

CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: TO WHAT EXTENT CAN (OR SHOULD) THE DISCOURSE UNIT WORK FOR PRACTITIONERS?

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The Discourse Unit became known to me in 1992 whilst training as an Educational Psychologist in Manchester. The very existence of the DU and, in particular, the politically informed critiques of psychology with which it has been associated have been integral to my work ever since, both as an academic and as a practitioner who values theory and critique.

Some of the experiences and conceptual terrain encountered during that early professional training had been oppressive and at times intellectually and emotionally brutalizing and so contributing to *Psychology Discourse Practice* (Burman, E., Allwood, R., Billington, T., Heenan, C., Aitken, G., Warner, S., Marks, D., Alldred, P., Goldberg, B. and Gordo Lopez, A., 1996) felt like an imperative (Billington, 1996). The PhD with Erica Burman further encouraged an engagement with theoretical resources which were both liberating and discomfiting in almost equal measure in the challenges they posed to daily practice with young people, their families and teachers (Billington, 1997).

The history of British educational psychology is rooted in the positivist tradition and its practitioner orientation (i.e. in some respects it is similar to school psychology in the US) and also its research base (as exemplified by the *British Journal of Educational Psychology*) continue largely to ignore any (de-)constructionist threats (Burman, 2015). While today the power relations involved in practice have been manicured by a neo-liberal agenda, to work as a practising psychologist with young people, their families and their teachers continues to be problematic. Despite the contradictions and dilemmas, however, I have continued to believe in the value of certain practises (now in the child and family courts) while at the same time creating a space at Sheffield by expanding research and teaching programmes in Psychology and Education (Williams et al., eds., 2017; also see *Centre for Critical Psychology and Education*, <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/research/ccpe>). These programmes have either incorporated or have in some way been influenced by the work of the DU, in particular, by the work of Erica Burman and Ian Parker.

The professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, however, is accredited by the British Psychological Society and the Health Professions' Care Council and there are restrictions both in respect of the core curriculum and also the extent to which we can aspire to become 'critical' which is ultimately, of course, to become more overtly political. Our trainees often have to survive in placement locations which subscribe to primitive normalizing accounts in which they are expected to be proficient with all the psycho-paraphernalia of diagnosis, psychopathologies and psychological testing in relation to questions of human difference.

While it has become easier over the years to invoke issues of context and power regarding questions of difference, many trainees and students arrive having been trained to reject theory. We do seem gradually to be having some impact on the kinds of practices performed by educational and child psychologists in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, in particular, (but elsewhere in the UK too) but this is far from universal and even then it continues to be difficult to sustain the engagement of practitioners in the development of their theoretical sensitivity. It can be just too precarious for practitioners to attempt to bridge that gap between the language adopted in theoretically sophisticated texts and the very different language of professional practice.

In reflecting upon the impact of the DU over the last 25 years, its existence has encouraged us to create a space at Sheffield in which to develop Foucauldian inspired work relating to the nature of psychological knowledge, its location and manner of generation. The DU has contributed to debates and changes in relations between practitioners and clients to the extent that it is easier for us now to justify training psychologists to consider power relations; to encourage them to work *with*, as opposed to *on* our clients; to support their clients in developing their own specialist knowledge as human subjects and even to construct new knowledges in the contemplation of different approaches to a range of psychopathologies, autism spectrum, attention deficit etc.

Clearly, power relations persist but might the context for the relationship between practitioner and client be shifting so that in this potential transfer of knowledge / expertise from practitioner to client, governments could look to dispense with the practitioner altogether and once again locate responsibility more completely within the individual client? Would this constitute the ultimate success for critical psychology i.e. the eradication of government attempts to regulate difference via psychology practitioners ushering in a return to medieval means of control? It seems unlikely that governments could totally erase psychology practice but such a move might prove to be economical. What will be the position of the DU in negotiating these future changes?

The Chapter below appeared originally as the Introductory Chapter to the following: Hardy, J. and Hobbs, C. (Eds.) (2017) *Using qualitative research to hear the voice of children and young people: The work of British psychologists*. The Division of Educational and Child Psychology. The British Psychological Society: Leicester.

