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Katchen - Book Profile: Psychiatric Abuse and the Intelligence Community - JCRT 2.3

Book Profile: Psychiatric Abuse and the Intelligence Community

Colin Ross, *Bluebird: Deliberate Creation of Multiple Personality By Psychiatrists*. Richardson, TX: Manitou Communications, Inc., 2000. 406 pages. ISBN: 0970452519.

Cheryl Hersha and Lynn Hersha, with Dale Griffis and Ted Schwartz. *Secret Weapons: Two Sisters' Terrifying True Story of Spies and Sabotage*. Far Hills, NJ: New Horizons Press, 2001. 434 pages. ISBN: 0882821962.

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Since Victor Marchetti and John Marks first published *The CIA and The Cult of Intelligence* in 1980, the American public has been treated to a series of exposes that have been highly critical of CIA and military operations. These allegations against the CIA resulted in formation of the House Select Committee on Intelligence in 1978, which held hearings that uncovered evidence that the CIA in particular had engaged in experiments in "mind control" by using unwitting US citizens and foreign nationals.

3. Out of these hearings came a number of well- researched books. They include John Marks *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate: The CIA and Mind Control* (1986), which gives an overview of CIA mind control research under the rubric of Projects Artichoke, Bluebird, MKULTRA and MKDELTA; *Journey Into Madness: The True Story of CIA Mind Control and Medical Abuse* by Gordon Thomas (1989); *Psychiatry and The CIA: Victims of Mind Control* by Harvey Weinstein (1990). The last two focus on abusive medical experiments conducted by J. Ewen Cameron at the Allen Memorial Institute in the 1960s. Such abuses were the subject of a successful suit against the CIA by a number of victims.
4. During the 1980s, advances in the understanding and treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder coalesced with new insights into the nature of hypnosis and dissociation and a political and cultural climate in which traumatic child abuse and particularly traumatic sexual abuse in children could be appreciated.
5. A similar cultural climate had existed during the first two decades of the 20th Century in the United States. Multiple (or Dual) Personality had been seen at that time as a not uncommon phenomenon. But after the subsuming of Multiple Personality into the catch-all category of Schizophrenia by Eugen Bleuler, who considered Multiple Personality to be "iatrogenic" (i.e., physician caused) and thus evidence of malpractice with hypnosis, the disorder was regarded quite rare until the 1980s, when the cultural climate once again permitted its acceptance and treatment. The number of documented cases of Multiple Personality skyrocketed, particularly after the publication of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III, which listed Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) as a separate disorder from Schizophrenia. Moreover, spectacular cures for MPD involving the recovery and reliving of traumatic memories were announced. By the 1990s, it seemed that a reliable cure for MPD, later named Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) was at hand. Confront the abuse and confront the abuser (typically the father or another male relative), the theory went, and the disorder could be cured.

6. One complicating factor that became apparent during the late 1980s was the fact that many patients began to allege their families had been involved in unconventional and often antinomian religious observances that were used to justify the sexual abuse. This abuse was often considered to be of a satanic nature, but not limited to Satanist observance. These allegations generally had few provable details. By the middle 1990s, reports from therapists indicated that clients and patients were also remembering abuse that had been carried out in military settings. And unlike the cult abuse allegations, these claims often had leads which could be traced to military and intelligence agency activities.
7. Unfortunately, reports of a universal cure for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Multiple Personality Disorder proved to be premature. In their zeal to cure their patients (and prodded by health insurance policies that had a tendency to run out) therapists engaged in intensive abreactive therapy in the course of inpatient hospital admissions that lasted months, or years. In many cases, this sort of therapy led to a resolution of the patient's conflicts but in all too many cases, the result of all this reliving of trauma was simply the flooding of the patient with traumatic memories, amounting to the re-traumatisation of the patient. In many cases, the patients were left less functional after therapy than before.
8. A backlash soon developed which involved parents accused by their offspring of sexually abusing them as children. Some former patients retracted earlier allegations against their parents, and a number of psychologists and psychiatrists who still held to the earlier paradigm of Multiple Personality Disorder revived the older conviction that the affliction was iatrogenic. These professionals maintained that therapists generated memories of sexual abuse in their patients through hypnotic suggestion. They went even further in describing something they called the False Memory Syndrome. Through litigation and public advocacy the same professionals sought to bring that form of psychotherapy which utilized recovered memories to a halt.
9. All of this background is essential to understanding *Bluebird* and *Secret Weapons*. In 1995, Colin Ross, one of the leading lights in the treatment of Multiple Personality Disorder (which had been renamed a year earlier) set out to bridge the gap between the International Society for the Study of Dissociation, of which he was President at the time, and the adherents of False Memory Syndrome. At the same time, Ross was researching many of the allegations of US Military and Intelligence Community sponsored abuse that many of his patients were recounting. The outcome of these seemingly discrepant activities was *Bluebird: Deliberate Creation of Multiple Personality Disorder by Psychiatrists*.
10. *Bluebird* documents a pattern of CIA interest in the creation and utilisation of Dissociative Identity Disorder that started during World War II. Ross identifies the origin of this interest with George H. Estabrooks, who wrote as early as 1943 that it should be possible to manufacture the perfect spy through hypnotic creation of multiple personalities. Through diligent research, Ross documents the existence of a network of psychologists, many of whom, such as Ewen Cameron and Harold Wolff were already identified by previous researchers with MKULTRA and related projects. All apparently did work for the military and/or the CIA at one time or another.
11. If this was all that Ross had to say, *Bluebird* would be a one 'dimensional, reductionist work, similar in many respects to Weinstein's *Psychiatry and the CIA*. But Ross has more to his agenda than simply exposing possible CIA connections of many practicing psychiatrists and psychologists. The other half of *Bluebird* is the documentation of the creation of "Manchurian

