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Why Am I Here, And What Is Here Anyway?: A Social Constructionist Window Into Clinical Psychology.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Arts
in
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Abstract

Understandings of why people enter into careers as clinical psychologists are underdeveloped. This thesis uses a social construction perspective to explore the question of how clinical psychology students explain their career choice, and in particular how expectations and understandings of a career in clinical psychology are constructed as influencing such a decision. Interview transcripts from six clinical psychology students were analysed using a combined methodology of Heideggerian hermeneutics and discourse analysis of a thematic nature. The themes developed outline how the participants constructed clinical psychology, the process of choosing such a career, related professions, what it meant to 'be' a clinical psychologist, and other peoples' perceptions of clinical psychology. The conclusion of these findings suggest the need for multidisciplinary awareness in the training of clinical psychologists, the need for an increased focus on long term career satisfaction and goal achievement, and attention to the education of the public about the role and utility of clinical psychology.

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This feels like the fun part of the thesis writing that I have been looking forward to ever since I started writing it, the opportunity to thank and appreciate all the people who have been a part of my life during the writing of this thesis.

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Why Am I Here, And What Is Here Anyway?:

A Social Constructionist Window Into Clinical Psychology.

Throughout this thesis italicised paragraphs, such as this one, are to be found on the opposing page of the main thesis document. These sections represent my thoughts and ideas around particular aspects of the work. This style of commentary, known as reflexivity (Edwards & Potter, 1992), is an integral aspect of any constructionist-based work such as this thesis. While the importance of this concept is explained further when discussing the ontology of this thesis, it is necessary for you as the reader to understand the role of this commentary from the onset. Primarily, for me, being able to be reflective over the process of writing this thesis was to contribute to other students some of the considerations required in writing in such a style. Secondly and more commonly, reflexivity serves to make the research process transparent for the reader to maximise the validity of the research (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). By seeing my reasoning, and the assumptions behind why I have chosen to conduct my research in particular ways, it is hoped that you as the reader will be in a better position to judge the merits of this thesis. Additionally, reflexivity can provide a forum for the author to communicate with the reader in a more informal manner than is often allowed within an academic document, creating a sense of engagement between the reader and the myself and making the thesis more enjoyable to read.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Why people choose to work in the field of mental health is a question that appears to have been increasingly asked in recent times (Hargrove, Fox, & Goldman, 1991). High staff turnover, an identified need to know what expectations people bring to the field, and people's understanding of their roles are all elements that have motivated inquiry into what the motivations of mental health workers might be (Lazar, Cohen, & Guttman, 1995). While other disciplines such as social work have turned an eye upon themselves, psychology appears to be a field that steadfastly remains disinclined to understand what attraction it holds for those seeking it as a career (Murphy & Halgin, 1995; Ragusin, Abramowitz, & Winter, 1981).

Earlier studies that have examined the expectations of social work students have indicated conflicts between students' expectations and their experiences of the workplace (Lazar, Cohen, & Guttman, 1995). Such findings have given some direction in addressing issues of retaining trained people. While psychology shares similar issues, particularly in areas such as mental health (Murphy & Halgin, 1995), no similar research has been conducted that approaches the question from a social construction ontology. Being such a new and emerging discipline, psychology is continually evolving (Garfield & Kurtz, 1976). It would seem that an understanding of how people recently introduced to psychology perceive and understand the discipline, is a vital and necessary reflection of where psychology is heading and what the future shape might herald (Murphy & Halgin, 1995). At the same time knowledge of what expectations and needs people bring to psychology allows increased tailoring of training and employment conditions to reflect such emphases (Stedman, Neff, & Morrow, 1995). This thesis entails such a focus, and consists of an investigation into what perceived reasons led students to choose psychology as a career. Associated with this, and necessary to make sense of such a question, is an exploration of students' understandings of clinical psychology as a career path.

This thesis is primarily orientated towards clinical psychology students' constructions of

clinical psychology. The data of analysis was obtained from interviews with six clinical psychology students. Their constructions of psychology were developed from an analysis of these interview transcripts. A review of the literature that formed the basis for this thesis to be developed is presented; this outline is then followed by an explanation of the methodology and theory behind the thesis research design. The remainder of this thesis is followed by the analysis of the transcripts, which is divided into five chapters containing the main themes of: What is Psychology, Choosing Psychology, Differences With Other Professions, Being a Psychologist and Views of Others. A discussion of these themes in the context of the rationale for this thesis is then provided.

1.1.1 Literature

A review of the literature reveals remarkably little investigation into the motivations of psychologists. Despite claims of increased interest in the few articles that were found, little evidence was located to support this (Murphy & Halgin, 1995). This seems rather ironic considering the amount of research psychology, as a discipline, conducts on others. Research has been conducted on the motivations of social workers and this provides some point of reference in understanding how motivations towards mental health professions can be accessed and understood (Lazar, Cohen, & Guttman, 1995; Lyons, Vale, & Grimwood, 1995). However, this material is largely quantitative in nature, which raises certain conceptual concerns. The methodology in these quantitative investigations, particularly the focus on different scales and measures from organizational psychology, which have been adapted for the purpose, indicate possible limitations to the utility of such research. While these articles and studies can provide a gauge of social workers' responses, little can be derived from them without an idea of what concepts such as social work (Lyons, Vale, & Grimwood, 1995), commitment (Lazar, Cohen, & Guttman, 1995) and job satisfaction (Hargrave, Fox, & Goldman, 1991) mean to the participants themselves. Of the research that exists concerning mental health workers, possibly the closest in focus to this study was a study conducted in Australia by Mohr and Luscri (1995) investigating social workers' orientation and world beliefs. However, this study was quantitative and the focus was on the measurement of predefined constructs, which fails to address the participants' constructions of events. .

Career Motivation

Psychology has conducted some studies that more directly addressed the concept of career motivation of psychologists (e.g. Murphy & Halgin, 1995; Ragusin, Abramowitz, & Winter, 1981). Of these, only one used qualitative methodology (Ragusin, et. al., 1981). Ragusin, Abramowitz, & Winter (1981) used a qualitative process within a psychodynamic framework to examine therapists' family history for levels of dysfunction. It was theorized that this family dysfunction was motivational to the individual to seek a career in psychotherapy. This study found strong support for this pattern of career motivation in therapists; but as their results were directly opposite to an earlier study that found low levels of family dysfunction (Henry, Sims, & Spray, 1973), further research appears to be warranted (Ragusin et. al., 1981). Another study used quantitative survey methods to collect data (Murphy & Halgin, 1995); again, while useful, without the qualitative research to outline personal meaning, measures of prevalence and occurrence have little relevance (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The Availability of 'Psychology' for Research?

This lack of available research raises the question of how open psychology is as a discipline to investigation. Qualitative researchers often emphasize that some facets of human behaviour or life are unavailable to measures such as those used by sociologists and anthropologists (Silverman, 1985). Is psychology one such area? It seems noteworthy that the majority of studies criticizing the ideology and values of psychology have originated from sources external to psychology (Guggenbühl-Craig, 1971). While it is possible that this results from acknowledged problems with interpretive issues arising when studying one's own culture or group, methods exist to compensate for such bias (Silverman, 1985). It is difficult to deny that such an external focus would serve to maintain the predominant power structures and hierarchy operating with the discipline. It would be an interesting additional effect of this proposal to discover what degree psychology, as a discipline, was open to self-scrutiny. Possibly, this study could be useful to draw conclusions regarding the lack of research in this area.

It seems interesting to note that for many, the term psychology, without any specific definition, refers by default to clinical psychology. It was not until I began to provide such a focus to my own project, in terms of defining participants and maintaining clarity in my writing, that I noticed that the literature I had been reading predominantly referred to clinical psychology as simply psychology. Such a bias in the consideration of the diversity of psychology was also prevalent within the groups of my peers and friends. Unless someone had a specific interest in another facet of psychology, such as industrial or organisational psychology, the term psychology referred to the area of therapeutic psychology typically occupied by clinical psychology. This idea of clinical psychology being a default referent for the term psychology is one that I explore at different points throughout this project, as it has been an area of considerable personal insight.

As I write this I am aware that now this project serves another purpose and that is to open in some ways the exclusivity of clinical psychology for those who are not part of the profession. By the definition provided above, and due to the selection processes of the respective diploma programmes the field of clinical psychology is by nature a rather exclusive one. Without any consideration of traits, ability or knowledge, the simple fact of limited numbers of students being selected for the programmes each year limits who can and cannot become a clinical psychologist.

At the time this project was undertaken and planned, I was attempting, along with several friends, to gain entry to a clinical psychology programme. Some of my friends were successful in their applications, others, like myself, were not. At this point, part of the sense of disappointment accompanying a failure to achieve what had been a long-term goal was undeniably incorporated into this project. However, over time my career has moved on, and looking back, I don't see that my goals and expectations of a rewarding career within psychology have been in any way disadvantaged. This also appears true for those of my friends who did not gain entry into the clinical psychology diploma programmes; when I hear them talk of their jobs and roles that they currently hold, I think back to their transcripts and notice that they are doing exactly what they wanted to be doing. So the question arises again, what is clinical psychology that makes it different to other facets of the diversity that is psychology?

1.1.2 Clinical Psychology

What we understand psychology to be today contains considerable diversity in application and understanding. In order to obtain a specific understanding of the term for this study, the particular area of clinical psychology has been chosen. This serves both as a focus for the study, maintaining practical limitations on the size and scope of the project, and also to tie the project to my personal reasons for wanting to explore such a topic. Clinical psychology for the purpose of this paper is defined by the nature of the processes and training required to become part of the profession. In this instance it refers to the practice of psychologists who have completed recognised postgraduate diploma courses in clinical psychology at a New Zealand universities. This is intended to make a clear demarcation from other professionals fulfilling similar roles in the community. With this in mind then, the term psychology is used throughout this paper to refer to clinical psychology. Where this broad generalisation impedes clear discussion regarding different groups of psychologists or perceptions of psychology, the distinction to the group regarded as clinical psychologists will be made explicit.

1.1.3 Early Shapes

In early discussions hypothesising how this project might take place and be shaped, I talked to my friends and peers about their motivations to become clinical psychologists. What developed was an awareness that most of the people either studying clinical psychology, or wanting to, envisioned quite different careers for themselves. This formed both a discrepancy with the literature and with each individual story, as the presentations of what psychology represented often failed to allow for such diversity within the field. As was stated earlier, the interconnectedness of expectations of psychology as a career with motivations for studying towards such a career made an exploration of why my peers wanted to become clinical psychologists an excellent starting point for understanding some of this diversity.

These principles were, like the rest of the thesis, themselves a product of changes in my ongoing understanding of what was important to me in research and how I understood knowledge to be produced and validated.

1.2 Research Perspectives and Considerations

In approaching this study it became essential for me to consider how I believed the world could be understood. This seemed particularly relevant as some of my concerns with previous research, such as that by Murphy & Halgin (1995), was that it was based upon traditional positivist based research assumptions. While serving to form the basis to originate new discourses that challenge such studies, and spawn further interest in the area, such as this thesis, the assumptions inherent in these traditional approaches did not seem to encompass the diversity I felt existed within clinical psychology students. I view positivistic research as being particularly problematic when investigating the types of concepts - such as motivation and expected career satisfaction - that this thesis has attempted to research. My concern originated from the philosophical belief at the heart of positivist research assumptions, which claim that objective investigations into what comprises reality are possible (Kuhn, 1970). The effect of such a belief is to often refute or neglect the perspective currently receiving credence, which is that knowledge and reality are embedded within a social context, and that any research conducted is a function of the social community it originates within (Kuhn, 1970). It is anticipated that, like much of traditional research, these studies may have more reflected the researchers undisclosed values and beliefs than an understanding of the socially generated interaction involved in the study (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). As one of my goals in the writing of this thesis was to provide an alternative view to the existing stereotypes of what psychology was, the importance of recognising the social nature of the research itself seemed an important element to include within the design of the thesis itself.

Within this idea of my needing to find other ways of exploring the world, which could compete academically with the dominant positivistic approach, several principles were available that I wanted to encompass within this thesis:

- A recognition that there is no singular truth waiting to be discovered
- That any task, such as research is a progressive and dynamic process
- That my research respects the knowledge and involvement of the parties who provided the material that this thesis is based upon.

1.2.1 Social Construction

The overarching perspective that seemed to best fit with these principles, and allowed an exploration of the issues I was interested in, was that of social construction. As an ontological framework, social construction represents the ideology that reality is fabricated from the social interactions operating between people (Leuenberger & Pinch, 2000). Typically the interactions perceived as functional are contained within language, however, a broad notion of what comprises the functional text constructing reality is advocated by some theorists such as Derrida (Nuyen, 1994). Social construction as a paradigm for research arose from philosophical origins generally critical in their intent, which had the purpose of showing how dominant theories were based upon assumptions based within cultural ideologies, rather than existing in fact (Coulter, 2000). To show how, as individuals within societal frameworks, we use language to construct versions of reality and events.

The tradition and ontology of social construction seemed perfect in addressing my personal beliefs and my purposes in conducting this thesis. Both in allowing multiple truths and realities across social situations, and providing a framework orientated towards critiquing the assumptions behind different stereotypes and concepts of psychology, social construction as a guiding ontology contributes substantially, I feel, to the validity of this thesis.

Under this framework two methodological tools seemed useful in the approach I wanted to take. The first of these, discourse analysis, I viewed as a way of unpacking the constructions present in the participants' dialogue. The second is a hermeneutic approach as conceptualised by Heidegger, which presented a framework for viewing the interaction between my own perspectives and that suggested by the text (Packer, 1985).

For me discourse analysis represented the lens or viewing glass I intended to use to explore participants' understandings of motivation and expectations of psychology. However, I found the literature detailing how to actually conduct research using a discourse analysis approach rather vague at best. What I found was, I had a tool that could show me things in the world, it could help me develop a picture or image of how people saw the field of psychology, but there was no users manual. It was this lack of knowledge of what to do with the tool I had, which led me to integrate this style of analysis with the approach characterised in Heideggian hermeneutics.

1.2.2 Discourse Analysis

The first of these approaches, discourse analysis is a methodology strongly associated with the development of social construction as a viable research ontology (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Some confusion is common around the term discourse analysis as a number of diverse traditions and perspectives share the term to refer to quite distinct practices, each differing on often substantial ideological and philosophical underpinnings (Potter & Wetherell, 1990). The tradition of discourse analysis I have chosen to work with in this thesis is one advocated for within social psychology by the theorists Potter and Wetherell (1987). In general this tradition uses the term discourse analysis to refer to the process of analysing text to make explicit the assumptions and underpinning social aspects of any text.

Using this approach I have analysed for the function of the text at different points, examining how different structures and themes are used to in a performative sense to achieve an particular action (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Principally in this thesis I focused on the actions of persuasion and representation as this is connected to the function of construction, where the participants are using different shared understandings and pre-established social resources to construct a particular understanding of 'what psychology is'. Analysis of this activity is the backbone of this thesis and the presentation of the different ways the participants' text represents psychology and psychologists forms the majority of analysis. The third manner of analysis present in this thesis is examining for variation, or contradictory points, in the text. For the most part this form of analysis was performed when it clearly highlighted the changing activities of the text and the way that the same resources were utilised in achieving different functions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). These elements of examining text for function, construction, and variation are what Potter and Wetherell (1990) describe as the key elements of discourse analysis.

1.2.3 Hermeneutics

The second methodological approach that I have included in this thesis is that of Heideggian hermeneutics. Hermeneutics originated as a method of textual analysis for working with the meaning contained within biblical texts (Packer, 1985). In utilising an hermeneutic approach, as one would imagine for a methodology aligned with social construction, the researcher attempts to understand the context that text is situated within. Packer describes Heideggian hermeneutics as being characterised by three modes of engagement with the world.

The first is the ready-to-hand mode, which is the holistic manner in which people perform day-to-day tasks. In this mode the performance of a task is not broken into elements or components, like catching an object, the task is performed naturally as a whole. It is hard to imagine how the task of catching a ball, for example, could be broken down into discrete elements with objective consideration of each aspect and still function to achieve the required task, in this case to actually catch the ball.

The second of Heidegger's modes is the unready-to-hand mode. In this state of awareness the performer cannot naturally complete the task, and awareness is required to re-examine the task and reframe the task for its completion. An example of such an act in this mode might be catching a ball that has been poorly thrown. The actor is required to realise that they are not going to be able to catch the ball from where they are, to decide what they can do to still achieve the task of catching the ball, and then moving so that they can. The key point to this mode is that it is not distinct from the actual task, but rather a natural and instinctive problem solving aspect of the main task.

The final mode discussed by Heidegger is that of present-at-hand. In this mode of awareness the actor is required to step back from the task itself and reflect on the process and performance, this is a mode incompatible with the actual performance of the task. An example might be when a sportsperson watches video footage of their performance and critiques and analyses the different aspects of the task. According to Packer (1985), this mode is the one that most positivist based research operates within.

Heideggian hermeneutics as a research methodology then, involves a movement from the present-at-hand mode to the ready-at-hand mode. The writing of this thesis is performed in the ready-to-hand mode, however, the resolution and planning of the thesis often necessitated a movement to the unready-at-hand. The process of reflecting and appraising the progress of the thesis, the inclusion of theoretical frameworks, and the editing process was done in the present-at-hand mode.

One concern arising as a function of my adopting this approach was Heidegger's view that the only mode of value in enquiry was the ready-to-hand mode, that research should only concern itself with peoples day-to-day functioning. This is a concern as this thesis has examined interview data, a context that Heidegger describes as predominantly accessing the present-at-hand mode, since it asks people to reflect on their day-to-day lives. However, the focus of analysis was the functions of the text in the interview. That is, the concern of this thesis was less on the thoughts and content that the participants presented, but rather the style and shape of the text. This focus on the activity of how the participants would frame and construct psychology when asked, maintains the analysis activity within the bounds of Heidegger's ready-to-hand mode of engagement, which Packer (1985) describes as the starting place for hermeneutic inquiry.

The other modes of engagement are primarily occupied by the reflexive component of the thesis. The unready-to-hand mode is often the focus of the reflexive comments, however, these comments themselves are made in the present-at-hand mode and represent my own attempts to detach myself from the task and reflect upon the process I am engaged within.

Where I found the hermeneutic approach most useful was in its approach to conducting a research enquiry. This provided a non-linear model for investigation which was extremely flexible and permissive in style, and which also encompassed an appreciation for the mutual involvement of the participants and myself that I felt respected the contributions of all parties.

This non-linear basis for investigation is characterised in the way that the research direction and focus is likely to adapt and change as different levels of inquiry and understanding are derived from the perspectives offered by the participants (Misgeld & Jardine, 1989). This

circular approach to inquiry resembles the writing of this introduction, in that knowledge of my own perspective in constructing a meaning for myself alters as I write (Packer, 1989). In moving between Heidegger's ready-to-hand mode and unready-to-hand mode in the writing and analysis of the essay, I find new awareness arising from the using of such concepts (Packer, 1985).

Essential this entails a very circular process in the acquisition of meaning, as knowledge gained now is colouring how I see my earlier position, which in turn provides me with a different sense of meaning to progress from (Packer & Addison, 1989). This circularity makes the presentation of information in a traditional academic format somewhat problematic. While concepts and understandings such as Heidegger's modes of engagement have been used in the writing of this thesis, at certain points I did not have the use of these concepts; yet the knowledge of them affects even those points. This thesis represents a process, not a progression; though progress occurred between stages, it was seldom linear. In an effort to provide a sense of continuity to the reader, I have structured information in a flow from my own internal meaning, to that of the external meaning of the participants in the proposal.

As an approach to developing a methodology to answer the questions I felt I was going to investigate, and to explore the concepts and issues that might arise, the flexibility offered by the hermeneutic approach was attractive. Sharing with phenomenology a belief in the creation of meaning and reality through human consciousness, hermeneutics supports a circularity of investigation that seems perfect for the investigation as suggested by this thesis (Packer & Addison, 1989). The current availability of research in the area proposed by this paper does not lend itself to support any conclusions substantially enough to construct a hypothesis or rigid theory that would be testable through quantitative methodology. Even qualitative methodology based upon phenomenological paradigms does not provide a substantial enough base to enable the initial exploration of this area. Many such methodologies, such as grounded theory, demand support from the literature as a launching platform for the initial approaches that the researcher will pursue (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A hermeneutic approach will allow an investigation to proceed requiring only that the researcher has their own understanding of the concepts they wish to investigate (Packer, 1989). From this understanding, although it

At this point I began to consider my own position within the text. Throughout the thesis I have tended to separate myself from the participants, however, at the time of the interviews I was in a very similar place to them in terms of goals and mutual understandings of clinical psychology. In some respects I feel this need for separation was a reflection of my objective scientific baggage, in others it was an attempt to promote the participants as authors of their own – yet I have taken their words to create a story of my own, so this is a false humility in a sense. This is not a consideration I feel I have resolved. While I have maintained the separation in the body of the thesis, I have presented myself substantially throughout the thesis in my reflections. My hope is that this contributes to the readers' recognition of the mutual roles that both the participants and myself play in the authorship of this thesis.

may be quite vague, the researcher can begin to explore other people's reality through interpretation of the meaning within their discourse (Packer, 1989). The explorer then alters their original conceptualisation based on the new understanding they have developed (Packer & Addison, 1989). If there is a method to hermeneutics it is the method of self-awareness, in both the researcher and those who embody the concepts being explored (Misgeld & Jardine, 1989).

Allowing the Participants' World

Additional to the positive points already noted, a hermeneutic approach for this investigation appealed for a number of reasons that are tied to ontological and epistemological values (Bleicher, 1982). This approach allows the world of the participants to be explored as fully as possible, while at the same time allowing the researcher to develop the questions they brought to the study. By allowing the participants' worlds and meanings to be knowable, the nature of investigation is substantially expanded to include areas of subjective knowledge that were difficult at best to explore from other paradigms (Packer & Addison, 1989). At the same time, hermeneutic approaches to interviewing and investigation demand more interaction from the researcher. Enhancing the status of the participants' knowledge, along with the belief of necessary researcher involvement meets several personal needs that many other models of inquiry have not answered (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Many of these qualities for me can be refined down it seeming to be a more respectful approach to exploring another person's knowledge (Oakley, 1993).

