



Journal

Volume

89

January/February 2008

A bimonthly audio magazine
of contemporary culture
& Christian conviction

January/February 2008

Journal 89

more on

Psychiatry and Normal Life

*The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sadness into Depressive Disorder** (2007) by Jerome C. Wakefield and Allan V. Horwitz was published by Oxford University Press. Christopher Lane's *Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness** (2007) is published by Yale University Press. Dan G. Blazer's *The Age of Melancholy: "Major Depression" and Its Social Origins** (2005) was published by Routledge. Carl Elliott's *Better than Well: American Medicine Meets the American Dream** (Norton, 2003) deals with some similar questions in a more general context. Elliott was a guest on volume 70 of the *Journal*, and is also the author of a collection entitled *The Last Physician: Walker Percy and the Moral Life of Medicine** (Duke, 1999). In the introduction to that book, Elliott comments that the picture of the "American Dream" that is now commonly available to us seems to require, "not only that I pursue happiness but that I pursue it aggressively, club it into unconsciousness, and drag it back bound and gagged to my basement." Similar concerns were addressed in *Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness*, one of the reports produced by the President's Council on Bioethics under the leadership of its then-chairman Leon Kass. The report is online at <http://www.bioethics.gov/reports/beyondtherapy/index.html>. Dr. Kass talked about *Beyond Therapy* on volume 70 of the *Journal*; a portion of that interview was a "bonus track," and may be heard on our website at <http://www.marshillaudio.org/cdbonus/default.asp>. Another thinker who has raised questions about how we come to define a condition as suitable for medical care is Peter Conrad. In his *The Medicalization of Society: On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders** (Johns Hopkins, 2007), he notes that in the thirty-plus years in which he taught medical sociology, "the number of life problems that are defined as medical has increased enormously. Does this mean that there is a new epidemic of medical problems or that medicine is better able to identify and treat already existing problems? Or does it mean that a whole range of life's problems have now received medical diagnoses and are subject to medical treatments, despite dubious evidence of their medical nature?" In his book, Conrad explores "the social underpinnings of this expansion of medical jurisdiction and the social implications of this development." Conrad notes that the percentage of GNP spent on health care rose from 4.5% in 1950 to 16% in 2006. To what extent is the overall cost of health care a function of the fact that we are now treating conditions once regarded as part of the human condition as diseases or "syndromes" fixable by chemicals?

Disc 1

1 Introduction

- 1 **Jerome C. Wakefield**, on how psychiatry began ignoring symptoms of mental suffering and so defined sadness as a disease
- 2 **Christopher Lane**, on the complex characteristics of anxiety and the tendency to treat the absence of ease with drugs
- 3 **Dan G. Blazer**, on why psychiatric disorders require attention to the story of patients' lives

Disc 2

- 1 **Fred Turner**, on 1960s dreams of countercultural change and the rise of the *Whole Earth Catalog*
- 2 **Barrett Fisher**, on the films of screenwriter Charlie Kaufman (*Being John Malkovich*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, etc.)
- 3 **Thomas Hibbs**, on the theme of the possibility of redemption in *film noir*, "neo-noir," and similar films
- 4 **Jerome Wakefield**, on the role of drug companies in promoting new views of human well-being

*An asterisk means that the book is in print; if you wish to purchase it from our friends at Splintered Light Books, call 1.800.979.3310.

more on

Philosophies in Film

Thomas Hibbs's *Arts of Darkness: American Noir and the Quest for Redemption** (2008) was published by Spence. Listeners interested in the issues raised by Hibbs may also wish to look at a recent book from InterVarsity Press entitled *Faith, Film and Philosophy: Big Ideas on the Big Screen** (2007), edited by R. Douglas Geivett and James S. Spiegel. Among the fourteen essays is one by Gregory E. Ganssle called "Consciousness, Memory and Identity: The Nature of Persons in Three Films by Charlie Kaufman." David P. Hunt reflects on the question of "Gnosis and Authenticity in *The Matrix*," which is the subtitle of an essay called "The Sleeper Awakes." James S. Spiegel raises questions about time and destiny in "What Would Have Been and What Could Be: Counterfactuals in *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Run Lola Run*." Among essays more interested in moral than philosophical issues is Caroline J. Simon's "Vengeance, Forgiveness and Redemption in *Mystic River*."

Other Works Mentioned

Fred Turner's *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism** (2007) is published by Chicago.



The **MARS HILL AUDIO** *Journal* is produced at our studio in rural central Virginia, outside of historic Charlottesville. The *Journal* is one of several audio products we distribute, all of them intended to encourage greater wisdom about interaction with contemporary culture.

If you would like more information about our work, please request a free catalog by calling 800.331.6407, consulting our online resources at www.marshillaudio.org, or writing to P.O. Box 7826, Charlottesville, Virginia 22906-7826.