

HUMANISTIC ALCHEMY

PURPOSE - BEYONDING

It is intended that Humanistic Alchemy contributes to establishing an identifiable clear space in the psy field. This clearing will assist the renewal and revitalisation of various existing traditions. Clearance will also make space for new forms of praxis to emerge. This movement has become known as Beyonding. You may want to be part of it.

The following bigger picture antagonisms are identified to better locate HA. HA emerges from a cultural context enveloping the British psy field at the start of the second decade of a new century. Together the social, existential and philosophical perspectives listed in the right hand column amount to an HA manifesto. These are contrasted with the ideologies (unexamined belief systems) and presumptions listed on the left side of the page, which HA gives short shrift to or rejects outright. The terminology here is necessarily dense, a shorthand, a series of brushstrokes, a signposting.

X	HA
Governmental regulation of counselling and psychotherapy. The hegemonic extension of the Health Professions Council.	Practitioner self-regulation through peer networks, inter-vision and a commitment to ethical practice and enquiry. APA i.e. Alternative Practitioner Accountability.
Professionalisation of the psy-field through academisation, standardisation and bureaucratisation.	Post- and de-professionalisation, deconstructing the professional false self. Facilitation and the diffusion of skills across occupational boundaries.
Evidence based practice.	Practice based evidence.
Polarisation phobias and corresponding bogus unities. Threat and coercion.	Dialectical thinking. Thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Conversation and dialogue.
Surveillance society, audit culture and the related production of 'terror' (therapist error) as justification for disciplinary controls to be placed over the entire psy field.	The reinvigoration of informed trust and the elaboration of authentic ethics. Neutralising the internalised panopticon (Foucault). Unfettered enquiry and creativity as the foundational values for all psy praxis.
The normalisation of cultures of domination and institutional violence, including their uncritical reproduction within the psy field. 'Power over'.	Refusal of coercive relations, insistence on negotiation and consensus-building. The right to differ and to whistle blow. 'Power with' & 'power from within'(Starhawk)
Neo-liberal managerialism and the application of cold war game theory and cybernetics to human relations.	Collaboration and mutual aid to define the goods sought and any hidden third party costs including to animals and the environment. A

	'social quality market' fostering shared dignity.
The marketisation of subjectivity, the commodification of (un)happiness, total lifestyle packaging with therapy incorporated. Colonised imaginations.	The restoration of mental space, proofing against grooming for consumerism. Imaging modes of exchange with no market value.
Spectators within the spectacle (the organisation of appearances in everyday life). Therapy as techniques for putting up with, coping with and adapting to co-option and fragmentation.	Spect-actors (Boal), engaged participants in the community, combining personal and social change agendas. Therapy as a catalyst for dissidence, challenge and wholing, undoing oppression and upsetting 'business as usual'.
Product delivery and alienation.	Discovery, delight and conviviality.
The denial of social and economic determination of the human condition and the denial of limits to solo personal transformation.	Joined-up multifactorial thinking with translations between the macro and micro levels of societies and individuals.
Subordination to a medical model and the corporate/governmental appropriation of 'wellbeing' as its soft front.	Holistic and dialectical perspectives that include the freedom to feel bad, hurt, troubled, angry and to think and act accordingly.
The medicalisation of humanistic therapy, usually subsumed under an integrative tag.	The reclamation of humanistic psychology as a human potential perspective within a personal development paradigm.
The mystification of psychodynamics and the disproportionate status accorded its priesthood within the psy field. Psychoanalytic hubris and elitism.	Education in psychoanalytic thinking brought to bear on everyday life. Capability regarding transference phenomena, characterological resistances and other defensive formations and psychodynamics.
Corporate positivism and the hallmark of its New Age variants - the actor of reality syndrome (e.g. 'thought is 100% creative'). Fantasies of mental omnipotence, underpinned by bodymind splitting The futile attempt to disown and devalue so-called 'negative emotions' Gurus.	The recognition of tragedy (human limitations) and acceptance of ambivalence (holding contradictory impulses). Thought informed by emotion. Admission of doubt, uncertainty and mystery ('negative capability' Keats). Working towards bodymind unity and integration. Gonzos.

Beyond these antagonisms lies a further vision. This vision heeds the ethos and principles of the right hand column, and runs through the bodymind, expressive arts, ecosocial and transpersonal dimensions of the course. Humanistic Alchemy moves its participants forward exponentially along a path of personal and communal renewal.