The only serious omission from this book (last entry in August 2015) is Monbiot's stance on Europe and Brexit. For that, you can go to his website and look under 'globalisation', where he comes out in favour of the EU as the 'lesser evil' (the alternative being greater subservience to the USA). This is the only point where I disagree with him – by leaving the EU, we at least have a chance to extricate ourselves from all the evils of the EU that Monbiot lists and resist the blandishments of Trump and American capital. However, on every other opinion he expresses I am with him. Surprisingly, the main thing I take away from this collection of articles is not the impending doom of climate change, but the many ways in which we allow the rich to get away with it while they harm the rest of the planet.

References

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Unrecognized trauma

Trauma, abandonment and privilege: a guide to therapeutic work with boarding school survivors, by Nick Duffell and Thurstine Bassett, Abingdon, Oxon/New York, NY, Routledge, 2016, 200 pp., £17.59 (paperback), ISBN: 978-1138788701

Following on from Nick Duffell's pioneering book *The Making of Them* (Lone Arrow Press, 2000), *Trauma, Abandonment and Privilege* is a must-read for any and every therapist who has worked, is working or may work with clients in connection with boarding school, in whatever capacity – which is almost inevitable, even if the connection is outside awareness. However, the style, the approach and the content reaches far beyond this readership. Anyone who has any experience of and/or interest in the phenomenon of boarding as a practice dating back over centuries, which remains 'alive and kicking' today, will find this a compelling read.

The layout, using clear sections and headings, makes for easy access and digestible 'chunks' – important since the material may be emotive for many readers. The authors write:

> Boarding is one of the most unusual kinds of trauma in that it is imposed deliberately and carries with it the benefits of social privilege. It entails a requirement to emerge as a competent person destined for societal success. Until very recently it has also been an unrecognised trauma, and there are many interests at stake to keep it hidden. (p. 91)

The authors stress the strength of attachment to the 'Strategic Survival Personality' (p. 21), necessarily constructed to withstand intense emotions of bewilderment, anxiety, loss and protest when faced with a strange environment, and how the reluctance to let go affects

the therapeutic as well as familial relationships. Highly relevant references are made to the pioneering psychiatrist William Halse Rivers (as portrayed in Pat Barker's 'Regeneration' trilogy) in Chapter 3, 'Managing Separation' and under the sub-heading 'Lost for Words'. Rivers noticed that only enlisted men were 'struck dumb' when encouraged to recall memories; officers, public school boys were '*already* practised in the art of dissociation, learned at school' (pp. 37–38). On page 40 there is a moving and chilling insert from the wife of a corporate high-flier, who says:

> I have a husband who has no concept of or apparent need for relationship of any kind other than those which can bring him short-term business benefit. He has no ability for intimacy and no perceptible sex-drive.

As a prelude to Chapter 5, 'Signs, Symptoms and Relationships', there is a reference to therapists who 'are overly prone to seeing client's 'more attractive and vulnerable sides' rather than the darker side, that they may end up 'colluding with the client's tendency to split rather than reveal' (p. 51).

'There are those', the authors write, 'who enter therapy for a number of reasons but specifically not to look at boarding issues' (p. 63), and 'the issue for therapists is how to raise this subject and, once it is put on the agenda, how to keep it there' (p. 64). Later in the book, the authors stress the value of 'the therapist's main task [as] not to miss clues, and if possible, to prevent the client from leaving therapy too early' (p. 186).

Chapter 8 comprehensively covers not only 'What Is Trauma?', with reference to the work of Martin Pollecoff, who runs a therapy service for ex-servicemen called 'The Long Boat Home', but also 'Developmental Trauma', paying attention to 'the *context* in which the trauma occurred is the key' with reference to the work of Dan Siegel (p. 109).

In Chapter 9, 'Sex – Puberty, Gender and Abuse', the reader learns how the trauma of boarding is not limited to young children; the authors cover all aspects of maturation: latency, puberty and 'Boarding School attitudes to sexuality'. Many moving personal contributions demonstrate and illustrate 'Boarding's sexual legacy' (p. 130).

