

profession. I do not want to apportion blame, but don't we, as a profession, have at least some part in the co-creation of IAPT? I would have welcomed some thoughts on this also.

Overall, this a thoroughly timely and thought-provoking book; I just wanted more. How can we, as a profession, engage with each other and enter into a more constructive dialogue across modalities? Perhaps this could be the theme of the next book: *The Future of Psychological Therapy*?

### Note

1. Graham Music Blog: Brexit, project fear, brains, racism, inequality and the other.

### Reference

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### A response to Martin Pollecoff and Adrian Hemmings

The counselling and psychotherapy profession is approaching a crucial point in its history. After 40 years of increasing domination by managed care and evidence-based practice, which have come to full expression in the UK in this century in the NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) scheme, there is now a growing backlash. A number of publications are beginning to challenge the way in which the dominant discourse has, in effect, shut down debate about different approaches to practice and research as a result of creating the message that all is well with psychological problems ever since 'scientists have recognized the superiority of CBT', and that research is just about evaluation. The book *The Future of Psychological Therapy* is one of those publications that challenges this point of view. Its aim is to open up debate and work towards a profession that is balanced and not just taken over by the dominant discourse.

My professional concern in proposing and subsequently editing the book was to remind readers about what is taking place around us, and in so doing remind ourselves of the creative traditions of the profession, which seemed to me to be in danger of getting brushed aside. I was also motivated to support an approach to therapy which maintains a sense of what Martin Pollecoff refers to as 'real psychotherapy' – i.e. an approach to therapy based on 'freedom, mystery and self-discovery, and social change' – as opposed

to an approach to therapy which is disseminated by language that Pollecoff aptly compares to '1950s Soviet tractor factory production reports'.

We are currently living in a (Kairos) time of opportunity. The situation in our profession mirrors a broader dissatisfaction with a neoliberal global capitalism that only serves elites, is driven by money, profiteering and greed, and can be destructive: the 'globalized free market' has heralded the onset of an emphasis on 'shareholders, gains, minimizing losses and attracting capital flow', and has turned 'economic welfare ... into economic warfare' (Dekkers-Appel, 2015, p. 11). Indeed, the 'idea of social cohesion, mutual responsibility, protection of the disabled and safeguarding employees is diametrically opposed to the idea of the free market' (ibid., p. 12). These developments, which have huge consequences for the practice of therapy, were predicted many years ago by Steiner (1919/2004) who said that spiritual life will be taken over by lies, egoism will become dominant in social life and American principles will dominate economic life becoming the leading world force and all of this will result in physical illness and the death of culture.

The Kairos possibilities of challenging these developments have led to political turbulence and movements on both the left and the right, as in the 1920s and 1930s, such as Trumpism in the USA, the Momentum political movement associated with the British Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn, and many other similar movements throughout Europe, as well as Brexit and disillusionment among young people. The fact that the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) are not regulated by the state means that many of our colleagues are not aligned to the state by law, and are therefore relatively free to think about these things when they go about their practice and research. We are able to avoid an approach to therapy which is subject to the fact that 'welfare from the point of view of the State is almost always interwoven with social control, anxiety about the possible uppity behaviour of ordinary people' (Humphries, 2015).

So the therapy profession with its longstanding subversive qualities, as Adrian Hemmings points out referring to the chapter by Del Loewenthal, can stand against some of the most undesirable developments in our society. Like the young doctors who, as Martin Pollecoff points out, were striking for 'who is in charge' rather than for pay and contracts, we are able to do the same. We do not, like Jeremy Hunt (apparently the wealthiest Conservative government minister) and the vast majority of politicians, Conservative and 'New Labour' alike, have to promote the profits of big business where the rich get richer (including themselves), the poor get poorer, and the middle class are gradually eliminated. We are free of all this, and are able to stand against the prevailing trend in health care which, 'rather than focusing on prevention, fostering healthy lives ... is set up to deal with the symptoms of bad health', which 'is a profitable model for big pharmaceutical companies, of course, because treating ill health requires expensive procedures and drugs' (Jones, 2014, p. 201).

In his review, Martin Pollecoff also draws our attention to Pol Pot's 'Year Zero' concept in Cambodia in the 1970s. In so doing he makes a point which I also recently referred to in an article (Lees, 2016), and which underpinned the book, namely a concern that IAPT carries the danger of giving the impression that the therapy profession only began in 2006, and that the 100 years of innovations preceding this were merely the musings of a primitive and pre-scientific age. One outcome of Pol Pot's regime was that about 20% of the Cambodian population, a gentle people

with a great and distinguished cultural history, were slaughtered after Year Zero. In twenty-first-century Britain, people obviously do not get slaughtered in this way. But nevertheless, a similar phenomenon after the advent of IAPT can be observed in our profession, in that many third sector therapy organizations have already been eliminated.

I do not deny that, as Adrian Hemmings writes, the book may be a ‘response to trauma’. It is certainly the case that it is part of a polarization between ‘us’ and ‘them’ which has taken place in recent years, and it is equally certain that we need an alternative vision to the dominant discourse. This can take the form of striving to celebrate, maintain and further the creative traditions of the profession, but it might also take the form, as he says, of humanizing IAPT, researching into what is actually taking place in IAPT, and creating more dialogue. Hemmings is also right to point out that we need to produce a *Future of Psychological Therapy 2* (I would say even *Future of Psychological Therapy 3*, so that we can address all of his concerns). As Martin Pollecoff points out, the professional landscape is changing. There is an opportunity to respond to this in an active, creative and vigorous, rather than a passive way.

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