Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Contextualising a Problematic Relationship between Narrative Therapy and Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Evaluation in Psychology

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Psychology

at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Robert Stephen Busch

2011
Abstract

This thesis problematises a conflict between two discourses: narrative therapy and evidence-based psychotherapy evaluation in psychology. To answer the research question of how narrative therapy can be evaluated, I contextualise both discourses by historically situating them in and through a genealogical examination. Narrative therapy is a postmodern therapy that draws from a diverse history of knowledge involving a range of interpretativist theoretical influences that are resistances to positivist social science. In contrast, evidence-based practice in psychology, the latest model of evidence-based psychotherapy evaluation, is modelled from evidence-based medicine. Evidence-based practice is understood as an improved evaluation model from the empirically-supported treatment movement, and operates within a positivist philosophy that privileges objective methodology over interpretative research approaches. A genealogy enables a power relationship between narrative therapy and evidence-based psychotherapy evaluation to be made visible that indicates an incommensurable conflict (a differend) due to their divergent philosophies on the formation and practice of human knowledge (epistemology). However, a genealogy also enables a fragmentation of the meaning of evaluation and narrative therapy and in doing so pluralises the meaning of evaluation, narrative therapy, and narrative therapy evaluation. I conclude by tentatively considering possibilities for the evaluation of narrative therapy while problematising them within (and reflecting on) the differend between narrative therapy and evidence-based psychotherapy evaluation in psychology.
I wish to acknowledge the theorists whose work I have been able to draw on to form this thesis: Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, Erving Goffman, Victor Turner, Barbara Myerhoff, Clifford Geertz, Jerome Bruner, Edward Bruner, Gregory Bateson, Egon Guba, Patti Lather, Yvonna Lincoln, Derek Hook, and Nikolas Rose, among the few that constitute this thesis. I acknowledge that their works made this thesis possible.

I wish to thank all of those people who inspired me to write this thesis and to also thank those who supported my research and writing journey. Listed below are my personal acknowledgements in no particular order of preference.

Thank you to Professor Andy Lock, my primary supervisor, for helping me start out and continue this journey, and for his advice. Andy enabled me to take the Discursive Therapies paper, 175.771 Contemporary Theoretical Perspectives when starting out my thesis. It was in this paper that I came across Foucault’s work as well as the works of Bateson and Goffman. I also wish to thank Andy for his open mind and for fostering a creative space to write my thesis for which I am grateful.

I wish to thank my co-supervisor, Professor Tom Strong for his interest, guidance, wealth of knowledge on postmodernism and discursive therapy, and for including me as a part of his group of postgraduate students at the University of Calgary. I also wish to thank Tom for his valuable perspectives from both practitioner and academic positionings. I also appreciate that supervising at a distance (from Canada) is fraught with time-consuming emails so I am grateful to Tom for the time that he spent on email conversations and feedback.

I am grateful to Dr Pete Branney for conversations on discourse, epistemology, and for his laughter and company.

I would also like give a big thanks to Dr Leigh Coombes for conversations relating to narrative.

Thanks also to Leith Pugmire for sharing thoughts on and interests in narrative therapy earlier on.

I wish to thank Morgan Booker for conversations on Foucault’s works.

I also like to thank, and am grateful to, Associate Professor Mandy Morgan for enabling me to continue to focus on my thesis alongside my employment commitments
and for inspiring me to appreciate the importance of qualitative, postmodern research again from way back when I was an honours student.

I also wish to give thanks to Dr Brian Tuck for many conversations that I think both of us reflected on our own views and with each other about Foucault, discourse, the body, and Foucaultian interpretations of the body – not to mention various interesting issues in and between critical and clinical psychology. Brian (and Nietzsche) made me appreciate more the role of the body and think of its connection in relation to Foucault’s genealogical writings.

Thank you to Amy Aldridge for enabling conversations on organising content and for reminding me of my goal.

I wish to thank Kirsti Chapman for her support and friendship, and for conversations related to the content of this thesis including psychopathology, therapy, narrative, and liminality, among many others.

Thank you to Nietzsche and Foucault for your work on genealogy, and thank you to Lyotard for your thoughtful writings on the differend and postmodernism. Thank you for enabling me to identify, contextualise, characterise, and understand a problematic power relationship (a differend) rather than to ignore, ‘transcend’, or trivialise it.

Thank you to all of my friends and colleagues for your encouragement, patience, and support. Thank you for being patient and accommodating while I researched and wrote.

Finally, thank you to my family – to Mum and to Kevin, and to my Nana and to Allen, who have supported me and have been incredibly patient throughout my studies and who I am looking forward to spending more time with.
# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... III

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...................................................................................................... IV

TABLE OF CONTENTS ......................................................................................................... VII

INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................................... 1
  (Re)Locating the Issue of Narrative Therapy and Evaluation ........................................... 3
  Overview .......................................................................................................................... 5

CHAPTER 1  PROBLEMATISATION .................................................................................. 9
  Competing Paradigms of the ‘Truth’ of Psychotherapy Evaluation .................................... 9
  The Present State of Affairs of Psychotherapy Evaluation in Psychology ......................... 13
  Narrative Therapy: Dissent on the Apparent Consensus of Evaluation ............................... 18
  A Problematisation of a Differend formed from My Experience ......................................... 21
    Problematisation as a Strategy for Critical Historical Research ....................................... 32
    Reflecting on Formulating the (or an Emergence of) Research Question(ings) ................ 37
    A Location / Disclosure of My Values and a Reflection on My Experiences of Evaluation in Psychology ................................................................................................. 39
  Has the Relation between Evaluation and Narrative Therapy been addressed in Psychology? .......................................................................................................................... 44
  The Research Question(ing) ............................................................................................ 47

