

Perhaps the most challenging of these concepts is the paradoxical theory of change (pp. 23–4). The assumptions on which the theory is based include, among others, the ability to self-regulate, make choices, stay in the here-and-now, and bear pain, and Taylor shows throughout the book how to help trauma patients to develop these skills and capacity.

I enjoyed Taylor's use of *experiments*, a concept Gestalt therapists will be familiar with. In addition to working experimentally with clients, she has also introduced experiments that therapists can try on themselves. By doing these, readers may be able to shift their understanding from an abstract dimension to one that is more tangible, and they may also get a better grasp of the struggle experienced by trauma sufferers (p. 105).

Although Taylor writes about the close relationship between Gestalt and Sensorimotor therapy, and despite the fact that she acknowledges the common ancestry of the two approaches, I felt Sensorimotor theory and practice were somewhat redundant in her book. Tracking, contact and experimentation are, as Taylor writes (p. 6), the ancestors of some of Sensorimotor Psychotherapy methodologies, and if you follow Taylor's guidance through Gestalt Therapy you will be better equipped in delivering better trauma therapy.

In Part 1, the author introduces the Gestalt concept of the *field*, expanding the conventional view on the subject, and considering all the various forces at work. This perspective is relational: it does not see trauma as an internal problem that needs to be removed, but one that invites us to think how trauma may be maintained in the life of the sufferer. In Part 2, Taylor zooms in and considers the actual work with the individual, including hurdles and how to overcome them. Part 3 focuses on the relationship between patient and therapist, which for me carries much of the potential for healing.

Taylor's approach to working with trauma clearly is a Gestalt one, and her book deserves to be called Gestalt Trauma Therapy. For me, her contribution to Gestalt theory and practice is too important to be left for the smaller print. Having followed and implemented Taylor's approach to trauma therapy, I feel I am now on even more solid ground as a therapist working with traumatized patients. 5

Why Love Matters for Justice

Wounded Leaders: British Elitism and the Entitlement Illusion

By: Nick Duffell

Lone Arrow Press, London, 2014, 367 pp

ISBN-13: 9-780953-790432, price £17.00 (hardback)

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'I hope you're not missing me because I'm certainly not missing you', writes a small boy in a letter home to his mother (p. 80). He is lying. By this stage, the process of disowning one's feelings, essential for survivors of the institutionalized malevolence known as elite education, is complete, and the child is on his way to build a functioning false self, essential in his future life in the high echelons of society. This little-soldier-in-the-making may one day shout irately at his perceived inferiors as 'plebs' from the height of a bicycle seat. He may publicly address in Parliament a woman from the opposition with the phrase 'Calm down, dear', or will do his bumbling buffoon shtick whilst achieving precious little for the town he runs apart, from advancing his own profile. Most therapists will readily maintain that love is important to the development of a healthy human being, particularly during childhood. Many of us received with enthusiasm the publication a while ago of a book that spelled out *why love matters*. Of course, given the views now in vogue – psychotherapy trainees being taught how to *measure* empathy, and so forth – those timid two words *love matters* are beginning to sound seditious.

But is it enough to say that love matters? I wonder how many among us are ready to go a little further than our ritual stint of 'audience democracy' – the indolently benignant stance of tapping one's foot in agreement to the tune of worthy beliefs. My guess is: not many. Only very few of us – and Nick Duffell is among them – are geared up to expose the massive financial and institutional interests established on the premise that love does *not* matter *in the least*. Only very few of us are ready to dedicate their life's work to clarify how love and nurture are consistently hindered in order to prop up a pervasive pathology known

as the 'national character ideal'.

One of these giant vested interests is the elite education in Britain's public schools, those gilded factories of snobbery and entitlement that produce our future alleged leaders. In his latest book, Nick Duffell tackles this very subject with courage and tenacity, adding a political dimension to the work he has done over the last 25 years, from ongoing men's therapy groups to forays into radio and TV. This book is also a socio-political counterpart to his previous book on public schools, *The Making of Them* (Duffell, 2000).

