

DISCOURSE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS: TRANSLATING CONCEPTS INTO “FRAGMENTING” METHODOLOGY

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Abstract.

There is a growing body of work that draws on psychoanalytic interpretive strategies to enrich our understanding of the psychological processes involved in an individual's investment in particular discursive positions. This work champions the irreducibility of the social and the psychological, exploring the way in which the desires and wishes of the individual mediate the accessibility of social discourses. However, employing psychoanalysis as a framework for interpreting text necessarily means proceeding tentatively: rather than an individualising, theory-driven tool, the authors argue for its use in a way that “fragments” texts. Specifically, we demonstrate how psychoanalytic interpretation might be grounded in a fine-grained narrative analysis as well as in a reflexive interpretation of the research relationship, in order to seek ways to open out the text to produce various new discursive forms, rather than to “fix” their meaning.

RESISTING SOCIAL DETERMINISM: THE VALUE OF THE PSYCHE.

There are significant continuities between psychoanalysis and discursive psychology which has seen researchers successfully drawing on both frameworks (for example, Billig, 1997; Day Sclater, 1999; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000a, 2000b; Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2003). On the face of it, psychoanalysis and discursive psychology are equally concerned with interpreting the meaning of experience (Henwood & Coughlan, 1993). As such both are interested in accounts for what they say about subjective realities rather than for how closely they represent the “truth”. Psychoanalysis, as a therapeutic endeavour focusing solely on the talk of the analysand, does not presume that the analysand's talk reflects or represents actual events. Freud (1937:266) argued that “the patient's assured conviction of the truth of the construction” is enough to be

therapeutic. Therefore, psychoanalytic data does not have to reflect objective reality; rather it needs to be *felt* by the patient to be objective reality. Similarly, discursive psychology is interested in language not for its “truth” value but for what discourses achieve and how they construct experiences in different ways creating multiple realities. Thus both schools of thought assume constructionist theories of meaning: “Both note how our access to reality (whatever that might be) is indirect and mediated. Both point to the ways in which stimuli and events are standardly worked up in some way” (Wetherell, 2003:105).

Nevertheless, there are differences in how psychoanalysis and discursive psychology understand the mediators of personal experience and in the approach of each to language. From a psychoanalytic perspective, what we say is primarily mediated by unconscious dynamics and relational processes. Our talk is “worked up” by our anxieties, defences and projections. In contrast, from a discursive perspective what we say is constructed by and constructive of the dominant discourses available in the social and political context. Social constructionists are uninterested in reading the text for what it says about mental states or cognitive processes and have been critical of psychoanalytic attempts to go “beyond language” to inner experience. Rather, discursive psychologists read the text for what identity positions are constructed for the person talking and the audience listening, for the broader cultural discourses and subject positions it draws on. These identity positions are dynamic, shifting and multiple depending on the context in which the talk is situated. This highly contextual depiction of identity has seen discursive psychology criticised for its discourse determinism; for perceiving social discourses as merely adopted by individuals as one would try on different hats (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000b). The appeal of combining discursive psychology with psychoanalysis lies in the idea that individuals are both consciously and unconsciously motivated to adopt various subject positions and social discourses allowing freedom from a deterministic view of language. In particular, unconscious motivations are influenced by the biographical history of the individual: “the contemporary experiences, actions, relations and identities that make up subjectivity achieve their meaning and influence with reference to the way a person’s past is sedimented into unconscious (as well as conscious) mental processes” (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000b:137). Therefore, it is argued, drawing on psychoanalysis in discursive work provides a more emotionally “colourful” reading of the way in which subjectivity is “performed”, contextualising individuals not only in their social and political contexts but also in their interpersonal and intrapsychic trajectories. Bringing psychoanalysis into the frame can be understood as reasserting the psychological in predominantly social explanations of identities and relationships.

The difficulties of holding onto both the psychological and the social in understanding subjectivity are increasingly evident. In a debate between Wetherell (2005) and Hollway and Jefferson (2005a; 2005b) based on the latter’s psychoanalytic reading of a discursive account, each accuses the other of overemphasising either the social or the psychological dimension of subjectivity. The major sticking point appears to be with respect to unconscious processes. According to discursive psychologists it is enough to consider participants as reflective, embedded in relationships and practices that are partly influenced by socially available discursive resources but also resisted and reworked for their own purposes. Spears (2005) for example, argues that Hollway and Jefferson’s reading of unconscious conflicts in their case study could just as easily be understood as conscious conflict between dissonant selves. Appealing to unconscious

processes is considered unnecessarily complex and worse still, functions to “individualize” participants thereby maintaining the psychological/social dualism. Psychoanalytic readings of texts have been accused of risking “a kind of ungrounded reductionism that fixes subjectivity in one, predetermined grid, usually that of a biographical difficulty with one’s parents” (Frosh, 2007:643).

