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Governing emotionally-vulnerable subjects and 'therapisation' of social justice

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ABSTRACT

In numerous countries, pessimism about enduring social and educational inequalities has produced a discernible therapeutic turn in education policy and practice, and a parallel rise in therapeutic understandings of social justice. Focusing on developments in England and Finland, this paper explores the ways in which radical/critical conceptualisations of social justice privilege attention to psycho-emotional vulnerabilities. Extending older forms of psychologisation, therapeutic understandings of social justice in many contemporary radical/critical accounts resonate powerfully with the wider therapisation of popular culture and everyday life. Using theories of discursive power, we explore the new forms of governance, subjectivity and agency in mainstream therapeutic programmes, and evaluate their implications for pedagogies rooted in radical/critical notions of social justice.

INTRODUCTION

In numerous countries, the crises of late capitalism are intensifying political and public pessimism about declining emotional and psychological well-being, disengagement and motivation amongst growing numbers of groups and individuals deemed to be 'at risk' (see Ecclestone 2013, Wright and McLeod 2014, Brunila 2012, 2013). Leaving aside specific nuances in national government responsesan approximately 15 yearperiod has seen a discernible 'therapeutic turn' in Britain, Sweden, Australia, America and Finland (see Ecclestone et al 2014). This reflects general agreement about the desirability of three inter-related goals. The first of these is that all educational settings are key sites for interventions that foster a virtuous circle of engagement, inclusion, participation and emotional well-

being. Secondly, these interventions are seen as crucial for overcoming cyclical problems with aspirations, achievement and employability (and therefore are cast as equally, and sometimes more, important than traditional educational outcomes). And thirdly, that barriers and subsequent educational needs are not only primarily psycho-emotional. These goals are accompanied increasingly by determinist accounts from neuroscience about genetic traits and dispositions, thereby embellishing psychological accounts of the lasting legacies and barriers created by early experiences (see Ecclestone, Wright and McLeod, Brunila op cit).

These ideas have generated widespread support for state sponsored initiatives designed both to build emotional well-being and mental health in the present, and to try to prevent problems in the future. In Britain, diverse educational settings, including youth work, youth educational programmes, transitions and rehabilitation projects, adult and community education, have introduced initiatives such as circle time, lessons in emotional education, psychodrama workshops and anger management. These supplement counselling-based peer mentoring and lifecoaching as part of whole-institution support systems (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, Ecclestone and Lewis 2014, see also Watson et al 2012). In eclectic and *ad hoc* ways, some initiatives adapt elements from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), positive psychology and individually-based diagnoses of emotional needs or behaviour problems. Others draw on different strands of counselling, self-help, psychotherapy and psychology. They all involve individual and group activities to help participants explore, understand and manage emotions. Similar approaches are prevalent in Sweden and Australia (Dahlstedt et al 2010, Irisdotter-Aldenmayr 2013, Wright and McLeod op cit). We define these here as 'mainstream therapeutic pedogogies' and differentiate them from those we explore below as 'radical/critical therapeutic pedagogies'.

In Finland, concerns about the emotional well-being of children and adults were prominent in the 2012 presidential campaign and there has been an intensification of therapeutic approaches across the education system, especially through the rise of project-based initiatives (e.g., Min. of Ed. 1996, OPH 2010). In the context of arguments in this paper, the therapeutic turn in Finland is interesting because there is a

largely unchallenged view that Finland's education system exemplifies Nordic welfare as integral to educational and social justice (e.g. Sahlberg, 2011, Reay 2012). From this standpoint, policy makers, private companies, educational organisations and individual researchers promote Finnish equality and social justice as export products. Yet this overlooks a long tradition of critical research that explores how social justice and equality policies in Finland are integral to market-oriented, project-based and marginalized political activities (e.g. Gordon et al 2003, Holli, 2003, Brunila 2009, Vehviläinen and Brunila 2007). Although we do not do not engage with these critiques in this paper , they highlight the need to question how far a therapeutic turn challenges Finnish understandings of social justice.

Our contribution to sociological work on a discernible international therapeutic turn in education policy and practice, has charted the rise of what we have called 'therapeutic' education and the broader educational, social and political consequences of 'therapisation' in compulsory and post-compulsory education (eg Brunila op cit, Brunila and Siivonen in press, Ecclestone and Hayes op cit, Ecclestone 2011, 2013, Ecclestone and Lewis op cit). In this paper we extend ideas from this earlier work by revisiting some old questions raised by American sociologist C. Wright Mills. Writing in 1959, Mills urged social scientists to use a sociological imagination. He argued that this should combine history, psychology and sociology in order to illuminate that the troubles people typically experience as private and individual are *public* issues that come from wider structures of class, culture, economics and politics. It goes without saying that different historical periods influence what we see as private troubles and public issues. Mills also asked a deeper question: how should we understand the varieties of men and women that seem to prevail in this society and in this period? What kinds of human nature are revealed in the conduct and character we observe in this society, in this period? (Mills 1959/1979)

In this paper, we extend Mills' largely materialist question by using a discursive approach to analyse studies of mainstream therapeutic pedagogies in English and Finnish educational settings, presenting therapisation in terms of discursive power (see also Brunila, 2011). This approach emphasises language in relation to a domain of struggles over, for example, what

is or is not true and who has the power to pronounce what the truth is. Adopting a discursive orientation challenges the taken-for-granted nature of things and opens up areas for critical analysis of power implicit within politics and practices. It also makes visible the subtle ways in which choice stems not so much from the individual but, rather, from the condition of possibility and the discourses which prescribe not only what is desirable but also what is recognisable as an acceptable form of being and doing (Davies et al., 2001; Brunila and Siivonen, in press).