CHAPTER 2  GENEALOGY AS A METHODOLOGY AND A READING PRACTICE: TRANSVERTING THE EVIDENTIARY ............................................................... 49
  Genealogy from Archaeology ............................................................................................ 51
    Discontinuities in History ............................................................................................... 51
    Rupturing Humanist and Modernist Progressivism ......................................................... 52
    Conceptualising Relations between Discourse, Knowledge, and Power to Disrupt a Unified Concept/Practice .......................................................... 54
  Disrupting Truth Regimes ................................................................................................. 58
  Genealogy as Dissociative Transversion of the Evidentiary ............................................... 59
    A Dissociative Research Approach ............................................................................... 59
    Contingency and Conditions of Possibility ..................................................................... 61
    Identifying Contingent Discursive Practices: Subjugated Knowledges, Descent, and Emergence ......................................................................................... 63
  Applying Genealogy in the Context of This Thesis ............................................................ 65
  Collection and Analysis of Documents as Genealogical Method ......................................... 66
  Critiquing and Transforming My Disciplinary Location – Psychology: Genealogy and Reflexivity ................................................................................................. 68
  A Reflection on Genealogy ............................................................................................... 70
  Afterthought: Genealogy and (Transverting) Validity ....................................................... 71
  Coda ............................................................................................................................... 73

CHAPTER 3  TRACING THE THEORETICAL DESCENT (AND EMERGENCE) OF NARRATIVE THERAPY ......................................................................................... 75
Tracing the Multiple Descents of Epistemology in Narrative Therapy as Emergent Moments of Resistance to Positivist Science ........................................ 75
Symbolic Interactionist Descent: Performance of Meaning.......................... 80
Erving Goffman: Unique Outcomes and Performing Moral Careers........ 83
Victor Turner: Performance of Meaning through Liminality/Subjunctivation.............................................................. 87
Barbara Myerhoff: Symbolic Performances and Reflexivity / Reflexive Consciousness................................................................. 90
Clifford Geertz: Textual Indeterminacy and Thick Description of Meaning......................................................................................... 93
Cybernetic Descent: Meaning through Comparison and Patterns of Interaction.............................................................................................. 96
Constructivist Descent: Narratives as Constitutive of Lived Experience ...... 101
Jerome Bruner: Modes of Thought .............................................................. 104
Edward Bruner: Narratives are Politically Constitutive............................ 108
Foucaultian Descent: Normalising Practices of Evaluation ...................... 110
Towards a Conclusion .................................................................................. 115

CHAPTER 4 TRACING THE THEORETICAL DESCENT AND EMERGENCE OF RESISTANCES TO POSITIVIST EVALUATION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES.................................................................................................................... 117
Dissociating and Pluralising Evidence-Based Evaluation................................ 119
Emergent Discontinuities in the Descent of Evaluation Theory ................. 120
Bifurcations from within Positivist Evaluation .......................................... 120
Resisting Reductionist Evaluation in the 1960s and 1970s....................... 121
Emergences of New Meanings of Evaluation ........................................... 122
Responsive Evaluation – Attending to Local Knowledges ....................... 123
Empowerment Evaluation – Fostering Self-determination....................... 125
Evaluation as Practical Hermeneutics – Critical, Practical Understanding in and through Dialogue ......................................................... 126
Fourth-Generation Evaluation – Constructing Understanding through Values and Partnerships.......................................................... 128
Towards a Conclusion .................................................................................. 131

CHAPTER 5 TRACING THE CONTEMPORARY DESCENT AND EMERGENCES OF EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPY EVALUATION IN PSYCHOLOGY ...................................................................................................... 133
Documenting and Tracing the Contemporary Descent and Emergence of Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Evaluation and its Resistances ................. 133
Governmentality .......................................................................................... 137
Events before Empirically Supported Treatments ....................................... 139
Emergence of Empirically Supported Treatments........................................ 142
Technologies of Standardisation ................................................................ 146
Technologies of Measurement and Experimental Methodolatry .............. 156
Medicalising Technologies of Disorder-focused Prescription (and Proscription) ......................................................................................... 162
Discourse of Professional Competition ..................................................... 168
Interim Summary .......................................................................................... 175
Emergence of the EST Resistance Movements ........................................... 176
Principles of Empirically Supported Interventions (PESI) ............ 177
Empirically Supported Relationships ........................................... 181
Humanistic Psychology Resistances ............................................. 183
Discourses of Counter-Conducts of Evaluation .............................. 186
Evaluation at Present: Emergence of Evidence-Based Practice in
Psychology (EBPP) ..................................................................... 193
Towards a Conclusion ................................................................. 202

CHAPTER 6   CONTEXTUALISING A GENEALOGICAL RELATIONSHIP: A
DIFFEREND ....................................................................................... 207
A Problematisation of a Differend between Narrative Therapy ‘Evaluation’
Discourse and Psychotherapy Evaluation Discourse in Psychology ...... 212
Juxtaposing Narrative Therapy Evaluation with Evidence-Based
Psychotherapy Evaluation Discourse ............................................. 215

CHAPTER 7   ADDRESSING THE DIFFEREND: TOWARDS A CONCLUSION. 241

REFERENCES .................................................................................... 251