The Blend

For me these two methodological styles, discourse analysis and hermeneutics, sit together remarkably well. However, it is necessary to mention that the blend of these two perspectives is somewhat theoretically loaded, as a degree of controversy surrounds the compatibility of deconstruction and hermeneutic enquiry (Nuyen, 1994). Primarily the incompatibility that may exist between these approaches is characterised by the ongoing debate between two of the leading theorists for each tradition, Jacques Derrida for the deconstruction perspective and Hans-Georg Gadamer as an advocate for hermeneutic inquiry. The basis for this debate,

however, seems to principally originate from Derrida's views on the objectives of hermeneutics. Nuyen (1994) presents Derrida as exaggerating the differences between these two traditions by claiming that hermeneutics seeks to determine a finite understanding. My own interpretations of this debate, and the manner in which I have approached the hermeneutic component of this thesis do not associate with such a claim, however. In fact, one of the significant attractions of the hermeneutic approach for me has been the integral concept of how any understanding is limited in the sense that it can ever reach a final truth. While I have taken some tools from the Heideggian hermeneutic approach, the goal of truth has not been adopted, if it indeed is a component of this perspective, a claim I am uncertain of. Like Gadamer (in Nuyen, 1994), I see the way that a hermeneutic understanding is acquired is a cyclic process which has no end; hermeneutics appeals in the way that this supports my own disbelief in a universal truth to be discovered. What has been harder for me was to maintain a vocabulary that conveyed the relative and momentary nature what I have said within my thesis. For me then, discourse analysis and hermeneutics support each other in the manner that they allow an exploration of our reality placed within a social, historical, and political moment.

Once I had determined to attempt the integration of these methodologies, several questions arose that needed to be considered in the next step of formulating how the thesis would develop.

- How I would address the need for transparency and self-reflection in the thesis
- Could I approach the questions I wished to answer as completely in either qualitative or quantitative methodologies?
- What role would the participants have in my research and how would they be situated in the finished thesis? Associated with this concern was the question of how I would place myself within the text as a participant in the processes and constructions I was researching?

In considering reflexivity I feel that in many ways I am still struggling with the purpose, and role, played by these additions to the text. While I want to make the reader aware of different processes underlying my writings, I also like the idea of having an opportunity to explore different relationships between the reader and myself compared to that commonly regarded as suitable in academic writing.

At the time of writing this I am also unsure of where different sections will fit together in the final draft of this work; for example my explanation of reflexivity would seem to make an awkward opening page, yet the explanation of the accompanying text is necessary at quite an early point for the reader to understand it's purpose. By necessity then these accompaniments provide an opportunity to fragment the myth of linearity, which is inherent in any coherent piece of writing. This opportunity then allows me to present understandings and reflections in a manner that describes some of the process and amplifies the circular nature of the project in a way that is difficult to manage in the structure of a thesis.

1.2.4 Reflexivity

The first of these concerns, that of the issue of self-reflection and transparency in the thesis and research process, I have tried to address under the concept of reflexivity. As part of the hermeneutic process there was a need to convey to the reader an appreciation of the basis behind which I attributed particular meaning to different aspects of the research process, the analysis process, and the participants' text. This concept is also seen as integral to the validity of discourse analysis in making the process transparent and allowing the reader to critically evaluate for themselves the positions taken by the analyst. The conveyance of this internal meaning, understanding, and awareness of the participants' discourse is one that constantly evolved through different stages of the project, similar to my understandings of the project goals and objectives.

The term reflexivity refers to an explicit consideration and self-awareness on the part of the researcher around different points in the project (Edwards & Potter, 1992). While a common tool in making the processes of discourse analysis transparent, the concept of reflexivity is the principle occurrence of Heidegger's 'present-at-hand' mode of performance in this thesis (Packer, 1985). Typically, in being reflexive, the researchers awareness of the research process is made explicit through the text. The purpose of this is to make the process of exploration seamless with the constructions of knowledge occurring within the process. The manner in which this is done is often chosen to represent the author's appreciation of their place within the text and the role of their beliefs in shaping this.

The way that I have attempted to include myself within this process and to make my reflections and considerations explicit to the reader as part of, yet separate to, the actual thesis writing is to present the reflexive aspect of this text as accompanying the prose. Therefore, throughout this thesis, my thoughts and reflections at each point have been presented on the page adjacent to that of the main text.

1.2.5 Quantitative vs. Qualitative

The second of the considerations I felt needed to be made in approaching this thesis was,

It seems to me now that my early considerations of this thesis involved a choice between quantitative or qualitative methodologies reflected some of the simplicity that matters of epistemology are dealt with in undergraduate psychology. While I see postgraduate papers as introducing a wider scope of perspectives for how the world may be understood in terms of focusing on ontology, I have found this dichotomy of quantitative versus qualitative, which was the framework my early learning taught me to frame such questions within, a difficult one to leave behind. It feels to me now, at a point of having completed much of this thesis, that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can exist under the same ontological umbrella. My position now, is that the separation is actually an ontological one and is based around what can be known, how knowledge is created, and what conclusions the researcher can validly make based upon their research. However, while simplifying the debate, the terms quantitative and qualitative do tend to convey an affiliation with certain assumptions and philosophical positions that still leaves the terms themselves useful indicators of the trends of research in New Zealand.

In some respects, and I think this is largely a retrospective appreciation of my feelings, I think that I was always going to do qualitative type research for my thesis. At the point of considering thesis ideas during my first year of Masters study I was feeling increasingly dissatisfied with the rigidity and unqualified conceit of much of the research I was reading. Through this, I developed a feeling of wanting to challenge the status quo around the acceptance of qualitative work within psychology. While this thesis is not orientated towards such a goal, I feel that every psychology student who undertakes and completes (a slightly ironic comment considering the length of time I have spent enrolled in my thesis) a qualitative thesis increases the acceptance and appreciation of this type of work and the values and beliefs that tend to accompany it.

which of the tools offered by the different traditions of qualitative and quantitative research would be most appropriate to my research questions? In my early considerations of this thesis, I tried different formulations of the idea within a quantitative survey methodology. This was predominantly a function of the learning I had experienced until that point and my lack of appreciation for viable alternative processes or ways of conceptualising the problem at hand. However, particularly once I had read some of the literature around the topic, my feelings were that quantitative conceptualisations of motivations and career lacked a certain appreciation of the personal lacked appreciation for the diversity that may exist amongst potential psychologists. Essentially, this lack focused around the differences between my personal appreciation of coming to study clinical psychology and that presented by other researchers. I began to view this difference in terms of a failure to consider the individual's interpretation of the different facets of career choice and motivation; a common criticism in positivist based quantitative research (Kuhn, 1970). The decision that quantitative methodologies would not adequately capture my ontological concerns, reframed my understanding of what can be understood through many traditional research methodologies and designs, and was an important move in the development of this work. However, being able to move beyond the values and beliefs of much of my earlier learning and the views of my peers was still problematic. Predominantly quantitative methodologies were seen as more rigorous and consequently to be preferred.

My experience of research within the university setting has been that those researchers conducting qualitative research, at least in New Zealand, tend to be in the minority. This conveys to me a sense of tension within psychology as a discipline, though psychology is by no means alone in this. Many aspects of psychology have examined and developed theories for how people, in groups and in isolation, glean and organize information from the world around them. When quantitative methodology is expounded as a preferable paradigm over alternative means of investigating the world, there is a sense of rejecting these findings (Packer & Addison, 1989). Through developing my understanding of the concepts that I was interested in, and learning about the different ways that knowledge can be understood, the options offered by qualitative methodologies became the only viable way I could see this thesis accessing the data I wished to work with.

As I write this I have had an almost light bulb reframing of my purpose in this thesis, well more in my analysis I guess. Initially I wanted to know why people wanted to be psychologists and then began to wonder what psychology was. This sense of getting an appreciation for what clinical psychology is has become the primary focus of my thesis, yet during analysis I have found myself trying to present all of the ideas and themes present in the participants' text; many of which lay outside the scope of this idea. The writing of my original intentions and goals at this point, a long way down the track of writing, has helped considerably in refocusing the process onto this area of analysis.

One friend who was good enough to proof read this thesis asked me, "was getting 'emotive' a bad thing?". To which I made a rather bemused response of "no". However, on reflection I feel I have inadvertently conveyed a sense of the traditional desire for objective research and unprotected values – I have been feeling that I should appreciate both paradigms and methodological camps equally, yet for me they are entwined with a host of issues and debates that make them weighted in my esteem of their merits. So I would like to make it clear that there is not intended to be any sense of apology in my use of the term 'emotive'. I see this comment as discussing a denial and rejection of my world views, which seems almost ludicrous to try and present as devoid of passion and emotion, so no, its definitely a good thing!

I have said that these are not my own ideas. They do represent my academic and personal perspectives on research, but I have developed them through my papers and readings from a number of areas and disciplines. This all contributes to both my interest in this direction of inquiry, and the methodology utilized in the process. While I tend towards supporting qualitative lines of inquiry over those of quantitative methods, I think it is important to note that I do not reject quantitative research, and did consider how my research questions might have been better answered under a quantitative approach. However, based upon my concerns with earlier research, and a desire to provide a more explorative outline of the discourses present in constructing psychology, qualitative methodologies seemed superior. My perspective on the division between these two styles of research is that they are complementary but different methods of research. While the theory and conceptualisation on quantitative research is open to several quite strong criticisms, qualitative research has its own weaknesses and conceptual flaws (Bleicher, 1982). Each can answer questions the other cannot even begin to ask. It is not quantitative research I reject; it is the rejection of qualitative research I find myself getting emotive over.

1.2.6 Collaboration

The last of my considerations under my methodologies was how to regard the involvement of the other people who, would in many respects, contribute significantly to the final result (Burgess, 1989). Possibly, the most obvious case is the contribution of the participating students, who have provided the material for this study. If, in the process of implementing the study discussed in this paper, I found no students willing to participate, I would not be able to answer many of the questions I wished to examine. I would have plenty to discuss, but it would not be this thesis. Through the course of this thesis I have at times chosen to refer to these people as collaborators or participants. Another perspective, however, is that they instead serve as consultants.

The idea of whose meaning is present in the final work and where ownership lies is one that I have been developing for myself throughout this project. My early ideas focused predominantly on the ownership and accurate portrayal of the participants' stories and meaning. My thoughts are now that in many ways I undervalued my influence and the place I held both within the interview process and conceptual development of the project in contributing to the shape of the stories even prior to analysis.

While it may seem that this is a semantic distinction, I feel it is an important one. I believe in the idea that each individual is an expert on their histories and the meaning held by them. However, theories arguing that we worked, or will work, together to discover this meaning also fit within my personal worldview. The structure of the in-depth interview used within this study is designed to create a forum for participants to be able to make their own meaning explicit. It is arguable whether they could have arrived at a useful sense of their meaning without this process (Seidman, 1991). At the same time, I would have had no meaning without their assistance. To this end, I do consider the project to be a collaborative work. Within an academic framework, however, it is not considered such, nor is the role of the participants considered in the manner I have outlined here. However, I feel that considerable benefits would be possible if an explicitly collaborative project was viable within work at this academic level. There are a number of entanglements and concerns with undertaking such a project, yet the wealth of meaning and the experience to be gained from the interaction with others would seem to outweigh such criticisms.

1.3 The Question

In theorising the approach and methodology best suited for this thesis some focus was required to provide a starting point for the initial research. As a way of obtaining this focus the following three principle assumptions were developed; these were:

- That students could identify particular motivating aspects of a career in psychology, and that these motivations would be interconnected to the students expectations of such a career.
- That students chose a career in psychology, which assumes the availability of choice in such an enterprise such as career path progression.
- That psychology exists as an institution; and belonging to such an institution has variable personal meaning for individual students.

I have become increasingly aware throughout the writing of this section of the thesis how much of my conception of psychology is structured around psychology as being therapeutic in nature and orientated towards being a mental health profession. Such a conceptualisation has been instrumental in the shaping of this project in terms of my personal beliefs and understandings that psychology shares considerable assumptions and values concerning mental health with other related professions. The development of such a belief has come from finding theories and knowledge claimed by psychology being pervasive and recognised within fields such as counselling and social work. This has led me to question my own choices in making psychology my path to being involved with mental health, when positive and attractive opportunities have been available to move into alternative fields.

1.3.1 Motivation

In focusing on how people arrived at university and their choice of major, specifically on the decision between psychology and other mental health fields, an initial overarching question was developed that addressed the issue at a global level (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This question was, "What motivations cause people to chose psychology and what expectations accompany such a decision?". While this is rather general question, and fails to cover many of the underlying aspects associated with such a choice, it provided a starting point to work from that was useful in discussing and researching the concept (Packer, 1985). Motivation, as used here, refers to influences that focused an individual toward a particular path, whereas expectations are desires that the individual sees as might be satisfied by a career within the discipline. Both constructs have levels within them that relate to the way that expectations provide motivation through a desire to obtain the expected benefits to the individual or to others. An example of this is found in social work students, where a study by Mohr and Luscri (1995) indicated that social work students have an active social conscience, which motivates them to achieve socially orientated benefits.

1.3.2 Vocational Choice

In many respects, such an outline resembles Astin's socio-psychological needs satisfaction in vocational choice (Jepsen, 1991). However, the constructs in this study are not as fixed as those used by Astin, and at this stage are only guides to help define the project. In addition, the field chosen as part of this study is significant in achieving an increased understanding of Astin's theory. Psychology is similar enough to other mental health professions, and yet contains enough diversity that individuals could satisfy similar needs with different career choices. Alternatively, each profession also has distinct aspects not covered by the others; why psychology is chosen over other fields is currently unclear (Jepsen, 1991).

In this sense of membership to an institution being important I have been trying to decide where the individual fits within the construction of a discourse – do individuals shape the institution or are there processes such as institutionalisation that shape the individual in the joining process.

A large part of this introduction section feels like I am answering the questions I want to answer before I talk to the participants; which sits uncomfortably with my goals for the thesis. However, many of these thoughts and definitions of key concepts would have been present in the work anyway and I hope that the manner that I have elaborated on them here adds to the clarity of my position in starting this project.

1.3.3 Psychology as an Institution

Beneath this initial guiding question existed at least two other layers; each prompted from experiences and awareness of their meaning for me as a researcher. The first of these focuses on the consideration of the discipline of psychology as an institution; asking the question, what does the institution of psychology mean to a psychology student? In addition, what does it mean to the individual for them to be part of such an institution? This concept, framed within the question of 'what is psychology?', explored how each particular institution may be experienced and understood by outsiders. What aspects are seen as attractive and appealing, and which characteristics tend to dissuade people from wanting to be part of such an institution? Also the concept of affiliation and 'being part of' an institution are concepts to be explored within this category. While such a retrospective enquiry of these understandings may not be possible, at worst the understanding of the newest members to the institution will be gained, an awareness that is still of considerable use. How valid this understanding will be is difficult to determine at this stage, since whether or not the participants perceive themselves as part of the institution is part of their personal meaning I hope to access.

Institution is used in this sense to refer to a context that shapes the meaning and values held by those operating within its confines. Here I refer to the Psychology Faculty as being an institution within the larger institution of university. Affiliation refers to the extent that members of an institution subscribe to the values and paradigms representative of that institution. While consideration is given to my own meaning of these concepts, it is primarily the meaning they hold for the participants that is the focus of this essay.

1.3.4 Personal Meaning

A second issue to be explored is to what extent is personal meaning of, and the desire to affiliate to, such institutions determined by personal history and the meanings held in such a discourse. This is probably the biggest part of the study and maybe the most difficult to define, perhaps due to its obvious characteristics. In psychological terms, psychodynamic theory examines individual's personal history as being responsible for the place the individual occupies in the now. This refers to the participants, how they feel emotionally and physically, and what ideologies and values they have adopted. Constructionist theory, to simplify, considers that it is personal interpretation of events that defines the influence of such an event, and an objective recounting of such a history achieves very little (Pressley & McCormick, 1995). The direction taken by this proposal is to try to combine these perspectives by seeking personal interpretations of life events relating to decisions to seek university entrance.

1.4 The Choice of Methodology

I chose to use a qualitative method that would allow me to use my own perspective as a starting point. From such a point I could adapt the focus and direction of the study as new meanings and understandings evolved from the research. The choice of qualitative methodology is a theme that is threaded through this entire thesis and resurfaces in many different sections. The decision to use qualitative research is intricately associated with the actual topic and, because of this the style of writing, the methodology used and the research question are all inseparable.

1.4.1 New vs. Existing Material

Participant selection did not appear overly complicated at a surface level, like many other aspects of this thesis. However, things rose to the surface quite quickly as the writing process made various issues explicit. The type of data to be used does in a sense derive from participant considerations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). While it is possible that methods such as discourse analysis could contribute answers to some of the questions asked in this paper, availability of such text was problematic. Material of this nature does exist, with the majority of it consisting of anecdotal transcripts of career paths and histories of social workers and psychologists who felt they had unusual experiences in the field; however, it is scarce. It was also felt that such material being predominantly older in production date might not suitably reflect the same meaning that people today derived from their studies and future careers (Evans, 1977). I also wanted to look at students particularly because they have not had the same time separating them from their initial thoughts on career path and choice of discipline, and in actuality may still be experiencing concerns over their choices. Lastly, in the meagre amount of articles and books I did find, I encountered nothing relating to this area in New Zealand, an aspect of this study that I feel would make it of substantially greater relevance to the people involved.

1.4.2 Participant Recruitment

Access to participants was the first area that was considered. While greatest access was to students at Massey University, my own campus at the time, it seemed a valid concern that factors influencing the choice of discipline might be correlated to issues affecting the choice of university. This seemed likely in aspects of motivation such as desire for prestige, recognition, and academic status, all often factors in the choice of university, and all possible issues in the choice of psychology as a field. However, it is uncertain how valid such concerns are. Is it necessary to select psychology students from each university offering such a course? There will still be insufficient participants to give a quantitative study external validity (Bouma, 1993). What might be achieved, however, is a greater control of the representativeness of the selection context. In such a consideration of sampling there is a sense, once again, of trying to

include quantitative rigour within this project. In the context of this, feelings of the necessity for varying types of control might possibly be attributable to a form of cognitive dissonance with conflicting research values. Based upon considerations of the number of interviews that would be conducted and the financial considerations involved with conducting interviews at other universities, the sample was limited to participants at Massey University.

1.4.3 The Participants - Defining

A second issue that arose when considering the population from which students would be sought, was the definition of belonging to a particular discipline. This was of particular relevance to psychology, where many students not majoring in psychology take psychology papers as electives. To more tightly define the students who would be invited to participate in the project it was decided to choose from fourth year students. That is, psychology students who are in their first post-graduate year. The rationale behind such a distinction was that by this stage students would be more likely to have begun thinking of themselves as affiliated with their discipline. Additionally, as it seems that many students do not hear about the clinical psychology diploma programme until their third or fourth year, selecting participants from within this group seemed to address the requirements of the project with participants then being at a point of applying or considering their application for the programme. While it is not expected that students will be totally incorporated into their discipline's dominant paradigm, it is my belief that at this level most students have demonstrated a degree of commitment to their chosen field. In making this commitment, it is more likely that the student will have already considered the sense of meaning that I want to investigate. Though not essential by any means, familiarity with such concepts is likely to make a student more receptive to discussing them with a stranger.

1.5 Considerations in Interviewing

In order to gather the information that it seemed would most appropriately contribute towards the questions this paper asks, it was felt that an in-depth interview would be the most suitable investigative format. The exact structure of this interview was derived from that used by other qualitative researchers in the social sciences and has considerable support across a range of literature (Seidman, 1991). For over a decade it has been recognised in the literature that interviews are the most suitable and viable method available to researchers trying to access the meaning people see in their lives (McCracken, 1988). While certain quantitative and more controlled survey measures would access some similar data, this would be substantially different from that desired in this project. An example of this is that of a survey. While a survey process could follow a structure to answer many of the questions I have asked, there would not be sufficient room to allow for flexibility in the constructs. This flexibility is essential to the view that the constructs are not so much being researched as developed (Packer, 1989). Importantly the style of the interviewing needed to try to reflect my understanding of a hermeneutic approach. Towards this end, the interviews need to provide enough information to allow later interpretation of the various modes of engagement in which the participants operated at various times (Packer & Addison, 1989). Also, the interviews need to reflect an engagement with the participants. As Misgeld and Jardine, (1989) argue, a hermeneutic inquiry represents a challenging of our norms and ourselves. Such a challenge cannot occur in a vacuum.

The methodology of the interviews presented some concern, and validity seems crucial to the success of the project. This is especially true in gaining credibility in the domain of psychology where, like many other countries, New Zealand remains largely quantitatively focused (Bird, 1989). This was especially prevalent in the consideration of issues of validity when interviewing participants within my own discipline. Issues raised concerned the possibility of taking for granted many shared values and concepts that may be of relevance and interest to the study (McCracken, 1988). This was likely to have considerable impact on the goal of seeking themes present or absent from interviews about a discipline that I myself was strongly

affiliated with (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It seemed likely that, in itself, being a participant in the academic culture would bias the interview process, distorting the information gathered, and resultantly be adverse to the goals of the project.

1.5.1 The Interview Style

The interviews with each respondent consisted of three separate aspects, each located within a sixty minutes period. Sixty minutes was chosen as a compromise between a longer interview that was unwieldy and a shorter time-span that only skimmed the available information. It was also felt that participants would be reluctant to commit to a long interview, while a shorter period would not allow time to cover all the ground the participant felt relevant (Seidman, 1991). This framework was developed from Seidman's (1991) progressive interview process, which comprised of a series of sequential interviews. While the progression of concepts seemed useful to this study, it was anticipated that the amount of data obtained, and the consequential demand on participants, was excessive to the needs of this project. It was decided to use audio recording to capture the content of the interviews. This left the interviewer free to give the participant their full attention; note taking was still used to a lesser degree, to allow later prompting of instances of interest, without disrupting the current flow of conversation.

