

Shaking Hands  
With Monsanto and Big Pharma:  
The Guardian and Observer's ongoing war against  
alternative medicine

A review of *Suckers* by Rose Shapiro<sup>1</sup>

**By Martin J Walker**

On Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, Rose Shapiro got a long introductory piece from her recent book, *Suckers* published in the *Daily Mail*. It was difficult to know what else the book could contain after these three *Daily Mail* pages because in this short article, Shapiro managed to denigrate all and any non orthodox therapy used by the human species. Despite *Suckers* being tagged as a science book, there wasn't a reference in sight, although mention was often made, even in the short excerpt to the authority of Mr Stephen Barrett, the prominent US Quackbuster who leaves a trail of lost court cases against alternative medicine in his wake.

Having read this article, I was inevitably interested in Rose Shapiro, her thing with pages and for that matter its publishing house; what kind of publisher would invest thousands on such a loss leader? Looking up the advertising material for the book on the internet, one thing

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<sup>1</sup> *Suckers*, Rose Shapiro. Harvill Secker, published February 7<sup>th</sup>. 2008

sprang immediately to my attention. Two quotes accompanying the advertising blurb were from prominent Guardian and Observer Journalists.

George Monbiot the Guardian's exceptional investigative writer said: "'Suckers" is a fascinating, excoriating book; witty, shocking and *utterly convincing*'. I have to say that reading this bit of baloney depressed me for days, I will explain why below.

The second quote was from Nicci Gerrard, who writes novels under the name of Nicci French,<sup>2</sup> a joining of her husband's and her own name. Gerrard is a staff editor on the Observer and had the following to say about 'Suckers', 'A devastating, compelling and very witty exposé of the increasingly bizarre world of alternative medicine: truly, a book for our times'. This quotation didn't depress me at all because I learnt long ago not to expect much from in the way of sense from thriller writers, in the main they are like footballers, outside talk about that craft, they are lost for intelligent words. And Nicci Gerrard's father is, or has been the Director of a pharmaceutical company, so, she would be inclined to say that sort of thing, wouldn't she.

I thought as well that Gerrard's quip was so far over the top that inevitably the intelligent portion of the world, would disagree with it, thinking that the real book

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<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with *the* Nikki French who wrote the brilliant Total Eclipse of the Heart lyrics

for our times, would be the one that tells the story of Vioxx the Merck drug that has killed at least 30,000 people in the US, and an untold number of people in Britain.<sup>3</sup> Others, of course might argue that the real book for our times, is the one that tells the story of Avandia the anti diabetes drug that is reckoned by the Senate Finance Committee to have caused approximately 83,000 fatal heart attacks since coming on the market in the late nineteen nineties. These deaths and this drug produced by Glaxo Smith Kline, have been accompanied by a story of dirty tricks, denigration and oppression of a senior diabetes scientist Dr John Buse.<sup>4</sup>

A recent report quotes Dr Buse as saying, 'Corporate intimidation, the silencing of scientific dissent, and the suppression of scientific views threaten both the public well-being and the financial health of the federal government, which pays for health care.'<sup>5</sup> Now there, some would say, is a real story of our time, 'Corporate intimidation and the silencing of scientific dissent'.

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<sup>3</sup> Untold because the science lobby has managed to ensure that damaged individuals or their relatives are denied legal aid to pursue claims against Merck.

<sup>4</sup> The Intimidation of Dr. John Buse: The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over Medicare, Medicaid and the FDA. This makes it an important player in health policy and oversight of the health system. While the Committee's recent report on "The Intimidation of Dr. John Buse and the Diabetes Drug Avandia" is not as dramatic as John Le Carre's "The Constant Gardener", it doesn't miss by much. The Committee's investigation was triggered by a June 14, 2007 New England Journal of Medicine article "Effect of [Avandia] on the Risk of Myocardial Infarction and Death from Cardiovascular Causes."

<http://healthcareorganizationalethics.blogspot.com/2007/11/intimidation-of-dr-john-buse.html>

<sup>5</sup> Counterpunch. Evelyn Pringle. **August 15, 2007**. Protection Racket? The FDA and Avandia

One might have expected George Monbiot to have been drawn to either of these post-modern stories. His most recent book out now in paperback is *Heat*, which analysis the lobbying with deception and denial of the science of global warming. Monbiot has also written about this lobbying under the title of the *The Denial Industry*.<sup>6</sup> In the book Monbiot traces the great ravaging swathe that the corporate lobbyists have cut through truth, science and epidemiology, producing Junk Science to protect profits. The book mentions a number of lobbyists, such as Stephen Milloy, the man who is credited with coining the term Junk Science.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Heat*, George Monbiot, Allen Lane. To order a copy for £16.99 with free UK p&p (rrp £17.99), go to [Guardian.co.uk/bookshop](http://Guardian.co.uk/bookshop) or call 0870 836 0875.