The Chapter is just one of our attempts at Sheffield (and by others in the Division of Educational and Child Psychology / BPS) to provide stepping stones for trainees and practising educational and child psychologists to consider making that difficult crossing to contemplation of a differently situated and politically committed professional practice in psychology. The chapter was written for practitioners and its inclusion at this Conference is intended to prompt debates as to the ways in which the work of the DU can (or should) further be utilized by practitioner psychologists who work under the auspices of a statutory governmental regulatory authority. It is clearly not radical but it is formative and invites critique although the dangers in attempting to cross the gap in the other direction might be equally precarious.

References (introduction)

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THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GROWTH IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITHIN THE FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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The emergence of qualitative approaches in psychology

The growth of qualitative research in psychology has been, if not exponential, significant during the last thirty to forty years or so. There have been text-books (for example, Willig and Stainton-Rogers, eds. 2008, Banister et al., 2011, Parker, ed. 2015), new Journals (*Qualitative Research in Psychology*) and even initiatives in two of the world's two largest psychology organizations - *Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section*, British Psychological Society, and the American Psychological Association's *Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology*. This growth and influence has many roots and in this opening chapter our intention is not to provide a detailed literature review of specific research papers (for a helpful earlier account see Miller, Billington, Lewis and De Souza, 2008) but to reflect on the historical, institutional and intellectual foundations for qualitative approaches which we argue are currently fuelling a renaissance in the field of educational psychology theory and practice.

Education and Psychology: Institutional and conceptual origins

While both education and psychology share much older classical roots in antiquity, it was compulsory school attendance which provided the catalyst for the creation of compulsory state-controlled education systems (for example, US, 1852, Britain, 1870, France, 1892). While not all young people were to receive the same kind of education, of course, instruction of the majority of children (eventually of the same age), herded together in clusters of rooms, was generally at the time considered to be the most effective way of transferring knowledge i.e. from the head of a teacher or the words on a page into the head of the child.

Whatever the difference in pedagogies, from Comenius (1592 – 1670) and Rousseau (1712 – 1778) onwards, educational and psychological approaches to human development and learning have often been found in the same place. For example, Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827) but also Herbart (1776-1841) and Frobel (1782-1852) were just three early educationists who utilized psychological ideas. Institutionalized forms of Education and Psychology were born almost as monozygotic twins, not only sharing a cultural and political context but also sharing ideas about learning and development in schools. For schools were to provide a location, a material space or even laboratory for the study of human development which became a site in which the category ‘child’ could be constructed and regulated.

Following the creation of mass schooling systems, the ideas and works of John Dewey (1859-1952), philosopher, psychologist and by instinct a social reformer, provided a model for liberal, progressive education (1897) and he took a particular kind of psychology into the classroom, one which emphasized the importance of individual experience but one which was also concerned with moral and social issues. Dewey sought to place a democratic agenda at the heart of educational practices which emphasized not only the importance of community but also the experiences of individual child learners (1916). These are themes which have continued to encourage many educational psychologists, whether researchers or practitioners.

It had been Dewey’s mentor, William James (1842-1910), who had presided over the early history of the emerging institutional forms (both Psychology and Education) and like Wundt (1832-1920), James too created a scientific laboratory (the first in the US in 1875). James also taught many of the first generation of American psychologists and educationalists, including Dewey, G.S. Hall (1844-1924), the first President of the American Psychological Association, and Edward Thorndike (1874-1949) who was one of the first and most influential educational psychologists in the US.

James (1890) provided a seminal exposition of key concepts which were to underpin the development of much psychological research during the 20th. century, for example, in relation to behaviour and cognition. However, most psychologists (both then and perhaps even now) were enticed to leave behind the liberal, and what we might know now as the progressive potentials of psychology and education in order to develop particular theories / practices which accorded with the more functional needs of government. The consequence of this choice was that the core activities associated with our discipline became focused around measurement. The creation and application of batteries of technological devices, emboldened by the newly-devised statistical models, would become the bedrock for educational psychologists throughout the 20th. century. In the process these devices were to create and circulate particular ideas and discourses about children, their learning and development, mostly with measurement primarily in mind. Any ways of thinking or talking about children (i.e. discourses) which were not so easily subject to quantification were diverted away from what we call mainstream psychology, for example, to philosophy, sociology, phenomenology and, of course, psychoanalysis.

