

Poor Leonard's Almanack

by Leonard Roy Frank
Street Spirit October 2007



ON BRAINWASHING, MIND MANIPULATION AND PSYCHIATRY

This is the last in a series of six related columns. Columns titled "On Knowledge," "On Education," "On Learning," "On Teaching," and "On Propaganda" appeared in *Street Spirit* earlier this year.

1. One field of mind-changing in which intensive investigation has been carried on with generally benign intentions and in a more or less scientific manner for many years is to be found in the sphere of medicine. The problem of mental derangement presented the physician with the necessity of attempting to change back to its original form the behavior of those whose personality had undergone a malignant transformation. His patient had, to all appearances, become another person, alienated from his true self (hence the name of "alienist" formerly given to psychiatrists), and the physician's job was to reverse these changes.

J. A. C. BROWN (British psychiatrist), *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing*, 1963

2. We reported to the 2nd World Congress of Psychiatry in 1957 on the use of deprogramming in the treatment of paranoid schizophrenic patients. By "deprogramming" is meant the extensive breakup of the existing patterns of behavior, both normal and pathologic, by means of intensive electroshock therapy usually carried out in association with prolonged sleep....

(During the third stage of deprogramming the patient's remarks are entirely uninfluenced by previous recollections — nor are they governed in any way by his forward anticipations. He lives in the immediate present. All schizophrenic symptoms have disappeared. There is complete amnesia for all events of his life.)

D. EWEN CAMERON (Scottish-born U.S. psychiatrist and president of the American Psychiatric Association, Canadian Psychiatric Association, and World Psychiatric Association), "Production of Differential Amnesia as a Factor in the Treatment of Schizophrenia," *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, February 1960. Cameron developed "deprogramming treatment" during the 1950s at McGill's Allan Memorial Institute in Montreal. The third stage of deprogramming was followed by a "period of reorganization," during which Cameron applied his "psychic driving" technique. Subjects were bombarded with weeks of tape-recorded, emotionally loaded messages repeated 16 hours a day through speakers installed under the subjects' pillows in "sleep rooms." There were negative messages to wipe out unwanted behavior and positive ones to induce desired behavior. Cameron established the effect of the negative tapes by administering shocks to the subjects' legs at the end of the messages. Hundreds of people underwent these procedures, which were extensively reported in the professional literature at the time. In 1978, previously secret documents revealed that the CIA partially funded Cameron's brainwashing experiments as part of its MK-ULTRA (Mind Control) Project.

3. A few months in the solitary cell renders a prisoner strangely impressive. The chaplain can then make the brawny navy [unskilled laborer] cry like a child; he can work on his feelings in almost any way he pleases; he can, so to speak, photograph his thoughts, wishes and opinions on his patient's mind, and fill his mouth with his own phrases and language.

W. L. CLAY, *The Prison Chaplain: Memoirs of the Rev. John Clay, 1867*, quoted in Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain*, 1978

4. Of all the tyrannies on humankind, The worst is that which persecutes the mind. JOHN DRYDEN (English poet), *The Hind and the Panther*, 1687

5. There is... following prefrontal lobotomy a redirection of the thinking processes from the self toward the environment. The patient takes his cue from those around him. He is

cheerful when they are cheerful, playful when they are playful, sympathetic when they arouse his sympathy, apologetic when they show him how he has transgressed.... He is unconcerned about himself and unworried about the future. If he is no longer able to paint pictures, write poetry or compose music, he is, on the other hand, no longer ashamed to fetch and carry, to wait on table or make beds or empty cans. If he has suffered some reduction in his personal dignity and vanity, he has gained in social adaptability and has at least a chance of earning his living. And some individuals can accomplish this on a fairly high level of efficiency, since prefrontal lobotomy interferes relatively little with intellectual capacity as measured by standard tests.

WALTER FREEMAN (psychosurgeon, 1895-1972), "Prefrontal Lobotomy: The Problem of Schizophrenia," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, May 1945. Freeman introduced the lobotomy operation in the United States and was its chief promoter. He is said to have lobotomized more than 3,500 people between 1936 and 1967, when he lost his hospital privileges.

6. Present-day tyranny differs from the old in that the new absolutism must control the mass production of ideas, the spiritual element, or else lose control of the situation. It differs not merely in increased quantity of police for purposes of repression, but also in the thorough "thought control" which reaches to the most intimate core of the personality.

CARL G. GUSTAVSON (historian), *A Preface to History*, 1955

7. Brainwashing is a system of befogging the brain so a person can be seduced into acceptance of what otherwise would be abhorrent to him.

