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The History and Future of Psychotherapy and Alternative Health-Related Practices: Lessons from the Past and from the Present

JOHN LEES and RICHARD CLEMINSON, University of Leeds, UK

ABSTRACT *This article discusses the political potential of contemporary psychotherapy and complementary and alternative medicine which have stood, for the most part, outside centralised political power structures. While the focus of the article is primarily historical, it seeks to extract lessons from the past for the context of today; and, in particular, examines the way in which psychotherapy and alternative health movements have sought to construct an alternative to political centralisation and the divide between expert and popular culture in the early twentieth century. To date, very little explicitly comparative or historical work has been done regarding the relationship between contemporary psychotherapy and earlier politicised healthcare movements; and, in this context, the article examines the relevance of some earlier forebears of contemporary psychotherapy to the politics of psychotherapy today. It looks at three different historical scenarios in order to deepen our understanding about the interaction between psychotherapy and political power. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

Key words: psychotherapy; complementary and alternative medicine; political energy; centralised political power

INTRODUCTION

Health discourse and practice in contemporary European societies have undergone considerable change in recent years: many practitioners and publics are reconfiguring their healthcare demands, a reconfiguration which has led to a growing interest in professions allied to medicine such as psychotherapy, and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), and, indeed there are many similarities between these two forms of healthcare (Lees, 2011; Tovey & Lees, 2011; Hök & Madsen, 2012).

In this article, we argue that the growth and popularity of psychotherapy and of CAM suggests a changing understanding of what is implied by health and illness; the increasing influence of grassroots activity; changing relations between official or state-provided health care; changing subjectivity around the care of the self; and a different way of looking at politics. Such changes take us beyond a narrative based on the rhetoric of science and into

*Correspondence to: John Lees, School of Healthcare, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9UT, UK.
E-mail: J.Lees@Leeds.ac.uk

implicit narratives of empowerment, resistance and the "re-enchantment" of humanity (Bookchin, 1995) – changes which we view as transformational. Although we acknowledge that the transformational nature of psychotherapy and of CAM is yet to be fully demonstrated, the depth of feeling and concerns voiced by many practitioners and members of the general public in these fields must be taken seriously, especially within the context of economic recession and, specifically, in the light of developments in the field of healthcare in the UK and across Europe.

In view of their expansion and resilience, it has been suggested that conventional research, the paradigm of "normal science", is being superseded, and that these developments represent a shift which will lead us into a "post-paradigm period of revolutionary science", thereby opening up new ways of understanding and treating health problems (Tudor, 2010, p. 13). Whatever the case, the rapid growth of these disciplines has relevance to the politics of healthcare and psychotherapy.

In this paper we examine these claims further. In the next section we look more closely at the transformational qualities of psychotherapy and CAM. We then look at the development of similar health movements in the earlier part of the twentieth century and, finally, draw some conclusions from the historical survey. The overall aim of the article is to examine the relationship between what are in effect marginalised healthcare movements and centralised political power, both in the past and in the present.

POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY AND CAM

There are several aspects of the potential radicalism of psychotherapy and CAM which we wish to highlight.

First, they are publicly driven movements, are popular and are the therapies of choice for many members of the general public. As a consequence, they have developed on the margins of centralised political power and, as such, are essentially heterogeneous movements with a plethora of practices varying both within and between different countries. In view of the fact that their growth is user- rather than research-led, they are, in political terms, quintessentially grassroots movements.

Second, their popular support – and even their support amongst academics and professionals – is resilient, in spite of ongoing disputes about the scientific evidence regarding their efficacy and effectiveness. Debates have been raging in the field of psychotherapy around this ever since Eysenck's (1952) review of the literature on therapeutic outcomes, in which he asserted that there was no evidence that therapy and, in particular, psychoanalysis, made people any better. In spite of this, the profession has continued to grow. A similar principle applies to CAM. An article in the UK's newspaper *The Observer* recently reported that an attempt to appoint a CAM professor at Aberdeen University had aroused concerns about "the scientific integrity of the university" and the danger of "attracting negative publicity" to the university because of its support for the post and the unscientific nature of CAM (McKie & Hartman, 2012). Furthermore, although the university did not make the appointment because of perceived partiality of the funding, it still stood by CAM methods in principle by stating that "research to investigate the evidence base for the effectiveness or otherwise of complementary therapies [is] a legitimate academic endeavour" (Jump, 2012). Yet there are dangers. A recent major CAM scoping study suggested that the

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scientific debate had a political dimension. It stated that there was "an ongoing battle on the political scene, and as always there is a risk that the politicians are going to use the scientists for their own purposes" (Madsen, 2013).