Alfred Binet (1857-1911) famously assisted the French government in dealing with young people in Parisian schools who did not

seem well suited to the new mass schooling system. Rather than investigate the structure of the schools themselves, however, or indeed the nature of what was being taught and how, the gaze of the authorities invariably fell upon the children themselves and following the adoption of the experimental method as the preferred kind of research activity to be conducted, it was to be the individual child who became an object to those practices which invariably involved measurement of some kind. Increasingly, psychological research and practice tended to avoid theoretical issues and hence had little intellectual purchase on more complex analyses, for example, which might consider whether the models of the 'human' circulated in psychology were either discovering or else creating the objects of their inquiry. Theory and philosophy were largely to be excluded from the emerging discipline of educational psychology and whether as researchers or practitioners, certain culturally and politically specific ideas about the 'human' came to dominate. In particular, those discourses that accorded with an essentially Cartesian model of mind (Ryle, 1948, Parker, ed. 2015) assumed prominence i.e. that as humans we are essentially individual, isolated and can be explained by a particular understanding of the 'cognitive' to the exclusion of other considerations.

However, doubts persisted for many psychologists in the early 20th. century as to the nature of the epistemological landscape of the discipline and it should be noted, for example, that Binet, like his mentor Charcot, with whom he spent seven formative years, maintained a moderate stance on the heredity-environment problem, recognising that both had an impact upon development. Indeed throughout his career Binet remained suspicious even of the usefulness of the concept of 'intelligence' for which he is ever associated (for further detail see Williams and Goodley, chapter 4).

The development of psychology and education in the US after James involved a number of key individuals such as Cattell, Hall and Thorndike, and by about 1920 the experimental method and the practices of measurement could claim victory. The debates within psychology had for a time been fiercely contested, highlighted by the Clark lectures of 1909 which, at Hall's invitation, were given by Freud. A number of distinguished figures attended the lectures, including James, Hall, Titchener, Stern, Mayer and Boas, which were hosted by the department of psychology, pedagogy and school hygiene at Clark University and which were designed to address Hall's view that education had become 'the chief problem of the world, its one holy cause' (Hall in Prochnik, 2006, p.99). It is from about this time that psychology established some distance from the philosophical and the theoretical and instead strengthened its ties with government, proving its usefulness by organizing its activities around only those specific ideas about the human which could be operationalized through measurement. The strongest form of the critique here, suggests that educational psychology failed to see that in these moments of our early history, scientific curiosity was sacrificed for the soothing re-assurances of the merely technological.

During the early years of the 20th. century, Psychology and Education, in their institutional forms, thus came to reflect the 'modern', a project in which psychological science offered simultaneously somehow both to individualize and homogenize all human functioning. Freud's

seemingly rather pessimistic view of human nature was at odds with the missionary zeal that was the hallmark of the new institutions and the Freudian unconscious, 'an imagined cesspool' (Mayer, in Zaretsky, 2004, p.83), was to be rejected in favour of a psychology which focused only on the experimental method which, as an arm of government, became antagonistic to theory. Even Wundt, considered by many to be the founder of 'scientific' psychology, had warned against separating psychology from departments of philosophy and opposed the 'creation of a separate discipline of psychology' (Winter, 1999, p.162).