EDWARD HUNTER (journalist), *Brainwashing: The Story of Men Who Defied It*, 1956

8. The daily soma ration was an insurance against personal maladjustment, social unrest and the spread of subversive ideas. Religion, Karl Marx declared, is the opium of the people. In the Brave New World, this situation was reversed. Opium, or rather soma, was the people's religion.

ALDOUS HUXLEY (English writer), "Chemical Persuasion," *Brave New World Revisited*, 1958. Huxley gave the name soma to the bliss-inducing hallucinogenic drug introduced in his 1932 futuristic novel *Brave New World*.

9. The nature of psychological compulsion is such that those who act under constraint remain under the impression that they are acting on their own initiative. The victim of mind-manipulation does not know that he is a victim. To him, the walls of his prison are invisible, and he believes himself to be free.

ALDOUS HUXLEY, "What Can Be Done?" *Brave New World Revisited*, 1958

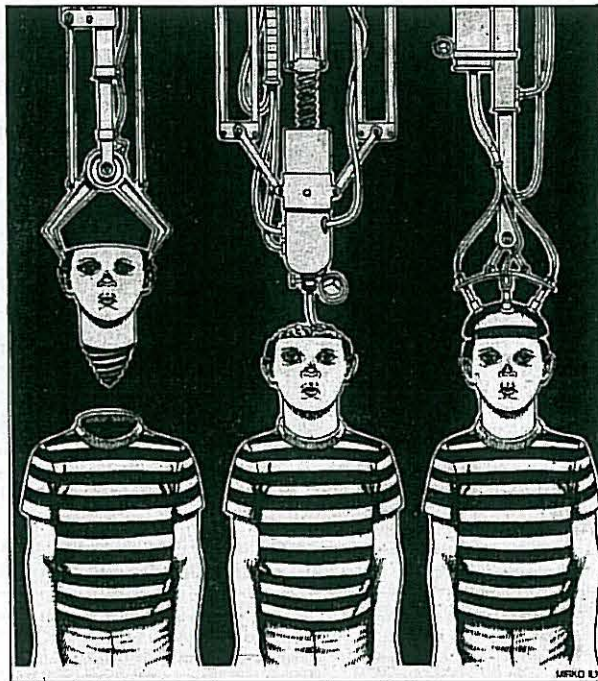
10. It seems to me perfectly in the cards that there will be within the next generation or so a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude, and producing... a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their liberties taken away from them but will rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda, brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by pharmacological methods.

ALDOUS HUXLEY, 1959, quoted in John Marks, *The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate"*, *The CIA and Mind Control*, epigraph to part II, 1980

11. I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, letter to Benjamin Rush, 23 September 1800. These words are inscribed at the base of the dome in the interior of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington.

12. It is hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head.



Psychiatry can so easily be a technique of brainwashing, of inducing behavior that is adjusted, by (preferably) non-injurious torture. In the best places... these can be replaced by more subtle lobotomies and tranquilizers that place the bars of Bedlam and the locked doors inside the patient. — R. D. LAING

SALLY KEMPTON (meditation teacher), "Cutting Loose," *Esquire*, July 1970

THURGOOD MARSHALL (Supreme Court associate justice), *Stanley v. Georgia*, 1969

13. Psychiatry can so easily be a technique of brainwashing, of inducing behavior that is adjusted, by (preferably) non-injurious torture. In the best places, where straitjackets are abolished, doors are unlocked, leucotomies largely forgone, these can be replaced by more subtle lobotomies and tranquilizers that place the bars of Bedlam and the locked doors inside the patient.

R. D. LAING (British psychiatrist), preface (1964) to *The Divided Self: An Existential Study of Sanity and Madness*, 1959

14. The doctors kept talking to Rosemary [who had been given a local anesthetic], getting her to sing or count. When the patient became sleepy and disoriented, the two doctors could tell the operation was working. As long as she continued to sing out and to add and subtract, the doctors kept cutting away, destroying a larger and larger area of the brain....

Rosemary had been Rose's child, Rose's burden, and her daughter was [after the operation] like a painting that had been brutally slashed so it was scarcely recognizable.

LAURENCE LEAMER (writer), referring to the lobotomy operation Walter Freeman and James W. Watts performed on Rosemary Kennedy in 1941, *The Kennedy Women: The Saga of an American Family*, 1994. Joseph P. Kennedy had arranged for the operation on his 23-year-old daughter. She was institutionalized the remaining 63 years of her life.

