

Bachelor's thesis

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2014

Anu Korvenniemi

EXPERIENCES FROM PSYCHOSIS

– Story of a book “Toisen maailman kartalla”



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Kuvaus kirjan ”Toisen maailman kartalla” valmistumisesta.

ASIASANAT:

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Toisen maailman kartalla

THANK YOU / KIITOKSET

Writers / Kirjoittajat Lotta, Ville, Pirkko, Helena, Antero, kuvittaja Kaarina Laanti sekä Ntamo.

1 INTRODUCTION

The idea of making a book about psychosis experiences was based on the need of peer support and positive stories of people that have survived well and continued their lives after psychosis experience. Also the book aimed to become a tool for developing the care as well as offer information for anyone whose life has been touched by psychosis or is working in the mental health field.

The book is formed by five stories written by people that have experienced psychosis or psychosis-like state. The writers have chosen start- and end points to their stories. They tell and analyze the circumstances before their psychosis experience, they describe the experience itself and give the reader a rare chance to see what psychosis experience actually is like.

The book was published by Ntamo and can be found in the library of Turku University of Applied Sciences.

2 THE MEANING AND THE PROCESS

The idea of making a book about psychosis experiences was based on the need of peer support and positive stories of people that have survived well and continued their lives after psychosis experience. Also the book aimed to become a tool for developing the care as well as offering information for anyone whose life has been touched by psychosis or is working in the mental health field. As the writers also describe the psychosis experience itself, the book gives a reader a rare chance to see what a psychosis experience actually is like.

The book has five writers who were found from different places, such like mailing list of an association, through “someone who knew someone”, etc. They all offer a different point of view. The writing processes varied but the main idea was to first “write the story as it happened” and in the end analyze the circumstances that predicted the psychosis. Also they analyze how the experience has changed their lives and what they have learnt about themselves through the process.

Ntamo, the publisher, who promised from the beginning to be a partner in the process, made this book possible. All the writers knew during the whole process that in the end the book will be published, which made the whole project motivating.

3 THE WRITERS AND WRITTEN SAMPLES

The following samples are translated chapters from the book, one from each writer. The translations are not professional, meaning that even though the subject matter is correct, the tone of the text may not be reached as it is.

Lotta – Was I born as a shaman or do I have a mental health problem?

”As younger than 10 years old, I was extremely happy. The world was mystical, magical and wonderful. There were miracles everywhere – scary and fascinating places. Brooks, old mossy trees, thrillingly shaped rocks, abandoned sheds, playgrounds. In the riverbed where the water had gone low because of lack of rain, there was a sandy islet. On the islet laid a dry fish skeleton. It was a miracle to me, miracle where I could feel the echo of the great questions of the universe. I could feel how everywhere the curtain between worlds was thin and wavering..”

Ville – The unknown soldier

”The psychologist of the army hospital thought that I might have some kind of a depression but guided me to talk to my commander. The commander didn’t understand how serious my situation was, but he was very understanding. He reminded me that there was going to be a three days’ vacation and that I should just relax by taking few beers. I had imagined that I had made big mistakes but the commander was actually very satisfied and was going to send me to a vice commander course.

When I was closing my own closet before leaving, I made a decision not to return to garrison. I decided that I would try to commit suicide with a car on a way home.”

Pirkko – A room of one's own

"The sharp eye person feeds me many poison pills. I wake up in the borders of the dark. Under my feet there is only shaking swamp to where I drown. The pain shrinks my heart, the fear blocks my throat. I choke!

To the kitchen, to the kitchen! I have to get water, to get water! Round, grey haired, black cooking lady turns to look at me.

"Give me water, Rose, give me water!!"

Rose takes calmly a glass from the closet and pours me water. I take the glass with my greedy hands.

"Rose, I am in awful emergency!"

"Sit down to this chair, darling", says Rose and takes a book from a closet. She turns the pages for a while and hands the book over, to me. "Read here, dear."

"...He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death", I read, "I will fear no harm..."

Suddenly I realize: *Though I walk through a dark valley of death, I will fear no harm...*" The Bible! And dad and mom...