However, the potential of using unconscious processes in this way, as emotional or mental activity that we are unaware of, lies in its conceptualisation of subjects and their talk as overdetermined – always made up of a plurality of identity positions and meanings, at the conscious and unconscious level. Nevertheless, applying the concept of unconscious dynamics in the reading of text in this descriptive sense only focuses on one aspect of the unconscious processes, running the risk of reducing psychoanalytic interpretation of text to a formulaic identification of the oedipal complex, for example, in participants’ employment of specific discourses. For Freud, unconscious processes could not be conceived of separately from the dynamics of repression (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973) which points to unconscious processes as disruptive, interfering and impossible to find: “it always hides, it lives nowhere and it blocks us as we try to know it directly” (Frosh, 2002:12). It is the dynamic, “fragmenting” nature of these unconscious processes, employed and recognized in the activity of producing and reading texts, that work against reducing or fixing subjectivity. While psychoanalytic approaches to qualitative research might “read” texts and offer interpretations that emphasize a defended and divided subject, this needs to be done with the knowledge that these texts can never be fully known, rather each interpretation should lead to a place of further interpretation, “disrupting and disorganising” analysis (Frosh, 2007:644). This approach privileges reading texts not for what we can understand but for what they open up: multiple interpretations produced by an over-determined subject.

This move towards employing psychoanalysis as a critical and disrupting force rather than a sense-making, “truth-finding” tool draws more on Lacanian psychoanalysis (see also Frosh & Saville Young, forthcoming; and Saville Young & Frosh, in submission) than other psycho-social approaches with a Kleinian emphasis (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2000a, 2005a). This split within psychosocial studies (see Layton, 2008, *British Psycho(-)Social Studies: Special Issue*) centres around different ways of understanding the “psycho(-)social”; with the social and the psychological in “psycho-social” conceptualised as separate entities with points of juncture (Jefferson, 2008) or with the “psychosocial” conceptualised as a Moebius strip, with subjectivity understood as constituted in and through its social formations (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). A Lacanian perspective is more suitable for the purposes of the latter, given Lacan’s emphasis on subjectivity as always subjected to language, and thereby socially produced and regulated, but never fully rational or consciously controlled (Georgaca, 2005). From a Lacanian perspective, using psychoanalysis to understand defence mechanisms or psychic processes in discursive work is an elusive and illusory goal for we are always subjected to language and therefore can never occupy a position that offers a final pronouncement on it. An analysis of text does not convey hidden meaning because there is no final hidden meaning, but “the fundamental openness of utterances” (Georgaca, 2001:226) so that the subject can never be fully known or fixed but remains resistive (Frosh, 2007). Within this framework the analytic focus, in contrast to a Kleinian gaze at psychic defences in the subject, is on the way language works in and around the researched, the researcher and the phenomenon, to “the cat and

mouse game with the Other (which) could be, provisionally at least, located as subjectivity itself” (Malone, 2000:83).

TRANSLATING PSYCHOSOCIAL CONCEPTS INTO A “FRAGMENTING” ANALYTIC APPROACH.

This paper hopes to make an empirically grounded contribution to the debate around the usefulness of employing psychoanalysis in discursive work introduced above, a debate which is often largely theoretical. We try to demonstrate how a concern with both discourse and psychoanalysis might translate into methodology that captures subjectivity and language as overdetermined, fragmented and shot through with multiplicity while still remaining grounded in a close reading of both the text and the context to privilege the subjects’ meaning making under particular intersubjective conditions.

A close reading of the *text* is accomplished by drawing on traditions of “critical narrative analysis” (Emerson & Frosh, 2004) that deliberately distance the reader from the text, at the same time attending to the emotional and conceptual movement of textual themes. Specifically, this analysis calls for multiple readings of the text, each focusing on a different level of structure, emphasising the form the narrative is taking and how this form constructs multiple layers of meaning (Gee, 1991). Each new reading leads to questions rather than answers, opening up the overlay of meanings at work and corresponding with our aims to “disrupt and disorganise” texts while also warranting certain interpretations over others by privileging the personal meaning making of the narrator. This narrative analysis offers a “bottom up”, “data driven” approach, with its emphasis on a fine-grained reading of the text, complementing psychoanalytic interpretations of text which run the risk of being overly theory driven or “top down” (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008). Such “binocularity” ensures that psychoanalytic interpretations are grounded in textual moves. An emphasis on the form or structure of the narrative, rather than simply the content, is anchored in a Lacanian understanding of the unconscious as “a linguistic/discursive structure permeated by desire” (Georgaca, 2005:82).

A close reading of the *context* calls for recognition of the performative aspects of interviews – participants’ gestures and actions in the interview also add meaning to their accounts (Riessman, 2003). Moreover, narratives are performative because the participant is speaking to an audience, the interviewer, who is an active participant opening up certain narratives and closing down others. The interviewer’s own personal reactions to the participant and feelings about the participants’ talk and performance of that talk (recorded in field notes) are read out from the analysis, in principle offering an intersubjective perspective on unconscious processes and dynamics (Hollway, 2006) rather than the individualising perspective psychoanalysis is so frequently accused of (Sondergaard, 2002).