<sup>7</sup> Because Monbiot's work is so good, it's worth quoting him at length, even in a footnote on the lobbying strategies of Philip Morris that included the work of Stephen Milloy.

APCO would found the coalition, write its mission statements, and "prepare and place opinion articles in key markets". By May 1993, as another memo from APCO to Philip Morris shows, the fake citizens' group had a name: the Advancement of Sound Science Coalition (TASSC). APCO would engage in the "intensive recruitment of high-profile representatives from business and industry, scientists, public officials, and other individuals interested in promoting the use of sound science". By September 1993, APCO had produced a "Plan for the Public Launching of TASSC". The media coverage, the public relations company hoped, would enable TASSC to "establish an image of a national grassroots coalition".

There are clear similarities between the language used and the approaches adopted by Philip Morris and by the organisations funded by Exxon. The two lobbies use the same terms, which appear to have been invented by Philip Morris's consultants. "Junk science" meant peer-reviewed studies showing that smoking was linked to cancer and other diseases. "Sound science" meant studies sponsored by the tobacco industry suggesting that the link was inconclusive. "Doubt is our product since it is the best means of competing with the 'body of fact' that exists in the mind of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy."

TASSC did as its founders at APCO suggested, and sought funding from other sources. Between 2000 and 2002 it received \$30,000 from Exxon. The website it has financed - *JunkScience.com* - has been the main entrepot for almost every kind of climate-change denial that has found its way into the mainstream press. It equates environmentalists with Nazis, communists and terrorists. It flings at us the accusations that could justifiably be leveled against itself: the website claims, for example, that it is campaigning against "faulty scientific data and analysis used to advance special and, often, hidden agendas".

The man who runs it is called Steve Milloy. In 1992, he started working for APCO - Philip Morris's consultants. While there, he set up the *JunkScience* site. In March 1997, the documents show, he was appointed TASSC's executive director. By 1998, as he

Milloy's Junk Science site while it has always supported the corporate lobby against global warming has attacked many other groups and individuals who have campaigned against the environmental toxicity caused by corporations. Milloy has supported none more faithfully than Stephen Barrett, and Elizabeth Whelan the head of the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH).

Tucked away in the many site-links on the Junk Science site, is the American Council on Science and Health. In Milloy's site book section, are books by Stephen Barrett and Ronald E. Gots, both writers vehemently opposed to the idea of environmental illness.<sup>8</sup> Books by Fredrick Stare and Elizabeth Whelan, the originator and the present co coordinator of the American Council on Science and Health. And even a book by our very own Michael Fitzpatrick ex-Revolutionary Communist Party member, founding member of the Science Media Centre,<sup>9</sup> Sense About Science and sworn enemy of Dr Andrew Wakefield and major scion of the vaccine industry.<sup>10</sup>

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explained in a memo to TASSC board members, his JunkScience website\ was being funded by TASSC. Both he and the "coalition" continued to receive money from Philip Morris. An internal document dated February 1998 reveals that TASSC took \$200,000 from the tobacco company in 1997. Philip Morris's 2001 budget document records a payment to Steven Milloy of \$90,000. Altria, Philip Morris's parent company, admits that Milloy was under contract to the tobacco firm until at least the end of 2005.

<sup>8</sup> For more information about Gots see Martin J Walker. SKEWED, available from [www.slingshotpublications.com](http://www.slingshotpublications.com). To read about Fitzpatrick's denial of the illness's ME and CFS see the same book/

<sup>9</sup> The London Science Media Centre actually appeared to change its public presentation on global warming, having begun by defending corporate interests on the issue, it is now fairly quiet on that front. Not so its New Zealand Counter part however, which campaigns vehemently against the whole idea, suggesting it's junk science.

