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Reclaim Your Mind : Manifesto
An Urgent Message for all those who have or are in danger of
being labelled mentally ill
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"compassionate" like their psychiatrist — if they are lucky). Enough despair, enough division! We are here, the "insane", the "angry", "the unstable", the "chaotic", the "depressed" …

The saying "none of us is free as long as some are not free" seems more true than ever in these oppressive times. We can't expect to find joy and wholeness without changing our environment, without changing the very structures of reality. Thus any real, profound healing will necessarily involve a healing of the planet and society as a whole.

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that something inside of each one of us which intuitively know what's the best direction to take. This may mean turning off, at least for a while, all the background noise of civilization, like television, radio, newspapers and eventually friends. All our conditioned fears, desires and ideas of our limitations will not go away at the second we isolate ourselves but we may find meditation valuable to help us in this process.

> *Two roads diverged in the woods. I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference.*
>
> **- Robert Frost**

As far as we know, we only have one life on this planet. Why should we waste it trying to adapt ourselves to the always more demanding expectations of this insane society when there is so much to live, explore, experience and discover?

Changes always come from below and the old structures of oppression will inexorably fall when we stop relying on them. We will then finally be able to create a new culture of diversity and solidarity where everyone is accepted (and loved!) for who they are!

The good news is that any change we make in society through our actions is likely to have much more impact on our lives than any treatment done alone at home! This doesn't mean we have to create a new class of professionals who will tell others how to live, that's the very thing we are opposing! Just like the position of a teacher over his students automatically prevents any teaching to occur, the authority of a healer rules out any real healing. Effective healing is non-hierarchical, with all individuals healing and being healed at the same time.

We have been staying alone for too long! After too many years of isolation and alienation, some have given up the hope that someone will one day truly understand them (as opposed to just being

Following our path

Our mind is self-created, it has developed over the years as we were bouncing on "reality" and other human beings. There is no rigid structure that every brain follows, even if some models are useful to understand how we think. As a consequence, we all have completely different potentials and shortcomings. Instead of focusing on our "problems", wouldn't it be more sensible to promote our gifts, skills, desires, sensitivities, so that each one of us make the most of their potential during their limited lifetime, no matter how different they are from the current "norms"?

The norms are and have always been illusory anyway. Quantum physics tell us we are the co-creators of the universe, that the only fact of observing an object changes its nature and that our "subjective" mind has a much more important role in reality than most materialists think. The way we see "reality" and ourselves has more to do with our mental environment ("the Matrix") than with any kind of materialist reality or genetic predispositions. If we are able to somehow go beyond the mental structures of civilization, if we are able to transcend them, then everything becomes possible!

> *Man is ignorant of the nature of his own being and powers. Even his idea of his limitations is based on experience of the past, and every step in his progress extends his empire. There is therefore no reason to assign theoretical limits to what he may be, or what he may do.*
>
> **- Aleister Crowley**

To follow our path, we must first know what we want. We must learn to listen to our inner voice, our unconscious, our true will,

Introduction to "Reclaim Your Mind"

We are pleased to publish this anonymous text which appeared on the old website of the 325 Collective in 2003 and which was re-edited and published online in 2011. We don't agree with this text entirely and are pessimistic about the prospect of a wide-spread 'healing' of Earth or the masses of society – as has always been the case, minorities will throw off the chains of social obligations, will seize their own life trajectory and wilfully define themselves, finding each other and creating unique moments of beauty, life and freedom. Maybe in the ruins of techno-industrial mass society a widespread healing will occur. For the time being, we aim to liberate ourselves from the cage we've been born into, alongside as many others as possible. This means overcoming the limiting constraints of our mental patterns and freeing ourselves from the self-fulfilling diagnoses of mental illness, to glory in our inscrutable uniqueness and our dysfunctionality – our refusal to be working, integrated components of the megamachine.