In relation to the focus of this paper, a discursive approach illuminates some of the contradictory and complex ways in which therapisation reflects and shapes particular discourses about human subjects and their agency at a time of profound pessimism and crisis; how, as Ball drawing on Foucault, puts it, human beings are envisaged in a particular period, and how practices produce humans (Ball 2014). We are interested in how forms of circulating power in therapeutic pedagogies operate by teaching individuals not only to reproduce what is expected from them but also how to utilize the strategies and insights they are offered or compelled to take part in. Drawing on in-depth studies of different types of therapeutic intervention in British and Finnish contexts, we argue that mainstream forms of therapeutic pedagogy are not simplistically repressive or emancipatory, confining or empowering, humane or manipulative. Instead, a discursive understanding illuminates agency as a subject-in-process and as the effect and redeployment of power (for example Butler, 2008; Davies, 1998). According to Butler, it is the very constitutivity of the subject that enables her/him to act in these forms of power, which are not just regulating but also productive. From this perspective, we can theorize therapeutic forms of subjectivity and agency as in flux, changeable and unstable but also as a crucial focus for political

understanding and action.

We structure our arguments by first charting briefly a shift from long-running manifestations of 'psychologisation' in society, politics and educational practice into a powerful popularised therapeutic form that elevates psycho-emotional vulnerability in a particular way. In the second section, we illuminate the ways in which radical/critical debates about social justice are increasingly refracted through a therapeutic understanding. In the third section, we explore the forms of governance, subjectivity and agency that arise from therapisation and use a discursive approach to understanding some manifestations in English and Finnish mainstream therapeutic programmes. Finally, we offer and then evaluate critically some examples of pedagogies that emerge from radical/critical therapeutic understandings of social justice, propose further research and include some brief comments on limitations to a discursive approach.

1. FROM PSYCHOLOGISATION TO THERAPISATION

Within professional practice and academic study, critical and radical psychology has a long tradition of exposing the ways in which 'psychological vocabularies and explanatory schemes enter fields which are not supposed to belong to traditional theoretical and practical terrains of psychology' (de Vos 2012, 1). As numerous critics note, psychologizing discourses have spread into schools and families, everyday and institutional life as an increasingly global and cross-cultural phenomenon. This has had profound effects on identity, personal and cultural discourses and social and institutional practices (eg Foucault 1967, Rose 1992, Hart 1995, Parker 1995, de Vos 2012, Burman 2014). There are long running critical challenges to the pathologising of social problems as individual psychological deficiencies or traits, the growing medicalization of everyday behaviours and emotional responses, and the role of educational and other social policy settings in addressing them (eg Myers 2012, Teittinen 2011, McLaughlin 2011, Harwood and Allan 2014). Historians explore the effects of changing psychological fashions on the ways in which educationalists, bureaucrats, health professionals, parents and young people understand and label human character (eg Myers 2011, Thompson 2006, Stewart 2011). Yet, according to Kenneth McLaughlin, while critics explain some roots and effects of psychologisation, they overlook its contemporary resonance within the more powerful and pervasive rise of 'therapeutic

culture' (2011).

The rise of targeted and universal interventions in educational settings, summarized briefly in our introduction, is a particularly stark manifestation of psychologisation. Yet in the light of McLaughlin's argument, we would argue that therapeutic culture goes far beyond the explicit extension of psychological ideas and practices. As a cultural sensibility that permeates social policy, public discourses and private life, therapisation helps us make sense of problems and reactions to life events for ourselves, those of others close to us, colleagues and public figures (see Nolan 1998, Furedi 2004, Wright 2011, Durodie 2009). Even more potently than popular and everyday forms of psychologisation, therapisation makes assumptions and activities derived from formal psychological and therapeutic traditions highly accessible, whilst obscuring important differences in their roots and ideological commitments. Through a set of therapeutic orthodoxies, an expanding range of experiences and life events, from serious structural inequalities and traumatic events, to those once seen as commonplace or mundane, are seen to create fragile identities or worse forms of lasting emotional damage.

In education, for example, assumptions about the effects of divorce, bad experiences in educational settings, witnessing or experiencing abuse, being bullied, failing examinations, being alienated or disaffected from formal learning experiences, or simply having a vulnerable learning identity create a widening spectrum of perceived risks, threats and adversities. These expand significantly what we mean by 'vulnerability', 'trauma' and 'abuse' and, in turn, legitimize numerous forms of emotional support and intervention outside discrete programmes (see Ecclestone and Lewis op cit, Ecclestone and Goodley op cit).

Therapisation has been especially powerful in the British education system. It has embraced, for example, progressive arguments that pedagogies for collaboration, 'voice', empathy, confidence, self-esteem, resilience and a positive learning identity should be key purposes of a formal school curriculum (eg Priestley and Biesta 2013). Therapisation also draws on older initiatives such as alternative curricula introduced after the raising of the school leaving age in 1972, such as life and social skills, work preparation and other schemes for the unemployed (see Ecclestone forthcoming).