The dominant figure in British Educational Psychology, from the date of his first appointment in 1913 was to be Cyril Burt. He will always be associated with the allegedly fraudulent use of his experimental data (Hearnshaw, 1979, Mackintosh, 2013) but there are also intriguing personal connections which facilitated the transformation of what were arguably Burt's personal prejudices into public policy (Chitty, 2007). Burt also contributed to the seminal report on '*The use of psychological tests in education*' (Board of Education, 1924) and encouraged the development in England of a particular kind of educational psychology which drew on the positivist model being formulated in the US. Despite the reservations of the principal author of this influential report (W.H. Hadow), approaches to educational psychology research and practice in England for the rest of the century were to be dominated by the same assumptions as to the nature of psychological knowledge that were embedded in Burt's work and which, we argue, were characterized by the following:

- 1) a reductionist and scientifically inadequate understanding of human intelligence
- 2) a concentration on heritability as the single most important variable in human learning and development (virtually to the exclusion of all others)
- 3) an intrinsically eugenicist approach which generated and circulated what we can now see as racist, sexist and able-ist theories of human being (after Williams, Billington, Goodley and Corcoran, eds. 2017).

There were many distinguished and international contributors to the Hadow report, one of whom was to provide a very different reference point for educational psychology research and practice. Susan Isaacs (1885-1948) went from being a governess to trainee teacher and was eventually awarded a scholarship at the Psychological Laboratory in Newnham College, Cambridge. She trained as a psychoanalyst, became a member of the British Psychoanalytic Society in 1921, and between 1924 and 1927, the Head of Malting House School (see Williams and Goodley, chapter 4 for further discussion of her early contribution). Isaac's work kept alive something of James's intellectual creativity and curiosity (James, 1902) and accorded with Dewey's commitment to progressive and emancipatory forms of education (Dewey, 1938). Her approach also sheds a light on concerns both then and now of an educational psychology research and practice which fails to acknowledge epistemological complexity and uncertainty and fails also to engage with any questions relating to experience, emotion or indeed consciousness.

It has often been overlooked that Freud's structural model of human psychology outlines a conceptual framework of mind as formed

through social relations, which are inherently bound up in our intimate relations, ideas which we now think of as psychodynamics. Anna Freud, Melanie Klein (a close colleague of Isaacs) and others such as Winnicott and Bion have continued to influence contemporary discourse in the wider social world, for example, through concepts such as 'defence mechanisms', 'transference' or 'projection', each of which has been inserted forcefully into western cultural discourse, albeit only by stealth in educational psychology. However, it is still possible to detect the influence of psychodynamics in educational and psychological practices today. For example, attachment theory and the use of terms such as attunement and containment, despite their flaws and lack of precision, continue to remind us that there are ways of thinking about human being, our learning and development, which cannot so easily be explored or explained solely by quantification.

Qualitative research in psychology

While James, Dewey and Isaacs kept alive in psychology questions relating to the nature of human experience, it had been Dilthey (1833-1911) who had previously articulated important methodological distinctions between the human and natural sciences. These were further to be developed in critiques of empiricism and the scientific method itself (for example, Kuhn, 1962, Feyerabend, 1975, Latour, 1979). Unfortunately, theories and questions, on the one hand relating to the nature of human experience, and on the other hand relating to the nature of scientific knowledge itself, were largely jettisoned by what came to be known as mainstream psychology and were to find homes in other domains of research and practice, once again, for example, philosophy, sociology, psychoanalysis and phenomenology. However, such theories and questions (concerning human experience and the nature of scientific knowledge), having first been displaced to other disciplines, have more recently begun to re-enter psychology and indeed educational psychology, contributing as crucial resources, not only to progressive approaches in learning and development but also to the surge of interest in qualitative and theoretical approaches in psychological research and practice which have prompted this book (for example, Billington, 1996, Corcoran, 2012, Martin, Sugarman and Slaney, eds. in press).

It has been argued elsewhere that 20th. century mainstream psychology (and thus by implication educational psychology) became accustomed to focusing on methodology rather than theory (Parker, 2014). The effect of this was to prevent us from understanding our own performativity, not least the ways in which our language-use has been constructing and circulating ideas about understandings of the human which are either implicit or assumed in our research and practice, for example, in discourses dominated by concepts of (dis-)ability, gender, race, sexuality. Perhaps the single most important intellectual concern across the social sciences and indeed the humanities during the last one hundred years or so has related to the nature, status and reliability of language. From Wittgenstein onwards (1922), researchers (and practitioners) have increasingly been unable to ignore questions relating to the function of language, and not least its 'meaning'. It is this 'turn to language' which laid the foundations upon which qualitative research in

psychology and, most recently, qualitative research in educational psychology have been built.

