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The Failing 'Mental' Health System has it Roots in Anglo-Saxon Conceptions of 'Normality' and 'Deviance'. Is it Time for an Indigenous Irish Replacement?

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Relationship

Power Institutions & Irishness

Topic: The Relationship between the Irish and Institutions of Power over the last 500 years

Review of the Literature on this Topic finds that this relationship was/ is 'fraught'

Leads to **Research Question** surrounding the "legitimacy of performative and systemic aspects of Irishness."

This is Research

- A literature review leading to valid research questions requires a systematic synthesis of *ALL* the literature on a topic. This must be achieved by a *critical evaluation* of primary sources (Cooper, 1994; Hart, 1998; Fink, 2006)

- Alternative research questions anyone?
- Except for a few specialties the literature on research topics is overwhelming. (Cooper, 1992)
- The individual scientist is overloaded and can't keep up with the amount of information available (Denscombe 1991)
  - 'information fatigue'; 'information obesity'

• Although research consists of nicely packaged, reconstructed stories, research as it actually happens is a non-linear, messy business. Characterised by 'flip flopping' between the different stages (Blaxter, 2002; Grix, 2004)

- At every stage of the research process, choices are available between valid options. These choices influence how the research progresses and ultimately its findings At times the most appropriate option is unattainable due to 'resource issues. Need to be explicit and transparent (McGrath et al. 1982).

Psychological difficulties, mental health, mental illness, psycho-social/ psycho-spiritual difficulties, etc...

My area of interest

In Ireland, what and who are the 'power institutions' in this area that the Irish have a 'fraught' relationship with?

- Psychiatry
- Psychology

- Psychiatric Institutions such as St. Ita's & St. Brendan's established under English rule
- The Irish College of Psychiatrists: until 2009, a division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists UK (ICP website)
- Psychology is above all an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon. It is conceived in English, thought about in English, written about in English, and takes into consideration problems relevant to Anglo-Saxon culture (Ardila, 1993).

Back to the Literature

- Colonialism harmed the Irish psyche
- Psychiatry & psychology: power institutions now in the 'healing harmed psyches' business
- Psychiatry & Psychology intrinsically connected to colonial power (if not active agents of colonisation, i.e. 'The Handmaidens of Colonialism', Said, 1978)

- My daughters young life has been destroyed by an appalling service she has received….
- I would like to be treated like a human being…
- No service. They created more unnecessary anxiety to the point I completely shut down…Left in hysterical state, allowed to drive home on Friday afternoon with no service available (not even G.P.) over the weekend.
- The so called 'supports' you speak of have caused 95% of all the problems in my life, have in fact destroyed my life, caused me endless misery and driven me to the brink many times
- I am treated like a number
- …by being with the mental health service makes me so much worse
- 'care' is not something I associate with my HSE experience
- I believe I could have recovered 10 years ago if assessment and access to entitled services were offered
- Abysmal, criminal, systematically destructive of human potential
- People have died through not being listened to

(*Second Opinions*, National Service Users Executive, 2012)

- *Is the bio-psychiatric approach causing an epidemic of psychiatric disorders? (**Anatomy of an Epidemic, Whitaker, 2010**)*

- ***The Emperor's New Drugs (Kirsch, 2009)***

- "there is a widespread consensus amongst our members that some of the changes proposed for the new framework could lead to potentially stigmatizing medical labels being inappropriately applied to normal experiences and also to the unnecessary use of potentially harmful interventions (British Psychological Society, 2012).

- 'Crazy Like Us', (Watters, 2010; Summerfield, 2008) Big Pharm., psychiatry & psychology imposing their views, understandings and treatments = profiteering & colonisation

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This is Research

- If Mental Health Power Institutions are 'illegitimate' in their native countries then question emerges as to how legitimate they are in a country where their original legitimacy came through colonialism and the barrel of a gun

- We are where we are!

The current research setting

Irish men's groups and male individuals dealing with the most serious psychological/ psycho-social issues facing men today

How would we research this setting?

- What are the ontological and epistemological choices? (footings of research on which the entire research edifice depends, Grix,2004).

- Which paradigm? (paradigms like blueprints, which researchers often unaware of Kuhn, 1962)

- Indigenous psychology: the scientific study of human behaviour (or the mind) that is native, that is not transported from other regions, and that is designed for its people (Kim & Berry, 1993)