CASE STUDY: “I WILL STAND BY” – HASIM.

We demonstrate the possibilities of such an approach through reference to one specific piece of research on “brothering”. This involved conducting in-depth, biographical interviews with a small purposive sample of men (N=8) in middle adulthood around the meaning and experience of being a brother (Saville Young, 2006). For the purposes of

this paper the authors present a case study selected from this sample: Hasim¹ is a 65 year old married man who spent his childhood in what is now Pakistan, his adolescence in India and came to live and work in Britain as a psychotherapist in the early nineteen sixties. He comes from a large family of nine children (six boys and three girls) and is the second eldest. His extended family remain in India and he returns every few years to visit them. In the interview, Hasim describes having had a particularly close relationship with his oldest brother who, when their father could not find work after the family moved to India, left school and got a job to provide for the family. While his brother had to be the provider, going out of the home to work, Hasim describes his role as disciplinarian or head of the house. Since his brother's death ten years ago, Hasim has taken on the role of financial provider for his siblings. The extract selected for analysis explores this particular narrative of "brother as provider" from a discursive and psychoanalytic interpretive framework grounding the analysis in two important dimensions of talk: the form or structure of the narrative and the performative aspects of the narrative in the interview context. We try to show how each of these dimensions of talk work to open up the analysis, leading to questions which demand that the text be read as over-determined, as requiring multiple interpretations, many times and at various levels.

The first reading involves retranscribing the text using poetic line breaks, in other words dividing the extract into *parts*, *strophes*, *stanzas* and *lines* based on a careful listening of the audio taped recording for nuances in tone as well as for the content of the narrative. Listening for the intonational pitch of what is said (increased loudness, length or change of pitch tone) enabled us to isolate these small spurts of speech into *lines*, with each line containing a chunk of information or an "idea unit" as well as a pitch glide (a movement in the pitch of the voice) or "tone unit". However, each line is just one part of a larger piece of information, which is called a *stanza*. Each stanza in a narrative concentrates on a single topic. These stanzas or topics are often related, in which case they fall into a *strophe*. Finally, all the strophes together make up larger units of information or subplots which piece the entire story or plot together as a number of *parts*. Lines, stanzas, strophes and parts are important because "they represent how speakers marry structure and meaning" (Gee, 1999:117), they demonstrate how speakers organise their meaning in speech while also pointing to the multiple levels at which meaning plays itself out in speech. The stanzas, strophes and parts are named and together provide a guide to the flow of text. Below is a retranscription of an extract from Hasim's interview using these poetic line breaks². The extract is fairly lengthy but has not been broken up into more manageable segments in order to preserve the sequential and structural features so central to Gee's approach.

¹ A pseudonym is used throughout to protect the anonymity of the participant.

² The reader will note from the extract that Hasim's English fluency is somewhat poor, given that English is his second language; what implications does this have for drawing on Gee's poetic linguistic approach? In considering this, it is important to remember that Gee (1991) first applied his analysis to the narrative of a woman diagnosed with schizophrenia, a narrative which deviated sharply from the temporally ordered stories being worked with by other narrative analysts at the time (e.g. Labov & Waletzky, 1997). Therefore, if anything, Gee's approach is most suited to analysing texts more open to misinterpretation due to fluency difficulties because of its emphasis on listening to the oral features of talk, opening up multiple possible interpretations rather than assuming that we know what participants are saying. Certainly, there has been at least one other example of Gee's approach applied to talk from second language English participants, in Riessman's (2008) work on infertility in South India.

Extract.³

Part 1: Being deceived by my brother.

Strophe 1: My brother asks for financial help and I assure him I will "stand by"

Stanza 1: Brother's financial situation

1. so when I went to India I told him that HOW WAS the thing
2. he said / brother it was very difficult FINANCIALLY I was very much
3. though my other brothers HELPED ME
4. I was spent TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND RUPEES of my nephew / who kept the money WITH ME

Stanza 2: I reassure him of my help

5. so I said DON'T WORRY
6. we'll this is OUR DAUGHTER'S it is OUR SISTER'S money her son is / because he has got NO MOTHER
7. but that money will be better
8. you don't worry about that / I WILL STAND BY

Stanza 3: I could help him but had to be cautious

9. now two hundred thousand means twenty two thousand five hundred POUNDS
10. so FOR ME I can BEAR IT
11. so if you in India if you tell them yes DON'T WORRY I will do that / then they will DEPEND MORE on you
12. so we have to be VERY DIPLOMATIC and CAUTIOUS ALSO
13. so they DO NOT make the same mistake of OVERSPENDING OTHER PEOPLE'S money