Since William James attempted to delineate the field of a positivistic psychology (1890), there have been several educational psychologists who have been alert to the dangers should we fail to acknowledge questions and theories concerning the nature of persons. Dewey (1916), Vygotsky (1978) and then Bruner (1986), for example, each in their own way, envisaged a psychology of the person which was impossible to contain within discourses of isolated individuals. Dewey knew of the importance of social environments for human mind and behaviour and Vygotsky too focused on explanations more obviously rooted in the social world while Bruner developed accounts according to a humanist tradition. Deweyan ideas about school and social reform and neo-Vygotskian ideas about learning and language have since shaped many contemporary professional understandings and practices relating to the nature of children and childhood. Brunerian narrative approaches too have supported the work of increasing numbers of psychologists and social scientists who have aspired to less disabling forms of research and practice (White and Epston, 1990, Berliner, 1992) while other theorists and qualitative researchers have been developing analyses which are similarly sensitive to the dynamic, intrinsically social possibilities within human beings and their situations (Gergen, 1994, Tolman, 1994, Daniels, H., Edwards, A., Engestrom, Y. and Ludvigsen, S. (eds.) 2009).

In 1974 Bruner joined with Martin Richards, Ryan, Shotter, Harre, Ingleby and the Newsoms to produce *The Integration of the Child into the Social World* which, along with *Reconstructing Social Psychology* (Armistead, 1974) and also Margaret Donaldson's (1978) Piagetian critique, *Children's Minds*, sought to articulate the fundamentally social nature of human development. In the UK the emergence of these publications alongside a growing interest in the recently translated works of Vygotsky led to critical stirrings within UK educational psychology, most clearly articulated by *Reconstructing Educational Psychology* (Gillham, 1978). *Changing the Subject* (Henriques et al., 1984) and *Children of Social Worlds* (Bruner, 1986) reflected the growing interest in, and understanding of the fundamental importance of the social world when contemplating children, childhood and the kind of gaze we bring to bear on them. What began to emerge, and *Changing the Subject* is a good early example, was an interdisciplinary conversation in which psychologists and others in the social sciences began to question the nature of the human subject that positivistic psychology had been assuming i.e. as 'unitary' (isolated and unproblematic) and 'rational' (explained by cognitivist assumptions concerning human reason).

The mid- 1980s was also a time when we began to hear the term, 'psy-complex' (Ingleby, 1985, Rose 1985) which, informed by Foucault's introduction of the genealogical method, had been coined as a critique of the influence and extent of psychological knowledge. Critical thinkers drew upon strands of psychology, psychoanalysis, linguistics and semiotics to examine the influence of language and Potter and Wetherell's (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology* signalled an increasing appreciation of the power and influence of language in structuring what we accept as reality (see also Foucault, 1970, Parker, 1992). Potter and Wetherell (1987) couch their critique of psychological theory in methodological terms and highlight how dominant psychological methods

of, for example, rating scales that underlie attitude theory, fail to take account of the variability of human thought and action, and by doing so bolster a spurious model of thinking as uniform, rational, and classifiable into equal-interval categories. Hollway (1989) developed a version of this critique to import a psychoanalytic gender analysis, so that subjectivity, complexity and contradiction, long associated in institutional practices with the devalued and supposedly inferior [sic] thinking of women, would be seen as not only inevitable features of, but also as vital for, a more adequate understanding of psychological life. The works above together with the works of other social scientists such as Harre (1979), Shotter (1993), Gergen (2009), Danziger (1990), Gilligan (1982, 1989), Walkerdine (2001), Billig (2008) provided vital theoretical resources and thus also the impetus for the expansion of qualitative research in psychology.