Therapeutic pedagogies also encompass goals and practices associated with mental health and 'mutual recovery', where community and political projects, and adult and community learning programmes incorporate these goals (eg Lewis et al 2013).

The inclusivity and popular appeal of therapisation make it appear to bean increasingly necessary and accessible response to life and educational events that are experienced increasingly as emotionally debilitating, anxiety inducing or stressful. This legitimises new forms of lay expertise through lifecoaching, well-being trainers and consultants, mentors and personal development advisers and peer mediators. By diluting the specialisms of counselling, therapy and psychology, other professional groups such as teachers, classroom and learning assistants and youth workers become 'lay experts'. In some cases this includes children and young people themselves. Although some of these new practitioners may be trained in specific therapeutic techniques, most are more likely to offer popularised, eclectic combinations of ideas. They are therefore unlikely to be regarded by policy makers, other professionals or participants in interventions as 'therapy people'. This makes it easy to overlook their essential role in therapisation.

As we argue next, all the features of therapisation summarized in this section are integral to radical/critical discourses about social justice that seek to challenge mainstream therapeutic discourses.

2. THE THERAPISATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

We acknowledged above that experts and theorists from diverse traditions of psychology contest the nature and influence of psychologisation. Similarly, it goes without saying that political and educational concerns about the roots of and solutions to poor emotional well-being reflect diverse, sometimes incompatible, ideological or social commitments. It is therefore no surprise that advocates of behavioural programmes to teach emotional or psychological 'skills' appear to have little in common with critical sociologists who call for educators to understand and attend to the 'generative dynamic between thinking, feeling and practice' and the ways in which 'emotions and psychic responses to class and class inequalities contribute powerfully to the making of class' (Reay 2005, 912, see also

Leathwood and Hey 2009, Hyland 2009, Cramp et al 2013).

In general, contemporary radical/critical understandings of social justice reflect long running interest in the psycho-emotional dimensions of social inequality, and the need for collective and politically informed responses, amongst critical psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists, as well as members of radical political movements (see Panton 2012, McLaughlin op cit, Author 1 2011). As Sharon Gerwitz observes, there has been a strong shift in academic, political and professional interest from the redistribution of material resources to the redistribution of relational justice in the form of social responsibilities, obligations and duties and expanded notions of social and cultural capital (Gerwitz 1998, also Reay 2012, Hayes 2012, Griffiths 2012, Lewis 2012, Walker 2012).

This perspective acknowledges power as integral to recognition and asks how we can promote ethical ways of treating each other on a day to day basis (Gerwitz 1998). At a macro level, it raises questions about how those who have structural forms of relate to us (eg Gertwitz 1998). Citing Nancy Fraser and Iris Young, Gerwitz argues that these conceptions of social justice draw in what Fraser calls the 'politics of recognition' and what Young calls an 'openness to unassimilated otherness' (1998, 475). If this is understood merely as 'identity politics', widely criticized by feminist researchers, it shifts attention towards acknowledgment of cultural identity on the terms of specific groups claiming recognition (e.g. Lloyd 2005; see also McLaughlin 2011, Brunila 2011a). This encourages welfare professionals and educators to adopt practices that 'listen to the pain' of cultural loss amongst oppressed groups and which "co-author…joint narratives about problems, needs and claims" (Leonard quoted by Gerwitz 1998 476). Here an 'ethics of otherness' and a 'politics of recognition' are "*important in so far as they provide a ethical and practical basis for relations marked by a celebration and respect of difference and mutuality*" (ibid, 477). Acknowledging that some theorists of social justice, including Fraser, argue that recognition should not displace calls for economic redistribution, McLaughlin argues that, nevertheless, radical political and survivor groups place increasing emphasis on removing barriers to 'participatory parity' (McLaughlin op cit). In a therapeutic culture, these barriers are cast predominantly as psycho-emotional.

We argue that an emphasis on identity, together with growing concern about psycho-emotional vulnerability that we explore below, become intertwined with therapisation. For example, in adult and community education and access to higher education programmes, some radical/critical educators look to the work of Amyrta Sen, to propose an assets-based or capability approach (eg Walker 2012, Lewis 2012, 2014). For example, advocates of programmes in adult and community education that aim to develop mental health and well-being, propose that, "*agency is … one's ability to pursue goals that one values and that are important for the life an individual wishes to lead; agency and well-being are deeply connected*" and therefore essential for mental health (Lewis 2012, 2014). Here, educational forms of recognition aim to redress cultural, symbolic and status injustices, and the emotional and psychological harms caused by "*non-recognition, the rendering of invisibility as a result of dominant cultural forms; misrecognition, being seen as lacking value and as inferior; and disrespect, being maligned or disparaged in everyday interactions or representations*" (Lewis, 2009: 259). Following this argument, providing recognition affords a universalist understanding of shared humanity where struggles for recognition are linked inextricably to identity, the shaping of people's subjectivities, or senses of self in relation to the social world (Lewis 2012). Increasingly, this identity is becoming a predominantly psycho-emotional one.