15. Many patients dislike the "empty feeling" resulting from the reduction of drive and spontaneity which is apparently one of the most characteristic effects of [chlorpromazine].... Chlorpromazine may prove to be a pharmacological substitute for lobotomy. HEINZ E. LEHMANN (Canadian psychiatrist), "Therapeutic Results with Chlorpromazine (Largactil) in Psychiatric Conditions," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, [5 January 1955. Lehmann was a leading promoter of Thorazine, trade name for chlorpromazine and the first of the antipsychotic drugs introduced in the U.S. in 1954. University of Pennsylvania professor of neuroscience Peter Sterling expressed a similar opinion in *The New Republic* ("Psychiatry's Drug Addiction," 9 December 1979): "a psychiatrist would be hard-put to distinguish a lobotomized patient from one treated with chlorpromazine."

16. Our whole constitutional heritage rebels at the thought of giving government the power to control men's minds.

17. I believe that the day has come when we can combine sensory deprivation with drugs, hypnosis and astute manipulation of reward and punishment to gain almost absolute control over an individual's behavior. It should be possible then to achieve a rapid and highly effective type of positive brainwashing that would allow us to make dramatic changes in a person's behavior and personality. I foresee that day when we could convert the worst criminal into a decent, respectable citizen in a matter of a few months — or perhaps even less than that.

JAMES V. MCCONNELL (psychologist), "Criminals Can Be Brainwashed — Now," *Psychology Today*, April 1970. In the same article McConnell wrote, "No one owns his own personality. Your ego, or individuality, was forced on you by your genetic constitution and by the society into which you were born. You had no say about what kind of personality you acquired, and there's no reason to believe you should have the right to refuse to acquire a new personality if your old one is antisocial."

18. The technique [used on 8 schizophrenic patients] simply involved prolonged, periodic isolation, combined with constant verbal stimulation. This technique... may be recognized as basically similar to techniques reportedly used in recent and medieval times in attempts to affect an individual's political or religious thinking. In fiction, also, the idea is presented in disturbingly impressive fashion by George Orwell in his novel, *1984*. BEVERLEY T. MEAD and JOHN P. ROLLINS (psychiatrists), "Response of Schizophrenics to a Brain-Washing Technique," *Diseases of the Nervous System*, July 1961

19. The disturbance in memory [caused by electric convulsive therapy] is probably an integral part of the recovery process. I think it may be true that these people have to be for the time being at any rate more intelligence than they can handle and that the reduction of intelligence is an important factor in the curative process.

ABRAHAM MYERSON (clinical professor of psychiatry, Harvard University), quoted in Franklin G. Ebaugh et al., "Fatalities Following Electric Convulsive Therapy: A Report of 2 Cases with Autopsy Findings" (discussion), *Transactions of the American Neurological Association*, June 1942

ON BRAINWASHING

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20. I thought of a rather cruel trick I once played on a wasp. He was sucking jam on my plate, and I cut him in half. He paid no attention, merely went on with his meal, while a tiny stream of jam trickled out of his severed esophagus. Only when he tried to fly away did he grasp the dreadful thing that had happened to him. It is the same with modern man. The thing that has been cut away is his soul.

GEORGE ORWELL (English writer), "Notes on the Way," *Time and Tide*, 6 April 1940. *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, vol. 2, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 1968

21. *Crimetop* means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to *Ingsoc* [the official Party line], and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. *Crimetop*, in short, means protective stupidity.

GEORGE ORWELL, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949

22. Will you understand, Winston, that no one whom we bring to this place ever leaves our hands uncured? We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies; we change them.

GEORGE ORWELL, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949

23. We shall crush you down to the point from which there is no coming back. Things will happen to you from which you could not recover, if you lived a thousand years. Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves.

GEORGE ORWELL, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949

24. Two soft pads, which felt slightly moist, clamped themselves against Winston's temples. He quailed. There was pain coming, a new kind of pain....