As the qualitative movement has continued to grow in breadth and depth, so differences and specialisms have begun to emerge and there is now a host of innovative qualitative approaches, all of which are in a constant state of refinement. The ever-increasing sophistication of specific techniques, especially in relation to the analysis of language can be found, for example, in various kinds of discourse analysis (Parker, 2013 and ed., 2015, Potter, 1996), deconstructionist accounts (Burman, 2008, 2015), social constructionism (Gergen, 1985, Burr, 1995, Corcoran, 2014), feminist research (Butler, 1990, Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1996), conversation analysis (Antaki, 2015), narrative (Reissman, 1993) and other, often dialogically-inclined texts (Bakhtin, 1984).

Many of the above share similar principles or theoretical starting points and, at least implicitly challenge and critique 'reductionist' or positivist approaches in a manner which has significant epistemological and ontological consequences, not least in respect of an attitude to questions of knowledge and truth. For example, psychology and educational psychology have become accustomed to accepting positivist assumptions about the status and reliability of knowledge as somehow being 'out there', as something which the researcher can 'discover' and which can then be presented as 'findings'.

Psychologists engaged in qualitative research have often concluded that this is a problematic or even unsustainable position to take in their research, and argue that such a position should at least be open to critique and contestation. Those of us who had initially been lured by the promise of unearthing psychological certainties in our research and practice under the guise of probabilities obtained via the experimental method ('discoveries'), had struggled to understand the ways in which language invariably seemed implicated in our work and in ways which were little understood. The work of many social scientists cited above have encouraged the development of qualitative approaches to research as a means of exploring the role and function of language in psychology, influenced variously by neo-Vygotskian, post-structuralist or dialogical accounts. One particular iteration of the turn-to-language has been the development of a critical psychology which was more robust in its analysis of psychology as part of the apparatus of government (Holzkamp, 2013, Rose, 1990).

The future of educational psychology: Qualitative research as science

The intense theoretical debates generated by the critical social and psychological scientists of the last fifty years have provided the means by which educational psychologists could not only develop qualitative research but also develop critiques of our own discipline, some with the aim of developing a research and practice agenda which could aspire to be emancipatory. This endeavour, constructed on the shoulders of social science critique, has enabled researchers and practitioners to develop challenges to the premises upon which much positivist practice and research in psychology and education had previously been conducted (Prilleltensky, 1994, Billington, 2000, Martin, 2004). It has been possible to articulate, for example:

1. the ways in which the (mis)use of able-ist, gendered and racialized explanations continue to misrepresent and undermine the potentialities of human subjects;
2. that the aetiology of human functioning is a complete reversal from that popularly circulated; rather, as human organisms our development is defined and constrained by the 'conditions' (James, 1890) of our environment and we are thus always a priori 'relational beings' (Gergen, 2009);
3. that psychology's tendency to individualise invites a reduction of the complexities of being-in-the-world to simplistic psychological categories supposedly existing in isolated individuals.

It has been argued that many of the ideas and practices circulated specifically within educational psychology bear a resemblance to science only insofar as they use numbers, statistics and mathematical formulae (Billington, 1996). Those powerful critiques of the nature of scientific knowledge cited earlier (Feyerabend, Kuhn, Latour) undermine the claims of educational psychology as science, not least since in our efforts to attain the status accorded to the natural sciences, we have created non-human methodologies which are unable to capture the phenomena of persons under investigation (Sugarman, 2014). It is argued here that psychologists, including educational psychologists, have come to perform a research and practice which too often:

1. prioritize methodology over the phenomena to be studied (Costa and Shimp, 2011)
2. adopt methods ill-suited to recognize the phenomena under scrutiny i.e. the human (Goodley, 2014)
3. investigate and reinvestigate versions of persons it has itself constructed (Hacking, 1995).

