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Counsellors in the gaze: A Foucauldian analysis
of counsellors stories around being a counsellor

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Abstract

Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of rules and regulations pertaining to counselling in New Zealand. This project looks at the power relations constituted in those changes for a small group of counsellors. The social constructionist perspective is evaluated and found to provide a useful epistemological basis for this inquiry, when used in combination with a critical realist epistemology. This epistemological duality allows the objects under discussion to have different types of ontological status ranging from the socially constructed to the (more or less) real. An overview of the different styles of narrative analysis is presented and the conclusion reached that structural models of identifying and analysing narrative are not appropriate for working with fragmentary narratives. A model is presented for identification and analysis of fragmentary narratives based on content.

Three narratives about being a counsellor are identified; the 'counsellor as double agent', the 'unsupported counsellor' and the 'unyielding counsellor'. The story of the counsellor as double agent is the story of a counsellor who may promote either training or relationship as having primary importance, depending on context. The story of the unsupported counsellor is the story about the lack of support of the relationship aspect of counselling outside of peer circles. The story of the unyielding counsellor is the story of the counsellor who would leave rather than compromise her values. These three narratives are presented as being co-existent. Through analysis of these narratives the type of control practise constituted in the new rules and regulations is identified as being a type of 'sovereign' or overt power practise. This characterisation of that power practise lends validity to subsequent discussions about resistance to the cultural change constituted in the new requirements. The power practices operating prior to the recent changes are identified as being 'disciplinary' or covert in nature. The conclusion is reached that the 'counsellor' represented by the text under analysis is not necessarily operating under normative regimes, and may at times adopt a deconstructive approach to the processes underlying construction of behaviour as 'problem'.

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Introduction

As a counsellor in private practice in New Zealand I am interested in changes that are happening in the counselling industry in this country. It has been my experience that over the last five to ten years there has been a profound change in the form of an increase in the number and specificity of the regulations and other formalised requirements which employers, ethical bodies, registration authorities and funding agencies may now use to scrutinise counselling and counsellors.

In recent years the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) has significantly tightened its requirements for membership, moving to an increased emphasis on tertiary qualifications. The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), one of the public bodies funding counselling in New Zealand, recently required all its approved counsellors to reapply under more stringent criteria. ACC has also introduced changes to the counselling approval process which require the counsellor to structure the counselling process and constantly report on that process. This is regarded by many counsellors to be intrusive and counter therapeutic, according to an article published in the New Zealand Health Review (2003, July). The new counselling approval procedures introduced by ACC also place an increased emphasis on abnormal psychology including assessment and diagnosis using the criteria of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). This change was criticised in the New Zealand Health Review article for enforcing a medical model on counsellors, who may work from a variety of different non medical models. This change was also criticised for being abusive of clients, by labelling them as mentally disordered. There were other aspects of the new procedures which were also considered to be abusive of clients including the requirement to provide substantial detail of sexual abuse at a relatively early stage of engagement, and the requirement for the client to undergo Diagnostic and Treatment Assessment (DATA) by an ACC DATA assessor, if they wished to continue in counselling past thirty sessions.

In September 2003 the NZAC members newsletter reported on the results of a survey which that organisation had undertaken of its members who were currently ACC

counsellors, or who had recently resigned from ACC work. The survey results indicated that most counsellors who were involved with ACC work were concerned about the changes which were regarded as over regulatory, counter therapeutic and about meeting the needs of ACC rather than clients. The survey report commented that it was the more experienced counsellors who had ceased making themselves available for ACC work, or who were contemplating doing so.

The Family Court, another public body funding counselling in New Zealand, has recently introduced new forms and procedures for counsellors wishing to be approved to work with clients funded by the Family Court. The type of information the Family Court now requires is similar to the new criteria which both the NZAC and ACC have imposed. Under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Bill a new state entity will be created which will administer mandatory registration for all counsellors under a registration system which will limit the type of work a counsellor may do to a defined scope of practise.

Miller (1994) predicted that changes of this type might take place in New Zealand as a result of the increasing importance of what she termed 'professionalism' in counselling. Miller (1994) defined professionalism as a response to the open market economy where service providers were required to compete with each other for shrinking resources. I read professionalism in this sense as being about status. Miller (1994) expressed the concern that as third party funding agencies were becoming the ones who had to be impressed, they could end up determining how counselling was defined, and 'professionalism', in counselling would, ironically, end up destroying the professional autonomy of counsellors in New Zealand. Miller (1994) based her prediction on changes she described which had already taken place in counselling in the United States and Britain.

Webb (1998) sounded a similar warning about potential threats to counselling in New Zealand, and described that threat as arising from 'New Right thinking'. Webb (1998) describes six ways in which she regards New Right thinking as functioning to disable socially relevant counselling provision. These involve the strategies of a culture of personal blame and responsibility, the introduction of user pays and contracted counselling, and the

hijacking of principles and concepts, (which Webb (1988) describes as a type of discursive guerrilla tactics; using the language of social caring to entrap practitioners into a state of powerlessness). Other strategies include overwork and constant reorganisation and the introduction of professional administrators, persons in positions of organisational power who know nothing about the work which is the primary purpose of the organisation. Webb (1998) concludes that these strategies could have the effect of deskilling the counsellor as counsellors energies are directed more and more towards their own personal survival and both client and wider community issues receive less attention.

The scene is set then. Enter stage left; a small group of women counsellors who have lived/are in the process of living, through these changes. Enter stage right; another of their number who wishes to investigate and document their experience in doing so. Why? you might ask. Well, firstly so that those counsellors have the opportunity to tell their story, and secondly, so that the one who wishes to investigate and document can use her analysis of those stories to try and advance current understandings of the meaning(s) of power and resistance.

Regulations and other requirements which institutions may apply to individuals could be described as an 'apparatus' for the control of individuals (Foucault, 1995). The writings of Michel Foucault have been described as "the most important contemporary effort to develop a method for the study of human beings and to diagnose the current situation of our society" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. xvii). Dreyfus & Rabinow (1983) describe that method as a unique combination of some aspects of structuralism with some aspects of hermeneutics, without strictly speaking being either of those things.

The writings of Michel Foucault which I refer to in this project are mostly drawn from the text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995). Although subtitled 'the birth of the prison' this book is not really about prison per se, but about the development of disciplinary technology with the prison used as a metaphor for society in general (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983).

Foucault (1995) describes how modern western culture has created the individual as object and furthermore has installed within each individual a system of internal surveillance which render the self as object visible and therefore able to be controlled. Although the surveillance is internal, and individuals experience this control practise as 'self' control, the norms against which the object self is evaluated are culturally determined.

Foucault (1995) uses the example of the Panopticon (a model prison) as a metaphor for the surveillance of the individual as object. The Panopticon prison was designed around a central control tower which had windows all around it. Around the central tower was a ring of prison cells each with a large window facing inwards towards the central tower and another large window on the wall opposite facing outwards. The benefits of this design from a prison administrators point of view were not simply that all the prisoners in the ring of cells would be visible to a single guard in the tower, but that knowing this, the prisoners would not do anything they thought they might get into trouble for. The effect of the constant visibility would be thus to create 'the guard' in the mind of each prisoner, so that the prisoners became their own controllers. According to Foucault (1995) the control of individuals by the culture of the society works in the same way, that is we are all prisoner and we are all our own guard, monitoring and adjusting our behaviour so that it conforms to the norms of the society. Foucault (1995) called the type of power exercised in this way 'disciplinary power' and the means of application of disciplinary power were referred to as 'disciplinary apparatus' or 'disciplinary technologies'.

Rose (1989) builds on the analysis of Foucault (1995) to explore in some detail the disciplinary technologies individuals are subject to in various settings and the way these control practices affect the individual's experience of themselves. Of particular interest to me are the descriptions Rose (1989) provides of psychologists as agents in the exercise of disciplinary power. Rose (1989) traces the development of psychometrics and developmental psychology to the eugenics movement of the nineteenth century. He describes how the eugenicists regarded feeble mindedness as the major social problem of the time. The feeble minded were considered "kith and kin of the prostitute, the tubercular, the insane, the unemployable, the vagrant and the libertine - all manifestations

of a degenerate constitution" (Rose, 1989, p. 139). Another major concern was that "the race renewed itself most rapidly from its inferior sections, with a consequent increase in hereditary unfitness down the generations" (Rose, 1989, p. 139).

According to Rose (1989) identification and management of the feeble minded and other types of inferiors was the motivation behind the development of the concept of 'normal intelligence' and subsequent tests to find which individuals fell below the norm. Rose (1989) describes how "Eugenics sought a link between the biological, heritable, variable basis of mental characteristics and the criteria of social worth. This link was forged by psychologists, who measured the senses and related those measurements with social judgements" (Rose, 1989, p. 141).

Rose (1989) considered the disciplinary apparatus of developmental psychology to be even more powerful and pervasive than that found in psychometrics and I am in agreement with Rose here. I can remember what it was like to be a mother of a small child and have the 'developmental norms' which my child should attain listed for me in the Plunket book. The Plunket nurse would come to the house to check up and make sure that 'things were as they should be' with my child. I was concerned lest my child should fail to perform according to the schedule and be therefore described as 'slow' or 'behind' in a particular developmental measure, because, in my experience, those labels once applied, knew no bounds, and tended to stick.

As with psychometrics Rose (1989) views developmental psychology as a eugenics inspired project whereby the state seeks to differentiate inferior individuals so that it can institute different stronger control practices against that population, that particular problematical section of society, 'slow children', 'problem individuals'. I see developmental psychology a little differently, having experienced its effects as a mother, I view it as also being a patriarchal control practise aimed at women in general and mothers in particular. If my child had failed to meet its developmental targets then there was no doubt in my mind that I would have failed as a mother, me personally, not my husband, not my family, not my community and certainly not society at large, but me myself. I would have failed to

fulfil one of those most basic fundamental functions which according to society gave women a reason for being, and that was producing and raising a 'normal healthy' child.

Although, generally speaking I find the analysis provided by both Foucault (1995) and Rose (1989) to be extremely useful, I have a problem with the descriptions which these authors provide of these types of power operations, when I try and apply them to my own profession. The increasing raft of regulations and requirements which various institutions may these days apply to counsellors could be described as a 'disciplinary apparatus' (Foucault, 1995), which has the effect of positioning the counsellor in a field of view and subject to the disciplinary or 'normalising gaze' (Rose, 1989). The disciplinary gaze could be described as having the function of exercising disciplinary power over the counsellor in order to produce the 'docile' counsellor, who in turn uses normative regimes to discipline clients to conform to the norms of the society (Rose, 1989). I do not like to think of my profession in this way, and would like to think that it was possible to resist such power practices. A problem arises for me here though, because neither of these authors provides any encouraging descriptions of resistance to disciplinary power, and I do experience my counselling subculture as expressing some resistance to the changes which have happened in the industry over the last ten years.

Before I present my readings of the stories of my peers, there are some other tasks I must attend to. Firstly I must provide some description of the particular setting within theoretical psychology in which I see myself attempting to operate, namely social constructionism. This is the task I do battle with in Chapter One. Secondly I must attend to the requirements of self disclosure and reflexivity, by giving some background to myself as counsellor and feminist, and this is done in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three I explore issues of methodology concerning the use of narrative. In Chapter Four I present a theoretical framework from my counselling practise which I use to recognise narratives. Chapters Five, Six and Seven focus on the stories of my participants and in Chapter Eight I (psycho) analyse stories about power relations which can be read in the stories of the counsellor.

Chapter One: A theoretical (re) positioning of social constructionism.

In this research project I have used a form of narrative analysis to investigate counsellors' stories about being a counsellor. There are many different ways of doing research which could be included in the general description 'narrative analysis' and I shall provide some description of these in Chapter Three where I introduce the theory behind my own methodology. The purpose of this present chapter is to describe the theoretical perspective which I believe is common to the majority of different ways of working with narrative, and that common aspect is social constructionism.

Although social constructionist perspectives in psychology have been around for about thirty years now, and are considered by some to have reached a stage of comfortable middle age, (Stam, 2001) I believe they are still largely thought of as being a departure from the normal way of thinking. I note that the term 'mainstream' social psychologists (Edley, 2001) is still assumed to refer to empirical social psychologists and not social constructionists. I believe that there is further evidence of the marginal position of social constructionism in the conventions of report writing I see in psychological literature. Social constructionist researchers usually begin their reports by outlining and substantiating the epistemological position they seek to speak from, whereas researchers who work in the more traditional, mainstream empiricist way do not attend to this aspect of their investigations. My reading of this difference in reporting conventions is that this aspect of the work of empiricist researchers is taken for granted, is seen as not being in need of any explication or explanation, in other words, it is normal. Researchers seeking to speak from other positions however, need to justify their departure from normality by identifying and validating their speaking position. I have chosen to follow the convention of other social constructionist researchers. It is my intention to both attempt some description of social constructionism, and at the same time to identify the position I take within that generalised epistemological territory known as social constructionism.

In order to provide some description of social constructionism I shall be using a form of narrative process in that I will be telling stories about the history and origins of social constructionism. In that sense my use of narrative begins here as I attempt to story my understandings of social constructionism using narrative process as both my means of meaning making and my way of articulating my understandings. While the use of narrative process in this sense was not a feature of the literature which contributed to the developing theory of social constructionism, the concept of narrative was an important part of that developing theory, (Gergen & Gergen, 1984; Sarbin, 1986), as was the idea that social knowledge was both a product of and a determining influence upon the process of history making (Gergen, 1973). What this suggests to me is that telling stories and an awareness of history are both accepted aspects of social constructionism. With this in mind I begin the process of attempting to describe my 'knowledge' using narrative, that is telling stories, as my way of acknowledging the relationship between history and current understandings. My first story is a history of myself as feminist student, becoming disenchanted with empirical psychology and looking to social constructionism for an alternative.

I have had two quite distinctly different periods of engagement with academia, in my life thus far. As a young person I studied botany and ecology, and currently, as a mature student I am studying psychology. Needless to say, my studies in botany and ecology were not disrupted by any suggestion of epistemological debate, and the same could generally be said for my first year studying psychology, but by the end of the period in which I did second year social psychology, I was starting to feel uncomfortable with aspects of the 'reality' of research in social psychology I was being presented with and I was looking for something else, some other way of engaging with psychology and perhaps expressing the concerns I was feeling. I found some clues about that something else in the aspects of feminism presented in a course on the psychology of women the following year.

To give some background to this situation, in the years intervening between my first and second engagements with academia, I had had several careers. The last of those and the work which brought me back to university, was as a counsellor, principally working with women, and specialising in the areas of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Over the years

of working with women I had become quite well versed in the hierarchically ordered dual realities of heterosexual relationships, his and hers, and also the dual realities of women's position in society generally, hers and theirs, theirs being generally indistinguishable from his. I was not expecting to find this state of affairs in the science of psychology, but I was mistaken. I found that in psychological research it was also possible to have dual realities, the reality of the researcher, in most cases white middle class male psychologists, and the missing reality, that absence which was generated when the male reality was generalised to all humankind. Coming from working with women in a way where identifying and validating uniquely female experience was associated with being healthy, I was particularly disheartened by what I experienced as a lack of health in psychology. During my feminist studies I learned that I was probably at times working from what could be loosely termed the feminist standpoint perspective (Rigor, 1992) and also that the name given to what I had come up against was phallocentrism, the tendency to generalise the male condition to all (Caine, Grosz & Lepervanche, 1988). In generalising the male condition phallocentrism fails to acknowledge either that the female experience could be different, or, if it does acknowledge a difference, dismisses the female condition as being abnormal and therefore not worthy of study (Nicolson, 1992). I shall use Franzoi (1996) (the text my second year paper in social psychology was based on) to provide an practical illustration of this phallocentrism in research.

Franzoi (1996) discusses the empiricist research of two teams of male researchers who were investigating the role of misattribution in sexual arousal. Dutton & Aron (1974, cited in Franzoi, (1996) and White Fishbein & Rutstein (1981, cited in Franzoi, 1996) both measured only male responses to get their data. There were women used in the experiments, but only as sources of sexual stimulation for the male participants whose responses were measured. Franzoi (1996) moves without explanation or acknowledgment, from describing the specific behaviours of the male participants in both these studies, to deriving general theories about 'persons' and 'people'. The male experience became the universal, and the fact that this was not remarked upon or even acknowledged, speaks to me of it's normality, in the world of psychological research. However, it was not normal for me. My experience of working with women predisposed me to look for stories about

women's reality in psychological research, and my experience of discovering these stories to be mostly missing predisposed me to look for another type of psychology. While the feminist standpoint perspective offered a solution to the problem of the missing stories of women's reality, it offered me no theoretical framework on which to base a challenge to phallogentrism. According to standpoint theory we each have our own partial or situated knowledge of the world which is determined by our position in the social hierarchy (Riger, 1992), therefore there is no place outside partial or situated knowledge from which to assess the validity of accounts. Further engagement with the literature revealed to me that my own personal process, that of dissatisfaction and searching for an alternative, mirrored a process which has occurred in the discipline as a whole, some years earlier, and was the process which gave rise to social constructionism. I shall leave the story of myself as student at this point and attend to another story, the story of the development of social constructionism in psychology. My reading of this history is presented as a personal reading.

Modern social psychology is generally thought to have emerged as a distinct discipline during the Second World War when British and American governments used psychologists to provide them with information about the ways in which individuals could be influenced. This information was then used to manipulate the personnel of the armed forces and the public to think and do things which the powers that be thought would be helpful to the war effort. Social psychology was an empiricist science, based on laboratory experiments which provided information for those in positions of power (Burr, 1995). Wexler (1996) describes how in the post war capitalist boom in the United States "social psychology became more routinised, delimited and directly utilised as a technical force of military and industrial production" (Wexler, 1996, p. 14). Wexler (1996) further describes social psychology as a mechanism for the construction of an ideology which promoted the interests of those in positions of power. According to Wexler (1996) this ideological package successfully obscures from the individual the social conditions which cause suffering, allowing people to avoid recognising factors which they thought were beyond their control. For this reason Wexler (1996) regards social psychology as "the reinforced, scientised statement of commonsense methods of systematic social ignorance and denial" and further claims that if

social psychologists are to believe in what they do they must “deny that their work is a contribution to social ignorance and illiteracy” (Wexler, 1996, p. 15).

Wexler (1996) describes how social psychology became subject to radical critique which questioned the validity of its very existence, and also to what Wexler (1996) termed conventional critique, being the critique from within social psychology by those wishing to rescue social psychology by reforming it. It is this conventional critique or critique from within social psychology which lead to the development of the ideas of social constructionism with psychology.

Although I find the criticisms made by Wexler (1996) to be very persuasive, as a feminist I also experience something lacking in his critique because it comes from the Marxist perspective, pitting workers against those who wield industrial power, the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, whereas I see gender as also being an axis on which society is organised.

Wexler (1996) acknowledges the crisis in social psychology, but does not credit either the radical or the conventional critics with having any meaningful answer to the problem. According to Wexler (1996) the crisis issued a challenge which has as yet gone unanswered, and that is to develop a social psychology which could resolve the fundamental dichotomy of cultural mystification and truth. Wexler (1996) here posing the question:- if we require cultural references to give meaning to what we perceive of the world, how can we ever transcend our own cultural embeddedness sufficiently to make observation of this process? I am, in principal, in agreement with Wexler (1996) on this point. I think that acknowledging the constructedness of much of what is given the status of concrete reality in our world, is only part of the process of attempting to understand the whole.

Kenneth Gergen is perhaps the most well known, certainly the most cited of those who embarked upon the internal critique of social psychology, and is also credited with being the originator of the social constructionism movement in psychology. He is certainly the

author most often singled out for criticism by opponents of social constructionism (Stam, 2001).

According to Gergen (1973) social behaviour was not governed by a set of universal laws which could be discovered by laboratory experiments, but could be explained in terms of history. Gergen (1973) considered that psychological theories which were presented as descriptive of human behaviour were actually prescriptive in that they contributed to our knowledge about what was normal or desirable and therefore, over time, the theories themselves were capable of producing change in that which they purported to be explaining. In the arguments of Gergen (1973) then, reality became historically dependant, a moving target, as it were.

To appreciate the significance of what was proposed by Gergen (1973) one needs to compare the idea of the historically dependant reality with the concept of reality contained in the tenets of empirical science, that form of science on which social psychology had built its reputation. Within the empiricist tradition there is assumed to be a one to one relationship between the real world and our knowledge of it, that knowledge being made valid by being objective, and that knowledge being expressed in a language whose words had fixed and stable meanings. The stability of the characteristics of the real world of empiricism means that observations of behaviour can be used to derive laws about universal patterns in behaviour, and these laws can then be used to predict behaviour (Coolican, 1994). If reality was, as Gergen (1973) suggested, unstable and context dependant then empirical process was rendered meaningless, a process which produced laws which lost their context and become obsolete before they were even written.

The ideas of social constructionism in psychology which developed subsequently contained more specific challenges to empiricist ways of thinking than were presented by Gergen (1973) but these could also be said to be corollary to that first assertion about reality being historically dependant. Although it has been said that there are many varieties of social constructionism, and also that even well known authors in the field may not want to be termed a 'social constructionist' (Stam, 2001), because there are so many different

constructions which can be put on that term, I think there are a few basic concepts which would apply to most of the varieties of social constructionism.

The social constructionist way of looking at things has been described as counter intuitive (Burr, 1995) because of the way it contradicts the common sense normal world view of empiricism. Empiricism speaks of a fixed reality, social constructionism speaks of a context dependant reality. In empiricism, knowledge is validated by being objective, that is to say sourced entirely from observation of the object of study, with the observer, the subject, playing no part in the generation of that knowledge. In this perspective, the culture, gender or social status of the person doing the observing is irrelevant. In social constructionism knowledge is determined by the relationship between the subject and the object, a process they are both part of, and knowledge is intrinsically tied up with and inseparable from language and power. Burr (1995) describes how the ideas of Michel Foucault have been taken up by social constructionists, including the idea that those in positions of power get to determine meaning and what is valid knowledge. There is no direct relationship between the world and knowledge within this perspective, knowledge is not a description of the real world, but is related to the social processes which create and maintain power hierarchies in human society.

Over the years, and still currently, there is a lot of debate about the validity of the social constructionist perspective. But before I begin to frame my own assessment of that perspective, I need to return to my own story and explore what social constructionism had to offer me as a feminist social psychologist disillusioned with the phallocentrism of empiricist research practise.

Initially it seemed that social constructionism had everything to offer, principally a framework which could validly characterise the knowledge generated by investigation of white middle class males, by white middle class males, as being knowledge specific to that group alone, and not being able to be validly generalised. Social constructionism also provided an analysis of the relationship between power and knowledge which explained how the position afforded white middle class males in patriarchal society made it 'logical'

that their interpretations should be accepted as truths. However there were some aspects of social constructionism with which I had difficulty.

The major stumbling block to social constructionism becoming the answer to my problem of needing a new feminist friendly psychology was its relativism. As a counsellor in the field of domestic violence I was very wary of an epistemology which threatened to make less valid or less real the concrete realities of my clients' experiences. Sitting in front of someone with a black eye or a broken arm, the significance and importance of material reality was forcefully brought home to me. I found the theory of social constructionism at that time to be most unhelpful in the area of supporting specific material realities.

Furthermore, I usually accepted the woman's account of how the injuries occurred and often rejected her partner's account of how this happened. Here I found myself behaving in a way which I could not reconcile with what I was being taught about social constructionism. I found myself easily able to acknowledge the constructedness of his story, while at the same time being quite empirical in my acceptance of the factual nature of her account. I found there was no allowance for this type of epistemological biculturalism in what I was being taught, and certainly in the literature, epistemological inconsistency on the part of any author seemed to be taken as evidence of intellectual weakness, by both empiricist and constructionist commentators alike.

It seemed to me that there were several unresolved issues in the theory of social constructionism, as I understood it at the time. Firstly there was the problem with the lack of boundaries around the relativism, the failure to provide a process for distinguishing between what was socially constructed and what was not. Secondly there was the problem, which arose as a result of that relativism, of social constructionism being unable to provide a speaking position from which one could assess one account as being more valid than another. This was the problem to which Wexler (1996) referred. Thirdly, there was the problem of the existence, or otherwise of socially constructed objects. Social constructionism is clearly a metatheory about meaning and systems of meaning making. The systems of meaning making described by social constructionism construct objects but

the ontological status of those objects remains uncertain (Hibberd, 2001; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002).

Lastly, for myself as student, there was the problem that social constructionism seemed to be something which could only ever really exist in theory, because to do any thing with it or about it, invariably meant using language in the conventional sense, that is, in the empirical sense. It has never ceased to amaze me how easily I understood and accepted the idea that words had no fixed meaning, whether this concept was presented to me in verbal or written form, I always understood perfectly what people meant by this. I did find it unsettling however, when social constructionist authors, whom I admired, engaged in arguments about which of their unitary versions of reality was the correct one, for example Parker (1990) and Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards (1990). Social constructionism was a theory which seemed impossible to faithfully translate in practise, and the ideas expressed in the theory seemed to have very little to do with how it's proponents behaved.

Despite the initial promise which social constructionism seemed to offer as a potentially feminist friendly psychology, I found it to be unworkable, and eventually concluded that it was actually quite hostile to the feminist enterprise. Reading the social constructionist literature I had a sense that I was simultaneously participating in two realities, and that the theory of social constructionism was describing a reality, the constructed reality, which I could not think, talk or write about, unless I was simultaneously situated in another reality, the empirical reality, and yet this dual positioning was not acknowledged or discussed by social constructionist authors. I became suspicious of the reasons behind the silence of the literature on this issue. I suspected that there were power operations being performed here which would more likely than not lead to a strengthening of the status quo and empirical phallogentrism, rather than any shift towards a psychology which would meet my needs as a feminist.

At this point my first two stories merge as I embark upon a retelling of the story of the origins of social constructionism, from my own feminist perspective. Again this story is presented as being my own construction, a personal account and idiosyncratic no doubt,

and I am not seeking to present it as any other form or reality, apart from my own process, part of my history of coming to my present understandings of social constructionism.

Stam (2001) talks about the dual participation of academics in that they are both observer of their discipline and also participant, being researchers themselves. I think that Stam (2001) has omitted to acknowledge one other form of participation which must be in operation, and that is author as socially positioned gendered subject. I would thus argue for three levels of participation (at least).

Although reflexive statements of self disclosure, whereby the author sought to describe the cultural/social/political position from which they imagined they were speaking, became a not uncommon aspect of the literature describing social constructionist research, this was not a feature of the work of the authors who contributed to the initial development of the theory of social constructionism. I may say that Kenneth Gergen is a white middle class male, and I frequently do, but this is not because Gergen has communicated this to me in his writing, or invited me to reflect on how this aspect of himself as author may influence his work. Indeed this assertion on my part may be factually incorrect, for all I know, but I have made it often enough and no one has contradicted me yet.

I have here used Kenneth Gergen as an example of those authors who contributed to the initial development of the theory of social constructionism in psychology. I am aware of the criticism levelled at critics of social constructionism who target Kenneth Gergen as if he was that approach, (Stam, 2001; Gergen, 2001). And although it seems perfectly clear to me that Kenneth Gergen is not social constructionism, I shall also use Gergen to represent social constructionism, and I think this has a lot to do with the status afforded Gergen in the discipline as it was taught to me. If Gergen was not social constructionism, then he was most certainly the father of social constructionism in the discipline as it was introduced to me.

My third narrative, the feminist retelling of the history of social constructionism is the story of the establishment of academic social psychologists, that predominantly white middle

class male group of psychologists, responding to the crisis in social psychology. I am not referring to the response of those whom Wexler (1996) described as making conventional critique, I am describing the response of those whom patriarchal society afforded privilege to, responding to a threat to that position of privilege. I am attempting to read the third layer of Gergen's participation, that is, his participation as representative of patriarchal authority. I am not challenging the explanations of Wexler (1996) but I am saying that in my opinion, rescuing social psychology was not the only thing that was happening. Gergen was the rescuer described by Wexler (1996) as well as a protagonist in the confrontation between patriarchal society and feminism.