Well documented, erudite, suitably fervent in its denunciation of excruciatingly unjust, cruel and psychologically antediluvian institutions, this book is a must read for mental health practitioners, and for those who want to gain a deeper insight into the workings of British society. As far as I'm aware, there is no other psychologist at present who has been able to identify a direct link between the dissociative process a 'boarder' is prone to in order to survive, and the intrinsically dissociative structure of places (for instance) such as the House of Commons.

Indiscriminate in his generosity, the author quotes approvingly from insightful thinkers and practitioners such as Panksepp and Schore, but also from dubious and crankier sources such as Wilber, a self-styled 'philosopher' and a demigod among New Agers.

Throughout the book, Duffell uncovers crucial connections between psychology and politics, two spheres held separate by an artificial barrier. Psychological insight is priceless in helping us dissect the very apparatus of exploitation and the hidden motives behind a vast order of injustice. As Duffell writes, 'dissociation became the unconscious driveshaft of the engine of colonialism' (p. 168). That London and England 'still insist on a special role in Europe' is due to the fact that the predominant idea is still that 'we are a leading world power' (p. 122).

The author understands such delusions of grandeur and entitlement as part of what he calls 'the Rational Man Project', a pervasive and culturally predominant mode that shuns vulnerability and disdains the heart. The culprit here is the culture and philosophy of the era of the Enlightenment, which Duffell sees as a uniformly consistent mode of thinking that has enthroned Reason above all other deities. This is not quite right, for alongside the *Encyclopédie philosophes*, the Enlightenment also produced Rousseau, a philosopher on whose ideas the Summerhill libertarian school of Alexander Neill was founded, to quote one example. A key Enlightenment figure, Rousseau also inspired the equally progressive notion of 'negative education' of Georges Lapassade, and was an influence on

the psychology and pedagogy of Carl Rogers. To Kant, by far the greatest philosopher of the Enlightenment, we owe the birth of modern ethics, of the 'mystery of the moral law inside me', as mysterious as the starry sky at night. To see the Enlightenment and 'Reason' as the culprit is to forget that without its influence, we would still be burning witches at the stake. It would be a different matter if the culprit here is *rationalist man*. But the rationalist man venture started way back, with Socrates and the decline of the great tragedians Aeschylus and Sophocles, and continued with Christianity. This topic is too controversial, its implications too vast, to be discussed here. Perhaps the 'rational man project' is another name for positivism and neo-positivism. But then again, Duffell's take on neuroscience, summoned to substantiate his argument, is seemingly over-optimistic, given that the book draws no substantial distinction between the prevalent reductionist version of neuroscience currently in vogue and its more sober and inspiring manifestations. More importantly, however, by assigning the role of the guilty party to an important but rather abstract notion ('rationality'), the issue of class division (crucial in understanding elite education) takes the back seat.

Compared to the overgrown boys that make up the current coalition government in the UK, Obama does look like a true statesman. Yet the author overplays his accomplishments, considering that next to nothing has been achieved by an administration keen on drones, speechifying and the maintenance of the status quo at home and in the Middle East. I am not convinced that, as the author seems to imply, better examples of leadership are on offer in Continental Europe, either.

As an interesting alternative to the institutionalized pathology of the public schools system, the author proposes that 'the stock of boarding schools be recycled and used as sixth form colleges' (p. 334), a public-private partnership example modelled on the Danish *Efterskole* or after-school, with 'per-child subsidy for any form of education outside their immediate control' (p. 335): those who could pay would pay.

As a way of understanding the psychology of our so-called leaders, this book works a treat, and there are some real gems to be found here: 'In Blair' – the author writes – 'I often thought the puffed-up boy was noticeable in how he walked, with his suit buttons determinedly fastened' (p. 104). ☺

Reference

Duffell, N. (2000) *The Making of Them: The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System*, London: Lone Arrow Press