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 accessory 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 litum (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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they will be split up. It's very rare, if ever, that a family of three children are adopted together. As it is, they are all with separate foster parents. There is also the possibility that none of them will ever be adopted.

I talk to Julie over the two days which are for me, a mere bystander, very distressing but for Julie are devastating. I discover that she likes to draw and is good; she brought me a couple of her drawings the next day. She is not, however, good at cleaning her house. The father of her children lives on a barge, gives her little support though they have a relationship of sorts. She is doing her best.

I also discover that she doesn't like her social worker (I can see her point), feels she is not helping her and that they do not communicate well. Her previous social worker is on maternity leave. Julie had liked her very much. It was her right to ask for another social worker but she was not informed of this. It is obvious to me that Julie feels these people are against her, and because of the lack of communication feels she can play no part in what is happening to her and her children. She repeatedly says to me: 'I haven't done anything wrong. I love my children. They won't take them away, will they?'. I cannot reassure her that they won't, having been told that 'she hasn't got a hope in hell'.

We sit in that court room for two days. We are shown photographs of what, to me, look like three smiling, ordinary children, a bit grubby around the knees. A paranoid Julie is quick to point out to me that they had been playing when the photographs were taken:

'That's alright, isn't it?', she asked me. Of course it's alright.

Witness after witness gets up and gives evidence. Foster parents of each child, 'expert witnesses' from the Tavistock Clinic, social workers and guardian ad litum all saying, in one way or another, what a terrible mother Julie is. We are told that her house is dirty and that she emotionally neglected her children.

Julie listens to all this, head bowed, picking her face and nails, only looking up at me for some sort of reassurance. Nobody says a good thing about her. It is as if she isn't in the room.

One of the 'expert witnesses', responsible for assessing the two girls, tells us in her evidence that as part of the assessment she gave them each postcards to send to whomever they chose. They chose their brother, Adam. Our 'expert' didn't even know of Adam's existence, but no-one in court questions her, or comments on her lack of thoroughness — not even Julie's barrister.

We are told by the foster mother for the youngest child, Adam, that he has started biting himself. Her explanation, which is given a lot of weight in court, is that he is terrified of his real mother. It is a fact that Adam started to bite himself in her care but an equally obvious explanation might be that he started to bite himself because he was so distressed at being taken away from his mother and allowed contact with her for only a few hours, once a month. But this is one of the things the Social Services do when they have decided that children are to be adopted. Maybe they hope that by making the time between visits longer, the children will forget their mother and make the job easier.

After all the witnesses have given their evidence it is Julie's turn. It is now almost

the end of the second day. She is asked humiliating questions about her parenting, her life. She says very little in reply, looks at me often. She fights to keep back the tears. Julie tells the court that she loves her children and there is no substitute for a child's real mother. She is in the stand for less than twenty minutes.

We have to go out while the magistrates make their decision. We wait for half an hour. Once back in the court, we are told the application by Social Services is successful. The courtroom rises, everyone shuts their files and leaves without a glance at Julie. When I stop one of the social workers and ask what happens to Julie now, she shrugs. I don't think Julie has taken in what has been decided. No-one else is around so I take her home.

I can't imagine or assess the added psychological damage done to those children who will never be allowed to see their mother again. I still can't bear to think about Julie's mental state and how she will cope — probably by having three more babies? But nor do Social Services think much of her. Three weeks after what must have been the worst day of her life, Julie was sent a letter from her social worker, via her solicitor. The letter asked if she would like one more visit to say good-bye to her children and would she like to bring a camera. How did people in the 'caring professions' come up with an inhuman idea like that?

On Rhythm and Time in Bodywork

Silke Ziehl

All living things move, and change, however imperceptibly. For that is almost how we define life — by the ability to move, towards and away from, to open and to close, to interact with the world around. Time-lapse photography has given us breathtaking pictures of flowers opening and closing their petals in the dance of life, and slow motion pictures allowed us to observe the sheer delight of the movement of seagulls' wings in their elegant and sinuous three dimensional figure-of eight flight patterns. In order to see and appreciate these movements, we need to adjust time — to speed it up, to slow it down.

Similarly, in bodywork, I've learnt that time, and the rhythms of movement, have a logic and beauty quite of their own. It is important to find the time to focus inward

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