There is no doubt in my mind that Gergen would vehemently disagree with himself being positioned thus, even himself as textual icon, symbolic of, rather than being that which is the object of these discussions. However, I cannot say that I have ever read or heard anything in the social constructionist literature which suggests to me that Gergen, or anybody else, has transcended their socio-political positioning, has permanently dissociated themselves from their place in society and floated free as a value free non situated member of no society at all. It is a central thesis of social constructionist theory that we do not and cannot speak from a position of dissociated neutrality, we are always situated within culture, so whether Gergen and his cohorts like it or not, they are white middle class males and I am a middle aged female feminist student who, for that reason, has constructed their writings as representative of patriarchal authority.

In a recent critical debate about the value of social constructionism to the discipline of social psychology generally, Gergen (2001), appearing to grow weary of the endless rhetorical process of the debate, challenged his critics to come up with something more productive than mere critique by asking 'what comes now?' I read Gergen (2001) here reflecting on the question of how the discipline might progress as a result of this process (of debate), and if we are not facilitating progress, by what we are doing, then maybe we are using the wrong process. It occurs to me that I am using something of the same reasoning, in retrospect, examining the effect of the process of the development of the theory of social constructionism on the representation of feminist voices.

I have adopted the strategy of examining the patriarchal nature of social constructionism, indirectly by looking at its effects on feminism, because social construction does not speak directly about its gender politics. The 'logic' of the theory of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1995) suggests that, patriarchal power operations, if present, would always be masked. In Gergen's accounts of the origins of social constructionism, one of the ways in which patriarchal power is masked is by avoiding engaging with any dialogue which focuses directly on the male/female dichotomy. Although Gergen (1985, 1991a) acknowledges the role played by feminist academics in the development of applications of social constructionist theory, discussions of gender power relations do not feature largely in his work, and by my reading, gender relations, if not a 'missing discourse' in his work, (Fine, 1992), are an under represented discourse.

Burman (1999) makes reference to the absence, in social constructionist literature, of acknowledgements of the operations of discourses around gender and sexuality, which, by feminist analysis are always present, regardless of what other aspects of culture are being researched. Burman (1999) expresses the concern that the consequence of this is the reproduction of the subject of psychology as culturally masculine.

Gergen (1991b) suggests that the development of social constructionism in psychology was part of a wider movement to post modernism in society generally. Gergen (1991a) suggests that social constructionism arose as a result of a crisis of confidence in empiricism caused by the discovery of faulty logic in the theoretical framework of empiricism, the requirement to gather data with no preconceptions as to what it might show being in contradiction with the requirement to have a hypothesis. Burr (1995) seems quite clear that social constructionism was psychology's solution to the problem of bias. Gergen (quoted in Misra, 1993) does make some acknowledgement of the role played by accusations of bias, but in the whole I read his talk on this issue as playing down the idea that social constructionism was a response to the exposure of phallocentrism in psychology, (as well as a response to the exposure of ethnocentrism or other kinds of bias within the discipline.)

Gergen (quoted in Misra, 1993) while discussing the post modern trends in society generally makes the comment “and to the literary movement you must also add the critical voices of the culturally marginalised: feminists, blacks, Asians, gay activists, and so on” (Misra, 1993, p. 407). He does not consider women to have been culturally marginalised, just feminists, likewise gays are not marginalised unless they are activists, whereas apparently all blacks and Asians are marginalised. I read this type of reference to the feminine as a device for distancing the author from the male/female dichotomy. If it was women who had been mentioned, then by the ‘logic’ of the binary, men would also have been present, that is, the maleness of the author, but by referring only to feminists, this is avoided. Similarly, if gays had been simply gays and not gay activists, by the ‘logic’ of the binary, heterosexuals would also have been present, that is to say the male heterosexuality of the author.

By avoiding terms which participate directly in the gender binary, I believe that Gergen (quoted in Misra, 1993) successfully obscures the operations of the patriarchal discourse on sexuality. I position Kenneth Gergen as a white middle class male in a profession dominated by white middle class males, which was challenged about its phallogentric bias. The response to this challenge was a retheorising of the discipline of social psychology which rendered any further criticism of bias meaningless and invalid. Social constructionism has been criticised for many things but not gender bias or phallogentrism because social constructionism effectively cut away, removed the ground from underneath any speaking position from which that criticism could be voiced. Gill (1995) reflects on how the relativism of social constructionism works to silence critical voices, including feminists. A feminist epistemology is destined to remain forever the ‘stone unturned’ being assumed to be as incomplete and monistic as the patriarchal, the theoretical alternative being judged as being equivalent in its lack, even though it has never existed (Hekman, 1987) and that which the theoretical alternative might theoretically replace, has never been displaced. There is no vacancy to be filled because the position of privilege has never been vacated. Rather than eliminating privilege I see the relativism of social constructionism working to render patriarchal authority invisible by invalidating any speaking position from which critical voices could be articulated.

The white middleclass male stories about the world had had their day in the sun as it were, basking in the comfort of being unchallenged truth, but the mechanism for organising their (supposed) retirement as universal truth, that is social constructionism, was also a mechanism for ensuring that nobody else's stories could ever occupy the same position as the white middle class male stories had. It was as if the apparatus of privilege had to be dismantled so that no body else could use it, as if white middle class males has declared 'well if we can't be right, then nobody can, right no longer exists'. I believe that it is this discourse, the discourse of 'dismantling right' so that nobody else could use it, was responsible for the failure of social constructionism to put boundaries on what was socially constructed and what was not. If 'right' was going to be dismantled, then social constructionism needed to be an all or nothing, across the board replacement for empiricism. If empiricism still had some domain then the threat of others being able to use the apparatus of privilege to their advantage still existed.

Associated with the issue of recognising boundaries to social constructionism was the issue of commitment to ontology (Hibberd, 2001). If the apparatus of privilege was to be successfully dismantled then social constructionism and relativism needed to be applied universally and this meant that meaning was all there was, issues of existence were no longer part of the equation. My reading of the history of social constructionism is that both the unbounded relativism and the 'muteness' with respect to ontology (Hibberd, 2001) were artefacts of a process whereby patriarchy needed to firstly appear as if it had vacated the position of privilege, and secondly, make that position appear so uninhabitable that no one would ever try to go there, and thereby discover that its (supposedly former) residents had never left.

I view the unbounded relativism of social constructionism as the weapon which the patriarchy used to retaliate against feminists for challenging patriarchal authority. The about face to relativism effectively cut the ground away from under the feet of the feminist critics. Burman (1999) reflects on the lack of feminist platform within social constructionism "It is certainly the case that feminists do not occupy a distinct position with

the schools of social constructionism or discourse work. We need to consider why this might be, and what this indicates about the discipline, and what aspects of the discipline social constructionism in psychology is thereby reproducing” (Burman, 1999, p. 171).

The effect that the process of the development of the theory of social constructionism had on the progress of feminism was that the feminist enterprise stalled. The conditions which lead to the development of feminism, still exist in our society. The problems which lead to the feminist challenge to the phallocentrism of empiricism still exist. The so called ‘solution’ to the problem of the phallocentrism of empiricism has caused feminist voices to become further marginalised and alienated within the discipline. I conclude therefore that the development of the theory of social constructionism was a patriarchal power and control device. However, in taking this position I am not seeking to construct myself as a radical critic of social constructionism (Wexler, 1996). I am not questioning the validity of the entirety of social constructionism. I regard social constructionism as a valuable tool for making sense of the world, and human society in particular. For this reason I view myself as being a conventional critic, representing the critical voice from within social constructionism, seeking to rescue the discipline by reforming it (Wexler, 1996).

The tasks for the rescuing reformer seem quite clear to me. As I see it there is nothing (much) wrong with the theory of social constructionism except for; its failure to acknowledge the boundaries or limitations to its relativism, its failure to account for the material existence of objects which are not socially constructed, together with the constructed existence of objects which are socially constructed, and its failure to acknowledge the epistemological double act, or biculturalism which must of necessity be operating in all discussion of or applications of social constructionism. If I could remove these three ‘problems’ from social constructionism then perhaps I would have the feminist friendly psychology I am seeking.

The three problems I refer to above have in one form or another, over the years, provoked many authors to engage in the ‘ritual of academic debate’ (Shotter & Lammerman, 2002). Gergen (2001) makes reference to a rhetorical process of criticism and debate which at

times seems to not be going anywhere. I disagree with Gergen (2001) in this point. Just as the origins of social constructionism can be traced to the literature of the 'crisis' in social psychology (Morgan, 1996), I read the literature of the current 'ritual of rhetorical debate' as (being in the process of) retheorising social psychology. However I prefer to think in terms of movement rather than progress, the construction of any change as progress being a comfort best reserved for hindsight.

My construction of the process of the endless rhetoric referred to by Gergen (2001) and the ritual referred to by Shotter & Lammerman (2002) is that both realists and social constructionists alike have set about the task of bridging the gulf between their epistemological positions. Those differences which seemed so irreconcilable when the theory of social constructionism in psychology was first developed are being chipped away. Realists are making concessions and social constructionists are making concessions, the distinctions are beginning to blur.

The bridge building or gulf spanning process I refer to above I see as being one of creating stepping stones by partitioning from a particular position, a version of that position which is closer to the other side. Held (1995) is strongly critical of what she terms the anti realism of post modern influences in psychology. Held (1995) suggests that this anti realism could lead to the unacceptable situation where "the reader herself (within her particular historical/linguistic context) determines what the text means" (Held, 1995, p. 11). Held (1995) then goes on to partition the realism position into different types of realism and propose her own 'modest realism'. The modest realism of Held (1995) acknowledges the performative nature of language and also the "real effects of language use not only on the clients linguistic productions, but on the clients extralinguistic behaviour/life as well" (Held, 1995, p. 194). I read the modest realism described here as having incorporated from social constructionism the notion of a linguistic reality, and Held (1995) positions this linguistic reality as coexistent with material reality.

Held (2002) continues the process of partitioning of realist epistemology when she distances herself and modest realism from the realist 'rage' of Hibberd (2001) and Maze

(2001). Held (2002) also partitions social constructionist epistemology making a distinction between 'strong' social constructionism and social constructionism generally. Edley (2001) uses the term 'thoroughgoing social constructionism' in his partitioning and concludes that thoroughgoing social constructionism (which I read as meaning the same as strong social constructionism), was in fact an erroneous construction of social constructionism arrived at by its critics as a result of their inability to understand the real partition that exists between ontological and epistemological forms of social constructionism. Hibberd (2001, 2002) also partitions social constructionism and refers to that part of social constructionism which she finds to be most deficient and problematical as Gergen's social constructionism or Gergen's brand of social constructionism.

The bridge building efforts I find most encouraging for my purposes are those of Nightingale & Cromby (2002). Nightingale & Cromby (2002) like Held (2002), partition both the realist position and the social constructionist position. Nightingale & Cromby (2002) distinguish between naïve realism and critical realism, while the version of social constructionism being critiqued they describe as strong or of Gergen, and also as wholly discursive social constructionism. Nightingale & Cromby (2002) then proceed to describe a new type of social constructionism which is their solution to the problems they see inherent in strong constructionism. The version of social constructionism proposed by Nightingale & Cromby (2002) is a social constructionism which is embedded in a critical realism.

Nightingale & Cromby (2002) characterise strong social constructionism as holding fast to the idea that there is no reality outside language. Nightingale & Cromby (2002) reject this and claim instead that "If objects exist independently of language, then, unless materiality were wholly uniform, (in which case the marking we call text would be imperceptible), they must have differential properties. And if objects have differential properties, it is untenable that the language we use to socially construct our world and activity does not- on occasion, and however imperfectly, partially, tangentially or implicitly- reference these differences." (Nightingale & Cromby, 2002, p. 703).

However, having sought to insert claims about the referentiality of language into the theory of social constructionism does not mean that Nightingale & Cromby (2002) reject the role of language in the construction of reality. Nightingale & Cromby (2002) further assert that “the imperfect fit between language and materiality, world and word, creates uncertainty, flexibility and indeterminacy, which is the course of its deployment and situated use, means that language actually *co-constitutes* reality” (Nightingale & Cromby, 2002, p. 706), [emphasis in original].

I regard the position adopted by Nightingale & Cromby (2002) as being an extension of the position arrived at by Held (1995), their critical realism equating to the modest realism of Held (1995). By proposing that social constructionism exists within a critical realism, Nightingale & Cromby (2002) have made it possible for the relativism of social constructionism to be bounded, to have definite limits. The proposal that critical realism and social constructionism are both valid ways to view the world invites participation in the next stage of this debate, and that is a sorting out of what is socially constructed and what is not. This is one of the changes I was looking for in my quest to reform social constructionism. Being able to distinguish between what is socially constructed and what is not establishes the boundaries to the relativism of social constructionism and makes it possible to say that there are some objects whose existence is material and some objects whose existence is constructed. This reformed version of social constructionism is no longer mute on the issue of ontology.

The acceptance of the coexistence of empirical and constructionist forms of knowledge addresses other issues with which I had concerns. Principally it provides an epistemological position within critical realism, from which it is possible to address the validity of particular constructions. Nightingale & Cromby (2002) conclude that “we propose a critical realist ontology wherein referentiality and objectivity are possible, though always partial, limited and necessarily dependant upon further empirical and discursive revision. What this permits is: first, a consideration of the ways in which the processes of social construction can be constitutive or formative of the ontological, as well as the epistemological; and,

second, a conceptual and theoretical framework within which the evaluation of the accuracy of our accounts becomes possible" (Nightingale & Cromby, 2002, p. 710).

I am mindful of the caution sounded by Burman (1999) about the strategies used by the mainstream to protect itself from being disenfranchised by subversive innovations, "By such means psychology and capitalism, through the common practises of reification and commodification, work to deradicalise critiques of research. They reconfigure such interventions as new techniques for the improvement of an even more broadly 'applicable' psychology, and in doing so assimilate and neutralise them" (Burman, 1999, p. 162). I have presented the social constructionism of Nightingale & Cromby (2002) as being the answer to my problem of firstly needing to find something other than empiricism and then needing to find something other than social constructionism. Now I find myself questioning whether Nightingale & Cromby (2002) have completed the task not of reforming and rescuing social constructionism but of assimilating and neutralising it. I cannot rule out that possibility, but I do not think that this means that the form of social constructionism proposed by Nightingale & Cromby (2002) is not capable of being used as a powerful tool for exposing the constructedness of particular accounts, and objects, and for challenging the power operations being performed by particular constructions.

While I made reference above to a sorting out of what is socially constructed and what is not, I do not imagine that psychologists will be rushing in to engage with this task. I believe that since the first proposal of social constructionist concepts in psychology, this has been a problematical area for psychology, questioning as it does, the ontological status of most of what the discipline is based on. The industries of academic, clinical and applied psychology have been built upon assumptions about the concrete and materially real nature of objects like intelligence, normality and sanity. To propose that such things are socially constructed implies an instability which the marketplace could not tolerate.

If the definition of sanity, for instance, was not referring to something real in the physical world then potentially a change in the social political environment could alter that definition, and in the worst case scenario this might happen a lot faster than the change

described by Foucault (1965). If this happened then all previously trained staff would become useless, all current texts would be out of date, and all training courses would need to be redesigned. Other consequences might involve releasing all current psychiatric inmates and assessing to entire population to find the replacement inmates, because of course, we could not leave the (newly) insane at large in the community. It just doesn't bear thinking about, the logistics would be impossible, the cost astronomical and the injustices unconscionable.

I do not think that the ultimate restructuring scenario I have described here is ever likely to happen, though one can never be sure, some of the smaller scale restructuring exercises I have been witness to over the last few years have made about as much sense as that. The point I wish to make in presenting the hypothetical example of the ultimate restructuring scenario is that a multiplicity of ways of knowing must extend to all levels. Acknowledging the social constructedness of aspects of the object 'sanity' will only advance current understandings if at the same time we hold onto some of the material aspects of that object and accept the partial nature of both understandings. Only by application of both epistemologies can we begin the process of working out where the boundary between them might be.

In my discussions of the problems with attempting to achieve a 'purely' social constructionist perspective I described epistemological biculturalism as being inevitable, regardless of the intentions of the researcher, because of the empiricist assumptions inherent in writing or indeed any form of communication. There would be no point in writing this thesis if I did not believe that the majority of the words I used had meanings which were fixed and stable enough to be read (relatively) unproblematically by others.

My other reasons for seeking to incorporate both constructionist and realist perspectives in my analysis were that I wanted to be able to assess the validity of accounts and also to differentiate between objects which were (more or less) constructed and objects which were (more or less) real.

In the Introduction I described this project as seeking to present counsellors stories and also to analyse the power relations enacted therein. I anticipate that the constructed nature of accounts will be evident in the stories of my participants and I will certainly be reading those stories from a social constructionist perspective, looking for relationships between socio-political context and the nature of the narratives enacted. However, the power relations which those stories may reflect/create/maintain, I regard as having a different type of ontological status from the stories themselves, and for this aspect of my investigation I believe a critical realism is the more epistemological position to read from.

What I am saying here is that I construct power relations as being more 'real' than the stories which reflect/create/maintain them and regardless of any considerations of the empiricist assumptions inherent in language use, this is the primary reason why I have sought to establish a theoretical orientation which includes both social constructionism and critical realism, because I want to talk about power.

Chapter Two: Reflexivity – some theory and practise.

In this chapter I address issues of reflexivity by both talking about and doing aspects of reflexivity. I use the term reflexivity to refer to the intentional inclusion in the research report of information about the researcher and/or the research process which would not ordinarily be included in an empirical research report. Reflexivity can include disclosures of personal information and/or socio-political analysis of the position the author perceives that they are speaking from. This form of reflexivity is intended to have the effect of acknowledging the presence of the self of the author in their work, so as to avoid the textual disembodiment achieved by the use of empirical objectivity (Gill, 1998). There are different ways of being reflexive, and different ways of acknowledging the self in writing, or to put it another way, there are different types of self one could acknowledge by reflexive disclosure.

In chapter one I discussed the theory of social constructionism with respect to the issues of feminism, power, realism and relativism. Theorising the self is another major philosophical and psychological issue which is thrown into relief by the ideas of social constructionism. Gergen (quoted in Misra, 1993) describes a type of evolutionary process of concepts of the self, where romanticist notions of the self were replaced by modernist ideas, and modernist ideas gave way to the post modern or social constructionist self. According to Gergen (quoted in Misra, 1993) in the nineteenth century Western cultures' view of self "there was a pervasive belief in some kind of deep and hidden resource lying within" ... (people, within which)... "resided passion, soul, inspiration, creativity" (Misra, 1993, p. 405). Misra (1993) describes psychoanalysis as the refuge of these ideas in present times, and humanistic psychology as a site where their faded signature is still visible. Gergen (quoted in Misra, 1993) goes on to describe how the empiricist mainstream has come to dominate 20th-century psychology with its modernist ideas of self in which "the pervasive position is that the essence of self is somewhere close to consciousness, is usually rational (cognitive), and is knowable to science through systematic observation" (Misra, 1993, p. 406). Although Misra (1993) describes behaviourism and cognitivism as the most extreme examples of modernity in psychology most of psychological theory and research is

included in this categorisation by virtue of the importance afforded to the scientific approach in psychology generally. The main differences between the romantic self and the modernist self as presented above are about the depth of and the accessibility of the essence of the person. In the romantic self the essence was deep within the person and although described as hidden was, of course, only hidden to man. It was not hidden from God. In the modernist self the essence is much closer to the surface and is accessible to man or science.

However, regardless of how deep one positions the essence of the self and regardless of who one allows will be able to read it, the romantic and the modernist notions of the self are both constructed around the idea that the nature of the person is determined by features residing within that person. Within this perspective individuals are regarded as autonomous, and self determining, having moral awareness and choices, and individuals are held to account for their behaviour. When change is required by society, for example, a decrease in the crime rate, it is the behaviour of individuals which is targeted in order to bring about that change.

The postmodernist notion of the self which is part of the theory of social constructionism turns the idea of an essence of the self completely upside down or would be more appropriate to say inside and out. Within this viewpoint "the self is emptied out: there is no author, no attending agent, no originary source within the being which produces language or action.... we begin to see.....an emerging conception of a decentered self" (Misra, 1993, p. 406). The decentered self then is, from moment to moment a product of a particular discourse, a construction within the prevailing narratives, a cultural artefact, unstable over time and place, a constantly moving locus point in a flexible and shifting array of relationships. According to the theory of the decentered self, I am defined by others, and I define myself, anew, each time that task is taken up according to the micro and the macro politics of the situation at that time and the cultural/ discursive/ narrative resources available to construct such definition. If the cultural/ discursive/ narrative resources available to construct a description of myself change, then I am changed, according to the theory of the decentered self. The possibilities for my experience of myself and others' experience of myself are determined by factors external to myself. Parker (1990) describes

how discourses position individuals as different types of subject. The types of person that I can be are determined by the subject positions made available to me within the culture I inhabit, that culture which by being internalised, inhabits me.

All of which means that according to postmodern theory I have no essence of self, I have no stable inner core of being which defines me independently of the society that I live in. But the problem is, that however attracted I am to this theoretical notion of the decentered self, that is not what it actually feels like to be me. I experience myself as being essentially me, as being autonomous and independent. Does this mean that the postmodernist concept of the decentered self is fatally flawed?

Not according to Nicholas Rose. Building on the work of Michael Foucault, Rose (1989) presents a convincing argument for the idea that although individuals in our modern society are constructed and controlled by the culture of the society, the primary control mechanism used to do this is the discourse of the autonomous independent self. According to Rose (1989) the "new era of the culture of the self" began with the Protestant revolution when self inspection replaced the confessional and "the self was to become both sinner and judge" (Rose, 1989, p. 224). Rose (1989) goes on to describe how government of citizens in modern democracies came to be achieved not through enforcing adherence to external rules but by the creation "of a space of regulated freedom dependant upon the generalisation of a set of ethical techniques for self inspection and self evaluation in relation to the code, a way of making feelings wishes and emotions of the self visible to itself, a way in which citizens were to problematise and govern their lives and conduct, to find a way in which, as free subjects, they could live a good life as a consequence of their own character" (Rose, 1989, p. 228).

I read Rose (1989) as saying here that although we are each shaped and controlled by the culture of the society, that is, we are each the creation of the collective enterprise, we do not experience ourselves as such, because the control device operating in this instance is the construction of ourselves as autonomous, as having freewill and choices. We experience ourselves as having an essence, our own character, that unique inner resource that makes us

different from all others and able to express that difference in the choices that we make. My subjective experience of myself is not contrary to the concept of the decentered self, in fact, according to Rose (1989) it confirms it. It is no burden to live my life within the constraints of what society allows for me if I am operating under the belief that I have choices and I am expressing my unique personality in the choices that I make. Can I say that such freedom is an illusion? I do not think so. That freedom exists for me experientially, that experience of the self has having some freedom of choice is a reality within the culture of the society I live in, although not for all people in the same way. What we have here is not two competing realities but two parallel realities, I am at once both that socially constructed decentered self and that autonomous individual.

Chapter one concluded with description of the ideas of Nightingale & Cromby (2002) where social constructionism was embedded within a critical realist epistemology, the critical realism providing a position from which socially constructed accounts could be evaluated. It seems to me that the perspectives on self described by Rose (1989) propose a rationalist or realist notion of self as one of the constructions of self that is possible within an overall framework of the social constructionist self. I find it interesting that the view of the world which I selected as being most sensible to my understandings acknowledged both realism and constructionism, but gave primacy to realism, albeit a critical realism, whereas the view of self which I found to be most sensible gives primacy to the constructed self. I read this difference as possibly being a reflection of a differential in the importance given to issues of ontology. This suggests to me that I am perceiving the existence of the world outside self as being more material than the existence of self.

Returning to my discussion of reflexivity then, I find myself asking what might be the implications of the concepts of the decentred self and the dual self for the practise of personal reflexivity? If I am seeking to acknowledge the presence of myself in my work, what form does that self take? I think it inevitable that I will write from the perspective of the independent autonomous self, although it does seem quite clear to me that my self is socially constructed. It appears to me that I must write from my autonomous self, but disclose both this aspect and my socially constructed self. I do not think that the idea that I

am disclosing the subjective consequences of the subject positions available to me at the time of writing, rather than my own stable and independent beliefs, makes reflexivity any less useful from the point of view of the deconstructive reader.

Does the idea of a social constructionist author disclosing their stable inner core of selfhood represent an epistemological conflict? The answer to this question would be yes if and only if we were to limit ourselves to the confines of a unitary reality, but once we acknowledge multiple realities, the question of conflict no longer arises. As Rose (1989) has described, the coercive technologies by which we are governed only work because we live in an experiential reality which provides us with a radically different explanation of ourselves.

Tindall (1994) provides an illustration of how the fusion of the social constructed self and the experiential self might present, when she describes post modern approaches to research and acknowledges the constructed nature of knowledge, but has an altogether different idea of what constitutes a self. Tindall (1994) acknowledges the value of choosing a research topic with which the researcher is personally involved and describes how this approach to research "centralises, rather than marginalises or denies the influence of the researcher's life experience on the research and the construction of knowledge"(Tindall, 1994, p. 150). Tindall (1994) goes on to say that if a researcher chooses to work in this way then it is necessary for that researcher to be "reflexive.... in order to achieve a resonance between subjectivity and objectivity", (Tindall, 1994, p. 150).

Tindall (1994) regards self awareness as a necessary prerequisite for reflexive disclosure. "If we fail to be critically aware and to know ourselves then we are in danger of undermining the validity of our work. Our findings, rather than being firmly grounded in people's accounts, may merely be the reflection of our own unconscious issues, disturbed by the research" (Tindall, 1994, p. 150). The self referred to here is the psychoanalytical self (Flax, 1990) and this psychoanalytical self is placed within a realist/empiricist inspired project of achieving validity in one's work by avoiding contamination by the self.

In her constructions of the self Tindall (1994) is clearly of the opinion that reflexivity should reveal something real about the author. Gill (1998) while advocating for the inclusion of reflexive process acknowledges the comparatively 'unreal' socially constructed nature of our accounts of ourselves, "How should we, as researchers, deal with the fact that our own claims are themselves constructions – our discourse is not somehow exempt, and is no less constructive, contingent and action orientated than any other discourse" (Gill, 1998, p. 20).

Potter & Wetherell (1987) take a more abstract view of reflexivity, proposing that in the first instance all language is reflexive in that it simultaneously describes and constructs that which is being talked about. Potter & Wetherell (1987) describe how authors use various forms of reflexive practise in their attempts to acknowledge this aspect of language use. One of the ways in which Potter & Wetherell (1987) see authors as attempting to work in this area is by the use of new literary forms, forms of writing more usually associated with creative writing than academic writing, with the intention that the creative writing convention will signal to the reader the constructive aspect of the language use.

Gill (1990) remains sceptical about new literary forms, in particular the convention of presenting one's work in the form of a dialogue, claiming that rather than empowering the reader to engage with a process of theorising alternative constructions from what is being presented, the dialogue literary form can actually strengthen authorial authority. "By appearing to acknowledge critical points they provide an inoculation for their argument and make it more difficult to rebut. They also sometimes protect authors from criticism thorough the use of strategic leaks of personal (or other) information, through which authors can offer persuasive credentials" ... (and that they can also) ... "produce a fake pluralism or multivocality" ... (creating) ... "a parody of real debate" (Gill, 1998, p. 36).

Potter & Wetherall (1987) also describe a type of reflexive practise where authors reflect on their own process of analysis at the same time as undertaking that analysis, analysing one's own analysis, and I use this type of reflexivity in Chapter Eight.

