

L-

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I think there's a book
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But I agree that there
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It's worth the effort to
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Lanny:

Both Catherine + I have
read this + liked it,
although we both think
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B.

303 78

Lanny:

Here's Mad with the Truth. In a nutshell, here's what I think about it:

There's lots I like, and I think it has ^{the} potential to be a very good book. However, I would want to check with them about the following:

1. We would not want to use all of the graphics. Do they feel okay about this?
2. Have they already made a commitment to the writers that their work would be included? There are some pieces I ^{find} ~~was~~ dubious about.
3. Of the pieces I do like, I still think there are some that need editing (mostly for length.) Are they willing to allow this kind of editing to take place?
4. At the moment, many of the pieces by women are poems, ^{journal} journal entries and more impressionistic pieces, while many of the men's submissions are straightforward accounts of their incarceration. This tends to give the impression overall that the men have more authority, have a better handle on their experiences, etc. Especially in view of the fact that more women are committed to mental hospitals than men, I would like to see this imbalance corrected.
5. While they do list mental patients' groups and resources at the end, I would like to see the book include some accounts from activists about how they have come to see their experiences and how they are fighting to change things (e.g. Ontario Coalition to Stop Electroshock). This would have the effect of bringing the book right into the present (since many accounts are from years ago), letting the reader know that the kinds of things people talk about in their submissions are still going on today, a fact which most people seem to be unaware of. (Witness the call-in show on Almanac a few months ago, where a psychiatrist was defending the "new" method of shock treatment. Most callers thought that shock had been stopped years ago, and believed the dr. when he said that the current treatment bears almost no relation to shock treatments of the past.)

I think that this activist stuff could be added in two ways: interviews with activists and/or journalistic pieces about various groups and actions around the country.

These are the kinds of things I would want to talk to the editors about before agreeing to publish.

B.

Apr 19 87

Barbara-

I've read Mad with the Truth quickly but carefully. I was more than impressed. I found all articles to be of high enough quality (re writing and content) to be included. They differ, of course. Some are excellent, many just good, but together they produce a powerful account of the lives and worlds of mental patients.

In reply to your points:

1. I liked almost all the graphics, but have no objection to deleting some.
2. As I say above, I'm not dubious about any articles. Let's talk about your (and C and J's) reservations.
3. I agree that some articles could be cut down but I don't think it's essential.
4. I may have missed the distinction between men's and women's articles. All are first person testimonials which deal to varying degrees with the structure of the mental hospital and related world and its impact on the internal states of patients. I had half an eye open for the distinction you mention but still didn't detect it. We might go over the pieces together to see whether the ~~xx~~ sex differences exist, and if so, to what degree.
5. I agree that the material you suggest adding would enhance the book, but this question relates to my general proposal, which I'll get to.

I feel strongly that the MS is publishable as is--with, of course, our usual in-house editing. It's an important Canadian document, especially because it spans so much of the country, revealing similarities and differences from place to place. And, though there *are* repetitions from account to account, the scope of oppression--from minor indignities to horrid atrocities--is made powerfully and articulately evident.

~~The editors xxx~~

Bonnie (what do you know about her? What kinda doctor?) and Don have obviously put in many years and much legwork to compile the MS to this point. Don, at least, spent much time on the road collecting these accounts. I wouldn't want to make the collection of additional material a precondition to publication. It could be demoralizing to them. (Are any other publishers in the running or are we sure we can have the MS if we want it?)

I suggest that we write them saying we favor publication and will send a contract soon if they're agreeable (do they know that spring 88 is earliest possible pub. date?). Then, we can also suggest whatever revisions we decide upon (your points 4 and 5), without making the collection of new material compulsory.

As you can see, I'm enthusiastic, partly because I've worked in the area and know how hard it is to collect writing of this quality. Let's discuss.

- L. P.S. I don't like the title & subtitle? What about yours? Are they committed to this title? I know ~~they~~ we can come up with a better one.

of time -
^ consuming

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