Candidates”, individuals with deliberately created alter identities who are under the orders of another person and for whom the host personality is unaware. Ross goes through a number of case studies from the little known story of Palle Hardrup, who engaged in bank robbery while under the hypnotic control of Bjorn Nielsen in Denmark in 1951, to better known examples such as Candy Jones, an alleged CIA courier, Patty Hearst, Sirhan Sirhan and even Mark David Chapman, whom he characterises as a “self-centered” Manchurian Candidate, not under the control of anyone else. He then goes on to show that in five cases that he personally examined, therapists treating DID did in fact induce false memories of ritual abuse where none had existed.

12. However, by documenting the amount of time and effort that is required to create a Manchurian Candidate, he shows that the creation of a Manchurian Candidate (and according to Ross, false memories) is not something that can be accomplished in the course of two-hour psychotherapy sessions a week. In doing so, he effectively damns with faint praise the premise behind False Memory Syndrome, and shows FMS to be in many ways, self-serving and dishonest. *Bluebird* is a must for those who would understand the controversy over CIA and military fabrication of DID.
13. *Secret Weapons* is a case study in the creation of “Manchurian Candidates”. Cheryl and Lynn Hersha came out of a military family. Their father was, according to the book, an ex GI who never stopped thinking in military terms. In 1965, he offered up his two daughters, then aged 4 and 6 for the kind of military training that had been reserved for high level US agents with high security clearances. Cheryl was trained to be an assassin, the “Black Widow”, to withstand any enemy torture and to fly Blackhawk helicopters. Lynn was trained to lead elite commando teams on anti-terrorist missions, both at home and abroad.
14. The book details how their training as “girl soldiers” began. It began as early as it did because the first step in their training involved the deliberate creation of DID in both children, and ages 4 to 6 are an excellent age for that to occur. The training begins with a game in which children are tied to desks and are required to press a red button that gives a painful electric shock to another child or receive a shock in return. Lynn complied and Cheryl refused. At this point, the book begins to give the reader a background into Project MKULTRA and the sorts of experiments that have been well documented, including the use of LSD on unwitting subjects, John Lilly’s experiments with sensory deprivation and Ewen Cameron’s work with electroconvulsive therapy, sensory deprivation and “psychic driving”, the playing of repetitive tapes to subjects.
15. Next the book purports to show how Cheryl’s dissociated identity was accomplished. This feat was achieved by keeping the girl hungry and thirsty, and forcing her to watch X rated videos on a movie screen, with electric shocks going to her genitals, whenever she was used sexually. It then details how Cheryl was placed in a morgue drawer and forced to listen to descriptions of sexual acts, being taught the story of “Sexy Sadie” for hour after hour, while she got hungrier and hungrier and weaker and weaker. At intervals, people asked if Sexy Sadie was ready to come out and play. This continued until Cheryl realized she was “looking at” Sexy Sadie and did so. Later on, she would be dressed in boys clothes and taught to be “Charles Wallace”.
16. Lynn’s training, on the other hand, would be far more military-oriented. Lynn received very extensive commando and anti-terrorist training as Lieutenant Rick (Rikki) Shaw. Lynn alleges that she participated in several missions including one domestic anti-terrorist raid.