Another form of reflexive practise, illustrated by Morgan (1996), is where an author from within the discipline, analyses the discipline itself, representing a type of reflexivity at the institutional level. The writings of the conventional critique of social psychology described by Wexler (1996) which lead to the development of social constructionism, for example Gergen, (1973), could also be described as being reflexive in this sense, as could the writing of some of those authors who have been described as participating in the current ritual of debate about social constructionism. Parts of Chapter One of this current project could be described as being reflexive in this sense. For the remainder of this chapter I shall attend to the process of personal reflexivity, as I present two different reflexive discussions of myself, the author as feminist and the author as counsellor.

The author as feminist.

I describe myself as a feminist, in my life, in my counselling work and in my academic work. I have arrived at using the word feminist in my self description as a way of acknowledging to myself and others that I believe sexual difference is fundamental to the way human society is organised and furthermore, that that organisation impacts negatively on women in ways that are not generally experienced by men, although men may experience other types of impact.

However, having used these first few general words of explanation I have already perhaps taken my description of feminism in a direction not all feminists would agree with, because there are many different ways of being feminist. Therefore, what follows is both some description of feminism generally and some attempt to describe ways in which my feminism may be different to other feminisms.

In attempting to describe my feminism I am not seeking to define a single position, or a single epistemology. I see my feminism is encompassing a range of different speaking positions. It is a territory rather than a single space to speak from, a territory with fuzzy boundaries and open doors. It is also a territory which changes over time. I may believe I

know the general whereabouts of its location at the beginning of this project, but I know from previous experience that there can be a transformative effect in writing, and I accept that I may end up in a slightly different space from where I started.

I must make one last disclaimer before engaging with this description. While I am attempting to describe my feminism and be/do that feminism in my writing, this does not necessarily mean that I shall exclude phallogocentric discourse from my writing. According to Grosz (1988) phallogocentrism is a type of invisible everyday misogyny built into our language and thinking systems and usually operating below the level of consciousness. I can therefore expect that my feminisms will be presented not as an alternative to underlying phallogocentric systems of thought, but in addition to them, in a layering of possible readings.

Many authors have attempted some classification of feminist perspectives and I shall refer to three of these in attempting to map out some perspectives which may identify the position of my own feminist perspective.

Grosz (1988) identifies different types of feminism based on the particular misogynys they recognise and oppose. Grosz (1988) refers to misogyny at the observable empirical level as sexism and the feminism which opposes this as liberal feminism. Within this perspective opponents of sexism are concerned with changing the behaviour of (sexist) individuals. Grosz (1988) refers to the misogyny inherent in particular theories and underlying structures as patriarchal and the feminisms which oppose patriarchal theories and seek to rewrite those theories as structuralist feminisms.

Grosz (1988) describes as conservative feminists those feminists who seek to preserve mainstream theories from being rewritten by structural feminists. According to Grosz (1988) conservative feminists maintain that women's issues can be included as special cases or additions to existing theories without challenging the whole basis of the knowledge or the theory.

The final category of feminism described by Grosz (1988) in her classification is “feminists of autonomy” (Grosz, 1988, p. 96). Feminists of autonomy are feminists who are seeking to find a response to phallocentrism, where phallocentrism represents the deepest level of misogyny. Grosz (1988) describes how within phallogentric systems of language and thought so-called neutrality, the universal ungendered condition of knowledge, that which is referred to as truthful and objective, is both masculine and in denial of that masculinity. According to Grosz (1988) these feminists see phallogentric systems as using the masculine model to represent both sexes and seek to make visible the masculinity of the universal while at this same time striving to “be able to claim a space within theory for women as women”(Grosz, 1988, p.97).

It seems to me that to classify an individual feminist according to the categories of Grosz (1988) is to acknowledge where her feminisms rest rather than where they begin, or, what her feminisms include rather than what they exclude. By this I mean that feminism of autonomy must of necessity include structural and liberal feminisms because feminists of autonomy would not be blind to empirical or structural misogyny, but their concerns would not stop there, whereas liberal feminists might limit their concerns to observable sexism. I regard these types of feminism as being layers of awareness and concern.

Riger (1992) identifies three categories of feminism in psychology according to the epistemological basis used for research. According to Riger (1992) feminist empiricists see “closer adherence to the tenets of science as the solution to the problem of bias” (Riger, 1992, p. 732). These feminists are in effect saying that there is nothing wrong with the systems we currently have, but that some individual researchers produce bias in their work as a result of doing bad science. The focus of change here is at the level of individual behaviour and I read this feminism as being indistinguishable from the liberal feminism described by Grosz (1988).

The second category of feminism described by a Riger (1992) is standpoint feminism. According to Riger (1992) feminist standpoint epistemologies acknowledge the male centeredness of the mainstream or dominant forms of knowledge and seek to uncover and

promote women's experience and knowledge. Within this perspective women's knowledge is referred to as subjugated or underground knowledge. Standpoint feminists thus see men and women as occupying fundamentally different positions in social hierarchies, with the male perspective currently dominating the female. Standpoint feminists study women and their experiences with the goal of restoring balance to society by elevating the importance of women's experience to the level of that currently afforded men's experience.

The third category of feminism discussed by Riger (1992) is feminist postmodernism. According to Riger (1992) the perspective within postmodernism that has been most influential in feminist psychology is poststructuralism. Within the poststructuralist perspective meaning and knowledge are socially constructed "poststructuralists reject traditional notions of truth and reality, and claim instead that power enables some to define what is or is not considered knowledge" (Riger, 1992, p.734). Poststructuralist feminists study systems of thought as they are manifest in language with the aim of elucidating the processes by which women are excluded or made invisible within those systems and also to attempt to redress that absence.

Gatens (1996) distinguishes between feminists of equality and feminists of difference. Gatens (1996) includes under the feminists of equality those feminists who see gender not sex as being the site of women's oppression and who furthermore see gender as being socially constructed, a type of sexual socialisation or sexual social identity. Gatens (1996) describes this type of thinking as disembodiment in that it has the effect of locating women's oppression entirely within the psychosocial realm, within the mind. The project of feminists of equality as presented by Gatens (1996) seems to be to respond to the prejudices of traditional sexism (i.e. the belief that women are inferior to men because of biological differences between the sexes) by ignoring biology (the body) and relocating the debate to the psychosocial (the mind). Gatens (1996) argues that this does not make sense in terms of the oppression experienced by women, in that, if the biological body is not relevant, what is it that is at issue in gender relations? Why are women oppressed? Gatens (1996) sees feminists of equality as colluding with patriarchal society in attempting to deny the

significance of sexual difference “as if women's bodies, and the representation and control of women's bodies were not a crucial stake in these struggles” (Gatens, 1996, p17).

Gatens (1996) describes feminists of difference as feminists who recognise that “we are historically and culturally situated in a society that is divided and organised in terms of sex” (Gatens, 1996, p11). As described by Gatens (1996) feminists of difference do not focus on the anatomical body (that dichotomously positioned other half of the mind made so significant by feminists of equality) but look instead to the “situated body” or the “imaginary body” (Gatens, 1996, p11) that body- mind/ mind- body which defies partition, which is both sexed and socialised.

Where then do I locate my feminism within this array of possibilities? In attempting to answer this question my first response is to seek a plurality here. I am locating my feminisms not my feminism. My second impulse is to reject liberal and empirical feminism and conservative feminism from my feminisms. I should not like to be known as a liberal feminist, or an empirical feminist or a conservative feminist. However, regardless of where my preference lies at this point in time I have a difficulty with excluding these feminisms and that difficulty comes from two sources.

In the first instance it seems to me this I am reading a type of developmental sequence into the different feminisms. Where developmental sequences are concerned generally and most certainly in this case I am inclined to the Kleinian point of view that developmental stages are added to each other rather than being replaced by each other as in the Freudian model (Klein, 1956). Using this model, feminism of autonomy could be said to be inclusive of liberal and structural feminism but not necessarily conservative feminism which exists as a dichotomous alternative to structural feminism in the categories of Grosz (1988).

Consideration of a developmental thread within the various feminisms therefore would seem to preclude my rejection of liberal or empirical feminist, but what of conservative feminism? I find myself unable to exclude conservative feminism for the same reason that I could not exclude feminism of equality or any other feminism which could be discounted as colluding with phallogocentric discourse, because as I described earlier I do not believe

that it is possible to eliminate phallogocentric discourse from my writing because phallogocentrism is built into the language I must use.

Therefore phallogocentric feminisms may be evident in my writing in a way that is outside my awareness, but quite possibly visible to the deconstructive reader.

In conclusion I find I must include all the possible feminisms of my acquaintance in my feminisms, some enthusiastically embraced, structural, autonomous, standpoint and poststructural feminisms and feminism of difference, others simply acknowledged, empirical, conservative and feminisms of equality, and to the potpourri of these feminisms I must add the feminist author as pragmatic realist.

Some feminist authors, notably the French feminists Luce Irigaray, (Irigaray, 1985), Helene Cixous (Cixous, 1991) and Julie Kristeva, (Kristeva, 1986) have attempted to write as women, to 'write the feminine' by exploring writing styles which are radically different from traditional academic writing (Sellers, 1994). Although I am attracted to the possibilities of that project I am not attempting to 'write the feminine' in this current work in any radical way. I acknowledge the concerns expressed by Jardine (1989) with respect to the obvious and the not so obvious risks involved in engaging in impenetrable discourse, but I do not think that this requires the project of writing differently to be abandoned altogether by feminist authors. I believe there is level at which the project of writing differently which is promoted by the French Feminists appears very much like the now accepted practise in qualitative social psychology, for example Freeman (1993), of writing in the first person and at times adopting a more conversational form of address, and also at times using present tense. This is the level of difference I have allowed myself in this current project.

From a feminist perspective the use of terms like 'one would think' or 'it is thought' rather than 'I think' has the effect of obscuring and thereby reinforcing the masculinity of the subject of science, (Irigaray, 1985). From a social constructionist perspective the use of the first person is intended to convey that the author, like all other persons, articulates from the socio/political speaking positions available to them at the time (Burr, 1995). I

acknowledge that I may have attempted to journey further into the possibilities of what writing differently has to offer, had I not been preparing this current work for assessment, and that is why I added pragmatic realist to the list of my feminisms.

The author as counsellor and feminist.

I currently work as a counsellor in private practice where most of the time I am working with women clients who are wishing to address issues to do with sexual abuse.

I began my counselling career working for Relationship Services, called Marriage Guidance in those days. Also in those days we all worked as volunteers, in return for which we were provided with free training and supervision. What different times we lived in then. What freedoms we enjoyed. I didn't belong to an ethical body, wasn't registered anywhere except with the agency I worked for and I didn't have to fill out forms. Both training and assessment were very much experiential. Assessment to be licensed as a counsellor came after a two-year training period followed by a two-year probationary period and was based on videos of myself counselling. The first time I was assessed for competence to do Family Court work I attended a residential weekend where we lived and worked with the assessors who put us through a series of practical exercises. No one wanted to know what qualifications I had, but they were interested to see what I could do. Family Court is currently undergoing a process of updating its counsellor's approval criteria and all counsellors wanting to do Family Court work are now required to fill out a lengthy application form detailing the qualifications that they have. But I am used to these forms now. Over the years I have filled the amount for various employers, for the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) and the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), and ACC again, but I always find myself thinking as I fill them out that I don't trust this process, even with all the boxes correctly ticked they still don't know me, they still don't know what I can do, or possibly even more pertinently what I cannot do. There seems to be a new narrative about what a counsellor is, or how one measures a counsellor, which I can engage with, but I cannot disengage with the old narrative and I think that this is because

the new narrative on its own does not sustain my belief in the work that I do and for me there is some conflict between these two narratives.

Because this is an area of my work that I find problematical, this is the aspect of counselling I chose to research. The first phase of that research was to engage with the literature around the question of what exactly it is that counsellors do which is effective in producing change for the client. In the process of this research, the experiential counsellor becomes the counsellor/researcher.

One of the types of information sought from counsellors by those who require forms to be filled out is about modality, that is, the techniques employed by the counsellor and the theoretical justification for the same. I always have difficulty deciding how to present myself with respect to modality. Over my counselling career I have explored a number of different modalities, but I cannot say that any one of them is me, or characterises my work in any meaningful way. I have done my time with Rogers and Egan, psychodrama, neurolinguistic programming, transactional analysis, object relations, and narrative orientations and found each of them to be lacking as a unitary solution to the question of modality, and finally I came to reject unitary solutions themselves. Despite my social constructionist leanings I found the empirical research approach of Asay & Lambert (1999) quite appealing. According to Asay & Lambert (1999) all types of therapy are equally effective, but techniques or modality accounts for about 15 percent of the improvement which clients experience. The other 85 percent of change for the best is attributed to the effects of the therapeutic relationship, factors outside counselling and placebo effects. Hubbell, Duncan & Miller (1999) take this argument further and suggest that the nature of the therapists modality is not only irrelevant but it is actually not necessary for the therapist to have a modality at all. According to Hubbell, Duncan & Miller (1999) it is not the therapists modality or theory of change which is important, but the clients. Each client has their own unique theory of change and the therapist needs to learn this from each client before working with it, in order to help the client produce change for themselves, that is, our modality is different with each client that we work with. According to Asay & Lambert (1999) the nature of the relationship between counsellor and

client has twice the influence on outcome that modality has, accounting for 30 percent of the improvement, and yet the forms which seek to define me and my work do not ask about this aspect of counselling, perhaps that is because this aspect of counselling is not easily quantified.

Hubbell, Duncan & Miller (1999) describe their concerns about the increasing importance of empirically validated treatments (EVTs) in psychotherapy. They see therapy being redefined in such a way as to make it more easily quantifiable and therefore able to be controlled by third party funding agencies.

I believe that the arguments about the efficacious superiority of one technique over another will never be resolved, that they are unresolvable, a rhetorical political process without end, and I believe that there is a need for modality or technique as such, of some sort, in counselling because it provides the client with a reason for changing. This idea I think is best expressed in the work of Jerome Frank. Frank & Frank (1991) describe four features which are common to all modalities and which together facilitate positive change for clients. These features are " an emotionally charged, confiding relationship with a helping person", "a healing setting", "a rationale, conceptual scheme or myth that provides a plausible explanation for the patients symptoms and prescribes a ritual or procedure for resolving them" and "a ritual or procedure that requires the active participation of both patient and therapist and it is believed by the parties to be the means of restoring the patients health" (Frank & Frank, 1991, p. 40-43)

Although not framed in such terms by Frank & Frank (1991) I read this as a description of the counselling narrative, the generic story of what happens in counselling. What Frank & Frank (1991) are saying is that a counsellor does need a modality at any given time, but any one will do, and this would seem to be consistent with the common factors research discussed by Asay & Lambert (1999).

If one accepts this view of the role of modality, and I do, what then of the concerns of Hubbell, Duncan & Miller (1999) about EVTs and quantification of the therapeutic

process? If one technique is equally as efficacious as another, why should an EVT be any better or worse than another way of working with a client? What is the potential threat or harm involved here?

One could argue that, as counsellors and clients are all individuals, a variety of persons being involved requires a variety of different approaches be available, so that the chances of individuals being suited are increased. According to Frank & Frank (1991) belief is required for effective therapy. I think that in our individual focussed society, being able to select from a range, a product which one believes reflects ones own individuality, is quite likely to foster a belief in the effective superiority of that product. An increasing demand for EVTs could see non quantifiable modalities disappear from the repertoires of counsellors dependant on third party funding agencies. The clients of these counsellors may be less well served as a result of this.

I think that there is another potential threat implied in the move to redefine counselling in quantifiable terms and that is that the control of the therapeutic process could pass to remote authorities outside the profession. If the only interest the remote authorities have in counselling is the cost of it, to them, then ways would be found for the effective superiority of shorter forms of therapy (brief interventions) to be empirically validated. (This has already started to happen). Ultimately the cheapest form of counselling is no counselling at all. The ultimate (financial) redefinition of counselling could be that it is unnecessary and the industry could disappear altogether.

My feminist analysis of this is that, as counsellors are mostly women (Paton, 1999) and (by my own observation) the majority of counselling clients are also women, patriarchal society may not see any great significance or value in what happens in the counselling room. It is also possible that (if most counsellors are at least a little bit like me) the counselling room can operate as a classroom for feminist learnings, or at least a place where female solidarity is practised. I believe this situation could be experienced as being a threat to patriarchal culture, hence the need to control, or ultimately get rid of, counselling. It is also possible

that the need to control is not based on recognition of any specific threat, but simply arises from recognition of counselling as having a feminine identity.

In this chapter I have presented a description of counselling process which positions the various modalities and constructed accounts or narratives about how change might happen. The object 'modality' is thus given the ontological status 'constructed'. However, I do not extend that descriptor to the change the clients can experience. What I am suggesting here is that 'client change' or 'outcomes' has a different type of ontological status from modality, that is to say, it is more real. It may be argued that as a counsellor myself I would always construct as tangible and 'real' the benefits which may be derived from counselling, and I would not dispute that argument. The important point for me here is that I am able to make/construct these distinctions precisely because I have recourse to both constructionist and realist perspectives. If I were constrained to (attempting to) work within one perspective only, this analysis would not have been available to me.

In this chapter I have also presented some discussion around reflexivity and also some reflexive presentations of myself, myself as feminist academic, as experiential counsellor, as counsellor/researcher and as feminist counsellor. I have made these disclosures to give some indications of the positions I am speaking from so that the reader may be better able to recognise the constructions I apply in my analysis. Before I begin the analytical chapters I need discuss issues of methodology and to explore the question of what it is that I mean when I use the term 'narrative', and these are the topics of the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Issues around methodology and the meaning(s) of narrative.

After some deliberation I decided not to use the word data in my discussions of methodology. However, as I am aware that the term data is probably the most commonly used term to describe that which researchers collect and analyse I shall therefore present some argument in justification of my decision.

I did at one stage consider using the term data but when I found myself thinking about my research in that way I had a sense of truncation, a multidimensional kind of cutting off, resulting in the violation of a small piece of knowing in a way that felt artificial. My concern was that that small piece of knowing supposedly 'produced' by the research process was actually nothing of the kind.

I chose my participants and my participants chose themselves from a group of counsellors who could be roughly said to be my peers in the Nelson Marlborough area. All of the participants were known to me before this research was undertaken. Most of the issues covered in the interviews were issues which have been discussed within the peer group previously. Whether at local, regional or national gatherings, wherever counsellors get together they tend to talk about these things. This is the continuous thread of knowing that I did not want to infer that I was pretending did not exist. I needed to acknowledge the continuous thread of knowing because it is quite possible that in my analysis I did not/could not always differentiate between what I know from the conversations I have recorded and other conversations I have had with the same people about the same issues over the years. I believe there is a history there in my relationship with my participants which I may only be partially aware of, a shared history that has evolved over time into a type of subculture and disappeared from conscious awareness, to some extent.

Therefore in the first instance, I rejected the word data because it inferred a more rigid and impermeable boundary between past and present knowing that I believed existed for myself as researcher in this current project.

There is another boundary which I read as being inferred by the use of the term data and that is the boundary which separates object and subject in research. The term data comes from traditional empirical psychology, that is, research which is based on science and assumed to be objective. Hence I read the term data as carrying assumptions about objectivity. For information to be objective in the traditional empirical sense it must be sourced solely from the object being observed, using external senses, with no part of that information being derived from the person doing the observing (Coolican, 1994). This objectivity does not exist in the project undertaken here. I have made no attempt to, or claims about, keeping myself out of the talk I have collected. That talk resulted from conversations between two people in relationship, and existed in the context of that relationship. The stories created were co-constructed within that relationship as it existed at the time the recording was made. Therefore what I collected cannot be objective and therefore data is not the appropriate term to use to describe it, because of the inferences of empiricist objectivity contained in that term.

I have so far described two places where I read the term data as implying boundaries that I do not think my research reproduces. The third objection I have to using the term data in the present context is because doing so would seem to be ignoring a boundary of a different sort, which I believe is present in this research and which I think is essential to the process of qualitative research, and that is the boundary between that which was gathered and that which was analysed. In empirical research this boundary is not constructed.

The talk I recorded for this project was transcribed to produce text, and I analysed some of the stories I read as being present in the text. What I analysed was not what I collected. The process of identifying the stories transformed that which was collected into that which was analysed. That transformation was an intuitive, creative, culturally bound process of interpretation which intervened to create a boundary between that which I collected and that which I analysed. To have used the word data to describe both would have been to apply a description that was both inadequate and misleading.

In conclusion, my reasons for rejecting the term data are that it infers a disjuncture between past and present knowing on the one hand, and research subject and object on the other, which I find unacceptable in terms of this present project. The use of the term data also fails to acknowledge a transformation which occurs in the interpretive process where that which was analysed was created out of that which was collected.

That which was collected, from whom and how.

I collected recordings of interviews/conversations. I include the term conversations to indicate a process involving two persons contributing more or less in the same way. I did ask more questions of my participants than they did of me, and each tape did consist mostly of the talk of the participant, so there was some sense of an interview that happened, but there was also some conversation which happened. Each recording was approximately half an hour long. The recordings were transcribed verbatim to produce the transcripts. In order to protect participant confidentiality names of places, persons and organisations have been replaced with generic terms for that category of object, for example, in some instances where an employer is named, the term '*name of employer*' is substituted.

The participants were seven women counsellors in the age range forty five to seventy years. I did not exclude male counsellors, there were simply none in the peer group I accessed. Counselling is a predominantly female profession (Paton, 1999). The participants were all counsellors who currently were or recently had been working as counsellors in private practise part-time, mostly in conjunction with other part time work such as social work, nursing, mediation services and drug and alcohol services.

My method of recruitment was non-probability purposive sampling using a combination of expert sampling and snowball sampling (Trochim, 2001). The term expert sampling applies to my recruitment because, wanting to stay within my own counselling culture, in order that I would have awareness of and be able to identify the stories of my participants, I chose from a potential pool of counsellors, those who met certain criteria. Those criteria were that the participating counsellors were members of the New Zealand Association of

Counsellors, were currently or had been Family Court Counsellors, and/or were currently or had been ACC Registered Counsellors, and who were generally regarded among their peers as being experienced practitioners.

My sampling was also an example of snowball sampling but not strictly in the sense described by Trochim (2001). Trochim (2001) describes snowball sampling as being where existing participants assist the researcher by identifying further potential participants. This was not the case in my research as all the participants were already known to me. What did snowball in my recruitment process was acceptance of and support for my project, within an already identified pool of participants. With the exception of the first participant I approached, I found that participants already knew about my research and felt positively about participating, and I attribute this to communications between existing and potential participants. This was a process that was not only assisted my project but which I think was vital. If the first participants had not found the interview process to be enjoyable or at least tolerable, I think that the word would quickly have gone around the peer group that taking part in my research was not a good idea, my pool of potential participants would have dried up and I would not have been able to sample within my own counselling culture.

The interview/conversations were unstructured in the sense that I did not use a set list of prepared questions for each interview. However I did notice over time that there were some questions I tended to ask of all participants, though not always using the same wording. These questions were questions like; how long have you been involved in counselling? what changes have you noticed over that time? what forms of accountability are you currently subject to? and do you think that this accountability process captures the essence of what is required to be a good counsellor?

That Which Was Analysed

In attempting to capture the sense of what I mean when I use the word narrative I have found it useful to think of three different types of meaning, operating here in layers. The

three different types of meaning I read into the term narrative are narrative as object, narrative as process and narrative as epistemology.

I use the terms story and narrative interchangeably and I find that this works equally well for each of the three layers of meaning I shall now describe. This usage is consistent with that of Sarbin (1986) “narrative is coterminous with story” (Sarbin, 1986, p. 3) and Polkinghorne (1988) “the term *story* is equivalent to *narrative*” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 13).

Narrative as Object or Linguistic Device.

In his discussions on research interviewing Mishler (1986) describes the benefits to be gained by the interviewer allowing the respondent to get sidetracked and tell stories. Mishler (1986) argued that far from being irrelevant, these stories were a form of data in their own right and amenable to their own form of analysis, namely narrative analysis. However Mishler (1986) does not provide any clear cut process for differentiating story from non story speech, although he does infer that story is not speech given in direct answer to an interviewer's question, but rather speech triggered by some cue internal to the participant. Mishler (1986) provides a list of possible characteristics which may be found in story speech, such as; including a logical chain of events, having a beginning and an end and something in the middle, being a chronicle which conveys meaning and having a recognisable plot.

Riessman (1993) continues with the project of developing criteria for distinguishing the narrative portions of an interview from the non narrative portions. Riessman (1993) suggests that the bulk of any transcript would typically be non narrative and that respondents would tend to tell stories about their past experience only where there is a tension between what was acceptable or desirable and what actually happened.

Riessman (1993) discusses the structural model of narrative associated with the work of Labov (1972, as described in Riessman, 1993) and also the dramatic model of Burke

(1969). Cortazzi (1993) also discusses the structural model of narrative, describing the six elements of that model as being like the responses to typical audience questions or comments such as ‘what was the thing that happened’ (abstract), ‘how did it start’ (orientation), ‘then what happened’ (complicating action), ‘what was the significance of that’ (evaluation), ‘what happened in the end’ (resolution) and ‘well, so much for all of that’ (coda- return to the present).

Burke (1969) in his dramatic model sought to explain the process of ascribing motives. Burke (1969) analysed narrative in terms of the five elements act, scene, agent, agency and purpose.

McLeod (2001) and Ochs & Capps (2001) are examples of more recent works where narrative is treated as linguistic device, or object. McLeod (2001) describes story telling as one type of interview response among many others and further describes the basic structure of a narrative involving the elements of beginning, middle, end, protagonist and climax. Ochs & Capps (2001) describe narrative as a genre which overlaps with other forms of discourse and which has a structure based around description, sequencing, morality and causation.

Despite occasional references to social context in their discussions, I read the work of Misher (1986), Riessman (1993), Cortazzi (1993), McLeod (2001) and Ochs & Capps (2001) as being about the study of narrative as object. Riessman (1993) introduces her topic with the words “Narrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself” (Riessman, 1993, p. 1). In the descriptions provided by Riessman (1993) the interview is conducted, the tape transcribed, the narrative portions identified, the tape then re-transcribed removing both the non narrative portions and the speech of the interviewer. The object of narrative as data is thus achieved. Riessman (1993) located her work in the post positivist era, and Misher (1986) also describes how his narrative approach makes accessible types of interview data which mainstream positivist research methods cannot cope with, thereby located himself also as post positivist. Although this type of research may have been a departure from existing mainstream research in terms of offering a new

way of working with qualitative data, I find the positioning of narrative as object, which is achieved by both these authors to be indistinguishable from the positioning of the traditional research object to be found in the mainstream positivist empiricist approach to research. In my opinion, in constructing narrative as object in this way, these authors are seeking to generate objective knowledge.

Narrative as Object and Social Process.

Gergen & Gergen (1984) while taking narrative as object and presenting their own structure for typifying narratives, also discuss narrative as being part of a social process.

In their structural typography of narratives, Gergen & Gergen (1984) use the terms stability, progressive and regressive to describe stories or portions of stories. Gergen & Gergen (1984) describe those stories in which the overall mood does not change as stability narratives. They use the term progressive narrative for a story where the mood improves and the term regressive narrative for a story where the mood generally gets worse. By combining these elements sequentially in a single story Gergen & Gergen (1984) were able to characterise the tragic narrative (stability followed by regression), the comic narrative (regressive followed by progression), the happy ever after narrative (progression followed by stability) and the romantic saga narrative (alternating regressive and progressive segments).

After presenting their own typology of narrative as object, Gergen & Gergen (1984) then go on to develop a different type of meaning for narrative. Beginning with statements like “narratives as linguistic devices are inherently a product not of individuals but of interacting persons” (Gergen & Gergen, 1984, p. 184) and “the individual is limited at the outset to a vocabulary of action that possesses currency with the culture” (Gergen & Gergen, 1984, p. 135), Gergen & Gergen (1984) argue that relationships are maintained through negotiations between narrator and audience as to what is an acceptable story to tell. “The bulk of the negotiation process is anticipatory or implicit; it takes place with an imaginary audience prior to the actual confrontation. In this way most human interactions

progress unproblematically” (Gergen & Gergen, 1984, p. 185). Gergen & Gergen (1984) conclude that narratives are socially constructed, that they provide a process of negotiation of meaning between persons, and that they are fundamental to the process of relationship maintenance.