The zine 'Beyond Amnesty' (downloadable from 325.nostate.net) is also well worth reading, a piercing and personal attack on psychiatry and this prison society that drives us to self-destruction. Anti-civilisation thinkers such as Chellis Glendinning, John Zerzan and Derrick Jensen have traced the pathology of modern society to its root in domestication, and the growing patterns of control, repression, abuse and self-destruction. It will take the deliberate violation of the control patterns instilled by the tranquilising institutions of society to reclaim our wilful self-empowered autonomy.

We remember the suicides and drug abuse and say the deaths are murders by this dominator system. We are in an existential struggle and have declared revolutionary war to the end.

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waits to be completed only by the love of other monarchs:
a politics of dream, urgent as the blueness of sky.

- Hakim Bey

Depending on how many years have been spent on the mental health industry (or under the judgment of society), changing this belief can be difficult but it's possible! Pay attentions to your beliefs in your day-by-day life, play with different paradigms (belief-systems) for a day, for a week, for a month. Hack into your reality-tunnel and accept the idea that you are not inferior but simply different, that we are in fact all different. If you need some inspiration or if you aren't quite convinced that beliefs have a role to play, read some books on cognitive liberty, neuro-linguistic programming or chaos. It might forever change the way you view "reality".

More than healing

At this point something should be clarified: this is not just about healing, because this idea would suppose there is a plateau to be reached, a sense of eternal well-being to be found. There isn't any, except on fairy tales and advertisements. Remember: permanent happiness is their myth! Personal development (or whatever name you prefer to give it) is in fact an on-going cyclic process where the travel matters more than the destination.

To be able to travel more freely, you'll want to unload from your shoulders all the burden of psychiatric conditioning and especially the idea that there is something wrong with you. As it should be said more often: you are perfect as you are! You have done your best given your situation and, even if the path you took until now has been more difficult than others, this doesn't mean you're a failure! "Normal" people will have to go through this one day too, or else they will never have the chance to grow up.

You are what you believe you are. If you insist on believing that you are a helpless victim of a terrible illness whose salvation lies on the hands of a few mega-corporations, this is what you'll eventually experience all your life. What do you want?

> *They lied to you, sold you ideas of good & evil, gave you distrust of your body & shame for your prophethood of chaos, invented words of disgust for your molecular love, mesmerized you with inattention, bored you with civilization & all its usurious emotions. There is no becoming, no revolution, no struggle, no path; already you're the monarch of your own skin — your inviolable freedom*

Selling cures for the problems they created

It is well known that depression has been on a steady rise in the past few decades. This increase apparently isn't about to stop since the World Health Organization (WHO) recently predicted that, by 2020, depression would be the second most prevalent health problem in the world, just below heart disease, and offered as an explanation that this was due to a previous underestimation of the number of people suffering from this "illness".

Couldn't the increasing feeling of emptiness and worthlessness characteristic of depression be related to the society we live in, at a time when people lose themselves in consumption and mass entertainment to avoid thinking about their miserable life, their economic survival or the ongoing destruction of the planet? While the "experts" paid by pharmacology corporations will invariably answer that depression is a brain disorder due to a "chemical imbalance", the result of some faulty genes they have yet to identity, we cannot help to wonder how this could not be environmental considering there was no such thing as depression in Africa before colonization?

> *Depression has widely been touted as endemic to the 20-something generation. Severe depression is 10 times more prevalent today than it was 50 years ago, and it strikes a full decade earlier in life on average than it did a generation ago. Such feelings and behaviours testify to frustration and despair that have nowhere to go when the*

social landscape is so frozen. Disaffection or even opposition are quickly marketed into sellable style images; alienation as fashion. Meanwhile suicide, perhaps the ultimate regression, has been on a steady rise for several decades.

- John Zerzan

At best depression is considered as a necessary side-effect of "progress" — just like civilian murders are a "collateral damage" of war — but "experts" always affirm that more scientific research is the only solution to the problem. Until these mythical genes have been found and we can all live in the promised techno-virtual "paradise" as genetically-modified human beings, the pharmacology industry is of course delighted to sell drugs to help humanity deal with its "chemical imbalances", just like we are sold bottled water to "solve" the problem of water pollution.

