

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF FORMER MENTAL PATIENTS

ADDENDUM

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IN a previous article (1) we listed a large number of published autobiographies of former mental patients. As far as we knew, this was the only extensive list of autobiographies that met certain specified criteria: the author had been a patient in a mental hospital; the book was frankly autobiographical; and the book was devoted primarily to a description of mental illness or mental hospitals. In our original article we requested that our colleagues send us titles that we had overlooked. The response was very good and it is only lack of space that compels us to omit a list of all the people who helped us. However, we must mention our debt to Professor Carney Landis who supplied us with a list of his own, many of which are classics dating back to the sixteenth century. We understand too that Professor Landis and also Dr. Walter Alvarez are each writing books describing their work with very large collections of autobiographies.

It should be noted that this list contains very few books in languages other than English. This is unfortunate, since autobiography represents one of the richest sources of information regarding cultural variations in mental illness and its treatment. Our new list contains only two such books, one in English and one in Spanish, and one article in German. However, several of the other books had originally been published in languages other than English. Yet we do hope that this will encourage some colleagues in other lands to compile lists of their own so that these may be added to a collection of books that presents a valuable and indispensable picture of mental illness as seen by the patient.

Here then are titles of books and articles which were not included in our original article. It should be noted that we have not had the opportunity to examine a number of these books, and we were forced to rely on the description provided by the person who told us of the book.

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