I flood with tears. Rose takes me into her round-safe hug. A fragile spiderweb starts to grow under my feet."

Helena – crazy happy. Story of post-pregnancy psychosis

"It would be important to guide the care personnel to understand, that though the post-pregnancy psychosis patient would be in involuntary ward and not capable for example to talk - it doesn't mean that she wouldn't hear or understand, though in her own way. This is why the default value should be that she understands what she hears. She should be explained that what is happening to her is a post-pregnancy psychosis and that it is not her fault and it is not caused by something that she has done or what she has been thinking. She should be explained that she is in the ward because she is being helped there and that people want only good for her and the illness will pass. Then maybe part of the worsening of the symptoms that happen because of the weirdness of the ward, would not happen (..)."

Antero – Two deaths to a Writer

"In the Lapinlahti mental hospital I died twice. I don't know what it feels like to be dead, but I dare to say that I know what it feels like to die. It was so strong, so different, not like anything I had experienced before. It was so real, so true, and it kept going and going and going. The death doesn't end anything. And that is what was so scary about it. It continues and continues and when you try to handle it with your senses in the detectable reality that has different rules, it can't work. To work, death must include some kind of a change of reality or level of awareness, otherwise the person will live forever. Though so he does, in my opinion. Only, that the perspective and interface must change."

4 DISCUSSION

Ntamo is a small publisher, and the book wasn't advertised at all. In the process of making this book I believed I was working on a small book, a book that hopefully some people who need it, could find through the grapevine. I am now amazed but happy that the book has found its way to the shelves of many university libraries and common libraries as well private collections. Actually, it was even stolen from one library, which made me and one of my writers very happy. We felt that the book was definitely needed!

Seriously speaking: When I started making the book, I was not aware how important subject this is. Nor had I understood the need for a project like this. I felt humbled as I experienced how openly and bravely the writers were telling their stories even though there definitely were also difficult times for them in the process – they worked hard in order to help others, to share information and personal experience. I was very impressed by the high quality of the texts the writers produced. I think this book includes some of the best prose I have ever encountered! This is a novel, not just some “experience stories put together”. I am well aware that my translations for his report do not do justice to the original texts!!

I believe this book has a lot to give. It shows that psychosis is much more than just a clinical state that can be diagnosed. This whole process has made me see that clinical terms can hardly fully describe what is going on in a human brain. Instead, stories like these can lead us much further. They give us an opportunity to truly understand - not with just clinical words, but with our hearts.

Appendix 1 Toisen maailman kartalla

Anu Korvenniemi (toim.):

Toisen maailman kartalla. Kirjoituksia psykoosista



Toisen maailman kartalla on toisenlainen kirja psykoosista. Sen kirjoittajat – Lotta, Ville, Pirkko, Helena ja Antero – ovat kaikki kokeneet psykoosin. He ovat kaikki myös selvinneet kokemuksestaan ja elävät täysipainoista, rikasta elämää. Kaikki he myös uskovat, että kokemus on ollut heille tärkeä: viestinyt asioista elämässä ja itsessä, joita he eivät muutoin ehkä olisi pysähtyneet käsittelemään. Heidän mukanaan lukijakin voi nähdä mieltä ja merkitystä sellaisessakin, minkä ehkä muutoin kuittaisi harhoiksi ja menetetyiksi päiviksi.

Kirjoittajat kertovat kokemuksistaan suoraan ja vivahteikkaasti, eivätkä heidän käsityksensä aina suinkaan ole yhteneväisiä. *Toisen maailman kartalla* tarjoaa hurjia matkoja ja lämpimiä kuvauksia välittämisestä; sen voi myös lukea kaunokirjallisena teoksena. Samalla se on puheenvuoro kokijoiden kuuntelemisen puolesta.

Kirjan toimittaja Anu Korvenniemi on sairaanhoito-opiskelija ja teos on osa hänen lopputyötään. “Tartu ojennettuun käteen ja astu toisen maailman kartalle.”

Hinta

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LINK:<http://www.ntamo.net/product/673/anu-korvenniemi-toim-toisen-maailman-kartalla-kirjoituksia-psykoosista>