Thus Gergen & Gergen (1984) add a second layer of meaning to the term narrative. Narrative is still linguistic device but it is something else besides, it is part of the process of relationship maintenance, it is how we do belonging, or not belonging, as the case may be. According to this model of how narrative functions, our ability to discern what is an acceptable story, and our skill at performing these stories will largely determine how we are accepted or valued within particular relationships. In this account of narrative as process, narrative is a function of the individual.

Wortham (2001) further builds on the concept of narrative as process outlined by Gergen & Gergen (1984). Wortham (2001) refers to his dialogic approach to narratives as being the study of narratives in action, emphasizing the interactional nature of narrative and the work achieved by narrative performance within the salient relationship.

Kenneth Gergen (writing in Worthan, 2001) refers to the two aspects of meaning for narrative already discussed, the representative function (of the linguistic device) and the interactive process of meaning making between individuals, but also refers to narrative as a process for defining the self and understanding the world we live in. Mary Gergen (2001) describes searching for narrative forms as one type of project used by feminist social constructionists and further adds that “the emphasis is on how the cultures narrative forms provide boundaries by which we can know ourselves and what we have accomplished” (M. Gergen, 2001, p. 44). Here narrative is a social process as described above but is a function of culture rather than individuals, and is also now described as a vehicle for knowledge and understanding. What we see introduced here, which is different to the concept of narrative as being a process of relationship maintenance, is the idea of narrative as a way of knowing and understanding. This introduces the third layer of meaning for narrative and it is this aspect of the meaning of narrative which I will now describe.

Narrative as Epistemology.

I have used Misher (1986) and Riesmann (1993) as examples of authors who use the term narrative to describe an object, a type of linguistic device. I have used Gergen & Gergen (1984) and Wortham (2001) as examples of authors who use the term narrative to describe both the object and a process, the process of interpersonal interaction, the process of narrative in performance.

I read in the works of Misher (1986), Riessman (1993), Gergen & Gergen (1994) and Wortham (2001) when considered in combination, a relationship between object and process which gives primacy to the object. I read the work of these authors, on the whole, as suggesting that the existence of the story, the linguistic device, allows for the performance of the narrative in action, the object making the process possible. Although Kenneth Gergen (writing in Wortham, 2001) and Mary Gergen (2001) when introducing the idea of narrative as a form of knowledge, are inferring a different type of relationship between object and process, for the best discussion of this other type of relationship, I turn to the work of Donald Polkinghorne. According to Polkinghorne (1988) the object, the story, is the result of a process, almost a by product of the process, that process being of primary importance. "I will use the term narrative and its cognates to refer to both the process and the results" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 13).

However, I see no conflict between the scenario suggested by Polkinghorne (1988) and the scenario I read into the work of the authors discussed above, because the process referred to by Polkinghorne (1988) is a different type of process to that referred to by Gergen & Gergen (1984) and Wortham (2001). When Polkinghorne (1988) uses the term process in this context he is referring to a type of cognitive scheme.

According to Polkinghorne (1988) humans have two organising cognitive schemes, the logical or scientific scheme and the narrative scheme and it is the narrative scheme which is used to make sense of human activity and events that affect humans "It is the scheme that

displays purpose and direction in human affairs and makes individuals' lives comprehensible as wholes. We conceive of our own and others behaviour within the narrative framework" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 18).

The process of narrative referred to by Polkinghorne (1988) is thus a process of meaning making or knowing and for that reason I refer to this meaning of narrative as narrative epistemology. According to this meaning of narrative, what we know of ourselves and others is determined by the stories we have available to us to make sense of ourselves, other people and events that affect us. We can only know these things through narrative, we can only construct this type of knowledge through narrative. If we cannot story it, then we cannot know it.

Polkinghorne (1988) seems quite clear about the role of narrative in the construction of human experience, and equally clear that a distinct boundary exists between narrative knowing and logical knowing "narrative meaning is one type of knowing produced by the mental realm. It principally works to draw together human actions and the events that affect human being, and not relationships between inanimate objects" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 6). Here Polkinghorne (1988) is suggesting that we use story to make sense of the social world and logic to make sense of the inanimate or physical world.

I have some difficulty with this aspect of the work of Polkinghorne (1988). It occurs to me that the distinction between animate and inanimate may itself be socially constructed and culturally dependant. I shall illustrate this idea with a story of my own. A few years ago I had organised to attend a conference with a colleague friend of mine. The day before the conference a member of my friends hapu died and she then travelled to the funeral instead of coming to the conference. We met up a few days later and my friend asked me what the weather had been like at the conference and I said "it rained steadily for three days, tangi weather". My friend said "aye", and we sat in silence for a moment.

For me there are several stories at different levels represented in this interchange, which is also an example of narrative enactment by fragmentary reference, which I shall talk more

about later. One of the stories I read as being present in this interchange is about the earth, Papatuanuku, the sky, Ranginui, and the wind, Tawhiri Matea as living entities in relationship with each other and with the tangata whenua, and by the production of rain, acknowledging that a member of the tangata whenua is passing over from this world to another.

I am assuming that Polkinghorne (1988) would have classed earth, sky and wind as inanimate and therefore outside the realm of narrative. It seems to me that in the logio-scientific mode, earth sky and wind have no choice but to be inanimate. Polkinghorne (1988) suggests that a recognition of animate/inanimate somehow facilitates a choice between narrative and logio-scientific knowing. I think that being in either narrative or logio-scientific mode also has a determining affect on what is animate and what is inanimate. And if the boundary between animate and inanimate is socially constructed, does it not then follow that the distinction between narrative knowing and logio-scientific knowing is also socially constructed? And if the boundary between these two modes of knowing were to disappear, which cognitive scheme would subsume which? I think there is only one way that argument could go, because narrative knowing allows for the story of science, it includes this story, (once upon a time there was a scientist who lived in a world of real objects...) whereas the logio-scientific mode, it seems to me can only represent narrative knowing as being different from and separate to. The position I take is that the story about science is simply another narrative construction which we use to make sense of ourselves and the world. However, regardless of the position I take on the existence of other forms of knowing, for the purposes of this project I do not need to make any argument against the binary system of cognitive schemes proposed by Polkinghorne (1988) or against the idea of logio-scientific knowing as being different from and separate from narrative knowing, and I do not propose to do that. It seems quite clear to me that my current enterprise is located entirely within narrative knowing as described by Polkinghorne (1988) and therefore there is no requirement for me to consider the validity of the concept of other forms of knowing.

Polkinghorne (1988) described narrative knowing as being that part of the total human knowing which relates to persons and events that affect persons, that part of human knowing which is not about inanimate objects. I see counselling as being an activity which is based on persons and events that affect people. In my experience and from what I know of the experience of other counsellors, I have never known of anyone attending counselling seeking assistance with an inanimate object which has no affect on any persons. Therefore it seems clear to me that counselling is an activity entirely situated within the realm of narrative knowing, as described by Polkinghorne (1988). Similarly I see this research project as being situated entirely within the realm of narrative knowing, in that this project is about counsellors and their work and the issues are all person based, being about relationships.

Having thus situated my work in this current project entirely within the realm of narrative knowing, I do not need to address the question of whether other types of knowing exist, however, having thus situated myself and the stories of my participants, does create a problematic about other types of discourse which I must now address.

In my multi layered definitions of narrative I have assumed that the three types of meaning for narrative I have described, narrative as object, narrative as process and narrative as epistemology, can co-exist. By adopting the narrative as epistemology meaning I am claiming that all knowing in the realm of persons and events that affect persons, that is, in the realm of this research project, is storied. I am claiming that for the purposes of this project, if it cannot be storied, then it cannot be known. The consequence of adopting narrative epistemology, is that I now have no basis for recognising any content in my transcripts which is not part of narrative knowing, that is, is not narrative in nature. Mishler (1986) and Riessman (1993), authors who describe narrative as object, as linguistic device, are quite clear in their descriptions of analysing transcripts, that only a small portion of any transcript will be narrative, and the majority of any transcript will be non narrative. Does this mean that the narrative as object meaning conflicts with the narrative as epistemology meaning? I do not think so. I do not think that there is any incompatibility between the

layers of meaning here, but in order to show how this can be, I need to qualify what I mean by narrative as object.

My position is that all talk on the transcript is part of narrative knowing, and also part of the process of meaning making and relationship maintenance, but only some of that talk will be recognised as narrative as object, that is, narrative as linguistic device, using the structural definitions of narrative described by Misher (1986) and Riessman (1993). The type of narrative linguistic device recognised will depend on the definition of such device used by the particular analyst. Analysts who define the narrative linguistic device in terms of particular structural features will recognise narrative wherever those structural features appear. This does not mean that the balance of the transcript not recognised by this process is not narrative knowing, or narrative as relationship process, or indeed narrative as object using any other set of structural features for definition. The object of narrative as linguistic device is constructed by the definition used to characterise the said object, and there is a temporal aspect to how such definitions operate.

All of the authors I have discussed so far in this chapter have emphasised the importance of temporal aspects of narrative in the meanings they have ascribed to narrative, describing narrative as facilitating an ordering of events over time. I propose that recognition of narrative as structural linguistic device also has a temporal dimension, in that a sufficient number of the features described as characteristic of narrative, according to the definition being used, must be evident during the time of the interaction, in order for the object narrative to be recognised.

It is my contention that the balance of the transcript not recognised as narrative (by whatever structural definition being used) is indeed narrative, by that or any other definition, but that the narrative is not recognised as an object because not enough of the salient characteristics are displayed within the timespan of the transcript. Taking this position redefines the non narrative portions of the transcript as portions of the transcript containing incomplete or fragmentary narrative which by virtue of its incomplete nature is not able to be recognised structurally. I think it is important to acknowledge another

possible reason for the non recognition of narratives could be that the stories being told are outside the cultural awareness of the analyst.

What I am proposing is that whole all of the transcript will be storied, the majority of the stories may be present in a fragmentary way, referred to rather than performed in their entirety.

As a counsellor I often experience clients relating many stories in one session, but I am equally familiar with the situation where a story can be months in the telling; the small part of such long stories I might get at any one time being a fragment of story, or narrative fragment. In my work with sexual abuse survivors in particular I have identified over the years many typical stories relating to the different aspects of recovery from abuse, which I hear over and over again from many different clients. Some of these stories are long term stories, but increasingly I find I no longer have to wait for the months to pass in order to find out which story is being told, I can recognise the story from a fragment.

This is a different process of story recognition from that which I have described previously in this chapter, this is identification of stories based on content, and is I believe the only way to recognise fragmentary narrative, because, as I have described above structural definitions do not allow identification of narrative fragments. The aspects of narrative that I use for identifying my clients stories are content, both literal and metaphorical, and it is this process that I have used for identifying the stories contained in my transcripts of interviews/conversations with counsellors.

Davies & Harre (1990) use the idea of narrative fragments in their explanations of positioning. According to Davies & Harre (1990) a lived autobiography, that is the process whereby persons position and reposition themselves in talk, consists of a collection of fragments of different stories.

Bennett (1983, as described in Cortazzi, 1993) studied teachers' story telling in the staffroom. The teachers were recorded in conversation with each other in a group situation.

This study found that because of their shared history, the teachers were often enacting a type of solidarity ritual in their story telling, telling stories which were characteristically cryptic and fragmentary, with meanings which were designed to be accessible to insiders only.

I have assumed some shared history with my participants in this research, as most of my participants have been in my peer group for many years now, and I believe that it is this shared history which enabled me to recognise some of the stories contained in the transcripts, even though they were present only in fragmentary form, referred to rather than performed. In the next chapter I present the framework which I have used to assist me to recognise narrative fragments in the content of the transcripts.

Chapter Four: Presenting a model for identifying and analysing stories.

For the purposes of analysis I combined all the transcripts into one text and henceforth when I use the term text I am referring to the transcripts collectively. My reasons for doing this involve arguments from within both the modernist and the social constructionist epistemologies around self, individual and culture.

My first reason for combining the transcripts was because of a potential problem caused by myself as individualistic researcher, choosing, as research participants, persons who are known to me. I acknowledge that I habitually think of myself and others in terms myself and the other being autonomous individuals, in the traditional modernist view of the individual. Part of this way of thinking is the tendency to attempt to explain or characterise peoples talk in terms of their individual history. One of the consequences of my sampling strategy is that I knew stories from the history of my participants which were not referred to in the transcripts, but which I believed could render me vulnerable to attempting to explain individual narrative fragments in terms of what I knew of the history of the individual speaker. It would have been counterproductive to my goal of sampling 'culture' to engage with my participants talk on this individual level. While it may have been unlikely that I could entirely eliminate any tendency on my part to do this, I thought that it was important to work in ways which would minimise this analytic practise on my part. The new participant which I created by combining the transcripts was a participant which I could not attempt to explain in terms of any prior knowledge which I may have had about any one of the individual participants.

I characterise the idea of a process by which individuals combine to produce the collective identity as belonging the modernist or individualistic perspective, because it is a concept which gives primacy to the individual in the sense that the individuals create culture by collectivising.

The post modern or social constructionism perspective on the other hand, conceives of a relationship between culture and individual which gives primacy to culture. As I described in Chapter One, within the social constructionist perspective, what we 'know' of ourselves and others is dependant on the constructions allowed us within culture.

Parker (1990) describes the functional manifestations of culture which allow for the construction of individuals as discourses, where a discourse is "a system of statements which constructs an object" (Parker, 1990, p. 191) and which also contains subject positions. "A discourse makes available a space, and it addresses us in a particular way.....we cannot avoid the perceptions of ourselves and others that discourses invite" (Parker, 1990, p. 197).

Harre & Davies (1990) also acknowledge the way in which positioning constructs individuals "An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practises in which they participate. Accordingly, who one is, is an open ended question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within ones own and others discursive practices" (Harre & Davies, 1990, p. 46).

According to this perspective then, there is no such thing as an individual who is outside of or independent of culture, well, there may be, but we could not 'know' of them.

Furthermore, even if we endeavour to conduct research at the level of the individual, we do not in practise achieve this, but what we do is study is a manifestation of culture. Within this viewpoint the object individual is constructed at the locus point which represents the intersection of the various positioning influences or discursive practices which operate within culture to construct a person at that place.

According to social constructionism I am working at the level of culture regardless of whether or not I regard myself as doing so, because 'talk about being a counsellor' that is, what is said about counselling, is a product of culture. Therefore from a social

constructionist perspective combining the transcripts makes sense because they are all from the same source.

The social constructionist perspective also reframes the goal of wanting to sample culture into a goal of wanting to explore some aspects of how the object counsellor is constructed, or to put it another way, to identify some of the positioning influences which operate upon those spaces which counsellors occupy.

I have here used modernist reasoning to arrive at a concept of culture and then applied social constructionism ideas to theorise about the operation of culture, a practical example of the epistemic biculturalism or epistemic eclecticism which I described in Chapter One. I am aware that in attempting to work in this way I am departing from accepted reporting conventions. I believe that the usual practise would be to state that I am adopting one of these perspectives and then try as hard as I consciously could to speak only from within that perspective. However, as I discussed in Chapter One, irrespective of my desire to work within the social constructionist paradigm, I do not believe that this is possible, without, at the same time also working from within another non social constructionist paradigm, be that envisaged as modernist, realist, empiricist or individualist. As I see it the abnormality I am performing/producing here is not my epistemic duality per se, but my attempts to acknowledge that.

The stories I identify from the narrative fragments in the text are not the only stories present. There were also narrative fragments that refer to other stories and some of these stories are about the participant's personal lives. In identifying the stories that I have, and in my silence on the stories I do not identify, I am bound by my contract with the participants which is evidenced by the information sheet and consent form. I contracted with my participants, and they with me, that I would analyse stories about being a counsellor and therefore I do not have permission under the consent process I used to work with any other stories which may be present in the text.

My first step towards getting a general sense of what was being said about being a counsellor in the text was to engage with that material. To facilitate this process I asked a question of the text, re-interviewing in a sense. I re-interviewed with the text representing the sole participant, but now a participant culture, or fragment(s) of same. The first question I asked of the text was "what makes a good counsellor?" My reading of the text produced a huge number of responses to this question, covering a variety of different aspects of being a counsellor, which seemed to me to, loosely speaking, fall into five different categories.

There were aspects of being a good counsellor which I read as being related to workplace issues and relationship to work generally and there were aspects of being a good counsellor which were related to professionalism and to the performance of the counsellor. Other descriptions of the good counsellor referred to the more intangible aspects of being a counsellor, notably quality of relationship, and the biggest category of responses were those addressing the issue of personhood, that is, being a particular type of person.

I found my interest was drawn to what appeared to be an inconsistency or incongruity between the descriptions of the good counsellor which related to professionalism and those which referred to the more intangible aspects of being a counsellor, in particular the relationship aspect of being a counsellor. Experiencing this inconsistency and exploring the meanings of that for myself as reader and analyst represents the next stage of my engagement with the text.

My reading of the text was that the relationship between the counsellor and client was regarded as being of pivotal importance to the process of counselling, as illustrated by Extract 7 "*I grew to learn that it didn't matter what intervention you used.... as long as you had a good solid....relationship with your client*". Extract 8 also speaks to the importance of the relationship between counsellor and client ranking it as "*the most important thing*" and placing it "*above any theory*".

In contrast to this in Extract 3, safety in counselling is presented as being a product of tertiary education "*it was actually a safe place to get counselling, because we were all well*

trained....we all had to go through Massey, or Canterbury or Waikato or Auckland". The importance of tertiary training is also described in Extract 9 *"I do believe in people having a level of qualification....(and the training).... shouldn't be just an eight month certificated".* I found myself asking, how could a counsellor who placed relationship above all else condemn as unsafe, or not 'proper' a counsellor who had not done (enough) tertiary training?

It occurred to me that I may have experienced an inconsistency here because, as I had asked a single question of the text, (what makes a good counsellor?) I was expecting a single answer, or a single story. I also wondered if experiencing a lack of consistency was an artefact of using the categorisation process, because it also seemed to me that because I had asked a single question, I was now assuming that I was a single questioner, speaking only from one position. Categorisation is a process which only recognises unitary realities. I remembered back to when I had been doing the interviews. It had surprised me when issues to do with the importance of training had come up. This was not something which was usually talked about in my discussions with my peers. I had thought at the time that this was an indication that myself and my participants were now in a different space, differently positioned. I had thought that because I was interviewing for research and there was a tape running, that 'society at large' was present in the interaction in a way it was not usually in my conversations with peers. It now seemed to me that this was so, and I had in effect been (at least) two questioners, and in my engagement with the text I was reading responses given simultaneously to two different audiences, from a single reading position, and this was what had given me my experience of inconsistency in the responses. Experience of inconsistency here being reframed as failure to acknowledge multiplicity of reading position. It seemed likely to me then, that as there was more than one audience involved, there was more than one story being told about what makes a good counsellor, that there were probably several different stories involved here.

As with my arguments around reasons for combining the transcripts, here I read my process as being one of starting from a non constructionist perspective and then finding that I

needed to utilise social constructionist ideas as well, in order to make sense of my own process.

When I identified that the responses to the question 'what makes a good counsellor?' most likely contained references to a number of different stories I had an immediate sense of knowing where I was and feeling at home. I realised at that point that I had constructed a research process which had many parallels with one on one counselling, the text representing a symbolic client, or client culture in this instance. I ask questions of my clients and I frequently get a bewildering array of responses. In my work over the years I have developed a content based framework that I use to make sense of clients stories.

This framework is based on the idea that persons have a multiplicity of selves and the nature of those selves is determined by the positions they take up or are given in whatever storyline, or narrative is salient in the current interaction (Davies & Harre, 1990). In my counselling work I have identified three main types of story which position clients as different selves during counselling. I call these three narratives 'the story as presented', 'the untold story' and 'the untellable story'. Because of the parallels I saw between my research process and my counselling process, I decided to use the framework which I use in counselling to make sense of the stories present in the text. Before I embark upon that analysis, I shall illustrate how the concept of the three co-existing narratives works by presenting a generalised example from my counselling work. The counselling situation I use in this example is the situation where women attend counselling on their own, wanting to address issues in relationship with their heterosexual partner: not an uncommon situation in my experience. This is the counselling situation where lead to me developing this framework to assist me with making sense of clients' stories.

The first story that I identify from the talk of clients in this situation, the story as presented, is usually a self depreciating tale about the rightness of their partner's position and the pathology of their own. In this phase of establishing the counselling relationship the clients may say things like "he's a lovely man" or "we have a perfect relationship really" or "I don't want to lose him because of some silly reaction I have" and "I know I'm being

unreasonable" and "there must be something wrong with me" and "I need to get myself sorted out". As the stories continue the woman's unreasonableness can later be described as something like "my sex drive is too low" or "I get upset just because he wants to go out without me" or, about an affair, "why can't I forget and forgive and move on, it's been three months now" or "he says its not normal for me to want to spend time with my friends and family now that I am married".

The story as presented in this counselling scenario I see as being part of a good father bad child narrative, a reflection of the symbolic/imaginery or male-adult/female-child narrative of heterosexual relations which is dominant in patriarchal society (Grosz, 1999). When as a counsellor I do not support my client's construction of herself as a bad child, the clients talk can shift to being less about her badness and more about justifying her feelings and behaviour, and we move into the untold story, the story of her experience in the relationship.

In the untold story phase of the counselling process the clients may say things like "he's not perfect" or "I think he should come to counselling too" or "I shouldn't have to have sex every time he wants it, should I?" or "how can I move on when I am still hurting" or "my friends and family are important to me". I call these types of stories untold because, although they exist in the counselling room, they have not yet been told at home. In this counselling scenario the untold story is a type of bad father/good child narrative, which although it may appear to be the opposite to the story as presented, and to challenge patriarchal authority in heterosexual relations, positions the male partner in the same way, as the story as presented, but constructs him as performing differently within that position.

The next phase of counselling with clients in this situation often involves the client choosing to tell the untold story to their partner, in the belief that he will listen, will hear her reality and change, and therefore the problem would be solved. However, in most of the cases I have been involved with the telling of the untold story at home does not have this outcome so desired by the client. The woman speaking her reality can be taken, by her

partner, as further evidence of the woman's pathology, (as well as, sometimes, evidence of the risks involved in allowing one's wife to go to counselling).

Sometimes women can become disillusioned with the counselling process at this stage and give up, but, if they choose to continue, a third story is added to the layers of her understanding of the relationship, and that is the untellable story. The untellable story in the example scenario I am using here begins with tales about hard times in his past, and then goes on to describe his defences against his feelings, his vulnerability and his dependence on her strength. The women may say things like "if it weren't for me we would have no friends at all" or "he is totally hopeless in the kitchen and scared stiff of changing a nappy" or "I think he is actually frightened that I will leave him and that he will be on his own, because he simply wouldn't cope" or "I have to worry about his feelings all the time, I have to be the strong one" or "he's the one who really needs counselling, but he would never go".

This third story I read as being a type of good mother/sick child narrative, the story about her strength in the relationship. I call this story untellable because the women invariably choose to not tell this story to their partners. They may tell this story to women friends or women family members but are usually really resistant to the idea of telling this story at home. The untellable story seems to be for women's ears only. When questioned about the idea of telling this story at home the women may say things like "no, I couldn't possibly talk to him about this" or "he would never understand in a million years" or "he just doesn't think about relationships in that way".

Regardless of this stance taken by the client, it is my experience that, even though the untellable story cannot be told, it does speak, eventually, in subtly but significant different feelings and behaviours as the client begins to live the complexity of her new understandings of herself in relationship with others, including her partner.

I have pondered at length over the years about the reasons why the untellable in this scenario seems to be confined to the secret society of women, and the answers I have come

up with are, probably, like the three stories I have described, layered and co-existing. There are three main types of reason which have suggested themselves to me, that the untellable is restricted to protect her/women, to protect him/men, or lastly and most significantly, to protect the system, patriarchal society. I think that the protective function for men inferred here is self evident, the untellable story is the story of the weakness and vulnerability of the masculine. There are aspects of the protection function(s) for women and for patriarchal society, however, which are not so self evident, therefore what follows is some explanation of how I see the restriction of the untellable working in this way, for the protection of women and society generally.

The reason I see the untellable as being a possible threat to the fabric of patriarchal society is not because of the content of the story itself when considered in isolation, but because of the relationship of the content of this story to the other two stories that it co-exists with. Patriarchal society is based on systems of thought characterised by binary logic, that type of either or thinking which forces dichotomous choices. Our language is infused with language features known as binary oppositions, or dualisms (also known as oppositional pairings) which carry an implicit either/or value judgement. Good/bad is an example of a binary opposition, light/dark, up/down, man/woman and mind/body are other examples. The two terms in a binary opposition are hierarchically ordered with the first term being dominant or privileged over the second. This is the type of thinking which dominates Western culture "the Western logic of identity is the logic of either/or" (Sampson, 1983, p. 155).

It seems to me that binary logic could cope with the story as presented and the untold story in my example scenario, not in the multi-layered perspective of a social constructionist counsellor, but in the characteristically patriarchal way of simply making a dichotomous choice, 'he is either a good father or a bad father, make your choice, you can't have it both ways'. I believe that the idea of such a choice is not intrinsically threatening to women, perhaps because it would not be particularly relevant to women, either way, the women are in the same position. However, I think that the idea of a choice being made between the untold story and the untellable story does contain some real threats.

If binary logic is the reasoning we are using, then women may have their oppression acknowledged, (the untold story), but at the cost of disowning their strength, (the untellable story). Or, on the other hand women may have their strengths recognised but no longer be able to speak of their oppression. Both these outcomes could be seriously disadvantageous to women. The reality I hear in stories of my women clients, the reality I perceive, is that women are both strong and oppressed, and this is the reality which is delimited. I do not know if this is because of the fear that speaking a dual reality in a monistic culture (Hekman, 1987) can only ever result in one of those realities being discounted, attacked, possibly destroyed, or because the risk is that dual reality might actually be accepted. The untellable aspect of the third story then, is not so much the threat posed by it's content, although that is a threat on it's own too, but more important however is the threat posed by the possibility that the untellable story co-exists with the untold, the dual reality that women are both oppressed and strong, no either/or to be entertained, no dichotomous choice to be forced here, and this is a situation with which binary logic cannot cope.

The untellable story when added to the other two stories then has the power, potentially, to deconstruct the whole system of binary logic and the language system which is structured upon that. Some feminists may argue that this would not be a bad thing, in that primary site of women's oppression in our culture is the language and the binary oppositions contained therein (Sellers, 1994). However, it is always a scary venture to propose doing away with something when one has no idea what might replace it. Both these sentiments, the desire to change and the fear of the unknown, are expressed in the writing of Helene Cixous, "Now it has become rather urgent to question this solidarity between logocentrism and phallogentrism...to threaten the stability of the masculine structure (the binary opposition) ...by conjuring up from femininity the reflections and hypotheses that are necessarily ruinous for the stronghold still in possession of authority" and "What would happen to logocentrism, to the great philosophical systems, to the order of the world in general if the rock upon which they founded this church should crumble? ...all the history, all the stories would be there to retell differently; the future would be incalculable; the historic forces would and will change hands and change body- another thought which is yet unthinkable-

will transform the functioning of all society” (Helene Cixous, cited in Sellers, 1994, p. 39-40).

By restricting the circulation of untellable story the women are refraining from putting patriarchal society and binary logic to the test, thereby protecting the system, while at the same time keeping alive the dual nature of their reality and keeping alive the possibility that one day this dual reality may be able to be safely spoken in society at large.