From these perspectives, advocacy of social justice aims to expose and then address the psycho-emotional effects and causes of inequality as a key source of recognition. Proposed initially as both a precondition for social justice, we argue that this recognition has become seen as a socially just end in itself. We also argue that this shift is especially acute in education where profound fears about growing pressures on those most marginalized and at risk of educational failure have eroded radical hopes for socially progressive mechanisms for equality. Here the education system itself is simultaneously a main culprit in social injustice and an increasingly high stakes source of potential (?) remedy.

Concerns about vulnerability reinforce this perspective. According to Jackie Lumby for example:

> *....From Willis's (1977) seminal study of the educational roots of inequality to more recent explorations of the burgeoning mental health and behavioural issues among*

> *adolescents, or the effects of globalisation on at-risk youth... their fragility and degree of exposure has made many apprehensive. Education is depicted as a structural aspect of a risky environment, presenting perils which some young people fail to navigate successfully, with lasting detriment to their lives* (Lumby 2011, 261).

Emphasis on recognition, capabilities and the psycho-emotional dimensions of inequality counters the ways in which policy pathologises young people or adults 'at risk' of serious structural inequalities. In her analysis of 'vulnerability', as a central theme in Australian social policy for 'marginalised' and 'at risk' groups, Julie McLeod shows how some interpretations of social justice counter the pathologisation of vulnerability. They recast vulnerabilty from a negative attribute of some marginalised groups to a quality or state that is integral the '*fragile and contingent nature of personhood*' where we are all '*potentially vul-nerable*[6]' and where vulnerability is a '*universal*' dimension of human experience and identity (Beckett quoted by McLeod 2012, 22). In this scenario, acceptance of our universal vulnerability enables everyone to claim their right to '*be protected from the effects of potential vulnerabilities [whilst] defending the rights of others to receive support in the light of their actual vulnerability*' (Beckett ibid).

Some theorists go further to depict collective and specific vulnerabilities as potential sources of political resistance that reveal structural inequalities and the deflection of social responsibility for them. For example, Helen Spandler argues from the field of mental health that we need to see 'illness' as embodying both negative and positive possibilities, as something to marshal in order to illuminate enduring oppressions of capitalism (2013). Here collective narratives of suffering and lay expertise de-centre professional definitions and de-stigmatise vulnerability as a springboard for political resistance (ibid). In another rejection of the ways in which aspirations for capitalist materialism are both normalizing and unrealistic for growing numbers of people, Judith Butler links notions of vulnerability to 'precarity' as a vehicle for new forms of power and resistance:

"precariousness [is] a function of our social vulnerability and exposure that is always given some political form, and precarity as differentially distributed [is] one important dimension of the unequal distribution of conditions required for continued life... precaritization as an ongoing process [avoids reducing] the power of precarious to single acts or events. Precaritization allows us to think about the slow death that happens to targeted or neglected populations over time and space. And it is surely a form of power without a subject, which is to say that there is no one centre that propels its direction and destruction" (Butler in Paur 2012, 8).

For Butler, interruptions or inadvertent convergences with other networks might produce subversive citation that disrupts the sedimented iterability of subjectivity (Butler 1995, 135 in St. Pierre 2000). This is also a way of resistance (Kurki & Brunila, in press) because these ideas are not meant to turn people inwards or to feel vulnerable or weak. Yet almost twenty years after Butler proposed these radical possibilities, the pervasive reach of therapeutic culture creates other 'inadvertent convergences'. These risk incorporating subversive understandings of precarity within a widening spectrum of events and conditions deemed to comprise risks, threats and potential harms and therefore to render more people vulnerable. For example, in the UK context, policy categories of vulnerability to worsening structural risks have expanded since 1995 into a much more diffuse spectrum of psycho-emotional vulnerabilities seen to arise from commonplace, mundane, serious and traumatic experiences alike (Ecclestone and Goodley 2014). In this way, even those who object to lack of attention to structural explanations of risk of vulnerability, or who hope for discursive disruptions and resistances, are drawn into a greatly expanded agenda of psycho-emotional risks that no longer targets just specific groups but, increasingly, everyone.

Of course, not all the sources cited here invoke therapeutic orthodoxies in relation to new understandings of vulnerability, or advocate pedagogy, assessment and knowledge as sources of recognition and justice. Many also resist strenuously behavioural forms of therapeutic pedagogy while others, such as Butler, seek explicitly to deconstruct the limited view of identity that can lead to therapeutic forms of recognition. Nevertheless, it is

important to deconstruct both the assumptions and absences that ideas about social justice reveal within themselves, as well as the inadvertent convergences in therapeutic culture that draw together seemingly incompatible perspectives. This requires asking questions about the relations between governance, subject and agency offered by the pervasive and compelling appeal of therapisation. We do this next, acknowledging that these relations overlap and intertwine rather than being linear or hierarchical in influence, and also reflect contradictions and tensions.