The idea is not necessarily to reject psychiatry as a whole but to let people choose what they feel is best for them, by showing them the different alternatives available and educating them about the lies of the mental health industry. Most importantly, we are not looking for an unique "Truth", we want each individual to understand how their mind works, seek their own solutions and have the freedom to enact whatever course of action they feel is best. Self-exploration allows any of us to evolve from the status of helpless victims to the one of healers. This is the spirit of do-it-yourself applied to the brain!

Alternatives to traditional "treatments" exist and most have existed long before a professional class of psychiatrists was created. Examples are : Meditation, yoga, magick, self-hypnosis, herbal & nutritional treatment, cognitive therapy, neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). All are useful pieces in our toolboxes. Most of them also have a holistic point of view, which emphasizes the importance of the whole and the interdependence of the parts, an idea most psychiatrists completely reject!

The solution will not come from above or outside, but from below and within. Our unconscious wants to help our conscious mind to heal, if only we listen to it. Changes inevitably happen when we finally take responsibility for who we are, for our life, for our community, for our planet, for our future. We aren't fooled anymore by society's doubletalk which tells us to be "responsible citizens" while asking us to follow orders from above without questioning. We want real responsibility and real freedom!

Reclaiming our minds

Make no mistake: this lengthy analysis on civilization and psychiatry is not used to push off our responsibility, to blame all our problems on others. We are all too eager to finally reclaim our minds! We don't need "professionals" to tell us how to live, people have found this by themselves for millions of years, and those "experts" prevent people thinking for themselves, providing instead ready-made explanations for any difficulty they may encounter in their development.

> *Either you think — or else others have to think for you and take power from you, pervert and discipline your natural tastes, civilize and sterilize you.*
>
> **- F. Scott Fitzgerald**

Victimism leads people to feel that they must have some kind of professional to help them — mental health agent, religious leader, educator, fashion adviser — because they are incapable of independently making their own decisions or carrying out their own activities. This is not the case! We are all capable of finding our way to healing, it's only the belief that we are not which makes us stuck!

Who can know better than ourselves what's going on in our minds? Our deep fears, motivations, desires are usually beyond words and they reach such a deep layer of our reality that few psychiatrist could find about them, especially not under the pressure of insurance companies to be more "efficient". The way we think and see the world is entirely dependent on our past experiences. No one can truly understand us without re-experiencing our whole life!

A brave new world?

Unfortunately if they discover a perfect drug to remove all the symptoms of depression and stress, they won't stop here. As it is becoming increasingly clear, their interest is not happiness and well-being of the whole of humanity, as they promise, but "progress" and the on-going technological race. Such a drug would in reality be an opportunity to increase the demands of society and the stress- and depression-inducing effects of our environment. Our dependency on drugs will force in turn others to use them to be able to compete and survive.

> *Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them the drugs to take away their unhappiness. Science fiction? It is already happening to some extent in our own society. Instead of removing the conditions that make people depressed, modern society gives them antidepressant drugs. In effect, antidepressants are a means of modifying an individual's internal state in such a way as to enable him to tolerate social conditions that he would otherwise find intolerable.*
>
> **- Theodore Kaczynski**

While until recently society had to adapt to the limits of human beings, the situation has been reversed and it's now human beings who have to adapt to society. Is that their idea of a "perfect world"? And more importantly, is that yours?

Since this essential question never generates any debate in mainstream media, it seems that pharmacology corporations have already answered for us. Using the false promises of consumerism — "our product will solve all your problems and make you feel fulfilled just like these idealized images you see on our ads" — the sales of anti-depressants has increased by 800% in the 90's alone. They now claim that one american out of five, a market of over 50 millions people, "needs a cure urgently". Is it urgent because people are finally waking up and they need to be plugged back into the Matrix of illusion before they see the desert of the real world they live in?

Natural healing

The most problematic effect of these drugs, however, is that they often prevent individuals to go through the natural healing process which requires a dynamic chaotic void before a healthy restoration is possible. Real healing is not a slow gradual process, as psychiatrists would like to believe, but is cyclic, with its lows and its highs, until the brain has been "purged" from old conditioned neurons and a new freedom can be found. Unfortunately the people working on the mental health field don't like anything chaotic so they do all they can to suppress these "symptoms", preventing at the same time patients to reach the end of the tunnel.

