of what goes on in their minds are pigs.

**NM:** and this ...

**AA:** I would like to write a book which would drive men mad, which would be like an open door leading them where they would never have consented to go, in short, a door that opens onto reality.

**NM:** Do you remember saying that?

**AA:** Insidious and most devious mind-control. This is filth and I –

**NM:** Do you know about the short story, "Je suis le plus malade de surrealists"? Anais Nin wrote it about her relationship with you. It was published at the time when you were at the asylum at Rodez. She took the dialogue in that story from a textbook on schizophrenia. She later declared that the speeches were typical of the things you had said to her.

**AA:** Did she?

**NM:** Certainly. A textbook on schizophrenia – that's kind of worse than making stuff up, don't you think.

**AA:** She is one of my daughters of the heart to be born. I forgive her writing such a book. I have written books that are absolutely impossible to read and that nobody has ever read from end to end, not even their author. That reminds me, I want my fucking royalties – well overdue I think – at least 50-80,000 pre war francs. Have you any money?

**NM:** No, not really

**AA:** Heroin?

**NM:** What?

**AA:** Have you got any heroin?

**NM:** Of course not.

**AA:** Who are you? Where are you from?

**NM:** England; we are based in London

**AA:** England will be the first place to sink into the sea.

**NM:** Really? Our magazine is sold on the streets by homeless people.

**AA:** Modern life is made up of homeless people, people starving to death, madmen, maniacs, imbeciles, and people made desperate by the errors of life.

**NM:** Can you tell our readers anything about the Theatre of Cruelty?

**AA:** They always want to hear "about" this or that. They want an objective conference on theatre ... or on the plague. And I want to give them the experience itself, the plague itself. So they will be terrified and awoken. I want to awaken them. They do not realise they are dead. Their death is total, like deafness, blindness. This is agony, I portrayed. Mine, yes, and everyone who is alive.

**NM:** Brilliant. Can you say anything about how you would design a production of your theatre today?

**AA:** Can you get me some heroin? I'll tell you exactly how I'd do it.

**NM:** OK, I might be able to.

**AA:** Let's go.



# THE PSYCHOTIC PSYCHIATRIST

THE WELL KNOWN PSYCHIATRIST DR. KATRINA VON KRINCKLE-KUNST HAS HERSELF SUCCEMDED TO THE ALL POWERFUL EFFECTS OF SCHIZOAFFECTIVE ENHANCED CAPITAL PSYCHOTIC SEXUAL DELUSION... HERE WE CAN SEE EXCERPTS FROM HER TREATMENT SESSIONS RECORDED BY THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGIST DR. ROBERT LAING

WHAT? I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU ARE SAYING TO ME... DON'T YOU SEE WHAT HAS REALLY HAPPENED? THIS IS INSANE! TO SAY I AM CRAZY, WHEN ALL ABOUT ME IS SO CLEAR. IT'S SO OBVIOUS YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS DELUIDED, WHO CAN NOT ACCEPT REALITY, AS YOU ARE TRANSFERRING YOUR DARK GUILT ON TO ME. CLEARLY YOU ARE JEALOUS OF MY SUPERIOR MIND AND MY INTELLECTUAL RIGOR...



WHAT THE FUCK! YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT I'M CRAZY!



I'M NOT CRAZY! YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS FUCKING CRAZY! FUCK YOU!!! YOU MOTHER FUCKING STUPID IMBECILE. YOUR DIAGNOSIS IS TOTALLY PATHETIC, I CAN SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE, THE VAST UNDERLYING REALITY... BUT YOU, YOU ONLY SEE THE SURFACE... I CAN SEE INTO THE DEPTHS, INTO THE DARK BOTTOMLESS POOLS THAT HOLD THE TRUTH, THE SECRET FORCES THAT CONTROL OUR TERRIBLE INNER NATURES...