The divisions within the interviews each focused on a separate aspect of the individuals meaning in coming to their chosen vocation. The first aspect of the interview was a focused look at the participant's life history (Seidman, 1991). In this section, the interviewer presents the question of, "How did the participant come to be here at university studying psychology?". The task required of the participant in this section is to provide as much detail about their family, friends, and experiences that they feel is relevant to this question. This section provides the context of meaning that the participant feels led them to where they are today. It is essential in finding the mode of engagement the participant is now in, when the moment of engagement has passed (Misgeld & Jardine, 1989).

The second section focused on the details of the participants' present experiences (Seidman, 1991). The question for this section is, "what are the typical experiences you have of studying

While I wanted to create an even power relationship within the interviews, actually achieving this was more problematic than just saying it. I felt that such a balance was the only way possible in some sense to interview colleagues and friends with whom I already had a well-established communication style and context. However, the interview process brings with it its own artificiality and looking back on the interview process trying to resist some of the structural influences of the process was difficult. What seemed to work best for me was when I relaxed and stopped trying to be an 'interviewer'. This improved the flow of conversation and seemed to create a much smoother degree of exploration around the topic.

psychology?”. This section involves interactive relationships the student takes part in within the process of being a student. This provides a sense of context for the third interview factor.

The third interview component asked the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience. The question for this section was, “Having discussed with us your background before you were a student, and your experiences as a student now, what place do you see becoming a psychologist having in your life?”. This is the essence of the information that will be analyzed to obtain meaning, while the first and second interview components provided context and a framework to interpret the meaning presented in this last section. Though this is the only time we are explicitly asking the participant to relate their sense of meaning, in effect this is occurring though out the entire interview (Seidman, 1991).

1.5.2 Problems with Interviews

The nature of the interview process was particularly problematic in defining the roles between the interviewer and participants, the nature of the interaction, and the rigidity of structure. In many ways, interviewing is a method of data collection that researchers seem to try to transform into a quantitative measurement tool (Oakley, 1993). The trouble with this is that interviews are not quantitative no matter how cold, clinical, and detached the interviewer tries to remain (Oakley, 1993). It was decided to try to maintain a balance of power in the hierarchical structure of the interviews as much as was possible, in an effort to maintain consistency with the ideals of this proposal (Burgess, 1989). In addition, it was felt that such an approach aided in resolving many of the ethical concerns with people as subjects of investigation, and issues of exploitation (Snook, 1981; Burgess, 1989). By maintaining an equitable relationship within the interviews, participants gained an opportunity to develop their awareness of their own meaning within the focus of a wider context, namely that of our study (Misgeld & Jardine, 1989).

The actuality of what occurred in the interviews seems to support this idea somewhat, although by and large I found that all of my participants responded better to a more relaxed and 'natural' conversation style interview. I guess when I talk about natural conversation styles here I am referring to the sort of interactions I had previously had with these people and that they expected from me.

Participants Questions

Along with the nature of the power structure within the interview, was the issue of participants' questions, an area usually avoided by researchers since it colored the meaning of the participants' story (Oakley, 1993). I felt though that in fact, issues that participants felt worth querying could substantially contribute to my awareness of the participants' personal meaning expressed throughout the interviews. Traditionally, however, it is argued that the researcher should maintain a passive role within the interview; cues to interact explicitly with the participant are taken from the participant. One of the benefits a participant can gain from being part of such a study is the opportunity to engage in self-reflection with an audience, but not have to observe normal social rules of conversation (Reinharz, 1992). If the interviewer begins to fill the role of a conventional conversation partner then, as well as distorting the interview, they deprive the participant of one of the few compensations available for the time and effort they sacrifice to participate. Conversely, attempting to remain inert during an interview does not allow the participant to develop their self-reflection either, as even a two-way mirror gives something back to the person. In line with the content of this thesis, much of the proposed research would include the processes involved, so I cannot see that explicit interactions can harm the data gathering process. Indeed, it is accepted that the people being interviewed are not going to be representative of larger populations (Bouma, 1993). How valid is it then that they all be treated like they have such characteristics in common, and will all respond to the same interview style equally?

Bias

There is potential here to answer another critique of interview-based research. A common concern when using interview-based methodologies is distortions of the participants' stories, as they attempt to relate the information they interpret the researcher as wanting (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). By being available to answer the participants' questions as they arise through the interview, it would seem that this effect could be reduced through the participants' increased awareness of the researcher's aims. This is a double edged sword though, as if it is still felt that the researcher seeks a particular bias, then the respondent is more likely to be

aware of what this is. The interviewer needs to be explicitly open and honest in replying to participants in order to create an atmosphere of appreciation for anything the participants may disclose. This atmosphere allows the interview to move through a range of issues while being supportive of the participant, and without fostering a need for them to 'create' what the researcher wants in order to maintain the rapport that will develop.

Increased Collaboration

The utilization of this approach also contains more self-serving needs than those described above. As has been discussed in other aspects of this thesis, a substantial involvement is required by the participants. Most of the participants were, at the point within the academic year that I conducted these interviews, similarly engaged in theses of their own. Taking time out to attend an interview and subsequent reading of their transcripts represents, I feel, a degree of sacrifice on the part of the participants. By providing for the development and increase in a sense of collaboration the participants feel towards the project, then they are likely to experience increased ownership of the completed data. It is anticipated that a more interactive process with ongoing involvement with the project, such as proofing their own transcripts and having opportunity to reflect on the interview, will increase this participant collaboration. This sense of collaboration is likely to result in reduced participant withdrawal from the project and greater freedom in the use of their transcripts than they might have otherwise permitted (Burgess, 1989). This might not be due to increased ownership but perhaps with greater identification with the researcher, and a willingness to be helpful in response to this.

1.5.3 Restrictions and Limits on the Interviews

It was decided that the structure of the interviews would have only one requirement, that the participants restrict themselves as much as they could to the global questions asked within each section of the interview (Seidman, 1991). It was felt that too pronounced deviation from this structure would make the eventual analysis of the data overly complicated and end up detracting from the utility of the transcripts (Seidman, 1991). Within this limit however it was, as has been discussed, possible for the participant to move at a pace and direction they felt

comfortable with. It was envisioned that, at times, the interviewer may not need to speak at all, both parties becoming so involved with the telling and hearing of the story. Other times more prompting and supportive questioning may be helpful for the participant to find their place in their story. This semi- or non-structured interview would, it was felt, achieve the greatest flexibility and depth of information from the participants.

1.5.4 Considerations of the Analysis Process

The process of interviewing, transcribing of the interviews, and analysis had two main structures that seemed suitable to the overall process. Each method, while addressing some issues of validity, raised new problems. One method was to transcribe and analyze each interview before proceeding to the next (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process, while qualitative, is more a feature of grounded theory methodology than the hermeneutic approach that I was endeavoring to sustain for this study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Alternatively, once participants are located and chosen, I could as the interviewer simply move through the interviews until they all had been finished. This process allowed, at first appearance, for the interviewer to take the same level of knowledge to each interview (Seidman, 1991). This should mean that there will be less opportunity for previous interviews, and the hypothesis formed from them, to drive the direction taken by later interviews. While this seems to increase the validity of the transcriptions (Seidman, 1991), some concerns were expressed. The first of these was my own inexperience as the interviewer with such methods of inquiry. The other was that the limited availability of literature on this subject provided no real theoretical background as support for the focus taken by this paper (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Due to the intensive nature of the interviews and the demands placed on both researchers time and that of the participants, it seemed that a pilot study with a small initial sample of the participants would prevent the possible wastage of considerable resources and effort (Dick, 1990).

1.5.5 To Pilot First?

It was initially proposed that the study be piloted by doing an initial interview, with the project supervisor doing a brief review of my initial analysis of this interview. From this point, it was imagined that the proposal's methodology and validity could be gauged to a limited extent, and concordance across interviews improved (Dick, 1990). Once this initial transcription had been completed, I felt that, as the interviewer, I would have a greater idea of the processes and methods necessary to be improved in further interviews. This is likely to then facilitate a meaningful feedback session between the project supervisor and myself and allow a degree of assessment of the initial face validity of the overall project.

While some researchers (Dick, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), believe that this circular arrangement, of data collection followed by analysis leading back to data collection with an altered focus is preferable, others argue that such methods overly color the interview process (Seidman, 1991). Opponents of what I believe to be a more hermeneutic approach to data collection feel that such a process transforms the data collection, from a generative process to a creative one (Seidman, 1991).

To an extent, this model of reasoning sits slightly uncomfortably. It conveys a sense that we are almost trying to step back into an objective detached role of empirical observers, a feeling at odds with the values this thesis is trying to represent. My role as the interviewer within the project will involve a collaborative relationship with the participants in generating a story concerning their coming to psychology. This is a shift from more positivistic approaches to data collection, through interviews where the assumption is that the interviewer is a sterile data collection tool, as unobtrusive as possible and free from contaminating influences.

I felt initially when starting the interviews that I had good interview skills and was not going to have any problems in maintaining a passive role in the process while still guiding the conversation towards the aspects interested me. What I found, though, was that the more interesting aspects of the interviews tended to evolve or arise from moments that more closely approximated what I think of as 'normal' conversation. From this I began to realize that, while my interview skills were useful for reflecting and clarifying points with the participants, the blending of this with the normal discourse style present between the participants as friends and myself contributed the most to a useful interview. My thoughts here are that while I initially considered this thesis to be about how students talk about themselves within psychology, it is actually about the ways they present themselves as psychologists within discussions or conversations. Within the artificiality, I see occurring within interviews, where the interviewer is effortfully maintaining a particular style of interaction, the dialogue that occurs is outside the boundaries of what I consider a conversation. This conceptualization of the interview process supports many of the feelings and justifications that have led to this point.

1.5.6 What happened.

My position as interviewer within the interviews was one that moved and developed over the course of the interviews, and the adherence to any particular model occurred possibly more in theory than in practice. Initially my intent was that, as the interviewer, I would be not so much detached as passive in the actual interview, and neither in the project as a whole. A metaphor that seems to fit might be that of the passivity of a sounding board, as opposed to that of a theoretical inert mass. The sounding board allows interaction, but does not guide the content, where a theoretical inert mass only has no effect in theory; it still, at the least, evokes curiosity to its role in an interview. Whether a knowledge gathering methodology has validity, based on the degree the gatherer aids in the gathering, seems to derive from personal values. Indeed, it would seem that the effect of such a decision is largely determined by epistemological beliefs.

1.6 Justification

1.6.1 Multidisciplinary

Several reasons appear to justify both the resources required for the thesis design outlined here, as well as the ethical considerations raised. The first considers the relationship that currently exists between psychology and other mental health disciplines. While multidisciplinary teams are becoming an integral aspect of community health services, there seems to be some disparity between the power levels that different disciplines bring to such joint ventures. Psychologists are often members of such teams and, as such, their conceptions and beliefs of the other team members' professions may play a large part in the ability of the team to work together collaboratively. Currently, little exists that can help psychologists gain a better appreciation of their own perspectives prior to such an encounter. I strongly believe that the research outlined here would provide a guide to how psychologists view and understand other professions. This knowledge I see as useful in trying to understand some of the biases and preconceptions psychologists bring to a team situation.

In retrospect I feel that the participants gained a much greater sense of worth from participating in the project than I might have anticipated. This was particularly so in the later interviews, which were framed in a more challenging manner and involved a more mutual exploration of the topics involved. Participant enthusiasm for the discussion in the interview, and to view the final draft, have given me a much greater sense of what gains there are to participating in research. The opportunity to participate in an inquiry that has direct relevance to people and their lives is something I am more inclined now to see as a privilege. This is not to say I don't value and appreciate the participants involvement, but rather that I now have a greater appreciation of the value of the opportunity I created for them to participate within.

1.6.2 Career Burnout

Additionally, there is the issue of career burnout amongst mental health workers. This is an issue that has prompted a number of studies on social worker motivations and their role in career burnout (Lazar, Cohen, & Guttman, 1995). In New Zealand there is general belief, maintained through anecdotal reports, that this problem is especially prevalent. In light of this, research into the expectations of students when they enter the workplace could be of substantial benefit. This benefit could be seen both in preparatory courses prior to actual employment in these areas, as well as inclusion in the workplace of common goal related activities (Lazar, Cohen, & Guttman, 1995).

1.6.3 Participant Rewards

For the participants, there is in many respects less benefit to be accrued through participation in the project than that which I receive from its completion. This is unfortunate as it is the participants that contribute much of the material for a study such as this (McCracken, 1988). While little material benefit is available, and certainly insufficient reward could be provided to adequately compensate for the realistic value of the time given, there are aspects that such a study can return to those involved. In many interview formats, participants are provided with an opportunity to engage in a form of self-exploration not often experienced in normal conversation (Silverman, 1985; Oakley, 1993). In this instance effort has gone to maximizing this perceived benefit to the participants. While in part this is to cater to the values and methodology of this thesis, it is also to try and provide the participants with a sense of time well spent. I perceive this as being beneficial to all parties who will one day need people to participate in their investigations. By trying to provide people with positive experiences of involvement with research, their responsiveness both to the discipline and to researchers in general is improved (Burgess, 1984).

1.7 Ethics

When considering research that involves methodologies of a relatively intrusive nature, such as those used in interviewing, there are ranges of ethical issues that arise distinct from those experienced in other methods. Confidentiality is the main issue of relevance here, and is probably most difficult to deal with in the context of an interview-based qualitative context. While confidentiality is an issue for all researchers who solicit external involvement in a project, it is usually the case that anonymity can be assured to all participants (Burgess, 1989). This is not the case, however, with this style of project. While every effort can be made to protect the identity of participants, the use of transcript excerpts from participant interviews precludes any guarantees that someone who knows the participant will not recognize the person from such a passage (Burgess, 1989). This is particularly difficult here, where the population of potential participants is a small community of professionals. Any personal idiosyncrasy and details are likely then to identify the participants to others within this professional community. To try to improve confidentiality, each recorded interview was coded immediately after the interview. Each participant was coded with the first letter of their pseudonym, and then the interview number they are. For example, Dick Tracey is the fourth participant to be interviewed; the code for this participant would be DT4. The tape codes were matched with the participants' consent form, and later with their transcripts. These were then stored in a locked cabinet. In an effort to protect the identity of participants, the transcription was undertaken by the interviewer. This also has the benefit of increasing familiarity with the transcripts.

Part of the issue of confidentiality relates to dissemination of the data (Burgess, 1989). While the participant will, in this case, have granted use of the material for public publication within a journal article as long as efforts have been taken to protect identity, the researcher has a responsibility to ensure that such publication will not result in harm to the participant. This extends to publishing in areas that may compromise the confidentiality of the participant (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). When the researcher is considering utility and distribution of their research, awareness needs to be given to how this will impact on the participants' environment; academically, socially, and vocationally.

The idea of this project 'growing' on its own feels like a slightly strange one, but best describes the actual process. Rather than a focus on specific material that has to be included, the writing of this thesis has felt closer to the tending of a plant, where if the right conditions are present, the plant will grow. Continuing the analogy, there have been periods where I have not known what the plant needed, why it was wilting, or even whether it was ever going to flower. Movement towards the completion of the project has always relied on providing the right nutrients and environment, rather than ever coming from an effort to make it grow. This analogy reflects, however, a difficulty in this type of approach, where like many gardeners, I can describe the conditions required for growth, but making the process of growth transparent is more difficult.

Many other ethical issues common to qualitative research have been dealt with through the methodology chosen. The overall approach taken, of the participants as collaborators in the project, helps considerably with the concern over exploitation of the participants. In addition, the focus of the project has been to try to contribute as much as possible to the participants who are contributing a lot of themselves. In many ways, ethical issues can often be negated, or at least simplified, through respectful interactions with the participants. While this does not reduce the researcher responsibilities, it often makes many issues regarding objectifying treatment inherent in research less difficult to handle.

1.8 In Summary

Throughout this thesis, effort has been given to trying to maintain a consistent theme of values and methodology. At times, this has been difficult due to the nonlinear nature of the hermeneutic methodology utilized. While the appearance and flow of the information at times has suffered, this has been offset by the development of an understanding that has been absent from past quantitative proposals. Utilizing a hermeneutic approach creates not just a greater sense of meaning for the author but, through the interaction with the process, generates a greater sense of ownership of the writing than is encouraged by many other styles of theory construction. The way in which the process caused the writing of this thesis to grow, almost on its own, is indicative of the power of such an approach when generating meaning from discourse. While awareness is necessary of this snowballing effect, with care it can be a vital tool for many theoretical problems previously found too complex or involved for traditional research methods.

Throughout this introduction I have tried to outline a generative process to develop a construct of the meaning psychology students find in their department. Reasons why such a project can be justified have been given in terms of ethical arguments against research with people as subjects, both based on the literature and a perceived need within this field. The actual process of writing such a project was remarkably enjoyable. This is partially due to the novelty of the style of writing, but also due to the process of self-awareness set in motion

through the conceptualizing of a hermeneutic framework. This self-awareness highlighted many values and ideological beliefs I held almost without being aware of their influence. As the project developed, I acquired a greater appreciation for the need for such a proposal to be carried out. This appreciation derives in a sense from my new understanding of my own position within the paradigm of psychology, but also the needs such a study would answer. Psychology has tended to be shy of focusing its tools of observation on itself. If nothing else, this thesis has given me the confidence in my ability to appreciate other methods of inquiry distinct from those prevalent in psychology. Such confidence reaffirms my choice of psychology as a position to develop and grow within. Interestingly, when I started this thesis my prime motivation was to obtain a good grade and any personal knowledge that developed was just icing on the cake. Now as I finish, I find my position reversed, the awareness I gained through writing this thesis was the most important aspect of it, and achieving a good grade would be a bonus effect. As Misgeld and Jardine (1989) wrote, hermeneutics is about challenging ones own values, and I feel I have achieved that. While I am unsure to what degree my accomplishments will fit within the academic model, they hold personal value nonetheless.

Chapter 2: Methodology

As I have tried to outline in my personal reflections throughout the introduction, the actual implementation of this study was a rather dynamic process, with different aspects being adapted to circumstances or individual requirements for different participants. In this section of the project I have tried to outline some of the difficulties that arose and how I went about resolving the problems or concerns I had.

2.1 The Process

Participants were recruited from volunteers obtained when discussing my thesis topic with peers and colleagues. If people were interested in participating and met the criteria relevant to the process, they were provided with an information sheet (Appendix A) and sample consent form (Appendix B). If participation was still desired, times were made for interviews to be conducted in the Massey University School of Psychology interview rooms. On arrival the participants were provided with a new consent form for review, which they signed as consenting to continue participation in the project. This consent form was retained by myself and stored securely, separate to the transcripts and interview tapes.

There were five participants in the study, two males and three females, one of who was Maori, with all of the other participants identifying as Pakeha. While this was not considered a requirement in the study, as generalisability is not applicable in the same way as is often attempted in quantitative work, it was felt that participants from different cultures or gender groups might bring different conceptions and themes relevant to the constructions of psychology to the interview process.

Each interview lasted slightly over an hour, with the completion being determined by the participants feeling that they had said everything they wanted to on each aspect of the interview. Time was provided at the end of each interview to discuss any questions that might have arisen. Opportunity was also provided off tape for the participants to follow up on any points and concerns they may have been unwilling or uncomfortable discussing on record.

I began transcription of the first interview immediately, as this was to form the basis of a 'pilot'

It was at this point that the participants' lack of explicit thought about their career paths was made clear. Previously it had been thought that none of this would be new thinking for the participants, the idea that it was came as some surprise.

I have chosen to use this accompanying text in a manner that works around some of my concerns. This reflexive component of this project allows me to keep the person in my considerations and discussion of how I was thinking about them and the ways that I interpreted their words. I feel there is validity in this idea outside that of simply addressing an intuitive feeling. All of the participants, as I have described, are people that I interact with as friends, as well as students in class together, or as researcher and participants. These additional appreciations of the 'other', form a significant component of the context between myself and them; disclosing something of my feelings and thoughts concerning them provides the reader with an opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of my position in interpreting some of the text that is presented.

for the project. A second interview was initiated prior to the analysis of the pilot; however, the actual transcription process itself had already highlighted the usefulness of the data for this project and also indicated aspects of the interview processes that could be improved. These first two interviews were briefly analysed for main themes in conjunction with my supervisor and a sense gained that the project was feasible.

Through the analysis and writing up of the participants' interviews several problems arose for me. Although researchers using non-specific methodologies typical of this type of work commonly experience these issues, it seems that little literature or advice is available to simplify the process. In response to this, it seemed useful to spend some time discussing my problems and concerns in a way that may unpack and clarify some of the issues surrounding discourse analysis.

2.2 The Person

A difficulty that arose throughout analysis of the text was that of resolving the tension of removing the person from the text, yet maintaining the integrity of the participants who contributed aspects of their stories to this project. In some ways taking the person from the text created a conflict with the values of qualitative research that had originally appealed to me as a researcher. Removal of the individual from the text leaves a sensation of distorting the context within which the text originated. In particular, presenting pieces of a story, reshuffled along with other peoples' stories, at times gave rise to an uncomfortable feeling of being false to the participants who gave their words to this project. The questions keep arising about representation of the participants and their interests, and in a sense, what role they now play in the text. These questions have been made more difficult due to my ongoing relationship with the participants, and my awareness of their ongoing interest in the final text that I am going to present. A related adjunct to this concern was the decision to allow each participant to choose their own pseudonym for their text. Originally I felt that this choice allowed the participants in some way to retain a degree of ownership of their text, and to increase the sense of participation with the project. While I still agree with the ideals of this initial decision, it in many ways has increased the difficulty in removing the individuals from the text as they now can directly read how I have represented them

through their words. While in analysis I feel I reach moments of abstracting the participants from their words, as I splice the themes together I regain the awareness of their involvement, and in a very real sense am writing for them. Associated with this has been a difficulty in avoiding the use of gendered pronouns, such as he, she, which at times would have made sentence construction flow more readily. This felt necessary, however, due to the strongly gendered nature of the psychology diploma course, which during the year of my thesis was predominantly female in composition. While, 'she' seemed less problematic, the use of 'he' was going to make participant anonymity somewhat difficult. The simplest solution was to try and maintain a gender-neutral text, which was the position I adopted throughout.

