

LETTERS

BIPOLAR II DISORDER

Constructionism

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Surely one can only agree with Spence's intriguing insight that modern psychiatry is "merely an intellectual construct,"¹ and the same is true, of course, of other medical disciplines, as well as the modern scientific project in general.²

Indeed, for some time the ontological status of Spence himself has been contested as a possible *BMJ* construct: a frontline, not to say "full time", no nonsense, hard-headed, GP whose very appellation (Dispense) underlines the pervasive reach of big pharma.

Baudrillard has pointed out that in the post-modern media world the purpose of a simulation is to attest to the reality of the culture that generates it.³ Clearly by signalling the illusory nature of

bipolar II disorder, this article is nothing less than an audacious attempt to persuade us that there is a real person called Des Spence. Nice try.

Competing interests: PJC is one of the authors of the *Shorter Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry*, which treats bipolar II disorder as if it were a medical condition.

- 1 Spence D. Bad medicine: bipolar II disorder. *BMJ* 2011;342:d2767. (4 May.)
- 2 Rorty R. *Objectivity, relativism and truth*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- 3 Baudrillard J. *Simulations*. MIT Press, 1983.

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