In summary then I am proposing that for every story as presented there is an untold story which could be seen as being in binary opposition to the story as presented, but which may not actually be so, and there also exists a third story, the untellable story, which may be in binary opposition to the other stories. I further propose that the untellable story may potentially pose a threat to both the teller and society at large, resulting in restricted circulation of that story.

In Chapter Five I identify and describe the 'story as presented', or the first story which spoke to me in my engagement with the text. The next story I identified, the 'untold story' is presented in Chapter Six and in Chapter Seven I complete the trilogy with my analysis of the 'untellable story' of the counsellor.

Chapter 5: The Story as Presented

My engagement with the text differs from my engagement with the counselling clients in my example in that the text was produced by a number of single sessions, and therefore the text, in that sense, using the counselling analogy, represents material gathered from the early stages of the counselling process. For this reason I believe that it is likely that the story as presented will dominate the text, although I would expect the untold story to be easily discernible as well, and perhaps that the untellable story might be present by implication only.

Identifying the story as presented, the first story to speak to me from the text, was a process which emerged as I moved to the next level of my engagement with the text. I was curious about the sense of inconsistency I had experienced on first reading, and the idea of more than one audience being addressed in the descriptions of the good counsellor, which I described in Chapter Four. Inconsistency was the name I gave to my experience as reader and I wondered about the experience of the narrator in this situation, and what might be an appropriate name to give to that experience. Did the counsellor experience any conflict with respect to the different facets of the good counsellor? The next question I asked of the text was then, was 'did the counsellor experience any conflict/contradictions with respect to the diverse characteristics of the good counsellor?'

My reading of the text was that the counsellor did not have that sense of inconsistency which I had experienced. I read the majority of the references to aspects of the good counsellor as being directed to the in-group audience, counsellor to counsellor, but some of the talk about the good counsellor, the references to professionalism in particular, were by my reading, directed at a different audience, that is, society at large. Recognising this feature of the counsellors talk enabled me to make sense of the difference from the counsellors point of view, not as an inconsistency, which was my experience as reader, but as a type of survival strategy, playing both sides to get by in the imperfect world, (a bit like a child whose parents have separated). I decided that this represented the first story, the story as presented and I called it the story of the counsellor as double agent.

I read the counsellor as double agent as having a belief in the desirability of training and qualifications and having a good theoretical background. The counsellor as double agent then goes on to gain experience and after attaining a certain level of experience to achieve a realisation that engagement and quality of relationship are more important than theoretical orientation or modality and that training and qualifications do not necessarily guarantee the presence of this quality of relating. The counsellor as double agent promotes the importance of relationship like a badge of experience, but does not let go of any status achieved through training and qualifications. The relationship badge is recognised by other counsellors and some clients, whereas the status of training and qualifications is recognised by society at large.

The story of the counsellor as double agent is able to be read by combining narrative fragments, by reading the narrative fragments about valuing aspects of professionalism, training, qualifications and supervision, together with narrative fragments about valuing relationship. Some of these narrative fragments are presented below. To identify narrative fragments about aspects of professionalism I re-engaged with the text by saying to the text 'talk to me about training and qualifications', and marking out those sections of the text which spoke to me in response.

Narrative fragments about valuing aspects of professionalism.

Extract One - lines 85f to 91f

- p I learnt an awful lot through supervision, it was a valuable tool for me, and then realised that, um, I could sort of do counselling as in you know motivational interviewing, and that kind of thing, but that I still didn't have anything to base a theory on to work at a deeper level, and I liked the kind of simple idea of TA, that you could relate it to people
- i mmm
- p so that was when I decided to do the training
- i yeah
- p and um, yeah, I, it really quite excites me you know

In this narrative fragment I read the counsellor as laying claim to the status associated with professionalism in three ways, firstly, by making reference to having supervision. In my experience counsellors who have supervision are very wary of counsellors who do not, assuming such counsellors to be amateurish and unsafe. Most counsellors these days do have independent clinical supervision and certainly all counsellors who belong to an ethical body, New Zealand Association of Counsellors for example, are required to have supervision in place in order to obtain and maintain membership. Not all counsellors have supervisors though, making this an easy criteria for counsellors to target when they want to distinguish themselves as being professional.

The second claim to professional status made in this extract is about working at a deeper level. Like the reference to supervision, I see this as being part of a process of distinguishing serious, proper counsellors from the not so professional or amateurish counsellors. My reading of counselling culture generally, as I experience it in my work, is that there is a thread of psychoanalytical romanticism which runs through it, a narrative which assumes a hidden interior to the psyche. According to Misra (1993) God is only one who can see into the depths of the romantic psyche, and I think that this positions those who try to, i.e. psychoanalytical therapists, or counsellors working in this style, as seeking to be god-like, and the deeper one can read into the psyche of others the more god like one becomes.

The third claim to professional status made in this extract is in the reference to training and the naming of a modality. In my experience counsellors who have completed a recognised tertiary qualification, name that qualification as their training and do not necessarily unpack what that training involved. Counsellors who have received training which did not or has not yet produced an identifiable qualification tend to describe what that the training was, the modalities, what they learnt, as opposed to the name it was given when it was all over. Extract One refers to training as learning rather than training as qualification.

Extract One ends with the counsellor describing another of the qualities of the good counsellor, that is, that she enjoys the learning. To take pleasure in learning is not part of

being a professional and I read this reference as being an acknowledgement that in the talk around professional issues the counsellor had in a sense moved away from the counsellor to counsellor interaction, and she has now returned, she is back. I see this as part of the 'keeping two balls in the air' performance of the counsellor as double agent.

Extract Two continues the theme of training as learning, naming modalities rather than qualifications.

Extract Two - lines 74a to 101a

- p well, um, in the beginning Carl Rogers was quite in, and also the idea that if you were Rogerian you would do less harm
- i yeah
- p and so, um, that seemed quite a comforting way
- i mmm
- p to proceed, and um, there were other names like Carkhuff and Hailey and then there were people who wrote paper backs like Fritz Perls and um the man whose name has escaped me, but he did the TA origins
- i Eric Berne?
- p yeah, that's it, um there were those sorts of ideas floating in but very much the Rogerian reflecting, mirroring, respectful, um can't think of the word exactly but there was respectful listening and unconditional regard for the client
- i mmm
- p yes
- i I think they called it client centred, did they?
- p yes, yes they did, thank you, it was client centered
- i it was about following and being with?
- p yes
- i following and being with
- p yes, which even now is not a bad starting point
- i yes
- p well I mean its not a bad finishing point too, but I mean if you are not able to be there then I don't know where you can be
- i yeah, mmm
- p I don't know where you can be
- i mmm
- p so I look back fondly on that original
- i mmm
- p on that basic training, it was, it was very good and I have come to appreciate it even more as times gone on

In this extract the counsellor begins by naming authors who were associated with particular modalities in her training, (training as name dropping), and then goes on to describe the learning.

This extract ends with an interesting statement where the counsellor both values and devalues the training she has described. The training was “basic” and the sort one would “look back fondly on” and she has “come to appreciate it even more” meaning she did not always appreciate it so much. I read this as being an acknowledgement of the different status given to training as learning, as opposed to training as qualifications. The training as learning cannot simply be valued, because it has lower status, therefore it must be valued and devalued at the same time. The next two extracts illustrate the training as qualifications aspect of professionalism.

Extract Three - lines 42g to 48g

- p and it was actually a safe place to get counselling, because we were all well trained, we all went to, um, well that's assuming the university courses were any good
- i mmm
- p but I think on the whole they were, and we all had to go through Massey or Canterbury or Waikato or Auckland, we were committed, we had to do it, if we wanted to work in the department
- i mmm
- p and so um, it was an opportunity, I mean, I felt it was great

In Extract Three client safety is presented as being a product of tertiary training. This extract contains a reference to university courses and four universities are named, but there is no description of learning. The tertiary qualifications label is assumed to speak for itself and I read this as being an indication of the higher status given to tertiary qualifications.

The use of the phrase “*well that's if the university courses were any good*” in this extract is an interesting device which I read as giving the appearance of being open to debate the quality of such courses, but actually working to suppress any such debate. The debate is suppressed here because the only information given about the courses is that they were “*university*”, which is a high status descriptor, almost always used as a positive

endorsement. If the (apparent) invitation to debate the quality of the courses was genuine this possibility would need to have been supported by the use of at least one negative descriptor, as well as “*university*”, or alternatively, the use of other more neutral terms. Extract Three ends with the counsellor reinforcing the value of tertiary qualifications by inferring that they are not only better, safer, for the clients, but that it was good for her also, to do that training.

In Extract Four the counsellor is talking about her experience of getting a degree and unlike Extract Three she does unpack the qualification a little, talking about a specific type of learning which she believes needs to be included in counsellor training.

Extract Four - lines 103c to 119c

- p but I, I do believe in people having a level of qualification, whether it be for ACC or NZAC, I think there has to be some rigorous on going debate, about that, if they are going to lower
- i mmm
- p the criteria, for counsellors to be ACC accredited, or NZAC, I think there has to be a point at which people say, no, you have to achieve this level
- i mmm, yeah, mmm
- p and I guess I feel this way because I have worked really hard to get this, it didn't come easy
- i mmm
- p to get where I am, I didn't find it an easy process, it's taken me a long time, it's taken many, many years
- i mmm
- p so I guess I hold true to that, really, and I believe that, um, counselling shouldn't be just a, eight month certificated, um, um, I am not meaning to be disrespectful or anything, but I just think that it needs to be something quite rigorous where you are put through some personal, have to do some personal work
- i mmm
- p and you have to do lots of things before you can say 'yes, I am a counsellor'

In Extract Four the counsellor goes through a process of boundary setting, or cutting off, delineating, about who should be allowed into the in-group of proper counsellors. In the first instance the counsellor uses NZAC and ACC criteria to represent the boundary and the counsellor expresses concern about the criteria being lowered. The second line which is

drawn is about duration of tertiary training, the training should take years and not just be an “eight month certificated”. The last criteria presented for sorting out the properly trained from the less properly trained is the requirement to do “personal work”.

The reference to personal work in Extract Four and the final statement about having to do “lots of things” in order to be able to call yourself a counsellor I read as a return to the counsellor to counsellor interaction, as in Extract One. I read this ‘returning’ as a form of acknowledging the ‘otherness’ of the talk about professionalism. It’s as if the counsellor were saying, ‘I have been away but now I am back’. Another way of describing this would be to say that on issues of training, society at large is addressed first, and then the in-group. I see this ordering as reflecting the relationship which is experienced by the counsellor as having the greater power, in this issue, and it is definitely the relationship to society at large.

The four narrative fragments about valuing training and qualifications, demonstrate that there are a number of different reasons given for valuing training and qualifications. Interestingly, there were no narrative fragments referring to training and qualifications being of value because they enabled one to more easily obtain NZAC membership, or ACC or Family Court accreditation, or because they enabled a counsellor to get more clients or make more money.

I do think that these reasons exist, in the culture that I sampled, and I wonder if, in this instance, the silence of the text on these reasons was a demonstration of some resistance to the power that the relationship to society at large has on this issue (Foucault, 1995). Another possible explanation is that the counsellors are resisting but also colluding with training institutions and regulatory authorities in promoting a particular interpretation of what it is that training and qualifications have to offer. Although there are a couple of references to benefits to the counsellor from training, mostly I read these extracts as inferring that it is the clients who benefit from counsellor training. There is a missing dialogue here about benefits to the counsellor.

There is also a missing dialogue about the benefits to training institutions and regulatory authorities themselves. There is one reference in the text to the benefits to training institutions, in that they make their living by selling training provision, so would most naturally consider that all counsellors should buy some. However, there is not one single reference to the benefits to regulatory authorities, representing the state, and from a Foucauldian perspective, this could be an indication of where power is being exercised from, that is, from the direction of the silence. According to Foucault (1995) the dominant discourses mask the operations of power rather than describe them. It seems to me that regulatory authorities, training institutions and counsellors also to a lesser extent, are all colluding in promoting training and qualifications as being necessary for client safety. I am well aware from my own experience of working as a counsellor that the use of the client safety discourse renders counsellors quite powerless to resist whatever requirements are attached to 'client safety'. One can't argue with 'safety'. It seems to me that the power operations masked by the client safety discourse are those whereby regulatory authorities exercise power, in this instance through layers of agents, the training institutions and counsellors. According to Rose (1989) the object of disciplinary operations of this type is the individual members of the society. This analysis positions counsellors as intermediary in the exercise of disciplinary power, the powerlessness of counsellors being a necessary part of controlling their service delivery, in order to control the individual members of society.

I consider the analysis of Rose (1989) to paint a rather depressing picture of the role that the 'gaze of the psychologist' plays in the disciplinary society. I do not like to think of members of my profession being part of the systems of control of individuals which Rose (1989) describes. However, I acknowledge that the extracts relating to training and qualifications do reflect some homage being given, some obedience being shown to the authority of training and qualifications, and I read this as being evidence of the operations of the client safety discourse, that discourse which has the power to make counsellors afraid, and therefore obedient.

At this point, as analyst, I am ready to begin addressing the other side of the counsellor as double agent, and I also experience myself, as a counsellor, feeling a real need to do this. It is as if what has been told of the story so far is a picture of an unsustainable process, that, this much of the story, alone, does not explain why people work in the profession, not only work in it, but stay in it and feel committed and passionate about their work. The thought occurs to me, and it is not a particularly welcome one, that the culture of valuing relationship above all else may be a successful device of resistance which repositions counsellors outside the disciplinary operations described by Rose (1989), and/or it also might be a self soothing device which counsellors use to enable them to do the work despite being a pawn in the power games of the disciplinary society.

Narrative fragments valuing relationship.

Extract Five begins with an illustration of valuing the human qualities of the counsellor by reference to the learning which occurs outside training.

Extract Five - lines 176a to 205a

- p and that's really what got me there in the first place, was finding my own inadequacy in that way
- i mmm
- p and wanting to develop that ability to do that, um, also not just the counselling, but I thought it was a quality that as humans
- i mmm
- p that was desirable
- i mmm
- p so it wasn't just to do with that, it was to do with my whole being, and who I wanted to be, really, so
- i did you learn that thing from the training you were given or from the experience of doing the work?
- p I think it was the experience of doing the work
- i mmm
- p if you were supported

Here the counsellor refers to learning to be a better human, with her "whole being" and about this learning coming from doing the work rather than her training, inferring a process of maturation with experience. Extract Four ends with the counsellor referring to another

aspect of relationship in counselling, not the relationship between counsellor and client but the relationship between counsellor and employer, or supervisor or peers. I read the counsellor here as saying that just like clients, counsellors need the right sort of relationship environment in order to be able to learn and change.

In the next section of Extract Five the counsellor goes on to describe one way in which her training did contribute to her learning and this is a type of learning I'm assuming was unintentional on the part of the trainer, a learning which came from her own experience of and analysis of the relationship between trainer and trainee.

- p I, I think it was both, I think it was about being allowed to have the experience and also being alongside, like in training, people who had an idea about what it was about and modelled those, um, those qualities, and um, um, it's interesting because over all the training people that I have ever come across there are people who have been positive models and there are people who have been negative models
- i mmm
- p I mean, it's interesting because sometimes you get, I think in the past, someone who can put across a theory, good, um, style or theory of ideas, and then you realise that it doesn't actually match up with their way of being
- i mmm?
- p in the session, and um, that's informative as well, it's just as informing in a way
- i so, someone in a sense has a theory or has a technique or something, but is,
- p is not congruent, yes
- i it doesn't fit with the process
- p mmm
- i gets in the way of engagement?
- p yeah
- i mmm
- p yes, actually and that is part of the learning as well

Extract Five introduces the idea of the importance of relationship, and makes reference to ways in which relationship can fail, within the context of the counsellors relationships with trainers. The rest of the extracts in this section bring that relationship focus to the client counsellor interaction. Extract Six refers to the counsellor learning about the importance of the person in the counsellor and also the idea of maturation.

Extract Six – lines b143 to b153

- p ooh, (laughs) the things I thought I needed to learn, in the beginning I didn't know what I needed to learn
- i mm
- p I just got into it
- i mm
- p I started to realise that it was about being authentic
- i mmm
- p about knowing who you are, so as I developed the counsellor me so I developed as a person, it was a kind of parallel learning
- i mmm
- p I'm not sure that I have arrived, but (laughs) its much more, um its a much better space

In Extract Six the counsellor makes a very clear statement about the importance of relationship and also refers to the process of maturation referred to in previous extracts. In Extract Two the counsellor talked about the humanist approaches of authors like Carl Rogers. In this extract I read the counsellor as 'doing' the humanist approach, rather than talking about it, by the value being placed on being authentic. Being authentic or congruent in the humanist tradition was something which people were able to do as a result of successfully 'working at deeper levels' with themselves. Although being authentic is about possessing a quality of relating, it is also a statement about status. The status associated with being authentic is about recognition of ones own personal growth, which is a different type of status from the psychodynamic status associated with being able to read the depths of another's psyche.

Extract Seven also refers to the importance of relationship and the process of maturation.

Extract Seven - lines 239g to 255g

- p well I think creating a relationship is the primary, creating a good trusting, relationship, it can't be an equal relationship
- i mmm
- p because they are coming to you, so building up confidence and I found that um (interruption by someone coming into the room)
- p um, so I think when I started I felt much more anxious about um, not using, you know theoretical stuff and I, after the person had gone I would think, oh god, I should have done this or I should have done that, I think as I got more experienced, this was in my private practise

- i mmm
- p I actually worried about it less and less, um, I think I grew to learn that it actually didn't matter what intervention you used
- i mmm
- p as long as you had a good solid
- i mmm
- p had a good relationship with your client, and, to be sensitive to the fact that they needed to talk and that keeping them on track about what they needed to talk about that, was the most important thing

In Extract Seven the counsellor while valuing relationship also makes reference to intervention, the application of a particular theoretical model. The counsellor here suggesting that prior to her 'maturation' as a counsellor she had valued modality more but now sees it as being of secondary importance.

In Extract Eight continues the theme of ranking relationship with respect to modality.

Extract Eight – lines 421d to 427d

- i do you think relationship, like where would you put relationship?
in terms of all the different things that are important for counselling
to work, if you were going to rank it in priority?
- p the relationship between counsellor and client?
- i yes
- p I would probably put it, above any theory
- i right?
- p you know, I think, I would probably put that as the most important thing
between a client and a counsellor.

In Extract Eight the counsellor is saying that not only relationship is important but that it is “the most important thing between a client and a counsellor”, “above any theory”.

Extract Nine takes this progression a step further suggesting that relationship as an alternative to theory, rather than an adjunct.

Extract Nine – lines g272 to g279

- p but I know, that if you built a relationship with your client, a good relationship,
a good trusting relationship, where they felt safe, and you felt, safe
- i mmm
- p and there was a bit of humour in it
- i mmm

p a bit of lightness, um that it seemed to work better than all the theoretical stuff in the world

I read “theoretical stuff” here as being equivalent to modality, being part of the non relationship aspect of the client counsellor interaction. I read reference to intervention as having the same meaning. In terms of the disciplinary system of power referred to by Rose (1989) I view theory, modality and intervention as, potentially, being devices for the exercise of power over the individual. However, I do not think that all modalities would lend themselves equally well to this purpose, and I’m thinking here of the relationship based modalities, for example Rogerian client centred counselling. I do not think that Rogerian client centred counselling would function as effectively as other modalities as a device for the control of individuals, because it is not based on a structural model of the psyche, but on relationship. That is not to say that the relationship between counsellor and client could not function as a device for the exercise of disciplinary power. In saying that theory, modality and intervention are more likely to be disciplinary devices I am aware that I am making an assumption about the nature of the relationship. The assumption I am making here is that the relationship is both respectful and empowering with respect to the client.

The next extracts continue the theme of the importance of relationship and also introduce the idea that not everyone recognises the importance of relationship the way counsellors do.

Extract Ten - lines 359d to 379d

i do you think that it is possible to have all the boxes ticked correctly and not be doing a good job?
 p absolutely (laughs)
 i (laughs)
 p absolutely
 i so, so, there is this part of counselling, that can’t be measured, um, or counted, that is important, if you haven’t got it, the jobs not done?
 p mmm
 i it’s almost like it’s invisible?
 p well, well, that’s right, well I spose, yeah it is kind of like it’s invisible and the only one actually that will know that it’s not invisible, is the client, and the counsellor

- i yeah
- p and I think a lot of that has to do with, has nothing to do with the actual process, I think it's the connection between
- i yeah
- p the counsellor and the client
- i yeah
- p and it's the relationship that I think changes the whole, um aspect of counselling
- i mmm, yeah so its about the relationship?
- p mmm
- i that's the bit that can't be counted?
- p yeah, no theres no tick box for that.

In Extract Ten the counsellor begins by placing relationship as being outside of the accountability process, as being not captured by the measurements of counsellors performed by regulatory authorities. The counsellor then goes on to describe the importance of the part played by relationship in counselling as being a sort of secret between client and counsellor, "its invisible and the only ones actually that will know that it's not invisible, is the client and the counsellor". Again at the end of the extract the counsellor describes relationship as being excluded from the accountability process "there's no tick box for that".

I read this extract as implicitly expressing a concern about 'the system' not acknowledging the value or even the existence of the relationship aspect of counselling. The counsellor refers to the 'invisibility' of the 'connection' which I read as saying that the connection is invisible to the system, but not the counsellor and the client. It seems to me that the counsellors concerns here could be referencing a number of different issues including the possibility of parallels to abuse, if invisibility is read as being the same as secrecy, and also the issue of conflict between psychodynamic and behavioural constructions of the self, if denial of relationship is read as being the same as denial of the intangible aspects of self or the inner person. If one reads denial of relationship in this way then there are other issues which arise to do with the consequences for the counsellor of the selective and strategic use of behaviouristic constructions.

But firstly to look at the issue of possible parallels to abuse, if invisibility is read as meaning the same as secrecy. As a sexual abuse counsellor I tend to regard 'secrecy' as a possible indication of abuse, that is to say, I am very suspicious of secrets. What abuse scenarios could be constructed around the process of counselling? I read Extract Ten as saying that according to the system 'the connection' is the thing which is not supposed to happen, therefore could 'the connection' be the abuse? If connection was frowned upon, and counsellors were constructed as coercing or manipulating clients into connecting, or 'grooming' them into accepting connection in the absence of explicit consent, then there are clear parallels to sexual abuse in that construction. In this scenario the client is constructed as the victim, the counsellor the abuser and the system 'the others' who do not know.

Reflecting on why the system would deem that connection was not supposed to happen suggests other scenarios. If the connection is not supposed to happen because the system wanted to prevent horizontal communication, i.e. communication which excludes the hierarchy, then the system would be the abuser, attempting to isolate and disempower both clients and counsellors. In this scenario, connection is possibly secret because it is outlawed, a subversive activity by persons seeking to resist hierarchical power and control. Another scenario could be that connection is not supposed to happen because the system needs to construct counselling as a behaviourist enterprise. The 'abuse' in this instance could be construed as the 'killing' of the inner person.

This brings me to the issues around use of behaviouristic and psychoanalytical constructions, which arise if denial of relationship is read as denial of the inner person. I have elsewhere referred to the humanist/psychoanalytical basis to much of the training described by the counsellor. There are important differences between the humanist and psychoanalytical positions but they both construct the self as having inner depth, a deeper level, which, at least partially, determines behaviour. The self constructed by behaviourism, the Skinnerian self (Le Francois, 1995), has no inner person, has only behaviour, and that behaviour is governed entirely by factors outside the person. Given that the counsellors training had a strong humanist/psychodynamic flavour, and also given that 'the system' is more powerful than the counsellor, I believe that denial, by the system, of the existence of

inner depths in the client or the counsellor could be experienced by the counsellor not simply as a failure in recognition, or a misreading, but an attempt to kill the heart and soul of counselling as the counsellor knows it. However abusive this may seem, there is another construction to be read here which positions this power taking as being a small part of a larger power play.

It seems to me that there is another layer of analysis to be made here if one considers that 'the system' seems to pick and choose where it applies behaviouristic perspective. In my experience the system does maintain a belief in the inner person when it comes to attributing cause to the client problems, that is to say it seems to me that the system constructs clients as being the cause of their own problems. This would be consistent with, for instance, ACC now requiring that counsellors diagnose their clients using DSM IV diagnostic categories. Diagnosis is about what is happening inside the client and the problem is located within the client. This construction is consistent with the humanist/psychoanalytical self. However when it comes to the solution to the problem, the 'cure', I read the system as constructing the client as a Skinnerian self to the extent that the cause of the cure is located external to the client, that is, it is something that is done to the client, by the counsellor. According to this analysis the client is the cause of the problem, the counsellor is the cause of the cure, and the system (society, culture) has no causative role in either process. This construction leaves the counsellor solely responsible for bringing about change in the client, left holding the baby as it were, while the system/society/culture is not responsible for anything.

I believe it is this type of analysis which is underlying the counsellors concerns about the way in which the system constructs the counselling process. In this scenario the counsellor is set up to take the blame for problems which aren't cured, or aren't cured quickly enough. The counsellor is also set up to be responsible for fixing problems 'within the client' which may not actually be located within the client, but within the system. By constructing itself as playing no part in the problems of the individual, the system sets the counsellor up to do the impossible. This is another type of abuse scenario where the system is the abuser, the counsellor is the primary victim and the client is the secondary victim.

In Extract Eleven the counsellor focuses on one particular form of accountability, the information NZAC requires from counsellors each year in order to ascertain whether or not they are maintaining the criteria for membership.

Extract Eleven - lines 283b to 293b

- p and I really wonder where we fill in those green forms every year, saying to NZAC what we have been doing for training and supervision, I, I believe that nobody ever looks at those, and I don't think that they can possibly give any idea of what my work is like, simply by filling out that form once a year
- i mmm
- p and I think it's a waste of time
- i mmm
- p I think its just a matter of going through the motions, and doing the paperwork and being able to refer to it if something goes horribly wrong
- i mmm
- i you say that NZAC doesn't actually know how you work?
- p mm.

As in Extract Ten, I read the counsellor in Extract Eleven referring to the impossibility of tick box accountability, of the quantitative paperwork representation of the counsellor being able to accurately or holistically reflect what really goes on in the counselling room. I also read in this extract some cynicism, directed at those who collect paperwork representations of counsellors, NZAC in this instance, implying the NZAC is probably aware of the inadequacy of this type of accountability, but does not care, and is simply "going through the motions" to cover its own back in case "something goes horribly wrong". In Extract Twelve the counsellor is similarly cynical about accountability.

Extract Twelve – lines 280a to 295a

- p and so one of my favourite topics for mulling over at the moment is everything, we've got manuals this big, and we've got forms, we've got just so much to attend to
- i mmm
- p because we are all accountable
- i mmm
- p whereas we come from a tradition where we have to be responsible, so I could actually do my job without filling in the form and I would not be worried, because I am a responsible person, but nowadays, we don't have any responsibility, provided we are accountable

- i right
 p can you see the distinction?
 i yes, its almost like the paper game has taken over from morality?
 p yes, yes
 i and if you play the paper game correctly
 p yes
 i its possible you could be viewed as being, as
 p you could be anything.

In Extract Twelve the counsellor positions accountability as being a substitute for responsibility, and I think that this suggestion opens up a really interesting dialogue here. The counsellor describes responsibility as being a function of individuals and accountability as being a function of the system, of society, a distinction which could easily be deconstructed if one considered how individuals come to be responsible. Foucault (1995) gives a clear account of how the society, the disciplinary society comes to be present within the responsible individual. I read the counsellor here as saying that society does not trust its presence within the responsible individual, but I think it more likely that society simply does not see itself as being present in the responsible individual. This interpretation makes sense in terms of the analysis provided by Foucault (1995) and Rose (1989), who both see the exercise of disciplinary power as being masked by the dominant discourses of the society, and the dominant discourse which masks the presence of society within the responsible individual as being the discourse of individuality. I read the development of current forms of accountability as arising from a situation where society, not seeing how it is already present, in the responsible individual, seeks to make itself present again, in accountability. Because we are all, to a greater or lesser extent, embedded in the dominant discourses, we resent accountability in a way that we did not resent responsibility. It is as if the disciplinary society has become the victim of its own dominant discourse, fooled by its own mask, and is therefore misinterpreting, misidentifying responsibility. The new process, accountability, does not hide its operations behind the mask of the individuality discourse, it is a much more naked exercise of power than responsibility. I read the power of the panoptic observer (Foucault, 1995) here being replaced, or supplemented by a much more crude mechanistic form of control, one which does not so elegantly allow us the comforting construction of our own individuality.