Third, and due in part to their grassroots yet marginalised nature, and the fact that they have grown outside the control of the dominant discourses of the medical profession and the State, psychotherapy and CAM exhibit different responses to centralised power. These range from the perspective which aims to integrate these new healthcare practices with dominant biomedical practices to those which see them as alternatives – or even challenges – to conventional practice. At one end of this range or spectrum are the UK government's scheme for Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (see http://www.iapt.nhs.uk/) and the integrative medical movement which combines CAM therapies with conventional treatment based on the principle that any treatment (allopathic or otherwise) should be used which can be proven to help (College of Medicine, 2013); and, at the other end of the spectrum are the critiques made of centralised medical power, positions which we now examine in greater detail.

The first major work to challenge medical authority is that of Illich (1977), who saw many aspects of mainstream biomedicine as being iatrogenic and thus damaging. In his analysis, biomedicine produces the problems which it purports to deal with and prevents people from using their own natural healing forces: "The social commitment to provide all citizens with almost unlimited outputs from the medical system threatens to destroy the environmental and cultural conditions needed by people to live a life of constant autonomous healing" (ibid., p. 14). These concerns have resurfaced in recent years in the psychotherapy (and counselling) professions and amongst other observers. They take the view that medical discourse itself, and the way it affects our views about health, is a major concern. It is based on a disease model (Freeth, 2007), extends its power by identifying pathologies which are only visible to scientific experts (Salmon & Hall, 2003) and views psychological problems as akin to a breakdown of a machine – the "broken brain" approach (Miller, 2010). Indeed, in recent years, many therapists have critiqued such qualities, for instance, Sanders (2007) and Mollon (2009).

Then there are the critiques of government action itself, and its supporters within the therapy profession. For instance, in regard to recent government proposals to regulate the psychotherapy profession, the opponents of regulation argued that it would destroy the heart of the profession as a result of undermining the "self-authority, self-responsibility, and the right to self-determination" of the profession and replacing this with "a greater degree of external authority" based on "a set of external structures and processes" (Rogers, 2009, p. 26). They also argued that it would create a "market-led vision of therapy" which is "antithetical to the values and ethics of psychotherapy" (Leader, 2009).

These challenges to central medical and political authority have been conceptualised by Samuels (2006). Centralised political power has, of course, throughout history, been affected by the actions of groups on the margins and periphery of society. If this had not been the case, it would not have been possible to bring about changes since the 1970s as a result, for example, of the activities of the feminist movement. Yet, Samuels also argued that marginalised political activities have a part to play politically whether their ideas are viewed as having political power or not: the notion of political energy as distinct from political power. Psychotherapy and counselling (and other movements on the fringes of centralised power, such as environmentalism, CAM and those attuned to issues of ethnic, racial and sexual diversity), are examples of this. They exhibit “idealism and an imaginative and visionary focus on certain political problems with a view to making a creative impact on these problems” (Samuels, 2006, p. 7) and share an “emotional rejection of big ideas”. Their aim is to live “intelligible and purposeful lives in spite of the massive social and financial forces that work against intelligibility and purpose” (p. 8).

In this article we are concerned with examining how this idealism is translated into concrete change.