2.3 Style of Analysis

Choosing between an in-depth analysis of individual discourses and an overall thematic analysis across the interviews was a difficult one, and I'm still unsure how well I have walked the line between these two styles of analysis. The nature of this project initially seemed to call for a thematic analysis of the interviews, the purpose being to try to cover ideally all of the finite resources available for constructing clinical psychology. One of the advantages of qualitative work is the richness of the data that is gathered; through discourse analysis much of this richness is preserved and conveyed to the reader. However, due to the large amount of text obtained through the interviews, performing a deep analysis on each participant's transcript for each theme would, I felt, make the project excessive for my purposes. In an effort to compromise between these two approaches, I have separated this thesis into chapters based upon the main themes present across the interviews. Within this I have tried to maximise the depth of the analysis by choosing interesting or characteristic examples of a theme and exploring some of the richness of the data looking at different devices and subtleties of the text chosen.

Reaching this point of clarity was not a simple moment of decision and evolved through my efforts of writing and attempting to carry out analysis on the transcripts. Prior to actually working on this project in entirety I had two experiences of working with the data, which in some ways directed the approach I have now taken. Initially, as an assignment for another paper, with the permission of the individual who contributed the transcript, I used portions of an interview to gain an appreciation of what discourse analysis would be like. As an opportunity to grapple with some

of the issues and methods of discourse analysis this was invaluable. However, it highlighted the difficulty of performing such an analysis across interviews. For example, the interesting space between an individual's inconsistencies are a substantial breadth of the analysis of this type and yet are not present as such between interviews. Even the tensions between competing constructions across interviews lack the performative detail of action evidenced by the changing context of individual inconsistency.

The second experience was comparing a rough thematic analysis of one interview with the analysis of the same interview carried out by my supervisor. Such an analysis on a single interview feels somewhat arbitrary in that the support from other interviews is not available to suggest the theme as a common resource in the constructions being researched by this project, but rather an individual idiosyncrasy. On reflection I feel that while the single interview provided source for examples of particular themes, my awareness of the other interviews, and memory of their content from transcribing them, provided a crude guide towards some of the more common elements I was looking for. The resulting outline of themes provided the bulk of those elaborated on in this work. It was noticeable at this point though that within the themes was a sparseness of detail that had not been expected. This led me to believe that for this project to work I was going to need to work on elaborating or fleshing out the skeletal frame of the themes provided with the detail obtained from discourse analysis of individual examples. This process again reflects the movements between the different modes of analysis embodying Heideggian Hermeneutics. The detail of the text, or the interview itself is the ready-to-hand mode, removing myself from my position in the interview process to see patterns overarching all of the interviews, required movement into the present-at-hand mode.

My supervisor provided me with a useful sense of balance with the problem of determining the thematic lines lying between the transcripts

Tuffin (2000). One 'take' on the above is that the development of themes is inevitably somewhat of an artificial division – especially as they are clearly closely related and nowhere near as discrete as it looks on the basis of the reading of the analysis.

However, one of my sub goals for this project was to try and have a transparent window for the reader into the actual creation process of this work. While the final product I see as needing to have a flow and polish allowing pleasurable reading, it is important to me that some of the tangles and circles of ideas become visible. In trying to compromise between these approaches I have gone for a discrete analysis, but tried to show the reader where other possible divisions may lie.

Coming back to this point somewhat further through the project I find myself questioning how well I have achieved this goal – while opportunity may be available to improve this aspect, I feel I substantially underestimated the difficulties it presented.

2.4 The Analysis Process

Initially in working with the data I tried moving through each transcript and encoding each new theme using a numerical order for main themes and alphabetical ordering for sub themes. I found this quite cumbersome, as the number of themes rapidly grew to an amount difficult to easily keep track of. Moving between transcripts developed into a nightmare as trying to find if a particular theme had already been started and did a piece of text fit into a particular theme or sub theme began to bog down the process to a point where I couldn't see how to proceed. It was also becoming noticeable at this stage that there is very little clear demarcation existing in the text allowing nice simple division into and across themes. At any particular point in the text the participants may be drawing on four or five themes, and leading up to others, with the text working to build the foundations for another. Trying to find these lines within the interview material became arbitrary and resulted in considerable doubling up of extracts and piecemeal selecting of text. Endeavouring to accomplish such a task without a computer is a vision, I imagine that might be similar to one of Dante's hells - in a modern sense; discourse analysis twenty years ago must have been a considerably laborious process. Even with the computer available to try and arrange passages in a way that conveyed structure, I found I was losing track of points and feeling that the context of extracts was being lost in this type of literacy strip mining.

Initially I tried to avoid the use of the computer when performing the early analysis. The purpose of this was to develop a process where much of the data could be perceived and recognised at once. The desire to work in this particular way arose from discussions with other students who had performed discursive work and an appreciation that a considerable amount of the early analysis was performed intuitively. In order to consciously engage in an intuitive process, I felt that a good awareness and appreciation of the data was essential and this required some way of being able to see the whole data at once. Early attempts at this ended with me sitting in my backyard surrounded by cut-out extracts of different transcripts.

At this stage university time limits began to be a consideration in how the work was to proceed. As the most common advice I was receiving was to 'just start writing', this is what I did. Not totally dissimilar to the process of copying pieces of text and placing it with other similar extracts

focussing on a particular theme, except this time I wrote about the text as I did so. Initially this provided, as I have described, basically a skeletal framework looking rather sketchy and worryingly thin. Each time text was encountered that related to an existing theme it was placed within that section and some sense of the extract's place in the theme was developed. Like my earlier attempt this method still had a problem with text covering a range of themes, and placing it within a particular section remains in my view somewhat arbitrary. However, in the writing up of the analysis I feel that this was going to be an unavoidable problem, and in some ways a limitation of this type of work. With such richness of data deciding what and what not to discuss becomes largely personal choice and interest. As the writing up stage of the process developed, however, the extracts that were most suitable become considerably less of a personal choice and were determined by the way they connected the themes together, the sub-themes contained within a particular extract – reducing the number of extracts required for each point – and which participant presented the theme in the clearest sense.

Hopefully this choice is somewhat directed by the research question but I feel I would be lying to myself (if to no one else) if I presented this as being the total guiding influence. After all, as is often pointed out when discussing objectivity, I chose the question. The advantage to this style of combined writing and analysis was that I was now able to elaborate on a particular piece of text within a general framework of an established theme, often drawing out some alternate themes to that being discussed. This I felt retained the context for each extract to a greater degree than simply selecting to theme. Also, I was able to use particular pieces of text to expand or support other sections by overlapping them around the text, a technique conveying a sense of the circularity and interrelated nature of many of the themes touched on.

2.4.1 Transcribing

For the purpose of relating the participants' words I felt that vocalisations and pauses often had little relation to the content or intent of their discourse and so edited such instances from the final work. There were also times when the conversation would leave a topic for a period before completing a train of thought. For the most part, in the interest of maintaining coherency, such extracts have been linked into one quotation using the form of 'x ... y' to indicate a break in continuity. While this may in some instances give the text a gloss of structure and prior thought which was not apparent in the initial transcripts, it is felt that the intent and action of the text has been preserved intact.

2.4.2 The Interviews

When this project was initially proposed it was felt that the topic would be relatively 'safe' and commonplace to the participants. Essentially, participants seemed to have a lot of difficulty talking about why they came to study clinical psychology and what they felt it was about. This came across not so much in terms of an unwillingness to talk, but rather in a difficulty finding the right words. Talking about the issues throughout the interview seemed to bring out quite different feelings for the participants. The result of this was a lack of clarity in the participants' responses, which even with elucidation never really clarified how and why they considered this to be an issue and why it needs to be addressed. '...it sounds like a bumble...' (Joe, 335).

This was felt to be partially a result of not having discussed the issues raised in the interviews with many people before, and not having had an opportunity to reach a personal conclusion. Joe framed this as, '... Yeah I've thought about it lots before, probably not talked about it as much that could be because my thoughts haven't reached any firm endpoint...' (Joe, 339). The effect of this varied across the participants, some found it easy despite not having thought about some of the issues, others found themselves struggling to present the image they felt was being sort or desirable. Most however found the experience useful,

Joe (669-674): '...I think the further you get on and the more that you know, the more that you realise you don't know, and in that unknowing is uncertainty ... to

relish that, I think is a good idea...'

It seemed here that Joe was presenting the interview process as a way of learning, as a positive experience that was to be relished. Psych presented the experience differently saying that '...its making me aware of how, I haven't thought through things, that I'm kinda just doing assignments and exams and .. blundering along in someways...' (Psych, 752-753). Psych described themselves as not having thought through some of the topics present in the interview and having an appreciation of this causing a degree of clumsiness in their approach to becoming a psychologist, that they were '... blundering along...' Similarly, Tigger indicated that some of the issues discussed were new ones to be thinking and discussing,

Tigger (680-682): I guess there's some issues that .. have surprised me because they're not things that I've ever consciously even thought about before-I mean they're still there and ideas just simply going up ..

Rather than seeming to simply identify the participants '...blundering...' this passage reveals, like that of Joe above, the interview process to be one that helps the participants own understanding of their position and profession. The description that Tigger provides in some ways serves to show the interview as a catalyst for further thought, the issues have been raised, but they are the ideas are still '...going up...'

Associated with these ways of showing the interview topics as new and thought provoking were aspects within some of the text showing an awareness of some degree of impression management occurring. This theme of impression management was developed through the participants discussing their awareness of how they might sound, or that certain things should not be said in the context of a recorded interview. Tigger provided a good example of this with the comment, '...I'll tell you something when the tape recorder's off (laugh)...' (Tigger, 928) as did Wendy saying, '...I suspect that I'll share when you stop the tape...' (Wendy, 836).

At times there were clear indications that aspects of the text would be seen as negative and the need for impression management was made explicit. Mike raised this point the most clearly saying, '...I would hate to listen to my tape though, cause I probably sound like a real pratt...' (Mike, 678-679) and that, '...I'm glad this is all anonymous...' (Mike, 346). Overall an

impression was given that the participants were aware of other discourses around the topic but felt that there was risk of censorship or some other consequence to being identified as participating or promoting such views. This point more than any other I feel suggests the need, raised at the end of this project, for the discourses around what psychology is and is not to be made more open and public.

Chapter 3: A Summary of Analysis.

The remainder of this thesis has been divided into chapters, which individually focus on different themes developed from the interview transcripts, and a concluding section that draws these themes together making some recommendations on the practical implications of this thesis. This chapter briefly outlines those that follow and provides a brief description intended to allow the reader to more readily access the different aspects of this thesis.

3.1 What is Psychology

The initial chapter of analysis begins with the themes that related to the question *what is psychology?* This chapter is predominantly concerned with the participants' discourse around what it is they study and the profession they see themselves working within in the future. Themes that contributed to this chapter are:

- That psychology is '...The study of human behaviour...' with discussion that unpacks some of the assumptions associated with this way of framing psychology.
- That psychology is a '...science...'. This theme examines psychology as an empirical science, with participants contributing several discourses either refuting or supporting such a perspective.
- That psychology is an institution that should involve a process of change. Discourse around this theme included participants' discussing whether psychology is changing and in what directions such change may proceed.
- That psychology is a practical profession, with a need for practical skills and training to prepare students for making an impact on the wider world.

3.2 Choosing Psychology

The initial chapter examining *what is psychology*, linked to how the participants' described themselves as coming to study psychology with the focus of becoming psychologists in Chapter 5, which examines the participants' descriptions of *choosing psychology*. I felt there was a flow of concepts here, as the participants' descriptions of *what is psychology* seemed to share several assumptions and associations with their reasons for studying psychology. This chapter contains the themes of:

- Participants' knowledge of psychology and a becoming a psychologist as a process of choice. This theme develops the connection between the participants studying psychology and their described perceptions of what is psychology. Also examined here is the process of coming to psychology; is it a choice and what might be behind such a decision.
- What participants consider other students should know before they commit to studying psychology. This theme unpacks some of the participants' understandings around how such a decision making process might occur.
- What rewards participants' perceived a career in psychology as providing.
- Choosing psychology as career for personal satisfaction.

3.3 Differences With Other Professions

What became apparent through the interview process was that other professions overlap in some respects with the role that the participants described psychology as performing in the mental health sector. Chapter 6 examined how the participants saw other professions as different to psychology. The areas this discussion developed into were:

- Psychiatry. This section focuses on the participants' descriptions and discussion around psychiatry and how they view this profession as different or similar to psychology.
- Other Fields. Primarily this section examines the participants' discourse around counselling, but covers other professions such as social work.

3.4 Being a Psychologist

Distinct to what psychology is, was a dominant theme presented by the participants of what it means to be a psychologist. This theme developed being a psychologist something more and just doing psychology. The participants' developed the following ways of discussing what it means to be a psychologist:

- That there is a *right kind of person* to be a psychologist. This theme developed from ways of talking about some people as not being right for psychology, or others as having the necessary characteristics.
- That being a psychologist is a process of development. This was an extension from the participants' descriptions of there being a right person for psychology and presented the position that, even with the right characteristics, becoming a psychologist was still a process that required work.
- That certain features define a *good psychologist*; a way of viewing what a psychologist should be that has some implications for how a person would achieve the *becoming* previously described.

- That there are *right* reasons for wanting to become a psychologist. These reasons were associated with becoming a *good* psychologist.
- That being a psychologist is a profession that requires a high level of commitment. This theme was an aspect of the *right* reasons presented above, however, was distinct enough to be developed separately.

3.5 Views of Others

As part of the participants' discussions describing how they saw psychology prior to studying it, and how they described their career paths in comparison to others who were not studying psychology, themes developed around other peoples' views of psychology. These themes were:

- That common perceptions of psychology are based upon traditional images of psychoanalysts.
- That psychologists are perceived as possessing esoteric knowledge and have invasive means for understanding other people.
- That psychology is an unskilled profession based upon common sense.
- That psychology is for the mentally ill, which brings negative associations to how the profession is perceived.

The term 'others', is used here rather loosely. In the interviews this area developed around discussion of how the participants saw their families and friends appreciating clinical psychology, their attitudes towards it as a profession, and the support the participant received in developing such a career.

Chapter 4: Psychology is:

Clinical psychology, as the profession the participants saw themselves training towards, was constructed through several main themes: that of a clinical psychologist as a professional, clinical psychology as a helping profession based upon practicalities of everyday life, and clinical psychology as a science. Throughout the interviews, however, other ways of constructing clinical psychology developed: through comparisons to other helping professions, through the views and understandings others have of clinical psychology, what the participant felt made a good psychologist, and what issues and understandings led the participant to want to become a clinical psychologist.

The starting point for the description of psychology I am attempting to provide is then, what the participants understand clinical psychology to be. This area includes what the participants described themselves as knowing about clinical psychology when they first applied for the diploma course and what they currently see as being the defining features of the profession. Themes of clinical psychology as a profession, as a science, as having a practical basis, and being a dynamic field are included in this section as it was felt that they most strongly supported the initial conceptions of 'what is clinical psychology'.

4.1 A Difficult Question

What stood out when asking the participants what they first understood clinical psychology to be, as well as what they now understand it to be, was the typical response referring to the difficulty in answering such a question. Clinical psychology was seen as '...hard to describe...' (Tigger, 176-191) or '...difficult to pin down...' (Psych, 22). In one case this was explained as being due to the fact that all the theory taught in the course tends to refer to psychology rather than clinical psychology, '...they don't talk about clinical psychology as a, different, discipline, they always talk about psychology...' (Tigger, 541-542). As such the idea of discussing clinical psychology as something separate from psychology overall seemed to take some effort to develop.

4.2 The Study of Human Behaviour

This difficulty in separating clinical psychology from the wider discipline of psychology was particularly evident in early responses to the question of what the participants understood clinical psychology to be about. Here the responses tended to range around the kind of introductory statements found in first year text books, as was observed by one participant ‘...first year text book stuff ...’ (Psych, 12-15). For most of the participants, however, this idea of clinical psychology being ‘...about understanding behaviour...’ (Wendy, 55-60) or the ‘...the study of human behaviour...’ (Psych, 22) was at the forefront of descriptions concerning what clinical psychology is about. Within this idea of studying human behaviour, participants drew on the discourse of ‘...assessment and treatment of mental disorders...’ (Tigger, 176-191; Wendy, 325-331; Psych, 110-111) within the framework of clinical psychology as a ‘science’. Typically, the way clinical psychologists are presented as understanding behaviour, is through lenses of structured assessment and tools provided by their training. These tools and assessments are orientated towards mental disorders; a theme that sets the primary focus for what clinical psychology is all about. This left something of a tension throughout the interviews with the participants talking about the study of human behaviour within a model of assessing and treating mental disorder. This tension is particularly evident within aspects of the interviews focusing on the participants’ decisions to study clinical psychology, which were often around the idea of understanding particular behaviours, such as criminal conduct. The sense provided is that the impetus towards clinical psychology was to understand behaviour and that the training provided gave a framework of this understanding in terms of mental disorders. Clinical psychology is, it seems, a way of understanding the world in terms of mental (un)-health. One participant drew out some of this tension in their initial description of clinical psychology when they were trying to choose between mental distress and mental disorder as the focus of the field.

Tigger (184-191): I guess I see one as a medical diagnostic term, an umm label and I see the other as ... a state of emotion you-know-a state of feeling I think distress is not .. its not necessarily diagnosable you-know what I mean its not abnormal to be distressed, I think that’s a perfectly natural reaction and I think I am .. this is actually .. only just ... this is the first time I’ve ever really put

this into words . is that I think distress is actually a lot better ... to describe it because I don't, necessarily think that what we see is abnormal, as you understand a disorder to be abnormal ..

This idea of mental disorders being seen as something abnormal in a way that is unhelpful or problematic is a theme that became developed to a much greater degree later on in the transcripts and is a theme I will return to in greater depth in this analysis. However, for the moment it is sufficient to take from this section the tension within the text between clinical psychology as the study of human behaviour and clinical psychology as the assessment and treatment of mental disorders.

The theme of assessment and treatment was ongoing through the interviews and was used extensively to establish what clinical psychology was, particularly in contrast to other disciplines concerned with mental health. When discussing what assessment meant for the participants, it was strongly linked to the presence of a disorder.

Psych (127-129): umm I guess we're really trying to find out, what.. what issues are there for the patient, for the client umm, whether its actually .. trying to pin down a disorder, trying to find out causes

The sense provided within the text here is that the 'client' has come to the psychologist with issues or disorders and the role of the psychologist is to discover or 'pin down' this disorder. At this point within the text the disorder seems to take precedence over the client in terms of what the psychologists interest or goals might be. Accuracy of assessment was seen as one of the key areas of growth for clinical psychology; however, this sense of what was meant by assessment is strongly associated with the idea of clinical psychology as an empirical science.

When discussing science in the interviews it tended to be that the participants made explicit what they meant by this; it drew out for me the realisation that when I use the term 'science' I am referring to the philosophy of empiricism. This led to an awareness that at points the participants might be using the term to refer to different underlying values and beliefs.

4.3 As a Science

The concept of clinical psychology as a science was one that was established by the participants early within the interviews as ‘...the science of human behaviour...’ (Wendy, 187). This theme was continued, frequently in contrast to other ‘helping professions’

Psych (3-6): umm, well I always had an interest in helping, people, umm .. I looked at um social work, as a career option, and, yeah other sort of helping professions, interest in the police, ahh: in the end, psychology looked like, it was going to be the most interesting, the most scientific umm

Here psychology is presented as a science, as more of a science than other helping professions. This sense of psychology as a science is linked to its interest value, a strong factor in its appeal as a career choice. As was mentioned, this idea of psychology as a science is predominantly linked to the construct of assessments. When talking about how psychology was becoming more of a ‘solid science’ (Psych, 141) assessments were the primary focus of the justification.

Psych (147-152): I mean think, I guess just with assessments and perhaps, we are, there’s a lot of research going into tests and I guess I feel they are improving, yeah so if you look at the MMPI the original version

I: yup

Psych: and that’s their idea of a personality test, and what we have today um there have been some, some improvements

In this extract the way that psychology is seen as a science and the manner in which it has improved as a science is linked to the worth of the tests available. The idea that research is being carried out with the aim of developing tests that are improvements on original endeavours is the evidence for psychology becoming more of a science.

The way that psychology approaches being a science is one that was presented a degree of contrasts, both throughout and within the interviews.

Psych (141-144): umm yeah I think it is, yeah it’s a pretty solid science . umm

and I guess, but there is, there is an attempt to, to actually base things on empirical data, and we're not/ we're a long way from being able to say we always do that, but we're moving in that direction, we're trying rather than: just waffling along

In this instance, the text from the same participant presents a slightly different picture of the efforts of psychology to be an empirical science. While psychology is seen as a 'solid science' trying to base itself in empiricism, it is seen as a long way from such a position. This seems to contrast with the idea of the tests and measures used in assessment having improved being sufficient grounds to regard psychology as a science. In this extract, what pushes psychology into the realms of empiricism seems to be the intent that exists to 'base things on empirical data'. It is the attempting that takes psychology from the realm of the '...wafflers...' to the domain of the '...solid science...'

This idea of psychology as a science was not one that remained unchallenged between interviews, however. What seems to be primarily questioned is the idea of psychology as an empirical science.