...OH GOD I WISH I'D NEVER HEARD THEM SPEAK... THEIR WORDS HAUNT ME NOW... THEIR LIPS MOVED AND SPOKE TO ME ABOUT THE SUFFERING THEY ARE BEING TORMENTED BY DAY AFTER DAY... THEY CAN ONLY FIND RELIEF FROM THE DOUBLE INFLICTION OF CAPITALISM'S MERCILESS DRIVE AND THE CAPITALISATION ENFORCED ON THEM BY PSYCHIATRY... THEY WANT REVENGE AND EMANCIPATION... THEY DEMAND TOTAL FREEDOM TO ADDRESS THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF SLAVERY AND TORTURE... THEY TOLD ME THEY WANTED TO HELP FREE ME... BY... OH GOD... BY FUCKING MY DEAD BROTHER... MAKE THEM STOP!

JESUS CHRIST! I FEEL LIKE I'VE JUST VOMITED INTO MY OWN VOID... EUGH... AND THEN THE ANUSES BEGAN TO LAUGH AT ME, MOCKING ME FOR MY PART IN MY OWN TORTURE... THEY SAID THEY KNEW IT WAS TRUE, THAT I WANTED TO MODEL MY OWN EXCREMENT INTO IDOLS OF MY OWN ANAL DEATH... AND THAT BRANCUSI WAS MY TRUE FATHER, THAT HIS FORMS WERE THE KEYS TO UNLOCKING MY INNER DEMONS... THE ANUSES BEGAN TO SCREAM, CALLING FOR HIS SCULPTURES TO ENTER MY ANUS - IN AND OUT, HARDER AND HARDER, FORCING THEM DEEP WITHIN ME... THEY YELLED AT ME... THEY KNEW THIS WAS THE TRUTH I HAD BEEN TRYING TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM... THAT UNLESS I FOLLOWED THEIR COMMANDS... I WOULD... KILL MYSELF!



THEY BEGAN TO WHISPER TO ME, DESCRIBING HOW I WOULD DROWN MYSELF IN A PIT FILLED WITH THEIR STINKING SHIT!!! HOW IT WOULD FILL MY LUNGS AND CHOKE THE LIFE FROM ME... THEY KEPT GOING... AND GOING... THEY SAID THERE WAS WORSE TO COME, THAT I WOULD BE RE-BORN AS ONE OF THEM, SPEWING SHIT FROM MY MOUTH FOREVER...



AND THE PENISES... OH THE HORROR... THEY TOLD ME THAT THEY WERE MY TRUE MASTERS, THAT I KNEW THAT I MUST OBEY AND WORSHIP THEM... THAT I SHOULD TAKE THEM INTO ME AT ANY AND ALL OPPORTUNITY, THAT I SHOULD BE SHOWERED BY A THOUSAND EJACULATING HARD SHAFTS EVERYDAY... THAT NO MATTER WHAT, THEY WOULD BE MY SINGULAR OBSESSION AND THAT AS I HAD REJECTED MY FATHER'S PENIS, I WOULD HAVE TO SURRENDER TO ALL AND ANY PENISES THAT CAME NEAR ME... OH GOD NO!!!



...IT'S ONLY THAT MY PATIENT'S GENITALS BEGAN TO TALK TO ME DURING THE SESSIONS... THE PENISES, YAGINAS AND... GULP! OH MY GOD, THE... ANUSES... THEY BEGAN TO TELL ME THE HORRIBLE TRUTH ABOUT THE DISGUSTING EFFECTS THAT CAPITALISM AND PSYCHIATRY ARE HAVING ON THE SUB-CONSCIOUS MINDS OF THEIR WRETCHED AND INSANE HOSTS. HOW IT WAS ONLY THEY THAT COULD EXPRESS THEIR REAL DESIRES. THAT TALKING TO ME WOULD BE THE ONLY WAY THEY COULD FIND ANY LASTING PEACE!