Next comes 'The Healing Process' (Chapter 10). Normalization and 'the will not to change' – with reference to the work of Roberto Assagioli – are two of the resistant forces at work. To 'let go' not only of strategies but of the entire persona who got the child and teenager through can be re-traumatizing. 'If, phenomenologically, change is inevitable, trying to intentionally change the self is not' (p. 148). It is a mysterious, complex process, beset with hard work, highs and lows, gains and setbacks, and surprising reserves of inertia.

From 'acknowledging being wounded' to 'experiencing and accepting feelings about being sent away, and about what happened at school', and 'seeing that they have survived their wounding and understand how they did it' … 'the fourth step is one of acceptance. In developing their strategic survival personalities they did the very best they could to protect themselves at a time they were unprotected', and 'they inadvertently betrayed themselves. If they can truly forgive themselves for this, and have compassion for themselves, and make amends to those whom they may have harmed while surviving, then they will be able to move on.' Finally comes 'monitoring their strategic survival personalities and beginning to substitute more healthy behaviour patterns' (pp. 149–150).

The book concludes with 'Homecoming' (Chapter 12). 'The boarder's deep longing to come home has to be suppressed at school but can last a lifetime in the psyche' (p. 175). There follows a series of contributions that serve here, as in the rest of the book, to bring the text to life by weaving together narrative, context, emotion and meaning into an integrated whole.

A powerful book – much needed and not to be overlooked: by therapists, clients and the wider world.

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Tweeting while Rome burns

Hyper Normalisation – A film by Adam Curtis, 166 mins, 2016, Jaye/Gorel, BBC iPlayer, http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p04b183c/adam-curtis-hypernormalisation

The world is going to hell in a filter bubble – or at least those parts of it mesmerized by the internet and, especially, social media. We are tweeting while Rome burns. Meanwhile, the rest of the world – where reality takes place – harbours 'festering' and 'mutating' forces, arising from the West's simplistic foreign policies, which, for several decades, have focused on God-blessed America and her allies ridding the planet – or the Middle East at least – of despots. After which democracy will naturally flourish.

Except, of course, it doesn't. And Iraq and many of the 'Arab Spring' countries are in chaotic turmoil, riven by the proliferation of 'the poor man's nuclear bomb': suicide bombers, who multiplied after theological sleight of hand transformed forbidden suicide into sanctified martyrdom.

And no one, apart presumably from those organizing and executing these acts of incendiary insurrection, has any 'vision of a different or better future'.

It is with these damning words that Adam Curtis's latest mega-documentary 'HyperNormalisation' begins, echoing the closing sentiments of his last, 'Bitter Lake': 'What is needed is a new story, and one that we can believe in'.

'HyperNormalisation' is a bad trip of a film, and having ingested 166 minutes of Sandoz-quality, pure ADAM C, there is no coming down: things are not getting better, despite what Yuval Noah Harari says in his 2011 book *Sapiens*, where the reduction in international warfare and famine is highlighted. The only way is not up. The art of politics has largely been abandoned: 'the end of a dream that politics could change the world'. And it is true that politicians who actually believe in change – Jeremy Corbyn springs to mind – are often viewed as dangerous. So 'managed outcomes' are all that can be expected. Trying to minimize risk in the face of environmental disasters, climate change and war conducted on a small and individual scale through suicide bombing. How can peace negotiations take place when the populace is too frightened to venture out in the streets, asks Curtis of the Israel-Palestine situation.

It all seems to have started in 1975, when Henry Kissinger was seeking to establish balance in the interconnected system he perceived the world to be, thereby enabling a truly global society. At the same time, Hafiz al Assad – the father of the current Syrian leader – was seeking to develop stability in the Middle East, to enable the Arab world to stand up to the West. He saw that Palestinian refugees must be allowed to return to their homeland to establish