Wendy (484-491): umm I think that, psychology and psychologists would like to think that it's a science, umm and .. I'm not .. necessarily sure, that I think, that one it's a science, and two that it should be .. and in some respects think that we should be distinguishing ourselves from a science because we can never be a pure science, as such, we can never say, you-know umm these cells cause cancer, we can never, be, that, direct I don't believe, and so I think that in some respects we should be separating ourselves from that, and, making up a new . field, or making up a new concept, for the sorts of things that we deal with, because we're never going to get a, complete answer

What is introduced here in the extract above is the idea of another way of existing as a discipline; this way is a contrast to the traditional scientific representation of psychology. By stating that psychology is not a 'pure science' the remaining alternative is some type of adulterated or muddy science. This theme was supported by comments from another participant,

Tigger (290-293): ... I don't know that I would describe psychology as .. a

science, I'm not sure I said that before .. ummm I see it as much more medical but I .. it's a social science, I don't think its an exact science, I think there's still a large part of it that's art

Here, the muddy science is taken to another level with what can be regarded as the opposite of 'pure science', the domain of art. The idea of being a 'social science' is an interesting tension here, as this passage creates room within the text to allow psychology to have some kind of stake in the science world. What is left, however, ends up presenting a discomfort towards the idea of accepting that psychology is a science. Partly this seems to add to the grandeur – psychology has been left with some kind of scientific status, but also allowed to enter a more liberal and subjective arena. The point made in the extract by Wendy previously takes this mixture of philosophies and suggests that psychology needs to clarify some new ground for itself. Here science is presented as a concrete entity, within which psychology does not belong. Within this piece of the interview what is interesting is psychology's separation from 'pure science' because of its described inability to make causal predictions. The overall feel of the passage, however, was that this was more of a problem with science than with psychology, a rejection of values rather than a lowering of status.

It was often within the context of being a scientific discipline that psychology was presented as a dynamic field. The types of change seen were associated with becoming more scientific and empirical, more solid.

4.4 Psychology and Change.

When discussing change within psychology one key aspect was that any changes occurring were not seen as happening particularly fast. Change was seen as occurring, but at a relatively slow pace. What this idea of speed of change was relative to was not made explicit during the interviews – what was left in most cases was simply a sense of it being not fast enough. In some cases the idea of change was presented as an assumption that all things change so psychology must be changing. Within the extract from this participant, change is framed as a natural process with psychology constructed as a world, like other worlds; there is a sense provided by this extract of psychology as a functional ecosystem that has evolved – not a human construct. This sense of naturalness about psychology is used to justify an argument for change, despite no provision within the text for what this might be. Similarly, the rate of change within psychology is presented as a natural occurring state, slow change is unusual, and while room is left for the possibility of rapid change this is clearly identified as unimaginable.

Tigger (543-550): I think psychology like anything will change, because umm I think that's part of a natural process of evolution, in anything, and: I guess psychology is a, world like anything else, so it will evolve or it will disappear (laugh), yeah, if we don't keep up with the times we'll just sink, so yeah it will change, I think it will be slow, I dont think change .. umm generally, I don't think change is usually fast . I think its more, small progressions over time, although that's not to say that cataclysmic things can't happen when you have a major change but its hard to envision in psychology what that would be

The following extract supports this concept of a slow change and connects it with that of change being about changes in the technology of psychology. Here it seems that the change is more of a shift, an elaboration of what psychology can already perform, than an actual change it what it means to be a psychologist.

Mike (361-366): I don't think its shifting that fast at all, I think . if anything psychology is moving more to umm experimental, stuff getting involved in, in combined research, with different organizations different approaches .. like medical

fields, and stuff like that.

This is a curious mixture of depreciation of psychology in terms of altering to new interventions and being exploratory and innovative. What is given is a sense of psychology not being innovative on its own. Unlike the descriptions of other mental health disciplines maintaining their own narrow intervention focus, psychology is being offered as an eclectic field exploring the boundaries of its territory and the common ground where that territory meets the interests of others. There is a sense here that psychology is playing a mentor type role, lending its knowledge and expertise to other areas, but remaining unchanged and unsullied itself. The role of the development of technology and innovation is expanded later with an increased focus on what psychology has to contribute towards such a merger of disciplines.

Mike (378-389): a lot of the treatments they're doing with um, laser treatment on tumours and stuff like that, and the different approaches they've got now, compared to what they had years ago, when they just had to chop parts of your brain out then took out the cancer, now they just laser it for example, and they're assessing differences between this approach and this approach and stuff . I think its great.

I: It almost sounds more like what a doctor would do, than a psychologist

Mike: Umm not if you're looking at peoples deficits resulting from . umm, surgery looking at things, like umm, memory and how um, like the laser has got to go somewhere, its got to go through some structures, and we know what structures are involved in, so assessing for the particular instances an: what we know about what structures'.

Here, the exciting changes psychology is involved in are more around assessing and improving treatment procedures in another field. Psychology is seen as being able to contribute useful objectivity and knowledge to what are already specialised areas of medicine, in a way that can allow them to improve and refine their practices. This entire operation, however, appears to be quite unidirectional with little to suggest growth and change within the practices and theory of clinical psychology itself.

For other participants, however, the technology of psychology, or the areas of change were perceived as occurring within the theories and knowledge clinical psychologists employ. The previous extract developed the idea that psychology's knowledge has previously been under-utilised and it is only now that other fields are beginning to see its value to their own work. In what follows, the changes occurring are seen as more in the constructs available to psychologists in their explaining of the world, new ways of understanding human behaviour. The locus of change differs from external to psychology to within.

Tigger (467-471): ... theories aren't going to stop being produced and the research isn't going to stop being done and they're going to stop finding new things ... You-know its going to keep happening and we have to keep up with it

Within this example of change, the idea of movement is more pronounced; change is presented as less slow, as becoming something that an effort is required to keep up with. What is useful to note in this participant's extract, is the detachment from psychology and its change – that psychology is a separate entity that '...we have to keep up with...', the implication here, similar to the idea of an ecology is that psychology has a life of its own.

4.5 Practicality

A dominant theme that was developed within the context of 'what psychology is' was the practicality of psychology. This was presented as both the need for psychologists to acquire practical skills in training and the difficulties involved with this.

Principally psychology is seen as having a practical focus – they are there to help people have a '...better quality of life' (Wendy, 197). This idea of being able to help people and the range of areas where psychology can assist people is quite explicit in the extract below.

Wendy (346-349): ye::s because, um, they have all the .. um strategies in order to help, individuals with a variety of problems, and I suspect . that whatever their issue is .. it is . treatable, um in quotes, umm by any of the techniques that they

have knowledge of, and, I suspect also, that whatever is the problem, is potentially related to in some way, to one of the psychological disorders

Again this extract draws on the model of explaining the world in terms of mental illness, but also establishes a sense of the utility of psychology; that its premises and understandings are so universal that they can be applied to any aspect of life. What is clear as well is the strong sense of belief in the efficacy of psychological interventions – ‘... that whatever their issue is .. it is . treatable ...’. This idea of everything being ‘...treatable...’ is protected to an extent by the device of putting *treatable* ‘...in quotes...’. By doing this the term *treatable* is given a sense of the abstract, a claim that treatment cannot be achieved is defended against as the text now reads ‘... that whatever their issue is ... it is *something like* treatable...’. The claim is that psychology is efficacious, but the text seems to be structured to defend such a claim. The efficacy of psychology was made more explicit in one interview where the participant talked about their own experience of therapy.

Psych (289-292): I was given, given the power to change, whereas before . its struggled along with this is the way I am, but it was like being given the tool, to look, at ahh, my beliefs and what they were doing to me and change them and it it was very empowering

Here, it feels like there is a sense that the impact that psychological ‘tools’ can have on the client’s beliefs and life is almost transcendental in the way that change is effected. While the power of the change almost seems to lie outside the bounds of the client and therapist, and lies in the curative properties of the ‘tools’ given, the concluding statement is that there is a strong sense of empowerment within this process. This sense of empowerment serves to re-emphasise the utility and need for psychology; we are being told that what it does works.

Tangential to the concept of psychology as needing to meet practical needs is the theme of psychology *being* a practical vocation. This emphasis was made as an argument around the nature of training in psychology and the necessity for having skills that are going to be useful when working with clients. Using a focus of psychology training being overly theoretical, the text begins to flesh out rationale for why practical skills are so essential.

Psych (602-610): ahh, far more practical work, you-know like doing interviewing, case studies, umm, a lot more like that I think would be really helpful, a lot more umm yeah, practical experience and then learning, and what comes out of that, then learning from that you-know discussions, rather than just focussing on theory.

I: yup, so while you see psychology as quite an academic subject, umm its not necessarily what it is, when you do it?

Psych: no, no its not, and that's one/ they. I don't know whether its any pretension that we're trained/ and turned out as clinical psychologists, but really we're just given a bit of knowledge and then we start the training once we're finished

Within this description of the training for psychologists, strong statements are presented around the concept of proper training being practical in basis, while theoretical knowledge is seen as of considerably less importance. Another participant took this theme further and linked in how he saw theory as being impractical with a stereotyped anecdote.

Mike (602-609): I think we spend too much time, dilly dallying around, like we still talk about Freud, we still teach Freud, and we should, people still use his technology and stuff, but, ummm practically, based .. talking to someone whose, you-know, in a domestic situation and they're, battered wife or, umm . whose gone through a rape, they don't want to talk about, you-know, from Freud's perspective, (laugh) I just I think we need to really juice up what we teach, and how we teach it, and how applicable it is to real life.

The text here neatly interposes notions of Freudian psychology against those issues of real life practicality. Here it seems the work of Freud is being used to represent all that is impractical in psychology. This is particularly strong here as, to my mind, Freudian models of therapy best meet the stereotypical image of the media psychologist, using talk therapy orientated towards family relationships and sexual anxiety. While not wanting to impinge on the efficacy of psycho-dynamic theory outside of this stereotype, these particular issues relating to family life and sex seem to

target quite precisely a sense of absurdity and lack of connection between such a therapist and their client. This sense is reinforced by the laugh after the image has been completed; even with the weight of the issues such as rape and domestic violence being confronted, the presentation of the stereotypical intervention creates an image comic in tragedy.

Mike (614-625): I just, think, that if you're going to train in something . for so long, then you've got to be able to be competent to get out there and do something . .um and once you're working with people . you've got to know what you are doing, because you're stuffing with peoples lives if you're not ,and I don't think that's enforced enough like I don't think in any of the papers I've been to, ahh . someone said if you cock up, if you don't do a good enough job, how do you think they're going to feel ?? these people . people who have psychiatric conditions, or head injuries or involved in domestic disputes or, children who're just, you-know, screwed up, you make a mistake, and they get dicked around and it takes long enough to get on, a waiting list . let alone to be seen, for you to turn around and do something stupid and not know what you're doing and waste their time an:, and stuff.

Initially the text works around a sense of resource wastage as a justification for claims for practical efficacy. The value of training is used here instead of learning, which can be for its own sake or personal growth; training is used to learn to perform a task. In this case the goal of the training is to be competent, a statement that seems perfectly reasonable when coupled with the claims that follow concerning potential harm to peoples lives. The idea of being a guardian of society protecting individuals from harm to themselves and others is also used when participants discussed clinical psychologists' power to intervene into their clients' lives. Here the idea is employed to show the psychologist as having responsibility to act as guarantor for their own actions. The actual nature of this harm is not specified, particularly as the text ends back with resource wastage again, but is enough to give a sense of an impassioned justification for everyone working in this area to be competent. This necessity is reinforced by the general competency of the types of people whose 'lives will be getting screwed with'. Generally, these are people who

society who sees as less capable of autonomous lives and hence are less able to advocate for their own safety. This theme of the importance of practicality in being able to help people places clinical psychology as a vocation of trust. The therapist is in a position of status with considerable powers of intervention into the clients' life. For the client to be able to know that the therapist is competent and capable of ensuring their safety, it is essential that they can be perceived as trustworthy. Within this, the client also needs to be able to trust that the psychologist can help them, that this competency is 'applicable to real life' and can work for them. This idea of trust is elaborated on when talking about characteristics and skills of the therapist; a theme developed further when what it means to be a 'good therapist' is discussed.

(The italicised 'Profession X' represents the obscuring of the participants career prior to studying psychology)

Chapter 5: Choosing

In the previous chapter there was introduced a tension between the participants' descriptions of wanting to understand human behaviour and the assessment and treatment of mental disorders. This chapter begins to clarify some of this tension in participants talk around the kinds of behaviours they wanted to understand, often within the context of why they chose clinical psychology. However, for most of the participants the idea of becoming a clinical psychologist was more an adjunct to other career paths than a specifically chosen direction on the part of the individual, '...I don't feel it was like I actively chose psychology...' (Joe, 8). In other cases the career was chosen more for characteristics perceived as representative of clinical psychologists, '...I wanted to be in a profession, I didn't want to work as a labourer or anything like that, I wanted to have a recognised skill...' (Mike, 6-7). In this framing of psychology as a career, weight seems to be placed on the status of clinical psychologists, this is emphasised through comparisons made when talking of other possible careers choices made, '...I originally was going to go to law school...' (Mike, 7-8). The implication is that psychologists similarly hold the white-collar status of lawyers. For some of the participants this hierarchy was involved in a type of professional upgrading, as a career which had brought them into contact with psychology was exchanged for a step up the ladder, '...I've got a *Profession X* background so I have some contact in those special needs work with, educational psychologists...' (Laura, 4-6). Like other factors, this decision of psychology comparative to other careers was made with little knowledge about psychology or other options.

Laura (25-27): I didn't really know a lot about psychologists in general, at that stage, but I thought well I kinda like that, one to one kinda work with: kids, where as, you-know before I'd been in *Profession X* and that...

The task performed here in the text is to show that, while not a lot is known about psychologists - bearing in mind at this point the text is referring to educational psychologists rather than clinical - the work they do is more challenging and offers an intimate working relationship within its interventions. There is a tension within this extract which seems to lie around the idea of pursuing psychology for the opportunity to work one on one with children, when this opportunity is also present within a similar occupational

stream, namely that of educational psychology.

This idea of working with particular groups of people seen as being within the realm of psychology was a strong presented motivating factor, ‘...I’m interested in criminals...’ (Mike, 22), ‘...I quite liked the challenge of helping kids with special needs...’ (Laura, 37). This varied between an interest in the characteristics of the group in question and what working with such a group would be like or represent, ‘...criminals are such a neat bunch and they’re highly clever, often, and its just such a challenge I suppose...’ (Mike, 28-29). This appeal of working with certain groups often related to the participants perception of what working with such a client group would be like in terms of difficulty or rewards. A particular theme within this is the idea that the type of clients psychologists interact with represents a high degree of challenge to the psychologist.

5.1 Knowledge and Choosing

In some cases, the initial appeal of psychology as a career was often tied to conceptions of psychology common to the general public. However, these conceptions were discussed by the participants as being misguided or faulty. The difference between how the participants see psychology now and the common perceptions they saw the public as holding is perceivable within the participants descriptions of what they knew of psychology, ‘...Absolutely nothing, I can be completely honest, when I started psychology I knew very little...’ (Mike, 33-34). Yet each participant was able to discuss aspects about the type of work they wanted to do and had anecdotes of peers presenting certain conceptualisations of psychology. Often these ideas of psychology revolved around media and popular portrayals of psychologists, and the manner of this seemed to have some impact on how the profession was seen.

Mike (199-205): My parents when they were divorcing had to go to see a psychologist, who I only saw twice with the family, but I just thought what they did was kinda cool .. and I think TV had a big effect, I think when LA Law was on TV that had a big effect, and the few I think, interestingly, I

think this is great, this is so significant for me.

What stood out, as being significant, was the actual status of psychologists as professionals being involved in glamorous or romanticised roles, ‘... basically what I’d seen, in ahh movies umm *silence of the lambs* is my inspiration, umm yeah...’ (Psych, 8-9). One participant went further to describe the aspects of being professional that appealed. In the following extract the idea of being professional is highlighted as one of some power, ‘... mediating a situation ...’, ‘... people come to you ...’. Being a psychologist is clearly not in a neutral or equal status position in respect to their clients.

Mike (209-212): being in the position where you are objective, are mediating a situation and finding information and looking at different ways of resolving issues, and being in a position where people come to you, to a professional, I really respect that I think.

In this description of clinical psychology roles similar to the participants earlier career choice of law are drawn, the theme of being a ‘professional’ is a strong one though which had appeal to different participants for different aspects of what being a professional meant to them, ‘... I just think that having a profession is just something great and that’s why I thought this person’s terrific (*psychologist visited with family*)...’ (Mike, 218-219). It seems to me, that Mike’s claims of knowing nothing about psychology prior to studying it is more orientated towards refuting popular views of psychology. While minimising the understanding of those who have not studied psychology, such statements work towards creating a context for showing how much knowledge the person has gained since that period of ignorance. This idea is supported through further extracts where Mike continues to emphasise the disparity between what was known prior to studying psychology and his current understandings of people and mental health.

Mike (39-43): ...So basically my knowledge of psychology was little and even right up till the third year it was still fairly limited .. it wasn’t until working for JOB-X that I could say I learnt something, and could actually understand things more than what they were just written in the book...

This initiates a context for a strong theme in what Mike has to say about studying psychology;

that the knowledge is strongly academic and focuses on skills which transfer poorly to the practical nature of working as a clinical psychologist.

Mike (47-56): ...like you would say one of the symptoms of schizophrenia is social withdrawal and depression, and stuff like that, and if you'd asked me to write down what that meant I would have struggled ... instead of saying social withdrawal means that people don't go and pay their bills, they don't go shopping, they don't interact with other people, they don't take care of themselves, self care, and all these other things they don't go to the dentist, they don't go to the doctors, and it means so much more than what we give it credit for, and I think it wasn't until then that I started to think that psychology is so much more than what we are being taught here,

As was noted earlier, the idea of clinical psychology being a practical vocation that is of use to the clients is consistently emphasised throughout the interviews. This practicality is used to challenge the utility of academic frameworks in the context of mental health on many levels. Themes present as part of this challenge include a questioning of the type of 'knowing' provided by the academic framework and a wariness of the power levels created between the psychologist and their client by these ways of framing a clients concerns. The conclusion is that the participants perceive psychology as being 'so much more' than the public understanding of the discipline. However, the participants also see their understanding of psychology's potential to be similarly far above the psychology they are taught of. This makes me wonder where the limits of psychology are? Psychology is seen as 'so much more' than how the public conceptualises it, and 'so much more' than what is taught – where does the 'extra' come from?

5.2 Other Students

An interesting thing to note is that when the participants were asked to describe what the clinical program was to another student 'what would they be doing and learning' little detail was given outside the actual course structure of papers, years and process. Description of course content tended to be limited to the idea of including a practical component 'getting a practical element to our theoretical thing'. When talking about what a student should know before beginning down the path of clinical psychology training the participants encouraged a much greater knowledge or understanding of the field than most of them seemed to have had themselves, '...I would say to people, go and find out more about it, don't just read books on it, go and find out what psychologists do...' (Mike, 291-293). How this 'finding out' is meant to be achieved is not clear, particularly in light of the participants' observations that even after several years of specialised training they are still unclear. The kinds of things that it is felt someone should know before such training however seems to be less around the nature of the job and the work they will be doing than the risks or negative sides of the profession.

Mike (293-296): ...Find out it's a hard job, that its very stressful, that you've got all these responsibilities, you spend eight years get your first job, stuff up once and you're out and you can't practice again, all those sorts of issues you've got to think about.

There were positives to this list of what should be known, but they were much more general in nature and referred to unspecified challenges and rewards. In parts, the idea of rewards and challenges were detailed in more depth, and allude to the same idea of personal reward or accomplishment. A challenge to assertion of needing to find out was one participants response that, if you don't know, its not for you.

Wendy (320-322): ...Id say, umm . What's clinical all about? Id say go and read your abnormal psych text book, <laugh> and:: you-know if you're a second year and you don't know what its about, then clinical is probably not for you...

The implications within this extract are that a person should have a degree of self-initiative and

drive to be suited for clinical psychology. This statement seems to be quite oppositional to many of the participant's earlier statements of knowing '...very little...' about the area prior to their course.

5.3 Rewards

The participants' talk around their choosing psychology often highlighted aspects of a career in such a field that they were hoping to find rewarding and satisfying. While, as has been discussed, some participants were attracted to characteristics of psychology itself, others presented the work and nature of psychology as key factors in making such a choice.

Psych (305-311): yeah much better than that, I don't think the rewards .. umm match up to the amount of time and the effort of study put in, for me yeah, it does seem pretty secure financially, umm .. I guess . hopefully I'm going to be helping people . and that is really fulfilling for me trying to do that, making a difference, umm . back when I sort of, hopefully my learning will be ongoing, it won't be just stagnating in a job, umm it'll be developing for the rest of my career

In this passage, while the rewards are established as insufficient, allowing the participant to be perceived as relatively altruistic, a number of aspects are indicated as motivators in wanting to be a psychologist. Financial reward was a theme established by other participants

Tigger (520-521): Yeah I'm hoping that eventually there will be a monetary reward when I get a job (laugh) ... that will be nice, I'm not doing all this for the good of my health .. Because I'm having to support myself and *dependants* now, and you-know, so that job has become important

In each case, where financial gain was presented as a motivation it was contextualised with mitigating factors, avoiding a possible interpretation of greed as a motivator. This mitigation occurs in the above extract from Psych through the association of this aspect with the more altruistic considerations of helping others and making a difference. In the second extract the justification for desiring monetary gain is given as a need to support dependants; both of these extracts leave a sense of financial rewards on their own are seen as somewhat less valid or worthy,

and hence need a degree of justification.

The motivating considerations of 'helping others' and 'finding fulfilment in making a difference', as presented in the above extract from Psych's interview were themes often used in presenting psychologists as altruistic caring people. At times this left a curious tension present when talk of reward and achievement was contrasted to motivations of psychologists and constructions of psychology. While psychology is presented as a noble and sacrificing field where the practitioners are subject to stringent monitoring and codes of behaviour, working for the public good, often misunderstood and criticised, there is another aspect at odds with this.

Mike (304-317): being in a position where, you are able to, ah umm I hate to use the word help, but where you're able to assist people to umm overcome some of the debilitating problems they've got, and I've always felt, since I've been working in JOB-X, more of a drive to ah to get out there and do it, because you see how easy it would be to help someone, who for example suffers from, real anxiety and sure they're on medication for it, but that's like a short term fix it . and umm you can see it, you-know if I could spend 4 weeks with this person doing some relaxation, getting them to control their anxiety, then could help them get over it and you can see spending 10 minutes with them and how much that would improve them, just with some one on one time, then you think wow, this is rewarding for me, and basically anyone who tells you that they're in psychology be:/for reasons other than self reward are crapping, they are just... you've got to be in a job that you like, because it gives something back to you'.