If a person is lucky enough to be "allowed" to complete the healing process, it results in a new outlook on her image, life, reality and society, allowing her to adopt a more healthy lifestyle, perhaps away from mindless consumerism and weapons of mass distraction like television. Challenges and difficulties are necessary elements of any spiritual growth, and what could be more challenging than a mental "illness" which forces us to understand how our brain works and to evolve our consciousness in order to be able to keep on living? Our "disorders" truly are dangerous gifts which should be cultivated and respected rather than repressed and hated.

known as tardive dyskinesia. All of them are strongly addictive as well.

So we see that drugs do nothing other than keeping an artificial state in the brain which makes things more bearable for the individual. There is nothing wrong with that, considering that some mental disorders are deeply disturbing and can push to suicide, but it's not fair to tell people that their medication is going to heal them. Prescription drugs, like any other drugs, should be used as cautiously as possible and along with a real treatment, assisted or not by a professional. Otherwise the person will stay a consumer/victim of the pharmacology industry all her life. Sadly, this may be what they are hoping for.

The myth of permanent happiness

One effect of the excessive marketing from the pharmacology industry, and the many other industries promoting "health" as a value, is the creation of an unique ideal that everyone is supposed to cling to. These "fullfilled" consumers we see on ads have become, consciously or unconsciously, some kind of role models for most of us. They make us believe that permanent happiness is possible, the biggest myth of them all.

> *Suffering is a misunderstanding. It exists. It's real. I can call it a misunderstanding, but I can't pretend that it doesn't exist, or will ever cease to exist... There are times I — I am very frightened. Any happiness seems trivial. And yet, I wonder if it isn't all a misunderstanding — this grasping after happiness, this fear of pain... If instead of fearing it and running from it, one could get through it, go beyond it. I don't know how to say it. But I believe that the reality of pain is not pain. If you can endure it all the way.*
>
> **- Ursula Le Guin**

Human beings, like any conscious organisms, are dualistic by nature. We can't know the sweet without knowing the sour. We can't experience happiness without experiencing sadness. With our attempt to eliminate sadness, with our obsession for positivism, we

have only found emotional death. This is the way someone suffering from depression feels. In fact, it could be argued that a depressive person is different from a "normal" person only in her awareness of the poverty of her emotional life. Too afraid of terror, we have become unable to feel joy. To be able to go beyond that, pain should be embraced like any other feelings.

> *Chagrin, shame, fear, terror, anger are transient madness.*
>
> **- Benjamin Rush, father of American psychiatry**

Individuals labelled with manic-depression (bipolar disorder), on the other hand, experience both states intensely. While mania is accepted and even promoted by our society (think about shopping sprees), the depressive episodes are frowned upon. Take a minute and ask yourself: is this intensity necessarily bad for the person or is it a problem only because it doesn't fit in the myth of permanent happiness promoted by modern society? Yes, manic-depression cause suffering and makes it difficult to live a "normal" life, but isn't it also a way to experience life more deeply?

The reality of medication

Electroshock "therapy" and lobotomy are not as common as a few decades ago, although the fact these barbaric practices still exist is deeply revealing of the society we live in. Forced medication has been mostly replacing them, often with a threat of forced confinment if the drugs are not taken.

This change is not caused by a new sense of humanity amongst psychiatrists but by pressures from insurance companies who find it cheaper to send patients back home with drugs prescriptions, as well as from the needs of the pharmacology industry to increase its revenues. Another cause is that people are generally more willing to get "fixed" but we shouldn't necessarily see voluntary treatment as a progress over forced one. Indeed, it may just prove that we have been so effectively brainwashed that we do not resist anymore.

> *Of all the tyrannies a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive.*
>
> **- C. S. Lewis**

Let's have a look at the way these prescription drugs "work". While ads and psychiatrists explicitly or implicitly claim that they help to heal, the reality appears different: they work by merely hiding the "symptoms" and keeping the brain quiet. Once the drugs have finished their effects, the individual is on the same situation as before or even worse, since all antipsychotic drugs can damage the brain after several months or years of "treatment", a phenomenon

Actually, the "symptoms" of mental disorders — the only things on which the existence of these "disorders" are based on — are so broad and common that anyone could be "diagnosed" with 2–3 of them by just visiting a psychiatrist!