Foucault (1995) talks about the rise of disciplinary power, the control of bodies by controlling minds, and how this type of power came to replace the more direct, hands on type of power exercised in earlier times, sovereign power, the control by direct action upon the body. It occurs to me that either sovereign power never was replaced, but has always existed alongside disciplinary power, and/or that it was largely replaced in Western society, but is now making a comeback. If one extends the analysis which Foucault (1995) makes of the relationship between state and individual, to the relationship between different countries, then it seems quite clear to me that the United States is currently exercising sovereign power in its relations with those countries it has constructed as being a threat, for whatever reason.

I think that it is possible that both these forms of power have been operating in our society, but that in our binary way of thinking about things, these two have been positioned as opposites, and where the presence of one is discerned, then the absence of the other is inferred. It is easy to find examples of the operation of disciplinary power and I believe that the presence of examples of disciplinary power has prevented us from recognising the sovereign power which has simultaneously also been a feature of our society.

Extract Twelve ends with the counsellor highlighting one way in which she sees accountability failing, in that it is simply a game, and has no power to reveal anything meaningful about what the counsellor may actually be like, "*you could be anything*". I leave the last word in this section to Extract Thirteen, which I don't think needs any explanation or interpretation.

Extract Thirteen - lines 507d to 509d

p I think so, I think that we tend to, um, to go along with all the crap
 i mmm
 p um, but basically we do our own thing

In summary then, the story as presented which I have called the story of the counsellor as double agent, is a story about a counsellor who plays both sides, a counsellor who

acknowledges that relationship is the cornerstone of the work and who values training, while at the same time, acknowledging that training may actually be irrelevant to the success of the work, and also a counsellor who complains about tick box accountability, and does not believe that it achieves any good purpose, but does it anyway.

In my descriptions of the counsellor as double agent I have made reference to the analysis of Rose (1989) which positions psychologists as operating in collusion with the disciplinary power of the state. I have also questioned whether, if this analysis of the role played by psychologists is valid, then might not the same analysis apply equally validly to counsellors. I think that this is an important question but I shall not attempt to answer it just yet, because I believe that the other two stories about being a counsellor, the untold story and the untellable story also contain important information about the relationship between counsellors and society.

Chapter Six: The untold story.

After identifying the story as presented, I re-engaged with the text looking for what might constitute the next layer of narrative within the framework of my reading. As previously, I did this by asking a question of the text. My reading of the extracts in Chapter Five had suggested to me that quality of relationship was something which the counsellor had indicated was crucial to the work but there seemed to be very little talk about the community at large valuing this aspect of counselling. The question I asked of the text then was 'who supports the relationship aspect of the work of the counsellor?'

Unlike my previous interrogation of the text, my reading this time did not produce a large number of responses. Most of the talk on this issue centred around the lack of support for this aspect of counselling. Other counsellors and also clients were seen as being supportive of this aspect of counselling, but society at large was seen as either not knowing or not wanting to know:

"I just think there is a pretty funny sort of view out there as to what we do" (line b197)

"I don't feel very positive about the community being able to respond, um agencies being able to respond positively to what counsellors have to offer" (line b220)

"I don't think that they (NZAC) can possibly have any idea about what my work is like" (line b284)

"the only people who know are me and my clients, and, my peers might have a bit of an idea" (line b295).

My reading (in response to the question of support for the importance of relationship) was that the nature of the counsellor had now changed. This counsellor sounded a bit like a lone voice, unsupported and speaking from a position outside the mainstream. I read this counsellor as working alone to try and keep alive something which was important and which might die without her efforts, as illustrated by the Extract Fourteen.

Extract Fourteen - lines 505c to 513c

- p so its really important, that aspect of relationship
 i do you think that that aspect of the work is generally acknowledged or valued?
 p no, I don't, and that, um is significant in terms of things like ACC giving us those reports
 i mmm
 i do you think that that aspect of the work is at risk? In the profession as it moves on, past you and I to new counsellors and younger ones coming on?
 p do I think its
 i at risk, that aspect of the work of being lost or devalued?
 p well I certainly think it is

The object 'counsellor' now appeared to me to be constructed differently. Whereas the counsellor in the story as presented, (the counsellor as double agent) had seemed like a winner, successfully working within the imperfect system, the counsellor I read now seemed more embattled, almost under siege. In producing my second reading of the nature of the counsellor I had found my second story, the untold story, which I decided to call the story of the unsupported counsellor, a story about lack of support, isolation and vulnerability. This story is being told in relation to the counsellors beliefs about the importance of relationship to the counselling process.

While the story of the counsellor as double agent was characterised by some pragmatism and cynicism but also some optimism, I read the untold story as being characterised by quite a desolate pessimism. I found it interesting that this is the opposite way around to my client example. The clients in my example presented first with their vulnerability, and then their strength, whereas the counsellors presented first with their strength, being able to play both sides, protecting the counselling process and the client from being impinged upon by tick box accountability. Maybe this is saying something about the way clients and counsellors are positioned in society generally, that clients are supposed to have something wrong with them, and they present as such, and counsellors are supposed to be able to cope with anything, to be strong and protective, and they present as such, but, both clients and counsellors have other realities, in which they experience themselves differently.

Clients get to explore other subject positions available to them through counselling, but where do counsellors get to explore the ways in which they are differently positioned? It seems to me that there are several types of asymmetry between counsellor and client, the power difference being the one usually acknowledged, "*it can't be an equal relationship...because they are coming to you*" (line g239). There is another asymmetry which I see as being corollary to the power imbalance, and that is to do with multiplicity of selves arising from experiencing oneself as being differently positioned. It seems to me that the central narrative of counselling process is that the client will come to experience themselves differently, while the counsellor will remain the same. It seems to me that 'needing to stay the same' puts counsellors at a disadvantage as far as being able to acknowledge their untold and their untellable tales. This adds another dimension to the vulnerability of the counsellor, in that she is not allowed to be vulnerable, she must stay within the story as presented, or at least her freedom to move in this way, is constrained, by comparison with the client.

So this is the untold story, the story of the counsellor's vulnerability, and in this instance I read it as being a story about being isolated and unsupported, with respect to the counsellors beliefs about the importance of relationship to the counselling process. Further narrative fragments which refer to this story are reproduced below.

Extract Fifteen - lines 186b to 200b

- i mm, so you think that this view of counselling that we have been talking about, which I share, do you think, and I'm assuming quite a lot of counsellors would share, so you think that this view of is shared by agencies, employers or um, registration boards or funding authorities, that kind of thing?
- p ok, um, I don't think so
- i you don't think so?
- p I don't think there is any evidence to back up that kind of thinking
- i for them?
- p yes
- i what sort of evidence? do you think that they have a different idea about how counsellors work?
- p I don't know what people think, well part from back to what I said earlier about how my family responded to my being a counsellor, I just think there's a pretty funny sort of view out there as to what we do, and I think that people who've actually encountered someone like me, as their counsellor have gone away

probably quite sure in their own mind as to what it's all about, but some how it hasn't filtered through

In Extract Fifteen the counsellor indicates that she does not think that employers of counsellors or regulatory authorities view counselling as being a process which is primarily relationship based, "*I don't think that there is any evidence to back up that sort of thinking (for them)*". I read this as being quite a definite statement. However when questioned about what sort of thinking they might have, the counsellor becomes much less definite in her account. I find it interesting that after the initial statement that there is "*no evidence*" that employers and regulatory authorities think the same as counsellors on this issue, the counsellor seems to back off from any confrontation with employers and regulatory authorities and instead talks about "*people*" generally, and becomes a lot more vague, "*I don't know what people think*".

The change from "*I don't think that there is any evidence*" to "*I don't know what people think*" is quite dramatic. I read this passage as if the use of the word "*evidence*" has triggered a type of epistemological turnaround for the counsellor, a switch to a different mode of knowing, where she is no longer feels competent to know, for fear that she will be challenged to prove what she is saying, as if she was on trial. This extract suggests to me that the counsellor has, in a sense been gagged, or experiences a sense of powerlessness, or intimidation, when getting down to specifics about the behaviour of employers of regulatory authorities.

One of the changes I noticed in recent years since counselling employers have entered the commercial marketplace, was the inclusion of clauses about 'commercially sensitive information' in the employment contracts I had. The wording of these clauses was sometimes quite punitive and threatening in terms of what could happen to a counsellor who did anything which negatively impacted of their employer's ability to compete commercially. The effect of this for me was that any criticisms of my employer were only ever voiced to a very limited audience, and I have a sense that something of the same effect is operating for the counsellor in Extract Fifteen.

The extract ends with the counsellor suggesting that the only way people can learn about what counselling is really like is to be part of the process, as client. In the absence of the ability to challenge employers and regulatory authorities the only option left to the counsellor, as a process of communicating with society at large, is word of mouth descriptions from clients, and the idea that that might be effective, seems a rather forlorn hope "*it hasn't filtered through*".

Another interpretation suggested to me by my reading of this extract is that possibly the only arena where counsellors do have power and can have certainty about things, is the confidential one to one relationship in the counselling room, and that outside that arena, counsellors are not allowed to 'know'. I wonder if there are implications of the way counselling is constructed around confidentiality which work to limit the power of counsellors to speak what they know, in other arenas. It occurs to me that this could be due to a lack of separation between what counsellors know of their clients, that is the content of sessions, and what counsellors know of the nature of relationships generally, that is, the generalised lessons about the nature of humankind which we are provided with courtesy of experiencing counselling relationships with our clients. I also wonder if there is something in the way counselling and counsellors are constructed within society which acts to protect the non client population from the analytical attention of counsellors, in that we are allowed to have certain skills, on the condition that we only practise them on those whom society has constructed as dysfunctional, and therefore of no importance.

In Extract Sixteen the focus is on training institutions.

Extract Sixteen – lines 305a to 319a

- i you seem to be expressing some anxieties, which I can identify with, about um, what people think counselling is, or what people think you need to do in order to become a counsellor
- p yes
- i and people, because, training is a, is a business
- p mm
- i and the trainers are paid and make money out of it, they make a profit, um the the assessment that was in place for instance when you got into Marriage Guidance or got licensed or whatever, and passed those final things, isn't there, because training institutions aren't going to say, I don't think you would be a

- good counsellor, go away, we don't want your money?
- p that's right, and then, um, having fulfilled the course, well we have seen you up close and you are just useless and fail them
- i mmm
- p because they have to have a good pass out, um they have to have good numbers there too, so I mean it's not as if there is, I mean, if you do your assignments, you get there, so I don't know that the answer is

In Extract Sixteen the counsellor talks about the commercial aspects of the way training is provided today, the main points of concern being the lack of pre-training selection and the lack of post-training assessment. The counsellor considers that training institutions would not say to trainees, "*we have seen you up close and you are just useless and fail them*". This problem is considered to arise because "*they have to have a good pass out rate*", "*they have to have good numbers*". The counsellor in Extract Sixteen focuses on the financial implications of training institutions attempting to assess the quality of engagement. The counsellor suggests that the financial implications of not having a high enough pass out rate may inhibit training institutions from getting serious about assessment of the intangible qualities of counsellors.

When I consider my own experience of the process of counsellor training it occurs to me that there could be another type of financial disincentive operating here. When I was trained, within the agency now known as Relationship Services, it seems to me that the agency had gone about as far as it could in the direction of removing the guesswork from the post training assessment. I was required to produce videos of myself counselling, and these were assessed by a panel of experienced practitioners against over a hundred different criteria, most of which were descriptions of aspects of the relationship between counsellor and client. The viewing and re-viewing of the videos and subsequent closed session discussions between the panel and interviewing of the counsellor took hours. The panel had to be experienced practitioners who did not know me, and they were flown in from other parts of the country. Taking travel time into account, it could easily take a whole day to assess one counsellor. In those days the assessors had their expenses paid but gave their time voluntarily. Nowadays of course they would have to be paid for their time. It occurs to me that assessing the quality of relationship may be hard, but not impossibly so, but that to do it well, could be a very expensive exercise.

Another difference between the training environment I experienced and the one the participant counsellor is expressing concern about is that the training I received from that agency was provided to me free of charge, in a situation where the agency invested in me. I made no financial investment in that training and it occurs to me that this left the agency in quite a strong position to pull the plug, if they saw the need, to say ‘no, you do not make the grade’, (‘he who pays the piper’, as they say). I also think that being the party who took the financial risk associated with investing training in particular trainees provided the agency with a strong motivation to be rigorous in their pre-training selection.

However, regardless of how effective that assessment was, or was not, I think it was an expensive process which was made possible by the use of a volunteer workforce, and I am certainly not advocating a return to volunteerism, and my reading of Extract Sixteen is that the participant counsellor is not either. There were problems with the old system just as there seem to be problems with the new, and there does not seem to be any obvious answer. This sense of the unresolved problem is reflected at the end of Extract Sixteen “*so I don't know what the answer is*”. Extract Seventeen continues the discussion of the problematic with respect to training, and the intangible aspects of counsellor performance.

Extract Sixteen - lines 511e to 518e

- i so, with the people who come through your course, presumably some of them will go on and do the longer course and end up being counsellors?
- p mmm, mm
- i do you think, that you are, um passing onto to them, um, the importance of the invisible aspect? in the sense that we have been talking about?
- p I don't think I tutor in it
- i it's not a topic?
- p no, it's not a topic.

In Extract Seventeen the counsellor (who is now counsellor/trainer) after acknowledging the importance of the intangible relationship aspects of counselling, then describes how it is not part of her job to actually teach these. I think that the question remains open, however, as to whether or not the invisible aspect might not be learned regardless, as part of the process of the learning, if not in the content of the coursework.

In Extract Eighteen the focus shifts to how the conventions of report writing could work to redefine the counselling process, the counsellor and the client.

- Extract Eighteen - lines 609d to 627d
- p and, and, I don't know, you will remember in Relationship Services when they had started doing that, and I guess they are still doing it, you know, you had six responses that you could write
- i yeah
- p you know, for Family Court, and things like that, and you weren't to write anything else
- i yeah
- p so, you know, it depersonalised the counsellor
- i mmm, yeah, I definitely got the impression towards the end there that they weren't interested in what they couldn't measure
- p yeah, that's right, and I think there will be a period like that
- i mmm
- p I think there probably is, right now, cos I'm thinking of the Family Court forms that are coming through now, they are very simplistic, you only tick boxes, or very, you know
- i mmm
- p there is none of the writing a report down for the client
- i mmm
- p there is no such thing like that in the report now.

In Extract Eighteen the counsellor is referring to a time when the agency she worked for introduced new rules about what was permissible in a Family Court Report. Under these new rules the counsellor was provided with a selection of six statements which could be used to construct the report and no other wording was allowed. Prior to this, counsellors had been able to describe their client's wishes freely in whatever language they deemed appropriate. My experience of that prior process was that it was a collaborative process, and while the report may have been written by the counsellor, it was co-authored by both counsellor and client. The participant counsellor describes the six statement process as depersonalising the counsellor. My reading of the process of depersonalisation referred to here is that this was a reductionist process whereby the counsellor was reduced to 'the person who chooses which of the six statements to use'. The counsellor describes how the reductionism has now progressed to where the counsellor has become 'the person who chooses which boxes to tick', and the client no longer seems to be part of the process,

"there is none of that writing a report down for the client". It seems to me that with the counsellor reduced to the person who ticks the boxes and the client removed from the equation, there is no relationship between counsellor and client in this scenario.

I read the reductionist form of reporting process described in Extract Eighteen as being a device which (re)positions the client as invisible and (re)positions the counsellor as being a type of semi automated respondent, in relationship with the Family Court.

This narrative fragment is one of the few to contain a hint of optimism about the culture change, indicating that it may not be a permanent thing. I read "there will be a period like that" as meaning there will also be a period when it will not be like that, almost like there is a cycle of change, and things will turn around again.

In Extract Nineteen the counsellor is reflecting on the collective unconscious process which may be operating within those agencies that are viewed as seeking to control counsellors.

- Extract Nineteen - 309c to 321c
- i and we got all these new forms of paperwork accountability, telling us basically what to do in the counselling room, and how to write reports, but they wanted the whole thing cut and dried and laid out on the table
- p sounds a bit like ACC (laughs)
- i (laughs)
- i it does a bit yeah, sometimes I think ACC is getting a bit that way
- p just gives me another insight into, into ACC, yeah like, cutting down to three sessions, and yeah, its exactly
- i mmm
- p and is that about you know their fear, feeling that they want to be involved, but they can't because they don't have the background and they don't understand the processes?
- i I think with ACC its all about money, rather than, I spose money is a form of power and control
- p it is
- i but with that other agency I thought it was simply a desire to eliminate the unknown, by controlling it, mmm
- p yeah

In this extract the counsellor uses psychoanalytical process to explain the controlling behaviour of an employer and a funding agency. The psychoanalytical narrative is introduced by the word "*insight*" which I read here as being used in the literal sense of being able to see into someone, or in this case, the culture of an institution, insight meaning sight into, being able to read beneath the surface, the 'godlike' skills of the psychoanalyst. I read this use of psychoanalytical process as being a form of (attempted) power taking, a way of the counsellor attempting to take power over those who are (constructed as) seeking to control counsellors. As the psychoanalytical narrative unfolds the (institutional) client is diagnosed as operating out of their fear, a fear which is derived from their ignorance, a fear of the unknown.

I have used the term (attempted) power taking here because, in my experience, this type of talk does not actually change anything, except for how the counsellor feels at that moment. In my experience this type of talk, (using psychoanalytical process to analyse the hypothetical institutional client) is restricted to in group conversation and I tend to regard it as a type of comforting device more than anything else. I read this type of talk as if the counsellor is saying 'yes we do have the power to understand what is going on, and we could theoretically use that power to do something, ...but....' and it never goes any further. So while this type of narrative can serve to comfort on one level, on another it also speaks of a sense of powerlessness. I see this powerlessness as being derived from cultural restrictions which exist about where and with whom 'insight' may be properly used by the counsellor.

As in my analysis of Extract Fifteen, I read this extract as being a reference to a limitation experienced by the counsellor as a consequence of the manner in which the 'proper' object of her attention is constructed. I read that object as existing within a power hierarchy which places employers and institutions above counsellors at the top of the hierarchy and places the proper object of counsellors' attentions as being less powerful than counsellors, at the bottom of the power hierarchy. This analysis positions counsellors in the same way as Rose (1989) sees psychologists being positioned, in that the psychoanalytical gaze, like the normalising gaze, is hierarchical and unidirectional and is directed downwards along the

social hierarchy. The untold story then would seem to confirm the analysis of Rose (1989) rather than offer any support for a narrative of resistance.

On the content level then, the untold story, the story of the unsupported counsellor is about a person working in a profession which is, and may always have been, misunderstood, by the general public. However, despite this, counsellors had in the past felt supported by employers, training institutions, and regulatory authorities, but all that has changed since the cultural changes which have swept the New Zealand political and social landscape over the last fifteen years or so. The effect of that cultural change has been in a sense to 'make official' the ignorance of the general public, in that the institutions who may have known in the past, about the importance of relationship in counselling, now do not want to know, leaving counsellors, stranded, without outside support for this most vital if least visible aspect of their work. My concern is that this situation is not sustainable for counsellors. Counsellors provide some support for each other within their local peer networks. The ethical bodies to which counsellors belong can also provide some support, but I have no confidence that this support is going to be enough to allow the survival of relationship based counselling.

Webb (1998) describes the challenges facing the counsellors struggling to defend their profession from the debilitating effects of New Right thinking, and also the ways in which she regards NZAC as supporting counsellors in this struggle. I am aware that currently NZAC is making a concerted effort to have the scopes of practise for counsellors under the Health Practitioners Bill widened to include ways of working with clients which are not part of the biomedical model, that is, ways of working which give priority to relationship. Webb (1989) seeks to distinguish counselling, being a process which facilitates change through relationship, from the more medical approaches, "which tend to privilege technique rather than connection" (Webb, 1998, page 69). It seems to me that in the five years since that paper was written, counselling has lost ground in terms of differentiating itself from the biomedical model, and our profession is at risk more than ever of a takeover by the army of professional administrators who have made disease their business. I do not think that

counselling will disappear, but my concern is that it may become unrecognisable and uninhabitable to today's practitioners, and it is the clients who will lose.

On another level, the story of the unsupported counsellor is the story of a worker who is constructed as having certain skills and abilities but who may only use those with persons who are constructed as less powerful than she is. Consequently that worker is powerless to use her skills and abilities to help her resist (re)constructions of her job description being undertaken by entities positioned as being more powerful than she is. In this sense the counsellor is unsupported by a culture which constructs her domain as being essentially domestic rather than political.

I feel the need to qualify that last statement because I do not want to imply that the counsellor has no awareness of the ways in which the political constructs the personal. In constructing my explanation of how I read the difference between domestic and political here, I draw on my own experience of counselling process. Over the years I have developed my own generalised model/construction of the change process which happens in counselling, and I think that this model provides an illustration of the way counsellors are positioned. The three main elements of that model are the micro-cultural relationships network, the internal relationships network, both of which are embedded in the third element which is the macro-cultural environment.

I use the term micro-cultural relationships network to refer to all significant relationships in the here and now which may include partner, children, extended family, friends, neighbours and workplace relationships. The client experiences themselves differently at different places within the micro-cultural relationship network, as they are differently constructed and positioned within those relationships.

I use the term internal relationships network to refer to significant relationships of the past which have been internalised, principally relationships of childhood, and I regard the client as being positioned in different ways at different times within the internal network, in the same way as in the micro-cultural network. The construction of an internal network of

relationships as having some control over how persons experience themselves is one of the basic assumptions of the psychoanalytical perspective. Flax (1990) has described this aspect of the psychoanalytical perspective as being social constructionist because the internal environment, like the micro-cultural environment is subject to change, making the self inherently unstable as it is constantly being re(constructed) within the changing relationships of both networks.

I view the internal relationships network and the micro-cultural network as being embedded in and impacted upon by the macro-cultural environment, otherwise known as the 'bigger picture' or society at large.

In this model the counsellor client relationship is a temporary phenomena which, while also being embedded in the macro-cultural environment, facilitates (improved) access for the client to the dynamic interaction between the internal network and the micro-cultural network.

As I see it this interaction represents the arena of the counsellor's work, the domain in which insight can properly be used to facilitate change. The point I am trying to make here is that regardless of how much analysis of the macro-cultural influences there may be in the processes which bring about change in the internal and/or micro-cultural networks, counsellors do not, as a rule, facilitate change for their clients by bringing about change in the macro-cultural environment. It is for this reason that I referred to the location of the counsellor's work as domestic rather than political. It is also for this reason that I regard counsellors as being unsupported by their own change process when it comes to attempting to resist macro-cultural influences that impact on their work.

Chapter Seven: The Untellable Story

In Chapter Six I began by looking at the lack of support within 'the system' for the importance of relationship in counselling. I concluded that the unsupported counsellor was unsupported, made vulnerable, in other ways in addition to this. Unlike the client who was encouraged to explore a range of possible aspects and experiences of self in the therapeutic relationship, the counsellor was constructed as needing to deny her vulnerability in relations with client. Also, the counsellor was constructed as needing to deny her wisdom and strength, and power to bring about change, in her relations with the system. This positioning had the effect of placing the counsellor in a power hierarchy between the system or the state, and the individuals of the society. It also had the effect of making the counsellor powerless to resist whatever changes the state sort to impose on her profession. As a result of making these conclusions I reluctantly found myself acknowledging was that counsellors were therefore positioned as intermediaries in the power operations between state and individual, consistent with the analysis provided by Rose (1989) in his descriptions of the disciplinary society (Foucault, 1995).

However, if counselling does not change society, but can change individuals, does that necessarily mean that counselling process consists solely of assisting individuals to achieve a better fit with what society expects of them, allows for them? This would be so, if and only if, 'society' was a single cohesive entity, and if disciplinary practices were the only type of control practise operating in that unitary society. From my own experiences in life, firstly as a hippie/counter culture/alternative life styler of the '70s, and currently as a feminist, I believe that it is possible to simultaneously live in two (or more) 'societies', each with their own norms, each with their own control practices. I reason then that is it possible that counselling does not necessarily cause clients to become more comfortable with themselves through conforming to the norms of the unitary society or the dominant culture. It is possible that sometimes counsellors cause their clients to feel more comfortable with themselves by providing them with access to another 'society', a subculture, where what was previously constructed as abnormal, is now constructed as normal. 'Feminist' culture and 'abuse survivor culture' are two examples of alternate 'societies' I could say that I use in

my counselling. Rather than normalising the individual by changing the behaviour, what this process does is normalise the behaviour by providing access to an alternative 'society' in which the behaviour is constructed as normal. This analysis describes counselling as a process which utilises disciplinary power practices and normative regimes, but from a deconstructionist perspective. While I have used the term alternative society, I am not proposing that any alternative society in this scenario would wholly replace whatever society was experienced as normative previously. I am also not suggesting that feminism or abuse survivor culture are whole societies or cultures. My own view is that feminism, like other alternative viewpoints is a partial society, or limited subculture, which has salience with respect to certain issues only.

Not all counselling issues can be appropriately responded to within the process I have described above. If a counselling client reported behaving in a way which was outside the norms of any of the subcultures I had access to, for example physical violence directed at self or others, then I would most probably class that behaviour as abnormal and work with the client towards a goal of changing that behaviour. However, if a woman client wanted me to assist her to lose weight, when there was no medical reason for doing so, but her husband was telling her that she was fat and ugly, or, if a woman, who found sex distasteful, wanted me to help her dissociate during sex so that she would find it easier to put up with, then I would decline to work towards either of those goals and start talking about things like the need to sometimes look at 'problems' from multiple points of view.

In summary what I am suggesting is that at times counsellors do work in a way which is consistent with the analysis of Rose (1989), but that at other times, depending on the cultural diversity of the counsellor, counsellors may work by facilitating the client to reposition themselves in their self constructions and thereby reconstruct the nature of the problem.

I said earlier that in order for counsellors to be able to be described as solely concerned with using the normative regimes of the dominant culture to change behaviour, then disciplinary power would need to be the only type of control practise operating. My reason

for making this assertion is that I believe that sovereign power practices, being visible types of control practise, are likely to cause resistance which may take the form of a rejection of the norms of the society as being desirable or healthy goals for particular individuals. The whole point about normative regimes is that while individuals experience the desire to be normal, they are not aware of the disciplinary power which is operating to position them thus, whereas when 'accountability' replaced 'responsibility' the counsellor was aware that 'somebody' was trying to control 'something' and experienced a desire to resist.

I decided that the question I would like to put to the text next, in order to re-engage to locate another story, possibly an untellable story, was about resistance. However, before I could engage in dialogue about resistance, it seemed to me that I needed to address the issue of the operation of sovereign power in the modern context, because I find it hard to make sense of resistance in terms of the narrative of the disciplinary society described by Foucault (1995) and Rose (1989). The disciplinary narrative does not seem to include resistance in its storyline. Bartky (1988) reflects on this aspect of the disciplinary society "Foucault often writes as if power constitutes the very individuals upon whom it operates...Nevertheless, if individuals were wholly constituted by the power knowledge regime Foucault describes, it would make no sense to speak of resistance to discipline at all. Foucault seems sometimes on the verge of depriving us of a vocabulary in which to conceptualise the nature and meaning of those periodic refusals of control that, just as much as the imposition of control, mark the course of human history" (Bartky, 1988, p.82).