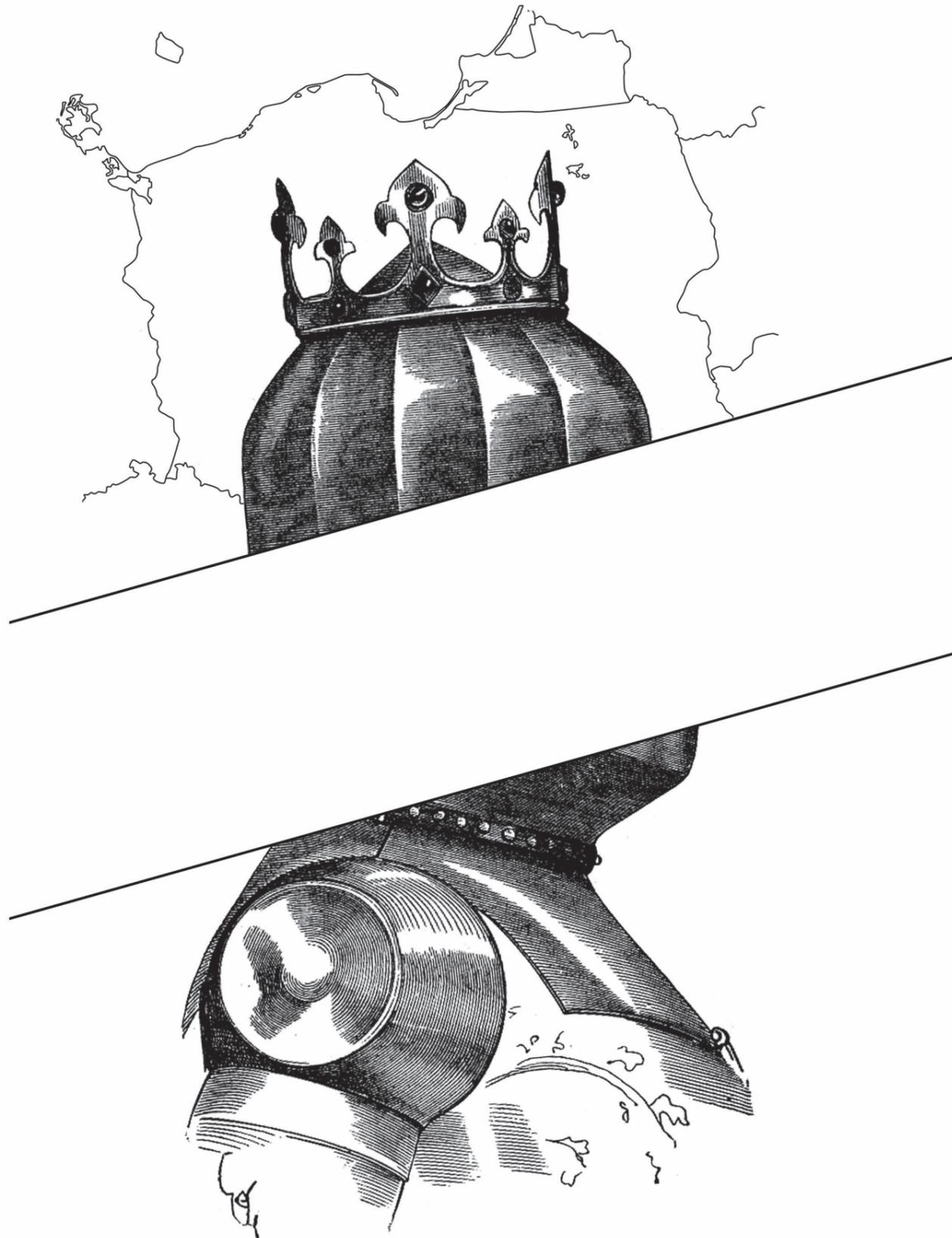


EURGH... THE YAGINAS SAID THEY LONGED TO BE CONSUMED BY GORILLAS FROM ANCIENT FORESTS... AS THEIR HOST'S MOTHERS WATCHED ON WHILE THEY MASTURBATED AND DEFECATED INTO THE GRAVES OF THEIR FATHERS... OH MY GOD... THEY TOLD ME THAT THIS IS WHAT I SECRETLY WANTED TOO...