> *We need a program of psychosurgery and political control of our society. The purpose is physical control of the mind. Everyone who deviates from the given norm can be surgically mutilated. The individual may think that the most important reality is his own existence, but this is only his personal point of view. This lacks historical perspective. Man does not have the right to develop his own mind. This kind of liberal orientation has great appeal. We must electrically control the brain. Some day armies and generals will be controlled by electrical stimulation of the brain.*
>
> **- Dr. Jose Delgado**

This quote, coming from a psychiatrist who was recruited by the CIA for the MKULTRA program of mind control after having served the fascist regime in Spain, could not be more explicit. This obsession for control is nothing new for the male-driven civilization we live in, and controlling the human mind is no doubt their biggest challenge. They dream to kill the animal (the life-force) in us, to finally transform us into perfect machines working exclusively in the name of "progress". The founding father of American psychiatry, Benjamin Rush, even considered insanes as "untamed animals whom it is the psychiatrist's duty to discipline", a comparison which remind us of the way non-white people were treated during the colonization.

Normality vs. diversity

What we observe is that, while some problems such as depression and stress seem to be the result of our decadent mental landscape, other states of mind have become a problem only because they don't fit within the grand schemes of civilization, where normality makes it easier to enforce "order". They use cultural differences for marketing purpose but in the end everyone is supposed to buy the same products and have the same desires: a stable income, an happy family, a nice house, a perfectly-sized body, a great confidence. Those who can afford it have "choices", but they are mostly limited to different tastes, such as the color of their car.

Yet diversity is essential for the survival of any eco-system. If nature has survived until our "conquest", it's because of this biological diversity. If the climate or environment changed, some species would die but others would survive, making it possible for evolution to continue. When civilization will have reduced cows to one "perfect" race, it will only require one virus to kill them all.

What interests us most though is diversity amongst human beings. We see that society doesn't support this simply by the way public schools work: all children have to follow the same subjects, regardless of their interests, and even if at the end of compulsory school they can "choose" between different careers, this is because of the needs of the job marketplace only. As a result a lot of teenagers finish school alienated from their initial aspirations and struggle to find a job which interests them.

Disorders as differences

Let's now look at some other widespread "mental illnesses" from the point of view that they are more a difference, part of the diversity of any ecosystem, than a disorder:

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a particularly sad example of the world we live in: many children are unable to stay all day long in these prisons called "schools" because they have too much energy and creativity. "Concerned" about their future in this society, influenced by psychiatrists, their parents feed them with Ritalin, sometimes since the age of 4, to numb them down and kill their flame. They fit again in the illusion of normality, but does that makes them happier? Schizophrenia is often mentioned when talking about mental illnesses for it can be deeply disturbing and very long. To understand this "illness" we should take a look at "primitive" cultures: in all of them, we can find shamans who had the gift to travel on the "other world" and heal people. The initiation was involuntary (although young shamans could be identified early by their tribes) and required several deeply disturbing years until the shaman was able to master his or her skills. What's interesting is that the effects of this initiation are extremely similar to the "symptoms" of schizophrenia. Indeed some primitive tribes were fooled by western psychiatrists that their future shaman was "schizophrenic" and had to be medicated. Unfortunately it appears that anti-psychotic drugs prevent the process to be finished, in such a way that the individual gets lost in the void between the two worlds.

People are increasingly put under the label of Asperger's syndrome or highly-functioning autism. Individuals diagnosed with

Psychiatry as political repression

More striking cases of how the myth of "mental illness" has been used by the system for repression include the Soviet Union where political dissenters were regularly "diagnosed" as "mentally ill" and confined in asylums. Similar repression was done in the USA where socially deviants were locked — such as Timothy Leary for advocating the use of "illegal" drugs. And as recently as April 2003 someone who was reading and talking about conspiracy theories within the US government was diagnosed as "paranoid" and held in an asylum for 9 days!