3. THERAPEUTIC FORMS OF GOVERNANCE, SUBJECTIVITY AND AGENCY

One discursive approach is to analyse how therapisation permeates popular culture and social policy settings alongside marketization as a more efficient way of governing citizens, workers and potential workers (Brunila 2011). For example, Nikolas Rose argues that contemporary working life is about getting the most out of employees, not by managing more harshly or rationalising but by releasing individuals' psychological striving for autonomy and creativity through enhancing their skills of self-presentation and self-management. In other words, therapeutic governance instrumentalises autonomy (Rose, 1998; see also Burman 2014). Following this argument, one type of ideal individual is someone who contributes to a flourishing economy. Conversely, those who do, or cannot do so, have what policy makers call 'complex needs' that need intervention. Here the vocabularies of marketisation and therapisation are intertwined, aiming to 'autonomise' and 'responsiblise' the self without shattering their formally autonomous character (see also Ball 2013, Brunila 2011b). This discourse connects political rhetoric and regulatory therapeutic programmes to the 'self-steering' capacities of subjects themselves, creating individuals who are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy, emotionally literate/ intelligent, adaptable, autonomous, self-responsible, entrepreneurial, flexible and self-centred. At the same time, they are resilient enough to take responsibility for the emotional damages that marketisation causes.

Seen in this light, therapisation is significantly more compelling, inclusive and expansive than traditional forms of psychologisation. Through democratizing approaches that enable us to take control of ourselves and our lives, new types of lay and pseudo-experts complement claims from traditional therapeutic professionals that applying scientific

knowledge and professional skill enable the self to achieve fulfillment. When a profound sense of pessimism and crisis combines with radical political understandings of vulnerability to render such aspirations excluding, ableist or simply unrealistic, those aspirations can be lowered to address our individual or collective emotional vulnerability (Ecclestone in Ecclestone and Goodley op cit).

Ideas of governance and governmentality are highly salient here. As a new manifestation of governance, therapisation represents market-oriented, self-organizing networks and by incorporating, producing and positioning its subjects as students, workers and citizens, it represents a form of governmentality (Brunila 2011b). As we explore further below, mainstream educational initiatives offer therapisation as a particularly compelling strand of regulative and productive power that permeates pedagogies and curriculum content, encompassing subjects that can be known and spoken about. Although this subject is already elicited and legitimized through popular therapeutic orthodoxies, educational forms of therapisation elicit the psycho-emotionally-vulnerable self as a legitimate subject to know and talk about. Traditional experts such as educational and clinical psychologists, new lay and pseudo-experts, such as educational professionals and youth workers, and children and young people themselves, are drawn in as peer experts trained in counselling, mentoring and mediation techniques (e.g. Ecclestone and Lewis op cit, Ecclestone and Hayes chapter 3 op cit, Proctor 2013b).

Some Foucauldian accounts of the content and processes of therapeutic behaviour management in schools depict these techniques and processes of confession about being a learner (eg Fejes 2008). We would argue that attempts to make acknowledgement of vulnerability both authentic and inclusive push confession into new spheres of influence where the emotionally vulnerable learner/worker/colleague who invokes our empathy and

commitment to social justice becomes a desirable, normative subject who must reveal him or herself in particular ways (Ecclestone and Goodley op cit).

However, the explanatory appeal of theories of governance and governmentality can obscure their limitations in illuminating subjectivity and agency in therapisation. Not least, whilst not presented as such, policy translates these theories easily into the drive to make people emotionally and psychologically well, and therefore productive, 'responsibilised' and independent in meeting the demands of fragmenting and precarious social and economic systems. Yet, while salient, this argument can suggest a one-way process, or even a type of conspiracy to create certain types of citizens: as Jessica Pykett argues, it is too easy for critical sociologists to offer overly deterministic and totalising accounts of the strategies used by the state to govern spaces, subjects and practices (2012). We acknowledge this danger here, arguing that it is crucial to understand how populist translations of therapeutic governance into policy and practice, cultural discourses and academic theorising do not turn their human targets into passive objects; rather therapisation cannot work unless its participants are capable of action and unless it offers compelling forms of agency. In other words, it is important to remember that therapisation works not only to render its targets as subjects of power but also to constitute them as agentic subjects.

Seen in this light, studies of behaviour and emotional management interventions for young children and young adults trialed or adopted in British primary and secondary schools (such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning strategy (SEAL), the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies programme and the Penn Resilience Programme), hint at the ways in which some participants and teachers internalise enthusiastically the therapeutic assumptions, discourses and subjectivities offered to them (see Challen et al 2011, Humphrey et al 2009, Gillies 2011, Procter 2013a, b). These studies show that, for some participants, the recognition of a diagnosis responds positively to their struggles for social recognition. Other participants resist in small and idiosyncratic ways, or are, variously, indifferent, compliant, confused and bemused. At the same time, while some participants and implementers regard such programmes as helpful and positive, they can lead both parties to adopt learned techniques in order to manipulate others' emotions. For example, the Penn Resilience programme teaches mindsets and behaviours associated with

emotional literacy, thereby enabling some children to deploy them strategically to get their way with parents (see Challen et al 2011). Conversely, the supposedly transferable mindset and associated thinking strategies advocated for 'resilience' can be dangerous for children when they try to use them in situations such as being caught up in parental violence (ibid).