17. Unlike Lynn, Cheryl, after initially being deployed for intelligence purposes, was more or less ignored by the United States government, which apparently could not find anything for her to do when the Cold War ended. For this reason, Cheryl had few obstacles to traumatic memories surfacing, first of incest with her father. Then, Cheryl recovered memories of her father's involvement in a non-traditional religious cult, the details of which she does not go into. The authors take pains to point out that Cheryl's therapist took a neutral stance toward the validity of her ritual abuse memories. When Cheryl began to recover memories of her government activities, she contacted Dr. Dale Griffis, a retired Ohio police captain and consultant to national law enforcement, in an effort to corroborate or disprove the memories. Griffis was able to verify many of them through field investigation.
18. Cheryl contacted Lynn for corroboration and Lynn began to recover memories as well. Unlike Cheryl, Lynn has been contacted fairly often, as late as 2000. Lynn appears to be part of a clandestine military force designed to survive a coordinated domestic terrorist attack that knocks out most of America's armed forces. As such, she was to carry on as a civilian, unaware of her secret life and training unless activated by a superior with a code word. At that point, she would switch into a military alter ego and do her duty. Lynn's situation is summarized thus:

"The change is like a re-enlistment in an army she never willingly joined. In a very real way, she is a career soldier who has never been paid, never allowed to retire and never given a chance to lead a life free from the fear of what she might do without conscious awareness." (p. 313).
19. This statement is very ambivalent and nuanced. Unlike most accounts by "ritual abuse survivors," the authors of the book accept the fact that national security interests do exist. One looks in vain for an anti-establishment political agenda in this book, either from the right or the left. And the Hersha sisters, despite their disclosures, are careful not to release any information that could adversely affect the security of the United States. Whatever the US government may have done to them, the Hersha sisters apparently remain patriots.
20. The ambivalence is also apparent in Ross' account. Ross concludes: "In the interests of national security, it is important that the CIA and military intelligence agencies have mind control programs in place. This is true, for one reason, because mind control methods are being used by leaders of destructive cults, dictators and terrorists. There is nothing wrong with the intelligence agencies seeking the assistance of physicians in such programs. The problem is the conflict between the National Security Act and the Hippocratic Oath. To date, organized medicine has behaved as if this conflict does not exist. That needs to change. The doctors who built Manchurian Candidates need to be governed not just by the National Security Act but also by the Hippocratic Oath. How this conflict should be resolved and how it should be regulated by The doctors who built Manchurian Candidates need to be governed not just by the National Security Act but also by the Hippocratic Oath. How this conflict should be resolved and how it should be regulated by civilian organized medicine is uncertain. Whatever the outcome, we will always need an effective, functioning intelligence community. The CIA stands between me and Gulag." (p. 267).
21. Ross's statement epitomizes the ambivalence that these two books share regarding the induction of MPD, or DID, in children to prepare them for a career of military service. The credibility of these two books is only enhanced by this ambivalence.

22. In his work entitled *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (1986), (New York: Little, Brown 1986), Lt. Col. (Ret) David Grossman, now the Chair of Military Science at Arkansas State University, notes that a relatively small percentage, maybe 2% of the male population is capable of killing without remorse. Not all of them fall within the 3% of the population that, according to DSM III-R, has antisocial personality disorder (ie. sociopathy). Many fall within the category that Grossman calls “sheepdogs” rather than predators. These are people who are capable of aggression, but also capable of empathy. These people see themselves as protectors of the “sheep” - the vast majority of the population that is not capable of aggression.
23. The problem, as Grossman regards it, is that if only a small portion of combatants are willing to actively kill the enemy in combat situations - whether these people are capable of empathy, or the two-thirds of sociopaths bent to the acceptance of orders - a nation in danger nonetheless needs them desperately.

Martin Katchen received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of Sydney, where he studied factors of hypnotisability and dissociative identity disorder in former members of high demand religious movements, including Jehovah’s Witnesses. He is a contributor to the volume *Out of Darkness*, ed. David Sakheim and Susan Levine (Lexington Books, 1992). He currently teaches in Southern California.

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