> *The excess of the passion for liberty produced, in many people, opinions and conducts which could not be removed by reason not retrained by government… The extensive influence which these opinions had upon the understandings, passions, and morals of many of the citizens of the United States, constituted a form of insanity, which I shall take the liberty of distinguishing by the name of anarchy.*
>
> **- Benjamin Rush, father of American psychiatry**

Just like new laws are constantly added to create new classes of criminals and force people into an ever-narrowing range of legality, new mental disorders are "discovered" all the time to create new classes of "insanes", open new markets for the pharmacology industry and force people into an ever-narrowing range of "sanity".

The ones suffering the most from psychiatry are perhaps the children, who do not have choices regarding their medication because they are not supposed to be "responsible" enough. Apart from ADHD and Asperger's syndrome mentionned previously, the label of "Oppositional Defiant Disorder" offers a convenient explanation for parents who do not want to understand why their children are rebelling against their oppressive ideology and pointless consumer lifestyle. For these parents, medication appears to be the only "solution", especially if they are themselves victims of the psychiatric industry.

this "disorder" usually have a high IQ and no impairment other than a difficulty to interact and communicate with others. We suggest that their isolation and obsessive thinking may set them apart and make communication more difficult (or less meaningful) as they are not on the same wavelength as others. That doesn't have to be a disadvantage though: some psychiatrists have in fact recently "back-diagnosed" Newton and Einstein with Asperger's syndrome. The question is: would these two geniuses have delivered their wisdom if they had been labelled as autistic and medicated in their youth?

Social anxiety is also on the rise. Apart from the fact it's easy to become self-conscious about our behavior and look when we live in a society which judge everyone on their appearance, it's worth mentionning that amongst all animals a percentage of them are naturally shy. Shy animals have greater chances of survival since their fears put them less at risk. For human beings, shyness may make it more difficult to be part of society but it's also a great opportunity to develop inner capabilities that others, too busy socializing, don't have the time to care about.

What we observe is that most of the pain felt by "mentally ill" individuals is caused more by a rejection of society than by the "illness" itself. Alienation, loneliness, homelessness, low self-esteem are all the destructive results of a society which doesn't tolerate differences. Furthmore, the belief that there is something "wrong" that has to be "corrected" (or at least repressed) can only alienate people from themselves and make them feel miserable and worthless. Indeed almost all of these "illnesses" are usually coupled with depression.

> *Our society tends to regard as a "sickness" any mode of thought or behavior that is inconvenient for the system, and this is plausible because when an individual doesn't fit into the system it causes pain to the individual as well as problems for the system. Thus the manipulation of an*

individual to adjust him to the system is seen as a "cure" for a "sickness" and therefore as good.

- Theodore Kaczynski

Healing or repression?

All this makes us wonder if psychiatrists and psychologists are really interested in healing or if their role is to keep the illusion of "order", "normality" and "sanity" within society? Indeed the primary goals of asylums has always been to keep the "insanes" outside of society because they were considered "dangerous". But how are they dangerous considering that there is statistically the same amount of criminals amongst the "sanes" than amongst the "insanes"? Is it perhaps because they do not fit in society and their mere existence exposes the lies of this system?

It's interesting to note that, before the appearance of asylums, heretics, witches, prostitutes, madmen and basically anyone "socially deviant" were being "treated" (tortured, exorcised, burnt) by the Inquisition and, when the Church started to lose its power, some of the witch-hunters "converted" to psychiatry and kept on doing basically the same job, using pseudoscience instead of religion to put themselves above the possessed/mentally ill and try to adjust them to society's standards. These standards change enormously through time and space. For example, homosexuality was considered to be a disorder by the bible of psychiatry, the DSM, until the 70′s.

Curiously, many psychiatrists today believe that witches were "misdiagnosed", that they were in fact "suffering" of "mental illness", not "demonic possession". They are the only ones who don't believe in the theory of the scapegoat (a figure whom the fears — or repressed desires — of society are projected on), agreed by all historians. Could it be because this theory also applies perfectly for the "mentally ills" of today?