

Questions which Disturb Me

Tom Merrington

1 Is therapy a service like plumbing or dentistry?

2 If it is not, on what grounds can remuneration for therapy 'provided' be justified?

2a If you will not be a therapist for nothing how can I trust that you do not conceive the process, despite conscious denial, as the provision of a service, like plumbing or dentistry, with contingent promise of remedy for my distress?

2b If money is just a useful token of exchange, who is prepared to be a therapist for alternative exchanges?

3 If it is part of the fundamental culture of capitalism that he who pays the piper calls the tune, is not unresolvable confusion invited over issues of power in a therapeutic encounter taking place within that culture?

4 Is there not a good argument for the therapist paying the client as reward (again within the capitalist culture) for bravery shown in facing up to her demons?

5 If a therapist is paid for his 'services' — or even for the valuable contribution of just being humanly present during 'the hour' — does that not lend itself to constipation of the required 'peristalsis' towards resolution of dependency and counter-dependency issues?

5a For is not this financial constraint a potential for reluctance to let go of the client which mirrors one of the most insidious abuses committed by parents and which is therefore one of the more common contributors to the need for 'one foot out' therapy in the first place?

6 Since the cornerstone of the corrupt version of capitalism which envelops us is the self-interested exploitation, oppression, abuse, humiliation, disempowerment of all who are weaker than ourselves, combined with the deification, worship, appeasement, blind obedience, promotion and empowerment of all who are stronger than ourselves, is there not a danger that, by participation in the marketplace, the therapist aligns herself in the unconscious perception of the client with those who for generations have cumulatively brought him to his presenting state of either self subjugation or glorification?

7 How can a therapist (whilst holding out his hand for money) best help a client to understand, without bringing him to the brink of helpless despair, that the state of confusion, dependency, emotional volatility, depression or rejection he feels and presents 'to therapy' personally are probably but the superficial (therefore feelable) symptoms of generations of abuse! This abuse arises from the conditions of extreme competition for survival which

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have existed since the time man first began to exploit fellow man, but only in the last century has he been given the extended lifespan and freedom necessary for the abuse to suppurate as surface pathology?

7a Notwithstanding the presenting camouflage of existential distress, if it is the age-old recycled system which now drives prostituted souls 'to the couch', does not a therapist have to bend over backwards to avoid becoming an acces-

sory after the fact of that system in order to be an effective catalyst for change and growth?

7b Or is therapy really an iatrogenic capitalist institution existing parasitically on the back of the demand it manages to whip up and sustain?

8 Is there anyone out there to throw light on these questions?

9 Is there anyone out there?

Getting Rid of Mother

Jackie Maher

I am a legal representative. I go to court and sit behind the barrister taking down notes of what is said, in case the barrister needs to refer to them. This is a court hearing to finalise the long gruesome process from care, to fostering, to adoption.

Sitting on one end of a bench is Julie; she is our client and we are defending her. We are trying to stop an application which Social Services have made for her three children to be adopted. Julie looks bewildered. She is not dressed in Armani, nor is her hair styled by Vidal Sassoon, as are the group of smartly dressed people gathered at the other end of the waiting area of this magistrates court. They are her barrister, the guardian ad litem (who

speaks on behalf of Julie's children), the barrister, social workers, and solicitors for the 'other side', the Social Services.

The only make-up Julie is wearing is a foundation cream, to try and hide the eruptions that cover her face. She is painfully aware of the mess and tells me that they are due to stress.

At this point, I do not know her fate but the group talking, in practised voices that don't travel, do. Maybe this is why none of them speak to her over the two days. Julie doesn't yet seem to realise that her children will be 'put up' for adoption. She has three children, two girls and one boy, aged five and a half, four, and eighteen months. Only the youngest is a good bet to be adopted successfully and, of course,

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