METHODOLOGY

The central aim of the investigation is to see how the transformational potential of psychotherapy (and CAM) can be informed and developed by an understanding of the way in which these and similar movements interacted with centralised political power in the early twentieth century, how they construct an alternative to centralisation and how they implicitly or explicitly challenged the divide between expert and popular culture. To date, very little explicitly comparative or historical work between the development of contemporary psychotherapy and earlier healthcare movements has been done. Yet, if the past is not mined for its lessons, historians have warned, it will fade into oblivion (Hobsbawm, 1994; Macmillan, 2010). In this sense, the past provides an important source of data from which to draw insights about our current and future practice, particularly with respect to alternative models of psychotherapy and other health-related initiatives. The article will thus make a contribution to research into the politics of psychotherapy by taking a longer view than is usual.

Many of the current critiques which show the shortfalls of contemporary practice are not new. They were debated and highlighted in the past by movements which were similar or which drew on similar ideas. We will therefore examine whether this experience from the past can enable us today to understand how the profession might develop in the light of the critiques which have been made and the marginalised political status of these critiques. How did centralised political power respond in the past to such explicit and implicit critiques?

Three different scenarios are examined: first, the relationship between psychotherapy, and in particular psychoanalysis, and centralised political power in Germany and Austria in the 1930s; second, alternative lifestyles such as body culture and vegetarianism in the UK, Germany and Spain in the 1930s; and third, gymnastics, sports and body culture in Portugal in the 1930s and 1940s.

These three scenarios are analysed through a two-dimensional focus: first, from the point of view of their actions as radical healthcare movements, including their critique of mainstream practices and their relationship with political praxis; and, second, the way in which such actions were met by centralised political power structures or indeed co-opted by them; especially in view of the fact that they developed within very diverse social and political contexts, from so-called liberal democratic societies to authoritarian regimes.

Nevertheless, in each case, these movements voiced concerns about the ways in which societies shaped health and access to health-giving resources. Furthermore, they each and all sought to reconfigure the relationship between the state, the individual, the collective and health in innovative ways, or at least in ways that deserve our attention today. While some sought fundamentally reactionary solutions to ill health, by evoking racist or exclusionary political techniques, others sought life-affirming revolutionary solutions to ill health as part of a project to overturn social and economic structures which they conceived as producing illness. Finally, we wish to point out the dangers that such movements – in the past and today – experience when faced with centralised political power structures. Some movements were effectively swallowed by the state, as in Nazi Germany; others provided an ongoing form of resistance.

AN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY GAZE

Psychotherapy in action in Germany and Austria in the 1930s

The history of the psychotherapy profession has always had a political undercurrent since the early days of psychoanalysis. On the surface Freud was a conventional doctor and psychoanalyst who conformed to the norms of late-nineteenth-century/early-twentieth-century bourgeois society. Yet his work had a subversive element which was anarchic in its outlook. Totton (2011) has referred to several quotations from Freud which suggest this, citing Freud's views about the unconscious as, for example, a "cauldron full of seething excitations" with "no organisation … no collective will" (p. 14). Indeed Breuer, Freud's early mentor, remarked that Freud harboured "a desire to '*épater le bourgeois*'" (Sulloway, 1980, p. 85). Then there were Freud's radical colleagues; for instance, the "wild analyst" Georg Groddeck and the anarchist Otto Gross who wished to publish a journal on psychoanalysis and radical politics, and who both saw psychoanalysis as a revolutionary movement (Heuer, 2012). In addition, there are subsequent developments such as the Frankfurt School and critical theory, from the 1920s and 1930s onwards, both of which drew on psychoanalysis as well as a range of other world outlooks.

The work of Erich Fromm, Wilhelm Reich and the Marxist psychoanalyst Marie Langer also demonstrate radical political views. Fromm became associated with the Frankfurt School; Reich developed his own radical psychoanalytic theories which he disseminated within the German Communist Party (KPD); whereas Marie Langer was directly involved in political activism. She fought in the Spanish Civil War and, having fled to Argentina from the Nazis, combined Marxism and psychoanalysis in group therapy sessions with workers and, as a result of this, found herself on the death lists of the military dictatorships and had to flee again.