<sup>10</sup> Chemical Sensitivity: The Truth About Environmental Illness, Stephen J. Barrett and Ronald E. Gots. Fad-Free Nutrition, Frederick Stare, Panic in the Pantry: Facts & Fallacies About the Food You Buy, Elizabeth M. Whelan and Frederick J. Stare. Toxic Risks: Science, Regulation, and Perception, Ronald E. Gots. Toxic Terror: The Truth Behind the Cancer Scares, Elizabeth M. Whelan. Tyranny of Health: Doctors and the Regulation of Lifestyle, Michael Fitzpatrick, GP

But while Monbiot is on the ball in relation to relatively old work done by Milloy on behalf of Phillip Morrison and Exxon, he avoids reference to many of Milloy's other targets and refuses to link Junk Science up to the other science/medicine lobby's that are generated by the pharmaceutical arm of the denial industry.

However, and I have noticed this before about Monbiot and his chums, especially those in the US, they come down heavily and deservedly on industrial corporations, except the pharmaceutical companies and as you work your way down the chain of public health to the bottom feeders such as GP's who continue to proscribe drugs that kill and maim thousands without ever mentioning the words 'adverse reactions', Monbiot's criticisms deteriorate to less than a whisper.

### **The organisations Monbiot is supporting when he supports suckers**

How can it be that someone who writes so courageously, so entertainingly and one can only say brilliantly about industrial corporations and such subjects as privatisation, goes into a plain blind funk when it comes to medicine. Unfortunately, his crossing the line in support of 'Suckers' dumps him and his bottom down on a bench squeezed between the arses of Ben Goldacre and Stephen Barratt and their denial of the damage caused by orthodox medicine.

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Barratt is the world's most prominent quackbuster and a non practicing psychiatrist. He is someone who has left his chaotic mark of legal ill-judgement on everything he touches. Barrett is a key member of the three organisations that are the foundation of international Quackbusting; the Committee for the Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), the American Council on Science and Health (ACASH) and the American Council Against Health Fraud (ACAHF). All three organisations have a part to play in the Denial Industry about which Monbiot writes so movingly.

All three organisations also played a part in setting up the British Council Against Health Fraud, that later became the Campaign Against Health Fraud and then HealthWatch and which has now been revamped by the new and more powerful science lobby, Sense About Science and the Science Media Centre. Both of which organisations are heavily subsidised by pharmaceutical and other multinational corporations.

The American Council on Science and Health, has had on its advisory board every prominent denialist in Britain and America. Originally set up in 1978, it was floated by Frederick Stare, the Harvard Nutritionist who built a reputation and a considerable department on large donations from the processed food corporations. Elizabeth Whelan was put in place as it's co-ordinator by Stare, and she remains to this day its senior executive.

The only corporate message that ACSH does not support, because it would be suicide, is that of the tobacco companies, however, they support every other conceivable corporate group that has ever been suspected of causing damage to human health. From the beginning Monsanto has been one of its major funders, one amongst many chemical, pharmaceutical and industrial food corporations that have poured money into the organisation to make it the most prominent pro-corporate lobby in the world. Relatively recently Professor Simon Wessely joined and a few years before his Death Sir Richard Doll sought refuge their with his fellow Monsanto recipients.<sup>11</sup>

CSICOP, is the original skeptic organisation, from which all other skeptic groups have flowed over the last thirty years. It was founded originally as a Marxist /atheist organisation that poured its academic energy into disputing everything spiritual, religious and other-worldly. For much of its early years, while the CIA searched for psychic weaponry, CSICOP was on hand to publicly dispute the possibility of such Psycho-technology, ensuring that if it was viable it didn't fall into the wrong hands. However, in the eighties with the cold war coming to an end and the CIA turning its interests to the protection of corporate rather than cold war America, CSICOP became more and more involved in the defence of pharmaceutical company competitiveness.

The British branch of CSICOP also played a part in setting up the Campaign Against Health Fraud, which later became HealthWatch. The 'only Professor of alternative

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<sup>11</sup> See Dirty Medicine etc.

medicine in Britain' (very sic) Edzard Ernst, is a CSICOP fellow traveller and spoke deridingly of all forms of CAM at their 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference in London.

The American Council Against Health Fraud (CAHF), was also a major progenitor of the British Campaign Against Health Fraud, now HealthWatch. Stephen Barrett was a founder member of the organisation. CAHF has had to restructure itself over the years, after facing a number of legal actions against its most prominent members. James Randi was forced into separating and so not attracting financial odium to the group when he was sued by Uri Geller.

