

The problem comes, of course, when the media-medic becomes so obsessed with the necessary theatre of the studio that he ignores the tail-end of Wyndham's warning and starts blaming the audience for any resistance to the message. The ability of the showman-shaman, just like his Celtic predecessors, to carry the audience first out of itself (by the entertainment of the process) then further into its own psyche (by the healing advice imparted) is a modern skill built on solid traditional practices. But it can all too easily become an end in itself. For the charlatan, the medium really is the message.

This is, after all, the Theatre of Embarrassment. Wyndham's very next essay is on P. J. Proby. Proby (aka Jim Smith, the Texas oil-man's son with pony-tailed pretensions), as I am sure you will remember,

was the man once tipped for pop-star idolatory or humiliation. He chose the latter, by splitting his trousers on the more prurient stage of the Cavendish Club in Sheffield. And I should know ... I was there!

References

- MATTHEWS, J. (1991) *The Celtic Shaman: a handbook*. Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books.
 PHILLIPS, A. (1993) *On Kissing, Tickling and Being Bored*. London: Faber & Faber.
 WYNDHAM, F. (1991) *The Theatre of Embarrassment*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Michael Shooter, *Consultant in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Gwent Community Health Trust, Ty Bryn Adolescent Unit, St Cadoc's Hospital, Caerleon, Newport, Gwent NP6 1XQ*

11th Pan African Psychiatric Conference

O. O. Famuyiwa

The Association of Psychiatrists in Africa has re-emerged after 11 years of dormancy, related to communications problems, migration of African psychiatrists to overseas centres and the demoralising impact of Africa's socio-political miasma.

The Nigeria chapter initiated the 11th Pan African Psychiatric Conference, held in Lagos from 20-25 November 1994. The main theme 'Socio-economic changes and mental health in Africa', was eloquently debated and the salient observations distilled in a communiqué. Sub-themes included biological psychiatry, primary care, manpower and resources allocation and the 'home-bred' so-called transcultural disorders. A World Health Organisation delegation made important contributions on nosology and classification.

Forty-five papers were presented – about six times the number read at the first conference in 1961, held in Abeokuta, Nigeria.

The representation of South Africa at the meeting caused considerable excitement and might have instigated the proposition to hold the next conference in that country in 1998 or before.

The conference curtain fell with the setting up of a non-statutory interim executive charged with the task of mobilising members across Africa and beyond to carving a fresh niche for the Association.

O. O. Famuyiwa, *Associate Professor of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, Lagos University Teaching Hospital, PMB 12003, Lagos, Nigeria*