Stanza 4: I reassured him nevertheless

14. so I told him OKAY / IT'S ALRIGHT / I mean we'll see that our sister gets the MONEY BACK
15. though our sister's NOT THERE / but he will get his money back ANYWAY

Strophe 2: I find out that my brother has deceived me

Stanza 5: My sister tells me that my brother only told me half the truth

16. when I came to my OTHER SISTER in Bombay
17. she told me that he has told you HALF THE MONEY / he has spent DOUBLE THE MONEY of that / his uh our sister's son

Stanza 6: Hurt and anger

18. so IT HURT ME
19. I say WHY he has to LIE TO ME
20. but he was AFRAID / (of what you) that whatever the money the boy has sent he has FINISHED IT ALL / and Hasim will be VERY ANGRY
21. so I WOULD HAVE BEEN / but I will just VENTILATE myself but at the SAME TIME I will come to the HELP AS WELL

Strophe 3: Why my brother deceived me

Stanza 7: I am trustworthy

22. I PROMISED HIM that whatever your expenses are / I'LL BEAR IT

³ Transcription notation (Gee, 1991): The text is divided into parts, strophes, stanzas and lines. Each numbered line is made up of one or more idea unit. Where there is more than one idea unit in a line they are separated by a slash (/). CAPITAL LETTERS indicate stress added to a word through increased loudness, length or change of pitch tone, also called focused material. The interviewer's words are indicated by round brackets () and *italics*.

23. I will send you three hundred pounds per EVERY QUARTER

24. so that YOUR FAMILY should be absolutely / WE WILL NOT SEE that you should be any heart breaks

25. ALL BROTHERS will see / but I'M taking that responsibility

Stanza 8: I have helped him in the past

26. because he has got THREE DAUGHTERS / and in INDIA / to have DAUGHTERS is a RESPONSIBILITY / financial responsibility (yes yes of course)

27. FIRST she got married

28. SECOND when I went there / I got her married

29. I mean spent some GOOD MONEY

Stanza 9: Because of this past help, my brother was afraid of me

30. so HE THOUGHT that already he has spent / THREE FOUR THOUSAND POUNDS / on my DAUGHTER'S MARRIAGE

31. now if I tell him the FULL AMOUNT / he may be ANGRY / or he will so he told me HALF THAT

Stanza 10: My sister also feels that my brother was afraid of me

32. when I came to BOMBAY / my sisters tells me that uh / no he told you HALF THAT / he has spent ALL HIS MONEY that his boy has kept there

33. I said but WHY HE HAS TO DO IT

34. she says well I DON'T KNOW / but SHE ALSO KNEW that he was afraid to tell me the WHOLE TRUTH

Part 2: I punish my brother for his deceit.

Strophe 4: I delay sending the money

Stanza 11: I did not send him the money I promised

35. so what I DID / THREE HUNDRED POUNDS of that quarter I wanted to send him / I DIDN'T SEND IT (laugh)/ I KEPT ja

36. I've not yet WRITTEN TO HIM

37. I've not sent him the NEXT ALSO

Stanza 12: I will still send him the money

38. but I had a GOOD MIND to take the telephone one day / I'll WRITE A LETTER to him

39. WHY you have to do THAT / it made me ANGRY and I DIDN'T SEND you the money

40. but here is your three hundred first comings / so I'VE GOT for him / I'LL SEND it to him

Strophe 5 I understand his anger and will take responsibility

Stanza 13: I was angry but can understand

41. but it made me a little bit you know uh / that ITS UNFAIR OF HIM not to tell me the TRUTH / (mm not to be honest)

42. but I could understand also that he was AFRAID OF ME

43. (mm do you think maybe he was embarrassed as well) embarrassing is the FIRST STEP

44. SECOND is that he COULDN'T OPEN THE MOUTH / so he wanted to PACIFY that look I only spend HALF OF THIS MONEY

Stanza 14: I have to reassure my sister and nephew

45. and my eldest younger sister was VERY ANGRY / that he didn't tell you THE TRUTH

46. of course the whole ALL FOUR BROTHERS alive now are RESPONSIBLE for that money
47. so I told my sister / I say you don't worry / I will write a letter to my nephew / and TELL HIM that look your money's safe / you don't worry
48. because he had a HARD TIME / he had a operation done / and operation cost about FOUR FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS there
49. so I say don't worry / WE ALWAYS STAND BY / and you will get your money BACK

Strophe 6: Anger and regret

Stanza 15: I wanted to punish him

50. but this THIS IS THE WAY I WANTED TO PUNISH HIM / that look THREE HUNDRED is NOT coming to you (laugh) / you have to MANAGE the three hundred

Stanza 16: I regret my decision

51. but then I came to England I said / I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT / I should have kept MY COOL
52. so I will WRITE A LETTER to him / and send him a CHEQUE

Strophe 7: This is the way family works

Stanza 17: Anger doesn't last

53. but / this is the way FAMILY WORKS you see
54. sometimes WE DO GET ANGRY / we GET HURT
55. (*ja ja but then you find that it doesn't last too long*) no it doesn't last MUCH /
56. but other feelings of nearness and dearness remain ALL THE TIME INTACT
57. though I get ANGRY / but I LOVE my family and

Part 3: To judge or not to judge my brothers— I am respected nevertheless.