Sometimes benefits and drawbacks in discourses and practices of emotional learning or emotional well-being are intertwined. For example, programmes such as SEAL can offer an acceptable identity and helpful strategies to children who experience emotional and behavioural problems. Lisa Procter's case study of Justin, who has 'high functioning autism' and 'anger management issues' shows how normalizing judgments about a particular diagnosed identity, and the subsequent strategies that children are made to deploy in relating to peers and teachers, offer an acceptable identity whilst also creating new forms of peer power, new essentialising labels and new sources of struggle for social recognition (Proctor 2013b). Justin's mother welcomes and proselytizes his diagnosed identity while he is ambivalent: he enjoys special treatment, concessions and many opportunities for one-to-one talking and learns to define and present himself through the language of therapeutic orthodoxies about his relationship with his parents and his self esteem. Yet he also resents how his identity defines, confines and 'Others' him in the eyes of peers and teachers (ibid). In a similar way to many other programmes in schools, the school deals with the ambivalences of being singled out for special emotional and behavioural treatment with the promise that Justin can become a lay therapeutic expert himself, as a peer mediator.

In a similar vein, Kristiina Brunila's study of compulsory programmes in Finland for young people experiencing unemployment, poverty, prison and educational failure shows the effects of being made to take part in therapeutic diagnoses and psychometric assessments followed by individual and group counselling and self-help techniques (Brunila 2012a, b, 2013). Her work illuminates some subtle negotiations, responses and their consequences. She argues that therapeutic pedagogies both open up and circumscribe agency through forms of speaking and being heard that involve confession of, and attendance to, psycho-emotional 'mistakes', legacies and vulnerabilities. By eliciting individuals' problems through expected and appropriate modes of being and knowing, therapisation is a form of learning that encourages participants to locate these in the self rather than society.

In another Finnish programme for young adults, adult educators who are not licensed to conduct official diagnoses devise their own tests as an alternative and observe how some participants embrace a resulting diagnosis of learning difficulties as a springboard for believing in themselves. For these and other participants, a diagnosis of emotional and psychological problems frees them from confronting questions about intelligence or ability and offers the chance for a new educational identity (Brunila and Siivonen 2014). Others are more critical and resistant, challenging these processes and labels as a diversion from gaining the knowledge and skills that might take them out of unemployment and social exclusion. At the same time, therapisation reflects problems easily back onto participants when they remain unable to enter educational or working life. The involvement of pseudo-psy-experts is crucial for legitimizing both these forms of intervention and their implications.

A study by Val Gillies of children's experience of SEAL in the Behavioural Referral Unit of a British school in a disadvantaged urban area shows the ways in which highly regulated, normalizing strategies to manage emotions sidestep or suppress some participants' experiences of intractable problems of poverty, racism and class oppression. For some young people, emotional literacy and management strategies are useless in helping them manage the conflicting emotions these problems createinstead, the problems they experience are highly gendered, raced and classed and some young people recognize and resist the normative discourses and practices that are supposed to address them (Gillies 2011).

In the light of Stephen Ball's claim that we do not just speak a discourse, it speaks us (Ball 2013), applying a discursive approach to these studies begins to illuminate the subtle ways in which mainstream therapisation speaks through language and social relations, whilst also allowing us to think about how we are 'reformed' by therapisation, how we learn to act in the power relations that such programmes offer, as well as how to utilise them. Studies cited above also show how alternatives and critical voices might appear through outright rejection of therapeutic approaches, quiet refusal or avoidance, and related questions about the absence of meaningful educational experiences and outcomes in the face of unemployment and poor education. It is therefore crucial to acknowledge critical voices within contemporary forms of therapisation as resistance.

Our brief analysis of the interplay between subjectivity and agency in mainstream therapeutic programmes rejects the determinist idea that a person would or should fulfill the role offered by founders of particular discourses. Instead, discursive and performative understandings of subjectivity offer ways to analyse therapisation as a site of constant negotiations and agency. This enables us to see that problems concerning therapisation are not objects but rather the products of different practices, policies and power relations and therefore always negotiable and changeable. Therapisation is therefore, simultaneously, compelling, rewarding, normalizing and confining, Othering and empowering. As Brunila argues, therapisation intertwines with marketization and enterprising discourses in very powerful ways (2012b). In defining a cultural script about appropriate feelings and responses to events, and a set of associated practices through which people make sense of themselves and others, therapisation works as a certain kind of subjectification 'that binds us to others at the very moment we affirm our identity. Yet therapisation never fulfills its promises: continuous striving for self-realisation, self-esteem and self-fulfillment engenders an ever-present fear of not learning and developing fast enough (see also Brunila et al 2014).

A discursive understanding of therapisation also indicates a much deeper type of crisis. Here, embedded within crises of economy, social and educational disengagement or alienation, and mental ill-health, highly pessimistic responses emerge from different political perspectives. Here it is possible to discern a crisis of rationality and, in particular, a crisis of the rational subject. In political and philosophical debate, a vision of Cartesian stable, rational and coherent subjectivity has become a contested and denigrated object of the Enlightenment project of humanity's historical progress through reason (Braidotti 1991; see also Malik 2001). In the contemporary context, Rosi Braidotti refers to Nietzsche to argue that at times of crisis, every culture tends to turn to its 'others', to become femininized, in the sense of having to face its limitations, gaps and deficiencies (1991). It is therefore no surprise that therapisation and its interest in 'the other' in a dualistic order of things (reason/emotion, cognitive/affective, mind/body) is, simultaneously, such an easy source of legitimation and so easily legitimized. In this respect, both mainstream and radical/critical therapeutic approaches denigrate boundaries between formal pedagogy, curriculum content and everyday knowledge, thereby resonating with broader philosophical

and political disenchantment with traditional forms of knowledge and pedagogy (see Ecclestone 2011, Brunila 2014).

