

RADICAL ADVENTURE

An Inquiry into Psychedelic
Psychotherapy

Andrew Feldmár

Edited by

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About the author

Andrew Feldmár is a Vancouver-based psychologist and psychotherapist. His approach to therapy seeks to reconnect patients to the joys of everyday life through relying on loving, living relationships, rather than the alienation of the classical doctor–patient relationship. He was born in Hungary during WWII (1940), and after the 1956 revolution was defeated, he immigrated to Canada on his own at the age of sixteen. He graduated with honors from the University of Toronto with a BA in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, as well as an MA in psychology from the University of Western Ontario. He has been a psychotherapist since 1969.

During 1974–75, he spent a year in London, England, intensively studying and training in the practice of psychotherapy under the renowned and controversial Scottish psychiatrist, R. D. Laing. During this year, he also studied with Francis Huxley

(the anthropology of healing), John Heaton (existential psychotherapy), Hugh Crawford (community therapy), and Leon Redler (spiritual emergency). These relationships became life-long friendships. Feldmár also worked with one of the founders of transpersonal psychology, Stanislav Grof at the Esalen Institute in California. He gained further experience in the field while volunteering at Hollywood Hospital in New Westminster, where LSD was legally used for research and therapy. He gained experience in brief psychotherapy in Palo Alto in the research group of Paul Watzlawick.

He has taught, lectured, and led workshops at Simon Fraser University (SFU), The University of British Columbia (UBC), Emily Carr University, and Douglas College. In 1989, he was a guest on a three-part CBC Ideas radio series entitled *R. D. Laing Today*. He has also worked as a consultant in both television and film (e.g., Showcase's *Kink* series, *Neurons to Nirvana: The Great Medicines*). Other career highlights include work with the United Nations; founding the Integra Households Association, a non-profit charity working with those in extreme mental distress; and Third Mind Productions, a film production company that went on to turn out the 1987 film, *Did You Used to Be R.D. Laing?*

He has also worked extensively overseas, mainly in Hungary, where he has published more than thirty books. His first book, *The Rainbow of States of Consciousness*, is now in its third edition. His first book in English, *Credo: R. D. Laing and Radical Psychotherapy*, was published in 2023 by Karnac Books. Two organizations have been set up in Hungary, inspired by Feldmár. The Soteria Foundation was established in 1995 and became a pioneer of community psychiatric care in the country. In 2006, his colleagues and friends founded the Feldmár Institute, in Budapest, in order to popularize his theoretical and practical approach to psychotherapy.

He is well-known to international audiences in the field of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy, having presented at numerous conferences on the subject. He took part in a research study sponsored by MAPS Canada in 2008 to demonstrate the efficacy of MDMA as an adjunct to psychotherapy in patients with severe PTSD. He was also a mentor in the California Institute of Integral Studies program of Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies and Research.

Preface

I was in my third year of life when Albert Hofmann had the first experience of an altered state of consciousness induced by LSD which he had synthesized only five years before. Twenty-seven years later I was initiated into this strange realm. And now, in my eighty-fourth year I wrote this book about what I judge to be vital to remember after my death, crumbs like Hansel and Gretel left behind in the forest hoping to be found and rescued. For more than forty years the most magical psychedelics have been prohibited worldwide. I hope that now we won't miss our chance to realize the gift they embody. It would be deeply regrettable if the current renaissance of psychedelics were to lead to disappointment due to greed and misunderstanding and medicalization and marginalization.

Editors' note

When we decided to undertake the project of editing this book, our first step was to collect all of Andrew's texts and talks on psychotherapy in non-ordinary states of consciousness. We began with the infamous 2001 *Janus Head* article, for which he was barred from entering the US, and went through all his interviews, conference speeches, and essays—right up to his remarks at the launch of his 2023 debut book in English, *Credo: R.D. Laing and Radical Psychotherapy*. We then deconstructed this material to synthesize his approach, which ultimately gave rise to the four chapters of this book—much like in a thematic analysis. After this process of aggregation, deconstruction, and analysis, we worked together with Andrew to build a completely new book. It is based not only on his previous writings and lectures, but also on new conversations between the three of us, along with fresh inputs, reflections, and stories from Andrew.

While we initially set out to gather and synthesize Andrew's key points into a coherent text, we soon realized that his message of radical presence and navigating the unpredictability of the psychedelic encounter meant that any attempt at systematizing and codifying his ideas was impossible. But this did not concern us, as the book offers something far more valuable than a manual: an experience—a transformative process through which the reader may feel inspired, informed, and perhaps even initiated into the lineage that Andrew so generously shares through his wisdom and insights.

Working on this book has been a deeply moving experience for us, and we hope that it may be so for our readers as well.

Aron Büky-Tompa and Daniel Acs
October 2024