Strophe 8: Making comparisons

Stanza 18: It bothers me that my younger brothers are lacking

58. (*ja ja (...) mm is there anything that I HAVEN'T ASKED you / that you feel is IMPORTANT to talk about as far as YOUR BROTHERS are concerned*
59. *is there anything that COMES TO MIND*)
60. (...) my ELDER BROTHER was very STRONG MINDED
61. youngers are NOT
62. so it sometimes BOTHERS ME / that / what's THERE
63. WHY are they lacking in that COURAGE / or why are they lacking in the DISCIPLINE / or this thing
64. sometimes it CROSSES MY MIND

Stanza 19: Making judgements

65. but then I think WELL it's all humanity / I mean / they are not PICKED UP / or they not GOT IT
66. so why I have to BOTHER about it /
67. I see many people EVERY DAY / I mean with the PROBLEMS and all that
68. so I have to be NEUTRAL TO THEM
69. because it's MY FAMILY that doesn't mean I should be HARSH with them or JUDGE them /
70. GENERALLY well we have to make the judgement ALL THE TIME /

Strophe 9: What really matters

Stanza 20: Happiness, love and respect

71. then I think well let them live their OWN LIFE / they're HAPPY that is what IT MATTERS /

72. but THEY KNOW that I LOVE not only THEM / but ALL THE CHILDREN
73. and even children they LOOK UP TO ME / um (..)
74. it's it's a PLEASURE to be among them / and WE ENJOY each other's company

ANALYSIS.

Parsing up the text opens up the multiple narratives and points to how the structure of the story contributes to different levels of interpretation. Part 1 is a sub-story about how Hasim's brother deceived him, by lying about how much of their nephew's money he had used for a heart operation. Stanza 1 and 2 introduce the characters, events and new information ending with a refrain that is repeated in different forms throughout the extract: that Hasim will "stand by" (l. 8) indicating his willingness to help his brother financially. Here Hasim takes up the older brother role of provider. Stanza 3 is an aside where he is involved in cultural translation, explaining to the interviewer, a white South African woman, how financial borrowing works in India, bringing with it (in his view) the risk of dependence. This first strophe sets up the structure for the rest of the story which continues much in the same vein: Hasim introduces new events often with very little build up to the crux of the story (for example Stanza 5, which reveals his brother's deceit, is very short), he then evaluates these events, at times including a cultural translation (in Stanza 8 he explains that having a daughter in India is a financial responsibility) and often repeats old material. For example, Stanza 10 is a recap of Stanza 5, with a little more information added, namely that his sister confirmed Hasim's suspicions that his brother was too scared to tell him how much money he had actually spent. This story structure, repeating aspects while building new information onto already established scenarios, is a pattern in Hasim's narrative. The listener is provided with the outline of the story which is then gradually "coloured in" with details: what is the effect of this narrative structure on the listener?

There are several levels at which the form of this narrative functions. First, the repetition of story content works to clarify a complicated storyline. Secondly, repeating the story line each time with further character development gives the listener time to draw conclusions as to the possible motives behind his brother's lie which include fear of Hasim's anger, fear that Hasim would not assist him financially if he was aware of the amount of money he had spent, or both. The structure of the story, providing initially the "skeleton" and then "fleshing" out the details not only opens up the possibility of alternative interpretations but gives Hasim the opportunity, in later repeated versions, to close down certain interpretations as he manages the meaning making of his story. Thus, Stanza 8, which describes Hasim's generosity at his niece's wedding, functions to subjugate unfavourable interpretations that may have arisen during the story telling: Hasim reasserts his subject position as provider by making it clear that his brother lied not because he thought Hasim would not help but rather because Hasim had already helped *too much* creating indebtedness and guilt.

Part 2 of Hasim's narrative captures the contradiction that is central to the extract. Despite working hard to assert his position as provider in the narrative, Hasim describes how he punishes his brother for his deceit by not sending him the money he promised. To motivate his actions, Hasim draws on a "paternalistic discourse" where honesty, obedience and faithfulness are expected from his dependents and where these fail, punishment will follow.

The last stanza in Part 2 is evaluative as Hasim explains that his anger at family never lasts long. This evaluative stance is continued throughout Part 3 where Hasim reflects on his attitude to his family, his disappointment in his younger brothers and the love he has and respect he receives from his nephews and nieces. Here Hasim seems to draw on a “preordained discourse” which constructs brotherhood as a relationship that is not chosen but is “determined beforehand” and therefore taken for granted as an enduring family tie. Family hurts are inevitably resolved and love always overcomes anger. It is initially difficult to see the significance and connection of Part 3 to the rest of the story; however, moving on to the other levels of structure and meaning suggests that it is crucial.