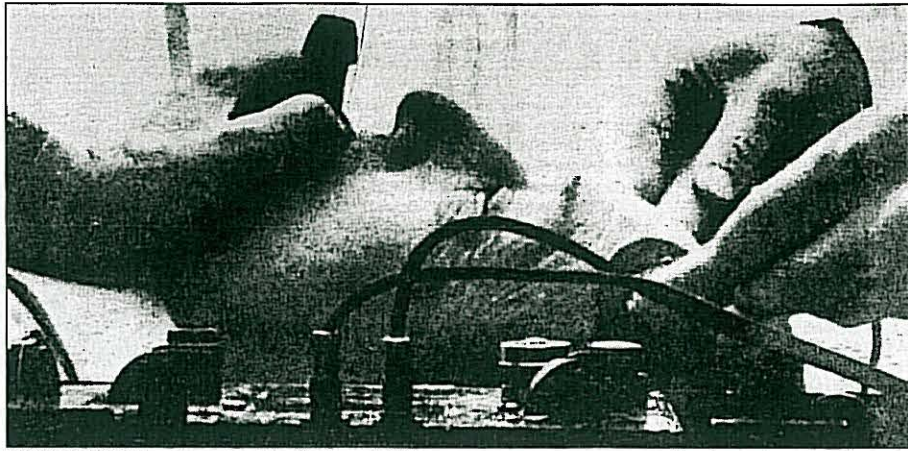
At this moment there was a devastating explosion, or what seemed like an explosion, though it was not certain whether there was any noise. There was undoubtedly a blinding flash of light. Winston was not hurt, only prostrated.... A terrific, painless blow had flattened him out. Also something had happened inside his head. As his eyes regained their focus, he remembered who he was, and where he was, and recognized the face that was gazing into his own; but somewhere or other there was a large patch of emptiness, as though a piece had been taken out of his brain.

GEORGE ORWELL, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949

25. I do not know any formal use of [shock treatment] in brain washing [sic] but it seems possible it could be so used. One can conjure up an image of large groups of dissidents in a police state being kept in a contented state of apathy by shock treatment.

ROBERT PECK (psychiatrist), *The Miracle of Shock Treatment*, 1974

26. We profit from the circumstance of the bath, remind him of the transgression, or of the omission of an important duty, and with the aid of a faucet suddenly release a shower of cold water upon his head, which often disconcerts the madman or drives out a predominant idea by a strong and unexpected impression; if the idea persists, the shower is repeated, but care is taken to avoid the hard tone and the shocking terms that would cause rebellion; on the contrary, the madman is made to understand that it is for his sake



ELECTROSHOCK or Electroconvulsive Treatment (ECT).

Photo from *Madness Network News Reader*

"Two soft pads, which felt slightly moist, clamped themselves against Winston's temples. He quailed. There was pain coming, a new kind of pain.... At this moment there was a devastating explosion, or what seemed like an explosion, though it was not certain whether there was any noise. There was undoubtedly a blinding flash of light." — GEORGE ORWELL, 1984

and reluctantly that we resort to such violent measures; sometimes we add a joke, taking care not to go too far with it.

PHILIPPE PINEL (French alienist and "father of modern psychiatry"), *A Treatise on Insanity*, 1801, quoted in Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, 1961, translated by Richard Howard, 1965

27. The victim must prove that he has come round to the ideology which kills him, and that he has therefore agreed to his own crucifixion. That is why confession without apostasy is not enough. The accused, after admitting his crime, has also to show himself clear of past delusions.... To make apostasy durable, to give it the semblance of free action, a real transformation of personality is needed: free will and conscience must vanish, another will and another conscience have to be infused into the living corpse whose soul has been destroyed. The justice which tortured was nothing to what we have today: the justice which dements.

JEAN ROLIN (French writer), *Police Drugs*, translated by Laurence J. Bendit, 1956

28. TERROR acts powerfully upon the body, through the medium of the mind, and should be employed in the cure of madness....

FEAR, accompanied with PAIN, and a sense of SHAME, has sometimes cured this disease.

BENJAMIN RUSH (a Founding Father of the United States and father of American psychiatry; the official seal of the American Psychiatric Association bears his portrait), *Medical Inquiries and Observations, Upon the Diseases of the Mind*, 1812

29. A Salvation Army worker, a very high-ranking office. She married a clergyman. For years she lay in hospital, constantly complaining that she had committed sins against the Holy Ghost. She complained of it for weeks and months, and her poor husband did his best to distract her, but without success. Then we decided to operate upon her [prefrontal lobotomy].... After the dressing had been taken off, I asked her, "How are you now? What about the Holy Ghost?" Smiling, she answered, "Oh, the Holy Ghost; there is no Holy Ghost."

GOSTA RYLANDER (Swedish psychosurgeon), "Personality Analysis Before and After Frontal Lobotomy," 1948, quoted in William Sargant, *Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brain-Washing*, 1956

30. [Lobotomized patients] suffered the amputation of their souls.