AS THE ILLNESS INTENSIFIES, THE HALLUCINATIONS INCREASE AND THE GOOD DOCTOR BEGINS TO GO PERMANENTLY INSANE!!!



FUCK YOU! YOU DO NOTHING BUT TRY TO SHIT IN MY CUNT... YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A WORMING LOWLY MAGGOT WITH ONLY SICKNESS AND STUPIDITY TO OFFER THE WORLD... YOU SHOULD BE BANISHED FROM MY MIND... I WILL NOT BE YOUR SLAVE, AND I WILL NOT WORSHIP YOU AND YOUR PATHETIC DESIRES I CAN DO WHAT I WANT... I HAVE ALL OF THE POWER AND CONTROL I NEED NOW!!!



## Monday

I went into hospital today. Not for any reason, I just like it there. That said though, standards are falling. Time was when you could fake certain symptoms and have people running around all over the place in no time. These days the queues are ridiculous. On the plus side neither the guard nor the nurses who threw me out before were about, so admission was easy. It eludes me why people watch hospital dramas on television when the real thing is so close by. Play your cards right and they'll even come and get you. I find casualty a bit melodramatic so I walked upstairs to one of the areas where people are given bad news, sat on a chair and looked terminal.

## Tuesday

Well the game's up, near enough. A note on my door (which I ate) says they are coming in 28 days. Why 28, I wondered. Are they coming through the mail? I don't mind. At least it's an appointment. Suddenly I have a future. It's all go on the home front, the water has been stopped as well. Some years ago in a public place someone told me "they" couldn't do that. Well evidently they can. Unless there is a rogue element somewhere, acting on its own agenda and without authority. Unlikely, I think. Now all my hydration will be down to the weather.

## Wednesday

There is little in the way of distraction now. The screaming people in the flat opposite are silent, and without water the heron will not come. Strangely though, even stripped of such basic amenities the pipes and walls are full of dull and inexplicable sounds. As a kind of game I have taken to hitting the walls with a large hammer each time they speak. I say game, it soon became more serious than that. It evolved into a kind of dramatic stand-off, each of us waiting for the other's move. You could cut the atmosphere with a knife. And after a while, I did.

## Thursday

There was some kind of major sporting success today, whether locally or nationally, I couldn't say, but those who place their emotions willingly in the hands of strangers were out in force, lowing like a herd. I passed unnoticed through the festivities until one of them grabbed me and attempted to involve me in some kind of heathen dance. Instantly I threw myself to the ground and released a batch of urine I had been saving for an emergency. Horrified and full of disdain the herd recoiled as I reclined triumphant. Behold, thought I, this is the true nature of victory.

## Friday

Perched on the pavement, minding my own, a sheet of newspaper blows against my leg so naturally I am inclined to read it since it has assumed the form of a message. Within its words I learn that a man who has committed a random act of violence following a slight misunderstanding which leaves his victim needing constant care has been imprisoned for a relatively short space of time. Why tell me? What can I do?

## Saturday

I wonder what I look like. It can't be good. People are looking at me in that way that suggests I have crossed the line from studied low-life invisibility into the unkempt arena of the remarkable freak. This has its advantages though. I went to the shop, picked up a loaf and said, "This is mine," to the owner and left. He said nothing then, or later when I returned with the crusts.

## Sunday

There is a limit to how much you can drink by walking around in the rain with your tongue out, especially this far from the equator. Mercifully under the old bridge there is a leak that never stops. I have seen it in high summer and wondered if the ancient structure was watered by some secret source of its own. Whatever, July's oddity is now February's salvation. Like a meal in a bag, with fluid added I am finally ready to be consumed.

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Brendan Quick, "Mark Shed, his work  
and thesis was about pseudo-madness?  
He married his dog (that made The Sun  
frontpage), dressed as an elf etc etc...  
wonder what happened to him... last  
heard walks Essex in the middle of the  
night dressed identically with five or six  
friends, they never say anything."

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The Cosmic Envelope