Coming from a position of committed political activism, Langer noted the failure of psychoanalysis to be aware of political realities. She cited one spectacular example of this in Vienna in the mid 1930s within the Institute of Psychoanalysis:

> In those days the Institute was full of Jewish refugees who came primarily from the Berlin Institute, and everyone from Freud down ignored the Nazi persecution going on in Germany … The very German analysts who had been persecuted, when they arrived in Austria, immersed themselves in psychoanalysis once again and seemed to have stopped thinking about what was going on "outside". (Langer, 1989, pp. 80–81)

Thus we have, on the one side, a potential for radicalism and an awareness of political realities and, on the other, an indifference to such realities and a tendency to suppress

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radicalism. Indeed some of the proponents of radicalism, such as Otto Gross, have been written out of the history of psychoanalysis (Heuer, 2012).

Psychotherapy thus exhibits two fundamental contradictions in regard to political life which have been present from its inception: first, the contradiction between radicalism and conformism; and, second, between political awareness and activism and lack of political awareness and lack of interest in political activism.

The body and political praxis in the UK, Germany and Spain in the 1930s

As numerous historians have pointed out, bodies are never simply "natural" or pre-existing in any way; they are only knowable through the workings of culture and history (e.g. Terry & Urla, 1995). This relationship, however, should not be thought of as purely unidirectional with powerful discourses of science acting upon a passive audience. People deploy their bodies not as completely autonomous elements but as deeply embedded material and discursive entities, as a means of ordering their own experiences and as a way of understanding their world and their part in it: the body has shifted from being a mere *signifier* of something else to become understood as a "site of experience, memory, or subjectivity" (Canning, 1999, p. 501). It is possible to analyse individual and collective agency as an experiential process and the body can be seen no longer as a "passive recipient of cultural practices, denied even the agency of experience" (Birke, 1999, p. 34). The *lived body* is thus emphasised as part of a dynamic analysis (Grosz, 1994; Young, 2005). As such, it is a powerful political weapon, and one concerned with emancipation and empowerment. This is particularly important as conventional science, generated in an elite centre and subsequently "diffused" into wider circles, has given way to more nuanced accounts of science in action whereby scientific knowledge needs to be understood as part of "a communicative process, involving appropriation, resistance and cultural contestation" (Topham, 2009, p. 20).

One bodily practice, nudism, was, in part, a response to the tensions encapsulated by modernity (see Berman, 1983; Eisenstadt, 2000), but also understood to be a route to the "truth" of the race and to be in harmony with "nature" (Mosse, 1985; Toepfer, 1997; Williams, 2007). Furthermore, since nudism was practised both individually and collectively, it took on a dimension far beyond that of the care of the individualised body; the diseases the body suffered and its sexual disorders were writ large on the collective "social body" (Ross, 2005). The scientific organisation of sexuality in the midst of these considerations moved to centre stage, as did the reform of sexual, social and cultural mores: "The perception of the body and sexuality within nudist writing did not simply reflect a discursive message; rather, the physical techniques of nudism became a means of cultural criticism" (Peeters, 2006, p. 435; see also Bell & Holliday, 2000; Smith & King, 2009). Nudism, therefore, can be understood as a kind of "body work", whereby "corporeal itineraries" are realised within the spaces etched out between political ideologies, agency and sexual knowledge (Wacquant, 1995, cited in Esteban, 2004, p. 12). We now look at how nudist and body culture movements developed in a number of countries in the 1930s.

The 1930s was a decade of acute political conflict and differences, when a battle of ideologies was taking place that would result in global conflict between liberal democracy, authoritarian fascism and "National Socialism", communism and other Left tendencies. In

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addition to the political battles in parliaments, in trade unions, on streets and on front lines, ordinary people were exploring radically different notions of health both individually and collectively to those espoused by State systems. From an awareness of their bodily weaknesses and strength they articulated political projects which sought to replace old values with new ones. Many voiced such change in "spiritual" terms; and, thus, some movements articulated change and alternatives regarding the body and health in the context of naturist and vegetarian movements. As will be seen, these movements were conceptualised as collective and individual strategies for "do-it-yourself" engagements in well-being, both physical and mental, as part of broader endeavours in favour of social change. However, they took on the character, to varying degrees, of the broader political struggles taking place in European societies at that time.

