

## POEM

### The seven ages of a neocon therapist (after Ian Birchall)

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At first the client in a sunlit room, correcting the therapist's quote.  
Then the nervy trainee in smart-casual attire, aghast at the tutor's  
Unprofessional warmth. And then the writer, in *Counsellor Monthly*,  
Of laudable words in database sheets, computing the level of  
Congruence, measuring empathy, assessing the amount of  
Unconditional regard for positive change. Then the Professor,  
Full of peculiar new words, reading from *PowerPoint*, adept at  
Dodging genuine questions, keen on research, polished in disagreement,  
Smoothing inconsistency with the private anecdote. And then the  
International Figure, the keynote speaker of platitudes coated in vague  
Political jargon, the peddler of positivism with a humane flourish who,  
Amid free lunches, publicly opines on the state of the world. The sixth age  
Turns into the paltry expert asked to endorse new versions of the  
Old model which proclaims, with studied passion, 'we have the means to  
Quantify experience, defeat uncertainty, abolish the unconscious and  
Build a stable future'. The last chapter of our dreary yarn sees our hero  
Repeating the old mottos, now merrily quoted by the new bureaucrats.