Predictably, crisis and inherent tensions within therapisation create deeper philosophical and practical contradictions. In an era of profound pessimism about social, economic and educational crises and humanity's role in them, a therapeutic feminized turn enables capitalism to harness the whole personality by shaping it more efficiently through a focus on emotions. At the same time, a market-oriented therapeutic ethos and its discourse of survival strengthen the Cartesian idea of subjectivity, the idea of the human as essential, ductile and 'becoming'. In wider theorizing about emotion in educational settings, there is resistance to managed, rational understandings (eg Kenway and Youdell 2011). Mainstream therapeutic pedagogies in the studies cited above promote the rational, coherent human subject who can diagnose and then work on behaviours and mindsets. This intersects with the irrational, emotionally vulnerable subject pathologised by policy makers and elevated in progressive, radical/critical accounts cited above. In a circular debate about which therapeutic approach is most progressive or emancipatory, each subject is invoked to counter the other.

4. PEDAGOGIES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our analysis of mainstream therapeutic programmes suggests that they offer a particular response to diverse social and political concerns as a powerful form of what Stephen Ball calls a new ontology of learning (Ball 2013). Here it is also possible to see the therapeutic expansion of 'learning' and the corresponding expansion of therapeutic pedagogy and expertise as part of what Basil Bernstein warned would become a totally pedagogised society that demands us all to shape our bodies and subjectivities to the needs of learning (Bernstein 2001). Seen in this light, mainstream therapeutic pedagogies offer a particularly narrow form of learning, namely about proper feelings and emotional management as part of a healthy mental state as integral to a proper way of being.

In contrast, pedagogies that arise from different radical/critical understandings of social justice aim to offer a more expansive understanding of learning that resists behavioural management. We outline here how these understandings have also taken a therapeutic turn. For example, using 'affective' in its more general sense, some educators emphasise affective and relational dimensions of inequality and psycho-emotional barriers to learning, arguing that we need to confront the hurt, suffering and feelings of inadequacy and lack of recognition that inequality create, and the particular anxieties and emotional barriers that non-traditional students face (eg Leathwood and Hey op cit, Hyland, Hunt and West, Cramp et al op cit). Other educators explore the possibilities of psychological engagement with students' life histories as the basis for critical pedagogy (eg Tarc 2013). Both within, and in response to, these perspectives, some critical sociologists argued that therapisation offers new affordances for voicing inequality or oppression (see Wright 2011). Following such arguments, radical/critical forms of therapisation might be a springboard, perhaps to raise political consciousness or to develop the confidence and motivation that enables participation and inclusion in educational processes. Drawing on traditions of political consciousness-raising, therapeutic pedagogies for social justice might regard "*collective or community life is understood as held together not by common experience or activity, but through the ability of individuals to 'disclose' themselves to each other*" (Panton 2012, 167-168).

More generally, practices rooted in therapisation are appealing because they enable public service and welfare professionals to deal with guilt about their own relative privilege and their inability to address structural inequality. According to Richard Sennett, they 'cross the boundaries of inequality' by privileging the promotion of clients' self-worth and empathy

with their emotional and psychological experiences (2005). This is especially tempting in education where profound fears about growing pressures on those most marginalized and at risk of educational failure have eroded radical hopes for socially progressive mechanisms for equality.

From some disableist perspectives, the elevation of collective and mutual vulnerability as a progressive or radical act, discussed earlier, celebrates a pedagogy of connectivity. For example, Dan Goodley in Ecclestone and Goodley op cit argues that such a pedagogy recognises that many of these connections are infused with power relations but opens possibilities for education through an expanded sense of learning: from self-as-learner to self-and-others-as- learners. According to Goodley, (ibid) attending to our relationships, the intentions behind our connections, and the costs/benefits that emerge, are always fundamentally social, political and ethical considerations. Yet here vulnerability also becomes normative, requiring people to blur boundaries between their professional and/or public and private lives, and between associated ways of regarding others and behaving towards them. Readings of vulnerability as progressive or radical intensify cultural expectations that we should model our professional and public relationships on intimate ones, by demonstrating emotional empathy, emotional disclosure, and mutual recognition of suffering. In radical therapeutic forms of pedagogy, uch expectations become a requisite marker of political commitment, depicting failure or resistance to disclosing ourselves as vulnerable as 'ableist' or a manifestation of masculinist and elitist Othering of non-traditional students (Ecclestone and Goodley op cit).

In different ways, then, advocates of a more therapised understanding of social justice offer pedagogies that, in different ways, privilege the affective and psycho-emotional and, we

would argue, overlook the structural, material and discursive aspects of therapisation. An alternative is for a critical discursive approach to make conditions of therapisation explicit by recognising them as a form of discursive relation, with limitations and possibilities and where spaces remain for negotiating social justice from pedagogic perspectives. For example, the concept of 'discourse virtuosity' shows how some teachers in Finland have pushed spaces for negotiations of equality and social justice in ways that have avoided individualization and market-oriented tendencies (Brunila 2009). Thinking discursively creates possibilities for seeing how certain discursive constructions are appropriated while others are discarded, relegated as irrelevant or even threatening. Taking therapeutic power relations seriously means being constantly aware of the discourses through which people are spoken about and speak about themselves (see also Davies 2005). This approach can create ruptures in power relations, at least locally, in a certain space and time. Following this argument, if we understand therapisation as a system that is not closed, shifts in historical thought and different material conditions become possible. In this way, then, pedagogy for social justice could be seen as not only a deconstruction of Cartesian dualism but also as working toward the not-yet-thought. The precondition for this would mean constantly reflecting on pedagogic practices and acknowledging power embedded in them. The danger here, of course, is becoming confined to the local and the detail of the discursive mechanisms and effects of therapisation, so that the structural and political workings of therapisation are silenced or simply forgotten.