In England, while "mainstream" naturists were limited to "educating young people about the biological differences between the sexes" (Smith & King, 2009, p. 439), others, such as the anarchist–socialist Edward Carpenter, advocated a form of "socialism of sandals and sun" and revolution in all quarters of human life in which nudism would play a driving role (Rowbotham, 2008). Carpenter's utopian message would involve "sexual equality and freedom, closeness to Nature, direct relations between human beings, 'by plain living, friendship with the Animals, open-air habits, fruitarian food and such degree of Nudity as we can reasonably attain to'" (Rowbotham, 2008, p. 6).

In other countries, the nudity of the body, as well as demystifying its taboos, was also perceived as a strategy in a broader attempt to foster the optimum conditions for the reproduction of human beings. As such, many nudist movements emerged in conjunction with the sexual sciences of the age and, in particular, with one of the two "great innovations in the technology of sex" of the nineteenth century, that, is, eugenics (Foucault, 1990, p. 118). Eugenics, a diffuse sexual science that drew on biological thought, evolutionary theories, moral concerns and conceptions of disease, colonised the popular imagination and became in some European countries, such as Germany and Spain, an influential field with a profound reception in society as well as in specific movements for change such as nudism. In England, however, such linkages between nudism and eugenics were not explicitly forged (Hardwick, 1933).

Chad Ross (2005) argued that nudism in Germany became increasingly infused with racial hygienic discourse, especially from the mid 1930s onwards as the Nazis came to power. One nudist explained that the improvement of the race was inseparable from "National renewal, Nordification and improving the character and nature of Germans either psycho-technically, morally or through racial hygiene and eugenics is not in the least possible without *körperkultur* [sic]" (ibid., p. 146). Nudism would allow people to get to know their future spouse and determine their reproductive compatibility through a process of mate selection, whereby the "healthy and racially acceptable" partner would also be the most beautiful (ibid., p. 146).

In Spain, too, such linkages between eugenics and nudism were made explicit. Here, however, the nudist "movement" was broad, often leftist in political inspiration, and it provided a critique of contemporary society and civilization by advocating vegetarianism and nudism and voicing opposition to the use of tobacco. The Barcelona-based "Friends of the Sun", in addition to organising gymnastics in the main city square and leading excursions into the countryside, advocated a form of nudism that aspired to encapsulate "eugenic sentiments of brotherhood" in order to improve human health (Anon, 1922–1923). Other organisations, such as the Pentalfa School, advocated a form of eugenics coupled with a strict sexual morality: syphilis, pederasty, lasciviousness and the corruption, which supposedly brought down the Roman Empire, were all put down to youth's ignorance in not following "a true natural lifestyle" (Capo, 1933, pp. 5–6).

More explicitly connected to a political project, the anarchist, naturist monthly review *Iniciales* (which was published in Barcelona, 1929–1937) presented itself as combining "anarchism, sexual education, naturism, nudism and free love". As such, the "undressing of body and spirit", whereby humanity would be freed from clothes as well as of its "moral and personal prejudices and miseries", would entail a revolution in sexual morality and sexual relations (Díez, 2001, p. 41). The French anarchist, Émile Armand, writing in *Iniciales*, explicitly linked nudism and sexuality, hoping that such an "exaltation" would be "pure, natural, instinctive", nothing to do with the "fictitious excitation" provided by those half-dressed or dressed up to titillate (Armand, 1932, pp. 5–6).

While the political and social content of different nudist movements varied, they all coincided in their attempt to move towards a utopian horizon for the ordering of human reproduction. As in other scenarios, such as the feminist use of phrenology to buttress claims for equality with men in the mid nineteenth century (see Russett, 1989), or the feminist use of sexology (Bland, 1995), nudism drew on a popularised form of sexual scientific knowledge which was put to use for a particular political project of "racial" or sexual purification.