GOSTA RYLANDER, 1947, quoted in Jack El-Hai, *The Lobotomist: A Maverick Medical Genius and His Tragic Quest to Rid the World of Mental Illness*, 2005

31. Conscience can now be eliminated surgically without any impairment of day to day working efficiency.

WILLIAM SARGANT (British psychiatrist), on psychosurgery, "The Movement in Psychiatry Away

from the Philosophical: New Chemical and Physical Methods of Freeing Tormented Minds," *The Times* (London), 22 August 1974

32. Brainwashing [is] the systematic, scientific and coercive elimination of the individuality of the mind of another.

ALAN W. SCHEFLIN (professor of law, Santa Clara University School of Law) and EDWARD M. OPTON JR. (attorney and psychologist), *The Mind Manipulators: A Non-Fiction Account*, 1978

33. ECT is a technique particularly susceptible to misuse for purposes of mind manipulation. It is cheap. It is quick. In many people it inspires terror. As Dr. Zeifert says, "Anticipation of ECT could, of course, be used as an instrument of torture...."

Electroconvulsive shock is only one way to inspire terror, but it is one that has advantages, from the user's point of view, that are shared by few others. It is legitimized as a standard medical practice, a fact of tremendous importance in a society that condemns torture and terror under their own names....

And finally ECT leaves no visible marks.

ALAN W. SCHEFLIN and EDWARD M. OPTON JR., *The Mind Manipulators: A Non-Fiction Account*, 1978

34. [The thought reform] "model" of behavior and attitude change is a general one which can encompass phenomena as widely separated as brainwashing and rehabilitation in a prison or a mental hospital. I would like to have you think of brainwashing not in terms of politics, ethics and morals, but in terms of the deliberate changing of behavior and attitudes by a group of men who have relatively complete control over the environment in which the captive population lives.

If we find similar methods being used by the Communists and by some of our own institutions of change, we have a dilemma, of course. Should we then condemn our own methods because they resemble brainwashing? I prefer to think that the Communists have drawn on the same reservoir of human wisdom and knowledge as we have, but have applied this wisdom to achieve goals which we cannot condone. These same techniques in the service of different goals, however, may be quite acceptable to us.

EDGAR H. SCHEIN (professor of organizational psychology and management, MIT's Sloan School of Management), address to a convention of prison officials, April 1961, "Man Against Man: Brainwashing," *Corrective Psychiatry and Journal of Social Therapy*, vol. 8, 1962.

35. Coerced psychiatric personality change — even (or especially) if it entails "helping" a person to give up his "psychotic delusions" — closely resembles coerced religious conversion.

THOMAS S. SZASZ (Hungarian-born U.S. psychiatrist), *Psychiatric Slavery*, 1977

36. It suits our masters that we should have no memory — the less of it we have, the sooner we'll forget what they did to us.

VALERIY TARISIS (Russian writer), *Ward 7: An Autobiographical Novel*, 1965, translated by Katya Brown, 1966

37. [Psychiatrist D. Ewen Cameron proposed] that after the war each surviving German over the age of twelve should receive a short course of electroshock treatment to burn out any remaining vestige of Nazism.

GORDON THOMAS (British writer), *Journey into Madness: The True Story of Secret CIA Mind Control and Medical Abuse*, 1989

38. The objective of "conditioning" is to deprive human beings permanently of their capacity to think and to will, and, since this is the capacity that makes us human, for good or for evil, "conditioning" is an attempt to destroy human nature itself. Perhaps we do not yet know enough about its results, up to date, to be able to tell whether or not its aim is actually attainable. We do know, however, that this has been the aim of its practitioners in our time; and we also know that the new science of psychology has equipped them with devilish devices which, in the past, were not at the drill sergeant's, priest's, or advertiser's disposal.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE (English historian), *A Study of History*, vol. 12, 1961

39. Brainwashing: the forcible application of prolonged and intensive indoctrination sometimes including mental torture in an attempt to induce someone to give up basic political, social, or religious beliefs and attitudes and to accept contrasting regimented ideas.

WEBSTER'S THIRD NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE UNABRIDGED, edited by Philip Babcock Gove, 1961

40. The Army defines indoctrination as an effort to change a man's viewpoint while he is still a thinking individual by regulating his thoughts and actions. This falls far short of the effect [brainwashing] produced upon some defendants seen in Communist courts, defendants who had obviously been completely broken, and had ceased to be thinking individuals.

ANONYMOUS, psychiatrist, quoted in J. A. C. Brown, *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing*, 1963

Frank is the editor of *Random House Webster's Quotationary*. His *Electroshock Quotationary*, an illustrated 154-page history of psychiatry's most controversial procedure, may be downloaded free-of-charge at http://www.endofshock.com/102C_ECT.PDF