The American CAHF laid down the initial blue print for a number of organisations that followed, this being a very loose knit organisation whose members independently campaigned and took legal action against those with whom they appeared to disagree. At the same time groups also wrote position papers on everything from Homoeopathy to Cancer therapy, deriding all forms of non-orthodox therapies while tacitly, although not openly supporting pharmaceutical medicine and all corporate products that might have been accused of damaging the environment and environmental health.

These three organisations their personnel and fellow travellers are inevitably linked to the new British and antipodean Science Media Centre and Sense About Science. In the main all three organisations stand four square behind the kind of corporate denial that Monbiot has recently described so adequately in *Heat*. Why his

privileged position at the Guardian has led him to take sides with the pharmaceutical arm of the corporate science lobby and why his very presence at the Guardian seems to have made him a campaigning comrade of Ben Goldacre, we will probably never know. This departure from Monbiot's previous independent critical position is deeply worrying.

### **Line by Line Analysis of one paragraph of Blurb**

I will not of course be obtaining a copy of *Suckers*, unless I happen to come across one discarded in a waste bin or donated by someone to the floor of the public transport system. It's not just that I wouldn't waste my money, it's also that I have lots of good fictional reading material waiting for me at home, including the next instalment of the brilliant series of Kris Nelscott's black detective 'Smokey' Dalton; why would I want to read quackbusters when I have such cultural feasts awaiting me?

Although I have read the excerpt in the Mail, I will restrict any analysis here of the content of 'Suckers', to the advertising blurb that gives us the essential arguments of the book. The publicity blurb for *Suckers*, is a bizarre farrago of untruth and impossibly unspecific denigration of alternative medicine. Shapiro's publishers have used the disingenuous pronoun of the first person plural throughout, this is similar to using the Royal 'we' which although it is all inclusive, doesn't really convince you that the Queen is in fact in exactly the same boat as the rest of us.

In the blurb 'us' leads one to think that the author is herself confessing to having been suckered by alternative medicine. However, it is difficult to believe this could be true, Shapiro's tone is, throughout heavily sarcastic and patronising.

*Alternative' medicine is now used by one in three of us.*

Of course it would not do to have an author standing on the sidelines suggesting all those who used CAM have been tricked, but not the author; this might sound arrogant!

The next sentence is calculated to strike alarm in the breast of all right thinking people.

*In the UK we spend more than £450 million a year on it (alternative medicine) and its practitioners are now insinuating themselves into the mainstream.*

Can you imagine that producers of alternative medicine make money, that people pay for them? The fact that the value of the industry is about level with the annual expense accounts of one pharmaceutical company executive is neither here nor there. Profits of the top ten pharmaceutical companies in 2006 were \$39,780,689,350. And while the blurb for suckers talks about alternative practitioners 'insinuating' themselves into the mainstream, it is interesting to reflect on the fact that, since the passing of the pharmaceutical prescription enabling,

Medicare Drugs Plan<sup>12</sup> in the US these profits rose, over the first six month of the acts enablement between 2005 and 2006, by over \$8 billion. Merck's profits alone rose in that six month period by \$2.7 billion.<sup>13</sup>

Just to put the UK figure for consumer spending on alternative medicine into perspective, we might note that in 2007 the pre-tax profits of the Daily Mail & General Trust were £288m.<sup>14</sup> The pre-tax profit for *one* of the UK newspaper groups is almost two thirds of the total of all consumer spending on CAM!

As for practitioners of alternative medicine now 'insinuating (which means not in a straightforward way but sneakily) themselves into the mainstream'. In the case of homoeopathy, the practice had its own mainstream system of hospitals and its own national health service, for at least half a century before Britain's doctors were drawn reluctantly into a government structured National Health Service.

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<sup>12</sup> The new Medicare drug plan was passed by the Republican Congress and signed into law by President Bush in December 2003. Since its inception, the program has been seen as a potential boon for the pharmaceutical industry. Analysts predicted that because of the privatized structure of the program and the ban on federal negotiations with drug manufacturers for price discounts, taxpayers and Medicare beneficiaries would be forced to pay high prices for prescription drugs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <http://oversight.house.gov/documents/20060919115623-70677.pdf>

REP. HENRY A. WAXMAN. RANKING MINORITY MEMBER. COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM. U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SEPTEMBER 2006. Analysis: Pharmaceutical Industry Profits Increase by Over \$8 Billion After Medicare Drug Plan Goes Into Effect

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.editorsweblog.org/print\\_newspapers/2007/11/uk\\_profits\\_up\\_at\\_daily\\_mail\\_general\\_trus.php](http://www.editorsweblog.org/print_newspapers/2007/11/uk_profits_up_at_daily_mail_general_trus.php)

Editors Weblog - Print JournalismUK: Profits up at Daily Mail & General Trust. Wednesday, November 21, 2007.

