Part 5

Therapeutic technologies and therapeutic institutions
Editor's Introduction

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The chapters in this section provide a breadth of knowledge and insight into how the everyday external and internal worlds of our personal lives – and their future possibilities – are shaped by a multitude of therapeutic institutions and therapeutic technologies. The chapters suggest and examine how through external institutions and technologies individuals learn to understand and manage their inner selves to produce self-governing citizens. Each chapter illustrates that this learning and the truths it produces are partial and specific. In this sense, and in an echo of Foucault's writing on "technologies of the self", these partial truths – or "truth games" – reflect larger cultural systems and can be imagined as "techniques of domination" (1988); a power play where we each develop cultural skills, attitudes, and beliefs about the outside world and our inner selves specific to succeed under a particular social logic, and which anchor us within a set of normalised practices.

Therapeutic institutions are all around us. They include the state and government ministries and services such as welfare, employment, youth services, census counts, and the policies and laws handed down to citizens, and that structure and shape subjectivities (Nolan Jr, 1998; Polsky, 1993). They include socio-cultural institutions and environments too, like universities, academic disciplines, and their classifications and designations (Furedi, 2014; Rieff, 1966); diagnostic categories and psycho-diagnostic tautologies (Klein and Mills, 2017; Mills, 2014); and cultural norms of epistemology and ontology around identity, language, communication, art, mourning, memory, and more; which impact and shape individual attributions and societal subjectivities (Binkley, 2011; Madsen, 2014). Likewise, therapeutic technologies, such as the variety of modern devices found on our smartphones – including mobile health and fitness apps – provide users with ways to understand and manage their emotions, stress, and mental health. In the context of mental health, such technologies via smartphones today provide a pocket therapist to aid self-management (Anthes, 2016; Hollis et al., 2015). Taken together the chapters in this section raise important questions, insights, and contexts around what therapeutic technologies and institutions do, and how they do it, while also offering suggestions for future possibilities and routes of escape.

In Bayetti's chapter on "therapeutic education" we see through long-term ethnographic research and wider literature on therapeutic culture a sophisticated account of psychiatric training and professionalisation in one site in India. The chapter focuses on the tensions between evidence-based medicine and clinical experience and offers a way to think through how the assumptions of psy-expertise around "the causes of people's suffering have led to a focus on the deployment of interventions based on psychological and pharmaceutical logics". Bayetti illustrates how a psychiatric training department functions as a "crucial institutional site in the emergence of therapeutic culture in India" and how biomedical psychiatry and its associated "evidence based practices" favoured by psychiatric students "can itself be seen as a therapeutic turn" within education. At the same time, the chapter notes how students often encounter cognitive dissonance when they choose to defer to experience in clinical scenarios and how "this conflict embodies the current tensions with the emergence of a therapeutic culture in India".

In their insightful and thought-provoking chapter on the contours of an emerging post-therapeutic future, Wiesner, Epstein, and Duda explore aspects of post-therapeutic thinking beyond the words and language of psychotherapeutic vocabularies and discourses. From the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, ethnology, linguistics, film, and music they provide evidence to suggest the necessity of a dialogic and multivocal language about our selves and our society. Written itself in a creative dialogic fashion the post-therapeutic future they suggest calls for "a new conceptualization of psychotherapy that turns diversity in language and thinking into useful tools and agents, tools that in turn serve us in our never ending search for meaning".

Hilberg and Mills's chapter on India and the growth of therapeutic technologies – which help users identify their stress levels and manage their mental health – develops the concept of "digital therapeutic assemblage". They illustrate how technology-enabled mental healthcare through smart apps as the solution for increased mental-health treatment in low- and middle-income countries, can often erase differences in national and individual economic realities as well as political and socio-cultural differences and continuities. This process in turn has hegemonic implications as it shapes ideas, understandings, and beliefs around digital and technologically driven therapy. As the authors note in their introduction,

> this raises pressing questions about the diffusion of expertise and decision-making; the reimagining of the diagnostic encounter through engagement with a digital device; and the normalisation of mental health protocols at the global level, despite the lack of a global consensus of the meaning of 'mental health' or 'mental illness'.

Marsha Pearce's chapter on the "undead psyche" of colonialism and slavery contained in post-colonial art in the Caribbean pivots on a therapeutic paradox of the post-colonial context and sheds light on an ethos of contemporary Global North therapeutic cultures through discussion of mourning and liminal states of healing. Through a paradox of the living and the dead she invokes and recognises the individual and collective ways Caribbean art copes with a traumatic collective past and its lingering effects on the self. The chapter breathes life into history's dead and Pearce illustrates how "an undead psyche is one that replenishes human agency in a quest to achieve well-being" and suggests such Caribbean realities could be used beyond the region's therapeutic cultures.

In Hanna Ylöstalo and Kristiina Brunila's chapter on the emergence of the Nordic therapeutic state, we see how the Finnish state under neoliberal policies and reforms in education and employment adopted the role of life coach with the aim of "producing resilient citizens who provide for their own needs and continuously develop their competitiveness". The chapter illustrates how in part this was achieved through employment policies that did not rely simply

on compulsion and sanctions, "but also on therapizing language and techniques of individual recovery and improvement." The chapter provides details on the connection between neoliberal ethos and the language, vocabulary, and methods of "therapization" and shines light on "the ways citizens are perceived and how they should perceive themselves both as vulnerable but also necessarily resilient and competitive".

The topic of Jeff Sugarman's chapter is liberal University education as "people making" and a study of "campus culture wars". Sugarman suggests how one of the main contributing factors "inciting current campus strife and contributing conditions to its possibility are the victim and therapeutic cultures that have become increasingly entrenched in contemporary society". He describes this context as emerging out of major 20th-century cultural transformations including the rise of therapeutic culture, which blurred and made uncertain how people should think about life events, emotions and feelings, and also the institutions around them tasked with supporting "emotional security and mental health". This destabilisation has produced a sort of emotional reasoning that now can dominate the rational terms "by which claims and disagreements are debated and adjudicated". The chapter further discusses the ways in which identity politics, emotional harm, and emotional reasoning have become the dominant ideological force on liberal campuses and today can act as obstacles to democratic dialogue. He notes these changes can in part be connected to beliefs "circulated by therapeutic culture" such as "persons are fragile and vulnerable" and possess a "limited facility to deal with physical and emotional harm". In conclusion the chapter cautions that these changes conflate the "distinction between individual and social well-being" and that victim culture, makes "any overarching or unifying vision of the collective good and the kinds of persons required to achieve it" difficult.

Ron Roberts's chapter examines the discipline of psychology itself across historical, technical, socio-cultural, and political developments and concludes it is "a deeply problematic discipline sceptical of its own subject matter and consequently unsure of what its epistemological aims are". Roberts' social history of psychology provides an intimate look and insightful critique at the costs the discipline has paid through its ongoing "collusion with militarism, surveillance, big business, mental health oppression and social control". He is explicit that "the functional logic of capitalism was psychologised" and the consequences this produced were self-alienation and victim blaming, alongside a critical depoliticisation of social space. The chapter concludes by asking the reader about the potential future for the discipline in light of "the immanent collapse of the neoliberal order". What might psychology still become if it was more honest about itself and its subject matter and dropped its "part of modernist folklore promising the 'magic' of technically engineered happiness".

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