

Michael has published two books of mental health memoirs, describing his own spiritual experiences and also his contacts within the professional world of mental health 1993-2005. The first volume is called *Angels, Cleopatra And Psychosis*, and the follow up book is called *Leonardo, Romancia and Ra*. Both were published by **Chipmunkpublishing** in 2009, and are available at Amazon ([UK](#), [France](#), [Germany](#)). They can also be ordered from all good bookshops.

Michael's involvement in mental health during the 1990s and 2000s was a considerable impediment to his creative writing. Not only was he ultimately forced to explain himself in his two mental health memoirs listed above, but he also had to become an expert in psychiatry to do so, reading every book on the subject he could get hold of. Most are truly dreadful. But for those who are interested, *A Treatise On Insanity* by Phillippe Pinel 1806 is a fascinating account of asylum life around the time of the French revolution, and *A History Of Psychiatry: From The Era Of The Asylum To The Age Of Prozac* by Edward Shorter details the barbery of psychiatry through frontal lobotomy, ECT and forced injections rather well. Kay Redfield Jamison's *An Unquiet Mind* is a good autobiography of the disorientating highs of a manic depressive. Jamison is a research psychiatrist herself, and her other book *Touched With Fire: Manic Depressive Illness And The Artistic Temperament* is the best study of artists and mental states of mind going. However, she over diagnoses. Her list of dead manic depressive artists in the appendix is ridiculous – she's got no proof, and Michael can't find any evidence for Beethoven's alleged psychosis whatsoever. Richard Bentall's *Madness Explained* doesn't explain madness, but it does explain psychiatric drug effects on the brain, particularly documenting the dopamine reducing effects of anti-psychotic medications. Louis A. Sass's *Madness And Modernism* however is truly awful. Michael isn't a great fan of modernism at the best of times, but Sass's book isn't just incomprehensible, it also misses out the most famous modernist madness case of all, that of Dora Maar's mental breakdown in Paris during the early 1940s, this also being the subject of Michael's play *The Minotaur*. Sass's is a book that tells you nothing, and the same can be said for *The Faber Book Of Madness*. [The Madness & Literature Network](#) is worth visiting.

The most baffling and disconcerting form of madness is psychosis, and artistically, it's difficult to interpret or represent. But good interpretations and representations do exist, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Parisian poetry of Gérard de Nerval in *Les Filles du Feu* and *Les Chimères* for example. The two 1990s Radiohead albums *The Bends* and *OK Computer* also articulate psychosis well, as does Natalie Imbruglia's 2001 CD *White Lilies Island*, particularly the two songs *Beauty On The Fire* and *Butterflies*. Psychiatrists would dismiss the lyrics of *Butterflies* as "word salad", but I call them great art.

Michael rejects any accusation of psychosis ever made against him, believing, instead, that he went through a profound and prolonged religious experience 1993-2005.