## **The Biggest Lie of All**

*There are methods based on ancient or far-eastern medicine, as well as ones invented in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many are promoted as natural treatments. What they have in common is that there is no hard evidence that any of them work.*

One of the ways that the pharmaceutical, science lobby groups confuse issues about CAM is by lumping all CAM practices together,<sup>15</sup> so making it appear that the tail ending cranky cures are a substantial part of the orthodoxy of alternative medicine, when in fact the therapists and sales people associated with these, are actually only equal to a small fraction of the number of allopathic doctors who are annually brought before the GMC as unfit to practice.

If we separate out and look briefly at the four main disciplines of 'alternative'<sup>16</sup> medicine, homoeopathy, herbalism, nutritional therapy and acupuncture, we can see that the above statement is utter balderdash.

The first point that has to be made is that scientific medicine, that is medicine based primarily on the ideology of science, only came of age at the beginning of the modern world in

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<sup>15</sup> This is why, incidentally that I have always been against the use of the initials CAM and the term Alternative and Complementary Medicine. While recognising the practices as outside allopathic or pharmaceutical medicine, it would obviously be better for each discipline to follow its own path.

<sup>16</sup> Of course it is absurd to refer to all these disciplines as 'alternative', in their own way each of them is firmly and historically rooted in the conventions of medical and health culture.

the 1920s, it is in fact an 'alternative' to the many forms of traditional health therapies and disciplines.

The statement that, *'many of them are promoted as natural treatments'* is of course as utterly meaningless as it is suggested is the use of the term by alternative practitioners. Any discussion of this semantic maze would take thousands of erudite pages. But perhaps one simple caveat might be added almost unthinkingly to the accusation of claims of 'natural treatments'. If we again take the four main disciplines of 'alternative' medicine, homoeopathy, herbalism, nutritional therapy and acupuncture, we might say about them that they each follow practices that have a minimum of industrial, corporate, mechanical or synthesized chemical intervention. How could this possibly be a denigrating accusations?

And now the biggest lie of all, the total, all embracing and complete corporate lie about the four main aspects of 'alternative medicine'; *'What they have in common is that there is no hard evidence that any of them work'*.

As many people involved in politics will tell you, referring, of course to other politicians, it is difficult to debate an issue with a congenital liar. The idea that there is no 'hard evidence' that the main practices of alternative medicine 'work', is an oft repeated lie and no more than that. Hard evidence in terms of cases and case studies, surveys and reviews are legion and can be produced from all over the world. In the case of homoeopathy, herbalism and nutritional therapy there are a plethora of affirmative studies.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Allopaths and scientists have a long history of either ignoring, manipulating or simply lying about the results of research and the evidence of statistics. In the 1850s statistics were given to parliament about the positive results of homeopathic treatments of cholera cases in comparison with treatments given by allopathic physicians. Somewhere between their presentation and their publication to figures were changed (not massaged) to reflect a completely different picture with allopathic treatment coming out most favourably. <http://laughingmysocksoff.wordpress.com/2007/11/27/sock-horror-in-cholera-statistics/>

Many of them in line with developing practices in 'scientific medicine' and 'evidence based medicine' that has In fact only come into practice anyway over the last 30 years.

While it is becoming clear that in the case of pharmaceutical medicine, 'there is no reliable evidence that these medicines do not make patients ill, or kill them', the opposite is true of the four main branches of 'alternative' medicine, there is considerable evidence that none of them have any, even minor, adverse reactions.

### **Bits and Bobs**

Despite promising to restrict myself to the first paragraph of the blurb, before I finish this part of the review, I have to make comment on two statements in the blurb.

*Ever more bizarre therapies, from naturopathy to nutraceuticals ...*

The above, is really laughable and must strike a note of absurdity in the minds of all intelligent people. How is it possible, even in the publicity blurb to a book of unrelenting pharmaceutical propaganda, for the writer to include under alternative therapies the use by multinational processed food companies of pharmaceutical products, such as vitamins and cholesterol lowering agents in processed food. This is what *neutraceuticals* are, they have nothing to do with alternative medicine and everything to do with the expansion of the pharmaceutical and chemical companies into the processed food market.