Foucault (1995) does describe resistance, but not in relation to disciplinary power. Foucault (1995) describes resistance and solidarity as being the reaction to sovereign power which is considered to be too abusive. In the narrative of Foucault (1995) disciplinary power was developed precisely for the purpose of preventing resistance and solidarity within the general populace.

In Chapter Five I discussed differences between responsibility and accountability, and concluded by suggesting that responsibility was a disciplinary power practise whereas accountability was a sovereign power practise. Foucault (1995) does not describe the co-

existence of sovereign power and disciplinary power in the modern context, but I think he does provide information which could be read as allowing for this possibility. In the first instance, comparing the torture of sovereign power practices with the non-corporal nature of the modern system Foucault (1995) states that "There remains, therefore, a trace of 'torture' in the modern mechanisms of criminal justice - a trace that has not been entirely overcome, but which is enveloped, increasingly, by the non-corporal nature of the penal system" (Foucault, 1995, p. 16). By torture Foucault (1995) is referring to the elements of prison life that concern the body, i.e. having limited food, being deprived of sex, being subject to corporal punishment and solitary confinement. I read Foucault (1995) here as suggesting that disciplinary power is not the only type of control operating in prisons. Elsewhere Foucault (1995) suggests that prisons are the site of operation of power practices which no longer operate in the rest of society "The prison, that darkest region in the apparatus of justice, is the place where the power to punish, which no longer dares to manifest itself openly, silently organises a field of objectivity in which punishment will be able to function openly as treatment" (Foucault, 1995, p. 256).

There is another way in which I read Foucault (1995) as inferring that sovereign power operates in prisons. My interpretation of sovereign power is that it was a control practise where the body was acted upon directly through the public spectacle of torture and execution in order to control the minds of the general populace, i.e. to impress on them the strength of the power of the sovereign and make them afraid to disobey. The body (of the condemned) was acted upon in order to control thinking (of the general populace). My interpretation of disciplinary power is that it is a control practice where the mind is acted upon in order to control the body, "to increase the utility of the body" (Bartky, 1988, p.62) so that the now docile body could be an efficient means of production, in other words this was about getting work done within the society. However Foucault (1995) describes penal labour differently "What, then, is the use of penal labour? Not profit; nor even the formation of a useful skill; but the constitution of a power relation, an empty economic form, a schema of individual submission" (Foucault, 1995, p. 243). I read Foucault (1995) here as describing a control practise which acts upon the body, in order to control the mind, that is, to create the subjectivity of the subjugated.

Bartky (1988) describes the disciplinary practices which create the subjectivity of the feminine. She identifies the control practices which construct women as having "a body on which an inferior status has been inscribed" (Bartky, 1988, p. 71) as being located entirely within the realm of disciplinary practices, however, I think that like Foucault (1995), Bartky (1988) also provides information which could support another reading, principally in her statements of the utilitarian nature of the object so produced. According to Bartky (1988) the purpose of disciplinary power is to produce a utilitarian object, to increase the utility of the body and thereby more efficiently appropriate the body to production, and yet the feminine body is not produced with the ultimate aim of getting work done. As I read and experience it, the purpose of the control practices which constitute the feminine body is, like penal labour, to produce a subjectivity of the subjugated. It is a control practice which acts upon the body, to produce a state of mind, to constitute a power relation, to produce submission. I accept that in other ways the control practices which produce the feminine body do resemble disciplinary practices, namely in the anonymity and wide dispersal of the power, and the recruitment of the individual to enforce the control practice, and I wonder if in this instance, disciplinary practice is combined with the exercise of sovereign power. Where women experience the practices of beauty as being meaningful and pleasurable, and also experience themselves as having a free choice about participating, I think that disciplinary power practices are operating. When women construct (some of) the practices of beauty as part of patriarchal power and control, and at times take pleasure in not conforming to its regimes, while also at times feeling compelled to comply for a variety of reasons, then I think that sovereign power practices are operating. I recognise here the dual consciousness of the feminist woman, being both critical observer and participant in aspects of the dominant narrative, while also participating in a different narrative about how to be a woman. Disciplinary practices which are said to construct the panoptic observer within the individual (Foucault, 1995) could also at times construct the executioner within the mind of women, recreating the public spectre of the scaffold (Foucault, 1995) within the public spectacle of the mutilating and deforming practices of feminine beauty. When positioned in that different narrative the practices of 'beauty' can be constructed as the public punishment which women are subjected to, not because they have

done anything wrong, or in order to change anything, but simply to institute and maintain power relations. According to this analysis, women, like prison inmates, are punished as a means of achieving power relations, not disciplined for the purposes of increasing utility and productivity, and I regard this as an exercise of sovereign power rather than disciplinary power. In the case of prison inmates the judicial system occupies that position which 'the King' did in the descriptions Foucault (1995) provides of sovereign power, while in the discourse of feminine beauty, it is patriarchal society/the masculine/men which is/are positioned as 'King'. In either example, one could say, by this analysis, 'the King lives on'. It seems to me that the two types of power practise described by Foucault (1995) do co-exist in modern times, and I rather think that this has always been the case. I also suspect that whether one constructs these as disciplinary and sovereign, or covert and overt, or productive and non-productive power practices, that the division is somewhat arbitrary and elements of the two combine in a variety of ways ultimately making classification somewhat meaningless. However, for the time being I shall continue to use the terms disciplinary and sovereign, because I am wishing to use the arguments of Foucault (1995) to reference my discussions.

If utility and productivity are not achieved through sovereign power practices, what is the benefit to society that is achieved here? According to Foucault (1995) the purpose of the penal system is to differentiate a class of persons in whom the illegality of the society can be invested, to assist the illegality of those who are 'not criminals'. Foucault (1995) makes the comment of Judges that "They assist as far as they can in the constitution of delinquency, that is to say in the differentiation of illegalities, in the supervision, colonisation and use of certain of those illegalities by the illegality of the dominant class" (Foucault, 1995, p. 282). My interpretation of what is being described here is that a class of persons is differentiated from the dominant class, and then sovereign power in the form of punishment is used to construct a power differential between the dominant class and the differentiated group. The differentiation process serves the society in that it allows certain qualities of society as a whole, which the dominant class does not want to acknowledge in itself to be invested in the differentiated group. I find this analysis to be consistent with the description which Foucault (1995) provides of the origins and functions of the criminal

class, I also find that it is consistent with the descriptions provided by Bartky (1988) of the construction of the feminine. It occurs to me that this analysis may also apply to other dividing practices in our society, i.e., diverse ethnic and cultural groups, the mentally ill, children, the elderly, and other differentiated groups may be subject to control practices which bear more resemblance to sovereign power practices than they do to disciplinary power practices. I am not proposing a rigid demarcation between a dominant class which is subject to disciplinary power and differentiated groups who are subject to sovereign power, but I am suggesting that both sovereign power practices and disciplinary power exist in our society and differentiated groups are more likely to be subject to control practices which contain elements of sovereign power at the same time as being subject to various disciplinary power practices.

I find support for this analysis in the descriptions which Foucault (1995) provides of the two archetypal power mechanisms, the leper response and the plague response. According to Foucault (1995) "the leper gave rise to rituals of exclusion...the massive binary division between one set of people and another" whereas "the plague gave rise to disciplinary projects...multiple separations, individualising distributions, an organisation in depth of surveillance and control" (Foucault, 1995, p. 198). Foucault (1995) continues; "all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution" and concludes " all the mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive" (Foucault, 1995, p. 199). I disagree with Foucault (1995) to the extent that I do not think that the first massive binary division of humankind was that involving lepers, and I regard that assertion on his part as being evidence of his gender blindness, his phallogocentric outlook. However I think the point Foucault (1995) is making about the role of dividing practices in instituting power operations is a valid and important one. Elsewhere Foucault (1995) makes reference to the dividing practices of the law "it would be hypothetical or naïve to believe that the law was made for all in the name of all...it would be more prudent to recognise that it was made for the few and was brought to bear on others" (Foucault, 1995, p. 276). Here

Foucault (1995) paints a picture of a hierarchical institution where a small number of persons at the top of the power hierarchy wield the law to differentiate themselves from all other persons, not just from criminals, but all those who do not have the power to make law or dispense its product, that object called justice. My reading of this passage is that the power differential between the Judge and non criminal others, for instance the clerk of the court, is actually greater than that between the clerk and the accused, because a division between criminal and non criminal would not differentiate 'the few' at the top of a hierarchy, it would differentiate 'the few' at the bottom of the power hierarchy. Therefore the division to which Foucault (1995) is referring is one which separates Judges from all others. Foucault (1995) later describes how the disciplinary society developed through the proliferation and multiplication of the power mechanisms of the penal apparatus into other spheres of society and he talks about "the growth of the disciplinary networks, the multiplication of their exchanges with the penal apparatus, the ever more important powers that are given them, the ever more massive transference to them of judicial functions; now, as medicine, psychology, education, public assistance, 'social work' assume an ever greater share of the powers of supervision and assessment" (Foucault, 1995, p. 306). The point I wish to make by these explorations of the meaning(s) to be read in Foucault (1995) is that while I believe the institutions of the disciplinary society are quite validly viewed as being in a power hierarchy with the general populace, there are power hierarchies and dividing practices within each institution also. Each institution can be thought of as having its Judge(s), its clerk(s) and its criminals. I believe that all persons below the rank of Judge are likely in one way or another to be subject to power practices which contain elements of sovereign power.

I see the women in my counselling subculture as likely to be subject to sovereign power practices for two reasons, firstly because they are in relationship with various institutions all of whom have their own power hierarchies which tend to position counsellors pretty close to the bottom, and secondly because they are women. Bartky (1988) describes how the culture of feminine beauty acts to position women as having less power and fewer rights than men, and therefore being subservient to men. As I have described, I believe there are locations within the subjectivity of the feminine where the control practices of

feminine beauty can be regarded as a form of punishment, consistent with sovereign power practices, while the construction of that punishment as an aesthetic or artistic endeavour, and the recruitment of the individual woman to be her own punisher, are consistent with disciplinary power practices. In this analysis punishment is used to constitute power relations, that is to say, sovereign power practices are used against those whom the dominant culture wishes to subjugate. I believe there is another reading available of the relationship between women and sovereign power practices.

I have described how I regard sovereign power practices to be a type of control where the body is acted upon in order to bring about a change in the mind, and disciplinary power practices to be a type of control where the mind is acted upon in order to produce a certain type of body. I reason therefore that in order to be amenable to disciplinary practice, one must have a mind. The reading which Irigaray (1974) provides of western culture is that the masculine is mind, and the feminine is body, and to the extent that the feminine is invested in women, then women might be regarded as being less of the mind and more of the body than men. Sigmund Freud in his classic pronouncements on the origins and nature of 'Femininity' provides an example of the operation of the culture Irigaray (1974) is describing. Freud (1965) concludes that women are mentally inferior to men, having less of a mind, or less ability to use the mind, because of the way their biology, the body, in the form of castration, intervenes to prevent them from being properly or wholly responsible citizens. Nicholson (1992) provides illustrations of how modern society constructs women as being vulnerable to their problematic biology, the body, in ways that men are not. Nicholson (1992) describes how, within our culture, the body, in the form of PMT and other 'disorders', intervenes to cause irrationality, or mental weakness in the female. The point of these discussions is that if disciplinary power operates through the training of the mind, how can women be effectively controlled in this way, when we are (constructed so as to be) more of the body than of the mind. It seems to me that disciplinary power is a type of control most suitable for use with the male population, they being more purely 'of the mind' or more precisely that sector of the male population which constitutes the dominant class. Less mental beings, i.e., women, and any differentiated group which the dominant class

wishes to subjugate, would seem to me to constitute those persons more appropriately subject to a combination of sovereign power practices and disciplinary power practices.

The last point I wish to make about the structural relationship between sovereign power practices and disciplinary power practices at this stage is that I regard the failure of Foucault (1995) to acknowledge the operations of sovereign power in the modern context and the uncritical importation of the ideas of Foucault (1995) into the theory of social constructionism as being constitutive of oppressive practice. The oppression I read as being present here is related to the construction of resistance, or more precisely the lack of same. I agree with Bartky (1988) that if disciplinary practices were all that was going on, then it makes no sense to speak of resistance at all. And because resistance does not exist within the disciplinary narrative, when we think we experience something like that, using social constructionist analysis, we are likely to conclude that our experience of resistance is an illusion which is simply strengthening our powerlessness, whether we realise it or not, in other words, resistance is useless. I have been subject to this type of reasoning in my discussions of resistance earlier in this chapter. I reflect upon the work which I have had to do in this chapter thus far, in order to try and create a platform, within social constructionism, from which I can speak of resistance. Why was this work necessary, why was it so difficult to reach this place, which I may or may not have achieved? What is happening with resistance to make it so seemingly inaccessible?

I think that is a question which is beyond the scope of this present project, for the present, however, I shall construct myself as having sufficient access to the phenomena resistance, to be able to talk about it with respect to my counselling subculture. The question I put to the text then, was 'how is resistance present in the talk of the counsellor?' My reading of the text was that there were several ways in which the counsellor talked about resistance. The most common expression of resistance was with respect to the practices of accountability; *"I think it's a waste of time...I think it's just a matter of going through the motions and doing the paperwork"* (lines b287-289). There was also an expression of resistance to patriarchal discourse *"I guess its morays of our society that I would, um that I would be looking at, in those things, ...(being subversive)...especially with women.* There was

another type of resistance which I read as being present, and that was resistance to experiencing others as trying to define the nature of the counsellor and the way in which she worked. This type of resistance I read as being present in the instances of the counsellor choosing to leave a work place where she was too uncomfortable with how she was positioned; *"I guess in some ways I mean I was lucky I could choose...I didn't have to put up with it"* (lines g148-150).

The expressions of resistance with respect to accountability I read as being what I would term 'grumbles', because the counsellor does not like this aspect of the work, and is saying so, giving a warning growl, so to speak, but that is as far as it goes. There is no talk which reflects that the counsellor is able to open up a dialogue with the institutions which impose the accountability, there is no talk which suggests that there is room for negotiation on this. But if it goes too far, then she leaves; that is the action which I read as being open to the counsellor, that is as far as her control and her choices extend. I decided that this was the next story, the story of the counsellor who believed herself to be self defining and responsible, and who does not relinquish that control over her own functioning which she constructs herself as having. I decided to call this the story of the unyielding counsellor, the story of a worker, a woman who is not malleable to the overt power operations of authorities that she regards as seeking to (re)define her. The untellable nature of a narrative such as this I think resides in the construction of a counsellor, who in this case is woman, who is capable of being unyielding, that is to say resolute, unable to be bent to the will, of (some of) the controlling practices she is aware of. Such resistance in an ungendered workforce might be construed as worker solidarity, however, in this predominantly female workforce and in my wholly female counselling subculture, I construct this resistance as a feminist enterprise, which in this case is illustrated by leaving stories, stories about the counsellor/woman removing herself from the sphere of operations of control practices which she does not wish to be subject to. The unyielding counsellor thus demonstrates a strength of mind, and according to the analysis of Irigaray (1974) this is a display of masculine strength. The unyielding counsellor has stepped outside her position in society, she has trespassed into the territory of the other, she is being masculine.

There are some extracts in the text which refer to leaving stories, but there are also leaving stories which exist for the participant group, which the text is silent on. I know this because I was part of some of those leaving stories, they are part of my shared history with the participants. I know the participants as being a group of women who all have a leaving story of some kind, whether it be leaving an employer, or choosing to no longer undertake a certain type of work, or choosing to no longer accept a certain type of referral. In my experience all these women have taken a stand at some stage, have said 'no, this is my bottom line, and I refuse to let it be crossed'. Some of the examples of talk about resistance to accountability practices, I know of as having progressed to leaving stories, but those stories are not explicitly told, although they are present quite strongly for me. As I read the text and acknowledge the leaving stories which are present, the absence of the other stories is highlighted for me, and I wonder about that absence. It occurs to me that there is a cost associated with being unyielding if you are a woman, and that the silences I read in the text indicate that there are wounds which are not yet fully healed which are being protected here. For this reason I do not consider it appropriate for me to probe any deeper into the silence of the text on this point. I think I must respect the request for privacy I am reading here. However, I can, I think, talk about my own experience, as that is what my reading of the text has produced for me. My reading of the text, by the absences I find there, takes me to my own experience of a leaving story. I realise that I am departing from conventional reading practise in presenting my own experience as a reading, but I also think that this type of reading practise is not altogether unknown. Crotty (1998) describes a type of interpretive reading practise called transactional reading. According to Crotty (1998) when we read in this way; "Out of the engagement comes something quite new. The insights that emerge were never in the mind of the author. They are not in the author's text. They were not with us when we picked up the text to read it. They have come into being in and out of our engagement with it" (Crotty, 1998, p. 109-110). I shall therefore be utilising a type of 'transactional' reading practise in adding my leaving story to those which are present in the text. However, my first task is to look at the stories of the counsellor. Some extracts from the text which contain fragments of the counsellor's leaving stories are reproduced below.

Extract Twenty Lines b67 to b75

- p it actually felt quite safe to be working for (employer) in those days and I really like that
- i mm
- p I felt they um had a (unintelligible) and because they had trained me there was that deep kind of link, plus, there was supervision
- i mmm
- p and an on going part of training so, so it was, that was a positive thing in my view, in counselling then
- i ummm
- p and I stayed in that organisation long enough for it to become something else

In this extract the counsellor is talking about work place conditions as they existed at some time in the past, before restructuring changed the culture of the organisation she worked for. The counsellor describes how she experienced it as being "*quite safe*" and that she really liked that, and that she felt a "*deep kind of link*" with the employer, because they had trained her. I read this as being a reference to the personal growth that accompanied experiential training, and that in sharing this growth with the organisation, there was a sense of family, a sense of growing up within, a sense of belonging. This extract illustrates for me both the invisibility and the power of disciplinary power practices. The counsellor is talking about a time before the regime of 'tick box accountability' was introduced, in almost reverent terms, as if this had been a veritable Garden of Eden of counselling. There is no hint of disquiet about the power operations of society at large or the agency, or counsellors themselves. I read this extract as describing a time when counsellors were allowed the dignity of being responsible, and that responsibility was constructed as being something that could be trusted because it arose from the positive qualities which those people had, each of them as individuals. I read 'leaving' in this context as being constructed as a return to the Garden of Eden, where that place is a space where the counsellor is not aware of being controlled, that is to say the control practices operating are covert or disciplinary.

Extract Twenty-one Lines e53 to e74

- p ah, their, I think I spose what I'm saying is, it's about the system in the organisation, and what I see in some of the organisations, is that, kind of, abuse of, the counsellor, or the worker
- i mmm

- p um, some of the organisations don't look after their workers very good, so that looking after wellness
- i mmm
- p in the, in the counsellor,
- i mmm
- p as a form of supervision, is also looking at the health of the organisation as well
- i mmm
- p and how they are looking after their people, how they look after their workers, how they look after their people
- i mmm
- p and so often, so often we seem to, organisations seem to be looking to have a job done, quite cheaply
- i yeah
- p not necessarily looking after the counsellor
- i mmm
- p and, and I think that comes from, from, some aspect of it is coming from me as well
- i mmm
- p because I think you know I worked in an abusive environment, in with the (previous employer)
- i mmm
- p for so long, and so I, I think my, my ears are attuned to that.

In this extract the counsellor (now counsellor/supervisor) is talking about how she assesses the conditions of employment (of her supervisees) as a means of measuring the "wellness" of the counsellor, the assumption being that counsellors who are discounted and abused by oppressive conditions of employment will not be able to value/support their clients, appropriately, because they are not being properly valued or supported. The counsellor describes how this aspect of her way of working is something she learned from her own experience of an abusive work environment. In this extract the counsellor casts her own experience in a positive light as a learning which now enables her to assist other counsellors to attend to their own wellbeing in the work place. 'Leaving' in this story is constructed as making a choice for personal wellness.

Extract Twenty-two Lines c94 to e119

- i I have had a similar experience with an agency in the past
- p mmm
- i in the past, where, um, people, I mean us counsellors were continually saying

p mmm
i the process we are aiming for, in relationship with our clients, should be
the process that the organisation works by, I mean, if we are aiming for
healthy respectful, mutually respectful

p mmm
i relationships

p mmm
i we need that in our work place, we need that to sort of be in all the layers

p mmm
i but it seemed like, we were being expected to be treated, in one way, which
we thought wasn't very nice

p mmm
i and then turn around and create this totally opposite dynamic in our work

p mmm
p yeah
i and it just doesn't work like that

p no, if one thinks, as a systems analyst, well it's not going to happen

i mmm
p if you try and think systematically about organisations that expect that

i mmm
p it won't happen

i mmm
p it won't happen in a month of Sundays.

In this extract there is a mirroring which occurs where the interviewer tells a story, similar to the story which the participant has told, and the participant supports the telling of that story, in the same way that the interviewer had previously supported her story telling, before using it to make a point of her own and then taking back the story telling initiative.

In Extract Twenty-two the story is about aspects of the workplace environment which jeopardised the counsellor/client relationship and which lead to leaving, but in this instance is more about the quality of interpersonal relations rather than conditions of employment, the missing aspect being described as "*healthy respectful, mutually respectful.. relationships*". In the previous extract I read the abusive workplace narrative being presented as part of a story about personal learning which lead to leaving, and which now facilitates effective supervision. In this extract I read the abusive workplace narrative as being presented in justification of leaving. In this extract leaving is constructed as something which has to be justified, and it is justified in terms of client well being, in that

the abusive workplace threatened the counsellor client relationship, and therefore threatened the ability of the counsellor to be able to work effectively with clients.

Twenty-three Lines g145 to g152

- p but, um there was a definite clash of cultures within the (workplace), and it just, and I couldn't be bothered fighting it, actually
- i yeah
- p I didn't have to put up with it
- i mmm
- p and I hated having to

In Extract Twenty-three I read the counsellor as constructing herself as being wise and strong and having power to choose for herself. The counsellor had the wisdom to know what was happening "*there was a definite clash of cultures*", and although she initially attributes her leaving to "*I couldn't be bothered fighting it*" she then reframes that as "*I didn't have to put up with it*" which is a much stronger statement. The strength of that is reinforced by "*I hated having to*" where the counsellor positions herself as someone who does not have to put up with things that she hates. In this extract leaving is constructed as an act of strength and power.

Extract Twenty-four Lines g156 to g159

- p but, I didn't like, I didn't like the way they started to treat people
- i mmm
- i people as units?
- p yes, people as units

In this extract the counsellor is giving some further information about the conditions which lead to leaving, and in doing so is positioning herself as someone who declines to participate in the abuse of others. In this extract leaving is constructed as an expression of virtue, of refusing to treat people badly.

Extract Twenty-five Lines g179 to g189

- p yeah, I didn't like being in the cattle or sheep drafting position (laughs)
- i (laughs)
- p through that gate, through this gate, so that was what it ended up basically

- i did you find that when you went into private practise that you were again able to work in the way that you wanted?
- p um, I guess that's probably why I enjoy the (type of funded referral) work because you can work with people who wouldn't normally get to a counsellor
- i mmm
- p a lot of people
- i mmm
- p um, yeah, I was able to work in the way that I wanted to

In this extract the counsellor continues the theme of the abusive nature of the culture of the workplace, i.e., the way in which it was abusive of clients. The question the interviewer asks in this instance is an invitation to the counsellor to comment on the way she herself was limited by the abusive culture, in that she was not able to work in the way that she wanted. Although the counsellor agrees that because she left she is now able to work in the way she wants to, this is framed in terms of what is good for clients, in that it is good for clients to be able to get counselling without having to pay for it. 'What the counsellor wants' is here reframed in terms of what is good for the client, and leaving is constructed as being good for the counsellor on these terms. I read in this passage some resistance to leaving or being strong and powerful, purely for ones own sake, that somehow these qualities are virtues only in the service of others. I wonder if this talking about an untellable aspect of the untellable story, that these counsellors, these women, may actually be strong and unyielding on their own account, and not because they are positioned in the service of others, as protector of the relationship between counsellor and client and thereby protector of the quality of service given to clients.

Extract Twenty-six Lines d309 to d337

- p I think they are learning what counsellors do, and I mean, I think that's what happened with the big drive when, um (employer) changed to (employer), for instance, and they got in managers and people in high positions who didn't have a clue
- i yeah
- p what counsellors did
- i mmm
- p and so they had people like, you know, (name of consultant) and those sorts of people actually write what counsellors did, or are supposed to do
- i yeah
- p and I think that is what happens with big organisations now, I think that they sort

- of have a blue print of what they think, of what they want from counselling
- i mmm
- p and they have it all in little boxes and you tick it as you do it, as you, you know, they think you should tick it as you do it
- i mmm
- p like ACC really
- i tick it as you do it
- p yes, you know
- i yeab
- p you know the client has to have, has to come to this goal, you know this objective
- i yeah
- p and once they reach them, then that's another tick that you get in the right box
- i so that's about accountability?
- p yeah. Well I think the whole area of accountability came into being because people, you know the hierarchy didn't actually know what they were supposed to be doing
- p what they were supposed to be doing
- i yeah
- p so accountability became something that was a way of, of, um, not making them look inadequate

In this extract the counsellor is talking about the origins and functions of accountability describing accountability as a way of meeting specific needs of the hierarchy. The problem which gave rise to the introduction of accountability is described as when *"they got in managers and people in high positions who didn't have a clue...what counsellors did"*. I read this as describing a situation where a hierarchy was being (further) established, but those *"in high positions"* found themselves powerless with respect to those whom they were supposed to control, because they did not have the knowledge. 'Knowledge', about counselling was something that the counsellors had, but management did not have.

The counsellor describes how the managers set about finding out what counsellors did, by redefining it, i.e., how the managers got over the problem of not having the knowledge that the counsellors had, by inventing their own, and saying that it was the only knowledge that counted. Rather than find out what counsellors were actually doing, which would have meant acknowledging the counsellors knowledge, the managers employed consultants to provide them with information about the counsellors should be doing. Once the managers had the *"blueprint"* they were then able to enforce adherence to it, and the accountability

practices were borne. The managers had solved their problem, had taken back the power, by defining what was knowledge; *"Well I think the whole area of accountability came into being because people, you know the hierarchy didn't actually know what they were supposed to be doing... so accountability became something that was a way of, of, um, not making them look inadequate"*. The counsellor is inferring that accountability empowered management. My experience of this accountability as a counsellor was that that these practices disempowered me. Regardless of how one constructs the change, from which side of the equation the change is being experienced, my reading is that the power differential was increased, with respect to the issues under debate

I read the counsellor here as saying that the accountability practices were a consequence of the managers need to know what counsellors did. I think that there is another reading possible here, and that is that power rather than knowledge was the motivation, (presuming that these two can be considered to be separate). Within the restructuring the managers experienced themselves as being positioned so as to (supposed to) have power over counsellors, but experienced themselves as being powerless, with respect to counsellors on the issue of knowing what counsellors did. As I described earlier in this chapter, I believe that accountability practices constitute an exercise of sovereign power, and their function is to institute and maintain power relations. According to this analysis the purchase of the blueprint was to enable accountability to be put in place, and the function of that accountability was to subjugate the counsellors. Once this had happened the managers were able to say that they knew what counsellors did, but that was a consequence of their power practices.

I shall end this section by giving some description of my own leaving story, which starts with an arriving story. After being involved in Marriage Guidance in Hamilton for some years, I arrived in Blenheim and became involved in that organisation here. One of the first differences I noticed in the smaller centre was that there seemed to be a shortage of personnel to fill all the functions within the organisation, and so most people had multiple roles, 'all hands to the pump as they say'. I found myself working as a counsellor and a tutor, helping out on reception, and sitting on the Executive Committee, the Professional

Practices Committee and the Training Committee. Most of the other counsellors were wearing the same number of hats. I realise that this was not necessarily the situation which existed in the larger centres and may well have not been happening in other smaller centres either, but it happened here. The point about this is that, even though the design of the organisation allowed for hierarchical structure, having the same persons present on all levels effectively disrupted any power hierarchy. In summary then, I found myself working in an organisation where there was no power hierarchy and we all credited ourselves and each other as being very responsible, and accountability (in the sense that I have been discussing) was not something which figured largely in my experience of the work. If each person had only had one role, one hat, so to speak then it is possible that Executive Committee could have been able to have power over Professional Practices Committee and Training Committee and all those committees could have had power over counsellors, but this was not the case. Another difference about the organisation at that time was that although the local organisation was affiliated to the national body, we were financially and administratively autonomous.