In the UK, some practitioners during the 1990s thought that we were 'giving away' our psychology, as more and more of the population adopted psychological language to describe themselves and those around them, including their children. As new forms of social communication and social networking emerged the 'psy-complex' could be seen to have been prophetic in its early recognition of how psychological discourse increasingly became the given way in which people understood

themselves and each other. Given the cultural changes of the last 20 years (see de Vos, 2012 for a discussion on psychologisation) we argue that the rise of qualitative research in educational psychology with its emphasis on both personal and theoretical reflexivity is both timely and welcomed. More specifically, and perhaps ironically, we argue with others that qualitative research, in our view, can actually lead to better science through the vitality of the questions that it formulates (Hacking, 2002, Harre, 2004, Packer, 2011).

Such critical approaches to psychology have been offering highly distinctive, theoretically rigorous epistemologies which have begun to generate potentially emancipatory applications of qualitative research. For example, Erica Burman's (2008, orig. 1994) utilization of deconstruction as a tool for critiquing development narratives together with her exploration of a feminist agenda strengthened analyses of the potentially debilitating nature of certain theoretical preferences and practices in child-care and educational arenas. Isaac Prilleltensky emphasized critical approaches and the possibility of community solutions (Fox, Prilleltensky and Austin 2009, Nelson and Prilleltensky 2005) while Ben Bradley similarly employed critiques of the assumptions of psychological knowledge and developed alternatives in respect of professional training (2005).

Indeed, there are increasing numbers of psychologists working across education globally whose qualitative research engages with theory and the critique of practice, including, for example, Newman and Holzman (1993), Bird (1999), Sloan (2000), Gallagher (2003), Leadbetter, Daniels and Stringer (eds.)(2005), Kincheloe (2006, 2008), Goodman (2010), Mercieca (2011), Martin and McLellan (2013), Vassallo (2013), Williams (2013), Corcoran (ed. 2014), Billington (2006, 2014), Sugarman (2014), Todd (2014) and Hughes (2014).

It is now twenty years since discourse analysis appeared in *Educational Psychology in Practice* (Billington, 1995, subsequently, Bozic and Leadbetter, 1999, Pomerantz, 2010 and Lewis, 2011). Discourse analysis specifically continues to be used to good effect in educational psychology research to examine how a range of phenomena, from the aspirations of Muslim girls (Hewitt, 2015) to the professional identity of educational psychologists (Waters, 2014) are shaped by dominant discourses that are part of a sociocultural history that is often far from benign.

However, there are now not only many forms of discourse analysis but many other highly specialized qualitative research techniques which are providing the theoretical foundations upon which an alternative vision for the future of our discipline could be created; not least, for example, through the ways in which we examine how the actual ways of talking about phenomena shape both our understanding and our professional responses. Some other techniques also have their roots elsewhere other than mainstream psychology, for example, phenomenology has been persistent in its examination of human experience (after Husserl, for example, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre). Its contemporary derivative, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), articulates a double hermeneutic process involved in making sense of a person's account of their experience (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). IPA reflects also the more recent 'affective turn' in psychology which again takes an interest not

only in what is being said, but also in the experiencing subject as well as in the phenomenology of the encounter. Narrative research too, a further growing strand of qualitative research within educational psychology (Billington and Todd, eds. 2012, Hobbs et al. 2012, Winslade, 2012), utilises to different degrees, post-structuralist and person-centered, humanist approaches. In each of the above, there is an emphasis on recognising the concept and importance of 'voice' and the relational complexities which ensue especially when acknowledging the presence and impact of the researcher and the reflexivity that this entails.

There is clearly insufficient space in this short volume to explore the wealth of ideas and practices evidenced in the above strands. However, for all those educational psychologists who are keen to engage with the richness of human experience oft-neglected since James, or who wish to develop the kinds of emancipatory forms of psychological and educational research and practice envisioned by Dewey, the qualitative forms of research above provide invaluable resources upon which to base our future work. We recognize, in particular, a potential for the future of our discipline should we actively seek to:

- i) identify and make transparent the epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions which populate the landscape of educational psychology;
- ii) reveal the kinds of human subject constituted and restricted through these discursive knowledges and which shape educational psychology research and practice;
- iii) identify ideas, practices and support mechanisms which enable children and young people to successfully resist and move beyond regimes of knowledge-making found to be oppressive, enabling them to navigate more successfully their (educational) lives.

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