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Lilly Stuart

## Are we Disabling?

**A reply to Steve Murgatroyd; Addressed to AHP Members who work within the system**

*. . . I am afraid that within five years transactional analysis is going to be completely discredited because of misuse. . . (by the system, L.S.) and that its value will be discarded by any serious-minded person. . . C. Steiner, 1974*

The concern Steve is expressing is shared by a number of 'helpers', psychologists etc here and abroad. The expropriation of 'health'(2), 'growth'(3), 'cure' and the better life, psychiatry(1) is appalling.

I myself feel concerned about the commercialization of alternative therapies/lifestyles under the umbrella of 'humanistic psychology'. Just one example: there will be a 'Festival of mind and body' at Olympia in London. The organizers approached various people in the growth movement to take a stand at the festival encouraging them to book fast to ensure they get a place (i.e. profit). The festival pamphlet is absurd and the best example I have ever seen of *selling* inner happiness. The system is taking over and making profits from radical and humanistic ideas. . .

Carl Rogers's ideas have been sold to industry to improve management, under the name of 'counselling in industry', 'T-groups', etc. Transactional analysis, invented for therapy by Berne seems to go the same way. Sell-out of humanistic ideas.

As Steve says, the goods are sold to the bourgeoisie. What can be done about it? People can't be stopped from selling their skills to industry or having a stand at the 'festival of mind and body', etc. But it is possible to utilize ideas from the growth movement and radical psychiatry into the community. I am trying, not very successfully, I suppose. It takes me time, tenacity, it involves battles with bureaucrats in the NHS. It's at present a nasty battle with the establishment but it is beginning to bring rewards. Within a year of quarrelling, sulking, rebelling, weeping at times with anger I now have permission to work directly with G.P.s. The strokes I get for doing therapy in the community (as opposed to a hospital setting) come from the G.P.s, the patients, the little local newspaper of the tenants Association and the BBC(!). The institution I am attached to freely hands out negative strokes for being 'out-there and doing something else'. Most of the time I still feel very sorry for myself for being so maltreated for my wonderful work but I am gradually getting into my adult who tells me that of course a bureaucratic, disorganized cut-back NHS is unlikely to encourage innovations at work.

I want to get out of my isolated struggle and I would very much appreciate if there were AHP members sharing Steve's or my ideas. Could we 'helpers' employed by the system get together and support each other. We could give each other strokes, ideas etc for what we are attempting to do. The system at present is unlikely to do that. We could meet, correspond or write. We could do all sorts of things once out of personal isolation.

#### References

1. **Steiner, C.** *Scripts people live*. Bantam Books 1974.
2. **Illich, I.** *Medical Nemesis. The Exploration of Health*. Calders & Boyars. 1975.
3. **Murgatroyd, S.** *Are Disabling?* Self and Society, December 1976.

*People who like the idea please get in touch with Lilly Stuart at 122 Charlton Lane, London S.E.7 8AB Tel: 01-853 3643 (evenings).*