Here the instrumental drive to be a psychologist is more self serving; while there are aspects of wanting to help others, the primary motivation is for self gratification. Without going into an involved discussion concerning the existence of altruism, the tension is highlighted between this idea of psychologists wanting to help for the good of society, or for more personal reasons. In the extract given there is a strong assertion for such a motivation in career choice for all people, not just in this instance 'you've got to be in a job that you like, because it gives something back to you'. This participant felt this was especially true for psychology, however, and categorically presents it as the only reason to work in this area, anyone who says anything else is 'crapping'.

This was the first time that an explicative had been used in this participant's transcript, providing a high level of emphasis to the statement. Other participants followed this model of normalising a desire for some concept of reward intrinsic to the job – one example was around the concept of respect.

Wendy (595-597): they asked him why they wanted to be a doctor, and he said he wanted to help people and he wanted respect .. and I think in some respects .. that might be quite similar for, psychologists, that you want to help people, and, you want respect

Here connections are made between the medical profession who, I would argue, are generally accepted as already enjoying a position of respect within society and are seen as occupying a position of doing good. In some ways the arguments presented within the text of each of these participants reflects a need to defend the primary reasons presented for wanting to be a psychologist. This defence in the first case works on the normalising of working for a reward, the second tries to normalise through association with a reputable source. Both extracts feel like they are working to counter any questionable elements to working for a reward.

5.4 Self Interest

The consistent work across the interviews and within each text showing psychologists as altruistically motivated becomes particularly interesting when it is being reversed. In Mike's extract the idea of helping others is now presented in a negative frame, 'I hate to use the word help'. Through the course of the interviews the idea of helping, psychology being a helping profession, was been a strong one. Psychology exists for others, and the way it does this is positive and empowering for the clients. It is here where psychology is now being presented as less altruistic, the concept of help is no longer deemed appropriate, the role of a psychologist is now reframed into assisting, and more strongly assisting with debilitating problems. There is a sense here of creating a context of expertise, helping is too plebeian or common to describe the sense of satisfaction and reward obtained, else psychologists could achieve similar contentment helping people cross the road. Again psychology is presented as being more efficacious than

psychiatry, the medication a client is likely to be on is only a short-term fix and the expertise of psychology is required to allow the client to 'get over it'. What is also noticeable in this extract is the downplaying of the treatment needed to produce a change for the client. What is needed is seen as being easy to implement and achievable in a very short time, '4 weeks' is presented as a viable timeframe, however, the comment that 'you can see spending 10 minutes with them and how much that would improve them' takes this case even further. It would seem that rather than minimizing the technical expertise of the psychological intervention, the implementation of which has been described as challenging, the task of this text is to subvert the competency of alternative treatments. A picture of other fields being lacking has already been introduced, the presentation of the ease of psychological treatment here serves to reinforce the superiority of this framework over competing careers. In the context of being a rewarding and challenging career path, which rewards through a sense of being efficacious, clinical psychology is shown to be superior through providing a greater opportunity for the practitioner to provide successful interventions for their client. While every job is seen as having to provide some sense of fulfilment for the individual, psychology is put forward, more through other areas described weaknesses, as the epitome of job satisfaction in the helping professions.

I have just wondered about the irony of my consistent use of the term discipline, when as I progress through the writing of this project I see increasing diversity of opinion within the participants – there isn't much that seems particularly disciplined.

Chapter 6: Differences with Other Professions:

This chapter is strongly related to the theme of what psychology is. Through describing other fields and professions in relation to psychology, an outline is drawn of how psychology is perceived. Through what is left, the things that are unspoken a shape is created, while this outline largely remains a silhouette it has a strong contribution to what the participants saw as being psychology.

Some interesting points were developed early in the interviews about the idea of differences between disciplines. For some participants there was 'not much' (Wendy, 214) difference.

Even with such a statement, however, there was a perceived difference, and that while there is overlap and this was supposedly an obvious point – 'there is of course some overlap' (Wendy, 244) differences exist.

Wendy (246-247): ...but I think mainly they they seem to cover different ... yeah, different sort of areas, plus I don't think that they get as much training in:, in the specific kinds of therapy.

Within this extract, psychology is presented as occupying a different area from other mental health fields and also has some extra kudos in the specificity of the training provided. This idea or theme of the training of psychologists being a large part of the differences to other professionals is a strong one, although it often exists in contradiction to the value the participants placed upon their training at other points in the text. An extract from another participant used this idea of overlap to establish a degree of hierarchy, establishing psychology as residing at the higher end of a continuum.

Psych (121-124): there's an overlap there, between the professions, some of the best counsellors are at the high end of their profession, probably doing just the same as we're doing umm and, there is an overlap but we do have a primary role of assessment, and using, you-know talk therapies

Psychology differs from other mental health professions in 'the types of problems they see'. A continuum is described that varies along a range of intervention forms. The participants describe intervention styles belonging to the disciplines of counselling and psychotherapy as residing at one end of the continuum and relate to dealing with 'normal problems'. Clinical psychology is placed at the other end of this continuum and deals with concerns that are more pathological.

6.1 Psychiatry

Psychiatry is placed in a similar place to psychology on such a continuum but is differentiated through their adherence to a medical model, and having access to the prescription of drugs. Some participants saw this similarity existing predominantly in how the professions are perceived by the public.

Tigger (746-748): I think a lot of lay people, umm confuse us with psychiatrists, I don't know with whether psycholoGISTS are in some ways discernible from psychiatrists to a lot of people so .. yeah

The capitals in '...psycholoGISTS...' represent Tigger's emphasis at this point. on the end of the word to exaggerate the label as distinct from psychiatrists. This reinforces the point being made here of similarity between the professions, with an allusion being provided that even the names can be confused unless care is taken.

Other participants aligned psychology with psychiatry in a much more encompassing manner.

Wendy (258-262): well psychiatry is just broadly the same as psychology dealing with the same level, that high level of umm disorder, umm except, with the potential to prescribe drugs, umm I see that as the core, and perhaps only difference, between psychology and psychiatry, of course you-know, the medical training aside, I think the ability to prescribe drugs

is the difference

Within this extract the strong implication that psychology is at the upper end of the continuum is continued, with terms like the 'high' level of disorder shaping a sense of increased status for the profession. It is interesting here the way that the 'medical training' of psychiatrists is seen as an 'aside' – it does not contribute to the difference, which lies solely in '...the ability to prescribe drugs...' However, this development of psychiatry being predominantly differentiated from psychology on the basis of their ability – and willingness – to prescribe drugs was one available in other participants' discourses.

Such descriptions contain subtle disparagement, psychiatrists have prescription drugs as 'part of their armoury' (Jo, 209), and this armoury is used to 'alleviate symptoms' (Jo, 211). While psychiatry is similar to clinical psychology in dealing with more 'serious' problems there is an implication that as a discipline it is less successful in doing this due to restricting their intervention to symptoms similar to the manner in which doctors treat flu symptoms until the virus has passed.

Tigger (761-765): Yeah that if you can do it with talk therapy somehow, or another, and empower the person to do it themselves it has to be better than giving them a pill to fix it-although you have to keep in mind that sometimes . a pill is going to be the quickest and most effective, mean means of relief, but I don't know that we're ever taught that that's all you need.

In this extract, the interventions of psychiatrists are limited to quick and effective relief – the usage of terms like 'pill' seem to reduce the status of the profession to a basic prescription agency that doesn't have the technical expertise of 'talk therapy'. Such band-aid type approaches are described as less than satisfactory by the participants, seeing them as failing to address the concerns causing the symptoms, which unlike a virus are unlikely to be successfully resolved by the bodies natural defences.

Tigger (767-773): ...Even when you take a pill, that there' always some sort of psychotherapeutic intervention which can be beneficial, for that

person I think it just gives them a power, autonomy of their own wellbeing you-know they're, doing more than just taking a pill to get themselves better they're actually doing something for themselves, in doing that they pick up skills along the way, that they can then generalise to, help themselves in other areas . umm .. yeah I think its better its less invasive its longer lasting . mmm...

This extract is quite pivotal in this particular interview in establishing the superiority of psychology over psychiatry and the work is all done in the way that talk therapy is shown as being beneficial to the client. The deliverance of power, autonomy, picking up skills, being able to help themselves, these are all *good* things that are hard to argue the benefit of. In the absence of a discourse to present psychiatry as working differently, it seems clear that psychology is superior.

What was notable over the transcripts was that psychiatry seemed to receive a greater degree of vitriol in comparisons between it and clinical psychology than other related fields such as counselling or social work, this stance was present in several transcripts, '...yeah, yeah, I don't I don't have much faith in the medical profession .. Psychiatrists in particular, extremely down on them...' (Psych, 442-443); '...psychiatry, if I can talk about that one, that frustrates the hell out of me ...' (Mike, 224). It would seem that in the struggle for status psychiatry as a field is more of a threat than other possible competitors. Many of the arguments used to minimise the authority and status of psychiatry as a discipline focused on the supposed dominant paradigm of the 'medical model' or their use of drugs.

Tigger (758-759): ...I think also that psychiatrists perhaps tend more, towards a drug regime. and my view of psychology and in general I guess and my personal view is that, they're (psychologists) generally anti-drug, we have this sort of, anti-drug mentality...

While Tigger's extract uses this difference merely to highlight the distinction between the professions, the extract below uses the same concern in broad dismissal of the efficacy of psychiatry entirely.

Mike (226-235): ...they (psychiatrists) are assessing people for their general

health and looking at medication issues and stuff like that and they tend to ignore all the problems that perhaps a psychologist could deal with but they just use medication, and for example one of the mental health consumer rights is that they (the client) get the best possible treatment for their condition, for example the best possible treatment for schizophrenia is a combination of psychotherapy, and drugs, medication, yet they get none of that, no psychotherapy no counselling nothing . they just get the drugs, and my issue with that is that I don't think they are kinda aware of what psychologists can do as much as: . all their focus is on medical model...

Here, the participant uses a similar device of 'what is best for the client' to show that the medical model is not just responsible for imposing a limiting and partial intervention on the client, as has been mentioned when discussing 'treating the symptoms', but is also implicated in the act of failing to meet the clients rights. Here Mike's comments indicate that medication is considered necessary in the provision of a balanced intervention. Since psychologists currently cannot prescribe medication, for them to provide a balanced intervention requires some type of partnership or involvement with a psychiatrist. The onus of this partnership according to the above text appears to lie on psychiatrists. In fact, psychiatrists through failing to work with psychologists are presented as actively impeding a successful treatment intervention for the client.

This idea of obtaining the best possible treatment or intervention was not only seen as being the clients right, but also an important aspect of a psychologist's role.

Mike (669-672): ...part of psychology in my opinion is advocacy, you're advocating for them to get the best possible help, or treatment that they can get, umm its part of you::'re requirements as a professional, in psychology...

This creates an additional tension between the constructions of these two roles. While psychiatry is seen as blocking clients' access to the best treatment, psychology is cast as the profession responsible for assisting the clients towards obtaining such treatment. The development of such a contrast, with the two professions at opposite ends of a continuum, places psychology as competing with psychiatry in terms of the goals they are working towards for their clients.

This difference arising from the training and professional unity of the field is further emphasised when talking about differences in intervention or understandings offered by psychology compared to other fields, ‘...Im not sure what they (psychologists) could offer that is separate from what everyone else offers...’ (Joe, 531-532). Reflection suggested that there is a ‘...strength that it has the diagnostic criteria...’ (Joe, 358), this however seems perilously close to riding on the bandwagon of the medical model which is so integral in reducing the stature of psychiatry in relation to clinical psychology. In addressing the apparent similarities that develop when psychology is constructed from building blocks of comparisons to other disciplines, participants reduce the tension by framing psychology as a collaborative eclectic practice. This effectively places clinical psychology as the good guy trying to work with other frameworks and paradigms for the good of the client but blocked by other disciplincentric fields who are orientated, monopolising, and maintaining inefficient practices to the detriment of the client.

Mike (255-266): ...it (psychology) can look at the medical model and trying to incorporate it, which it does, like we don’t say you’ve come to MR psychologist or you go to Mr psychiatrist, where we look at drugs and we work with people who are on medication from a psychological viewpoint, and we’re also interested in, umm from what I consider social work to a, be about, is how this person functions, and what, er needs they’ve had, and how you go about meeting those needs for example in the community, and that sorta stuff . a psychologist, I feel, can be involved in that, as well/can be comfortably involved, whereas a counsellor, knows nothing about the medications, maybe a generalization too, umm but are not in a position to do that, so I think , why I like clinical psychology, is that you can be anywhere, you can go anywhere and be respected for it, for starts...

Here we can see the work that is being done in the text to take characteristics from each area, presumably positive ones, and frame psychology as more complete composite of them all. The negative attention the medical model has received in other areas of the text here is conspicuously absent and actually appears to be working to claim some of the scientific objectivity and clinical nature associated with medicine for clinical psychology. The emphasis on the ‘...Mr...’, when referring to psychology, seemed to be a rather unsubtle tool to emphasise the status of the

psychologist in the extract over the other disciplines, particularly ‘...Mr psychiatrist...’.

The assumptions here seem to be that while clinical psychology can use the medical model where it is useful, it, unlike psychiatry, is not limited by a strict observance to any one paradigm. Also in this extract is a reiteration of the idea of psychologists holding a position of respect as a basis of their professional standing and training.

6.2 Other Fields

As well as psychiatry, psychology was constructed in terms of differences to other fields, within what might be considered the mental health professions – such as counselling or social work, along with, at times, other facets of the broader discipline of psychology. At points the difference was not highlighted as strongly as others – often as a way of showing a degree of appreciation for other fields

Psych (411-414): I mean we’re kinda all in the same general area of helping

I: yeah

Psych: making peoples lives hopefully better, and there’s that degree of overlap that we each have our own specialties

In this extract the difference is presented in terms of the motives or objectives of the different professions – we’re all here to help. However, within different points of the interview the way the text is engaged places psychology at a high position within a hierarchy of other professions. We’re all here to help, but psychology is more appropriate or applicable to more situations. Of these fields, the primary discourse worked around the parallels and differences between psychology and counselling.

To an extent this idea of similarity is maintained, with the participant seeing counselling as being very close to psychology.

Psych (49-51): umm yeah I guess, in some ways it, for someone who didn’t know anything about psychology describing it as counselling, would be quite a good

start .. But with an awful lot laid on top of that

There is a strong implication, however, within this extract that this is a naive or misguided understanding of psychology – it will do if you don't know anything about it and makes a good initial point of reference. As the discourse continues it becomes clearer that psychology has something quite different to offer than counselling as '...they (counsellors) weren't appropriate, for what was going on for me, I should have seen a psychologist, straight away...' (Psych, 419-420). What is reasonably consistent throughout the interviews is the position of counselling being a profession – although this construction is frequently challenged – that is somehow less than psychology on a range of levels. While at times this position was presented in terms of expertise or the quality of training, as in the extract that follows, the main theme around counsellors was along the lines of status or respect.

Tigger (230-237): you-know they (counsellors) had a basic helping skills course, they weren't trained to do specialist sexual abuse counselling, they were well out of their depth and they didn't even know it .. and it just gave counselling a bad name because .. you-know their clients .(breath). I don't know whether they were actually damaged but would often be quite vocally .. umm .. you-know in complaints about counsellors

I: right

Tigger: and counselling was regarded as a real cowboy option

Within this text counselling is presented as a low skill field – it becomes necessary at this point for the analysis to avoid my own use of the term 'profession', as the professional status of counselling increasingly becomes a point contested by the participants. The participant at this point uses the idea of specifics to show counsellors as inadequate to the task of 'helping' – while they have basic skills these were not sufficient to provide client satisfaction. This sets the context for the claim of counselling as a 'cowboy option', a direct challenge to the status of this field. In most cases such texts worked towards a position where the final admission was that the difference lay in psychology being more

professional than counselling, which left little room for someone who is a counsellor to be seen as professional.

Psych (61-65):...but I guess I was so impressed . with the way they worked, umm so much more professional than counselling, than counsellors Id been to

I: right, you you'd had an, um experienced the contrast have you

Psych: yeah yeah just a the skill and knowledge, just so much greater I was really impressed

The way that Psych presents psychology as being so clearly more impressive seems to directly work against any competing discourses presenting counselling as a competing profession. In another example, the participant is a lot more explicit about the difference in status between psychology and counselling.

Wendy (216-222): umm, I think there's a real confusion particularly between, counselling and psychology, in terms of clinical psychology do you mean ?

I: yeah

Wendy: umm yeah between counselling, and clinical, there's .. a real sort of umm, the core difference seems to be the respect that comes with the qualification, as opposed to anything else, but I think that there's some differences in the training the level of, specificity I guess, of the training

Wendy begins here with recognising the similarities between the two professions in a manner similar to other participants; there is almost a sense of 'well you could be forgiven for mistaking them as the same'. This is done mostly by the following passage that then progresses to the point of counselling receiving less respect. As was shown earlier when discussing reasons for choosing psychology, for this participant, respect was a large factor and one that was linked to the status of psychology. While this passage only indicates the difference in training as being one of specificity, when continued it developed into a more clear sense of this specificity as placing psychology in a more advanced position deserving of the extra respect.

Wendy (236-247): ... I think that, clinical (psychology) does focus on the disorder, but has all the strategies in order to help, and seems to deal with those people who are at the, umm .. the more problematic end of the spectrum, whereas counselling is quite often . I suppose Id say quite often, more for, things like mild depression, mild anxiety, not necessarily clinical disorders ... but I think mainly they they seem to cover different ... yeah, different sort of areas, plus I don't think that they get as much training in:, in the specific kinds of therapy,

Here psychology is presented as having 'all the strategies', which implies counselling does not. Counselling is indicated to be a 'milder' version of psychology with the counsellors receiving less training. While counselling is described as covering a different area – this area is in a sense of being the less important issues than those dealt with by psychologists.

In general psychology is considered by the participants as having more of a '...broader focus in their therapeutic tools that are available to them ...' (Joe, 114). This was expressed in a range of ways, often focussing on the idea, similar to that of the layperson that psychologists have access to private knowledge, to methods of getting a complete understanding of a person and their problems.

Mike (120-123): ...Its going to give me the approach where I can get as much information, because of its eclectic approach, and use that information that I gather and the knowledge and skills you acquire from it to then use that to help the individual...

At times, this idea of clinical psychology providing a more complete understanding than other perspectives of viewing a person was made quite explicit,

Mike (125-127): ...counselling and experimental psychology, and those sorts of things, even developmental psychology doesn't offer as much comprehensive understanding compared to clinical psychology.

Other fields are seen as addressing more superficial elements of the problems people present with,

psychiatry is discussed as addressing 'just symptoms' while counselling is portrayed as doing even less than this.

Mike (132-137): ...I wanted a package that brought everything together, so I could turn around and say well, this person's come to me and I'm going to use everything I can to find out what's wrong ... whereas a counsellor in my opinion doesn't really do that role, they get a person and treat what they can see and then that's it.

This idea of clinical psychology providing a broad platform also includes the range of options available to the practitioner in future career paths. The skills and training necessary to becoming a clinical psychologist are seen as being integral to any other branch of psychology, providing a solid grounding in transferable skills, '...I think the clinical program gives you the training to then go and work in any place, and then learn at the same time...' (Mike, 356-357). This idea of clinical psychology providing a broad base of training is seen as resulting in a professional who is capable of working in a much wider range of contexts than both non clinical psychologists and other mental health professionals.

Mike (570-575): ...I think psychologists in general should be trying to deal with as many different types of situations as they possibly can . umm because they can.

I: Right.

Mike: for that reason . umm compared to, counsellors or:: umm non-clinical psychologists . who what they deal with is limited.

The text here introduces the notion of clinical psychologists having almost an obligation due to their wide-ranging abilities to permeate as many areas as possible. There is no real attempt to justify this notion in the text; the rationale is simply that no one else can.

Clinical psychology is also seen as more addressing the issues pertaining to the individual client, both in the tools and methodologies it brings to the therapy session and the nature and cause of the problems it is seen as working with.

Mike (243-249): ...I can remember being asked in one of the clinical interviews

why I didn't go into social work or something like that, and I said because I was looking for more of a one on one relationship with clients, that I wanted to be involved in the assessment side of it, and I wanted to be involved in modification of behaviours and stuff like that working with people who couldn't or weren't aware of their behaviour.

What is introduced within this explanation of what the participant wants from psychology is the construct of psychology being somewhat parental in nature. This interaction between the therapist and client as private and intimate is presented as preferable to other ways of working. Here intervention is portrayed very much as something that is done to a client, the positive constructions of psychology helping someone help themselves or maximising personal potential have been left aside for the stark image of modifying the ignorant, even the issue of consent is not addressed here and the client's choice almost seems irrelevant or inconsequential.

The term 'good' was used here in a sense of asking the participants what they would want in a psychologist if they were the client, what would be the ideal values, beliefs and behaviours that they would view the 'perfect' psychologist as displaying. The basis for this idea came from my impressions that some of the practitioners my peers and I were exposed to during our training were viewed and discussed as better or superior than others, from this I developed a belief that there were certain things that made a good psychologist and that the participants discussion around this area would present some of the characteristics of such practitioner.

My thoughts around this are initially that this makes sense; it seems reasonable to imagine certain characteristics or behaviours that would not be appropriate in a psychologist. However, the more I think over it, it feels that this is based around an acceptance of a certain construction of what psychology is and should be, with such discourses of 'ok' and 'not ok' types of people working to maintain a particular discourse of what psychology is allowed to become.

Chapter 7: Being a Psychologist:

So far I have tried to focus mostly on what psychology is and why the participants chose to study in such an area. The next major line splits the data around a theme of what is a psychologist, rather than what is psychology. While some themes have connected to this way of viewing psychologists, now the data focuses more on the professional working life of such a person, rather than the perceived characteristics of the profession itself. The first section within this theme examines how the participants presented themselves and their own constructions of what a psychologist is, and follows this line of inquiry into exploring the elements used to describe what makes someone a 'good' psychologist.