And then things started to change. Finances and administration were centralised in Wellington. All our local committees were disbanded, and the national committees we were placed in relationship with did not share power in the way that we were used to. I believed it was something to do with the distance and the anonymity of those committees that they seemed to be happy to issue edicts on a take it or leave it basis. As a counsellor I became a 'service delivery worker' no more, no less. Previously I had been in charge of publicity, now I wasn't allowed to make statements to the paper, or talk on radio, I was not allowed to speak for the organisation, I had been muted. Apparently I no longer knew what it was all about, I could not be trusted to speak. 'What it was all about' was now something that could only be known by the experts in Wellington. In short I found myself positioned very close to the bottom of a large hierarchical organisation, which seemed to be growing itself new layers all the time, and none of them on a local level. The space provided for me to be a 'service delivery worker' seemed to shrink and become bounded by non negotiable conditions. I found myself increasingly being required to account for myself in my work, and the effect of that accountability for me was to (attempt to) construct myself as a type of

hollow empty counsellor, as having no personal or inner qualities that mattered, as not knowing how to do my job, as not being able to be trusted. I resisted, we all did, we wrote letters, they ignored them, we spoke at annual conferences, and then they did away with annual conferences. Eventually, I left.

After I had left I can remember getting back in touch with, reconnecting with some of the people who had been on the committees I had been part of before the restructuring, and upon telling them I had left, hearing several of them say to me 'what took you so long?'. Looking back now I find that really interesting, because that is exactly what many of my women clients describe to me, when they reconnect with women friends after leaving an abusive relationship, that their friends say to them 'what took you so long?'.

Making this connection raises several of issues for me, issues about the construction of 'taking care of the relationship' as women's work, and the consequent construction of the breakdown of the relationship as being more of a reflection of a failure on her part, especially if 'she' is a counsellor, then 'she' is supposed to know about relationships, to be able to make them work, regardless. And that is why 'she' stayed/stays so long, trying to make it work. I would like to be able to say that eventually the woman/counsellor is able to give herself permission to look after herself, rather than the relationship, but I know that with my women clients, if there are children present, then leaving is usually constructed as being about looking after them, and in the counsellors leaving stories there are places where leaving is constructed as being about looking after the clients. Looking back from this vantage point I would like to construct my leaving as being about 'me', but I suspect I had a need to demonstrate to someone, that I could not be pushed around, forever, that I had bottom line, that I was capable of being unyielding. I suspect that my hypothetical 'audience' for this demonstration was women in the community who were in abusive relationships, so I too was using the helping discourse to support my unyieldingness.

There are other issues which are raised for me in this discussion, for example the use of the metaphor 'the relationship' to describe the other in the power relationship, (similar to the use of the metaphor 'the family' to represent patriarchal authority in fundamentalist

Christian politics). However it is not my intention to enter into that type of discursive analysis here. The absences I read in the text brought me to my leaving story, and now my own leaving story has brought me once again to consider the process(s) of counselling, in this instance as represented by women clients who may or may not be leaving abusive relationships.

Earlier in this chapter I talked about counsellors working to support clients to reposition themselves in their self constructions and thereby reconstruct the problem. It seems clear to me now that any problem which is able to be worked on in this way is a problem which in the first instance originates in disciplinary power practices, because it is the normative gaze of the panoptic observer which undergoes change. This raises the interesting question of what happens to disciplinary power practices which originate in the dominant culture, when the individual (partially) repositions themselves in a subculture and that shift in perspective exposes, to the individual some of the hitherto masked power operations of the dominant culture. Resistance is now possible, but does that mean that the power practise in dispute is now a type of sovereign power practice, because it is now experienced as overt? Foucault (1995) talks about the construction of an 'outlaw' class of persons, persons who are outside the normal controls of society. I wonder if this means that when a person 'sees through' a covert power practise, they are then, by society and themselves, constructed as a type of outlaw, and that that dividing practise is accompanied by forms of punishment which subjugate the person. The effect of this type of mechanism would be that individuals who see through covert power operations would be automatically be constructed as disempowered. If a person experiences power practices as overt, and still complies for fear of punishment, then punishment arrives nevertheless, facilitated by the narrative of the autonomous self determining individual. If we are 'supposed' be self determining and yet we experience ourselves as complying out of fear, then according to the narrative of the autonomous individual we are weak, we are powerless.

According to this analysis the difference between a person who complies through a motivation to be a good normal person, and a person who complies out of fear of being punished, is that the person who fears punishment will experience themselves as powerless.

What happens to the person who ceases to comply? Presumably they are no longer disempowered by the narrative of the autonomous self, but they are still outlaw, and may be subject to sanctions, and experience themselves as being punished by society for not conforming. Examples of sanctions would be a situation of a counsellor who chose not to be subject to the power operations of ACC or the Family Court, finding themselves restricted to working with clients who can afford to pay, or; a woman with young children who chooses to leave an abusive relationship, experiencing the limitations of living on the benefit. Here the narrative of the autonomous individual works to provide a rationale for making such punishment 'worth it'.

The narrative of the autonomous individual thus plays an important role in compliance with covert power practices and resistance to overt power practices. It also functions to produce disempowerment in persons who can 'see through' disciplinary power operations, (outlaws by thought) and to produce a tolerance of punishment and powerlessness in persons who cease to comply, (outlaws by deed).

In summary then the narrative of the unyielding counsellor is a story about a woman who constructs herself as an autonomous individual. Access to different points of view, different subcultures, for instance, how things were in the past, can facilitate a seeing through or deconstruction of prevailing dominant culture disciplinary power practices, for example, accountability. The narrative of the autonomous individual constructs the (newly) overt power practices as abusive. The need to resist the abuse/accountability practices results in leaving because there is no 'change society' option, no 'change the system' option available. In this narrative the counsellor is reproducing the stories of her women clients who are in abusive relationships.

Chapter Eight: Final Analyses

In this project I have analysed counsellors stories about being a counsellor. My interest in these stories was in what might be able to be read through them about the power relations counsellors are involved in. Recent changes in the rules and regulations pertaining to counselling had caused me to wonder about the implications of those changes for counsellors. I was interested to know whether counsellors experienced those changes as a form of power taking or (attempted) control by the various regulatory authorities, and if they did, whether they resisted, and if resistance was present, what form it took.

From my analysis of the stories of the counsellor I have constructed stories about power relations. In this final chapter it is my task to draw together and analyse those stories about power relations and reach some conclusions about the power practices surrounding the counsellor. In abstracting stories about power relations from the stories of the counsellor I am moving further towards the critical realism end of my epistemological continuum, because, as I described in Chapter One, I believe that power relations have a different type of ontological status from the stories which reflect/construct them, that is to say I believe that power relations are more 'real'.

In Chapter Five I began describing the stories of the counsellor by introducing the story of the counsellor as double agent. This is the story of the counsellor who promotes the importance of training and qualifications to one audience, society at large, while at the same time promoting the over riding importance of the intangible quality of relationship to the in-group audience of other counsellors.

The first story about power relations I constructed in Chapter Five was the story about the state, represented by training institutions and regulatory authorities promoting and enforcing a dominant narrative about training and qualifications being necessary for client safety, that is, constructing the clients as being the beneficiaries of counsellors training and qualifications. I argued that this dominant narrative worked to mask both the benefits to counsellors and the benefits to the state, and concluded that through this narrative the state

was able to use the client safety discourse to render counsellors powerless. This analysis (re)constructed the training and qualifications narrative as working, not to make counsellors more effective in their work, but to make counsellors more easily controlled. The power relation between counsellor and state here is one of dominance and control.

There is another story about power relations able to be read in my discussions of the narrative fragments about training and qualifications, and that is the story about what happens to the relationship between counsellors when they engage with the dominant narrative. In Chapter Five I describe how the counsellor at times does 'gate keeping' talk, that is, making judgements about what training and qualifications other counsellors needed to have in order to be proper bona fide counsellors. I regard this type of talk as being part of horizontal hostility power relations. As I read it, after engaging with the dominant narrative which positions them as powerless in relation to the state, counsellors attempt to take power in relation to each other, by engaging in horizontal hostility. I regard horizontal hostility as operating to collude with and strengthen the power relations constituted in the dominant narrative because it directs counsellor's attentions away from the primary source of their oppression, and presents a picture of counsellors themselves as being the prime movers in the push for more stringent requirements. Both of these consequences of horizontal hostility work to mask the power operations of the state.

The theme of horizontal hostility is continued in the next story about power relations which is able to be read in Chapter Five. In my analysis of Extract One I refer to the status associated with being able to work at a deeper level, the status symbol of the psychoanalytical modalities. In my analysis of the extracts valuing relationship I refer to the status associated with having done ones own personal growth and being authentic and congruent, the status symbol associated with the humanist modalities. The status symbol of experience and maturation is also present in these discussions.

All of these status symbols are part of horizontal hostility dynamics to the extent that they facilitate the counsellor both to promote her own expertise and to judge other counsellors. These status narratives also construct power relations between counsellor and client. In

Chapter Five I made the suggestion that Rogerian or humanist modalities may not function as control devices as effectively as psychoanalytical modalities, because they were relationship based, rather than being based on a structural model. I think it is important here to make a distinction between inferred power relations between state and client and those between counsellor and client. By suggesting that Rogerian counselling may be less effective as a vehicle for the control of client by state, I was not meaning to imply that in Rogerian counselling the power relations between counsellor and client have substantively less of a power differential than that in psychoanalytical modalities. The psychodynamic status of being able to do something to another person, to see into another person, and in doing so, do something that they are unable to do for themselves constructs the client as powerless in relation to the counsellor. On the surface of it the Rogerian status of being able to do something to oneself as a counsellor, of being able to know oneself may seem like a different dynamic to the psychodynamic one, but in essence what the Rogerian counsellor is saying is that, because I am healthy and I am capable of having healthy relationships with others, you can be made healthy by having a relationship with me, and this also constructs the client as powerless in relation to the counsellor. I read the performance of relationship here as functioning in the same way as the performance of being able to see into the depths of the other.

The next stories about power relations which can be read in my discussions in Chapter Five are the stories which can be inferred by reading 'invisibility' as meaning the same as secrecy. I reasoned that if the relationship aspect of counselling was a 'secret' as in the 'secrets' of abusive power relations, then this could indicate that in the relationship aspect of counselling 'the connection' functions as a form of abuse. While I have acknowledged that there are parallels between this scenario and abuse, I would point out that the power relations of this scenario are also indistinguishable from those of the parenting relationship, which can involve having power over and denying choices, and which, depending on the age of the child, can be both of those things without being considered abusive. Another reading of secrecy presented in Chapter Five was that it was associated with a form of resistance, in that practising 'the connection' was a form of horizontal communication which the hierarchy attempted to outlaw. The power relations inferred here

are about the system being in a position of dominance and (attempted) control over both counsellor and client, and both counsellor and client resisting.

The last scenario associated with the abuse reading presented in Chapter Five was the story about the system 'killing off' the inner person within the setting of the 'cure', for the strategic purpose of constructing the counsellor as being solely responsible for bringing about change within the client. This use of power over was deemed to be 'abuse' in my discussions in Chapter Five and I find it interesting to reflect on why I used that label in this instance. I could say that it was the covert nature of the scenario I constructed, or because of the denial implied, but according to Foucault (1995), these are the general characteristics of all disciplinary power practices. I could conclude that I use words like abuse or oppression for examples of the use of power which I find distasteful. I also think that the use of negative descriptors to describe examples of the use of power could be a form of resistance which is an indication that the author believes that there could possibly be a case for arguing against that particular power practise. It is also possible that the occasional use of negative descriptors for particular power practices performs the function of localising the 'bad' in power use to those examples, thereby protecting all other examples of power use from such scrutiny.

The final story about power relations I take from my discussion in Chapter Five features the scenario where accountability, being a form of sovereign power, has taken over from responsibility, being a form of disciplinary power, within the relationship between the system/the state, and the counsellor. This is a theme which I return to and further develop later. Both disciplinary power and sovereign power represent power relations of dominance and control, the difference being the manner in which control is exercised. Disciplinary power operations construct the individual as having a mind, an inner person, like the psychoanalytical self, whereas sovereign power operations construct individuals as being more like the behavioural self, acting and reacting in a more superficial mechanistic way than the 'reasoned morality' of the responsible individual. According to this analysis both responsibility and accountability are control practises but only accountability is experienced as such.

To summarise, the power relations constructed in my analysis of the counsellor as double agent are on the whole stories which focus on the relationship between the state and the counsellor and present this relationship as one of dominance and control. However, as I have pointed out, the relationship between the counsellor and the client is also asymmetrical with respect to power and whether I regard this as dominance and control or some other more benevolent type of power over, the power dynamic is the same in that the counsellor is thus positioned as intermediary in a power hierarchy between state and client. It would seem inevitable then that counsellors are part of a process by which the state controls individuals, but is that necessarily so, or necessarily the only process happening?

I believe that the counsellor a double agent is able to disrupt the 'control' which flows through the power hierarchy, to some extent, simply because she is a double agent, that is to say two people, occupying two positions in the power hierarchy. My reading of the counsellor as double agent is that the counsellor who relates to the authorities and to society at large is not quite the same person who relates to other counsellors and clients. I think that that shift, that repositioning, however subtle, acts as a buffer, distancing the power practices of the state in relation to the counsellor from the way that power is exercised by the counsellor in relation to the client.

This analysis constructs the duality of the counsellor as double agent as a form of resistance, as a way of complying with those who are more powerful while at the same time providing some protection for the relationship with those who are less powerful. The counsellor as double agent therefore both confirms the analysis of Rose (1989) and challenges it. The position of the counsellor as intermediary in the power hierarchy is consistent with the analysis of Rose (1989) but the duality of that positioning supports an alternative scenario as I have described above.

It seems clear to me that the covert/disciplinary power practices of the state which construct the counsellor as self determining and responsible will impact on the client without either the counsellor or the client being aware of them. However the more overt/sovereign power

practices of the state which are experienced as power taking by the counsellor, and called accountability, are by virtue of their visibility, able to be resisted. Ironically, in the 'good old days' (according to the counsellor) when responsibility was the only form of control, the descriptions which Rose (1989) provides of psychologists were more likely to have been true of counsellors. However, since the introduction of accountability, the 'flow of control' is more likely to be acknowledged and disrupted by the counsellor. That 'thing,' accountability which the counsellor resented so strongly is actually what rescues the counsellor, in a sense, from being an unknowing puppet of the state, because the overt control practices open a window into the character of the power relationship.

To summarise, I believe that the analysis of Rose (1989) could be applicable to counsellors to the extent that they are controlled by disciplinary power practices. However, I believe that many of the new power practices associated with the changes in the counselling industry are sovereign in character, visible and able to be resisted. In my Introduction I assumed that the new rules and regulations pertaining to counsellors were a disciplinary apparatus, and this caused me to wonder if I had been mistaken about counsellors offering resistance to those changes. It now seems clear to me that those new rules and regulations are a control mechanism which is more sovereign than disciplinary in character, and therefore I have more confidence that that which I read as resistance was not simply a comforting illusion, or at least not exclusively so.

In Chapter Six I analysed stories which I read as being part of the narrative of the unsupported counsellor, the untold story of the vulnerable counsellor.

The first narrative around power relations which I constructed in that analysis was about the disempowering consequences for the counsellor, of the way the object 'counsellor' was constructed, namely as a person who has to be strong, and has to stay the same, in relations with clients. Although it may appear that to be constructed as having to be strong would be empowering, to my 'counsellors logic' this is not so. My counsellors logic would suggest that all persons have strengths and vulnerabilities and we are at a disadvantage in any relationship where we are required to suppress either of these, regardless of whether it is the

strength or the vulnerability. It could also be argued from a psychodynamic point of view that the imbalance in relations with the client sets up and maintains the imbalance in the counsellor/system relations. This is to say what the counsellor represses in relation to the client is expressed in relations with the system. This psychodynamic interpretation of the power dynamics between system counsellor and client offers a radically different explanation of 'power hierarchy' from that used in my previous discussions. Is the psychodynamic reading incompatible with the social constructionist one? It might be, but only if I was restricted to unitary realities, and I am not. Actually I think that there is an interesting reading to be made here by combining both psychodynamic and social constructionist constructions, a reading that plays on the different types of realities. I could for instance suggest a scenario whereby 'the system' believing in the 'reality' of the defence mechanism of displacement, constructs counsellors as required to repress their vulnerability in relations with clients in the expectation that this will then cause the counsellor to displace their vulnerability from the relationship with clients into the relationship with the system.

The next story about power relations constructed in my discussion of Chapter Six is on a similar theme and is told in the story about where counsellors are allowed to practice their skills, that is, who or what is the proper subject of the counsellors attentions. I concluded that counsellors were allowed to have and use knowledge only in the counselling room, in relations with persons whom society has constructed as dysfunctional and therefore of no importance.

I think that there is another reading to be made here concerning why the counsellor's skills must be so contained and controlled. Given that the majority of counsellors are women I think it is possible to construct counsellors as being the philosophical/spiritual descendants of witches or wise women. According to this analysis society might be expected to fear the skills of the counsellor and require those skills to be restricted for particular purposes. From a psychoanalytical perspective the collective guilt borne by society about how wise women have been treated in the past would strengthen the fear. This reading of why counsellors skills need to be contained feeds into another larger narrative involving psychodynamic

analysis of gender relations. From a psychoanalytical perspective the need to control is fear based. In the construction of 'the feminine' patriarchal society locates nature, darkness and the unknown within that object, (Irigaray, 1974) all of which are feared, hence in the control of 'the feminine' patriarchal society achieves mastery of all those fears. By displacing the fear of things which cannot be controlled onto something which can be controlled, patriarchal society maintains an effective defence against its own vulnerability.

The above analysis might suggest that in taking power over women, patriarchal society is reversing a pre-existing power relation which favoured women, inferring a sort of equivalence overall with respect to power, but this is not the case. That which had/has power over patriarchal society was/is nature, darkness and the unknown, not women. Women are not those things. Women may be constructed to be those things, women may be feared as though they were those things, but they are not those things.

This story of power relations positions counsellors/women as victims of society, but almost accidental victims. In this scenario women are disempowered not because patriarchal society needs them to be, *per se*, but because that society needed to construct a defence against its vulnerability and controlling women was simply part of the means to that end. This is a psychoanalytical narrative where the primary relationship is between patriarchal society and its own collective unconscious.

To summarise, the stories of power relations able to be read in my analysis of the counsellor's untold story describe a relationship between the counsellor/woman and patriarchal society, which is secondary or auxiliary to the relationship between patriarchal society and its collective unconscious. In this relationship the counsellor/woman represents an object used in the construction and maintenance of a defence mechanism. This positioning of women as object has parallels to the scenario described by Irigaray (1985a) who described women/the feminine as a form of currency used by men to achieve status in relationship with other men. The shift to psychoanalytical perspective here constructs a scenario where the analysis of Rose (1989) is no longer relevant. When the power practices

of society are constructed as being ultimately self reflexive the hierarchy which Rose (1989) based his arguments on is not present in the same way.

The first story about power relations contained in my discussions in Chapter Seven is the story of the deconstructionist counsellor, the counsellor who, like the counsellor as double agent, uses duality or multiplicity as a mechanism of resistance. The deconstructionist counsellor functions in a radically different way to that described by Rose (1989). This counsellor does not attempt to normalise clients by changing their behaviour but seeks to normalise the behaviour by facilitating access to alternative cultural perspectives. I categorise this way of working as a form of resistance because in my experience both counsellor and client are fully aware of what the mainstream or dominant perspective is, and the option to attempt to normalise the client to that culture is always present, but is rejected.

This illustrates the theme that speaks to me in the power stories contained in Chapter Seven, and that is a theme of the counsellor turning away from society, turning back to herself, returning to her clients.

The next story about power relations in Chapter Seven is contained in my concluding comments on the relationship between disciplinary power practices and sovereign power practices. This is a power relation on a different level, one located within academia, which I experienced the impact of as I tried to make sense of stories of resistance. I argued that the failure of Foucault (1995) to acknowledge the operations of sovereign power in the modern context, and the uncritical import of his ideas into the theory of social constructionism, had the effect of suppressing ideas and talk about resistance, and I experienced that as oppressive. If the disciplinary narrative was the only story about power relations we had access to then it made no sense to speak of resistance. It was as if Foucault (1995) had explained the nature of power operations to us and enhanced our understanding of the same purely for the purpose of strengthening our powerlessness. This interpretation constructs the adoption of the disciplinary narrative as the only explanation of power practices as a power and control device in itself, colluding with the state.

If I assume that there always have been persons who were considered as being capable of being 'responsible' and persons who were considered to be incapable in this regard, and I think that this is quite a safe assumption, then it would follow that there always have been control practices which worked through indoctrination into cultural norms as well as other more obvious control practices. It puzzles me as to why Foucault (1995), Rose (1989) and many social constructionist authors since, have ignored the 'irresponsible ones', the ones on whom control must be enforced from outside because they have no 'self control', that is to say no 'self discipline. To my way of thinking classifying (some) people in this way has always been a feature of our society, constructing a class of persons for whom the indoctrination process might be said to have failed, a failure which is usually attributed to the characteristics of the individual concerned.

I wonder if this is an instance of cultural blindness? Did all those authors live in uniform cultures where everyone was 'responsible'? Did they not have colleagues friends or family who were at various times constructed as 'inferiors' or 'outlaws'? Or, in a parallel to the phallogocentric outlook, did those authors consider that even if those other, incapable ones did exist, then they were not normal and did not need to be taken into account. This is a rather paradoxical scenario to be proposing for authors who (purport to) acknowledge that normality is socially constructed.

Or, to adopt the psychoanalytical perspective again, is this an instance where all persons could be considered to be both responsible and irresponsible, that is to be indoctrinated, but imperfectly so. It would follow then that the society would 'split and project' and acknowledge only its responsible-ness, the disciplinary narrative, and project its irresponsible-ness, the sovereign narrative, onto a particular sub-population where it could be contained and controlled. In Chapter Seven I refer to some sub-populations who are more likely to be subject to sovereign power practices.

The stories about power relations contained in my analysis of the unyielding counsellor are stories about the counsellor taking back power over her work practise by choosing to leave

work situations where she experiences oppressive power and control. This is a story of a person making changes so as to avoid being subject to sovereign power practices. I decided that this was the untellable story because the idea of a woman who is capable of being unyielding is untellable in patriarchal society, or at least untellable if she wants to continue to be constructed as a woman. I think that female persons can be unyielding but they run the risk of being punished for being so, by being stripped of any claims to womanhood, without being allowed into manhood, either, so they are left with nothing, bereft of the currency of gender construction.

I think there is another scenario which could make this story untellable, this time untellable to me as analyst, and that is that the retreat, the turning back, the taking back power process here is actually a movement from a location where both disciplinary power and sovereign power practices are operating to a location where only disciplinary power practices operate. Is this a 'back to square one' scenario? Is this a back to the 'good old days/bad old days' scenario? Has the analysis of Rose (1989) 'come home to roost' as they say? Has the unyielding counsellor used her strength to take me back to that place I was trying to get away from in the first place? Maybe yes and maybe no.

Disciplinary power practices are not the culture of a society, they are only the vehicle for the inscription of culture in the individual. What that process produces could be anything, depending on the nature of the culture. The unyielding counsellor would end up occupying that space Rose (1989) saw psychologists occupying if, and only if, the culture she operated from inside the counselling room, was exclusively the mainstream or dominant culture. I do not think that this is the case. As I discussed in Chapter Seven in my descriptions of the deconstructionist counsellor I believe that counsellors have access to a variety of different perspectives, and I mentioned feminist culture and abuse survivor culture as two examples. I also believe that there is such a thing as counselling culture per se, and that generally speaking, counsellors look at the world differently from the mainstream, irrespective of whether or not they are feminist or work with abuse survivors. In that sense counselling itself could be said to be a subculture.

Therefore I conclude that the analysis which Rose (1989) applies to psychologists may not be applicable to the unyielding counsellor who has moved herself into private practise and away from publicly funded counselling, not because there are no disciplinary power practices operating to construct her sense of responsibility in her work, but because the culture she is expressing/constructing in her experience of self responsibility is not (solely) the mainstream or dominant culture.

What overall conclusions might be drawn then about the power practices which construct the counsellor whose stories I have presented?

Firstly, it is quite clear to me that the counsellor operates within the culture of the autonomous individual. Although the counsellor seems to operate at times in ways which acknowledge multiple realities in relations with clients, she does not generally speaking take the social constructionist perspective, at least not with respect to the nature of her own self. In her relations with the state/the system, the counsellor places a high value on being self determining.

Secondly, another 'reality' which seems to me to be very clearly demonstrated in the various layers of stories I have presented is that the counsellor has no awareness of the operations of disciplinary power practices in those times when she experiences herself functioning as a responsible individual. At these times the counsellor experiences herself as unconstrained and free to exercise her personal judgement. This aspect of 'reality' which I have discovered/constructed here is consistent with the analyses of both Foucault (1995) and Rose (1989). The counsellor associates this type of freedom with the counselling industry prior to the restructurings and introduction of new rules and regulations which have happened over the last few years.

When the sovereign power practices of accountability were introduced the counsellor experienced herself as being subject to control practices and resented and resisted these. The counsellor considered that the control practices of accountability were the introduction

of state control, rather than a change from solely covert to both covert and overt power practices by the state in its relations with counsellors.

The strategic withdrawal of the unyielding counsellor to a location where accountability practices were minimised was experienced by the counsellor as a move back to a location of freedom and personal responsibility.

I consider that it is possible that, at those times when the counsellor experiences herself as having the freedom to be responsible, the counsellor is functioning in a way which is consistent with the analysis of Rose (1989), however, this would be dependant on the counsellor operating exclusively within the mainstream or dominant culture in her relations with clients. When the counsellor utilises a variety of different perspectives in her work, and at times uses this cultural diversity to construct acceptance for behaviours which the mainstream might otherwise construct as problem, then I do not think it can be said that she is colluding with the dominant culture in the production of normal individuals.

Counsellors Narratives Around Changes In Their Profession Research Project

Information Sheet

My name is Kathrine Townshend. I am a counsellor in private practise in Blenheim and a masters student at Massey University. I am currently undertaking a narrative research project looking at those aspects of the relationships between counsellors and the various institutions which employ and/or regulate counsellors which are reflected in counsellors talk about being a counsellor with respect to the issues expectations, rules and constraints.

It has been my experience that over the last 5 to 10 years there has been a profound change in the counselling industry in the form of an increase in the number and specificity of the regulations and other formalised requirements which employers, ethical bodies, registration authorities and funding agencies may now use to scrutinise counsellors.

I am interested to know if counsellors feel scrutinised or constrained to practice in certain ways. I will be collecting information by talking with consenting counsellors and tape recording those conversations. The audio tapes I collect will be transcribed to produce the text I will use for my analysis. The identity of participating counsellors will be protected by the use of pseudonyms in the transcribed text. The audio tapes will be wiped following transcription.

This research is interpretive in nature which means that my analysis must necessarily contain a reflection of my own personal engagement with the text. In addition, the ideas of narrative theory on which this project is based recognise that production and maintenance of narratives are not functions of an individual alone, and consequently both the narratives I read in the text and the narratives I use in my sense making are part of a wider cultural and social context.

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Counsellors Narratives Around Changes In Their Profession

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.
(The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project).

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

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