A second reading, drawing on critical narrative analysis, is interested in the devices that link lines to make stanzas, stanzas to make strophes, and strophes to make parts so that a level of cohesion is created within the narrative. For example, in the extract Hasim repeats his reassurance six times: “I will stand by” (l. 8), “I can bear it” (l. 10), “it’s alright” (l. 14), “I will come to the help as well” (l. 21), “I’m taking that responsibility” (l. 25), and “we always stand by” (l. 49). This repetition functions to construct cohesion within the narrative building the motif of “brother as provider”. It works to connect parts of the story asserting a particular way of interpreting the text: reinforcing Hasim as provider in a story where Hasim resists this very position on two occasions – first, in showing reticence about the potential dependence of his relatives in India (l. 11, 12 & 13) and secondly, in not sending his brother the money he promised. Here we see the way in which language functions to produce gaps: on the one hand Hasim’s mantra places himself firmly in the position of provider, on the other hand it works to suggest “he doth protest too much”. While his repetition adds a sense of cohesion, it simultaneously undermines his story by reminding us of why the cohesion is necessary in the first place: Hasim is working to manage the contradiction of a “brother as provider” refusing to follow through on a promise to give financial help.

A third reading of the text is concerned with the points of view in the narrative, what Gee (1991) calls the “psychological subjects”. This can also be thought of as the I-position of the narrator, telling the reader or listener about the stance/s the narrator takes up and how these shift across the story. The most significant aspect of Hasim’s use of psychological subjects is his adoption of his brother’s voice – he narrates the dialogue between him and his brother (Stanza 1) as well as the dialogue his brother has in his own thoughts (Stanza 9) using direct speech. For example, in Stanza 1, Hasim adopts the “I” of his brother: “he said, brother it was very difficult financially I was very much” (l.2). Later, in Stanza 9 Hasim again adopts the “I” of his brother, referring to himself in the second person: “now if I tell him the full amount, he may be angry” (l. 31). Certainly, this may be a cultural way of speaking specific to “Indian” dialect, nevertheless it achieves the function of bringing the story alive and also gives his brother a powerful voice in the narrative. Rather than always privileging his own viewpoint in the fraternal conflict, Hasim puts much narrative effort into gaining empathy for his brother’s fear. If the audience can fully understand and empathise with this fear then we must also identify with its origin, namely indebtedness to Hasim for his previous generosity. In doing so, the narrative reinforces Hasim’s subject position as the benevolent provider, emphasising his generosity and faithfulness to his family.

A final reading explores the themes or images in the text that the narrator invites listeners to focus on, normally information that is new, salient and important indicated

by the pitch with which it is said. This final level of analysis incorporates all the readings before it, as this focused material has to be read within the overall structure of the narrative. The key image in the first part of the story is that of financial provision which draws on a “paternalistic discourse” to construct brotherhood. The focused material is frequently about money and Hasim’s assurance of his help. The key image in the second part of the material is that of Hasim withholding the money out of anger. This image stands in contrast to that in Part 1 – the open hand becomes the closed hand. These contrasting images highlight the contradictions that Hasim has to juggle in this narrative, as withholder rather than provider. Part 3 of the story, which initially seems unconnected to the first two parts, functions to give the reader the framework within which Hasim asks for his story to be interpreted. There are two key images in the final part of the story. The first is that of Hasim’s love for his family and their respect for him, as a motive for and consequence of his open hand. This key image upholds Hasim’s subject position as financial provider described in the first part of the story. It also suggests that perhaps part of the reason for Hasim’s anger was that his brother’s deception threatened Hasim’s identity as the older brother and provider. His brother thought Hasim’s anger would surpass his generosity – it is this that Hasim seems to take the most affront with, saying about his anger, “So I would have been but I will just ventilate myself but at the same time I will come to the help as well” (l. 21). The restoration of self as provider comes about through acceptance of the second key image: that of two different types of men. Hasim describes two types of masculinities through the description of his older brother and himself, in contrast to his younger brothers. He describes the masculine qualities that he had hoped for in his younger brothers, namely courage and discipline, as not forthcoming. Hasim sees the older brother role as involving provision (looking after) and commanding respect (looking up to). None of his younger brothers fulfil this role. In order to accept his younger brothers, Hasim appeals to the notion of human nature – of everyone being different - and in doing so constructs himself as helpless in changing the men his younger brothers have become, abdicating personal responsibility.