7.1 The Right Kind of Person

For some of the participants what was presented early in the transcripts was that it takes a certain type of person to be a psychologist.

Tigger (38-40): umm I think a lot of it just came from the fact that I did so well in it, that there was almost a sense of coming home like this was .. this just fitted me, and I fitted it ..and I believe in going with your strengths

Within this extract, the use of the term fitting conveys to me notions of having a niche in the world, with the 'sense of coming home' enhancing this – mental imagery of blissful utopia springs to mind, with all people doing their 'proper' task in life.

The participant Psych saw this idea of personal characteristics making them right for psychology in a similar manner, 'it was something I could do and saw in a way .. kind of saw stuff in me that kind of made me think I could do the job' (Psych, 30-31). Here Psych talks of something internal and it is this 'stuff' that makes Psych suitable for the job. Within this extract, the idea of niche is not as dominant as it was in Tigger's, as the 'stuff' is left vague and may be experiences or aspects of the self that were learnt over time. Both participants present themselves as able to be good in their vocation, for Psych this is being able to 'do the job' while for Tigger it was expressed in 'going with my strengths'. In each case the sense conveyed is that having the right 'stuff' or 'fitting' is what it takes to be a psychologist. Wendy also presented this idea of a right kind of

person, however, in this instance it was around discussing psychology as being right for the person, 'you-know if you're a second year and you don't know what its about, then clinical is probably not for you' (Wendy, 321-322). This extract was introduced earlier when I explored the way the participants talked about what they saw other students as knowing about psychology. At that point in this thesis this extract worked to show Wendy displaying students as needing to have a certain awareness and comprehension of psychology. However, I see this text as saying that, as did Tigger and Psych did by implication – if you can be the right kind of person the wrong kind must also be present – that certain sorts of people are not suited for psychology. For Wendy, if you are not able to gain an appreciation and ownership of certain knowledge, in this case an understanding of psychology, then you are not the right kind of person. What is different in this extract, however, is the idea of time, or a place in a person's career development. This seems to leave room for the development of whatever it takes to be right for psychology. Contrasting with the discourse of 'fitting' which presents a more black and white image of things, you either fit or you do not, Wendy places the being right discourse into a framework of being competent or capable of acquiring certain sorts of knowledge. Mike, similar to Wendy, made this theme of a wrong kind of person quite explicit, '...I get this, sometimes I get this immediate feeling, you'd not make a psychologist, just by looking at them...' (Mike, 287-288). Mike described in this extract people's suitability as psychologists as being a very visible phenomena – it can be identified '...just by looking at them...'. While this was acknowledged as quite a strong statement it was difficult to get a good sense of what it was about a person that indicated they would not make a good psychologist. In some ways this passage also felt that it strongly works to identify Mike as having what it takes to '...make a psychologist...'

7.2 A Becoming

For many of the participants, what it meant to be a psychologist was more focused around the acquisition and possession of certain skills and knowledge. While all the participants included a category of skills, which can be loosely categorised as communication skills, skills for interacting with people, and other interpersonal skills, there were differences present in what purpose these skills had in practice. Mike, when describing these skills ends with a focus on assessment - ‘...I think communication skills and .. umm listening skills, and all those sorts of things . and assessment and . interaction all those sorts of things are really important...’ (Mike, 464-466). Wendy supported this idea of the key skills, with a focus on the ability to listen as ‘...core feature...’ (Wendy, 786). Other ways of describing the same skills orientated more towards the kind of interaction that they facilitated.

Joe (128-131): ...I think what attracted me the most was the skills that they needed ... the way that they related to people I think is different to how most people relate to people, and its kind of one of more respect I feel...

Within Joe’s description there is an allusion to communication skills, in the way that Mike discusses them, being in some sense being possessed by ‘most people’ – in that we all relate to others – psychologists, however, can utilise their skills to relate to others in a different way, one that is more ‘respectful’. Tigger also saw the skills of a psychologist as impacting on the relationship or interaction between the client and the psychologist, ‘... it’s given me:: the skills that I need I think to help people feel relaxed for me, and for me to feel relaxed with people...’ (Tigger, 272-281). While in this description Tigger is discussing skills from a previous career, the extract served to identify the need in psychology for skills that help to create a relaxed context for interaction. Common to both Joe and Tigger’s descriptions is the idea of these skills changing the way the psychologist interacts with others. I saw these descriptions as contrasting with the earlier way of describing a ‘fit’ with psychology – being a psychologist was now described as a process of becoming. In combination these ways of viewing a psychologist and their skills suggests that there is a process of becoming, a person can learn to be a psychologist, but only certain types of people can benefit from this process.

What was interesting was one participant's recognition of other professions similar possession of these skills. Joe discussed counselling as also possessing these skills but not having the same appeal as psychology, '...it could be interesting, but more in terms of gaining the skills...' (Joe, 222-223). This reinforced for me the idea that what being a psychologist meant was more than what they did – having the skills was a positive thing in itself, but was not the basis of attraction to psychology.

7.3 Knowledge as a Skill

While communication skills were at the forefront of the participants' descriptions of the skills a psychologist has, there was a strong association with an acquisition of knowledge – both as a process and possession. By this I mean psychologists are seen as needing to be able to acquire knowledge well. This is based to an extent on the idea of psychology as an academic profession as was discussed earlier, but also in some respects simply as a requirement of the '...huge amount there is to learn, and having a limited time to learn...' (Psych, 249). For some of the participants this shaped the way they approached their learning, '...it feels like at the moment there's so much to learn, I've, its better to stay in one area and be good at it...' (Psych, 241-242). While for others it represented a problem, Tigger described this as one of the problems of becoming a psychologist as '...they need to look very carefully at how to balance breadth with depth ...' (Tigger, 619-620). Possession of knowledge itself was not seen as sufficient in itself, Wendy highlighted a need for the psychologist to be able to convey to a client their possession of knowledge and some of the difficulties in doing this '...<laugh> yeah you go here client, look I know all this stuff...' (Wendy, 754). The laughter here seemed to suggest the inappropriateness of such a comment, which itself serves to present that there is a need for a client to have some awareness of the psychologists knowledge possession. In exploring this thread further Wendy discussed '... the .. language that you use...' as conveying some sense of the psychologists knowledge or more explicitly,

Wendy (757-759): ...you can, somebody comes to you with a problem, you can say yes, I understand or you can say yes, I've dealt with this sort of situation

before, so the person feels reassured that the clinician knows what they're doing

Here the psychologist is described as being able to say certain things that will 'reassure' the client. What seems implied in this description is the trust the client must have in the psychologist – if it is important to know the psychologist has knowledge, then all the psychologists are providing as reassurance is their word.

How other characteristics and skills necessary for being a good psychologist are conveyed to the client, was left somewhat tenuous, Joe stated that. '...I'd feel a connection...' (Joe,612) or '...I'd feel understanding .. that they could understand me and I could understand them...' (Joe, 616-617). More precise cues for how such a 'connection' is conveyed were built from conversational styles and the therapist's manner and attitude. Such characteristics were seen by some as more important than more physical characteristics such as dress and appearance

Joe (648-659): ...I think I'd be more concerned about the attitude of the person and how much they attended to me rather than how they looked, I mean they could be in jeans and and a T-shirt and as long as they welcomed me, sat me down, introduced themselves and let me introduce myself, then I wouldn't have a problem with how they looked. ... how they look, how they dress, what kind of person, alternative or dressed down, or dressed up, you don't need a tie and suit to be considered a good therapist in my view.

Joe describes a good therapist as someone who takes the time to engage in some of what seem like social niceties with the client. I imagine that in a sense, such things as welcoming and introductions serve to normalise the interaction and allow the client a space to feel they know what to do next. In the above extract Joe presents an image of what I think of as casual dress, '...jeans and a T-shirt...' as acceptable. However, in some ways this acceptance is conditional on other factors, '...as long as they welcomed me, sat me down, introduced themselves and let me introduce myself...'. What was interesting here was some of the contrasts and similarities with another participant around the appearance a good psychologist should possess.

Psych (617-624): laugh> piercings are out .. ahh I guess that depends on the setting, the clients umm but I guess, you'd want, they'd want to be well groomed

The reference to piercings in Psych's transcript referred to my own appearance and wearing of prominent facial body piercings. This is a strong referent to the manner in which the conversations interview discourse is embedded in a wider social discourse – in this case the participant and I had been actors within an ongoing discussion around the appropriateness of psychologists to present particular images or values. This discourse also connects to the broad nature of input into the design of this thesis. The presence of this discourse of 'an appropriate way to dress for a psychologist', external to the thesis, developed for me the theme of a 'right' image for a psychologist, which then became one of the interview questions.

A final point that I found possible within Psych's comments seemed to relate explicitly towards an interaction between the participant and myself. What stood out in this for me was the shift from 'you'd want' to 'they'd want', which as a device excludes me as the interviewer from the following statement of 'want to be well groomed'. This seemed to work to prevent a potential contradiction with the statement and perhaps also served as an indicator that I was not 'well groomed'.

.. And I don't think you have to dress . Like the clients, dress, dress to their level to make them feel comfortable there is always a difference, but you don't want to dress too far above I guess .

I: where do you draw your cues from do you think

Psych: well for me its going to be, other, clinicians

I: right

Psych: at least initially, until I'm, confident in how I want to present

Psych starts out quite strongly with the idea of there being an image that is not ok, '...piercings are out...' although this is covered to a degree with laughing. This statement is then followed by the framing of appearance as a contextual concern; it '...depends on the setting, the clients...'. However, the rest of the passage tends to present the psychologist as dressing to a higher level, they would '...want to be well groomed...', and that this level will be above that of the clients, '...there is always a difference, but you don't want to dress to far above (the clients) I guess...' While somewhat of a leap, I feel that appearance and dress contribute to a discourse of power and status. To me the implications here are that the psychologist will be of higher status than the client. Where Joe and Psych appear to share a thread of discussion is around appearance in terms of being a good psychologist. For Joe,

Joe (657-659): ...how they look, how they dress, what kind of person, alternative or dressed down, or dressed up, you don't need a tie and suit to be considered a good therapist in my view...

seemed to indicate that the trappings of appearance are not what make a good therapist (psychologist). It seemed to me that some of this sense was paralleled in Psych's concluding statement that appropriate dress would be guided firstly from, '...other clinicians...' but later this could become more of a personal choice as they became, '...confident in how I want to present...' This potential for dress to be a personal choice seems to be associated towards the more experienced end of the learning curve associated with being a good psychologist. For a practitioner doing the right things, dress was not seen as a factor in being good, for those who have not

achieved such a position, however, appearance served to cover the lack.

7.4 Being a Good Psychologist

For some participants then, there were essential traits a person needed to become a psychologist, however, there was also the option for becoming – as opposed to just being – such a person. Being a ‘good’ psychologist was then a reflection in many ways of this skill acquisition and implementation process – a process of training and learning. While a good psychologist tended to be presented as someone who balances out these traits and skills, who possesses knowledge and can convey their skill and knowledge to their client, they are also characterised by a desire to be a good psychologist – they are active in the process of becoming.

The facet to being a psychologist, that is associated with knowledge, was integral to participants’ descriptions of what a good psychologist was and best portrayed the way a person was seen as being able to become such a practitioner.

Tigger (465-472): I think you have a responsibility to yourself and your clients .
to continue that training, its ongoing-because its not going to stop, the minute
you go out of here theories aren’t going to stop being produced and the research
isn’t going to stop being done and they’re going to stop finding new things just
because we’ve left university

I: Yup

Tigger: You-know its going to keep happening and we have to keep up with it ...
mmm

In the extract above Tigger presents ongoing training as having a particularly knowledge based focus, its about ‘theories’ and ‘research’. There is a link here for me between psychology then and universities – its accepted that such learning occurs at a university – but what Tigger argued was that it is sometimes seen as stopping when university stops and that this was not acceptable.

Tigger (460-462): Totally I think, I think it has to be ongoing/I think the minute
you stop doing either the professional or the personal development then you may

as well stop practicing

When this point was clarified the implications were very clear, ‘professional’ and ‘personal development’ are essential. What I found interesting was the wording around what impact stopping development of any type would have on the psychologist. Tigger, does not say should ‘stop practicing’ but rather ‘may as well’, this suggested to me more a sense of ineffectualness, rather than inappropriate or harmful practice – the psychologist could still practice but might as well not bother since they will not be doing any good. Another participant, Psych, presented this theme of knowledge in a similar but slightly different context; there was for this participation an association between knowledge and expertise. Psych describes a good psychologist as ‘...someone who. knew a great deal of what they were talking about, who was, you-know, I guess in some ways an expert...’ (Psych, 174-175). Combined with earlier discussion about ‘...a feeling of not being an expert and not being an expert in the foreseeable future either...’ (Psych, 73-74), an impression is given of a striving towards an ever-moving goal. This theme of knowledge as expertise is directly linked to competency and being a good psychologist ‘...Id like to feel I had expertise .. Um if someones coming to me for therapy I you-know, Id want to be as good as I can be...’ (Psych, 78-79). In a sense having this knowledge, being an expert was seen as reaching perfection

Psych (565-568): ... because I don’t think experts have to be, expert in everything, I mean I think, Id like to be, have expertise in particular therapies, and say in some assessment, some areas, I mean, others, I’m, I’m not an expert in and that’s ok, I can still, have a professional image, yeah, you-know without being perfect

For Psych here, there is recognition of not being an expert in everything – this is expressed at the end of the passage as ‘without being perfect’ – and still being able to be professional. For most of the participants, ‘...professional, being professional is being skilled...’ (Joe, 487). Like the discourse of knowledge as a skill, there was perceived an important need for the possession of skills to be recognised, to be seen as skilled. This recognition was seen as having greater value when perceived by clients rather than by other professionals, ‘...Effective would be a word I’d like to see used in relation to

professionalism ... being seen by the clientele as being helpful as being useful...' (Joe, 499-500). This seems to focus around psychology as '...being useful...', as a vocation. Mike focused what seemed to be a similar point around the concept of helping others. '...its actually working with people, who have behavioural problems and working out how you can help them within the confines of ethics and their rights...' (Mike, 91-93). Being a good psychologist then is when a practitioner works in a functional and efficacious manner, they 'help' and are 'useful'. Other aspects of being professional involved performing certain professional requirements, in other words doing what a psychologist does.

Mike (672-674): ...that, you give all, the information, you look at all the possibilities, you, discuss with them all the chances, that they could, side effects and things like that if there are any, consequences...

This need for psychologists to be professional in this sense was seen as such strong aspect of being a good psychologist that it was used as a categorical qualifier for practising, 'If someone's not willing to take time out to do that (be professional) or skirts corners, then they shouldn't be there' (Mike, 674-676).

Ongoing learning was not accepted unchallenged, however, with psychology being framed as relatively slow to develop new knowledge as a way of disputing the need to be learning constantly.

Mike (361-368): ...I hate to say . but I know of a number of people who, have been .. who started psychology way before I did, who I now know, who have been asked to repeat papers and stuff like that . this is relevant . let me get to it, and they've been told well you need to repeat papers because things have changed . the the way that we approach stuff and there's new material in the courses and stuff like that, but when they've actually gone back and said well this is what you did in 1989 this is what you're doing in 1999 there's absolutely no difference...

In this example, the use of phrases like '...I hate to say...' lends the passage an air of discontent. As an opening for what follows, this tone tends to create an impression of frustration or

resentment at having to relearn material and serves to indicate that there has been little growth in the material being used to train psychologists. The use of exact dates tends to enhance this appearance, with a span of ten years being presented as having passed with ‘...absolutely no difference...’ The associated implication to this is that there would be no objections to compulsory training that covered new material. This implication seems necessary to have the statement accepted within a discourse where the expectation of ongoing training, was presented by all of the participants as an integral aspect of being a good psychologist. Also, within this extract is the appearance of some type of conflict between training institutions and practitioners. Courses were presented (by the universities?) as containing new material, yet those receiving the training dispute this. A possibility is that the parties involved here are looking at different aspects of what it means to be a psychologist. The theoretical nature of clinical training was of some concern to the participants who felt that practical experience was of greater importance in preparing them for future work. A difference in emphasis, with lecturers focusing more on theory and students wanting a greater practical focus, may result in changes being introduced to courses unnoticed by students. This effect would seem to be particularly high for the type of students Mike discusses here, who are already experienced in the field and attend more to practical skills they can utilise in the workplace.

7.5 The Right Reasons

What did develop at one point in the text was that a person could also choose psychology as a vocation for the wrong reasons, and wanting to be a psychologist for the right reasons was important in being a good psychologist. An example of this was when Mike focused on financial reward as an example of a wrong reason for wanting to be a psychologist.

Mike (684-687): ...they may even say that they're there for the money, you're dealing with peoples lives its not like "I'm here for the money as well as", that as far as I'm concerned is fine .. but when you-know when you stuff up you affect someone else.

Money is not actually presented negatively in the text and Mike acknowledges this explicitly. The link is made, however, through the concern with people's lives being the focus of psychological interventions. The implication that money is not a suitable primary motivation rests on notion that money is a somewhat shallow justification for such a choice. Good psychologists are presented as being dedicated to helping others, and not motivated by self interest. Indeed this desire to help is a strong theme throughout the interviews, seeming to underlie or justify many other aspects of what being a good psychologist entails. Tigger presents this theme in a tone of almost incredibility when discussing the client as the focus of decisions, '...the most important part, if you're not doing something for their client then you've got to ask yourself why the hell you're doing it...' (Tigger, 841-842). This way of describing acceptable motives is presented by Mike as something pertaining to careers other than psychology, and serves to normalise the stance of other motives being less appropriate - '...I suppose if you are going to be in anything, you've got to be there, firstly for the type of people you're working for...' (Mike, 668-669). This way of describing a psychologist as wanting to be there for the clients themselves was regarded as a necessary aspect to being able to be a good psychologist. For Tigger this notion was so absolute that it became the only extract where the idea of a 'bad psychologist' was explicitly referred to.

Tigger (850-854): they're more than the object of the discussion, they're people, and I don't think we/I think you forget that at your peril

I: right

Tigger: you-know I think that when we forget that you start to become bad practitioners, very bad practitioners...

This extract seemed to present the relationship between a psychologist and their client in very emotive terms that are difficult to refute or contest. Linked with the earlier statement of what a psychologist's focus should be, this passage presents any alternative as a perilous enterprise. What I thought was interesting in this was that the peril was not being a 'bad practitioner' but was reaching a starting point to become such. There was an inevitability present in this extract, that makes the entire point of what a psychologist's primary focus should be, almost undeniably correct – they must be '...doing something for the client...' To do anything other is not just failing to be a good psychologist or practitioner, but rather is the start to being a '...very bad practitioner...'

Where this way of seeing a good psychologist as being there for the client became problematic, was around discussion of interventions for the good of the client. There was an assumption implicit in discourse around interventions that a psychologist is capable of making decisions for the benefit of another person. This way of viewing the powers of a psychologist seemed to be placed within a context where, while the therapist may need to question that they are doing the right thing, their ability to act over the client was dominant. When discussing whether information could be used against a person Mike presented this power of the psychologist quite clearly,

Mike (160-163): ...a client I was working with I did exactly that. I was concerned about their safety, and I gathered all the information that I could and it did go against them, in that they got accessed, sectioned and locked up for a period of time...

Such decisions are not just seen on a cost-benefit type scale, in making decisions about other people the participants see themselves as adjudicators of morality, '...I sort of had this big moral dilemma, that this is a result, as a direct result of my doing, how was I with that?..' (Mike, 163-164). While the participants described themselves as uncomfortable around the idea of imposing structures on other people and being facing '...moral dilemma...', they see psychology as

In a group project I worked on over the period of writing this thesis I came to realise how strongly such an assumption of silence as consent can conspire to maintain power in particular roles or individuals. Combined with methods of silencing, such as professional status and academic credibility, such a way of writing psychologies writ of responsibility seems rather broad.

It feels throughout this section that money and financial rewards have been identified as shallow superficial motivations that someone truly caring and committed would not have, or at least, not as their main concern. I wonder though that while such discourses are often present in humanitarian circles how fair such stances really are. Money is a symbol that can represent a vast array of meanings for different people, it seems harsh to identify those who seek it for what it brings as shallow or somehow less than those with other less tangible goals. I have been thinking of a quote I read some time ago as I write this, and it referred to a line from the bible, which is described as being commonly misquoted, that 'money is the root of all evil'. The passage I remember pointed out that the complete line is 'the desire for money and riches is the root of all evil'. This idea seems to be much more representative of what the participants have said in their interviews – it isn't the working for money that is problematic, but rather the working only for money.

providing right and authority to impose a treatment, which is seen as a value judgement about health and normal behaviour, ‘...it sort of brought back the point that you-know, you’re forcing treatment on someone, and you’ve got to be able to justify yourself, what you’ve done...’ (Mike, 171-174). How such justifications are made were less clear within the text, but supporting a similar position, Psych presented psychologists as, ‘...always making those judgements and I mean, society judges that whether its not ok...’ (Psych, 528-529). In some ways this seems to place psychologists as advocates of societies values. To my eyes, this seemed an interesting way of framing the response from society, which will judge whether it is ‘...not ok...’. This presents psychologists as having the right to act until they are told otherwise; silence is taken as consent.

7.6 Commitment

A good psychologist then is someone who is committed; committed to the profession, to ongoing training and learning, and to their clients as people. While some of this need to be committed is based on discourse around the nature of holding peoples lives in your hand, another aspect of this need to be committed however arises from the nature of the job rather than the role.

Mike (645-650): ...I also think, that, they need to be physically and mentally strong, because its not an easy job.

I: Physically?

Mike: yeah, the stress involved, and the time that you may need to spend with someone, and the sheer number of people you’d have to see . I think you need to be.

Here psychologists are portrayed as needing to be tough and resilient against the pressures of the job. Commitment to such a demanding profession is cast as needing to arise from internal personal characteristics like those described when the participants were discussing their motives, such as wanting to help others. There is a sense that in the context of the job being difficult and demanding, certain motivations become more supportive than others – by this I am thinking of the theme of financial rewards being somehow insufficient, in a sense that when the job is at it’s most

stressful, then money will not be enough. To carry a psychologist through the crises they are presented as being faced with throughout their career, they must have a motive for being there which is enduring and sustaining.