Gymnastics, sports and body culture in Portugal in the 1930s and 1940s

Our final scenario is drawn from the history of Portugal as a kind of counter-example to the progressive steps taken in some contemporaneous societies mentioned above. Under the right-wing corporatist, Catholic and quasi-fascist dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar, inaugurated as the *Estado Novo* (the New State) in 1933 and lasting until after its architect's death, in 1974, the ways in which the body was to be utilised were carefully and rigidly codified. Following the methods espoused by Ling on gymnastics and physical education and allying them with the new theories of "biotypology", which sought to divide individuals according to "biotypes" and direct them towards "appropriate" physical and mental stimuli, one historian noted how the method was adapted to the regime's ideological basis. Created by the *Estado Novo* in 1935, the *Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho* (the National Foundation for Joy in Work), was one of the first institutions which, among its wider objectives, dealt with the physical health of the Portuguese. Inspired by its German and Italian counterparts, the Italian *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (National Recreational Club, founded in 1925) and the German *Kraft Durch Freude* (Strength through Joy, founded in 1933), it was the official body responsible for dealing with the leisure time and organising physical exercises for the Portuguese workers. The Italian Fascist and German National Socialist experiences also influenced the establishment of the *Mocidade Portuguesa* (Portuguese Youth) in 1936, a pre-military organisation, compulsory for all children in school. Its training methods were linked to the logic behind the official school curricula, especially after the 1936 educational reform imposed an ultra-nationalistic pattern of education (Domingos, 2010).

The Portuguese *Instituto Nacional de Educação Física* (National Institute of Physical Education), established in 1940, provided a training centre for the physical education of Portuguese youth whereby particular exercises were encouraged while others were proscribed on the basis that they were harmful to morality or not appropriate for one sex or the other. Some activities, especially football (the constraints would later be relaxed) were deemed to be suspect: the regime "considered sports games as the 'antithesis of all education' and a means to 'physical deformation' and 'moral perversion'" (Domingos, 2010, p. 25).

Such control of the body *habitus* under the New State echoed the kinds of calisthenics and bodily repertoires to be followed in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, representing a rigidified expression of the "techniques of the body" which was centred on control and domination and, in the final analysis, subjected to the demands of an over-arching authoritarian ideology (Mauss, 1992).

THE LESSONS FOR TODAY

As in the case of both psychotherapy and CAM, these movements, which developed in the early twentieth century, also, for the most part, developed independently of centralised political power; their growth was user- rather than research-led and so they were essentially grassroots movements. However, the historical survey shows that they exhibited widely divergent responses to the encounter with centralised political authority. The examples demonstrate that, even though they were able, in different ways, to generate political energy, the form which this took was dependent on the political climate in which they developed. In some cases they were able to resist the dominant political discourses; in others they were absorbed into them. We will now examine the qualities of these movements and, in particular, the nature of their critiques, their relationship with centralised political power and the relevance of this to the political situation of psychotherapy today.

Psychotherapy in the 1930s

The examination of psychoanalysis in Germany and Austria in the 1930s showed a contradiction between radicalism and conformism, and between political awareness and activism, and a lack of political awareness and interest in political activism. Both elements can be seen and recognised today. Phillips (1994) referred to "the way in which psychoanalysis so easily made people conform" in spite of "what seemed to be at its inception a new and astonishing criticism of conformism" (p. 131). Indeed, one could argue that the same principles can be extended to the whole of the psychotherapy and counselling profession. Both then as now, the profession's critiques are primarily conceptual in their orientation, for example, Freud's views about the unconscious. More recent critiques of centralised political power have concentrated on specific arguments about specific issues and have incorporated an element of activism based, at least in part, on conceptual critiques, for instance, what appears to be a person-centred critique about centralised power undermining the "self-determination" of the profession. The political activism of Marie Langer is an exception to the rule.

The experience of the psychoanalysts in 1930s Vienna exhibits a different dimension (and the psychotherapy profession as a whole until quite recently); namely, a lack of political awareness and no inclination for political action. Yet, once again, we can see whether this has changed today. The sociologist, Morrall, is scathing about this tendency. He is concerned about the apolitical stance of the profession generally, especially in view of growing social,

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economic and political problems in the world today. The tendency of many therapists towards introspection and indifference to political realities amounts, according to Morrall, to a form of social irresponsibility. He argued that the profession has abrogated its social responsibilities by becoming “dysfunctional, arrogant, selfish, abusive, infectious, insane and deceitful” as a result of its “asocial” nature (Morrall, 2010, p. 10). He contended that socially responsible behaviour has “been sacrificed” within the therapy profession “for more narcissistic goals (for example, the drive to gain professional status)” (ibid., p. 73).

