

Poetry Re-purposed – when psy gets lost in translation

Jacqueline Byrne

SUMMARY: This article addresses issues arising from teaching and learning in the complex field of psy. It looks at the ironic position of evaluation structures which are at times in opposition to intended learning outcomes.

KEY WORDS: learning, irony, teaching, student, evaluation

Whilst a technical text might be translated from one language to another quite functionally, poetry rarely survives such conversion. The practice of psy is a marriage of science and art. Whilst we can converse from alternative paradigms on the absolutes of research, attempting to translate the poetry of our practice into the dominant discourse is problematic. It is the cost of this which *Teaching Critical Psychology* calls into question.

As a former student of disciplines including English literature and psychotherapy, I have come across many examples of critical, acritical and critically problematic teaching. My Master's work rejected medical model approaches to 'eating disorders' and instead involved creative writing to explore 'disordered eating'. My reading of *Teaching Critical Psychology* took into account my experiences in the education system. In addition, having worked in the mental health industry for several years, I have experienced the broad spectrum of medical model, modernist, positivist and anti-medical model, post-modern, anti-positivist strands and many in-between. I reviewed this book with all this and more having played a role in my perspective.

As a student I could feel a pull to the philosophically possible yet was restrained by the actuality of the education model in which I was being educated. I found I was

Jacqueline is a psychotherapist and supervisor in private practice and specialises in working with people experiencing body image and eating distress. With a background in English literature, the use of language and the social and psychological messages inscribed therein, is a particular area of interest. Jacqueline's email address is: jacqueline@wingsandquill.com

© Byrne 1471-7646/18/02/108-03