In general, however, the earlier way of framing a good psychologist as being there for the client, seemed to be regarded as a more positive reasons than that of monetary rewards. Similar to this theme of being there for the client, was the way that a good psychologist was presented as viewing their client and their client's world. The way that this was expressed was around the manner that a good psychologist would employ to try and understand their client. One strong emphasis was the idea of acknowledging the client as a 'whole person' (Joe, para-306). What a 'whole person' is seemed to be able to be represented in different ways between participants. Psych seemed to refer to a 'whole person' as being looked at entirely, in all aspects, '...trying to look at me as I guess as a whole person, not having just focussing perhaps on one particular problem or issue that I had ...' (Psych, 173-174). Joe, however, regarded being seen as a 'whole person' as referring more to an idea of being seen *as* complete, unbroken, '...someone who acknowledges me as a whole person...' (Joe, 591). Of these two ways of seeing what a 'whole person' might be, it is the second that seemed to have the most tensions with other themes discussed in this thesis. Joe's claim of wanting to been seen as unbroken, as 'whole', contrasts with some of the earlier ways that psychology was framed as understanding the world through mental illness or abnormality. I wonder perhaps if this tension is resolved within a context of 'being there for the client'? From this, a good psychologist might be one who would look at all aspects of their client to help, but also try to maintain as much as possible an appreciation of them as a 'whole' person.

7.7 Becoming a Good Psychologist

Much then, of how an individual becomes a good psychologist, ‘...by doing what feels comfortable...’ (Joe, 405) and how they are evaluated, ‘...you can have all the qualifications in the world but unless you’re going to translate that into something that is workable by clients then you’re not going to be any use...’ (Joe, 508-510) appears to be outside the limits of any sort of professional body. Yet it is this professional relationship and training that give psychology its standing and differentiate it in the participants’ eyes from related fields such as counselling or social work. This idea of being able to have a feel for what is the right way to practise returns the image being presented of a good psychologist back to one of a certain kind of person.

Chapter 8: Views of Others

Throughout the interviews, there were threads that focused on what kind of person can be a psychologist, what should they know, what skills should they possess, all of which cumulated in an image of the ideal psychologist and established this image as a positive role to strive towards. Accompanying this image of a good psychologist was, however, a competing discourse, which focussed around how other groups, such as the public, who are not involved with psychology as a profession, view psychology. While some aspects of being a psychologist were still described in a positive sense as being valued, the participants also described a way of viewing psychology that was less positive.

Joe presented psychology as being 'less' than the public views it. When discussing personal understandings of psychology prior to studying Joe, '...assumed it would be more than it is...' (Joe, 230). Similarly, when talking about other peoples' understandings Joe comments that, '...I think they see it wrongly ... they don't have a very accurate view of psychology, I think they assume it is more than it is...' (Joe, 411-412). In some ways these extracts are interesting because of their vagueness, just what psychology is less in, is not made clear, nor is their any guiding comments as to what '...other peoples' understandings...' contain which is wrong or inaccurate. It seemed to me, however, that these two extracts present an image of psychology as seemingly deep and knowledgeable in the eyes of the public. From within, however, this distortion is lost and the profession becomes 'less'. Joe presents their own perceptions as aligning with those of the public when first starting to study psychology and then, as they learnt more, came to see it differently.

8.1 Couches and Stuff.

In many ways, public conceptualisations of what psychologists do seemed to be based on old fashioned ideas of psychoanalysis. Mike especially, had a number of anecdotes where these stereotypes served as the foundation of how others see psychology, ‘...a lot of people have the preconception that it’s analysing and its lying on a couch and stuff...’ (Mike, 96-97). Mike went on further to talk about how these traditional constructions by the wider public often place the student or practitioner of psychology as possessing esoteric or invasive knowledge or understandings of people.

Mike (97-101): ...it’s quite hard to get, my family especially, to fully understand, for example my Nana, when I told her I was studying psychology told me to leave her alone, ‘I don’t want you to analyse me’. so it was all paranoia and scepticism about what we actually did...

Here, Mike talks about ‘...family especially...’ as misunderstanding what psychology ‘...actually did...’ Family as an example works to emphasise the distrust and wariness of the public to psychology; the subtext to this extract seems to be to follow the lines of ‘even family will distrust someone involved with psychology’. Contrasting with this negative construction of how psychology is seen, particularly by family, was Psych’s description of family, who ‘...see it...as its good that I’m going to be a professional....status wise, especially mum, thought it was a good career choice...’ (Psych, 711, 713). It seems possible though, to see these contrasts as existing across different aspects of how psychology is viewed. While psychologists are seen as professionals, and this promotes respect, they are known as professional analysts, explorers of the *private* and hence people to be wary of. Tigger presented ‘other people’ having a type of discomfort with psychologists from another position.

Tigger (139-147): Most people never asked me to describe psychology

I: Ok

Tigger: In fact I cant.. I cant remember if anybody ever did .. I think, I just said

I'm doing psychology and they just shut up

I: (laugh)

Tigger: in a small town its probably considered a little bit weird, most people could understand you going to do languages, because it had the teaching end, but if you were doing psychology or even just education for the sake of it . that was a little bit weird

Tigger starts here with a statement that framed the following passage as relating to describing psychology, but in the sense that '...most people never asked...' When in the next lines Tigger describes themselves as saying '... I just said I'm doing psychology and they just shut up...', it is presented as clear that there was opportunity for people to ask for descriptions and that the non-issuance of such descriptions was based upon the *other persons* response. It appears here that Tigger is outlining the public discourse of what a psychologist does as a pervasive model for interpreting the behaviours of psychologists and one that promotes a wariness or avoidance of psychologists. This feels a strong interpretation, but I base it predominantly on the way Tigger frames the conversationalist not just as changing the subject but as closing the conversation, '...they just shut up...'

What was also present in Tigger's comments here is the idea that studying psychology was not valued, neither for learning in itself, nor as a road to becoming a psychologist. This represents an interesting contrast with the idea of psychology as a respected profession and suggests to me that it is more the knowledge that psychologists are seen as having that is viewed with suspicion. Being a psychologist has status, studying psychology is '...a little bit weird...' There seems also to be a break in the public view, at least in '...a small town...' between the studying of psychology and becoming a psychologist. Studying psychology is seen as a knowledge for itself, that doesn't have a career focus – it is about a knowing and is seen in the same light as '...just education for the sake of it...'

8.2 You can read my mind

There is an image then of psychology as having, particularly by lay-people, some kind of esoteric knowledge, which gives access to secret and private thoughts, '...ohh you can read my mind...' (Joe, 65). The participants, in some respects, shared this view - more relating to the 'skills and techniques' taught. An example of this is the way that psychologists are seen as providing ways of relating to people that will provided a greater understanding and relationship different from that experienced between people otherwise empowered with such knowledge. Joe stated this as, '...I think is different to how most people relate to people ...' (Joe, 129-130), or in Mike's case 'what I was interested in was why people did stuff...' (Mike, 11). This is a strange relationship, with what is in the layperson a 'misguided' understanding of psychology being the guiding interest for the participants' when choosing the field. While the public is described as having a poor grasp of what psychologists do, the primary skills the participants attributed to psychology, such as being able to assess individuals, are also acknowledged by those not belonging to the profession. The manner psychologists are seen to assess and have knowledge of disorders and issues relating to an individual are, however, simplified by the public. In the eyes of the layperson a psychologist can provide advice and assistance from afar, similar to perhaps a mechanic or plumber being able to 'diagnose' certain problems from a basic description of symptoms.

Mike (273-280): ...my mother asks me all these types of questions, that I could not possibly answer, and she'd be expecting to , like she'll have a friend whose feeling depressed and she'll ask me what I can do about, what we should do about it, and its like:, I don't even know the person, what am I going to say, umm they generally think umm psychology's about working with nutty people, or people who've got you-know small problems, I don't think they know the extent of it, what it does and how it works and stuff'.

Again in this extract was the sense of frustration with the lack of poorly defined limits of what psychology is, or is recognized as having, particularly in relation to the extent or limitations of the field. In this instance the misconceptions relate not only to how a psychologist practices, but the client group - who can be helped, the nature of what is possible and how they help. This idea that

a psychologist can listen to the symptoms for a bit, maybe tweak a few pipes or tune the engine and solve the problem represents a considerable challenge for psychologists when addressing their clients expectations. Overall, however, it seemed that psychologists were people viewed with a degree of wariness and suspicion – they could be useful at times, like knowing a lawyer or doctor, but the general appreciation was negative in nature.

8.3 Quacks and Crap

An interesting contrast to this idea of being an almost intimidating profession was a description of Wendy's who presented other people as seeing psychology as a '... sort of quacks profession...' (Wendy, 466). This was elaborated on to indicate a sense of psychological knowledge as being no more than common sense. This was presented in the framework of how other people can view the field

Wendy (471-477): '...she thought that people did psychology when they couldn't do anything else

I: ok

Wendy: and I thought that that was rather sort of umm interesting, sort of description, and I wondered how many other people saw it like that, that its like you're crap at everything else, so the only thing you can do is psychology, and everybody knows about psychology

This extract continues the theme of psychology as a 'quacks profession', a phrase that conveys images of snake oil salesmen in western movies peddling cures and products that have no substance. This idea of a lack of substance behind psychologists is emphasised by the way that they are presented as '...doing psychology because they (psychologists) can't do anything else...' Wendy describes this as an '...interesting, sort of description...' and wonders how representative it is. Where this text creates the most tension with the competing discourses of psychology as a profession possessing esoteric knowledge is in the few words, '...and everybody knows about psychology...' This statement seems to remove psychology to the realm of the common and everyday; the things that psychologists know, and by association do, are nothing different to what

I was left wondering at the end of this where people's wariness of psychology stems from, as two primary possibilities occur to me: One, that people see psychology as having a skill base or understanding of people that will allow psychologists to invasively know about the other and uncover their secrets. Two, that people are uncomfortable and afraid of mental illness and these ways of seeing mental health are associated with all who work in the field, so psychologists are more people to be wary of by association, rather than intrinsic to themselves.

anyone might do or say to support a friend for example. This construction of psychology, within a discourse that presents psychologists as professionals with a degree of status, generates a sense of psychologists as charlatans – the need for their services and status are unnecessary, or at the worst false. However this framing of psychologists strongly contrasts with the other ways of describing them, and serves mostly to highlight a potential alternative in how the profession is viewed.

8.4 Mentally ill

The opinion of the participants was generally that the public sees psychology as dealing with 'mental illness'. A strong association that came with this role, however, was the idea of mental illness having negative connotations.

Joe (419-425): ...if you see a psychologist you're mentally ill or you're psychotic ... and people don't like that, and that's a problem because of the view that we have in our society that being mentally ill is not ok ... its not an accepted norm, it's an ab-norm.

This was particularly evident through the terms that the participants described their friends and family using, '...basically that I'm going to, try and help nutty people...' (Psych, 732), '...nuts, crazy, loony...' (Tigger, 751). To some extent this was seen as more of a problem in the wording,

Psych (735-738): ...its that thing about mental illness I guess, that perhaps dealing with more ill people than a counsellor, yeah, try and help, try and help the crazy people mm

I: and you see it differently ?

Psych: <laugh> I wouldn't put it in those words, but yeah that's one aspect...

The differences between Psych's views of the role of psychology and that of the public, his friends and family, are demarked by the words they put it in. Essentially, though, it is accepted that they had captured at least '...one aspect...' of what it means to be a psychologist. Tigger presented the use of language by the public as of greater concern

Tigger (748-751): ...and all those words (*nuts, crazy, mad*) are derogatory...you-know... they feel quite negative, connotations to them, all words for being mentally disordered being mentally unwell when you think about it, nuts crazy loony hmm.

For Tigger, the words used to describe the consumers of psychological services defines the nature of the service, we become, '...people who deal with nutcases...', (Tigger, 745). It seems difficult to image that the clients of psychologists can be the focus of such language without the reputation of psychologists themselves being affected.

Chapter 9: What does this mean

Several points were presented at the beginning of this thesis as justification for such research to be conducted. While I do not feel that any final understanding has been achieved on what psychology is and how students studying to be psychologists may see the field, some of the themes available in the discourse of the participants have indicated support for some of the concerns that formed these justifications.

9.1 Ideal Teams?

The primary justification expanded on, at least to my mind, was the theme developed of how the participants viewed other professions within the mental health fields. Typically the participants presented allied professions as problematic or even in opposition to the values and principles they see as comprising psychology. This would seem to be worrying for good work relations or client management within team settings, where multidisciplinary teams work collaboratively for the benefit of their clients and patients. Similarly, there was a strong theme around other professions concerning how little the participants knew about what other fields offered or could contribute. This would seem to compromise psychologists' ability to refer correctly and to properly appreciate other team members or professions contributions to an intervention or discussion. This study would suggest that students do not seem to view themselves as having a clear understanding of either the roles of other professionals within team environments, or of their own roles as future clinical psychologists within a team. While this thesis only discussed these issues with students and cannot draw any real conclusions for the extent of impact that these stereotypes may play in the workforce, it seems reasonable to imagine that they will have some effect, even if it is only in the initial stages of getting to know colleagues and peers within a team.

It would be a recommendation of this thesis then that the training programme for clinical psychologists be orientated towards unpacking or reducing the prevalence of negative stereotypes of other mental health professions.

9.2 Career Burnout.

The second justification was orientated towards the participants' expectations of a career in psychology, what they saw themselves as doing once they had completed their training and entered the workplace. The primary concern within this theme, was the relatively low levels of understanding the students presented themselves having when they choose psychology as a discipline. When students are basing their expectations on limited or misleading information then a general dissatisfaction with the resulting career would seem likely.

This theme was associated, in my mind, with the wider public's views of psychology and psychologists. As such models of the profession probably formed a large part of the constructions the participants had prior to studying psychology, public education of what psychology is and involves would address several concerns simultaneously. Associated with this was a perceived need to change the image of psychology currently held by the public, from a negative construction, towards clinical psychology being a more positive or accepted profession. It is imagined that being involved in a long-term basis with a profession typically portrayed as negative and as provoking suspicion and distrust, would in the long term be wearing on psychologists.

It seemed, however, that some of the status of psychology originated from the professional standing of the field. As the status and respect were strong aspects of why the participants were drawn to psychology any changes in how the profession is perceived by the public would need to consider the impact of other aspects of the public discourse around psychologists.

9.3 Motivations.

When compared to the literature on social work students motivations of career choice psychology the participants discourse in this study seemed to present a degree of self interest as fundamental to such a decision. This contrasts with the level of social conscience found by Mohr and Luscri (1995) in social work students. While psychology students are presented in this thesis as being concerned with helping others and being effective in their practice, a degree of emphasis is given to constructing this concern as benefiting the practitioner. There is a sense within this thesis of the participants' presenting themselves as more selfish in motivations. This is, however, framed within a context where such motivations are seen as more honest and necessary in being able to withstand the rigours of the career. Considering the high levels of career burnout in social workers (Lazar, Cohen, & Guttman, 1995), such personal orientations towards self-reward may allow for a 'healthier' approach to professional and personal integration.

In contrast, high levels of attention was provided within the interviews around the altruistic and selflessness of psychologists. While arguments were made that self-interest was a necessary motivation, on its own this was not seen as sufficient, the work was too demanding and a willingness to be their for others was what was going to pull the practitioner through the difficult points in their career.

9.4 Dysfunction?

These tensions between the different ways of framing the motivations of psychology students are notable in their lack of focus on the family backgrounds of the participants'. Despite the strong focus in some of the literature on family and personal dysfunction in the career choices of psychologists (Ragusin, Abramowitz, & Winter, 1981), this did not seem to be prevalent within the participants' discourses. It is difficult to say what extent this finding is due to the different epistemological approaches between this study and that taken by Ragusin, Abramowitz, & Winter (1981). However, it does seem possible for both, this study to have failed to access the participants' themes of family dysfunction and for the earlier study to have unwittingly shaped the impact of family dysfunction on their participants' decision making process towards their own beliefs. What has been provided by this study is a wider outline of some of the other influences the participants saw as impacting on their career choice.

9.5 Tensions.

In terms of how psychology was constructed, tensions seemed to exist between psychology being a theoretical based discipline existing as a 'science' and a practical based career orientated towards efficacy and real world functionality. This tension of values and roles at different times reflected an ongoing struggle for the participants as they developed opposing themes. If it is considered in terms of a scientist-practitioner model, which is a concept popular within clinical psychology training institutions, then this tension represents difficulties with the acceptance of a core aspect of clinical psychology. For students entering their working careers with such a dissonance it would seem natural for conflicts of values to arise as their careers progress.

9.6 Stressors.

What struck me when considering what it meant that there was a, 'right sort of person', to be a psychologist, was the demands of a dynamic and changing society on such a construction. If there is a right type of person to be a psychologist at one point in time, with all the social and political values operating at that time, will the same model and concept of 'right' be appropriate at another? It also seems worthwhile asking how such a concept of 'right kind of person' is evaluated? This idea of what it takes for someone to become a good psychologist, or even just to meet the requirements to be a psychologist at all seems to be an extremely demanding one on both the training institutions and the expectations on the practitioner.

9.7 The Future.

Overall, and this is a difficult appreciation to convey, but I received a sense that much of the participants' discourse operated to resist the dominant discourses of what clinical psychology was and is. Generally this was couched in remarks and comments that expressed a sense of dissatisfaction with the current status of psychology as a career to belong to. There was a sense that the participants were striving to resolve tensions between how they would like to practice, and the way they are being prepared to practice - both by their training and peoples' expectations. What this means for the future of clinical psychology is difficult to say, in many ways if these themes and ways of constructing psychology are prevalent, they have the potential to become the dominant discourse delimiting the new boundaries of the profession. However, I am aware that as I say this many of these tensions are not new, the competing discourses around psychology as a science have been highly debated (Reinharz, 1992). What I feel would be interesting from this point would be studies with a similar ontological basis exploring the tensions existing between the constructions of psychology outlined in this work, and the constructions that are outlined by mental health consumers, and actual practitioners. While there seemed to be good arguments for choosing students for the basis of this work, I am also aware that these people exist in a manner between the worlds of practitioner and public. While this suited my purposes here, it leaves many gaps in the understandings the participants had to bring to the interviews and leaves several challenges for the utility of this thesis. The primary issue that peers and colleagues have raised

I feel as I write this that I am in some ways invalidating all the work and energy I see clinical psychology students, practitioners and other groups putting into this very debate. That I am presenting this thesis as 'initiating' such a discourse feels somewhat patronising in its implication that such a discourse does not currently exist. What I have felt whenever I have been engaged in such a conversation, however, is that often the assumptions, tensions and values behind the debates fail to be made explicit or recognised. While this thesis only touches on all the ways that clinical psychology can be discussed and presented, I feel that it does make a start towards unpacking some of these assumptions and tensions. Without such a starting point it becomes difficult to have a meaningful discussion about the direction and future of clinical psychology – how can we move forward if we don't know where we are?

with me over the course of my writing this thesis is 'What will this tell us about clinical psychologists?', and I guess my answer is still 'I don't know'. The perspective dominant throughout this thesis has been that there is not a final understanding to be found here. Not all psychologists will use the same devices and tools to present their career choices, and it seems even less likely that they will try and construct the same outline of what clinical psychology is. Even the participants from this research have, in an anecdotal sense from my own ongoing relationships with these people, moved from the positions that I have developed from within their interviews. However, some of these themes are likely to have a degree of transferability, in that other students, or even practitioners, will relate to the way that I have portrayed their discipline in this thesis. Others of course will disagree and perhaps here is where the ultimate purpose for this thesis lies. What I see this thesis doing now, is perhaps initiating a discourse amongst practitioners, students, and perhaps ideally in my mind, with mental health consumers as to what a clinical psychologist is and should be.

Appendix A: Information Sheet.

A Discursive Analysis of Participants' Talk about Clinical Psychology as a Career.

INFORMATION SHEET

Kia ora, My name is Dean Adam from Massey University. I am doing a study on the types of 'talk' clinical psychology students use when speaking about psychology as a career. This study is part of the requirements for my Masters degree. You are invited to take part in this study by participating in an interview where we will discuss different aspects of how, and why, you see yourself being motivated to study clinical psychology.

If you agree to take part in this study you will be asked to participate in an interview taking approximately an hour of your time. It is a necessary part of this study that audio recordings of these interviews are made. Once the interview recordings have been transcribed, a process which I will undertake myself, a copy will be made available to you to edit and review prior to the interview discussion being used any further in the research.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Your rights, as stated in the *Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct* booklet are:

- To decline participation
- To refuse to answer any particular questions
- To withdraw from the study at any time
- To have privacy and confidentiality protected
- To ask questions at any time
- To be given access to a summary of the findings when the study is concluded

You can contact me by leaving a message for Dean Adam at the School of Psychology office, Massey University, on (06) 350 4118. In addition, you can write to me c/o the School of Psychology office, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Keith Tuffin, on (06) 350 5799, Ext. 2072.

A vital concern of Massey University and myself is the importance of confidentiality in research. You will be asked as part of the interview process to provide or choose a pseudonym that your data can be identified by. This name will be used in all future reference to the interview data. The only times you will be linked directly to your data are for the purpose of identifying your interview tape and transcription. This is so we provide you with a copy of your transcript for review, and also, so that the interview tape and transcription can be returned to you at the end of the study.

At no time will the interview tapes or transcriptions be identified by your name. The information you are giving for this study will remain confidential and you will be unable to be identified in the final report.

Thank you for the time you have taken to read this.

Dean Adam.

Appendix B: Consent Form.

A Discursive Analysis of Participants' Talk about Clinical Psychology as a Career.

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and 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 that 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 also understand that I have the right to ask for the tape recorder 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:

Pseudonym:

My contact details are provided only for the purpose of providing me with a copy of the interview transcript for me to review, and for the return of my data once it has been finished with by the researcher.

Address:
.....

Phone Number:

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