This narrative is a story about the burden of being an older brother which plays itself out at multiple levels: at the financial level of responsibility but also in terms of feeling responsible for the men his brothers have become, men lacking in courage and discipline. The depth of this felt responsibility can be read into a psychoanalytic interpretation of Hasim’s slip of the tongue where he refers to his sister as his daughter (l. 6). This was not the first time Hasim constructed his sibling relationships as paternal relationships in the interview, often mistakenly referring to his older brother as his father, for example and his younger brothers as his sons, frequently followed by a correction of this confusion. These slips reinforce the paternalistic relationship Hasim has with his brothers, and is consistent with his desire, as the stern father, to punish his brother by not sending him the money immediately. However, this paternalistic stance throws a different light on the last part of the story where Hasim free-associates to his disappointment in his younger brothers. Surely, given that Hasim has in many ways a fatherly relationship with his younger brothers and was a substitute father to them as children, he could be responsible for their character flaws? This possible interpretation suggests that in failing to send his brother the money Hasim unconsciously creates a feared-and-desired situation. On the one hand by not sending the money Hasim is acting out his fear that he failed and continues to fail as a provider and father-figure; on the other hand, we argue that he also acts out a desire to relinquish his burdensome role of being the provider. This desire might be read into the uncertainty in Hasim’s

narrative around who takes financial responsibility. First, Hasim twice mentions that all his brothers are responsible for paying back the money (l. 25 & l. 46) but also states on a number of occasions that he alone will take responsibility so that it is not entirely clear whether or not financial responsibility will be shared. This uncertainty suggests that on the one hand Hasim may be relieved to share the financial burden of being the older brother and provider, a role that may cause resentment especially in cases where a family member has been irresponsible in his spending. On the other hand, sharing the financial responsibility denies Hasim a special role in the family. The narrative of Hasim as special was a core motif throughout his interview, a subject position that he privileges perhaps as a way of dealing with the burden of being provider - he constructs this burden as a privilege and a special role. The subject position of provider in Hasim's family and his fraternal relationships comes with its material costs but also with its status benefits.

The reflexive notes taken directly after the interview point to a real sense of privilege at being able to bear testimony to Hasim's story reinforcing the subject position as special. The notes also describe a mirroring of the relationships Hasim describes with his nieces and nephews reflected in the research relationship as the interviewer, a young white woman, sat listening and recording every word, admiring Hasim's sense of responsibility to his nuclear and extended family just as he describes his young relatives looking up to him. Pertinent however to the analysis of Hasim's extract is the addendum that Hasim willingly set up a second interview in order to follow up issues around brotherhood after an initial analysis of the first interview. However, Hasim failed to turn up to this second interview and also failed to reply to subsequent emails even though he had previously been contacted in this way. The predominant fantasy of the researcher provoked by this "resistance" was a feeling of being rebuked for not showing enough respect in the first interview. This fantasy stands in marked contrast to the "countertransference feelings" of awe and admiration that were documented in the field notes. The research relationship at an emotionally reflexive level seems to mirror Hasim's narrative so that we might even call it "transference": respect was demanded and given, a promise was made and then not kept leaving guilt around possibly not "looking up" to Hasim quite enough.

At many levels therefore (even played out in the research relationship), Hasim's failure to send the money to his brother is an act that belies a divided self. This sense of being divided is perhaps further indicated by paying attention to Hasim's laughter in his storytelling. Hasim laughs at the point in the narrative when he reveals his failure to send his brother the promised money (l. 50). This laughter seems in many ways incongruent with, first, his anger at his brother for not telling him the truth and, secondly, his desire to punish his brother. Perhaps his laughter is further indication of the conflicting feelings of fear and desire his actions (or lack of action in this case) conjure up. Not sending his brother the money is however also a safe way of acting out these conflicting feelings as, according to Hasim, it is merely a postponement and so does not directly threaten his special role in the family. If anything his act works to re-establish himself as the patriarch, willing to mete out punishment to those who deceive him.

DISCUSSION.

In contrast to some psychoanalytically informed modes of discursive analysis (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000a), the approach taken in this paper is to seek ways to open out the

text of the speaker's narrative in such a way as to produce various new discursive forms, rather than to "fix" their meaning. This is consistent with an understanding of psychoanalysis not as an expert meta-theory that can explain the subject to itself and that has its own superior "truth" which can be used to integrate the apparent anomalies of a broken text. Rather, our version of psychoanalysis is one in which the insistence of "interpretation" *remains at the level of the text*, examining its productivity and the ways in which such "inscribed speech" can topple meaning itself (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). In this approach, which is influenced more by Lacanian than Kleinian modes of psychoanalysis (Parker, 2005; Frosh, 2007), the tendency of speakers and analysts alike to find "the" meaning of a fragmentary narrative is opposed by a reflexive attempt to foreground the fragments themselves, and examine their movement *through the actions of* analyst and analysand, researcher and researched.