Morrall’s view echoes that of House (2003), who referred to self-serving therapists “actively” creating “the conditions in which their client then feels in ‘need’ of them” (p. 60). Indeed he adds another element to this, referring to the “fear-saturated environment” which “attempts to make safe what is intrinsically unsafe”, namely therapeutic work and, in so doing, “reducing the effectiveness of therapeutic work by limiting risk taking” (p. 73). In the 1930s there was a dangerously apolitical attitude because of the fascination of psychoanalysts with introspective analytical processes. Today there is, according to both House and Morrall, a more corrupted motive for being indifferent to political realities, namely, self-interest, which, according to House, is driven by fear.

If the message of 1930s Vienna and the views of Morrall (and many others) are anything to go by, and in spite of the efforts of the few, there is, arguably, an in-built political self-destruction mechanism within psychotherapy. This is the *nature of psychotherapeutic practice itself*, at least in the psychoanalytic and humanistic traditions, with their essentially reflexive and introspective methods. Reflexivity works towards change and transformation by turning “thought or reflection” and “action or practice” back on itself (Freshwater & Rolfe, 2001, p. 529; see also Steier, 1991). Yet this can either be a basis for praxis based on consciousness-raising as a result of developing a sense of “alienation from traditional social expectations” leading to “new ways of acting” (Mezirow, 1981, p. 7), or a source of endlessly spiralling introspection and inwardness. It can lead to greater and greater levels of political awareness and action or can become a self-induced tendency towards political impotence, as it seems to be for many therapists.

CAM-like movements in the 1930s

The alternative healthcare movements in the 1930s displayed a variety of responses to political power. Some movements, particularly in the UK and Spain, maintained a degree of radicalism, remained outside the power of the State, and explicitly or implicitly offered a critique of it. Others, particularly in Germany, were gradually colonised by the racist eugenics led policies of the State. Finally, yet others, as in Portugal, were to a large degree promoted by the State to serve its own authoritarian and fascistic purposes.

The first group, the critiques, were related to lifestyles and health activity. This represents a significant difference from the predominantly conceptual critiques of psychotherapy. Their critiques were couched in non-verbal bodily statements. They were acted out and embodied. They were also based on utopian visions. Furthermore, they were populist movements involving relatively large numbers of people. This contrasts to the academically and professionally driven critiques of systems (in the case of Illich’s critiques and other critiques of the medical model) or, as discussed, around specific government policies (in the case of regulation).

The second group of movements in the 1930s were absorbed into the ideologies of authoritarian racist regimes. Today, such regimes do not exist in Europe, at least not so overtly. Yet the same sort of absorption, or colonisation process, can be observed in the psychotherapy profession. Instead of engaging with powerful and extreme political ideologies, it has to engage with corporatism and business thinking. Business-oriented procedures and protocols permeate all aspects of society today, including academic and professional life, in our so-called liberal democracies with their globalised business-oriented practices. It is a way of thinking which reduces the complexity and subtlety of psychotherapy and CAM to a list of criteria in the name of maintaining professional standards by administrators and bureaucrats on the premise that practitioners are not able to do this for themselves. It also permeates professional organisations. The largest organisation in the field in the UK, the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, in addition to being a professional organisation, functions as a business with a Chief Executive Officer.

In the field of education, in which there have been similar developments, Stronach (2000) has shown how the power elites use the language of "business management" and such depersonalising terms as "quality", "standards", "assurance", "audit" and notions of "administrative control located outside the profession". Similarly, Leader (2009) referred to the "market-led vision of therapy" proposed by the regulators as being "antithetical to the values and ethics of psychotherapy". House (2003) has taken these views further. He has presented this as a malign process which has the aim of exercising power and control over practitioners – the "lethal cocktail": "the fear-driven dominator-hierarchical attempt to police the therapy field, and the considerable vested interests (both material and power-related) infusing the whole process" (p. 227). There is not only bureaucratisation, self-interest and fear, but also "policing" and the exercise of power and control over therapists.