CONCLUSIONS

Using the policy contexts of Finland and England, we have aimed to show that therapisation is much more significant, inclusive and pervasive than merely a new form of psychological governance that shapes responsible, flexible workers and learners. Its salience and potency

come from being able to speak powerfully across incompatible ideological standpoints. This produces prescriptive behavioural regimes alongside humane and socially radical responses first to a prevailing cultural sensibility of psycho-emotional vulnerability to social, economic and educational inequalities and then, more insidiously, to the risks that we present to ourselves as well as to others. Therapisation embellishes this vulnerability in subtle yet profound ways. While we might continue to regard some groups and individuals as especially vulnerable to precarious structural conditions both now and in an even more uncertain future, our collective sense of vulnerability is embellished by therapeutic orthodoxies that alert us to hidden or repressed psycho-emotional legacies of our own pasts.

In a context where disengagement, exclusion and alienation are recast simultaneously as causes, outcomes and manifestations of psycho-emotional vulnerability, mainstream therapisation presents emotional well-being as a form of social justice in its own right. This updates traditional forms of psychologisation that present societal problems as individual psycho-emotional deficiencies and then offer therapeutic pedagogies to address psycho-emotional aspects of the self and its learning. Mainstream therapeutic pedagogies become part of utilitarian and technological notions of competences for lifelong learning, offering opportunities to learn how to carry one's own choices and responsibilities, to become developmental and trainable in the markets of education and work (Rasmussen, 2009, 86). Therapisation also enables governments to legitimize an expansion of their activities by sponsoring new privatized forms of therapeutic pedagogy, expertise and pseudo-expertise in informal and formal settings. In Finland, for example, therapisation has been realized largely through the significant rise of state-sponsored projects evident in many European countries, where new non-permanent, informal structures enable public and private actors, operating outside their formal jurisdictions, to become part of political institutions' decision-making processes (Brunila 2011).

We have also shown that therapisation is also integral to radical/critical resistances to utilitarian approaches that present social justice as an individualizing, internalized responsibility of becoming, and as a question of the 'right kind' of subjectivity and mindset. Here radical/critical understandings of social justice expose and address the psychic and

emotional effects and causes of inequality. By speaking powerfully to older collective, radical political traditions, these approaches offer an empowering position of potential survival tied to selfhood (see McLaughlin 2011, Brunila 2014). In this way, radical/critical forms of therapeutic pedagogy offer a compelling form of recognition, not merely of self but of the psycho-emotionally vulnerable self.

We would argue that both mainstream and some of the radical/critical pedagogies for social justice explored above generate a closed circle where the purpose of therapisation is to secure social justice in the form of equal therapisation. In a context where mainstream therapeutic interventions are usually imposed on participants in the form of universal approaches, therapeutic approaches to social justice avoid questions about whether one needs or wants therapisation: instead, the question becomes one of how to therapise everyone equally, and in the most educationally progressive or radical way.

We reiterate here a point we made earlier, that our own perspective needs to guard against determinist and totalizing accounts. In our summary of empirical studies, we observed that it is too simplistic to characterize the mechanisms and consequences of mainstream therapeutic programmes as emancipatory or repressive. Instead, therapisation shapes subjects and agency by encouraging or compelling people to speak and act through language and social relations whilst also allowing them to think about how they are 'reformed' by therapisation, how they constantly learn to act in these power relations, as well as to utilise them.

Although discursive approaches set out to both problematize and resist these tendencies, and are essential for illuminating the complexities and possibilities of therapisation, there are potential limits if discourses are considered simply in linguistic terms. We have directed our focus here on a Foucauldian approach that refers to the practices of discourses rather than language/texts. Such an approach aims to bridge a symbolic-material distinction and signals the always political nature of "the real" (see Bacchi & Bonham 2014). Here it is crucial not to pay lip service to the need to remember the real and to bring political and structural dimensions into discursive approaches.

We are also mindful that, for reasons of space, we have not explored counter arguments to radical/critical approaches to therapisation (eg Tseris in press, Panton 2012). Nor have we

engaged with important critical perspectives on the negative effects of pedagogies based on notions of recognition and representation (eg Lingard and Keddle 2013). It is therefore necessary to know more about how therapisation 'works' in practice: although we have offered brief insights from mainstream programmes in this paper, we know little about pedagogies informed by radical/critical understandings of social justice. This suggests that future research should pose questions about how radical therapeutic pedagogies silence, overlook and deny certain forms of subjectivity, agency, knowledge, and social and cultural capital. In-depth comparison of policy and practice across settings and countries might begin to address these questions and also offer practical insights for implementers and participants in therapeutic interventions.

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