The parsing of the text and emphasis on contested meaning at the level of the story structure facilitates this opening up of the text by "fragmenting" the narrative into multiple levels of interpretation. The analysis of Hasim's core narrative demonstrates the way in which the contestation of brotherhood might work itself out at the psychosocial level – pointing to the complex interweaving of psychic, interpersonal and socio-cultural mediators of fraternity, and in the specific instance of Hasim, the routine ways in which acts, in this case failing to send his brother money, can stand simultaneously for both a feared outcome and an outcome that is wished for. The text becomes a mire of discourses of paternity and of family stability and obligation, linguistic indicators of possibly unconscious processes as well as a product of the research relationship and the fantasies it produced. The analysis shows how identities and relationships are simultaneously upheld and contested through language: Hasim's identity as "brother as provider" is both eroded and reinforced at various levels within the text; and "brothering" is "performed" in a contested space of cultural norms around family obligation and responsibility.

Whilst the strategies of textual analysis employed in the main bulk of this paper have the productive effect of revolving a variety of possible readings of Hasim's actions and the warrants he gives for them, what is key for the psychoanalytic rendering that we are seeking is the way these link with the specifics of the encounter between the researcher and Hasim, and further with the productivity of this for the textual presentation of the analysis itself. The researcher notes how her own position is one of guilty non-respect, or at least the feeling that she has somehow failed her speaker – not represented him adequately, not understood fully his "cultural" perspective. The reference to possible confusion caused by "Indian" dialect relates to this, as does the energy put into explaining the cultural assumptions about family responsibilities. The very selection of "Hasim" from a set of research participants for this paper, the attempt to stay neutral and sympathetic, and the downcast feeling that something has gone wrong at the end, all point to a kind of reparative effort on the part of the researcher, perhaps drawn out by the material itself, but also part of her own desire as one who wants to understand others better. This is heightened by the particularities of the racialised otherness at work in the paper: the researcher is a white South African woman, the researched an older, South Asian ("Indian" or "Pakistani" – it is not clear) man. In the postcolonial, and specifically post-apartheid, context, the social and psychic constraints on the researcher and the participant in this situation are possibly such as to produce an unspoken but dynamically powerful intersubjective exchange in which patterns of deference, respect, knowledge and interpretation are continually made

unwieldy and even painful. The enacted “failure” at the end of the contact between the two – Hasim’s “failure” to turn up for the second interview or to reply to emails, and the researcher’s feeling that she had somehow “failed” to respond to him appropriately in the interview itself – suggests a psychosocially overdetermined failure of intersubjective contact, in which historically and socially fuelled divides mesh with fantasies of communication and of “making sense” to create a powerful experience of disappointment. One possibility here is that this set of feelings arises in the interaction between the researcher and Hasim not only as a product of their gendered and raced interaction, but also as a mode of “acting out” of the impossibility of a fully satisfying brothering relationship. That is, in rather classical psychoanalytic style, one might understand the affect produced in the research setting as being resonant of the affect embedded in the material itself; this would be akin to the appeal to “countertransference” lodged in some psychoanalytically informed psychosocial research (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005a) and would enable us to read “back” from the research interaction to the research topic. In this reading, the “failure” of the contact between the researcher and Hasim would provide evidence for the failure of brothering both revealed and repressed in Hasim’s talk. However, as we have implied above, this practice of taking the characteristics of the interview as revelatory of the “reality” that stands outside it is fraught with assumptions and difficulties, amongst other things because the agenda set in the research interview is that of the *researcher* rather than the *participant*; any unconscious resonance is consequently more likely to relate to her than to him.

The *reading* of an analysis of this kind thus becomes problematic under these circumstances. Clearly, one wants to understand something about “brothering”, yet all one can really gain is a richer sense of how the struggle to articulate this experience in a very specific context is overlaid with associations of culture, race and gender that fuel the understanding itself. Hasim’s encounter with his brother is undoubtedly overdetermined, as the analysis makes clear; and in accounting for it Hasim also performs various modes of complexity and ambivalence that expose the difficulty and richness of maintaining intimacy across distance, and of negotiating personal and cultural imperatives. This becomes still more complex given the way “unconscious” elements of the material creep into the research account itself, as described immediately above. Psychosocially, what this produces is a new set of questions, or perhaps a “querying” of the original questions, of the ambitions and intentions of the researcher, and of the structural dynamics of the research process: what is it, exactly, that one wants to know? As a reader of such qualitative research, one gains a sense of the richness of individual stories, but also of the frustration produced by attempts to make universalising sense of them. Thinking psychoanalytically, however, this has major virtues: it argues not so much for the ineffable individuality of each subject, which is not our point, but rather for the predictable way in which subjectivity disappears into a host of unintegratable moments, each of them underpinned by something one might refer to as “desire”. Not the least element of such desire is the impulse to make things whole and comprehensible, an impulse which fuels quite a lot of psychoanalytically informed psychosocial research; but this is not, thankfully, something that can ever be fully achieved.

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