The psychoanalysts of the 1930s (and psychotherapists for many years after that) tried to maintain their independence but were unsuccessful and were either prevented from practising or had to flee. The lifeworlds of the CAM movements, in contrast, were colonised, in Habermassian terms, by political and bureaucratic hierarchies (Finlayson, 2005). They were absorbed by the powerful political and racist systems in Germany at that time. Like the third group of movements, represented by Portugal, they became organs of the State. Today, similar movements are becoming colonised by corporate interests and, like Morrall, we can – and must – ask whose interests they are serving.

CONCLUSION

The primary factor in alternative health movements *vis-à-vis* political life in the 1930s was external and concrete rather than internal and conceptual; namely, *the way in which we relate to our bodies*. In this sense, one of these movements, nudism, can be understood as a set of techniques of the body (Mauss, 1992) or a kind of praxis of the body (Cleminson, 2013), or developed in order to attain some higher aim (the purification of the nation, the incarnation of the indomitable spirit of the proletariat or the realisation of racial purity), which is seen to be encapsulated, literally "corporealised" by the body. In this attempt to unite material culture (the body, the Sun, the elements) with the development of lived subjectivities as part of a drive towards political and biological betterment, the body was cast as a raw material to be fashioned in conjunction with a set of knowledges drawn from strong health-oriented, eugenic and scientific discourses on sexuality. Such common ground signified that "[p]rogressive, conservative, racist and even religious perspectives" could coexist within the nudist culture of any given country (Peeters, 2006, p. 434), and could be a political weapon and a way of engaging in cultural criticism, thereby contributing to utopian, socialist and anarchist movements. Yet such perspectives can also be at the root of a eugenic racist ideology or form the basis of engendering control and domination as a result of engaging in codified exercises.

The nature of the critique is inevitably influenced by the form of the health-related activity. Psychotherapy works with the inner life while the health movements under discussion work with the body. In the case of psychotherapy, however, its practices provide the seeds of its own political impotence. Could it learn from the principles of "the praxis of the body" and introduce a "praxis of the inner life" and introduce its own unique form of critique based on what it does best? Our conclusion is that this would be achieved by developing a psychotherapy-driven reflexivity which heightens awareness of political realities as a basis for transformation and change in the sense of critical theory and emancipatory reflexivity (Mezirow, 1981), or in the light of the views about political activism (as presented in the work of Samuels, 1993).

The growth of psychotherapy and CAM has arisen in recent years because citizens have voted with their feet and are continuing to use these therapies and treatments irrespective of expert views. This was also a major feature of such alternative healthcare movements as naturism and vegetarianism in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Then, as now, some of these movements were not deterred by the domination of scientific discourse in professional life and the way in which politicians use "scientists for their own purposes" (Madsen, 2013). Today, however, there are a number of other challenges: corporatism, self-interest, fear and policing. Will psychotherapists be able to draw on "political energy" and their reflexive skills to bring about positive change and transformation, or will they be overwhelmed by these more malign tendencies?

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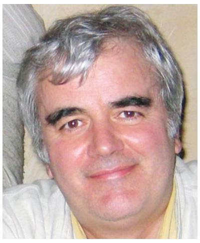

John Lees is Senior Lecturer in Mental Health, University of Leeds. He is a psychological therapy practitioner, was the founder editor of a Routledge journal, has edited a book series, edited or co-edited four books and published numerous book chapters and peer reviewed articles. His research interests incloude the links between therapy and complementary and alternative medicine and approaches to practitioner research based on investigating the microphenomena of practice.

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Richard Cleminson is Reader in the History of Sexuality in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, University of Leeds. He has published on the history of eugenics, homosexuality and anarchism. His latest book is (with F. Vázquez García) *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500–1800* (Pickering & Chatto, 2013).

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