However, I suppose one should be thankful that there are

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couple of words in the blurb that a sensible and intelligent person might agree with; neutraceuticals are mainly untested, a danger to consumers and yet another unnatural tampering with already denatured food.

And finally, I'm afraid I have to draw the attention of the book's publishers to a terrible typographical error that had me wondering for a moment. The blurb says:

*Suckers is a calling to account of a social and intellectual fraud; a bracing, funny and popular take on a global delusion.*

I must admit that my eyes closed briefly while I read this being tired from writing the night before, when I opened my eyes and the words rushed past them, I thought for a moment I was reading about Blair and Bush's role in the war against the people of Iraq. As my thoughts settled and I could understand what was in front of me, I realized that I was looking at probably one of the worst typographical errors I had ever seen. Of course, the sentence should have read.

The book *Suckers is a social and intellectual fraud; a sick but bracing, account of the science lobby and media global lies and delusions.*

### **The Publishers of Suckers**

Always when one begins researching a subject, there is the hope that your research will not be successful, that you will be unable to prove the seemingly obvious ideas about conspiracy that you keep being thrown back upon. I set out researching the publishers of 'Suckers' with the feeling that being a conspiracy theorist was bad

for my Intellectual development. In the event, my first Intuitive thoughts were, to my dismay, completely vindicated.

The publishers of Suckers are nominally Harvill Secker and it is catalogued as a Science book.<sup>18</sup> Harvill Secker is a subsidiary of Random House which is in turn owned by the massive German media conglomerate, Bertelsmann.<sup>19</sup> When I found this, I was convinced that the trail had gone cold and that were I to stray into the conglomerate, I would inevitably lose the any sense of the book as part of a conspiracy. I persevered, and when I looked at the Foundation that controlled Bertelsmann, Bertelsmann Stiftung, owned mainly by the Mohn family, I found that not only did this foundation have on its board one of the leading executive members of Bayer, but three of the Mohn family who control the Foundation were medical doctors.

One of the major projects of the Foundation is support for and the reorganization of the German public health system, with a dependence on pharmaceutical medicine and allopathy.

Our health-related projects develop independent policy proposals to improve the German healthcare system over the long term. We focus first and foremost on reforms that serve the needs of Germany's health plan members, since they are the ones who finance and use the system. At the same time, we study reform efforts in other countries in order to learn from their experiences and solutions. Our projects aim to increase transparency within the healthcare system while improving the quality of services and treatment offered by doctors, hospitals and other providers. Streamlining Germany's healthcare system is only possible if all

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<sup>18</sup> Suckers, Rose Shapiro. Harvill Secker • Science: general issues • Previous ISBN: 1846550289 Publication date: 07/02/2008 • 304 pages • Demy Octavo • EAN: 9781846550287

<sup>19</sup> **Bertelsmann:** Mohn/Gütersloh, Germany Industry: Publishing, media Revenues: \$19.193 billion Employees: 80,632. [www.bertelsmann.de](http://www.bertelsmann.de). One of world's largest media conglomerates, with interests in 600 companies in 60 countries. Properties include Random House (publishing). Reinhard Mohn, now 82, built the global empire after World War II. Mohn family owns 20% of company, but until 2000 Reinhard held the sole "golden" voting share. He transferred voting control to a company controlled jointly by Bertelsmann executives and Mohn family members.

processes are closely interlinked – from prevention and wellness initiatives to emergency treatment to rehabilitation and ongoing care.<sup>20</sup>

Not much CAM there then!

In some ways the kind of propaganda that ‘Suckers’ represents is actually well beyond any conspiracy, after all, why if what these people wrote was true, would they need conspiratorial collaborators. They could if they wanted just write good science books comparing allopathic and ‘alternative’ medicine while arguing that allopathic medicine was superior.

Unfortunately for readers of ‘Suckers’ and for seekers after truth they appear not to be able to do this and have to lean heavily on propaganda. But why can’t they even do propaganda with a touch of honesty, why can’t the Guardian and the Observer lay their cards on the table and just say, ‘Look we’re a cynical and dishonest load of bastards, up to our necks in the thick brown muck of vested interests and science lobby groups. We disagree profoundly with allowing people personal choice in health care options, and we don’t want an open or honest discussion about it. OK’. At least then we’d all know where we stand.

**Martin J Walker**  
**11 February 2008**

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**For Further Information**

**Martin Walker books are available from**  
**[Slingshot Publications](#)**

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<sup>20</sup>Bertelsmann Stiftung: Encouraging Social Change 2007.