

BOOK REVIEW by DAVID SLATTERY

‘Regulating the Psychological Therapies: from taxonomy to taxidermy.’

By Denis Postle (2007, PCCS Books: Ross-on-Wye).

This is a passionate book. A book written by a man stirred into action by his experience of injustice and hurt. There is a righteous anger in this writing ‘*There are no innocent bystanders in this matter*’ p76 and Denis is on the side of right. Denis Postle has had enough, he is a man with a mission like Helen Zahavi’s heroine Bella in ‘*Dirty Weekend*’ a woman who has been pushed too far by men and society’s attitude to women. She has nothing to lose and becomes very powerful and dangerous because of that, and so Postle who feels that the ‘*prairie land*’ of psychopractice has been colonised by the ‘*farmers*’ of the accrediting bodies (ukcp, bacp, bcp, bpc and bps) and their henchman the training organisations, he too is now firing from the hip.

‘The tone of what I have said may seem sharp, or harsh, or hurtful, or intemperate, but I feel that I have looked on for long enough in despairing passivity while one of the most precious development of the second half of the twentieth century is bricked up to starve – and some of the people doing the bricking are from my own family. That hurts.’ p28

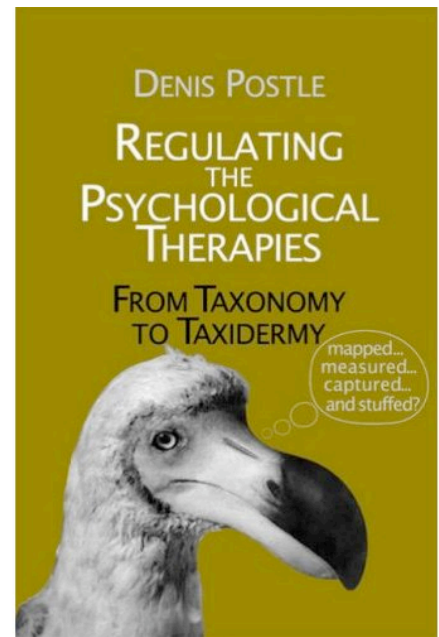
This proselytising (or Postletising!) polemic is impressive in its Pilger-like tenaciousness tracking the moves towards ‘professionalisation’ through letters and articles from January 1990 to February 2007 (the contemporary nature of this book is one of its many impressive features).

UKCP is involved in activities that are, ‘*...economically driven ‘ethical cleansing’, dressed up as care for clients.*’ p25, he does not pull his punches.

In the Foreword Brian Thorne speaks to some of my experience in reading this book. I felt shaken up and woken up.

‘...the readers of this, at times, coruscating analysis of the current scene will not only awake out of sleep but, in the words of the ancient Advent Collect, ‘put on the armour of light’. That armour will be needed, there can be no doubt.’

Perhaps one of the traps into which one can fall when ‘*outraged*’ is to at times lose coherence. This happens in Postle’s comments about Petruska Clarkson who moves from ‘*bulldozer in action*’ p28 a comment she attracts for her ‘*mine-is-bigger-than-yours*’ list of qualifications/accreditations, to her being the innocent



victim of the ukcp machine that is prepared ‘*...to wreck the working life of anyone who threatens its progress to statutory salvation*’. p141. But hey! This is a fight for survival. Perhaps if a few low blows are swung, or the ‘*marquis of Queensbury rules*’ are not followed to the letter it doesn’t matter.....anyway according to this book the accrediting bodies have had the gloves off for some time.

Now there is a great temptation in areas of such importance, and professional survival, as this to become polarised (with ipn or the accrediting bodies as the saviour or the victim). What I am very grateful for, in Denis Postle’s book, is that I have felt shaken and woken up a bit more to what has/is being done in my name.

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Glossary:

ukcp united kingdom council for psychotherapy
bacp: -british association of counselling and psychotherap
bcp: british confederation of psychotherapists
bpc: british psychoanalytic council
bps: british psychological society
ipn: independent practitioners network
bcpc: bath centre for psychotherapy and counselling